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'REPINING RESTLESSESSE':
THE MOVEMENT FROM HUMAN TO DIVINE LOVE
IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE TEMPLE

by

Julia Carey

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Department of English

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ABSTRACT

'Repining restlessness' is the movement of human nature seeking the way back to right love through a reassessment of the meaning of love and service. Herbert finds the paradigm of right love in the human-divine figure of Christ on the cross.

The joy and grief of Christ's sacrifice offer models of conduct which are played out in the courtly worlds of nature and grace. The relation between human reason, affections and will determines the value of human love and service. The submission of the heart and will to divine love is a test of faith and of poetic language. The cleansing of self-centred love stimulates the refining of metaphoric language to conform to biblical standards of excellence. Through extensive biblical references Herbert establishes poetry as an instrument of divine grace revealing God's love for man and drawing man back to the divine breast.

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Preface

In The Pulley Herbert uncovers the divine strategy of 'repining restlessness.' The term refers to the inevitable condition of human nature after the fall, and to the unpredictable human journey through the vicissitudes of temporal existence. The poems in The Temple seek understanding of 'repining restlessness' in human nature through direct re-creation of experience. The dominant experience is the response to human and divine love: the form of love between creatures and between creature and creator. In particular Herbert faces the issue of continuity or discontinuity in human and divine love. Human and divine love may be complementary aspects of the same experience or irrevocably separate and antagonistic. The alternatives reflect the broader question of the relation between Nature and Grace. Consequently, I have turned to the Woodhouse¹ model of nature and grace for the notions of continuity and discontinuity. In addition the theological positions attached to the Woodhouse model are helpful in assessing the various doctrinal influences that contribute to Herbert's view of the relation between human and divine love.

Calvin and Aquinas represent the two extremes of discontinuity and continuity with Hooker occupying a moderating middle position. Herbert approaches and retreats from each position as his mood and reasoning shift between a positive and negative view of human nature. The inter-

¹ A. S. P. Woodhouse, "Nature and Grace in The Faerie Queene," in Elizabethan Poetry--Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Paul J. Alpers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).

action between human reason, affections and will keeps the poems moving between submission and rebellion, joy and grief.

Herbert's pleas for self-effacing love echo the powerful voice of Augustine. The distinction between 'cupiditas' and 'caritas' is fundamental as Rosemond Tuve² has proved in her analysis of Herbert's poetry. Augustine's emphasis on 'right love' penetrates deep into the heart and mind of Herbert's poet-lover. Martz³ and Grant⁴ have drawn attention to the influence of modified Augustinian forms of meditation on Herbert's verse but Herbert's greatest debt to Augustine may be the concepts of 'right love' and the 'right use' of the world. For Herbert and Augustine love is an act of the human will and open to abuse whether directed towards fellow-creatures or God. As Tuve has suggested, Herbert is primarily concerned with the love relation between the individual and God. The value of human love offered to God is a pressing anxiety.

Fortunately, standards and tests of human and divine love are available by divine providence to guide human affections and reason to right action. Herbert repeatedly compares his own love for God to the example of human romantic love and most tellingly to the example of Christ on the cross. The comparison with courtly lovers is not, as Martz suspects, a form of sacred parody but much closer to Tuve's contention that human love is referred to the source of all human and

² Rosemond Tuve, "George Herbert and Caritas," in Essays by Rosemond Tuve, ed. Thomas P. Roche, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

³ Louis Martz, The Poetry of Meditation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954).

⁴ Patrick Grant, The Transformation of Sin (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press; Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 1974).

divine love, God.⁵ Herbert brings together the courtly world of love, service and art, and the tradition of 'imitatio Christi.' The hopes and fears, loves and intrigues of the human court are consistently referred to the higher court of Grace. Christ is the courtly master-mistress; the focus and the model of 'right love.' Christ's life is also the supreme test of the value of 'right love' for the ultimate act of love is his sacrifice on the cross. At the same time the continuity of human and divine love is tested in the figure of the man-God who combines human and divine love.

The model of Christ is derived from biblical prophecies and accounts of his life. Herbert relies on typology and many biblical references to establish the continuity of Christ's presence and example from Old Testament prophetic models, like Noah, to the fulfillment of the promise of love in the Gospels and on into individual life. The language of the Bible becomes a reference point and measure for the validity and sincerity of the poet's own actions and words.

The test of love is equally a test of language. 'Right love' demands appropriate and truthful language so that 'repining restlessness' may also describe the search for an effective poetic style.

The authority of the Bible in matters of style was firmly upheld by Calvin. Building on Calvin's words, Lewalski⁶ has developed the hypothesis that Herbert's own poetic style is an extension of the Calvinist maxim of 'unpolished simplicitie' and imitation of biblical

⁵ Rosemond Tuve, "Sacred 'Parody' of Love Poetry, and Herbert," in Essays by Rosemond Tuve.

⁶ Barbara Lewalski, Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979).

typological models. Herbert undoubtedly draws heavily on biblical quotations and typological allusions. Yet the result is not the Calvinist separation of nature and grace but a celebration of the continuity of human and divine love and language in spite of the interruptions occasioned by human sin.

Moreover, Rickey⁷ has found a variety of Classical allusions in The Temple which have led her to conclude that Herbert is converting Classic mores and style for Christian use. We should therefore see Classic mythology and style merging into, and being superseded by, the more complete accounts of human and divine love given in the Bible.

The desire for 'right love' and appropriate language leads to the simultaneous refinement and renovating of love and language.⁸ Herbert's concern with the truth of poetic expressions of love places him alongside Sidney and Shakespeare. All three poets insist that the stale language of popular love poetry needs an infusion of vigour and truth. The use and abuse of ornament is a matter of contention and the image of the over-dressed harlot comes to represent the misuse of poetry. The image runs through the language of Jonson, Shakespeare, Sidney and appears in Jordan II and The Forerunners. The renovating movement is represented by the stripping away of unnecessary embellishment and the unremitting analysis of individual motive, feeling and action to expose the plain truth.⁹

⁷ Mary Ellen Rickey, Utmost Art (Kentucky: The University of Kentucky Press, 1966).

⁸ Helen Vendler's work on 'the reinvented poem' has been helpful in developing my notion of refinement and renovation of human nature and language. See Chap. 2 of Helen Vendler, The Poetry of George Herbert (Cambridge, Mass; London, England: Harvard University Press, 1975).

⁹ Stanley Fish takes the stripping process to the point of total

Arnold Stein, George Herbert's Lyrics (Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1968).

Mark Taylor, The Soul in Paraphrase (The Hague; Paris: Mouton & Co, 1974).

CHAPTER I

(1)

The Two Worlds--'This world and that of grace'

Herbert imagines his body stretched on the rack. 'Betwixt this world and that of grace.'¹ Opposition and connection between the world of nature and the world of grace are encompassed in the image. Man is linked to both worlds, for his hands and feet touch 'this world and that of grace' and are joined by the trunk of the body. In one sense man holds nature and grace together and participates in the motions of both worlds. Yet the figure is simultaneously pulled in contrary directions by nature and grace which form the opposing tension beams of the rack. Man is tied to both worlds but in pain and fear of dismemberment. The rack image, which strains the body in the horizontal and vertical dimension, pulling from side to side and up and down, is a grim reminder of the perversion of man's place in the order of things. Man should be the link between the beasts and the angels, spanning the two worlds of nature and grace. In Mans medley, Herbert reviews the proper position of man.

To this life things of sense
Make their pretence:
In th' other Angels have a right by birth:
Man ties them both alone,
And makes them one,
With th' one hand touching heav'n, with th' other earth.
(ll. 7-12; p. 131)

¹ "Affliction IV", l: 6, in The Works of George Herbert, ed. F. E. Hutchinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 89. All subsequent references to Herbert's works by page number are to this edition.

The present ambivalent and precarious position of human nature, racked between the two worlds, and an outcast from both, is the result of the Fall. Herbert tells us in The H. Communion that 'When Adam did not know/To sinne.../He might to heav'n from Paradise go/As from one room t' another' (ll. 33-36; p. 52). The spacious, open plan that made nature an extension of the world of grace has been reduced in Ungratefulnesse to 'a poore cabinet of bone', 'close, reserv'd, and dark' (ll. 25-28; p. 82) unable to enjoy the benefits of nature and shut away from grace.

The benefits that God has bestowed on human nature are listed in The Pulley. The poem continues to link nature and grace in the vertical movement of the pulley image which gives the poem its title. The 'glasse of blessings' descends from heaven to earth and returns to be replenished. The horizontal progression from birth to death is represented by the hour-glass of man's temporal span, God commands 'Let the worlds riches, which dispersed be,/Contract into a span.' The qualities that characterise the perfect courtier, who seems 'rather fashioned with the verie hand of some God,' since he abounds 'in all goodness both of bodie and minde'² are given to God's courtier. He has 'beautie' and 'strength' of body, 'wisdom' of mind and 'honour' and 'pleasure' to satisfy his affections. However, God withholds 'rest' on the assumption that man will become self-satisfied, and 'rest in Nature not the God of Nature.' God resolves to 'let him keep the rest', punning on the word as 'remainder' and 'peace'. The latter meaning is held back, 'Let him be rich and weary' so that if virtue fails 'yet wearinesse/May tosse him to my breast.' Man

² Baldassare Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier, Bk. I, trans. Sir Thomas Hoby (London: J. M. Dent, 1975), p. 32.

is given much but he keeps 'Them with repining restlesnesse.'

It is clear from The Pulley that the relationship between nature and grace is controlled by a sense of degree and proportion. The image of the pulley does double service as a scale of value with God anxious not to give too much weight to nature. In The Country Parson Herbert speaks of 'Nature serving Grace' (p. 261; ll. 8-16) in line with the generally accepted maxim of his contemporaries. Hooker states that 'Those things which nature is said to do, are by divine art performed, using nature as an instrument;³ Nature is a servant not a master, although in Herbert's Nature, nature, in the guise of human nature, rebels against the supremacy of divine power and denies 'That thou hast ought to do with me.' The bid for independence indicates that the precise formulation of the relation between nature and grace and the application to individual life are not so easily settled. Calvin, Hooker and Aquinas proceed in divergent directions though all three build on Augustine's interpretation of Scriptural evidence. The later writers are taken to represent the three main streams of Reformation, Anglican and Roman Catholic thought, while recognising that within each group there are many subtle variations. For the present purpose a general impression of the major controversial areas that are relevant to Herbert's thought and language, is sufficient. Herbert draws on a variety of doctrinal sources; his preference at any point in time is decided by the most appropriate thought and language for a particular state of mind and a specific moment in the developing, shifting relationship between human nature and the divine presence.

³ Richard Hooker, The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, Bk. I, Ch. iii [4], ed. Christopher Morris (London: J. M. Dent, 1963), I, 159.

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Augustine insists 'that man was created right, in the sense that he was to live not according to his own self but according to his maker.'⁴ The same point is made by God speaking in The Pulley. For Augustine the human will in opposition to God's will keeps nature and grace apart as it does in Nature. Loving submission of the will to God brings human nature closer to divine grace. The rebellion of Nature turns with 'O tame my heart' into a plea for grace to control the aggressive will and make it act lovingly. The repentant movement is part of 'repining restlessness', the motion of the human will seeking the way back to God. The journey back is Augustine's 'pilgrimage of existence,'⁵ the horizontal movement of man from birth to death that crosses the vertical movement between heaven and earth; the 'crosse-bias' direction that Herbert complains of in Affliction I. Complaint is a further characteristic of 'repining.' The word describes repentance, complaint, love-longing but most precisely refers to the repeated crucifixion of Christ. Christ is crucified each time human nature rejects him and prefers self-love to Christ-centred love. Christ is also crucified in each individual who chooses to follow the way of the cross in everyday life. The first form of crucifixion brings death, the second new life. Thus 'repining restlessness'; the mood swings between joy and grief; the retreat and advance of the hesitant lover; the uneven service record of the servant and the racked figure pulled by nature and grace, are all variations on the central symbol of the cross. The cross is the intersection

⁴ St. Augustine, The City of God, Bk. XIV, Ch. iv, trans. Philip Levine, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard U.P.; London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1966), IV, 275.

⁵ St. Augustine, City of God, Bk. XIV, Ch. ix; IV, 305.

of the vertical and horizontal movements and of the poles of attraction and repulsion. The cross is the way of ambiguity, paradox and perpetual mood swings. The aim is sure and steady but has to be approached by a difficult and contrary route. Herbert is acutely conscious of the contradictions that allow him 'To have my aim, and yet to be/Further from it then when I bent my bow' (The Crosse , ll. 25-26; p. 164). Yet he is confident that 'These Thy contradictions/Are properly a crosse felt by thy Sonne.' Herbert repeats Christ's words on the cross, making them 'my words, Thy will be done' (ll. 34-36).

Nature identifies the problem of the will and relates it to the act of loving. The conclusion of the poem offers two solutions for the hardness of the human heart, 'smooth' or 'make a new one.' The choice depends on the condition of the 'rugged heart' and the potential for rehabilitation.

Aquinas follows the approach that seeks to 'smooth' the heart. Arguing that 'the natural inclination to virtue' depends on man's rational nature, and that man cannot sin without his reason, Aquinas concludes that man's 'inclination to virtue cannot be entirely destroyed.'⁶ Aquinas goes on to explain that 'the root' of natural virtue remains intact because 'sin does not diminish nature itself.' Nature and grace are separated by obstacles which may be overcome by human reason set in motion by divine grace. Once grace begins to move man, nature may be progressively perfected by 'co-operative' grace:⁷ human nature and

⁶ St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Prima Secundae, Q. 85, Art. 2, trans. and ed. A. M. Fairweather in Nature and Grace (London: SCM Press, 1954), pp. 127-129.

⁷ Aquinas, Prima Secundae, Q.111, Art. 2, pp. 166-167.

divine grace working together so that man 'merits an increase of grace by each and every meritorious action.'⁸ Herbert follows Aquinas part of the way when he picks up the 'root' image in The Flower, to explain the latent qualities in human nature that may be set in motion by grace. The 'heart' is 'shrivel'd' like a dormant tuber, 'gone/Quite underground; as flowers depart/To see their mother-root, when they have blowne' (ll. 8-14; p. 165). The 'root' is 'Dead to the world', nature appears to die but it is God's Providence that the cycle begins again with the spring of grace working on the dormant root. Herbert sees a sharper decline in human nature than Aquinas concedes, but the cycle of natural growth remains intact. The cycle of contraction and growth is another variation on the central movement of opposition and connection between nature and grace.

Vertue is less confident about the root's durability, 'Thy root is ever in its grave,/And thou must die,' and in Grace Herbert moves away from Aquinas when he postulates the death of man's natural 'root' of goodness in life and poetry; 'My stock lies dead, and no increase/Doth my dull husbandrie improve.' The 'stock' is the root on which the new growth is grafted; if the stock dies the entire plant succumbs. Nature is incapacitated and only 'suppling grace' can fill 'my heart' 'void of love.'

The positive, re-surg-ing energy of The Flower momentarily meshes with the optimistic Thomist point of view. Although the growth of Herbert's flower is controlled by grace not by the human 'root', there is a sense of co-operation and harmony between nature and grace. However, Herbert does not subscribe to the perfection of nature in 'this

⁸ Aquinas, Prima Secundae, Q. 114, Art. 8, p. 215.

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world' nor to incremental grace. He prefers the qualified stand of Hooker's rebuttal of the Thomist position, once the first rush of joy is steadied by reason; 'But while I grow in a straight line,/Still upward bent, as if Heav'n were mine own,/Thy anger comes, and I decline' (ll. 29-31; p. 165). Presumption and reliance on natural growth are both cut down by God. Hooker finds no evidence of human, natural perfection either: 'Search all the generations of men sithence the fall of your father Adam, find one man, that hath done any one action which hath passed from him pure, without any stain or blemish at all,'⁹ and the search is vain. The Thomist 'root' is reduced to 'the little fruit which we have in holiness' and it is 'corrupt and unsound.' In Employment II Herbert compares his unfruitfulness with the natural, instinctive fruiting of 'the Orange-tree' (ll. 21-25; p. 78). The sense of man's inadequacy and inability to do anything from innate goodness remains strong. Yet Hooker finds a place for works once man is justified by faith, through divine grace. Herbert's desire for occupation in Employment I and Submission is sanctioned by the Anglican position.

Hooker denies that works have 'a power of satisfying God for sin; and a virtue to merit grace...'¹⁰ but believes that human works, while subordinate to faith, represent 'Christ believed in heart, confessed with mouth, obeyed in life and conversation.'¹¹ Faith is joined to Hope and Charity. It is a fair commentary on Herbert's approach to the issue of

⁹ Hooker, "A Learned Discourse of Justification", in Ecclesiastical Polity; I, 24.

¹⁰ Hooker, "Of Justification"; I, 61.

¹¹ Hooker, "Of Justification"; I, 57.

human worth and human action in the world, on those occasions when moderating reason, and the sense of received grace dispel the depressing confirmation of human corruption and impotence, so forcefully presented in Miserie.

Miserie asks 'How shall infection/Presume on thy perfection?' Nature and grace are pushed apart by human depravity. There is no opportunity for re-building on such a rotten foundation. Man is totally earthbound and unable to rise in the vertical movement up to God; 'he is/A lump of flesh, without foot or wing/To raise him to a glimpse of blisse' (ll. 35-36, ll. 73-78; p. 100). The pilgrimage through human existence, as an alternative route, is hampered by 'without foot.' The doom of 'repining restlesnesse' is repeated in 'A sick toss'd vessel, dashing on each thing.' Herbert, in despair and disgust, has turned to Calvin and bitter self-castigation.

Human worth is non-existent; man is 'dirtie', 'foul', and can do nothing even when received into the service of grace, 'Man cannot serve thee;' Man, the worthless servant, must be brought to know his foulness, 'My God, I mean myself.' The poem follows very precisely a crucial passage from Calvin:

Thus a sense of our ignorance, vanity, poverty, infirmity, depravity and corruption leads us to perceive and acknowledge that in the Lord alone are to be found true wisdom, solid strength, ¹² perfect goodness and unspotted righteousness.

The gifts of 'wisdom' and 'strength' which Herbert's God gives to man in The Pulley are in Calvin's view more properly to be sought in God himself.

¹² John Calvin, Institutes, Bk. I, Ch. 1, ed. John T. McNeill, in On the Christian Faith (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957), p. 3.

Calvin believes that human nature is to be scourged into recognition of God's perfection and submission to the divine will, by painful and relentless self-negation. Self-denial means for Calvin that 'We are not our own; therefore, neither is our own reason or will to rule our acts and counsels' (Bk. III, ch. vii). Moreover, Calvin requires man to refer himself to God and 'to give him up the affections of the heart, that he may tame and subdue them' (Bk. III, Ch. vii). Thus Nature's 'O tame my heart' is given a much stronger force in the context of Calvin's admonition. Calvin repudiates the independent power of human reason, will and affections, and strips away human pretensions, to rely entirely on God's grace to perform all actions. Augustine's stricture that man should live according to God is taken by Calvin to the extreme point of human impotence. Even with grace man can do nothing, since 'not one particle remains to man as a ground of boasting' (Bk. II, Ch. iii). For Calvin human nature cannot be smoothed over for 'no good can ever be extracted from our heart until it is made altogether new...' (Bk. II, Ch. iii).¹³

Herbert is strongly drawn to Calvin as a remedy for false-humility which is a persistent temptation hidden in acts of apparent submission and the pride of artistic creation. The Holdfast reveals the very difficult art of submission, since to say 'I submit' is to claim an independent action, for 'to have nought is ours, not to confesse/That we have nought.'

The antidote for false-humility offered by The Holdfast is to live

¹³ John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979), II, 7; II, 13; I, 256; I, 255. All subsequent references to The Institutes are to this edition.

according to Christ 'who cannot fail or fall.' Although the paths of Augustine, Aquinas, Hooker and Calvin diverge at important crossroads, their goal is the same, to adhere as closely as possible to the way prepared by Christ since, as Herbert foresees in Lent, 'Who goeth in the way which Christ hath gone,/Is much more sure to meet with him, then one/That travelleth by-ways' (ll. 37-39; p. 86). In Christ the 'crosse-bias' movement of 'repining restlesnesse' finds peace:

Take of this grain, which in my garden grows,
And grows for you;
Make bread of it, and that repose
And peace, which ev'ry where
With so much earnestnesse you do pursue
Is onely there.
Peace (ll. 37-42; p. 124)

The seed of Melchisedec prefigures the bread of Christ's body which becomes the peace-giving food for man. Christ: man-God: unites the horizontal, temporal journey through human life to the vertical descent-ascent of grace from heaven to earth. The crucified Christ joins nature and grace as the racked human form cannot.

(2)

Reason, Will and Affections

Herbert focuses the contradictions and connections between the two worlds of nature and grace on the specific problems of human conduct in society and towards God. Herbert depicts the two worlds, in The Temper II, as 'thy higher court' of grace and the 'grosser' court of the world. The human courtier must come to terms with the intricacies of service, love and artistic ambition in both courts. The relationships of feudal service and courtly love contribute an organising framework for divergent thought and language, in Herbert's formulation

of the relation between nature and grace. Connections and contradictions between human and divine matters are set against the background of the feudal, courtly milieu.

The relationships between master-servant, lover-mistress, poet-patron involve and apply the operation and interaction of the three human faculties: reason, will and affections. Harmony or disconnection between the three faculties influences the disposition of specific relationships. The influence is clear in Obedience where Herbert applies the interdependence of the three faculties to the problem of submission. The terminology of a civil contract based on a rational proposition about divine love is the starting point for the poem. Reason, affections and will co-operate to produce the pledge of obedience:

O let thy sacred will
All thy delight in me fulfill!
Let me not think an action mine own way,
But as thy love shall sway,
Resigning up the rudder to thy skill.
Obedience (ll. 16-20; p. 104)

'Love' and 'delight,' thought and action are in harmony. By contrast the painful revolt of Affliction IV arises from the fact that 'All my attendants are at strife.' The dislocation of the faculties is reflected in the broken relationship between master and servant. In a similar manner, the operation of the three faculties is applied to the lover's search for the distinction between lust and right love, and the rational application of standards of conduct and art to the service, love and praise of God.

The previous discussion in Section (1) has intimated that the relationships among the three faculties are indicators and specific examples of the broad relation between nature and grace. Although the individual emphasis may be different, Augustine, Aquinas, Hooker and

Calvin are in general agreement that the condition of the three human faculties determines whether man flies 'with angels' or falls 'with dust' (Temper II).

For Aquinas the Fall represents a disordering of the faculties which may be set right by co-operative, rational effort once grace stimulates human reason. After justification by divine grace, Hooker relies on the rules of reason and laws, derived from God's books of Nature and Scripture, to control and guide the affections and the will back to God. Calvin places no reliance on any human faculty. Reason, will and affections are corrupted beyond repair by the Fall and must be replaced by a new covering for the consequences of sin. The degree and proportion of power assigned to the human faculties to rehabilitate man is the distinguishing factor. Moreover, individual writers lay a different stress on the importance and priority given to each faculty.

Augustine singles out the human will; perverted love arises from a perverted will which also infects reason. Yet the reverse may also be true once man gains 'good-will.' The will decides whether 'emotions will be wrong', for emotions 'are all no more than acts of will.'¹⁴ Desire, fear, joy and grief are all acts of the will. Significantly, these emotions are precisely the 'acts of will' which Herbert most wants to understand and regulate in his thought and language. The contradictions of 'repining restlessness' are found in the transitions from joy to grief in Longing; the distinction between lust and 'true desires' in Love I & II; and the rejection of servile fear of punishment for the awe of love and service, in the Affliction poems. The wavering affections are tied to the fluctuations of submission and rebellion in the

¹⁴ St. Augustine, City of God, Bk. XIV, Ch. vi; IV, 285.

human will. The verb 'love' at the end of Affliction I, 'Let me not love thee, if I love thee not,' confirms that loving service should be a voluntary act of the human will.

Yet Herbert does not forget the claims of reason and in The Country Parson acknowledges its necessary function. He writes 'if I do not give everything its end, ... I am false to my reason which should guide me ... perverting that order which [God] hath set both to things, and to reason' (p. 265; ll. 9-12). Herbert speaks in the language of Hooker's rationalism when he perceives reason as the regulator of human conduct. Hooker states that 'Goodness is seen with the eyes of the understanding. And the light of that eye, is reason.' He continues 'For the laws of well-doing are the dictates of right reason.'¹⁵ The 'eyes of the understanding' and the eyes of love play a vital role in Herbert's search for the way back to God. 'Eye' imagery will be discussed fully in Chapter 4 where Herbert's intricate reworking of classical and biblical sources will be examined. It will become clear that Herbert modifies Hooker's primary emphasis on reason, although in The Church Porch rationalism is put into effect in both practical and spiritual matters. The poem mixes classical ethics and Scriptural commandments in a set of precepts designed to guide the human will towards right affections and right actions.

The pattern of rational argument and explication contributes to the design of various poems. Herbert draws on proof from the natural world of plants and insects, personal experience and biblical history to support his position. Employment I & II argue from the example of

¹⁵ Hooker, Ecclesiastical Polity, Bk. I, Ch. vii [5]; I, 170.

the 'Orange-Tree' and the bees (I, ll. 17-20; p. 52; II, ll. 21-25; p. 79). In Dialogue the voices of man and ~~Christ~~ set up a rational interchange which at the same time sets limits on the power of human reason. Both speakers rely on the authority of Scripture, repeating the selling imagery of the Old Testament bondsman and the betrayal of Christ by Judas. Christ replies to man's attempt to reason out the bargain, 'What the gains in having thee/Do amount to, onely he,/Who for man was sold, can see' (ll. 13-15; p. 144). The familiar language of rational, human commerce is used to undercut confidence in human reason. Human reason is insufficient as a means of assessing human worth and understanding God's love. Christ brings divine wisdom to augment and enlighten human reason.

In The Pearl love and service are given with the open eyes of reason, 'with open eyes/I flie to thee, and fully understand/Both the main sale, and the commodities' (ll. 32-34; p. 88). Once more the language and experience of the business world are used. At the end of the poem man's 'groveling wit' is again superceded and supplemented by divine grace. The final lift to heaven is beyond the power of human reason.

The Pearl uses reason as an instrument of self-knowledge and knowledge of the world. Although Calvin rejects reliance on the power of human reason to guide man back to God, he implies that 'sense' or understanding can reveal human depravity and lead to self-knowledge. The passage already quoted on p. 8 does not preclude the use of reason, for it is 'one of the essential properties of our nature',¹⁶ and like The Country Parson (p. 265; ll 10) 'we insult the Giver' if we despise reason. Calvin argues that human reason has been 'perverted from its

¹⁶ Calvin, Institutes, Bk. I, Ch. ii; I, 235-238.

original integrity' but is not entirely blinded in earthly things which include civil life and the arts. However in spiritual matters Calvin has no doubt that the authority of Scripture proves 'how far our faculty of knowing God' falls short 'when it is declared, that though his image is so plainly exhibited; we have not eyes to perceive it.'¹⁷ Herbert's desire for clear-sight in human and divine affairs depends on more than human reason but his concept of the power of reason is not exclusively Calvinist. Herbert brings the full force of his reason to bear on the dilemmas of spiritual life and the definition of right love and service. He draws back from defining God's love for man except as it may be known from the Bible. Hooker too draws back from understanding God through human reason.¹⁸ The two men share a common appreciation of the painful process of rational control of the reluctant human will.

In an important statement Hooker maintains that 'The search of knowledge is a thing painful; and the painfulness of knowledge is that which maketh the Will so hardly inclinable thereunto.'¹⁹ In the Affliction poems 'thoughts' and the effort to understand the human predicament are 'a case of knives' wounding the heart and drawing blood (Affl. IV). Human reason in The Collar attempts to avert rebellion but is pushed away by the will. The realisation of human weakness and folly in Justice I reveals that the attempt to understand the contradictions of God's ways is beyond the capacity of human reason. The resulting confusion has become an excuse to avoid the knowledge of man's own paradoxical way of life which may be examined rationally. 'I cannot skill

¹⁷ Calvin, Institutes, Bk. II, Ch. ii; I, 239.

¹⁸ Hooker, Ecclesiastical Polity, Bk. I, Ch. ii [2]; I, 150.

¹⁹ Hooker, Ecclesiastical Polity, Bk. I, Ch. vii [7]; I, 173.

of 'these thy wayes' is more properly 'I cannot skill of these my wayes' and a more painful application of reason.

The stripping away of the pretensions of the human will by systematic reasoning is a characteristic movement of Herbert's poems. The undressing and re-clothing of human nature is a continuous motif. Classical and biblical prototypes are to be found in Platonic thought and both Testaments. The ascent of the soul leaves the body behind, stripping off earthly clothing. Herbert's poem The Bag reverses the Platonic ascent of the soul to show Christ descending, shedding divine garments to be clothed in flesh. The biblical account in Genesis (37:23) of the stripping of Joseph prefigures Matthew (27:28), 'And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.' Christ's captors mock him by dressing and undressing him but unconsciously go through the process which each man must apply to his own human nature. To go the same way as Christ the human will must be stripped of wrong affections, misguided judgement and self-interest, and put on the new clothes of humility and charity.

Depending upon the particular relationship and mood which individual poems recapture, Herbert moves, in the retreat-advance motion of his poems, between the different views of the human faculties offered by Augustine, Aquinas, Hooker and Calvin.

Herbert assumes that the affections, joy, grief, desire, fear, are all acts of the will. In particular Herbert identifies human and divine love as acts of will. Human love towards fellow-men and God may be a good or bad act. God's love towards man is invariably an act of good-will, even when man fails to recognise the goodness. The broken human heart in The Altar and throughout The Temple symbolizes perverted human affections and thus a perverted human will. The broken heart also

refers to the broader fracture and disconnection between nature and grace. The fragmenting of the connection between nature and grace confuses human reason, since two sets of contradictory data are interspersed with the remnants of an integrated frame of reference which united nature and grace before the Fall. 'Repining restlessness' is the activity of human reason seeking understanding. The power of human reason to order and discriminate information for the will is unreliable. Reason is limited by man's earthbound nature in Dulnesse; 'Sure thou didst put a minde there, if I could/Finde where it lies' (ll. 23-24; p. 115). Reason was given by God to be used by man to seek understanding of human conduct, and to interpret the knowable provisions of divine grace for the human will. Knowledge is essential but painful, for the will is reluctant to respond to rational precepts that curtail its self-seeking actions. Human reason, rightly used, may bring man to the gates of grace, but not beyond what man is permitted to know.

All three faculties rely not only on the first stimulus from grace but the continuing surveillance of the divine presence to dispel incipient insurrection.

Herbert holds back from full agreement with Hooker's rationalism, while accepting that reason is a necessary and useful tool. Herbert cannot agree with Aquinas that the faculties are merely disordered. For Herbert's poems speak of broken, racked human forms. Yet, the Fall has not entirely corrupted the potential for human growth. Herbert offers a more gentle, nurturing form of Calvin's rejection of human potential. Herbert rejects corruption with the same vehemence, but where Calvin refuses to allow genuine human development even with grace, Herbert speaks of building and growing towards God. The one qualification

is that man's independent efforts are always futile and must be referred to the action of divine grace. The pruning knife of Paradise cuts off syllables and unrestrained human growth, but the stripping process is designed to make man more 'fruitful.' Total destruction of human nature is rejected for the careful training of new growth. Every cut is a beginning and 'such beginnings touch their end' for the cycle of creation is continuous. Although Herbert speaks of the need for a new creation every day in Giddinnesse, the material of creation is always 'dust,' and the ashes of the corrupt human heart and will in Church-monuments are admonished and then, in Dulnesse, rendered into beauty by the touch of Christ's foot. Calvin's 'new will' is for Herbert the old will rendered down and then imprinted with the form of Christ; the old metal is tempered to a new cleanness and brightness.

When pain and disgust momentarily recede and human nature is in contact with the operation of divine grace, Herbert is able to pledge his fundamental belief that 'Nothing can be so mean,/Which with his tincture (for thy sake)/Will not grow bright and clean' (The Elixir , ll. 14-16; p. 184). Grace can enhance and refresh the fading colour of human goodness through the rich red of Christ's blood that puts colour into Death's complexion.

Nature is neither perfected nor eternally corrupt. A transfusion of Christ's human-divine blood rather than a transformation or all-new creation, is Herbert's remedy for the enfeebled condition of human nature. The transformation of fear to love; rebellion to submission, is more properly the transfusion of God's will into man's will through the blood of Christ.

The image of blood flowing through veins and becoming wine in The

Agonie is a powerful symbol for Herbert, so that we begin to see how his conceptual framework of the relation between nature and grace is applied in the precise and extensive use of symbolic and metaphoric words and phrases.

(3)

In Miserie Herbert exclaims 'Ah wretch? What verse/Can thy strange wayes rehearse?' (ll. 65-66; p. 100). Poetry is assigned the task of explicating and acting out the 'strange wayes' of human nature. The lines question whether language can make sense of human behaviour. The mood of despair and disgust in Miserie casts a shadow on poetry and human nature so that Herbert ties the value of poetry to his estimate of human worth. The low evaluation of human nature coincides with strong doubts about human language. In Miserie poetry is referred to the natural order and to human nature in particular. Miserie is followed immediately by Jordan II where poetry moves on to the world of grace and to man's performance before the divine presence. Taken together, the two poems show poetry moving from nature to grace so that fallible human nature is confronted with the overwhelming brightness of the divine nature, and at the same time the adequacy of human language to capture the comparison and serve both worlds accurately is examined. In Miserie the poet cannot find language bad enough to describe human corruption, while in Jordan II the problem is reversed and no language seems able to match the brilliance of Christ. In both cases the profound disparity between subject and language casts doubt on the poet's ability to find the right words and the most appropriate poetic style.

Yet Jordan II is motivated by the belief that there is an appropriate

style 'with which to clothe the sunne', however frustrating and painful the discovery may be. The intervention of Christ offers a solution which is to 'copy' the language of God's love. The Holy Scripture is to be the source of inspiration and style, a 'readie penn'd' model for the human poet. Calvin's exclusive reliance on Scripture in all matters of doctrine and style appears to become Herbert's poetic standard. However, Jordan II brings together the classical, poetic source of Helicon and the biblical river Jordan, suggesting that the pagan poetic becomes a Christian convert by immersion in the waters of baptism. The combination of pagan and Christian sources is Sidney's marriage of Protestant morality and classical standards of poetic excellence, found in the Apology.

Sidney suggests a threefold role for poetry: to delight, to teach and to move to goodness, for poets 'imitate both to delight and teach: and delight to move men to take that goodness in hand, which without delight they would fly as from a stranger.'²⁰ Poetry is, therefore, intimately related to the functions of the three human faculties. The affections are stimulated to delight; the reason is engaged and informed; and the will is moved to seek good and act well. Human nature may be stirred and educated by poetry so that the poet's language and style may persuade and help along the movement towards moral and spiritual regeneration. Herbert states his commitment to a poetic style based on the rehabilitation of the human faculties in The Church Porch. He urges 'sweet youth', 'Hearken unto a Verser, who may chance/Ryme thee to good, and make a bait of pleasure' (ll. 3-4; p. 6). Poetry may reach the reluctant human faculties and 'turn delight into a sacrifice.' The word 'sacrifice' hints

²⁰ Sir Philip Sidney, "An Apology for Poetry", in The Selected Poetry and Prose of Sidney, ed. David Kalstone (New York: The New America Library, 1970), p. 224.

at a more specific role for poetry as a means of bringing the significance and style of Christ's sacrifice into everyday living.

Sidney makes a strong case for the regenerative action of good poetry. The 'inward light' of reason is exercised by poetry, and with knowledge joined to 'so sweet a prospect' the will is enticed towards 'well-doing' (p. 236). Sidney argues that 'even our Saviour Christ, vouchsafed to use the flowers of [poetry]' and that 'the holy Scripture ... hath whole parts in it poetical' (p. 245). Thus poetry 'rightly applied, deserveth not to be scourged out of the Church of God' (p. 220).

The difficulty is to apply language 'rightly.' Good poetry is inspired by God, 'the heavenly Maker', but the fallibility of the human faculties may still result in failed poetry, for as Sidney points out 'our erected wit, maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will, keepeth us from reaching unto it' (p. 222). In Dulnesse Herbert makes the same link between the failure of poetic inspiration and the inability to act or write well, although the knowledge of Christ's perfection is present.

The influence of Augustine's thought is evident in both Sidney and Herbert. The distinction between right and wrong use of the world which Augustine makes in De Doctrina Christiana²¹ is directed by Sidney and Herbert towards the use of poetry, so that right language becomes an aspect of right loving. The 'infected will' brings Calvin into focus again, with the heavy moral and spiritual weight that is placed on the choice of language. Herbert adheres more precisely than Sidney suggests to the Calvinist belief in the Bible as a source of style. The H.

²¹ St. Augustine, On Christian Doctrine, Bk. I, Ch. III-IV, trans. D. W. Robertson (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1979), pp. 9-10.

Scripture sonnets celebrate the excellence of the biblical model and refer Herbert's own poetry to the standards of biblical typology and cross-references. Herbert does not depend solely on the Bible for material, so that Calvin's 'poetic' is proportionally modified by sources drawn from nature.

Human experience in the natural world and in spiritual matters reinforces the biblical sources. Although Herbert's plant and insect imagery is derived from biblical and emblematic sources, horticultural and herbal particulars are also drawn from folk-lore. In his comments on "The Parson's Knowledge" Herbert includes 'tillage and pastorage' (p. 228; l. 18) although placing holy Scripture as 'the chief and top' of knowledge (p. 228; l. 21). Later in speaking of the parson's "Completeness" Herbert acknowledges the value of knowing 'What herbs may be used in stead of drugs...' (p. 261; ll. 29-30). Practical knowledge and skill is not to be despised. The use of nature in life and poetry is part of the overall concept of 'Nature serving Grace both in comfort of diversion, and the benefits of application when need requires' (p. 261; ll. 11-12). Herbert recognises the force of Hooker's plea not to ignore the book of nature but to seek inspiration jointly in nature and grace. Herbert does not concur with equal partnership for he always places Scripture as his first and most telling source, but Herbert does put value on human experience. The colloquial tone of his imagery and syntax is not only an attempt to copy the 'simple' style of Scripture, but to capture the nuances and vitality of human nature responding to the world of nature and grace.

The response to stimulation from either world is often painful and ambiguous. Discomfort is particularly acute when nature and grace pull

in opposite directions. The tension is present in the poems of poetic failure, where the 'failed poet' is faced with successful rivals, or the failure of inspiration. Herbert responds with anguish and self-contempt to his repeated inability to find an appropriate style in which to write and love. The 'failed poet' and the 'failed lover' go together and bring Herbert's poetry onto common ground with Shakespeare's sonnets and Sidney's own Astrophel and Stella. All three poets face the dilemma of using commonplace language to express a love which they consider uniquely valuable. The question of genuine feeling and sincere execution is concentrated in the issue of false ornament, which is the dressing of the subject in inappropriate or shameful verbal garments. The stylistic problem connects with the dressing/undressing motif of the Christian seeking to follow Christ, which was touched on in Sections (1) and (2) of this chapter. Hooker sums up in religious terms what is felt by Shakespeare for his human beloved; by Jonson speaking against false ornament; and by Herbert for his divine love and poetry. Christ, the beloved, the truth, is 'the only garment, which being put on, covereth the shame of our defiled natures, hideth the imperfections of our works...' ²² Herbert reveals the imperfections of human garments and seeks the right garments of language and action in which to clothe his thoughts and poetic style. For the Christian poet the search for right language ends in Christ. Yet the desire for truth and accurate language is shared by poets like Shakespeare who are rooted in secular experience. Shakespeare draws on Christian terminology in the same way as Herbert draws on the language of human love. Both poets wish to point up the contrasts and similarities between nature and grace. In the final analysis Herbert

²² Hooker, "Of Justification"; I, 59.

relies on divine love and language and parts company with Shakespeare.

One of the most difficult problems in The Temple is to fix the tone of the language and the feelings. Do we hear Herbert's own voice speaking from personal experience or the voice of his poetic persona, a Christian everyman? It would be wrong to discount Herbert's apparent, final communication with Nicholas Ferrar that the poems are 'a picture' of the 'many Spiritual Conflicts'²³ between Herbert's soul and God. Yet the poems are clearly more than a private, unique experience opened for our inspection. The mood swings are, as far as we may judge, an accurate recall of past experience, forming a personal confession in the manner of Augustine's great work and the tradition of meditation. At the same time the spiritual diary is offered as an example and encouragement for every discouraged and uncertain Christian. Again the didactic exemplar does not do justice to the depth of response that many of the poems can evoke. The dramatic, persuasive quality of the best poems demands the direct participation of the reader, not as a pupil of the poet, but as a fellow-student. Herbert uses his personal confrontation with the contradictions and connections of the two worlds of nature and grace, to move away from self-centred 'repining' to the open appeal of The Invitation: 'Lord I have invited all.' Herbert is not content with the release of his own joy and grief, nor does he maintain the didactic tone of The Church Porch for long. He relinquishes the role of educator for that of fellow-sufferer. In his poetic intent Herbert most closely follows the example of his master, Christ, to share grief and joy.

Together reader and poet examine and share past experience. Past

²³ Quoted by Isaac Walton in The Lives (London: S.P.C.K., n.d.), p. 271. Herbert calls his poetry 'a picture' picking up the classical "ut pictura poesi" which Sidney repeats in the "Apology" (p. 230).

thoughts and feelings are relived in the present language of the poems and both past and present are applied to a future, dimly-perceived position, that is to be clarified in subsequent poems. The horizontal movement of time from past to future is intersected by portions of timeless experience that are encapsulated moments of eternity, eternally true and a taste of heaven. The double time perspective, the horizontal dimension of nature and the vertical movement of grace, gives Herbert the opportunity to stand back from his own experience, marking and revising the significance of his recorded thoughts so that the ambiguity and paradoxes of Christian experience cannot be avoided by choosing the simple, first impetuous solution. Irony and humour moderate any tendency to false-humility and self-righteousness. Gentle self-mockery points out momentary delusions and the temporary loss of way along the journey. The enduring quality of the poems is the fine tuning of intimate feeling and rational evaluation of human nature, for the purpose of renovating the human will.

Herbert builds up a store of words and phrases that cross-refer within and among poems and go back to biblical and poetic sources. The word 'dust' picks up the attitude to human love which is sometimes opposed, sometimes united to divine love. At the same time 'dust' recalls the material of creation in Genesis, the words of the funeral service and the healing sense of 'dust' used by Christ to cure blindness (John 9:6). In combination with the word 'eyes', 'dust' refers to the language of romantic love and begins a new cycle of comparisons. The repetition of words and lines is not an indication of an impoverished imagination. Herbert adapts the repetitive patterning of prayer and catechism to his sense that the dilemmas of Christian life are not only continuous from

biblical times to the present day, but are daily repeated and daily overcome in each individual life. Herbert picks up his own past language in order to revise and clarify terminology by repeatedly referring the same configuration of words back to the mirror of divine grace; Jordan II is a miniature of his poetic technique.

The following pages trace the restless movement of human nature and human language in The Temple, as both are guided towards a temporary plateau of rest and recuperation. The figure of Christ on the cross is the guiding symbol for both motion and rest; man and language.

CHAPTER II

Precepts for Life

Man is not immediately receptive to the guiding symbol of Christ and Herbert recognises that practical 'fences' are needed to control human actions. Laws are part of God's loving care for man in Sinne (1)

Lord, with what care hast thou begirt us round!
Parents first season us: then schoolmasters
Deliver us to laws; they send us bound
To rules of reason, holy messengers.

The rules of reason which bind the human will to right action come from God and reveal his will for man. The law of reason is one of the strategies of 'repining restlesnesse' in The Pulley, drawing man back to God. 'Fine nets and stratagems to catch us in' (Sinne I) anticipate the movement that may toss man back to the divine breast.

(1)

The Church Porch urges man to retain a firm sense of reasonable human conduct and to base human rules of behaviour on the divine examples of Holy Scripture. Herbert relies on the language of the Bible to give his poem authority and to consecrate the role of poetry, the giving of pleasure with some useful precepts for life,¹ to the service of God.

The language and tone of The Church Porch closely resemble Psalms 118 and 119 and Proverbs. The opening lines of the poem draw together

¹ Horace, "On the Art of Poetry", trans. T. S. Dorsch, in Aristotle, Horace, Longinus, Classical Literary Criticism (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1975), p. 90.

poetic theory and the moral guidance sought by the Psalmist, 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his ways? by taking heed thereunto according to thy word' (Psalm 119:9). Herbert's 'sweet youth' is bidden to seek guidance from the words of the poet who is passing on God's law; 'Hearken unto a Verser, who may chance/Ryme thee to good, and make a bait of pleasure' (ll. 3-4).

Herbert reminds his audience that the words of the poem merely repeat what God has placed in human nature as guidelines, and what ought to be available by reading Scripture.

Beware of lust: it doth pollute and foul
Whom God in Baptisme washt with his own blood.
It blots thy² lesson written in thy soul;
The holy lines cannot be understood.

(Ch.-Porch, ll. 7-10)

Herbert does not believe he is improving on the Psalms, but closing the gap of understanding opened by 'lust.' Vice perverts human nature and distorts the natural movement towards virtue. Human reason and human laws are both routed by lust. The clear message of the Bible must be recovered and committed to memory as a deterrent to vice. Since poetry appeals to the retentive faculty of the mind, poetry may assist the process of internalising standards and thus help to redirect human nature back to God.

The Church Porch presents a simple choice between excess and temperance. Excess reduces human nature to the level of animal sensuality.

The drunkard forfeits Man, and doth devest
All worldly rights, save what he hath by beast.
(ll. 35-36)

² 'Thy' is amended to 'the' in editions published after 1638. Hutchinson suggests that Herbert intended 'the' (note. p. 477), although 'thy' gives the 'lesson' a personal force beyond the general application of 'the lesson' to all mankind.

The intemperate man strips himself of all rational goods accruing to him from nature, retaining only animal instinct. At the same time he repudiates good conduct towards God and fellow-creatures, shedding reason and good-will in the abdication of humanity to reveal the rule of bestial impulses.

Herbert reviews the rules of social conduct, beginning with control of the senses then moving through intellectual to spiritual self-regulation. The Country Parson moves in the same direction from the practical, physical immediacies of the Parson's life to his spiritual growth and duties. The call to duty in human affairs precedes the call to divine service, so that human service is referred to and leads naturally to God's service:

Man is Gods image; but a poore man is
Christ's stamp to boot: both images regard.
God reckons for him, counts the favour his:
(Ch.-Porch, ll. 379-381)

'Stamp' makes the 'poore man' Christ's proxy, so that charity to the poor is charity to God. 'Regard' picks up Genesis (1:26) 'Let us make man in our image' and draws attention to the recreative love of Christ in the Gospels. Practical, intellectual and spiritual considerations meet in the human-divine concept of charitable conduct. Yet, humility and faithful service are not necessarily highly regarded in social life. Faith dramatises the difficulty of recognising the value of humble service.

A peasant may believe as much
As a great Clerk, and reach the highest stature.
Thus dost thou make proud knowledge bend and crouch
While grace fills up uneven nature.

(ll. 29-32; p. 49)

The vignette is set in both the human court of social relations and the court of grace. Knowledge gives the scholar a social advantage but

faith overrules worldly status to elevate the 'peasant' in the higher court of grace. 'Proud knowledge' is forced into the posture of fearful submission to the power of grace which depresses human pretensions while building on human submission and humility. The crux is whether Herbert opts for Calvin's faith alone or allows some reduced role for human knowledge. The final reading rests on the biblical material that Herbert incorporates into his language.

St. Paul is strongly represented with the echo of 'knowledge puffeth up' (I Cor. 8:1) in 'proud knowledge.' The first epistle to the Corinthians addresses the distinction between the 'wisdom of words' and the eloquence of the cross (1:23). Paul confirms that man is 'enriched' by God 'in all knowledge' but goes on to reject any independent claim for the 'wisdom of man', since 'Faith stands not on the wisdom of man but on the power of God.' Isaiah is sterner in his analysis of human knowledge as a measure of human worth, 'Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes' (5:12). The prophet predicts that divine power will smite the proud but protect the humble (14:11, 30). Matthew picks up the theme of humility, 'Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted' (23:12).

Herbert's own words leave open the possibility of a reduced place for human knowledge but the biblical material weighs heavily against 'proud knowledge.' In the world knowledge may make a difference but in matters of faith it is unnecessary and does not count. Trust, not understanding, is the most important measure of value in the order of grace, for, as faith tells the Christian 'forsaking therein all your good virtues, words, thoughts, and works,' Christians only put trust in Christ.³

³ The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, introd. Edgar C. S. Gibson, D.D. (London: Methuen & Co., 1908), p. 409.

The Church Porch is the gate to righteous conduct but the simple opposition of good and evil becomes more complex as precepts are translated into specific moments of experience. Together with The Altar and The Sacrifice the long didactic poem is a preparation for more difficult issues of conscience and faith. The value of human works is raised but not resolved, for although righteousness is sought in the precepts of The Church Porch a more precise methodology is required once The Altar reveals the broken human heart. The three poems progress from general precepts to particular, paradoxical confrontations between human nature and the divine nature. The Sacrifice brings human/divine together and consolidates the symbol of the cross as the source of pain and the remedy for sin.

Returning to Faith we find the 'sunne', a symbol for Christ, imputing 'lustre' to 'creatures' who have no inherent light and thereby allowing them to appear 'bright.' The language raises the same issues as 'proud knowledge' but provides more decisive direction in the clear reference to Romans (4:6-7) and the Articles of Faith of the Church of England, which deal with the question of 'works' (Articles XI and XII):

God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying
Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered.

(Romans 4:6-7)

...good works ... cannot put away our sins ... yet are
they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and
do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith.

(Article XII)

Expressed in Herbert's metaphors, Christ's brightness covers man's sin and allows the goodness of human efforts, not through any intrinsic human worth, but through the sacrifice made on man's behalf.

From the covering metaphor which looks back to Adam and Eve clothing

their nakedness, Herbert develops a motif of dress/undress images that perform the stripping and renovating movement of 'repining restlessness.' 'Dresse and undresse thy soul: mark the decay/And growth of it' advises The Church Porch (l. 453). 'Dresse' is not only appropriate clothing and the stripping of vice but the preparation of food and sacrifice. The connection is clear in The Invitation: 'God is here prepar'd and drest,/ And the feast,/God in whom all dainties are.' The eucharist feast repeats Christ's sacrifice. God is always well dressed but human nature is unreliable.

'Decay' and 'growth' alternate in human nature. Human laws derived from God and traced through pagan, Judaic and Christian history aid the search for 'growth' and righteousness.

The Psalmist declares 'Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever' (Ps. 119:111). Herbert helps to maintain the heritage of God's law as a pathway to peace and rest: 'Great peace have they which love thy law' (Ps. 119:165). Herbert also carries on the tradition of Proverbs, 'To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion' (Prov. 1:4). The phrasing of The Church Porch reanimates Proverbs for each individual so that ancient words are once more shown to be appropriate.

Herbert's perspective stretches from pagan to contemporary experience. A continuation of classical virtues; courage, temperance, chastity and magnanimity; Old Testament commandments and Christian principles may be traced in The Church Porch. Accumulated precepts are contrasted and referred to everyday life. Psalm 119:100 claims 'I understand more than the ancients.' Similarly Herbert presents a progressive revision of precepts at different stages of human history.

The Jews recognises the common source of thought and language, 'Whose streams we got by the Apostles sluice' and is a plea for the renewal of the link between Judaic and Christian laws. Self-Condernation measures individual conduct against the Jewish rejection of Christ, urging that past history should be used to judge present behaviour:

Look upon thine own estate
Call home thine eye (that busie wanderer):
That choice may be thy storie.
(11. 4-6; p. 170)

Precepts and judgement must be applied to the act of living and not used to condemn others without reference to personal error.

Decay contrasts Old Testament times with now, finding a deterioration in the spectacle of God's majestic power. The great royal progresses have been reduced to 'one corner of a feeble heart.' For the moment the new law written on the human heart appears to diminish God and man. The mood of Decay is the result of Mortification which traces the brief, downward spiral of man to death. The obvious power of the old dispensation is reassuring and unambiguous compared to the invisible corner of the human heart.

However, the security of the old law has another face which we see in Justice II; 'O dreadful Justice, what a fright and terrour/Wast thou of old.' Human 'sinne and errour,' throughout the course of human history, have distorted the appearance of divine justice. Fear of punishment motivates obedience as well as awe and love. 'Christ's pure vail' clears human sight and reveals that justice and obedience to the law are acts of love. Death operates in the same fashion, looking back into human history to revise misconceptions based on human blindness to the tenderness of divine law. Christ reveals the love implicit in the old and new laws.

Herbert incorporates the tradition of biblical types into the language of his poems, so that metaphors and explicit comparisons systematically refer the moment of personal experience to the significance of an earlier period of history.⁴ At the same time the biblical material helps to evaluate and give substance to personal conflicts. The value of friendship is traced back from 'thy friend' to the example of Christ and David:

Thy friend put in thy bosom...

 Thy drops of blood must pay down all his fears:
 But love is lost, the way of friendship's gone,
 Though David had his Jonathon, Christ his John.
 (Ch.-Porch, ll. 271-276)

Friendship is seen as both a type of Christ's love and as the fulfillment of that love in Christ's own life and on into individual experience. Continuity resides in Christ but is broken by man's failure to live like Christ and sacrifice 'drops of blood.' The extensive biblical references

⁴ In the use of type: anti-type I am following the definition offered by Lewalski in Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), Ch. 4, esp. pp. 133-142, and by Auerbach in Mimesis (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1957), pp. 64-66.

Although the type clearly precedes the anti-type, which fulfills the promise of the type, there is a problem when typology is applied to individual life. As Lewalski puts it the individual recapitulates the biblical types and also fulfills the prophecy of both Old and New Testaments. Strictly speaking the Christian is simultaneously a type and the anti-type. Auerbach describes 'an uninterrupted historical sequence of events', in which figural interpretation links two events that have neither temporal nor causal connection but in which "the first signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second involves or fulfills the first" (p. 64).

In so far as the Christian illustrates Christ's life in his own life he is in general terms a type of Christ; Christ is then the prototype or model. Since Christ on the cross is the symbol of the Christian life, if the Christian succeeds in living a Christian life he becomes the anti-type, or what the symbol represents. At the same time the individual is a model for those who come after.

The terminology is not consistent in either primary or secondary sources; therefore 'type' will be used to refer to the individual recapitulation of Christ's life as the type and anti-type combined.

are an attempt to reclaim historical continuity in love and service, and to relate biblical language to colloquial expressions and everyday life.

Herbert combines familiar scriptural quotations with his own witty, punning language. The poetic principle of 'energia', the use of persuasive rhetoric to move the human will to good acts, joins the moral, didactic repetition of moral precepts. The precarious life-style of the courtier is derided but in such a way that sympathetic insight is established between poet and reader:

Flie idlenesse, which yet thou canst not flie
By dressing, mistressing, and complement.
(Ch.-Porch, ll. 79-80)

The consonant shift of 'd' to 't' so that the expected 'misdressing' becomes 'mistressing' is a shared joke. With great economy Herbert is able to suggest misplaced love, lust; and turn 'idlenesse' into idol worship by the simple association of sound and ideas. The common-place becomes a humorous source of insight and significant meaning. The possibilities of colloquial language and word-play enable Herbert to use a single word for a complicated mental image or thought pattern.

The Church Porch takes stock of human nature measured against rational precepts. The Bible reveals the continuing operation of God's will for man's welfare. Properly used, Augustine's "uti", human reason and law, authenticated by the language of Scripture, prepare man to enter the holy temple.

The Temple is the physical and spiritual structure of the Church of England; the human body; the human heart; human knowledge and divine wisdom; poetry and the integrating symbol for all of them; Christ within the individual heart. All the threads weave into the sense to bring out the varying relationship between human nature and the provisions of

divine grace.

The Altar goes more deeply into the break in historical, typological continuity, with a more precise linking of Christian, Judaic and pagan material. The Sacrifice reviews the paradoxes of the new dispensation and opens a rich vein of Medieval symbols to extend the historical perspective towards the present moment.

(2)

The Altar poem is shaped like a pagan altar and Rickey has suggested that Herbert is consciously comparing pagan and Christian culture. She argues that pagan rites and deities are transformed or substituted by Christian concepts and ritual.⁵ Lewalski⁶ has similarly extended the biblical and emblematic material found by earlier critics like Summers⁷ and Tuve⁸, to propose a poetic based on biblical history and Christian/Judaic typology. The Altar represents the progressive continuity of human experience confronting divine truth, which I have begun to trace, in The Church Porch.

The biblical sources are especially rich in The Altar so that the pagan form is a framework for specific scriptural references. The most obvious source is the command in Exodus to use no polluting tool on the altar of hewn stone (Exod. 20:25). However, the 'broken and contrite

⁵ Mary Ellen Rickey, Utmost Art (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966), pp. 9-16.

⁶ Barbara Lewalski, Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), Chap. 9.

⁷ Joseph H. Summers, George Herbert (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954), Chap. VI.

⁸ Rosemond Tuve, A Reading of George Herbert (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952), pp. 112-137.

heart' of Isaiah (66:2) is a central motif of The Temple. The 'contrite' heart is the 'repining' movement towards penitence and painful recognition of man's wilful rejection of love. Ezekiel (36:25, 26) provides the regenerative movement, fixing the stripping process as a means of purification and renewal of the human heart: 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from your idols, will I cleanse you.'

The 'clean water' of baptism will become Christ's blood, as we pass through The Sacrifice and will extend to language in Jordan I and II. The 'idols' will be identified as substitutes for genuine love and service in Love I and II. For the moment The Altar faces the second promise in Ezekiel: 'A new heart also will I give you... and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh' (36:26)..

The transformation from stone to flesh is violent and painful. In Dialogue the pain of self-knowledge engineered by Christ's voice, threatens to break the human heart; in The Altar the heart is already broken. The inference from Exodus that the heart/altar is broken by the direct command of God, is inescapable. The human heart, the pagan altar and the Old Testament stone are fragmented by divine order to provide the material for Christian regeneration. The fragments separate and re-unite to form a fit altar for Christian praise and sacrifice. In the new form of the 'heart of flesh' the pieces carry on the tradition of praise and sacrifice from pagan ritual into the present moment of individual attempts to offer fit praise. The painful but clean fracture of the stone demonstrates God's paradoxical power, which breaks in order to heal and, as we have seen in Faith, throws down self-love in order to raise man to a new

understanding and faith in God's ways.

The stone altar/heart represents the merging of the old commandments written in stone, into the new law written in 'fleshly tables of the heart.' Ezekiel's prophecy meets present human experience of the painful transmutation from stone to flesh. The progression passes through the agony of the cross so that the broken human heart experiences the dislocation of the crucified body of Christ. Thus Christ fulfills the old prophecy and the letter of the new law comes to fruition in the individual, Christian heart:

'... ye are manifestly ... the epistle of Christ... written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.'

(2 Cor. 3:3)

Blood drawn from the human heart, mingled with Christ's blood, is the appropriate 'ink' for the new law of love:

Since blood is fittest, Lord, to write
Thy sorrows in, and bloudie fight;
My heart hath store, write there, where in
One box doth lie both ink and sinne.

(Good Friday , ll. 21-24; p. 38)

The poem is written on the human heart with the blood of suffering in imitation of Christ.

Sepulchre makes the very precise connection between the old law of Moses and the new law of Christ within each heart:

And as of old the law by heav'nly art
Was writ in stone; so then, which also art
The letter of the word, Find'st no fit heart
To hold thee.

(ll. 17-20 ; p. 40)

'Heav'nly art' seeks a new medium to work with; the divine poet has written on stone and now desires a 'fit heart' to engrave with the law of love. The problem is to discover how man may become 'fit.'

Love Unknown documents the violent renovation of the human heart in language that is richly evocative of the same material as The Altar.

The 'foul' heart is 'washt, and wrung'; the 'hard' heart is thrown into a 'scalding pan' and finally 'thoughts/I would say thorns' destroy peace.⁹

The purpose is to 'renew', supple, and 'quicken' the heart; 'to mend, what you had marr'd.' The responsibility for renovation is firmly taken away from the speaker of Love Unknown: 'The servant instantly/...seiz'd on my heart alone.' In The Altar the servant-poet attempts his own repairs:

A broken Altar, Lord, thy servant reares,
Made of a heart, and cemented with teares:

'Reares' means erect or raise, but in the background is a wilful act like the rearing of a horse fighting for control, or the raising of a false idol. The construction is unstable for although 'Teares' represent great suffering, they are useless as cement, particularly when compared with the efficient cement of love in The Church floore:

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

'Frame' is found in both poems, referring to a building structure and the human body. There may be a visual pun on 'teares' as rents clumsily cemented together and a possible reference to the biblical 'tares' of human sin.

Human craftsmanship is inefficient and doomed to failure, although the servant attempts to recreate his own heart from the original parts. The language identifies the true Maker:

⁹ The images are drawn from the Emblem Books; see Lewalski, Figure 15, for an example of the precise application of the visual image of the heart thrown into the furnace.

Whose parts are as thy hand did frame
No workman's tool hath touch'd the same.

The words repeat Psalm 119: 'Thy hands have made me and fashioned me' as well as Genesis, so that even in the act of repair the servant recognises the source of creative power is not his own. Since the parts retain their original form it is the shaping relationship of the parts which is broken. The pieces are unpolluted and may be re-used by the proper framing hand. The creative impulse is sent back to God:

A Heart alone
Is such a stone
As nothing but
Thy pow'r doth cut.

'Alone' means unique but also solitary if the heart attempts to assert independent action. 'Cut' is both creative and disciplinary action. 'A stone' is the rough material of creation which is too hard and obdurate for human skill to shape. Human effort will spoil the stone and will also fail since only divine 'pow'r' can 'cut' the hard heart, with contrition and love. At the same time 'the stone' is a valuable gem, reserved for the master craftsman. 'Cut' inflicts pain, for breaking and cutting are part of God's design for the repair or renewal of the human heart. Change is painful but becomes a form of consecration. There may be a pun on Altar-alter, so that the change of form produced by pain and suffering is a way of praising God and making a fit offering to God.

'Wherefore' introduces gratitude for the operation of divine power on the broken heart. For the moment the impulse of praise reunites the pieces in the 'frame' of the poem and of the human body.- 'Frame' is referred back to God's power in line three so that the reunion takes place through the offices of divine grace working with natural material:

Wherefore each part
Of my hard heart
Meets in this frame
To praise Thy Name.

The shape of the poem holds the words or parts together so that poetry is an instrument of divine power as well as the expression of human gratitude. The language emphasises the total commitment of 'each part' of the heart to God, and the need for 'energia' so that praise engages the whole heart in the manner of the Psalms:

Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and
that seek him with the whole heart.
(Psalm 119:2)

Herbert urges the country parson to move his audience with his sincerity, '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' (p. 233; ll. 28-32). He reiterates the message in A true Hymne.

The finenesse which a hymne or psalme affords,
Is, when the soul unto the lines accords.

The link between Herbert's poetic expression and the skill of the Psalmist is made with the word 'lines' which refers both to the 'psalmes' and the lines of the poem.

The final section of The Altar is the base and foundation of the pillar. The lines concentrate on the connection between the offering of love and of poetry to God. The motif of withholding love begun in 'alone' extends to poetic silence.

That if I chance to hold my peace,
These stones to praise thee may not cease.

'My peace' is silence, rest and a piece of the broken heart. Silence may be the failure of poetic inspiration or the poet's death, and if we

agree with Fish¹⁰ the lines propose the ultimate self-effacement, the disappearance of the poet. Yet, the main stress of meaning is on 'hold' and the temptation of 'cupiditas' which seeks to retain love and poetry for selfish ends. 'Chance' refers to unforeseen events and to a daring gamble that risks loss by keeping back a total submission to God. The power of silence is attested by The Familie which recommends 'silent teares' and 'griefs without a noise' as the most eloquent expression of trust in God's loving laws. Herbert is in line with Hooker's remark that 'silence' may be 'our safest eloquence' when speaking of God's majesty.¹¹ Herbert suggests that silence, rather than complaint or self-pity is more likely to penetrate the divine ear, for 'What is so shrill as silent tears?'

The Pulley makes it clear that 'peace' may lead to complacent indifference to God. The Altar seeks to overcome the problem by making the pieces of the heart and the lines of the poem immune to human change. Herbert prays for the form of immortality claimed by Shakespeare for his sonnets. 'I' may cease but the poem is a continuing affirmation of love and praise. The human heart and poetic expression are the work of God and cannot be entirely destroyed.

The Altar is the pagan altar, the stone altar of Moses and the fleshly altar of the human heart. It also represents the role of poetry in the regeneration of human nature. Pushing the emblem pattern to the limit, the shape of the altar is also the shape of the cross and of the human form stretched in the 'cross-bias' movement of the cross. The

¹⁰ Stanley E. Fish, Self-Consuming Artifacts, Ch. III (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

¹¹ Hooker, Ecclesiastical Polity, Bk. I, Ch. II [2]; I, 150.

pillar-form is described by Puttenham as a symbol of 'support' and 'majesty',¹² borne out by examples of secular love poems. Herbert's poem is therefore part of a secular, literary and social tradition of love and praise. The broken heart of the human lover rejected by his mistress is referred to the relationship between the broken human heart and divine love.

Herbert authenticates his language with reference to human standards of form and romantic love measured against the word of God given in Scripture and confirmed by Christ's life. Human and divine are drawn together by the language so that The Altar form refers to meanings that are simultaneously physical and spiritual, historical and eternal.

The final lines of the poem pray for identification between the individual sacrifice and Christ's sacrifice. If each Christian takes the lesson of the cross into his life as a guiding principle, then the human heart may become a consecrated altar with a fit offering of love. The Sacrifice reviews the terms and paradoxical implications of Christ's 'grief', offered as a remedy and propitiation for human sin.

(3)

The Sacrifice is built on the extensive use of typology and two Scriptural passages, Lamentations (1:12) and Matthew (27:39). The biblical interpretations are the standard Medieval readings, so that the poem is a very traditional recreation of the crucifixion and the events leading up to Christ's death. Noah is a type of Christ (l. 94) and the dove sent out over the flood foreshadows the coming of Christ; the

¹² George Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie, Ch. XI (Menston, England: The Scholar Press Ltd., 1968), p. 80.

deliverance from Egypt becomes salvation through Christ (ll. 9-11) and the water of purification is linked to the blood of sacrifice (ll. 21-22, ll. 121-123, ll. 149-151). The Old Testament is repeatedly echoed and fulfilled by Christ's choice of words: 'Who cannot wish, except I give them bread' (l. 7) brings together the Israelites' manna and the communion bread. At the same time the line warns that man cannot live 'by bread alone' for Christ brings spiritual nourishment as well.

The Sacrifice reminds us of what we should already know. Human blindness to the self-evident truth of Christ's love is a constant 'grief' to the figure on the cross, Who embodies genuine 'repining.'

Oh all ye, who passe by, whose eyes and minde
To worldly things are sharp, but to me blinde.
(ll. 1-2)

Worldly-wise and self-preoccupied man is oblivious to the sight and significance of Christ on the cross. The Parables of sight restored at Christ's touch have an ironic, bitter sequel. Human eyes remain averted, not through awe and gratitude for divine intercession but through indifference to Christ's suffering humanity.

Christ--the poet--must capture and detain his audience, moving them through their affections and intellect to right vision and right action. The divine voice is heard in The Temple, notably at moments of crisis in Affliction I and The Collar and when human faculties require guidance or remonstrance in poems like Dialogue, Love Unknown and Love-joy. Christ as the friend and mentor appears at intervals, but in The Sacrifice Christ makes a personal appeal for love and understanding and at the same time indicts human sin and folly.

The two-fold nature of Christ, human and divine, generates the paradoxes which make up the poem. The most powerful appeal of The Sacrifice

is the human suffering of Christ with the counterpoint of divinity, sharpening the pathos into barbs of conscience. Christ is amazed at his own predicament and we are forced to share the unbelievable paradox of an immortal God, murdered by man. The voice of Christ demands eye-witness participation, for as Herbert writes in Self-Condernation each man makes 'a Jewish choice' when 'true Christian joy' is repudiated. Christ penetrates the individual conscience so that man is both reprimanded and self-condemned.

The repeated refrain, 'grief', has the power of lament and awe commonly found in the chorus of Greek tragedy. The word is insistent and travels back and forth through time to find no comparable example of Christ's sacrifice. The pagan rite of blood sacrifice blends into the sacrifice of Isaac by his reluctant father. Christ's crucifixion goes beyond the offering of a human sacrifice by a human father, and is God's offering of his own 'sonne.' Christ cries:

But, O my God, my God! Why leav'st thou me;
The sonne, in whom thou dost delight to be?
My God, my God....
Never was grief like mine.
(ll. 213-216)

Christ feels the harsh incongruity of the scene and his human flesh recoils from the pain. So do our sensibilities, responding to the strong, physical presence of Christ on the cross.

At the same time the voice of Christ draws out and explains the significance of the scene. The paradoxes are stated and then applied to human experience and future generations of men. Christ steps back from 'grief' to point towards a brighter future:

In healing not myself, there doth consist
All that salvation, which ye now resist;
Your safetie in my sicknesse doth subsist:
(ll. 225-227)

Christ becomes an observer of himself: 'They buffet him, and box him as they list' (l. 129): time, place and personal pronouns shift out of sequence between present experience, recalled experience and prophetic vision.

Murderous sin and humiliation co-exist with salvation and glory. The old ritual of blood-sacrifice and the injustice of human laws are reworked by Christ's submission to ritual and law. A new formula for living and dying is evolved which requires physical, intellectual and spiritual participation in the sacrifice of personal comfort and desires. 'My blood on them and theirs' begins as blood guilt but the next stanza redefines the right use of the words for salvation: 'These words aright/Used, and wished, are the whole worlds light.' Culpability and salvation are the double face of human inheritance. 'Blood' confirms guilt but is also the wine of the eucharist and the water of baptism confirming acceptance and fellowship with Christ. The mingling of human and divine 'blood' is a pledge of allegiance and friendship. The problem is to decide whether man must face retribution before enjoying love and salvation. 'Tenderness' and 'bitterness' come together in 'grief'.

my tenderness
Doubles each lash: and yet their bitterness
Winds up my grief to a mysteriousness.
(ll. 125-127)

Although Christ's 'tenderness' increases man's crime, 'bitterness' both in the sense of malice and inflicted pain, stimulates the supreme mystery of Christ's love. Man is saved because of, not in spite of his sin.

The exact nature of 'grief' is a crucial issue when Christ's

example is applied to individual life. The refrain twice becomes 'Never was grief like mine,' once at the moment of despair (l. 216) and at the end of the poem (l. 252). The primary sense of the concluding line is that history will prove Christ unique and that although he is silent, 'I bow my head', others will repeat his story as Herbert does. Empson has suggested that in addition man will take up the refrain and apply it to his own life.¹³ The word 'grief' is used in The Temple to link Christ's sacrifice and the human ability to share in the pain and the hope of joy. The Thanksgiving offers strong support for a modified application of Empson's reading:

O King of grief! (a title strange, yet true,
To thee of all Kings, onely due)
O King of wounds! how shall I grieve for thee,
Who in all grief preventest me?
(ll. 1-4)

The poem comments on the grotesque and incongruous aspects of the death of God, the 'title' is 'strange.' The unfamiliar union of highest and lowest, pain and triumph is a difficult model to repeat. Yet man desires to share the 'grief' and make it his own. The pathos and guilt released by the voice of Christ in The Sacrifice stimulate a rush of enthusiasm and urgent desire to make reparation. Contrition becomes a form of excess which is wittily set against the impossibility of matching Christ's sacrifice. Battle imagery is applied to the 'art of love' so that the human will is in competitive conflict with Christ. The example of Christ's submission in The Sacrifice contrasts most strongly with man's aggressive, violent enthusiasm. The speaker systematically strips his links with the world of courtly affairs, metaphorically casting off the world, the flesh

¹³ William Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity (1930; rpt. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1961), pp. 262-70.

and the devil. Yet 'Victorie!' is brief, for simple rejection of the world does nothing to match Christ's passion. The powerful desire to be all praise and all love is not so easily realised and the poem returns to the original problem of right use of the world and a fit response to Christ's sacrifice.

The Reprisall moves away from confrontation to confession:

Yet by confession will I come
 Into thy conquest: though I can do nought
 Against thee, in thee I will overcome
 The man, who once against thee fought.

The painful route of self-knowledge and self-control is the human equivalent of Christ's 'grief'. God's 'art of love' is within the human heart and may be revealed if human reason is properly applied to the lessons of holy scripture. The images of poetry may assist the message of the biblical symbols.

The Sacrifice makes very precise, clear connections between biblical language and the language of the poem itself. The significance is carefully spelled out by Christ and the stages of comparison are explained to set up a reference bank of images and associations for subsequent poems:

My face they cover, though it be divine.
 As Moses face was vailed, so is mine,
 Lest on their double-dark souls either shine.
 (ll. 137-139)

'Cover' and 'vailed' refer Moses to Corinthians (I Cor. 13:12) and the biblical references to concealment in human affairs and finally the issue of dressing or ornamenting language to distort the truth. There is also fear of God's anger and the sense that man is not fit to face God. Yet, Christ's accusers are unaware of fear or humility and seek to cover up his divinity and love. The dress imagery gains momentum with the 'scarlet

robe' and the 'crown of thorns.' Both are explained precisely. The robe 'shews my bloud to be the onely way/And cordiall left to repair mans decay.' The crown is a symbol of the true vine and the blood and water of baptism. Robe and crown show that Christ has taken Adam's fall upon himself; both are the way of salvation. The mock, royal dress is a true symbol of human frailty and divine power to turn mockery into truth:

Yet since mans scepters are as frail as reeds,
And thorny all their crowns, bloudie their weeds;
I, who am Truth, turn into truth their deeds:
(ll. 177-179) .

'Weeds' is a pun on clothing and the undisciplined growth of human sin which causes Christ's death. Human 'scepters' are insignificant beside God's rod of power and human crowns prick the wearer, like the brave rose in Vertue.

Christ is 'trimmed' to incite the mob and becomes the prepared sacrifice. The 'restlesnesse' of human values causes Christ to be 'toss'd of men,' the word that will later be applied to man's search for contrition in The Pulley. The clothing of Christ by his captors is a double-edged symbol of majesty and subjection, that deflates mockery and stimulates compassion and guilt. Finally, 'they part my garments' (l. 241) and 'they will pierce my side' (l. 246) make the connection between clothing and flesh. Christ wears the flesh of man, suffers and bleeds like a man but, because he is also divine, transforms physical 'grief' into spiritual salvation, 'That as sinne came, so Sacraments might flow' (l. 247). 'My coat, the type of love' later appears as 'Joyes coat' an antidote to overwhelming grief in Joseph's coat. Christ himself sets typology in motion, fixing the present moment, looking back over the past and lifting out a symbol that unites past and present and

looks forward to the future.

They part my garments, and by lot dispose
My coat, the type of love, which once cur'd those
Who sought for help, never malicious foes:
(ll. 241-243)

The final words are a warning that 'My coat' cures those who seek help not obdurate sinners. The Christian has to learn how to wear Christ's clothing not 'for fashion' but as everyday dress. The lesson also requires the right use of natural and worldly effects. 'Then I will use the works of thy creation,/As if I used them but for fashion' (Thanksgiving, ll. 35-36; p. 35) turns out to be a boast, although there is a sense in which the world is useful for a time, as an instrument to be set aside when the new clothes of eternal life are offered at the end of the journey.

In The Thanksgiving the relationship between Christ and the speaker is set against the courtly world of love and competition. Courtly service and love become part of the biblical heritage as the concepts of service and love are traced through scriptural types into contemporary court life. The precepts derived from classical and biblical sources are applied within the restricted framework of that part of the order of nature concerned with social relations at the top of the hierarchy. The courtly world is itself set against the standards of the court of grace, revealed by the bible and moments of personal revelation.

CHAPTER III

The Restoration of Service

The speaker in The Thanksgiving has an incomplete notion of what is expected of him when he decides to commit heart and will to God. The particularities of service need to be worked out in collaboration with the master, the King of grief. General rules of conduct are useful guides but the final relationship is built on the individual heart in communion with Christ.

The relationship between servant and master is the prototype of courtly service. The bond is intimate but respectful; the servant is permitted to be critical but is always loyal; he may even be competitive as long as he retains a sense of his own inferiority and subordinate value. What we have is a modification of Bembo's 'perfect Courtier', who is so much in his Lord's favour that 'he may breake his mind to him; and alwaies enforme him franckly of the truth of every matter.'¹ The frankness and easy access to the lord are the same; the difference is that Herbert's servant is not the lord's counsellor, quite the reverse, and he is seeking truth from the master not offering it.

The critical licence given to the courtly servant is artfully suggested in one of Wyatt's renderings of Petrarch. He maintains the code of loyalty but at the same time suggests that his master, Love, is guilty of cowardice. He asks 'What may I do when my master fereth' and

¹ Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier, Bk. IV, trans. Sir Thomas Hoby (London: J. M. Dent, 1975), p. 261.

the answer is 'in the feld with him to lyve and dye' because there is no doubt in the code of courtly conduct that 'good is the liff, ending faithfully.'² Herbert is in an even more ambiguous position than Wyatt, since the actions he questions come from the divine will. While Wyatt may legitimately speak with irony of his lord, it is unthinkable that Herbert should doubt that a life of faith and a faithful death in God's service are desirable. Both men are exposed to the danger of lordly anger, but for Herbert the cost is much greater, loss of God's love. Yet his poems do recognise the great difficulty of fulfilling the call to service.

Personal inadequacy continually defeats the servant's efforts to prove his love in service. The writing of poetry is perceived as a form of service and that too fails, unless the master himself supplies the want, as he does in A true Hymne. As long as the intention is sincere, 'Although the verse be somewhat scant, / God doth supplie the want' and completes the heartfelt 'could I love' with the word 'Loved.' It is impossible to prove direct borrowing, but Herbert would have found a very similar relationship recorded in Shakespeare's Sonnets.³ No. 26 'Lord of my love' speaks of loving duty based on the merit of the master, and the lord's power to confer worth on an act of service. The poverty of the poet's wit and language requires 'some good conceit of thine', to make up for the fact that the speaker is 'wanting words to show' his great duty. Herbert's preoccupation with dress imagery is matched by Shakespeare's image of a human form of grace that will clothe love and

² Sir Thomas Wyatt, "The longe love", in Collected Poems, ed. Kenneth Muir (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), p. 4.

³ William Shakespeare, The Sonnets, ed. William Burto (New York: The New American Library, 1964).

service in appropriate 'apparel.' However, as with Wyatt, the master is specifically not God, but a human substitute, and in Herbert's terms an incomplete model. Herbert works with the material of courtly service, seeing the human court modelled on the Higher Court of grace and therefore as a way of approaching a concept of divine service. His servant can trust unreservedly in the standards of his master, although he may frequently doubt the exact application to his own life.

Perhaps the most difficult dilemma is to understand that affliction is part of service and indeed the 'grief' of the cross. It is hard for the servant to discriminate between punishment and the refinement of service. Often the master's favour seems to withdraw and the servant must decide whether it is his own failure or a deliberate, punitive withholding of remedy or good opinion.

Once more the prototype of regenerative suffering is to be found in the Bible. Isaiah gives a prophetic account of Christ's 'grief,' 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted' (53:4). The interpretation of Christ's anguish depends on the recognition of God's purpose, and it is for man to discover the purpose of affliction in everyday life.

The presence of the master as a silent listener, or on occasion as a voice in the poem, provides a sounding-board for the working out of 'repining restlessness.' Pain, complaint and sudden, revealing self-knowledge characterise the movement of the five Affliction poems. The servant passes through the 'crosse-bias' of the crucifixion in his contradictory and painful thoughts, expressed in equally ambiguous words to the master.

Affliction I assumes the tone of respectful, confiding intimacy but it is essentially a poem of gathering discontent. 'Entice' and 'brave' define the relationship in its infancy; the master used seductive promises and gifts, to which the servant responded with unreflecting enthusiasm based on personal glory.

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

'Brave' looks forward to Vertue and the 'sweet rose', 'angrie and brave' that causes pain to the 'rash gazer' and is rooted in 'its grave.' The 'brave' service is not enduring because it is self-centred and thus self-destructive.

The benefits from nature and grace which we see God bestowing on man in The Pulley are here tallied by the servant. He keeps accurate accounts but all on the credit side for himself. The personal pronoun dominates the verbs; I 'made it fine to me', 'such starres I counted mine': finally the whole universe 'Payd me my wages.' Not only is service founded on material gains but nothing is offered in return. The servant lives in paradise like a well-nurtured child without responsibilities. He is lulled by pleasure into complacent reliance on the stability of his position, so that the ominous warning that his thoughts found 'no place for grief or fear' is unheeded. We may know from The Sacrifice that to reject 'grief or fear' is to turn aside from Christ on the cross, but the servant is for the moment reliving human life before Christ. The prophetic meaning of words like 'grief' go undetected so that the servant is innocent like Adam and Eve before the fall, and also blind to Christ like the Jews. 'Straw'd with flow'rs' calls attention to the garden motif and to Christ's entry into Jerusalem, celebrated in Easter.

The kind of service we are shown is motivated by 'Thy glorious

household-stuffe', so that the warning of The Pulley that man will 'rest in Nature' and not in God is valid. The servant is seduced by external things, the clothing and trappings of service; by choosing 'fine array' he also chooses to exclude Christ. As The H. Communion explains, when it repudiates 'rich furniture', the choice of external things means 'thou should'st without me still have been/Leaving within me sinne.'. Although natural instruments should draw man to God something is wrong when the instruments are valued on their own.

What has gone wrong in Affliction I is that service is incomplete and the servant must reach the point of view of Affliction II that Christ is 'my grief alone' and also the source of 'delight.' The way of the cross is the form of service so eagerly sought, so that by Affliction V the servant can say 'There is but joy and grief' and conclude 'Affliction then is ours.' The five poems progress from the first intimations of 'grief', through acute suffering to acceptance of the will of God. The passage to self-knowledge involves the dislocation of individuality so that the servant does relive the suffering of Christ on the cross. Innocence gives way to knowledge and the trials of sickness, loss and conflict test the strength of the servant's will to resist God. The servant is engaged in an Old and New Testament Odyssey. From Eden he arrives at a new paradise modelled on the survival of affliction through God's help. 'Planted Paradise' lacked the stability of 'thy floating Ark' which can ride out 'tempests' rage. The 'Ark' is also the symbol of the old covenant in Exodus and the Church in Revelations which represents the new covenant.

Both joy and grief are accounted for and there is a purpose to affliction. 'The trees' are fixed more firmly by suffering and

represent the individual cross that also confers community with Christ. The desire to be a fruitful tree in Affliction I is satisfied in Affliction V, although the process is more complicated and uncomfortable than the natural growth of a fruit or shade tree. Human nature needs the vigorous pruning of affliction administered with divine discretion so that the final result is remedial not destructive; a means of encouraging new growth. Paradise makes the precise connection between the pruning knife and growth, not only in the thought but in the systematic stripping of words to reveal the meaning of the contradictions in Affliction I.

Such sharpnes shows the sweetest FREND:
Such cuttings rather heal then REND:
And such beginnings touch their END:

The two poles of experience, the 'milk and sweetnesses' and the 'sharpnes' come together to form the complete picture of service.

However, the pain cannot be underestimated. Herbert leaves no doubt that knowledge of ourselves is sharp and self-crucifying. The list of complaints in Affliction I becomes a cry of pain by Affliction IV. The 'blunted knife', an image of uselessness, has turned inward to become wounding thoughts. The responsibility for suffering is placed on God who deliberately uses power to 'crosse-bias me, not making/Thine own gifts good, yet me from my wayes taking' (ll. 53-54; p. 47). The servant suspects punitive even malicious intent in the master who apparently piles suffering upon suffering 'lest perchance I should too happie be/ In my unhappinesse' (ll. 49-50). At the same time the words point to one of the pitfalls of remedial suffering that the pain may become a focus in itself and the servant take pleasure in self-absorbed misery. The purging effect would be lost and instead self-will would gain strength. There is a right and wrong way to suffer.

A sense of stalemate causes the servant to fall back on the conventional words of Christian submission, 'Yet, though thou troublest me, I must be meek' (l. 61): 'Troublest' and 'must' undercut the sincerity of humility and it is no surprise when the next lines burst into rebellion and rejection of service.

Well, I will change the service, and go seek
Some other master out.

(ll. 63-64)

It is an admission of failure, because service has proved too hard. The assertion of self follows the congratulatory tone of 'Not simpring all mine age' but it is immediately transposed into a cry of loss and the beginning of a new awareness.

Ah my dear God! though I am clean forgot,
Let me not love thee, if I love thee not.

Empson has drawn attention to the ambiguity of these final lines.⁴ His comments are often just except that the implications seem to go beyond Herbert's own parsonage. The verb 'love' may be taken as future tense and present tense so that there are several possible interpretations.

'Though I am clean forgot' is the fear of abandonment but also the forgetting of 'I' and therefore the submission that just failed in the standard formula, 'meek.' The next lines confirm that submission is meaningless unless it is an act of love. 'Let me not' affirms by negative, in the style of Shakespeare's Sonnet 116, thus it is a commitment not to pretend to love and serve if the whole heart is not engaged. Discontent has made it hard to be assured either of God's love or of the servant's loving response. As Empson suggests the servant is saying if I have ceased to love then my master should let me go. The plea carries into

⁴ William Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity, pp. 214-216.

the future to cover other times of failing love and to prevent the servant from offering only token obedience and service. Ambiguity is inevitable at the moment of initial recognition that it is not the master's love and favour which have failed, but the servant's loving service.

Criticism of the master grows into a new awareness of personal fault.

The process is very clear in Justice I which begins 'I cannot skill of these thy wayes' and ends with a reversal of the pronoun to put the focus on 'my' with 'I cannot skill of these my wayes.'

The new insight is consolidated by acute suffering in Affliction IV. Complaint is replaced by persecution, torture and civil war. Again the movement is from external causes to internal conflict.

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.
(ll. 1-6; p. 89)

'Broken in pieces' extends the broken heart of The Altar to the entire human frame; the connecting links are all gone; everything is 'asunder' in the relationship of service and within the servant himself. 'Hunt' turns the blame towards God who appears as an implacable pursuer driving his exhausted prey to destruction. Yet 'hunt' has a long history of loving pursuit as well as blood-sport. Wyatt combines the ruthlessness and desire in the figure of the hunt in 'Who so list to hount' and at the same time conveys power and the danger of poaching on the lord's rightful prey.⁵ We have to consider that Herbert's servant has misunderstood the motivation of his master's pursuit, or that the reason for dislocation is that the servant has been poaching on his master's ground. In Herbert's

⁵ Wyatt, "Who so list to hount", Collected Poems, p. 7.

scheme that would mean reserving himself for his own ends.

'A thing forgot' returns to the cry of Affliction I. 'Thing' turns man into a lifeless object lower than the poorest 'creature.' The Renaissance wonder of man⁶ is reduced to a spectacle on the rack, to be mocked. Self-pity is close in 'a poore creature' though it also recalls that man was once given a place in the created order. Gradually the picture comes into focus and we see the figure stretched on the rack and remember The Temper I and the plea 'O rack me not to such a vast extent.' The same image is used, with man stretched between heaven and earth. Herbert makes a grotesque joke of the commonplace claim that human, physical stature is diminishing. Instead the figure on the rack is stretched like an elongated giant, a curiosity in a bizarre side-show. Paradoxically the figure joins the two poles even as he holds them apart. Man is designed to bridge the two worlds; his place is between the Angels and the beasts; but the easy access of The H. Communion, 'As from one room t'another', is now pain and a broken body. The servant is abandoned and broken, repeating the cry and the agony of Christ on the cross. That is the implication of the imagery with its many cross-references to other poems and to the words of Christ given in The Sacrifice and taken from the Bible. Without knowing it the servant has recapitulated the crucifixion of Christ and the rebuilding project is already begun.

The transition from pain to hope is neither direct nor smoothly executed. The second stanza has made the adjustment from external persecution by the master to the inner wounding by 'My thoughts.' Thoughts are

⁶ Pico Della Mirandola, "Oration on the Dignity of Man", trans. E. Livermore Forbes, in The Renaissance Philosophy of Man, ed. Cassirer, Kristeller and Randall (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 223.

a continuing problem for Herbert's servant; they mutter in Content and are 'spiteful, bitter thought' in Assurance, threatening always to disrupt the positive stand of the two titles. The next image of the 'watr-
ing pots' attempts to give a new direction to the 'case of knives', rhyming with 'lives' to enforce the connection between wounds and growth. The 'scätter'd smart' of knife wounds causes the heart to bleed and the action suggests the image of the 'watr-
ing pots.' The water hits and wounds the flowers even as it gives them nourishment to grow. The water and blood are symbols of Christ's purifying and nourishing action on the soul. However, it is 'My thoughts' that are like the 'wat'ring pots' because they are like knives. The servant appears to mean that bitter thoughts re-enact Christ's crucifixion and bring the combination of grief and remedy. Thoughts become God's pruning knife and his watering can; both directed to growth. We have to strain the image in order to recognise the positive motion, and in fact the straining of language goes along with the strong pull of all the negative terms, 'wound'; 'smart'; 'furie'; 'pink', which still insist on suffering rather than cure. 'Pink' completes the ambivalent progression; it is primarily wound again but also the colour of blood and water mixed together and of communion wine. It picks up the 'flowers' of line ten making the connection between the action of 'watr-
ing' and pinking. The soul is therefore hurt and turned 'pink' with blood; transformed into a growing flower; and made 'pink' and healthy by purification. 'Scatter'd smart' appears again in a modified form at line twenty-three. This time the positive action is clear. 'The sunne' as we know from poems like The Sonne is Christ who brings the 'light' of faith and love to dispel sin and doubt, in this example rebellious thoughts. The knife has more surely

become a positive force though by way of the complicated 'wat'ring pots.' The contrast between the servant's involved imagery and the clear action of 'the sunne' demonstrates that human thoughts require clarification from divine grace in order to become remedial not wounding. The warring factions of human nature can be turned towards co-operation and with God's controlling power work towards reunion of the servant and master.

Then shall those powers, which work for grief,
 Enter thy pay,
 And day by day
 Labour thy praise, and my relief;
 With care and courage building me,
 Till I reach heav'n, and much more, thea.
 (11. 25-30)

The instinct to change masters in Affliction I was correct but the servant mistook the nature of the alternative. He was in service to self-pity and misery not to God. 'Shall' places the new service in the future, so that it is a goal rather than a completed action. The rebellious force of 'grief', which is positive only when controlled by God, frequently reappears.

The Collar decides that service is really servitude, thus the priest's collar is not a symbol of freely chosen service but of slavery and foolish submission. The servant has been waiting too long for the right master, whose livery will be acceptable and 'brave', and decides to follow the path of independence.

Reason and self-will compete for dominance over the heart, pulling it in two directions like the racking image of Affliction IV. Two streams of awareness develop from the word 'pine.' Complaint, rebellion and the wish to be free from service run alongside the language of the cross, so that the servant is held by his choice of words to the concept of service defined by the Bible. Human and divine meanings are placed

together though the connection is held back until the ambiguous conclusion of the poem.

'Board' is symbolic of the master's service, eating at his table, and at the same time represents the communion table. Thus human and divine are juxtaposed from the very beginning. 'Free as the rode' has the same effect since the human road, the path the servant chooses to take, has another sense, rood or cross, which defines the alternative route offered by the crucifixion. The opposition between human and divine seems complete; there is no way to serve self-interest and God. Yet the language moves our attention from human meaning back into biblical paradigms, suggesting that some form of agreement may be possible. When Christ tells the parable of the field sown with wheat and tares in Matthew 13:24-29, he speaks of a mixed harvest which is then sorted after reaping. The servant in The Collar has no fruit in his harvest only 'thorns'; though he too is concerned with a final reckoning it is the loss of human time not eternity that angers him. What he misses is the eternal continuity of 'harvest'; 'thorn'; 'bloud'; 'restore'; 'cordiall'; 'fruit'; 'wine'; 'corn'. The words sum up the message of the cross which released Christ's blood and flesh to be an inexhaustible harvest and restorative. The 'bayes', 'crown', 'flowers' and 'garlands' pile up the evidence that all is 'wasted' only if the servant remains fixed in the human context without perceiving that it is part of the continuity of God's word.

The Old Testament anxiety about poor harvest, or more precisely man's barren response to God, which we find in Jeremiah, moves forward into the Gospel account of Christ's harvest of human souls. Jeremiah warns 'They have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns: they have put them-

selves to pain, but shall not profit' (Jer. 12:13). Christ reverses the trend when he accepts the crown of thorns and permits man to profit, by proxy, from his suffering. The servant has chosen words which bind his own actions to the pattern of biblical history, thus he is not free but brought to the impasse of impotent rage and 'repining.' Unconsciously he has worked himself into the rhythm of typology. Reason steps in to halt self-pity and recrimination with 'Not so, my heart.' There is a measured attempt to unravel the important strands of meaning. 'There is fruit/And thou hast hands' returns to The Sacrifice image of Adam's tree and Christ's cross being the same thing (l. 201). The heart is urged to pluck the fruit which no longer means damnation but salvation. The action recovers all the waste of 'sigh-blowne age'; 'pettie thoughts' should not guide the actions of the heart since they lead to real servitude of a closed mind and blindness. 'Thy cage' and 'rope of sand' are common images for human life and the body. Herbert, however, defines his images as the specific result of 'pettie thoughts.' He is urging the heart to cast off the restrictions of ignorance and wilful blindness, not necessarily the body itself. Expansion of vision not foreign travel is the prescription for discontent. The servant, however, interprets the advice as an invitation to death, and rejects it: 'Call in thy deaths head there.' The opening lines are firmly restated and applied to anyone who is stupid enough to wait on the pleasure of a master without taking care of his own needs; such a man has a servile mind and deserves bondage. The narrative voice interposes to place the scene in the past and lead us to expect a resolution. 'At every word' confirms the effect of the cross-references within the poem that link Old and New Testament material to turn words of rebellion into the movement towards

reconciliation.

'Me thoughts' picks up 'pettie thoughts' and turns them in the right direction. But there is still doubt and an uncertain response to the call 'Child.' The servant is not entirely sure that this is the call that he has been waiting for so impatiently. 'My Lord' has a note of query as well as hopeful recognition. The tentative note of 'me thoughts' (but I might be wrong) hesitates to give the full happy ending. We begin to see that the relationship of service is based on loving care and mutual recognition of the two roles, 'child' and 'my Lord.' The bond can survive neglect and rebellion. The 'Lord' is present even when he seems most absent or rejected. The collar is inescapable; the choice is to accept the burden and transform it into love by free submission and self-effacement; or to fight against the inevitable yoke of servitude, with perpetual frustration and the forfeit of any harvest. The servant has to learn that true service done out of love is itself freedom.

In order to make the choice of God's service valid, man must first understand what is required and what the alternative master has to offer. The servant may even discover that there is only one master in human and divine affairs. I have suggested that human reason is not only a gift of divine grace in The Pulley, but also a source of 'restlesnesse'; the search for knowledge on which to base choices. The Pearl confirms that love should be given with 'open eyes'; in the fullest possible knowledge of what the world offers:

I know all these, and have them in my hand:
Therefore not sealed, but with open eyes
I flie to thee, and fully understand
Both the main sale, and the commodities.
(ll. 31-34; p. 88)

Possession and command of 'Learning', 'Honour' and 'Pleasure' are displayed

by 'in my hand.' The good and questionable features of the courtly world are reviewed and evaluated. Like the biblical counterpart, the speaker is prepared to pay everything for the one pearl of love. The wild hawk of the human will is not controlled by ignorance or coercion but chooses to remain loyal to the hawker. The image recalls Christ's words in The Sacrifice spoken with irony but here proved true; 'Who does hawk at eagles with a dove' (l.91). The eagle has not only been tamed by love but enjoys his new state. 'Yet I love thee' is given value since it is the result of careful reasoning. 'Yet' may be read as a rejection of the world but 'have them in my hand' still retains possession. Although the implication is that I will gladly give them up it is in order to complete the final stage of the journey. Knowledge of the world is part of the continuous search for the right way to serve in the world without becoming tied to the world. The reckoning of value leaves no doubt that divine service is higher than worldly service, but the lower leads to the higher.

Herbert turns the credit for understanding back to God: 'My groveling wit' is earthbound and must rely on divine wisdom to unravel the puzzle of service; 'thy silk twist' is a refined version of the spinning done by the 'good huswife' in line four. The 'twist' is the two strands of refined nature and divine grace twisted together to make a strong ladder up to God. Human reason is insufficient to raise man. The Pulley image of blessings dropped on man to equip him for part of the journey is augmented by a further act of grace which sends Christ 'to conduct and teach' man how to become like him in service to the one master--God. The labyrinth image moves the poem from the classic tale of Theseus, through Christian transformation of the myth, to the application of the

image to individual life.⁷

The group of poems we have looked at have a characteristic movement which probes the visible surface of affliction and service to reveal the inner workings of human nature and the possibilities of divine grace. Blame shifts from the master to the servant himself and from external causes to conflicts within the individual, in particular the failure of a loving response which in turn infects the ability to reason and the power to act well. Service is debased into servitude by man's attitude of complaint and resolve not to accept the responsibility for the breakdown of his contract of service. He fears punishment without examining the cause or considering that it may not be punishment, but education.

The poems set out to alter the perspective and change the attitude of self-pity into self-analysis, and a firm reliance on the word of God and faith in the enduring bond between master and servant.

There is no attempt to disguise the volume and intensity of suffering which will prove to be the means of restitution.

The poems warn against premature self-effacement and the easy resolution of paradoxes. The ambiguous endings open up further efforts rather than closing the issues. Service has to be based on self-knowledge and love that is freely given. Individual identity must be established before a meaningful abdication can be made. It is also necessary to identify the corrupt parts of man before renovation can begin.

Herbert singles out the human heart as the broken link. Love has gone wrong and diverted man's faculties away from God to produce a self-centred and world-centred creature who resents service and repudiates his

⁷ See Rickey's account of the labyrinth in Utmost Art, pp. 45-47.

master.

The poems then address the problem of restoration. The movement of thought and language reverses the corrupting trend, bringing the focus back to God and the authority of the Bible.

The individual will is stripped away to reveal total dependence on God in all areas of human life. The world is put into perspective so that it is subordinate to the world of grace but an essential part of the total design. The right use of the world is to refer everything to God and to identify with the healing 'grief' of Christ in everyday life, not merely in selected moments of religious experience. Affliction is to be seen as confirmation of love and active service. Reader and poet participate in the suffering as the poem unfolds and forces us to reassess the meaning of service and love.

CHAPTER IV

The Restoration of Love

The details of service worked out in the Affliction poems are based on voluntary, self-effacing love. The human will gains genuine freedom from servile thoughts and motions when service is an act of heartfelt love.

An unqualified offering of the heart is demanded. 'Let me not love thee, if I love thee not' becomes the insistent anxiety behind poems of longing and grief, which record the restless, painful search for right love.

For Herbert to love and to serve are a single act of the human will; the bond between master and servant is simultaneously the bond between lover and beloved. The code of courtly love and the poetic tradition celebrating the trials and triumphs of the lover, complete Herbert's reconstruction of the courtly milieu.

Herbert adapts specific aspects of the love code to his particular requirement for a relationship that combines intimacy and awe. Desire is tempered by the fear that the offering of love is inadequate and insulting to the beloved. Passion is controlled by tact and reticence, so that the approaches to the beloved are tentative, and performed with a pervading sense of the lover's unworthiness. Herbert draws out the moral implications of the courtly model, and the potential for growth existing in the lover's attitude to his mistress as a source of virtuous action, and refers both to the relationship between Christ and the individual

human heart.

The moral values implicit in the love code have been summarised by Peter Dronke and his account is close to Herbert's interpretation of the tradition.

The lady embodies 'virtu' and there is 'infinite disproportion' between the lover and the loved one. Yet the lover may overcome barriers and grow in 'virtu' through the grace of the beloved, so that he acquires 'the habit of perfection' which is the source of virtuous action. The value of love increases with the painful effort demanded by the absolute sacrifice of the self for the sake of love. No reward or satisfaction is to be expected, and the lover must control passion, to look towards a distant goal of fulfillment and peace, in 'a more-than-human love.'¹

Herbert does not require the mediation of a human love but goes directly to the source of fulfillment, becoming Christ's courtly lover and also the beloved of Christ.

The relationship looks towards both human and divine love. The main stress falls on the role of man as the lover of God, who must prove his love through endurance and hardship. Yet the individual is also the recipient of divine love, although he may be unsure of the continuing presence of God as lover. Love between fellow-men is also referred to the form of love offered by Christ on the cross. In all cases there is a right and wrong way to love. Conflict between possessive 'lust' and selfless attachment is evident in love directed towards man and God. 'Love' may be a disguise for lust when the lover thinks more of his own needs than those of the loved one.

¹ Peter Dronke, Medieval Latin and The Rise of the European Love Lyric, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), I, 1-97.

The distinction between love and lust is a continuing problem for exponents of courtly love practice and poetry, whether the beloved is a human mistress or Christ. Yet secular poetry of courtly love is by no means homogeneous. Individual poets modify the love code, just as Herbert does, to suit personal requirements.

Sidney's *Astrophel* may view 'desire' with witty sophistry, acknowledging the claims of a higher truth yet preferring to enjoy the immediate physical reality of Stella's body (*Astrophel* No. 52). In a different vein Sidney repudiates human desire as corrupting lust and vows to dedicate himself to virtue and the 'higher things' of the mind. (*Certain Sonnets*, No. 31). Herbert has less trouble with the clash of reason and desire because, except for temporary diversions, reason and desire move in the same direction towards Christ. Herbert's beloved has a strong physical presence in the poems, but the body of Christ is an essential part of his love and not a distraction. Sidney's rejection of desire is moderated in Herbert's redirection of passion and longing, back to the source where he believes love should return.

Insecurity and pain circumscribe the world of Wyatt's courtly lover. Impatient with the lack of reward, 'repining' is his characteristic tone. Wyatt's mistress is more often upbraided for cruelty and neglect than praised for 'virtu.' In Wyatt's hands the conduct of the love code becomes a critical weapon against the lady's 'stony hert.' The lover has played his role of 'stedfastnes', 'great smert' and 'faithfulnes' but the lady oversteps her part, enjoying his suffering and exercising power without mercy ("Egerton", No. 69). Herbert's 'repining restlesnesse' is a similar critical strategy, though modified by growing insight into the lover's ambivalent position. The failure of love is initially traced

to a change in God's feelings towards man; flirtatious cruelty that denies consummation. Gradually the problem is revealed as a flaw in the fickle human heart and the inability of the individual to make every action an expression of love.

Increasing self-knowledge brings Herbert's lover closer to the complex and varied love of Shakespeare's Sonnets. Both poets understand the power of lust and the ideal love that confers worth on the outcast lover. Both reject conventional attitudes which turn love into idolatry. Herbert's Love I and II reveal the usurping power of lust to distort human sight, a theme reiterated in Dulnesse and recurrent throughout Shakespeare's sonnets. Sonnet No. 129 gives a powerful, personal indictment of the destructive/attractive pull of physical passion. Herbert's assessment is less forcefully personal but both poets dramatise the misuse of love. Sonnet No. 137 and lines 21-24 of Dulnesse offer close parallels in the motif of deception and wilful blindness expressed in the play on 'lies.' 'Lies' means both a physical position and the telling of a falsehood. The two poets reflect, ironically, on their distorted vision although Shakespeare relies on human power to distinguish truth while Herbert turns to God for assistance. Shakespeare probes human love until it responds to the test of 'fair, kind and true'; Herbert is dedicated to the redirection of love back to Christ on the cross. In Sonnet No. 105 Shakespeare sets down the threefold standard of love, 'fair, kind and true.' 'Fair' is reclaimed from overuse to mean not merely beautiful but just and the transformation of dark 'lusts' into consecrated bonds of love. 'Kind' means generous and self-giving, referring to the natural consequences of procreative love versus lust. 'True' is steadfast and genuine as opposed to deceptive ornament in action or language. Herbert

seeks the same tripartite love, identifying Christ as fair: 'pure red and white': in Dulnesse, and as the embodiment of charity and truth in Love III. Only Christ can deserve the Petrarchan eulogy and turn exaggeration into truth. Only Christ's love can give meaning to the pain of loving and confer worth on Herbert's lover.

The figure of Christ on the cross represents the 'grief' and 'joy' of love; the source of painful desire and the promise of future fulfillment. For Spenser Christ is the example of all love: fellowship, romantic love and love of God. All love is 'clene washt from sin' by 'thy dear blood' and mankind is directed to return love back to Christ and 'entertayne' one another with love, 'since 'Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught' (Amoretti, No. 68). Herbert qualifies Spenser's serene coupling of human and divine love. In The Temple the pain and joy of romantic love are reserved for the relationship between Christ and the individual heart. When human, romantic love is invoked it is generally an example of misdirected love or incomplete love. Yet, Herbert does refer human love to love of God and God's love for man. It is evident in his concept of 'charity built on the commandment to love thy neighbour as thyself and the moving statement on charity in Corinthians:

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

I Cor. 13:2

Love animates human nature and gives significance to human understanding and actions. Faith is fulfilled through love. In Affliction I we have seen the servant stripped of everything, including faith in the future. Only the final cry of love remains on which to rebuild a trusting relationship. The repeated refrain of The Pearl is an affirmation of love

that supercedes all other considerations. The Agonie ends with a definition of love as 'most divine' and the one antidote to 'Sinne.' For Herbert the day begins and ends with love. Without love man would remain forever 'a sick toss'd vessel' cheated of a harbour. The childlike prayers Mattens and Even-song marvel at God's love and his courtship of the human heart--'What is a heart?/That thou shouldst it so eye, and woee.' The new light of Christ's love, which is renewed at the beginning of each day, teaches the individual to love God and his creatures. At evening time the human heart seeks rest in the knowledge that God is 'all love.'

The biblical 'charity' is an inclusive term which Herbert rephrases as 'love' following the example of Augustine who concludes that 'amor' and 'caritas' are synonymous in holy Scripture.² Augustine paraphrases Corinthians making 'charity' 'right love', so that 'a man with a right love also has the right faith and hope.' 'But one who has no love, believes in vain, even though what he believes may be the truth.'³ Right love is directed towards God and towards creatures.

When Herbert identifies the symbol of the grapes in Love-joy as 'Joy and Charitie' he is identifying the characteristics of right love towards God and fellow-men. The drops of blood represent Christ's humanity and fellowship with mankind; the blood-grapes are also symbols of the biblical vine, which denotes descent from the lineage of David, stressing Christ's human and divine majesty, and thus highlighting the magnitude of his loving sacrifice on man's behalf. The poem moves from the visual emblem of human-divine love, the grapes of blood, to the intellectual

² Augustine, City of God, Bk. XIV, Ch. VII; IV, 289.

³ Augustine, Faith, Hope and Charity, trans. Louis A. Arand, Ancient Christian Writers No 3 (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1952), p. 108.

labelling of their meaning, 'Joy and Charitie.' Finally the poem arrives at the source of self-sacrificing love and 'true Christian joy' (Self-condemnation, l. 8), the figure of Christ. The 'minde' of Dulnesse (l. 23) is applied to the challenge of the window emblem and is drawn towards the conclusion that the model of right love--'caritas'--is to be found not in emblems or words themselves but in the flesh and blood of Christ which the symbols represent.

Companionship and co-operation among men and with Christ are suggested by the interaction with the ambiguous bystander. He is identified as 'The man' but is clearly Christ. The courtly ideal of friendship and patronage which is an aspect of Shakespeare's relationship in the Sonnets, is incorporated into Christian love. Unkindnesse recommends the bonds of friendship and the mutual responsibility to succour a friend. Yet the point of the poem is to re-establish Christ as the dearest friend who has been abused and neglected. Christ as the friend and careful patron reappears, consistently, offering guidance and encouragement and on occasion, a necessary goad to right action in poems like Dialogue. Christ speaks of himself as a friend in The Bag, proffering his services as messenger for 'any of my friends' who 'will use me in this kinde.' 'Kinde' is a measure of generosity and love as well as the more obvious sense of 'way.' 'Benevolent friendship', as Aquinas defines it, is first of all derived from Christ and then returned to him by extending friendship to fellow-men.⁴ Acts of benevolence towards the poor are another way of loving Christ and of personal growth. The man who 'banquets the poore' in Lent is also nourishing 'among those his soul.'

⁴ Aquinas, "On Charity" in Nature and Grace, *Secunda secundae*. Q. 23, Art. 1-8; Q. 27, Art. 1-8, pp. 342-368, esp. p. 358.

Love brings growth and change for human nature, but it is not easy to distinguish between personal growth and a sense of change in God himself. Man's own movement away from God may appear to be the retreat of God's love from man. In Love unknown the speaker fears that God's love has grown 'cold', only to discover that it is his own heart that has grown 'cold' and 'slack.' The lover vacillates from anxiety to hope, fearing loss of love and conscious of unworthiness. 'Repining restlessness' is concentrated into the lover's cry of 'Come' and the pain when God does 'ever, ever stay.'

'Come' and 'stay' perform the movement of retreat and advance in Home (p. 107).

Come Lord, my head doth burn, my heart is sick,
While thou dost ever, ever stay:

It is a reworking of the lover's impatience for the release of sexual tension. Compared with Donne's boisterous, witty persuasion in Elegy 19, Herbert's lover aims to arouse compassion and pity, not passion. He is much more like Chaucer's Troilus, using love-sickness as a form of seduction.

'Come' puts the responsibility for action on the beloved while the suffering lover remains passive except for verbal complaint. 'Stay' accuses the 'lord' of holding back from the relationship and thus precipitating the lover into the pitiful state of sickness. In fact it is more accurate to reverse lover and beloved since God is the absent lover.

The pain of loss and the frustration of desire draw the courtly lover and the Psalmist together. 'Come' is the cry of the abandoned lover attempting to win back his mistress or of the lover inviting the beloved to an amorous meeting. The Psalmist uses the same word to win

God's attention and good-will, putting into the plea the passion and intensity of longing that characterise the courtly lover's plight.

Home speaks with the voice of the Psalmist crying to God for relief and confirmation of love: 'How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord?' (Ps. 13:1), 'Make haste, O God, to deliver me' (Ps. 70:1) and the close re-working of Psalm 42:1, 'so panteth my soul after thee' in Herbert's 'My spirit gaspeth night and day.' Psalm 42 anticipates the movement of Herbert's thought at line thirty-one when 'stay' suggests 'when shall I come and appear before God?' instead of remaining in 'this world.'

'My heart is sick' is a rephrasing of 'My poore soul, ev'n sick of love' in Frailtie (p. 71). The language is anticipated in The Song of Solomon; 'Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love' (2:5). The call to love, 'Arise my love, my fair one, and come away' (2:13), is the summons that Herbert's lover longs to hear and hopes to stimulate by his own appeal for love.

Herbert's form of courtly love is in fact the Biblical love affair between God and the Psalmist; God and his Church. Sidney speaks of David's Psalms as 'a divine poem', 'wherein almost he showeth himself a passionate lover...' (Apology, p. 220). Herbert removes 'almost' and brings the Psalms into his own love poetry to God. He is in excellent company since Augustine also values the Psalms, not only to 'banish the swelling spirit of pride', but to become more than 'a rude stranger to thy true love.'⁵ Augustine explicitly refers to himself as God's lover; 'I myself will "enter into my chamber", and there will I sing a love-

⁵ Augustine, Confessions, Bk. 9, Ch. 4, trans. Sir Tobie Matthews, ed. Roger Hudleston (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1935), p. 210.

song unto thee, mourning "with groanings that cannot be uttered."⁶

Augustine's quotations, from Isaiah (26:20) and Romans (8:26), establish continuity between the prophetic statements of the Old Testament, through the New Testament, into personal life, in just the same way as Herbert does in Home with the word 'stay.'

The withholding 'stay' is referred to Christ in stanza two:

How canst thou stay, considering the pace
The blood did make, which thou didst waste?

The flow of Christ's blood was not staunchd unlike the present drought of love. The blood is wasted because if the blood sacrifice is not made good in individual experience then it has no significance. There is too the sense of man's unworthiness and inability to deserve Christ's blood. The main argument is that past examples of God's love must be made relevant to the present moment and the immediate need for love. A brief, retrospective summary from now, through the cross and Incarnation back to the fall, implies that God has somehow abandoned continuity of love. Yet the argument reverses itself, becoming evidence for continued, unchanging love from God. 'He did, he came' confirms that Christ died for all men. Although the verbs are still in the past tense, the shift has begun with the impossibility that 'thy love could fail or change.'

'As if' carries on the fear that the present absence of love is evidence of God's failure or variability but it also conveys 'how impossible' that love should fail. 'Stayest still' fixes Christ as a firm prop of love, the Old Testament 'stay' confirmed and continued. Motion and change are transferred to 'I'; 'why must I stay?'

In preparation for his journey the poet now turns to an anatomy of

⁶ Augustine, Confessions, Bk. 12, Ch. XVI, p. 342.

the world to convince himself and God that there is no reason to remain in a world so devoid of right love. With a delightful dramatic touch he rouses himself from his bed to push aside the 'clouds' that conceal the 'world of wo' and his own apathy. Revived energy turns him into the enthusiast of The Thanksgiving, stripping away worldly concerns and dismissing the world with a 'wink':

What is this weary world; this meat and drink,
That chains us by the teeth so fast?
What is this woman kinde, which I can wink
Into a blacknesse and distaste?

The questions can be answered in two ways: one confirms rejection of the world; the other raises qualifications. 'Meat and drink', which are symbols of worldly existence, are given by God to sustain life; food, is a provision of divine Providence in the poem of that name. Genesis (1:9, 15) confirms that Adam was given the means of producing food. As gifts of God 'meat and drink' cannot be despised. Yet gluttony is a sin and a denial of God's law of temperance as we know from The Church Porch. If food ceases to serve and becomes a master then the world exerts too strong an influence; a 'chain' or shackle of servitude binds man to the world. In addition, as long as food sustains life the individual is denied the freedom to 'come' to God by dying.

Similarly 'woman-kinde' cannot be so easily winked away. 'Distaste' is directed to an example of God's creative skill. 'Kinde' denotes the whole class of women, damning with one stroke. The word can also refer to procreation and by extension to the abuse of lust. There is also the sense of 'generous', 'charitable' which, while it does not have specific application here, does raise the possibility that the speaker lacks 'charity.' The expansive claim to obliterate by winking is shared with Donne's lover in The Sun Rising. There is no doubt that Donne's lover is wittily

alive to the fallacy of his power to efface the sun except in metaphorical terms, although the metaphor is a faithful reproduction of his feeling of potent well-being. Herbert's lover also suspects hidden humour in his gestures, which is confirmed by the time he is blasting 'joyes', 'scouling on them' and challenging all comers with bravado. Again there is no question of insincerity, merely of disproportion. Winking temporarily renders the eye blind in contradiction to the openness recommended elsewhere in The Pearl and notably in a letter from Herbert to his brother, advising, 'You live in a brave nation, where, except you wink, you cannot but see many brave examples' (p. 366, ll. 5-7). 'Brave' may refer to the ephemeral and limited as it does in Vertue, but there is still something to be learnt from the world. The world and women remain; a wink cannot last forever. At some point the problem of loving God while remaining in the world must be faced. Home evades the issue by courting death: 'O loose this frame, this knot of man untie!' However, the final stanza is not simply a repetition of the first 'Come.'

Come dearest Lord, passe not this holy season,
My flesh and bones and joynts do pray:
And ev'n my verse, when by the ryme and reason
The word is, Stay, sayes ever, Come.

The holy season is Advent, the days leading up to the birth of Christ. In The Bag we have a graphic picture of Christ descending, shedding divinity to take on human flesh and to live in the world. The world attempts to destroy and reject him but he is proof against corruption. Christ is able to 'stay' in the world without being overwhelmed by it and retains the power to return to God as an intercessor for man. At the end of Home 'stay' is required to complete the rhyme with 'pray.' Herbert writes 'Come' because Christ's coming is eternally repeated in order to fulfill both parts of the refrain. 'Come' shows the individual how to love in the

world and guides him by degrees to the eventual home in the new paradise established by Christ's loving sacrifice.

The Search and Longing substantiate the love motif of Home. There is the consuming desire for love; grief at the loss of love which is felt as physical anguish approaching the agony of the cross: 'With doubling knees and weary bones'; 'My throat, my soul is hoarse/My heart is wither'd.' The Psalmist's plea for succour mingles with the courtly lover's quest for ideal love, and both are referred to Christ in whom 'all promises live and bide.' In Longing Cupid's arrow is also the arrow of affliction or Christ's love dart, a reworking of the spear that pierced his side. The cry of the lover echoes through history: 'My love, my sweetness, heare!', and affirms the continuity of love from the faint glimmerings of pagan Cupid to the 'full-ey'd love' of Christ experienced by each Christian. 'Pluck out thy dart,/And heal my troubled breast...' has been addressed to human lovers, but for Herbert, Christ takes on the role of Cupid and has the power to alleviate the smart of love. The pagan God is superseded by Christ to whom Herbert turns for the model of the wounding/healing love of Christian faith.

Home fixes God's unchanging love for man and the direction of human love towards a distant state where there will no longer be anxiety about the quality of love. The Search pursues this distant goal which is occasionally brought closer to offer an encouraging foretaste of fulfilled love. The Glimpse recalls such a moment and the anti-climax which follows:

Whither away delight?
Thou cam'st but now; wilt thou so soon
depart,
And give me up to night.

In thought and language the poem rephrases lines from The Song of Solomon: 'Whither is thy beloved gone'; 'Whither is thy beloved turned aside?' (6:1).

The 'delight' of love is a personal experience but is found within the context of God's relationship with his Church in the Bible. The beauty of the beloved celebrated in The Song increases the longing for reunion and for a more permanent 'stay.' Herbert's lover feels the same urgency, 'Thy short abode and stay/Feeds not, but addes to the desire of meat.' 'Meat' is further delight; flesh in both the sexual sense and the communion of Christ's body and a possible pun on 'meet.' Physical desire and spiritual longing may both be satisfied in the 'delight' which Christ brings. For the moment it is a brief delight. Yet the lover-servant has already accepted the necessity of affliction in Affliction V and at the end of The Glimpse he has built on the 'crumme' of hope to accept that his journey to 'delight' is incomplete. Once again he changes the meaning of 'stay' from duration to a brief withholding of the loving presence of God. 'Grief and Sinne' will always threaten peace and love so that grace is continually needed to protect and promote the lover from the butt of adversity to the courtly lover. The plea is 'O make me not their sport,/Who by thy coming may be made a court,' and so the poem ends with a prayer for another more durable glimpse of the promised land. Christ within the individual heart transforms it into a royal court. The new paradise is found within the lover himself.

The title of The Glimpse points to the importance of sight and the use of the eyes to recognise and receive right love. In the search for right love Herbert's lover discovers that two words 'eyes' and 'dust' hold the clue to the continuity of human and divine love. An evaluation of 'dust', which represents the form of human nature in the world, uncovers the power of 'dust' to influence clear sight. The eyes may be blinded by dust so that divine love is obscured, or a proper valuation

of dust may clear the understanding and enable the lover to join human and divine love in consort.

The origins of the images associated with 'eyes' and 'dust' may be found in Plato and the Bible. The eyes are traditionally the gateway to the soul, through which love enters and is reflected back to the source. In the Phaedrus the awakening of love in the beloved begins when 'the stream of beauty' overflows in the lover and returns to 'the beloved.' It enters in at his eyes, the natural channel of communication with the soul, and 'in its turn the soul of the beloved is filled with love.'⁷ The 'beloved' of Christ is awakened in the same manner in The Glance. Christ's 'sweet and gracious eye' sends a glance that penetrates the heart bringing 'a sugred strange delight.'

Eyes convey love to Bembo's courtier, when the 'lookes of her eyes' 'pearce into the lovers hart' (Bk. 4, p. 314). The darts of love from the lady's eyes are a commonplace in courtly love poetry. Sidney's Stella wounds with her eyes (Astrophel Nos. 12, 17, 36) and so, in a more complicated manner, does Shakespeare's dark lady (No. 139). In The Glance 'thy sweet originall joy' is not a painful dart but a remedy for every 'bitter storm.' Elsewhere Herbert writes of 'darts' and 'knives' and the pain of love but as we approach the end of The Temple the stress shifts towards the healing power of fulfilled love. Redemption and marriage come together in the Communion imagery of Love III. Christ comes to represent the human ideal of love; the consecrated bond of marriage which St. Paul offers as a remedy for lust, and which Herbert introduces at the beginning of The Church Porch (l. 13).

⁷ Plato, "Phaedrus", 255, in Phaedrus and Letters VII and VIII, trans. Walter Hamilton (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1973), p. 64.

In a remarkable, prophetic image Herbert affirms that 'Thy full-ey'd love/...shalt look us out of pain' (Glance, ll. 20-21). The promise of Corinthians, 'now we see through a glass darkly: but then face to face' (I. Cor. 13:12), lives in Herbert's language to bring hope and comfort to his lover.

Nevertheless, imperfect sight is inevitable in matters relating to God, since perfect knowledge of divine love is beyond man while he remains in the world. Yet there is no excuse for the wilful blindness that Christ remarks at the beginning of The Sacrifice: 'their eyes to worldly things are sharpe, but to me blinde.' In Love II the eyes are blinded by 'Dust blown by wit, till that they both were blinde.' The 'desire of the eyes' which God removes in Ezekiel (24:16) and the 'lust of the eyes' which proves that man is 'of the world' in I John (2:16) indicate that human eyes have turned away from right love. Love should be directed towards God and only then reflected back to the world. 'Dust' has usurped its own Creator, 'Immortall Love'; and 'mortall love' is elevated to unwarranted eminence. The source of eternal beauty has been rejected for its reflection, so that in Platonic and Christian terms love is incomplete and misdirected.

True beauty is perceived by the 'eye of the minde' not the 'dimme eye' of the flesh subject to decay and distortion. The Platonic concept of the 'eye of the mind' is found in The Courtier and in Sidney's Apology (pp. 220, 236) and Sonnets (Astrophel No. 5). The 'eyes of the minde' begin to be sharpe' when 'the eyes of the bodie' (Courtier, Bk. 4, p. 318) fail or as Herbert would prefer when 'lust' and 'dust' are brought under control by the intervention of right love. When 'Immortall Heat', in Love II, kindles 'true desires' in the human heart then 'lust' is consumed and the eyes see 'thee' before dust. 'Before' is a measure of time

but also reorders the position of 'dust' so that 'thee' now comes first. Christ comes to 'mend our eyes' and fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah (35:5) that 'the eyes of the blind shall be open.'

Sidney's *Astrophel* knows that 'eyes are formed to serve/The inward light' and to aid reason in the battle with desire (*Astrophel*, No. 5). He also knows how often the eyes serve desire instead. Shakespeare is acutely aware of the distortion of value which may be engineered by the eyes' revolt from reason (No. 148). Herbert shares the dilemma of 'true sight' which for him rests in the understanding of the complex meaning of the word 'dust.'

In *Nature* the speaker is ashamed of his 'dust' which deserves to be 'hidden' in a 'saplesse' heart. The 'dust' in *Love I* and *II* is injurious to the eyes, blinding them to the truth. *Sighs and Groans* reduces the power of 'dust' to 'frailtie' and powder ground by God's anger, while *Church monuments* sends 'flesh' to school. The intention is to learn from 'dustie heraldrie' that the monuments of the world crumble and that 'dust' merely fills an hourglass. 'Dust' is ambiguous, referring to human remains, the remains of stone monuments and the 'dust and ashes' of Genesis (3:19) and Job's repentance (30:19). The baseness of 'dust' as a foundation for life or eternal fame is qualified by 'Deare flesh': a gentle, loving term that seeks to instruct not condemn. 'Dust' is also the material of God's creative love and therefore to be valued and nurtured. The question is how and to what extent 'dust' may be given value.

In *Frailtie* 'fair dust', representing all the frivolous paraphernalia of romantic love, 'honour' and 'riches', is despised and trodden underfoot. Over-ornamented 'dust' is stripped of its pretensions in the comparison with God's Regiment 'clad with simplenesse'. Yet 'the world' is

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powerful, and ambitious 'dust' pricks the eyes just as the 'brave rose' does in Vertue. The image is of a cloud of dust rising up to sting the eyeball and cause temporary blindness and tears. The eyes weep at the disproportion between God and 'the world.' Since the eyes are so intimately linked to love, right love is also injured or 'affronted.' The perfect Christian marriage between the human soul and Christ is threatened. Conflict between human and divine love seems inevitable.

Yet Christ offers a better way in Dulnesse. Again the poem is concerned with 'the rival claims' of human and divine love. Christ is identified as 'Beautie alone', the only beloved deserving 'Pure red and white', the colour of blood on pure flesh. The third stanza makes the miraculous claim that Christ can turn 'dust' into beauty:

When all perfections as but one appeare,
That those thy form doth show,
The very dust, where thou dost tread and go,
Makes beauties here.

When Christ treads on the dust he leaves behind the imprint of his 'form', which is the one perfection, and thus transforms 'dust' into his own shape, making it beautiful and valuable. Christ makes possible the reversal that uses dust to clear the sight not blind vision:

Therefore thou dost not show
This fully to us, till death blow,
The dust into our eyes:
For by that powder thou wilt make us see.

Ungratefulnesse (ll. 15-18; p. 82).

The image of the dust blown into the eyes is a complete reversal of the damaging power of dust in Frailtie. It is also a reworking of Augustine's rejection of those who 'stand outside blowing upon the dust and thereby raising it up into their own eyes' (Confessions, Bk. 12, Ch. XVI). In The Church-flore death blows the 'dust' intending to 'spoil the room' but in fact 'he sweeps.' The dust in Ungratefulnesse is akin

to the remains of Church monuments, for knowledge of human vulnerability and inevitable decay reveals, by contrast, the eternal, unchanging love of God. Death is an instrument of divine grace bringing human nature face-to-face with God, not for punishment or condemnation but to enjoy 'full-ey'd love.' Christ brings about the transformation of 'dust' into a healing, recreative material in Herbert's poem just as he does in John 9:1. The Gospel records the miracle which cured the blind man with clay made from the dust and Christ's spittle. Impressed with Christ's form of right love, 'dust' claims the continuity of all love, taking us back to Dulnesse and the imprint of Christ's foot treading the dust. However, since the individual lacks Christ's transforming skill, the human lover/servant remains 'lost in flesh' surrounded by 'sugred lyes.' The first step is to reinstate reason and discover the 'lies' of the mind as well as the flesh. The only hope is God's grace which can redirect eyes away from the exclusive focus on 'flesh' and towards the transformation of 'dust' by right love.

Thus the opportunity for clear-sight is available through God's grace and the right use of 'dust' to heal not mar the sight. Man's reluctance to give his whole heart is the major impediment which forces Herbert's lover to return, repeatedly, to the analysis of 'eyes' in relation to 'dust', for 'man is close reserv'd, and dark.'

The continuity of love is implicit in the images of eyes and dust but effort and painful searching are required to make God's promise of unchanging love explicit to the human heart: right love is gained through the intercession of Christ.

The metaphoric and symbolic meaning of individual words has revealed a continuing pattern of right love. Similarly the turning of the eyes

towards Christ is performed by poetic art, inspired and guided by divine grace. Herbert helps us to see 'that unspeakable and everlasting beauty to be seen by the eyes of the mind, only cleared by faith' (Apology , p. 220),

CHAPTER V

The Restoration of Language

The analysis of 'eyes' and 'dust' has shown that the same metaphor may affirm the eternal continuity of human and divine love, while at the same time deploring the present imperfect, and fragmented human experience of love. Ideally lovers may communicate face-to-face with the eyes and need no words, but the poet-lover must use words until language is superseded by direct, 'full ey'd love.' Meanwhile, right love must be expressed in the right language. The veracity of words used to describe and convey love becomes a measure of the quality and value of love itself. Herbert knows that loving praise must be 'the cream of all my heart' and that although 'my utmost art' will still prove 'small' and a 'poore sorte/To enroll thee' (Praise II, p. 146), the poet-lover is committed to his finest effort.

(1)

The Language of Courtship

Herbert is by no means alone when he insists that love and language are essentially interdependent. Sidney's appeal for 'energia' in The Apology is backed by Jonson's 'right and natural language' which he defends in Timber.¹ The Apology deals contemptuously with lover-poets who employ 'swelling phrases' that are not rooted in direct experience.

¹ Ben Jonson, "Timber", l. 715, in The Complete Poems, ed. George Parfitt (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1975), p. 392.

The conventional 'cold' and 'fire' of their language is wittily turned against them. Such writers cannot convince 'that in truth they feel those passions' because they lack 'forciblenesse.' Sidney concludes 'that we miss the right use of the material point of poesy' (p. 265) which is to make thought, feeling and language mesh. Sidney and Jonson agree that poetry has fallen into disrepute for a 'want of inward touch' and that something must be done to 'redeem arts' (Timber, p. 378, l. 149). The sincere lover-poet must reinstate language.

Sidney's lover seeks guidance and inspiration in the model of perfect love, represented by Stella. Herbert seeks the same remedy in the figure of his beloved and lover, Christ on the cross. Both poets weave their poetic standards into the process of courtship.

In Sonnet Number one Astrophel applies his poetic theory to the task of winning love. Delight leads to the use of reason and understanding and finally to action, when the lady is moved to pity. The three phases of poetry to delight, teach and move are taken from the theoretic Apology and put into practice as an art of love as well as poetry.

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
That the dear she might take some pleasure of my pain:
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain,
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertayne.

Herbert catches himself employing the same strategy in Jordan II, using the persuasive power of poetry to seduce God with fine phrases and elaborate wit. Astrophel is directed by his Muse to give up the folly of travail, 'beating' and 'biting' and look in his heart for inspiration. Stella is in Astrophel's heart, while Herbert must copy the figure of Christ in his lover's heart.

The problem of the relationship between true love and true language

receives detailed analysis in Shakespeare's Sonnets. The dilemma is stated early in the sequence, 'O let me true in love but truly write' (Sonnet #21). The similarities between the development of the problem in the Sonnets and Herbert's working through of the same issues are striking.² The failure or inadequacy of love is reflected in the corresponding lapse of poetic inspiration and the interruption of the flow of language. Concern about poetic technique, especially the distorting potential of imitation and ornament, is joined to pressing anxiety about the value of love. Shakespeare's focus is on human love while Herbert wrestles with the tensions of divine poetry and love given and received by God.

The failure of love and language is confronted in Deniall and Dulnesse. Both poems share common ground with Shakespeare's Sonnets number seventy six and one hundred and three.

The broken heart in Deniall produces broken lines and an unfinished rhyme at the end of the stanza. The flow of words is interrupted so that there is a forced pause before the sense of the sentence can be completed. The lines act out and confirm line three, 'Then was my heart broken, as was my verse.'

When my devotion could not pierce
 Thy silent eares;
 Then was my heart broken, as was my verse:
 My breast was full of fears
 And disorder.

In fact there is considerable evidence of successful poetic skill, since the vocabulary and syntax very faithfully reproduce the experience of unrequited love and disordered thoughts. The failed poet is a metaphor for failed love; he is not necessarily to be taken literally. As Curtius

² Compare the treatment of truth in love and language in Sonnets: 38, 54, 78, 79, 80, 85, 86, 130, 137.

argues the claim to 'artless and unschooled language' is part of the modesty topos.³ The self-denigrating poet appears in secular love poetry and in the Psalms (39:1-4; 22:1-2) representing human inadequacy, but paradoxically demonstrating human skill with words. Even in supposed failure the germ of success may be discerned, requiring the touch of grace to remove despair and release language.

'Pierce' and 'broken' are reminders that love is painful and violent, particularly shattering when the lover meets the implacable barrier of silence which arouses fear of desertion. 'Silent tears' from man may have eloquence for God in The Familie but God's silence is a threat to love. As in Affliction IV the break in love produces civil war and mayhem. The rebellious voice of The Collar is raised in the aggressive despair of 'As good 'go anywhere.' The cry of Home is anticipated in 'Come, come, My God' echoing the Psalmist's plea for love and succour (Ps. 5; 12; 38) and the Gospel call to love and service (Mat. 11:28). The poet's poetic failure is transferred to God's lack of response. The reproof reminds God that language is part of the gift of creation, setting man above the beasts and the mimic parrot in Man.

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

Having 'elevated' 'dust' and given speech, God, the lover, tutor, father, undercuts his gift by refusing to respond. Words spoken in pain or praise are useless unless God replies. The duet which harmonises in Heaven lacks the second voice in Deniall. For the moment God is to blame for failed love and harmony.

³ Ernst Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York & Evanston: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 83.

'My heart was in my knees' begins the return movement to personal responsibility, with the comic image of the heart oppressed by the weight of human complaint. The gesture of supplication is also an admission that the poet has failed 'to look right.' 'My feeble spirit' is the source of failure, not the withdrawal of God's lines of communication. Language skill depends on the right conformation of the heart and the will. The ability 'to look' arises from inner harmony, the will acting out of love. Divine silence is transformed into recognition that it is the speaker who is out of tune with God's will and love. The complaint becomes a plea for grace to restore the heart, and thereby restore the capacity to communicate effectively. The interplay between 'thy favours' and 'my request' reinstates the appropriate status between 'thy' and 'my', giving precedence to 'thy', so that there is no longer a clash of wills to bring disharmony. Thought and language do 'chime' and 'ryme':

O cheere and tune my heartlesse breast,
 Deferre no time;
 That so thy favours granting my request,
 They and my minde may chime,
 And mend my ryme.

Dulnesse extends the discussion of poetic failure into a comparison between secular and religious love poetry. The poem asks the same questions as Shakespeare's Sonnets seventy six and one hundred and three.

Why do I languish thus, drooping and dull,
 As if I were all earth?

Dulnesse

Why is my verse so barren of new pride,
 So far from variations or quick change?

#.76

Alack what poverty my Muse brings forth.

103

Shakespeare's lines are dulled and blunted by the overwhelming beauty of his beloved. Herbert is equally over-awed, but finds a biblical

explanation for his inability to match the prolific output of secular poets and the success of his rivals. He is 'all earth', 'lost in flesh' like the Psalmist who cries, 'My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word' (Ps. 119:25). Herbert's lover-poet is also over-awed by the power of 'flesh', the pull of the world, which requires the intervention of grace to quicken his 'minde' to break free from the commonplace 'sugred lyes.' The clogging 'earth' lightens into 'mirth' and 'brim-full' looks forward to the overflowing 'full-ey'd love' of The Glance.

'The wanton lover' is criticised for overworking words like 'fair', just as Shakespeare mocks tired metaphors in Sonnets number 18 and number 21. The stock vocabulary of the courtly lover, 'fair', 'hot', is undercut by the query 'Shall I' and the subsequent qualification of each epithet. 'Every fair with his fair doth rehearse' is close to Herbert's repetition of 'fair.' Yet 'wanton' has more life than the 'drooping and dull' poet-lover of God. Herbert envies the playfulness and ingenuity which make his poet look dull. He longs to experience the same vital passion for Christ who far surpasses any 'wanton' mistress. But there are also strong reservations about the quality of the love he envies. The poem is another subtle trick with the 'failed poet-lover.' The conventional vocabulary of the disappointed lover mocks the speaker too. He is more like the stereotype 'pretending' lover than those he criticises or envies. Yet the language is always under control. The sexual pun with 'sharpen' and 'drooping' is offered, but the implication remains open and is not a necessary meaning; although the 'wanton lover' is certainly more potent than Herbert's pathetic, self-absorbed poet-lover. 'Pretending' and 'wrongs' suggest counterfeiting and misplaced love, but

at least some action is taken towards the object of love. Even rejection and frustration are put to poetic use by the secular poet-lover.

The real problem is not the counterfeit love of 'wanton lovers' but what they represent in the experience of 'I' in the poem. The conflict is not a simple opposition between human and divine love but an internal conflict between 'flesh' and 'minde' which results in 'sugred lyes.' Secular poets may be besotted with human love and forget God, the source of love, so that they too are 'lost in flesh', but the emphasis is on 'I' the pretender to God's love. Herbert's poet is also motivated by self-regard and pride of the flesh; he is 'all earth' and the 'sugred lyes' of 'flesh' 'grow bold' and obscure reason. Self-absorbed love produces inferior poetry. Self-knowledge and learning are expected of Jonson's true poet (Timber , p. 398, ll. 973-991; p. 405, ll. 1281-1285); Sidney speaks of 'this purifying of wit', 'enabling of judgement' and 'enlarging of conceit' which characterise poetry designed 'to lead and draw us to as high perfection, as our degenerate souls made worse by their clayey lodgings, can be capable of' (Apology , p. 225). Herbert concurs with Sidney's assessment though 'degenerate' is softened to 'lost in flesh' and the 'lyes' are 'sugred', a word Sidney applies in The Apology as a term of approbation, referring to the 'sugared invention' of Heliodorus (p. 225). The final stanza of Dulnesse is remarkably close to The Apology although Herbert very firmly relies on the power of grace to purify wit; 'cleare thy gift', and lead to 'high perfection': 'I may but look towards thee.' The failure of poetic inspiration and art is a result of the poet-lover's distorted vision, his self-centred focus, and not the fault of 'wanton lovers' or human love. Divine grace is the 'quickness' of right love and right language so that God is the source of both love

and poetic inspiration.

The difficult problem of truth in the language of love is raised by Shakespeare, Sidney and in a different manner by Jonson, who is not specifically concerned with love in Timber. Herbert shares their concern and seeks his solution in the same way as he has sought the answer to right service and right love. The true poet must choose his style with care to avoid the seduction of ornament but retain 'delight'; he must speak plainly but with enough eloquence to move his audience towards virtue. Holy Scripture offers a stylistic model and a vocabulary of metaphors on which the poet-lover may draw.

(2)

The Language of Holy Scripture

Throughout the discussion of Herbert's thought and language numerous references to biblical thought and language have emerged. I have suggested that the biblical material extends the continuity of human and divine love through the Old and New Testaments into present, individual history. Poetic and experiential continuity in language and love is the foundation of Herbert's art of poetry and of love, which he finds not in himself but in God. The conventional language of romantic love is released, by grace, from misuse and misapplication to an exclusively human beloved, and reconsecrated to Christ, the perfect human and divine lover-beloved. Courtly language of service and love is borrowed from the tone and vocabulary of Holy Scripture, thus the poet's metaphors return the words of love back to God. Herbert's metaphors are authenticated by the Bible and fulfilled in personal experience. Contemporary poetic language is an antitype of biblical language. 'Repining restlesse' and

the stripping of meaning to uncover the truth represent the painful and exacting discovery of accurate authentic language with which to praise God.

The question of style, as Eric Auerbach has argued in Mimesis, has exercised the minds of biblical commentators since the language of the Bible came into contact with the standards of classical rhetoric. Auerbach suggests that 'pagan' criticism of the 'uncivilised' biblical style created a new standard of poetic excellence 'in which the everyday and low were included' to connect the sublime with 'the lowest.' The ambiguity of Scriptural language became a positive advantage. Although 'Scripture speaks very simply, as if to children' there are many difficult passages in the Bible which contain 'secrets and riddles.' Yet even these difficulties may be overcome 'by all who are humble and filled with faith.' The formulation is much like Sidney's 'eyes of the mind, only cleared by faith' (Apology, p. 220). Auerbach, referring to Augustine's interpretations of Scriptural style, concludes that a 'simple' heart 'filled with faith' may go beyond human understanding to share in the meaning of the Bible, 'for sharing and not purely rational understanding is what it seeks to offer.'⁴

Augustine's sharing is even more precise than Auerbach suggests, since Scripture cures 'so many maladies of the human will' (De Doctrina, Bk. 2, Ch. V, p. 36) and enables the inferior poet-lover to 'grow in a certain sense through the testimony of the great' for 'What he says in his own words he may support with the words of Scripture' (De Doctrina, Bk. IV, Ch. V, p. 122).

The two Holy Scripture sonnets in The Temple follow Augustine's

⁴ Eric Auerbach, Mimesis, Ch. 7, pp. 134-135.

'poetic' very faithfully and express an important aspect of Herbert's personal poetic of continuity. The two poems are companions to Love I and II in stanza form and the style of the opening invocation. They are part of the group of poems, which includes Jordan I, that are directed towards the formulation of a coherent and harmonious poetic style. The final line of Employment 1 begs 'give one strain/To my poore reed' and the immediate solution appears in 'Oh Book', the invocation to Holy Scripture. The language of the Bible is put forward as the answer to 'lust' in Love I and II and the source of 'truth and beautie' for poetic inspiration and style:

Oh Book! infinite sweetness! let my heart
Suck ev'ry letter, and a hony gain,
Precious for any grief in any part;
To cleare the breast, to mollifie all pain.

The heart is cleared of 'grief' and soothed with 'hony'; 'strange delights' are nourishment for the heart but also meet Sidney's requirement that language should teach through delight. The curing of the human will is evident in 'we may wish and take' and the stress on 'health':

Thou art all health, health thriving till it make
A full eternitie: thou art a masse
Of strange delights, where we may wish and take.

The child-like simplicity lost in Affliction 1 is given back when Scripture sanctions the movements of the human will towards truth. 'I had my wish and way' is guided by the Bible away from self-indulgence to harmony with the divine will revealed in Scripture. The Bible is the 'thankfull glasse' and 'the well' in which the reflection is never distorted. Man's form is purified by looking into the source of right love so that a pure image is reflected back. Scripture 'mends the lookers eyes' enabling the individual to see his strengths and weaknesses

mirrored in the words of God. The dark glass of Corinthians (1, 13:12) is in fact an illuminating metaphor for the poet, and links his language not only to biblical style but to the concept of charity. Right love and right language are found together in God's word.

The second sonnet refers to typological continuity between the Bible and individual life.

This verse marks that, and both do make a motion
Unto a third, that ten leaves off doth lie:
Then as dispersed herbs do watch a potion,
These three make up some Christians destinie:

The cross-references and prophetic foreshadowing of events in the Bible are directly related to 'some Christians destinie.' It is a clear statement of the continuity between biblical history and individual history. The 'secrets' of God's word are revealed through internal glossing in the Bible and in Herbert's poetry.

Such are thy secrets, which my life makes good,
And comments on thee: for in ev'ry thing
Thy words do find me out, and parallels bring,
And in another make me understood.

Individual experience in the poems is then an antitype of the biblical types 'which my life makes good.' 'My life' and 'thy secrets' are both instrumental in understanding the divine will and human conduct. The riddles of human life are unravelled by the Bible but at the same time are a way of appreciating the significance of God's word in everyday life. God's omniscience, human self-discovery and the continuity of experience come together in 'for in ev'rything/Thy words do finde me out, and parallels bring.' 'Thy words' are a key to understanding the self, 'me'; and to unravelling the complex meaning of the poems themselves which recreate biblical and human history. Herbert's references to the Bible and his own internal system of cross-references within and

between poems follow the pattern of biblical typology. The temporal distinction between past, present and future is set against the discovery of a repetitive, timeless rhythm that makes each discrete experience equally a part of a continuing eternal pattern. As Auerbach puts it 'in God there is no distinction of times since for him everything is a simultaneous present' (Mimesis , p. 137). In the same way as human nature spans the worlds of nature and grace so man participates in the temporal world and stretches towards eternity or 'a simultaneous present.' The Holy Scriptures offer language and experiences that have an immediate, temporal application and at the same time reveal and draw man towards 'eternal blisse.' Herbert's eloquence comes from God's word and leads back to God, so that poetic style is sanctioned by God and helps to restore man to God's breast.

The Holy Scripture poems 'make good' Augustine's comments on style in relation to the Bible. The same material is given a more austere, moral tone by Calvin. Calvin's influence is apparent in some aspects of Herbert's poetic. The 'plain style' which Stein⁵ and others have associated with Herbert and which Lewalski has developed into a Protestant Poetic, based on the Bible, has a strong advocate in Calvin. He believes that the 'unpolished simplicity' of Scripture is 'too mighty in power of truth to need the rhetoricians art' (Institutes , Bk. I, Ch. VIII; I, 75). Towards the end of The Temple, Herbert does imply that simple, concrete language without rhetorical embellishment, is more suited to the pursuit of righteousness. The Posie dismisses ornament, 'Invention rest,/ Comparisons go play, wit use thy will', but in the manner that a fond

⁵ Arnold Stein, George Herbert's Lyrics (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press; 1968), esp. Ch. I.

parent would bid a child 'go play.' The Rose rejects 'sugred lies', referring back to Dulnesse, and demonstrates the principle of economy and simplicity in the single, self-explanatory figure of the rose. Yet it is only because the metaphoric meanings of the rose have been so consistently built up through other poems, like Vertue, that the single word can be eloquent without elaboration. The plainness that Herbert espouses is not in any sense 'unpolished.' His language is refined to the point of clarity that comes from a pure heart applied to the ambiguity of metaphoric language. Herbert shows himself to be Augustine's scholar 'one of those who look into the heart of the Scriptures with the eyes of their own heart' (De Doctrina , Bk. IV, Ch. V, p. 122). His poetic is informed by charity and also understanding, for he is too 'he who can quote' Scripture at will and 'understand them properly.' Yet even poems that seem close to Calvin's reliance on the simplicity of Scripture to instill the 'love of righteousness' and to prevent the individual from going astray in the pursuit of righteousness (Bk. III, Ch. VI; II, 2) are indebted to the medieval heritage as well. The Pilgrimage which is a 'simple' allegory of the individual journey through biblical and human history looks back to Everyman as well as forward to the Puritan Pilgrim's Progress. The 'silk twist' and 'labyrinths' of The Pearl may owe a debt to Calvin's 'labyrinth' through which 'the Word' serves 'as a thread to guide our path' (Bk. I, Ch. VI; I, 67) but it is only one of many converging influences.

Many of the qualifications, which Hooker applies to Calvin's position on the sufficiency of Scripture as a guide in all areas of human life and human salvation, contribute to Herbert's poetic theory.

Hooker argues that although the Old Testament did 'foreshew' Christ's

work it required his coming to complete the meaning of the prophetic words. Christ applied and rounded out the Old Testament material in the same way as human reason may now be applied to the understanding of the Old and New Testaments and may supplement the information with direct experience. He cautions 'that the benefits of nature's light be not thought excluded as unnecessary, because the necessity of a diviner light is magnified.'⁶ 'Nature's light' is inferior but the pressing need for divine grace does not exclude the use of reason in the conduct of human life. Paul's admonition to Timothy, 'Continue thou in these things...' (2 Tim. 3:14), is intended to promote progressive understanding. Continuity is not repetition but careful building on what has gone before, so that Christ builds on the Old Testament prophecy and human reason builds on Christ. Hooker concludes, 'It sufficeth therefore that Nature and Scripture do serve in such full sort, that they both jointly and not severally either of them be so complete, that unto everlasting felicity we need not the knowledge of anything more than these two may easily furnish our minds with on all sides' (Bk. I, Ch. XI, [5]; I, 218).

Although Herbert may say at the end of Holy Scripture II 'Starres are poore books, and oftentimes do misse' he does not exclude nature as a source of information; he merely believes that nature's book is fallible when interpreted by man alone. In poems like Dialogue, Affliction I and Love unknown Herbert joins 'Nature and Scripture' in the application of human reason to the dilemmas of a Christian life which aims to continue biblical models. The expository style of his appeals to God places biblical texts beside the evidence of human reason. The Pearl is an excellent example of a biblical text that is interpreted by reasoned

⁶ Hooker, Ecclesiastical Polity, Bk. I, Ch. XI, [4]; I, 218.

application to personal experience. The conclusion may be that man's 'grov'ling wit' is insufficient but that too is covered by Hooker. Through Scripture man 'may have thereby the light of his natural understanding so perfected that the one being relieved by the other, there can want no part of needful instruction unto any good work...' (Bk. I, Ch. XI; [5]; I, 218). Herbert holds back from such a definite faith in human reason but he modifies Calvin's guiding 'thread' with strands of human reason. Nature and grace co-operate to supply the right 'twist' to language so that the text of Corinthians is woven into the language of personal experience, giving the biblical exemplum a logical connection to individual submission and salvation.

Herbert is rarely satisfied with a single thread or formulation. He has definite boundaries, which follow the blunt precepts of The Church Porch, but within these limits he is a virtuoso of language and meaning. He is prepared to list alternative points of view as long as they lead him to God. The authority of Scripture is not in doubt but the precise character and application of scriptural authority to individual life is open to the proof of human reason and experience. The one condition is that there must be no doubt that human reason and the words of reasoned argument are gifts of God and therefore sanctioned by divine grace.

Although Herbert relies heavily on biblical language and is particularly sensitive to the potential conflict between ornament and plainness in poetic style, his position is more flexible and ambiguous than Calvin's exclusive reliance on Scripture and the 'unpolished simplicity' of biblical style.

The choice between ornament and plainness is neither simple nor necessarily the solution to the problem of the appropriate style for

God's poet-lover. The choice does, however, bring the biblical commentators and the courtly love poets together in a common concern about right language.

(3)

The Language of the Muses

Herbert's Jordan poems represent the meeting point of two sources of poetic inspiration: classical poetic standards, mediated through courtly love poetry, and the biblical ideal of inspiration, purification and redemption.

The title Jordan demonstrates Herbert's preference for compression and economy. The baptism of Christ by John (Matt. 3) in the waters of Jordan is compared to the poetic inspiration bestowed by the spring of Helicon. In both cases inspiration descends and transforms the recipient. The stream of pagan tradition flows into the river of biblical history. The classical source is metaphorically purified and made Christian by passing through the biblical symbol of conversion. At the same time the commonplace 'purling streams' of the courtly lover are drawn into the river symbol. The claim of romantic love is reduced by the comparison but remains part of the inclusive water metaphors. The Jordan is also a barrier that Moses must cross to reach the promised land. The Old Testament river foreshadows the same river in the New Testament promise of baptism into love. Another barrier that must be overcome is the conventional language of love debased by self-indulgent use. The language of courtly love must be reclaimed and purified for God, just as Christ claims human love in baptism.

The poet of Jordan I is searching for an enemy to attack:

Who says that fictions onely and false hair
 Become a verse? Is there in truth no beutie?
 Is all good structure in a winding stair?
 May no lines passe, except they do their dutie
 Not to a true, but painted chair?

Although the speaker has matured further than the two first sonnets in Walton's Life the tinge of self-righteous indignation colours the tone. However, Herbert gives us many opportunities in the language to qualify and deepen the dilemma beyond the simple opposition of two styles or two kinds of love. Jordan I seeks an external scapegoat but the familiar strategy of Affliction I precedes a more searching probing into the recesses of motivation within the individual, which gains momentum in Jordan II.

At the same time Jordan I is a witty critique of poetic language, spoken with sardonic humour and using the methods of composition that the thought continually undercuts. Rhetorical questions and analogies are piled up and the argument builds to a climax of comparisons and assertions. Herbert draws freely on well-worn poetic clichés, 'enchanted groves', 'sudden arbours' and 'purling streams' compete for attention but in Herbert's hands the phrases retain a certain attraction and liveliness. The repeated 'no lines', 'no verse' 'except' those of secular poetry allow a limited value to exclusively human love. Courtly love poetry and the pastoral idyll are forms of 'verse' but not the style that Herbert's poet can approve wholeheartedly. The problem is the confusion between the 'true' and 'painted chair.' The Temper anticipates the need for definition and offers 'thy chair of grace' as the 'true' chair. In Jordan I poetry is seen as a courtier-lover doing homage to the wrong lord or mistress, or at best paying tribute to the imitation of the genuine monarch of love. 'Painted' refers to concealing ornament

that attempts to deceive the eye into believing that the 'true' source is present.

The veiling of sense in line nine once again places classical style and biblical language side by side:

Must all be vail'd, while he that reads, divines,
Catching the sense at two removes?

The hidden meaning of classical poetry and the Bible is a commonplace. Along with the 'speaking picture' of poetry goes the stripping away of the outer layers of 'bark' or ornament to arrive at the central core of meaning. The same process applies to biblical exegesis. 'Divines' may be a witty shaft aimed at over-elaborate allegorising as well as a reminder that more than human inspiration and wisdom is required for divinity. 'Removes' refers to the stripping of the veils of meaning but also suggests distance from the true sense of language. Behind the sense of 'vail'd' is the passage from Corinthians (2.3:15-16) which links the understanding of the Old Testament to the coming of Christ. Moses' veil over revelation is removed by plainness: 'We use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face.' The Old Testament 'vail' then becomes the present blindness of men which is to be removed by Christ: 'But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.' Plainness is not necessarily simple language but clear and precise use of meaning. In fact Herbert uses the technique of hidden meaning: the biblical reference is compressed into 'vail'd' and then released by the clues offered by 'reads' and 'divines.' The difference is that Herbert's core meaning is the Word made flesh, the most precise use of language, and not merely close to the truth, but the truth itself.

The distinction between real and feigned shepherds: 'Shepherds are honest people': depresses the pretensions of pastoral poets and alludes to the biblical linking of pastoral life with the birth and ministry of Christ. The connection is explicit in Christmas where Herbert raises his voice in unison with the shepherds' song. In Jordan I Herbert identifies his plain language with the 'honest' song of the shepherds and then returns to the question posed by 'onely' in the first line. The dismissal of pastoral poetry gives way to an argument for reciprocal recognition that would accept the religious poet into the community of poets. Herbert offers an ironic reversal of Sidney's defence of love poetry in The Apology. Where Sidney urges that love poetry deserves 'not to be scourged out of the Church of God' (p. 220), Herbert exhorts the pastoral poets not to 'punish' God's poet with exclusion from the house of poetry. The use of 'punish', a strong, punitive measure comparable to scourge, suggests that Herbert is invoking and reversing the well-known Apology to emphasize the claim of the religious poet. Jordan I is an argument in favour of recognition for different kinds and styles of poetry, not a simple rejection of any particular form of composition. In her analysis of Jordan I Rosemond Tuve insists that Herbert is not protesting against love poetry 'but against its usurpation of the whole field and very title of Poetry.'⁷ The tone of the poem shifts between critical evaluation of secular love poetry and the desire to reinstate the value of divine love poetry. The suggestion that Herbert envies the secular poet is faced with bravado: 'Riddle who list for me.' Herbert reminds us with subtle hints that the 'nightingale' and 'spring' of exclusively human love are

⁷ Rosemond Tuve, A Reading of George Herbert (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 187.

ephemeral; spring must fade and the song die away. The reference to the game of Primero indicates that love and reputation are a gamble based on an uncertain combination of cards, while Herbert looks for permanence and security in his poetic material and style. Jordan I seeks to extend the definition of poetry and to claim the right to a poetic based on plainness. The difficulty is to interpret 'plainly' in a precise manner. Rather than mere simplicity of language Herbert is indicating a poetic of clarity and truth which still uses metaphoric language but in the service of right love, without reference to personal glory. It is a commitment to one subject, 'My God, My King,' not to one plain mode of expression.

There are more complex implications that God needs no embellishment and that Christ brings his own beauty and finally transforms the debased language of love. Jordan II takes up the issue of embellishment and makes the transition from generalised criticism of poetic language to the problem of right and wrong motivation in the poet's own divine poetry.

The use and abuse of ornament is a major theme of Sidney's Apology, Jonson's Timber and Shakespeare's Sonnets.

Sidney acknowledges that ornament can be a form of deception used to seduce men away from virtue to vice. Detractors of poetry claim that 'it abuseth men's wit, training it to wanton sinfulness, and lustful love' (p. 250). This is the charge that Love I and II level at human love and human poetry and which the same poems immediately qualify, pointing to wrong use as the culprit. The true role of embellishment of language is not deception but quite the reverse. It is man's corrupt wit that turns 'the figuring forth of good things' into phantastic and 'unworthy objects' (p. 250). Sidney turns 'pretending' into 'intend' to make his point. The poet 'cometh to you with words set in delightful

proportion ... with a tale forsooth he cometh unto you ... And ~~p~~pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue' (p. 237). Delight, proportion, truth (forsooth) and virtue are the characteristics of true poetry. Sidney goes on to compare poetry with the 'pleasant taste' that brings children to eat wholesome food. The child-like appeal of poetry coincides with that aspect of Scripture which Auerbach singles out for comment (Mimesis , pp. 134-135) and the child-like naivety Herbert so often employs in his verse. 'Childhood is health' claims H. Baptisme and it is the aim of Herbert's purification of language that words should regain a child-like, innocent clarity, while retaining an appeal to the senses and the intellect which will move the will to right action.

The language of The Odour is full of enticing smells and tastes that are designed to draw the servant-lover to God and attempt to make human love pleasing to God. The persuasive power of poetry is used in a wistful, deceptively simple attempt to gain the Master's attention and approval. The language seduces the senses to the point of confusion between taste and smell: 'As Amber-greese leaves a rich sent/Unto the taster'; 'This broth of smells, that feeds and fats my minde.' The question is whether the persuasive use of delightful language is legitimate or a means of concealing the real intention. The desire to be loved by Christ is hardly wrong; what may be a problem is the attempt to bend the will of God to the desires and needs of the lover-poet. Ornament may be flattery, a form of seduction that Shakespeare treats with irony in sonnet eighty three:

I never saw that you did painting need,
And therefore to your fair no painting set;
I found, or thought I found, you did exceed
The barren tender of a poet's debt.

There is a strong sense that the beloved has no need of ornament but brings intrinsic beauty that outdoes and shames the poet's imagery. Herbert feels this strongly in Easter when he is forestalled by Christ's own flowers that are fresh and eloquent, 'thou wast up by break of day,/ And brought'st thy sweets along with Thee.' Further 'curling' metaphors from the poet are unnecessary since faithful reproduction of Christ's innate beauty will produce the 'pure red and white' of the perfect courtly beloved, as we have seen in Dulnesse. Shakespeare once more sums up the predicament for himself and Herbert:

Thou truly fair, wert truly sympathised
In true plain words by thy true telling friend
And their gross painting might be better used
Where cheeks need blood; in thee it is abused.
Sonnet # 83

'True plain words' are the alternative to 'gross painting' and for both poets it is excess and misapplied embellishment which are faulted. The truth also speaks in metaphors and ornament, but only to describe what is 'truly fair.' Herbert must rely on his 'true telling friend' Christ to retrieve a sense of proportion in his language.

Herbert addresses his poet's excesses of language in Jordan II. The well-meaning but fallible enthusiasm of The Thanksgiving is repeated in relation to poetic technique. The lover-poet is overwhelmed by the 'lustre' of 'heav'nly joyes':

When first my lines of heav'nly joyes made mention
Such was their lustre, they did so excell,
That I sought out quaint words, and trim invention;

A secondary sense, which makes the second line refer to 'my lines' as well as 'heav'nly joyes', suggests a concentration of energy on language for its own sake and pride in the brilliance of composition. This sense is certainly picked up in line six, 'as if it were to sell',

My thoughts began to burnish, sprout and swell,
 Curling with metaphors a plain intention,
 Decking the sense, as if it were to sell.

Words like 'burnish', 'sprout', 'swell', 'curling', which in Jordan I, Dulnesse and Deniall were found in secular poetry and criticised for inaccuracy are now discovered in the poet's religious verse. Critical evaluation is now transferred to the self.

The poem bursts with metaphors and we are hurried along on the flood of inspiration, blotting and revising as we go. Language is controlling the poet rather than serving his intention to find the most appropriate expression. There is no organising principle and little discrimination in the poem's poet. There is consummate organisation and discrimination in Herbert's rendering of poetic confusion and excess. The lines stop and start with the movement of thought and the images are very precise in their application to the fundamental problem, that evades the solutions offered by the poet-narrator. The decking and selling image is an accurate description of the poem's activity. 'Heav'nly joyes' are degraded and changed into an over-dressed harlot attempting to lure clients to buy her wares. Far from extolling love the poet has obscured right love and made the language grasping and self-seeking. Poetry too has become a whore and what is worse the whore of God. The use of language degenerates into abuse when the intention is to impress rather than seek truth. Shakespeare holds back from the trap of excess in Sonnet number twenty one which uses the same selling image. Shakespeare does not want to share his love and may be accused of covetousness, yet the primary sense is the wish not to debase the beloved by decking with unnecessary ornament:

Let them say more that like of hearsay well;
 I will not praise that purpose not to sell.

'Hearsay' is what the 'friend' warns against at the end of Jordan II urging the poet to turn to his own experience. Love and language cannot be sold to God because he already owns both. The implication of personal gain, 'cupiditas', is contrary to the rule of charity.

'Decking' is strongly criticised by Jonson in Timber. He objects that 'Cloth of bodkin, or tissue, must be embroidered... Nothing is fashionable, till it be deformed' (p. 392; ll. 718-722). The 'good dressing' of a lie is compared to the commodity value of a whore, 'Some love any strumpet (be she never so shop-like or meritorious) in good clothes' (p. 384; ll. 390-392). The prostitution of language may be overcome by standing for 'truth and goodness' which are 'plain and open' (p. 283; ll. 290-291). Herbert and Jonson are in striking agreement about the decline of language and truth.

The real problem for Herbert's poet is the failure to make language serve selfless love instead of an assertive, commercial proposition. The self is too much in evidence in Jordan II:

As flames do work and winde, when they ascend,
So did I weave my self into the sense.

The 'flames' are identified with the selfish 'lust' of Love I and II and with the theme of sacrifice. The offering is not for the sake of God but for the gratification of personal poetic ends. 'Weave' goes back to 'Curling with metaphors' and to the 'winding stair' of Jordan I. The poet is absorbed in the mechanics of composition which become more important than the 'sunne' the words intend to 'clothe.' The external clothing has superseded the significance of Christ's naked body on the cross, so that in the terms of Love I 'onely a skarf or glove,/Doth warm our hands.' 'My self' is still the focus of the language although the professed intention is to praise God. Yet in The Starre the poet begs to

'Glitter, curle, and winde as they;/That winding is their fashion/Of Adoration.' The stars 'glitter', 'winde' and praise God by nature, there is no question of 'pretence.' It is this purity of intention, a natural motion toward God, that human love and language requires; and which can be found in Christ within each heart:

But while I bustled, I might heare a friend
Whisper, How wide is all this long pretence!
There is in love a sweetnesse readie penn'd:
Copie out onely that, and save expense.

The friend breaks into the bustle to confirm that the poet has been 'pretending' like the lovers in Dulnesse and unlike Sidney's true poet. The final lines follow Sidney's sonnet No. One very closely, as we have seen in the discussion of the language of courtship. Both poets are directed towards the image of love within their own hearts. Sidney is guided by his 'Muse', Herbert by Christ, 'a friend':

Fool said my Muse to me, look in thy heart
and write.

Astrophel and Stella, No. 1

Love is 'readie penn'd' in the heart, written in the mingled blood of Christ and man in Good Friday. Love is also written in Scripture as we know from the Holy Scripture poems. In Jordan II the value of personal experience and the recognition of Christ in everyday life is stressed.

There is a sense of urgency at the end of Jordan II: 'long pretence', 'save expense' point to time wasted. As The Temple draws to a close the passage of time passing becomes a recurring theme. The need to discover right language is most pressing. The Flower welcomes the renewed burst of creative energy but looks towards the time when the seasonal withering of inspiration no longer brings pain:

How fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean
Are thy returns! ev'n as the flowers in spring;

'The flowers' are symbols of poetic revival as well as the return of joy after 'grief.' The ebb and flow of poetic inspiration is part of God's overall design to bring man back to the wonder of love by 'repining restlessness'.

After so many deaths I live and write;
I once more smell the dew and rain,
And relish versing.

The 'dew' and 'rain' are the nurturing water of grace which has now lost the painful associations of the 'watering pots' in Affliction IV.

Living and writing are equally important to the poet-lover and both are gifts of 'my onely light.' God is the source of renewed love and language. Poetry is part of 'thy wonders', an aspect of God's love to be viewed with wonder and gratitude. 'Versing' can help 'To make us see we are but flowers that glide.' The 'flowers' of poetry remind us of our origins and our end. The knowledge reveals that there is 'a garden for us, where to bide.' Poetry warns of 'swelling' 'pride' since it too may be guilty of excess and thereby 'Forfeit' Paradise, the return to God. The conclusion of Jordan II has shown that Paradise is within the human heart where language must seek it.

In order to reach Paradise language has to be stripped of old associations with less pure forms of love. The Quidditie strips poetry to affirm its essential nature by negation. The poem lists all the things that poetry is not, 'a crown', 'honour', 'gay suit' and so on through the paraphernalia of the courtly world of love, service and poetry. The conclusion shifts to a positive definition, 'But it is that which while I use/I am with thee, and most take all.' The right use of poetry brings man back to God, 'I am with thee.' The return to God is the most important use of poetry taking precedent over all other uses. In fact the

whole courtly world is taken over by the dedication of poetry to God. Thus the 'lower court' of the world is brought into relation with God's 'higher Court of grace' through the medium of poetry.

One problem remains to be solved. There is a danger, implicit in Jordan II, that language may seduce and ravish the poet himself rather than his audience. While Herbert speaks of the desirable power of 'a set, and laboured, and continued speech' to 'inflame or ravish' (Country Parson, p. 257, ll. 24-25) the Country Parson's congregation, the preacher himself must remain in control of his material. It may be that finally beautiful language has to be renounced in order to return to Paradise. The Forerunners faces the possibility and the reality of failing powers and the imminent dissolution of man and language:

The harbingers are come. See, see their mark;
White is their colour, and behold my head.
But must they have my brain? must they dispart
Those sparkling notions, which therein were bred?

The creative power of the mind has been taken away and the poet feels himself turned the 'clod' of Dulnesse without hope of returning 'quicknesse.' The decline of poetic skill is artfully and humourously suggested in the trite rhyme of 'He will be pleased with that dittie;/And if I please him, I write fine and wittie.' The lines ask for reassurance and attempt to placate God. Yet the lines do speak the truth for God can supply the want of art in his poet.

Stanza three begins a great nostalgic review of language that represents one final effort to retain 'Lovely enchanting language.'

The beautiful, reclaimed harlot has reverted to old ways, in spite of the efforts of her benefactor. The poet has once more tried to deck the sense, 'as if it were to sell' to God:

Farewell sweet phrases, lovely metaphors.

But will ye leave me thus? When ye before
 Of stews and brothels onely knew the doores,
 Then did I wash you with my tears, and more,
 Brought you to Church well drest and clad:
 My God must have my best, ev'n all I had.

'My tears' have proved a poor restorative and cement in other poems so that it is not surprising that the poet's efforts have failed. Fine clothes too have proved a mistaken method of renovation. All that the poet has achieved is to veil the nature of the wanton. The offering of language to God has been a form of presumption and an incomplete conversion. Yet the poet is still strongly attracted to his mistress-language. He lingers over the words like a fond lover unwilling to let go and still hopeful that the rival 'fond lover' will prove less enticing. The defecation of language harms the poet and the value of the words:

Fie, thou wilt soil thy broider'd coat,
 And hurt thyself, and him that sings the note.

The speaker is now admonishing a naughty child and playing on feelings of responsibility and guilt. Language is a living creature for Herbert's poet, One that can respond with a will and with love.

'Foolish lovers' include the speaker himself as the movement towards renunciation begins. The clothing image is reduced to 'canvas' and language is dubbed 'follie.' The poet returns to the Platonic ideal, 'True beauty dwells on high.' A theoretic model of truth and beauty may prove more durable than the attempt to domesticate language and enjoy beauty:

Let foolish lovers, if they will love dung,
 With canvas, not with arras, clothe their shame:
 Let follie speak in her own native tongue.
 True beauty dwells on high: ours is a flame
 But borrow'd thence to light us thither.
 Beautie and beauteous words should go together.

'True beauty' is also found in the Psalms. Psalm 90 urges the return of God's favour and mercy and asks 'let the beauty of the Lord our God

be upon us.' Reliance upon God's eternal beauty not man's creative powers nor the allure of language is the point to be made from God's own language of the Psalms. The 'new song' of Psalm 96 is the goal of Herbert's poet so that he may say 'strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.' Human beauty is borrowed from God for a time, to help man reach back towards the source. Yet it must never be more than a means to a more important end. The beauty of language must also remain instrumental and not burn brighter than 'the flame' that the words describe or reproduce. Beauty and truth 'should go together' in right language, but it is more vital that the focus on God should remain firm, and that the clear commitment, 'Thou art still my God', should never be obscured. The message does not change 'with more embellishment' but is the constant pledge of God-centred, not man-centred or even language-centred, art. Once the poet is able to penetrate the core of meaning, ornament ceases to be important. The movement is similar to the other acts of submission and self-negation. The act of submission in fact frees the servant from servitude, the lover from idolatry and the poet from the entanglement of language. No longer bound by his own will the poet-lover-servant is free to use all his talents to acknowledge and glorify God. Thus he can accept the approach of winter and bid farewell to the birds of spring. His strength comes from within his own reliance on God. The 'bleak paleness' marks him as one of God's children. The Passover sign is no longer the mark of death but of renewed inner life. The initial reliance on human reason and inspiration has been replaced by trust in God. The poet no longer needs ornament although he may still use it in his verse. Understanding the alternatives he is able to choose and accept that if it is God's will, 'Lovely enchanting language' must be relinquished. Language has served the

purpose of bringing the poet to recognise that the chalk mark is also Christ on the cross and within each man.

Let a bleak palenesse chalk the doore,
So all within be livelier then before.

The remainder of The Temple reiterates a preference for simple language and an increasing sense that the journey is approaching an end. However, it would be wrong to assume that Herbert has found a simple solution that removes him from the world. The main trend is to depress the claims of the world and look towards God. However, as always Herbert's humour saves the world from total rejection. The poet confuses 'deceits' and 'delights' in The Rose:

Or if such deceits there be,
Such delights I meant to say;

In order to make his point the speaker deliberately substitutes the two words to add force to his earlier 'sugred lies.' His aim is to persuade his companion and consolidate his own 'right way.' The language appears very clear and precise but 'scourge' and 'purge' at lines twenty six and twenty eight turn the world into a stimulus for repentance. 'But I health not physick choose' is an admirable choice but in the context of the poem it becomes a claim to be without sin. It is only the rich meaning of 'rose' accumulated from other poems, the Bible and emblems, that clarifies the position. The rose is Christ as well as the flower that 'biteth in the close.' Christ does remove sin and is to be preferred over the ephemeral and unreliable human rose. Although the language and the solutions appear simple, both are the refined and complex product of many painful analyses, and of a wealth of cross-references throughout The Temple, linking Herbert's language to the Bible, and to the passage of human love and language through the vicissitudes of time.

In the last poems a more consistent tone of simplicity does emerge. The poems sound like a child at prayer and, as I have suggested, the tone fits both Auerbach's and Sidney's accounts of biblical and poetic language. The servant-lover-poet is moving towards a new role that will make him more completely part of God's family. Indeed it is the motion towards the fulfillment of the Gospel promise that each Christian will be the son of God and the brother of Christ: 'Behold; what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God' (I John 3:1). The Gospel confirms the Old Testament description in Genesis of 'the sons of God' multiplying on the earth.

Herbert's poetic is a way of loving God and through him neighbour and self. Poetry helps to bring man closer to God and therefore closer to the concept of charity in thought, word and deed. The right use of poetry coincides with the discovery of right love. The purification of language follows the same movement as the rehabilitation of the human heart and contributes to it. Both heart and language are released from reliance on exclusively human sources to look towards God for inspiration and guiding principles.

Many influences converge in Herbert's approach to poetic language. Classical standards filtered through Sidney's Christian modifications of Plato, Aristotle and Horace are evident. The Bible is a powerful source of example and vocabulary. What emerges is a Protestant poetic modified by the medieval courtly tradition. Herbert's poetic is based on the Bible and the continuity of human experience, through history, as it is interpreted by human reason operating in charity. The particular form of Protestant poetic which Herbert espouses leans towards Hooker rather than Calvin, although Calvin's more austere formulations

remain an undeniable influence.

Herbert constantly reminds us that the language of love and poetry originates with God. The restoration of language enables words to be used with clarity and precision, giving the impression of great simplicity. Rising confidence in language depends on constant vigilance and continuing awareness of the ease with which poet and language can slip back into old patterns. The movement of advance and regression never ceases although with the acceptance of grace brief resting points may be reached. The dominant movement is upward and forward to God but the counter, retrograde movement cannot be discounted. Love III offers a resting point to consolidate the threads of thought and language and provide a 'taste' of Paradise.

CHAPTER VI

'Taste and fear not'

The poems following The Forerunners are closely related to each other in content and tone, so that they may be considered as a group, moving in the same direction towards an anticipated climax.

The general movements of approach and withdrawal that have characterised the feelings and actions of the lover-servant now become an uncertain response to the loving invitation that welcomes man to participation in the promised marriage feast in heaven. The stripping/undressing process is now reversed by the selection of more durable garments and a 'new look' which will never be out of 'fashion.' The transformation of Death's 'uncouth' appearance is achieved with 'new array' that makes 'dust' and 'bones' 'gay' and 'glad.' Christ's undressing in The Bag has provided human nature with new clothes that are fit for heaven. Defects are not hidden by clothing but accepted and eventually transformed by Christ's garments of flesh and blood.

The main dilemmas that have faced Herbert's lover-servant-poet are condensed into the thought and language of the final poems, so that we are given a review of the material of The Church. The system of cross-reference of words and ideas between poems and with biblical material is most pronounced in the last thirteen poems. The simplicity that reminds us of a child praying to an admired and loved father is a result of all the careful analysis of meaning that has gone before. Individual words and whole lines reverberate like the echo in Heaven, repeating

with a slight alteration the preceding thought and language.. Consequently, clarification and not simple repetition is achieved.

In the previous discussion of language in Chapter V I have sketched the progression of meaning that enables The Rose to claim 'For my answer is a rose.' The rose has come to mean not only the ephemeral and grief-ridden temporal world of love and service, but a purging reminder of human fallibility, and finally Christ's blood and love. Another word 'fair' has been extended from a description of appearance to the sense 'just', in 'fairly':

Say that fairly I refuse,
For my answer is a rose.

The use is consonant with Shakespeare's complex usage which requires the word 'fair' to refer to physical appearance, inner value and the sense of right judgement and generous conduct. 'Fair' is one aspect of the triple love test discussed in Chapter V. Although Herbert rejects the deceits of the world, which seek to place human values above God's known standards, he does so with graceful wit. Herbert takes the word 'fair', which in Frailtie has been a term of ironic contempt, and, while maintaining 'Worldly joyes to be a scourge', first allows 'worldly joyes' to be 'a purge' then makes a personal choice of 'health not physick', with a courteous reliance on his own right reason derived from 'a rose.' The pun with the verb 'arose', formed by eliding 'a rose' and evident to the ear and the eye when the poem is read, makes the answer Christ. The death on the cross, the flower seeming to wither on the tree, becomes at the resurrection an affirmation that Christ's rose of love will never fade. The continuation of temporal life into eternal life is possible as long as man participates in Christ's blood sacrifice both in everyday conduct and the renewed pledge of the Eucharist. In Dulnesse Christ is

described as 'pure red and white.' His bloody complexion is compared to the blushing roses that colour the courtly lady's cheeks. In The Rose Christ is once more preferred above the 'worldlings' rose so that there is a double answer in the final line. The meaning follows the proposition of line twenty one:

If then all that worldlings prize
Be contracted to a rose;
Sweetly there indeed it lies,
But it biteth in the close.

'If then' qualifies the rejection of the world and opens the possibility that 'a rose' may not be an adequate symbol for 'all' that may be valuable in the world. The Elixir gives an answer that turns service in the world into a form of service to God:

Who sweeps a room as for thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine.

When human conduct is referred to the truth of God's law, human action may become fine and throw off the burden of 'deceits.' In The Rose the conclusion about the world depends on a hypothetical 'If then.' The poem is a demonstration of human reasoning, making analogies, labelling and judging. The worldly rose is sweet but 'it lies' so that the sweetness may be counterfeit. The thought has come from Dulnesse, 'Sure thou didst put a minde there, if I could/Finde where it lies' (l. 24, p. 115). 'Lies' in the sense of untruth, is applied to the mind so that there is some evidence that human reason may need to be supplemented with a more complete understanding of the 'worldlings' rose. 'Deceits' are to be rejected but not true service and love in the world. 'Contracted' refers to reduction and to the form of betrothal and marriage, as well as a business contract. The point to be taken is that of Love I and II: the exclusive commitment to the world reduces man to the ephemeral, wounding

rose. 'But it biteth in the close' refers to the final judgement which will go against those who choose the fading rose of the world. The plucking of the rose pricks the hand like the prick of death; 'close' is the embrace of death, the ardent lover of the 'worldlings' rose. Yet the plucked rose can become a purge by pricking the human heart into repentance. However, a death-bed conversion produced by fear of damnation is not the right way to love God. A life of healthy praise should be the choice. The poem draws attention to 'contracted' meaning in the rose symbol; in fact God's poet condenses both the world and divine love into the same figure. Within the words 'rose' and 'fairly', an intricate system of cross comparison and evaluations is worked out, drawing on the thoughts and language of other poems and the same symbols found in the Bible and the milieu of courtly love and service. The book of nature and the book of Scripture are companion sources.

The Rose draws together and compares human and divine values. Discipline and Judgement relate the question of human worth to the fear of punishment and uncertainty about merited love. The insecurity of Affliction I is repeated in Judgement's 'dreadful look' and 'What others mean to do, I know not well.' The poet-lover-servant cannot believe that he is 'so void of sin' by his own efforts. The ironic comment on the doctrine of merit refers the poem to I John 1:8: 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' There is only one way to handle the fear of judgement and so the poem turns to the 'Testament' of Christ's love: 'There thou shalt finde my faults are thine.' The pronouns 'my', 'thine' transfer the burden of sin to Christ and refer the responsibility for punishment to divine love.

Discipline begs God to 'Throw away thy rod', the symbol of anger

and punishment in Sighs and Groans and the antithesis of 'Saviour' and 'feast':

Thou art both Judge and Saviour, feast and rod,
Cordiall and Corrosive.

The two faces of God are necessary to bring man back to love, but as the journey approaches an end, the poet prays that God will bid farewell to punitive measures and harsh judgement, preferring instead rehabilitation through love, and justice with mercy. The stern Father-King of the Old Testament judgement seat is asked to pass the sceptre of power to his other self, the gentle, but still powerful judge, who looks at man with the eyes of a lover and friend:

Throw away thy rod,
Throw away thy wrath;
O my God
Take the gentle path.

Herbert argues that the grounds of wrath have been removed; the human will is submissive to guidance; language and reason are referred to God and reliance is placed in the word of God:

Not a word or look
I affect to own,
But by book
And thy book alone.

The rebellion of The Collar is subdued in the language of The Banquet which converts anger and self-will to wonder and submission, in the same way as Discipline seeks to convert 'thy rod' to love. The Collar complains 'My lines and life are free', The Banquet responds 'Let the wonder of his pitie/Be my dittie,/And take up my lines and life.' The 'gentle path' is set down in Herbert's version of Psalm 23:

He leads me to the tender grasse,
Where I both feed and rest.

The notion of Christ as the source and provider of nurture and sanctuary

runs through the thought and vocabulary of the final group of poems. The motif recalls the parables of the Kingdom as a feast and the many allusions to dressing, savouring and participating in the sacrificial feast which we find through The Temple.

The link with the Eucharist and the Last Supper is plain in The Invitation which repeats the 'Come' of Home, this time drawing man towards a meeting with God that will not be frustrated.

Love is a banquet of the senses in the last poems. The Banquet reworks the tastes and smells of The Odour and the 'Pomander' is more precisely a symbol of the bruised body on the cross, exuding an enticing fragrance:

But as Pomanders and wood
Still are good,
Yet being bruised are better sented.

The moral warnings of The Church Porch against excess in drink and meat change to 'Taste and fear not' when the feast is the flesh and blood of Christ's body. The waste of time and resources deplored in Jordan II is echoed in The Invitation:

Come ye hither All, whose taste
Is your waste.

The solution is to 'save your cost, and mend your fare' by choosing God's nourishing and revitalizing food. The stress on 'All' in the refrain opens the invitation to all men in spite of their failings and previous wrong choices.

The Banquet takes up the flight and eye imagery of The Temple with increasing confidence in the opportunity to reach the goal of rest and clear human sight, inspired and aided by divine love:

But I still being low and short,
Farre from court,
Wine becomes a wing at last.

Christ's blood draws human nature upwards:

For with it alone I flie
 To the skie:
 Where I wipe mine eyes, and see
 What I seek, for what I sue:
 Him I view,
 Who hath done so much for me.

The progress towards recognition of God's love and a right response has been built on the mistakes and failures recorded in earlier poems. Clear and simple vision has been developed through intricate and painful self-analysis. The Wreath demonstrates the process of clarification. The movement of the poem is based on a chain of meaning linking the final words of each line to the beginning of the next. The construction is a miniature of the incremental continuity of human experience in love, service and language which I have identified throughout the foregoing pages. Individual lines remain intact and hold on to their meaning yet each links into the next to add to our understanding of the poem. In the same way Classical morality and poetics merge into Old and New Testament laws and language, and all three meet the thought and language of present personal experience. In all phases, the specific issues of human worth, the rules of love and service, and the penalty for wrong-doing join with a pressing anxiety about the right language in which to express moral values and the concept of loving service. These issues are faced at all points along the journey but the solutions are revised according to the context. Thus 'A wreathed garland of deserved praise' stands alone and is valuable; the laurel wreath of the pagan poet and conqueror is a symbol of an accepted value system. However, within the context of God's presence in the next lines the value is reassessed, until finally 'this poore wreath' is identified with the crown of thorns of Christian joy and grief, which alone can turn feeble poetry, 'this poore wreath',

into a crown of praise. The chain of continuity progressively reduces reliance on human 'wreaths', and increases dependence on the intervention of divine grace, working with human nature to achieve the garland of praise promised in the first lines.

It is important to recognise the provisional tone of the final lines. 'I may' asks permission but is also to be realised in future action. 'Then shall I give' confirms that the praise is as yet unperfected. In Discipline although the heart is 'bent' towards God the stress falls on 'aspire' at the end of the next line. The poet-lover is not quite at the end of the journey.

Love III gives us a brief taste of the delight that waits and beckons man to a 'full-ey'd' reunion with God.

The poem opens with a clear statement of the welcome motif followed by the hesitant response of the human guest:

Love bade me welcome but my soul drew back.

'Love' is the God of love of the Gospel and the courtly tradition, and the master-mistress of loving service. The 'welcome' is to the fulfillment of the roles of servant-lover, guest-beloved which are also performed by Christ, the quintessential master-servant, lover-mistress, host-guest. As Anselm has put it Christ must be 'perfect God and perfect man in order to make' atonement for man's sin.¹ Christ must demonstrate the controlling power of love and also submission to love; he commands and serves. The soul is reluctant to respond to the welcome; reticence and retreat are explained by a profound sense of unworthiness, for 'My soul' is 'Guilty of dust' and sin. 'Dust' is felt to be a barrier and a

¹ St. Anselm, "Cur Deus Homo", Ch. VII, in St. Anselm Basic Writings, trans. S. W. Deane, introd. Charles Hartshorne (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Co., 1962), p. 246.

badge of shame. The repeated reworking of 'dust' throughout The Church poems has failed to fix the value of 'dust' for the poet-lover. 'Yet' is 'in spite of' so that the invitation and welcome to the feast is not enough to convince the poet that he is worthy. He remains tied to human concepts of time and worth, requiring as the poem Time suggests not less life-span but more time to become valuable. Time concludes that 'He doth not crave lesse time but more.'

'Yet' is countered by 'But', introducing the next overture of love. The eyes of love observe and respond to the sense of worthlessness and discomfort. 'Eyes' begin to work on the concept of 'dust' in the complex renovating process analysed in Chapter IV. The host, with the hidden pun on the communion host, is intimately tuned in to the feelings and thoughts of the guest. The promise of 'full-ey'd love' in The Glance is played out in Love III:

But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
If I lacked anything.

The image of 'full-ey'd love' is literally brought to life with 'quick-ey'd', so that actions confirm and make good the prophetic promise of The Glance. 'Quick' is the life-giving force that the poet lacked in Dulnesse. The ready response of 'Love' in Love III answers the earlier plea for 'quicknesse' and echoes the Psalmist's 'Quicken me after thy loving kindness' (Ps. 119:88). The words of the New Testament are even more precisely repeated:

'For the word of God is quick and powerful ... and
it is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of
the heart.'

Hebrews 4:12

Christ, the Word made flesh, sees into the heart of the poet's anxiety in Love III.

'Quick-ey'd' refers to the speed and penetration of loving insight and transfers the power of life and death from the courtly mistress's eyes to Christ. Love and language have returned to their original, true source.

The scene of welcome draws on biblical material in the Old and New Testament. The prophet Zephaniah warns that 'the day of the Lord is at hand; for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.' Punishment, not love, awaits the uninvited guests 'all such as are clothed with strange apparel' (Zeph. 1:7). The guest in Love III fears that he may have presumed to invite himself to the feast. 'Love' approaches to dispel the fears and bring the New Testament definition of guest to the fore. The wedding feast in Matthew (22:1-14) has 'both bad and good' guests to replace those who 'were ~~not~~ worthy.' Yet the problem of inappropriate clothing persists and Herbert must somehow discover fit clothing. Another parable of the kingdom offers hope to the 'poor and halt' (Luke 14:21). However, the statement, 'many are called, but few are chosen', is a problem. Herbert interprets the passage in two ways. Welcome is a double movement beginning with the call from God, then followed by the response from man. Man's responsibility is to answer the call and become a guest; self-will is the barrier to selection. The Invitation invites all, 'Lord I have invited all', but a process of self-selection aided by the enlightenment of divine grace, determines the final guest-list. Fit wedding garments are chosen with eyes cleared by love as Love III proceeds to show.

The marriage supper of the Lamb in Revelations, 'Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb' (Rev. 19:9), is relevant and indicates that the prophetic revelation of Love III looks

forward, beyond the temporary experience of the poem, to eternity. The ritual of the Eucharist is, of course, a constant point of reference for the language and ceremonial movement of the poem, and is a symbol of the eternal regeneration and continuity of love.

Since man is free to accept or refuse the welcome of 'love', one refusal would lead to exclusion if the invitation were not renewable. God's invitation is daily repeated and the opportunity to accept is continually available. Giddinnesse recognises 'Except thou make us dayly, we shall spurn/Our own salvation!' God's love is beyond the temporal span and is eternally regenerative. The verb tenses of Love III move between past, present and future, dissolving the normal sequence of time. Time becomes fluid, opening in the past: 'bade', 'drew back'; bringing in the present participle: 'observing', 'questioning', with the sense of continuous action; returning to the past: 'answer'd'; and leaping into the future: 'You shall be he.' 'I will serve' is a future intention that involves the present submission of the human will to God's loving provision for man. The cumulative effect is to merge temporal action and language with an eternal and continuous movement which Auerbach describes in Mimesis:

The horizontal, that is the temporal and causal, connections of occurrences is dissolved; the here and now is no longer a mere link in an earthly chain of events, it is simultaneously something which has always been, and which will be fulfilled in the future; and strictly, in the eyes of God, it is something eternal, something omni-temporal, something already consummated in the realm of fragmentary earthly events.

Mimesis, Ch. 3, p. 64-65

The verbs of Love III achieve the effect of 'something omni-temporal', and perform the same motion of continuity, and inter-connection of human and divine experience, which is evident in the structure of The Wreath.

The courteous dance of approach and retreat between host and guest

is the courtly love dance between lover and mistress. Both participants observe the courtesies of the courtly code. The host defers to the needs of his guest; the guest is also the lover overcome by the beauty which his mistress now offers him; the mistress is at the same time the master welcoming his humble, hesitant servant to his table. Christ is too the lover and friend encouraging his beloved to believe in the power of love to overcome the difference in their station. The ritual approach-retreat movement brings the lovers, host and guest, master and servant, progressively closer to each other. The poet is still troubled that he may not be 'A guest ... worthy to be here.' Love replies 'You shall be he' and it is a promise of approaching transformation. Yet the guest is still incredulous, 'I the unkinde, ungrateful?' He has identified the crucial barrier to complete participation and reciprocal love. Man is unable by himself to look towards God because his eyes are blinded by the 'dust' of line two; he is bowed by a profound sense of unworthiness and awe in the presence of God. Once more the relation between 'eyes' and 'dust' is critically relevant. The many references identified in the chapter on 'Love' are brought to a climax in the interchange between host and guest. The promise of the lifted 'vail' in Corinthians (I. 13:12) is desired but also feared:

Ah my deare
I cannot look on thee.

The speaker metaphorically averts his eyes but Love initiates ever closer contact. 'Drew nearer' becomes 'Love took my hand.' The touch begins the transformation of 'dust' and 'eyes' just as Christ cured the blind and maim in the Gospel by touch. 'Who made the eyes but I' reminds the guest that eyes were created by God and therefore are valuable and worthy. The 'shame' associated with 'dust' at line two is dispelled, 'And know

you not, sayes Love, who bore the blame?' The imagery of dust blowing in the eyes to mar sight in poems like Love I and II and Frailtie is first related to man's sin, 'Guiltie of dust and sinne', and then transformed into clear sight and worthiness when Christ absolves man from sin, 'who bore the blame?' Questions and answers capture the mood of child-like simplicity, noted earlier in the discussion of the last group of poems. The tenderness of a nurturing adult responds to the subdued despair of a child seeking knowledge. In The Country Parson Herbert describes the technique of catechising which is precisely used by Love, 'helping and cherishing the Answerer, by making the Question very plaine with comparisons, and making much even of a word of truth from him' (p. 256, ll. 13-15). 'Love' picks up and develops the guest's 'cannot look' and 'shame' so that worthiness is discovered in words of unworthiness. 'Quick-ey'd' love can discern the true meaning of language. Christ also demonstrates not only insight into poetic technique but the power of composition. The poet-guest's human words and love flow into Christ's words and love so that both create the poem. Christ clarifies and purifies meaning as he explains away the poet's fears. Human language returns to the source to be cleansed and then returns back to the human speaker with the clear message of love.

The transformation takes place in the language with which Christ demonstrates the truth of his advice in Jordan II to copy the 'readie penn'd' imagery of love. The interchanges with Christ bring the divine word into the poem as a participating voice so that there is no longer a distinction between human and divine language. Human poetry flows into the work of the divine poet; together man and Christ write the poem of human life.

Yet, the human poet finds it difficult to believe that his contribution has any meaning. Man is unworthy because he is 'unkinde' and 'ungrateful.' The courtly bond of service and love has failed. The servant-lover has been ungrateful, almost ungraceful, without grace, and undervalued the favours bestowed on him by his master-mistress. As a lover he has proved 'unkinde.' The word carries the complex meaning that Shakespeare works into 'kind' in the sonnets and plays. 'Unkinde' is unnatural, contravening the natural bond of affection, cruel and unresponsive, ungenerous and therefore devoid of charity. The lover-servant has failed in charitable love towards God, his neighbour and himself. Consequently he is not fit to look on 'Love.' Yet man's argument is proved wrong. Human reason cannot penetrate far enough into the divine mind to make conclusions about divine love.

The consequences of 'marr'd' are taken over by Christ who takes 'the blame' so that man is not permitted to accept 'blame' or make reparation. Christ forestalls all man's arguments and accepts human nature with all its flaws into the feast of love.

If there is to be no blame for man then what remains for man to do? 'I will serve' says the guest. Not even service is allowed. The words are stripped away with 'You must sit down.' 'Love' will serve and leave nothing for the guest to do but receive food and obtain pleasure and nourishment. 'Taste my meat' is on the surface a simple, courteous invitation but the words are the key to the movement not only of Love III but The Temple. 'Love' responds to the 'famisht eyes' of Longing and the 'desire of meat' in The Glimpse so that the audacious pun on 'meat' conflates the domestic, sexual and spiritual senses of the word. 'Meat' is the body of Christ, the physical flesh that satisfies hunger and

desire for food and fulfillment. Christ is simultaneously food, a desirable body and a divine presence. Human and divine meanings converge in 'meat' to suggest that there is a further play on the sense of reunion or meeting. Flesh which was 'dust' at the beginning of the poem has become food to sustain eternal life. Man's role then is to accept the position of guest and then, with child-like obedience, feed on the nurturing 'meat' of love.

The ritual of the Eucharist takes Christ inside each individual so that human nature receives the divine nature in a recapitulation of the Incarnation. Thus human nature becomes both a type of Christ and a fulfillment of Christ's promise in the daily renewal of the pledge of Christian love.

However, the words 'guest', 'taste' and the past tense, 'I did sit and eat', point to a moment of identification rather than a permanent state. What we are given is a tempting 'taste' of the renewal of innocence; enough to encourage a continued aspiration towards the promised goal, and strength to face the endless battle with sin. A guest is not a permanent resident and one meal cannot satisfy hunger for long. The weary traveller has temporarily found rest and succour in spite (of) his own assessment of his unworthiness. The promise of continuing love through temporal life into eternity gives strength, renewable in the Church service of communion, to go on from Love III into The Church Militant.

The last words of The Church lead into the journey through religious history which details the wandering of the Church from pagan to contemporary persecution by sin:

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

The words spoken by the angel at Christ's nativity represent the affirmation of Christian rebirth. The lines look up to heaven but are in contact with the world in the blessing for 'peace' and charity (good-will) towards each other and from God to men. Love III teaches the lessons of charity and humility which are the essence of right love and fortify the individual against the onslaught of sin in The Church Militant.

The final poem in The Temple is an early piece written in a style that Hutchinson notes Herbert did not repeat (Works , p. 543). However, the poem was placed at the end of The Temple by Herbert. The implication is that the renovating process is never complete until death, and most important that the rejuvenated Christian must return into the world to be a type of Christ for other men. The anti-type, man striving to fulfill the life of Christ in his own life, is also the type of love for future generations. He is an example of how God's word may be applied to everyday life.

The continuity of sin and love is baldly stated in The Church Militant:

Plato and Aristotle were at a losse,
And wheel'd about again to spell Christ-Grosse.

Sparkling wit and subtlety are replaced by straightforward, rough humour. The lines are an 'unpolished' statement of the intricate, skilfull pattern of The Wreath which reveals and builds on an incomplete first position. The progression from pagan to Christian awareness is accomplished in two, forthright lines. For a moment the poet conforms to Calvin's 'unpolished simplicity' tinged with the tone of satire. The Church Militant represents the same sharp opposition between the world and divine aspirations as Herbert's first sonnets:

Why should I Womens eyes for Chrystal take?

Such poor invention burns in their low mind
 Whose fire is wild, and doth not upward go
 To praise, and on thee, Lord, some ink bestow,
 (Second Sonnet in Lives)

He finds 'In the best face but filth.' We may ask whether the charitable, courtly tone we have come to rely on in Herbert's Church is repudiated in the end for Calvin's stern judgement of human corruption.

Enthusiasm and immature superiority speak in Herbert's letter sent to his mother with the first sonnets. The Classical Muses are rejected, 'I need not their help, to reprove the vanity of those many love-poems, that are daily writ and consecrated to Venus' (p. 363, ll. 6-8). Yet The Church poems have revealed the religious poet's own vanity, in Jordan II for example. The Church Militant shares the early religious fervour and may be seen as a repetition of The Thanksgiving which followed the awe and painful realisation of Christ's suffering and sacrifice for man. In The Thanksgiving the overwhelming impression of The Sacrifice produces impetuous actions of renunciation that are subsequently examined in other poems and qualified by increasing insight. In the same way the profound experience of rebirth in Love III stimulates the first impetuous steps of the newborn Christian into battle with 'Sinne.' L'Envoy restores the translucent, crystallised language of the last poems in The Church. The theme of peace and nurture is reasserted. The 'bloud' and 'death' of The Sacrifice meet the feast of Love III using language to bridge grief and joy, death and life:

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

'Sinne' attempts to destroy the value of Christ's 'bloud' and 'flesh' turning 'thy Crosse' into 'common wood' but the poet relies on God to

conquer through love:

Blessed be God alone,
Thrice blessed Three in One.

FINIS

The journey back to God demands a radical reappraisal of man's position in the world and in the order of grace. Language is man's companion traveller so that the right role for man and poetry is discovered and pursued as one goal. Man and language suffer from the consequences of the Fall. The Temple explores the precise symptoms of man's fallen nature and of debased language. The human will no longer acts from selfless love but from self-interest. Without the firm centre of right affections, the 'ever fix'd mark' that Shakespeare finds in Sonnet 116, and the controlling power of reason, urged by Hooker, the human will becomes a renegade, pursuing pleasure for its own sake, revelling in self-centred pride. Augustine's 'for the sake of God' is forgotten. The pronouns 'I' and 'thee' clash as God and man are divorced by the human will. Paradoxically, the thought and language that drive 'thee' and 'I' apart also begin the counter movement towards regeneration and right love. The broken heart reveals the possibility of improvement and increasing strength not merely a remaking of the original, intact heart. Reason is sharpened and exercised in the pursuit of right love. The will passes through rigorous tests of its own strength against the power of God until impotence reveals that nothing can be done without divine grace.

The precursor to grace, as The Forerunner proves, is a meticulous stripping away of old roles, old meaning and the misguided activity of self-centred love. St. Paul tells us that 'our old man is crucified' with Christ and that as Christ rose from the dead so should man 'walk in newness of life' (Rom. 6:4). Love III establishes that the new life,

the new Paradise, is a personal contract between Christ and the individual, chosen with open eyes, and reached through the vicissitudes of affliction. The contract has no final form on earth. It requires a vigilant and continuing process of revision and renewal. The figure of Christ on the cross comes to symbolise the meeting point of the old and new way of life.

The linear and vertical movement of the cross is a consistent feature of the language in the poems. The upright beam spans heaven and earth, stretching man in the pain of Affliction IV and drawing him upward in Easter-wings and the 'silk twist' of The Pearl. The cross-beam is the passage through the world from birth to death, followed in The Pilgrimage and Peace. Paradoxically that road, claimed for exclusive human use in The Collar,² is also the way to God if the journey follows Christ's path in Lent. Both directions lead back to right love although the journey is painful and confusing. Yet once the form is discerned the simplicity of the solution is startling. Eden is no longer an idyllic garden but a carefully planted and nurtured heart that houses the figure of the crucified Christ.²

Man's role is to recognise and respond to love, to accept grace wholeheartedly and no longer resist the appeal of the master-mistress, Christ. The poet-lover must carry on the tradition of right love and right language entrusted to him by God and previous generations. In Love III Herbert accepts the trust by trusting in God's love: 'So I did sit and eat.' Yet, the speaker knows that 'repining restlesnesse' will return and attempt to disturb the feast.

² An emblem showing Christ within a heart is reprinted by Lewalski, figure 8.

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