The Poetry of Immanence: Sacrament in Donne and Herbert

by

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Sacramental topoi and allusion in George Herbert and John Donne mark the intersection of spiritual and material claims to religious identity. The Incarnational character of the Eucharist, the Word-flesh polarization it addresses, is conceptually central to the poet-priest's interrogation of the relationships which obtain between spiritual piety and ceremonial forms, religious subject and community, doctrine and politics, private devotion and art, Word and words. Just as the paradox of Incarnation articulates the temporal and material immanence of an otherwise eternal and transcendent Being, so do these several dichotomies involve the interpellation of relatively static aspects of religious experience amid the more dynamic contexts which inform them. This study posits a sacramental or Incarnational poetics as essential to our understanding of the complexities characterizing Donne's and Herbert's doctrinal, devotional, socioreligious and artistic concerns.

The Word-become-flesh, its duality at once implicitly tending toward polarization and conflation, is the paradoxical essence of sacramental thought and the epistemological basis of poetic experience. Sacramental topoi and allusion are central to the interrogation of binarisms which, though certainly important for Christian thought and tradition, are of a much broader cultural significance. Indeed, interest in such dichotomies as spirit and matter, soul and body, meaning and language, individual and community, mind and art is by no means exclusive to the religious domain, even if concern for the nature of the relationships which obtain among deity and sacrament, private devotion and ceremony, or doctrine and ecclesiastical politics is. Even the distinction between Christian and secular culture is more or less anachronistic, at least as concerns Herbert and Donne, for whom the relationship between the Word-become-flesh and these other human dualities was apparently less metaphoric than symbolic, less a matter of a conceptual basis around which thought might be organized than a present reality with which all experience is imbued. The Incarnational paradox, by their account, is embedded in the quotidian -- fleshed out, so to speak, in a world constitutive of divine immanence, and whose significance, moreover, is inexhaustible. 'Thy word is all,' writes Herbert, 'if we could spell.'

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For her wisdom, support and many kindnesses,
to Eva go my sincerest gratitude and love.

For Joel and Michael

What is this Holy Spirit?
And what is it doing in the eggplant?

--- David Craig

Introduction

Purpose, critical context, theology, Church of England

1
Purpose

Sacramental topoi[1] and allusion in George Herbert and John Donne mark the intersection of spiritual and material claims to religious identity. The incarnational character of the Eucharist, the Word-flesh polarization it addresses, is conceptually central to the poet-priest's interrogation of the relationships which obtain between spiritual piety and ceremonial forms, religious subject and community, doctrine and politics, private devotion and art, Word and words. Just as the paradox of Incarnation articulates the temporal and material immanence of an otherwise eternal and transcendent Being, so do these several dichotomies involve the interpellation of relatively static aspects of religious experience among the more dynamic contexts which inform them. This study posits a sacramental or incarnational poetics as essential to our understanding of the complex doctrinal, devotional, socioreligious and artistic concerns of two of the seventeenth century's most celebrated literary figures.

The interiority characteristic of private devotion is always reflective of creeds and traditions in the broader Christian community, while these in turn, epitomized and implicitly rehearsed in ceremonial forms, attest truths and realities which ultimately exceed their grasp. The Pauline admonition to examine oneself when receiving Holy Communion promotes the mutual reinforcement of ritual act and psychological reflection, of external and internal aspects of spiritual renewal. Sacraments, then, and particularly the Eucharist,

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[1] 'Sacrament' and 'sacramental' will for the most part refer to the Eucharist, or, more properly for the Elizabethan and early Stuart Church of England, the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. Some attention is paid Baptism, marriage, auricular confession and ordination; while the Eucharist and Baptism were the only official sacraments for the early English church, other rituals, especially ordination, continued to be held in high regard by episcopalian divines indifferent to Roman Catholic associations: A. Milton 475-79. Occasionally, 'sacramental' may also connote those aspects of medieval synthesis and Aristotelian or Ptolemaic cosmology wherein the universe and its constituent parts constitute a vast and hierarchical web of correspondences, sympathies and antipathies -- a world, moreover, in which matter is pervaded by spirit and thus is of supernatural significance. Whatever its early modern 'scientific' status, it is clear just such a world view was a vital part of Donne's and Herbert's poetic imagination, as it would continue to be for Vaughan, Milton and Traherne.

occupy a liminal position in the formation and evolution of Christian identity. For in bringing the materials of ceremony within close proximity to the devotional psyche, they provide a highly ritualized means of integrating the private and social dimensions of religious life.

This intersection of private and public spheres reflects the incarnational features of sacramental doctrine. As religious community and ceremony are material counterparts to the constituent souls they assume, so do the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine flesh out, so to speak, the promise contained in the words of institution, 'This is my body, this is my blood'. If not for the reifying effects of ritual and its trappings, both Christ's flesh and blood and the individual communicants they feed and affirm would not have the ontological status that ceremony allows. That the Word became flesh and 'dwelt among us', as the magisterial opening to John's Gospel avers, is the central paradox of Christianity reflected in and rehearsed by the Lord's Supper. Incarnation, however, is but prelude to Crucifixion, and so the sacramental wine is at once of a rejuvenating and bitter fruit; the gift of Christ to the world necessitates the death of him who, as one of Donne's 'La Corona' sonnets proclaims, 'cannot die'. Similarly, the self-affirming insularity and narcissism of which the private devotional sphere is susceptible are attenuated to the extent the *dévote* identifies with the broader Christian community of which he or she is a part. And because that community, the church, is the body of Christ, participation in its rituals constitutes a yielding of personal identity to that of Christ and to the church that ceremonially and institutionally manifests his Presence. Consuming the elements of bread and wine, then, is a consummation, a participation in a marriage in which bride and groom, individual and community, become one flesh. But because the sacrament combines reflection on ultimate sacrifice with the at least momentary demise of individual identity in favour of the Christian myth it celebrates, the Eucharist reflects a social as much as it does a theological *Consummatum est.*

As is true of all marriages, however, this one is not without its complications. As luminaries of the Stuart religious establishment, Herbert and Donne can no doubt be shown to exemplify both personal religious devotion and adherence to what Sir Thomas Browne was to call the 'articles, constitutions, and customs' of 'the great wheele' that is the English church.[2] But as religious artists, both address devotional matters in ways that cannot be reduced to pious, if dazzling, acquiescence. Nor is their relationship to a national church whose confessional identity was far from settled a simple matter either. Moreover, the doctrinal ambiguities permeating Donne's and Herbert's sacramental thought not only reflect general religious turmoil in the pre-Civil War church; they are intimately related to both the character of their spiritual devotion and the status of their art.

To the extent the Eucharist is thought to manifest Real Presence and objective access to divine grace, it counters the anxiety of a devotional psyche sensitive to the depravity of the human will and its utter inability to initiate or sustain the redemptive process. Though Herbert and Donne rarely countenance an explicitly predestinarian Calvinism, they do often evoke the anxious despair characteristic of those whose elect status is precarious, if not altogether in doubt. Moreover, their high regard for ceremonial forms and belief in the efficacy of an episcopal sacramental ministry does not preclude an evangelical piety preëminently devotional and word-centred in nature. This is not to say they exemplify the *via media* balance of otherwise opposite styles of divinity, but rather that their treatment of sacraments is symptomatic of the tension between a non-mediated spiritual subjectivity and one whose pedigree is more firmly rooted in the external forms and accoutrements of sacrament and ceremony.

If, however, discreet or isolated subjectivity in the religious sphere is distinct from the corporate identity celebrated through communal ceremony and sacrament, it is these same external forms of worship which facilitate justification of the religious poet's art and thus promote individual creative endeavour even while proclaiming the divine origin of all

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[2] Browne 1.5-6.

creativity: 'Thy word is all', writes Herbert in 'The Flower', 'if we could spell' (21). Incarnation, again, is central to a Christian poetics which seeks to communicate effectively that which is ultimately ineffable, just as sacraments claim somehow to embody that which, to reason anyway, must surely exceed their material and mediatory status. Indeed, it is the Incarnation itself that proclaims the fleshing of the eternal Logos, so that the Word is, quite literally, 'all'. It is, paradoxically, the relinquishing of transcendent divinity that gives Incarnation its peculiar power to invest flesh with a spiritual imperative, in the same way that the material being of a poem or painting is essential to whatever ideas it communicates, or that bread and wine are integral with the sacred flesh and blood they declare. Just as ideological conflict over the relative claims and status of flesh and spirit informs long standing controversy over the nature or *modus* of sacramental presence, so the same binary tension provides much of the creative impetus for Donne's and Herbert's religious thought, even as it prompts them to question the value of their art relative to the truths it communicates. Moreover, poetry and homily allow Herbert and Donne to objectify their internal spiritual experience, to exercise control over and to determine the outcome of processes that might otherwise escape their control. Poetic craft, then, shares with sacraments a capacity to externalize an otherwise subjective interiority; both devotional verse and sacrament facilitate the realization of private religious experience as part of a communal whole, whether through the public medium of literature or the collective celebration of ceremonial forms.

Chapter One examines the centrality of the Incarnation for *The Temple*, focussing on Herbert's use of sacramental topoi to explore the relationships which obtain between deity and sacrament, private and ceremonial aspects of religious experience, individual subjectivity and body of Christ, spiritual devotion and art.

Chapter Two begins the inquiry into John Donne, with which the remainder of this thesis is concerned, by elucidating the theological, social and political dimensions of the Dean of St. Paul's most explicitly sacramental sermon, that of Christmas 1626. Emphasis

here is placed on the contiguity of internal and external aspects of sacramental experience, paying particular attention to the relevance of the Eucharist for a religious interiority inflected with predestinarian Calvinism. We will see that despite his veiled endorsement of an avant garde,[3] even theologically Roman Catholic sacramentalism, Donne showed both considerable opposition to the anti-Calvinist divines then vying for control of the ecclesiastical establishment and a reluctance to allow the universalist implications of a sacramentally oriented ministry to impose upon God's hidden and unsearchable decrees.

Chapter Three continues to explore the contiguity of inner and outer dimensions of Christian faith as addressed by Donne's divine poems. Sacraments here provide material and objective escape from the anxieties of a Calvinist interiority even as they are the means by which grace is spiritually conferred. The liminal status of sacraments, moreover, is manifestly analogous to the performative and public character of Donne's devotional verse, the highly stylized ritual enactment of otherwise rarefied spiritual process.

Finally, Chapter Four suggests for sacraments a significance that goes beyond the purely religious: sacramental and incarnational thought, rather, play an essential and formative role in Donne's 'secular' poetic experience. His expansive and sometimes surprising appreciation of sacramental ideas and topoi suggest the centrality of the Incarnation in his understanding of and engagement with the world. The 'Songs and Sonets', elegies, satires and verse letters are in this respect, then, as much a celebration of the incomprehensible Logos that was Dean Donne's explicit vocational preoccupation as they are the witty diversions of a sceptical, cynical and bawdy Jack.

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[3] Historian Peter Lake has coined the phrase 'avant garde conformity' to refer to those divines whose ceremonialist emphasis distinguishes them both from other conformists less concerned for the sacramental dimension of pastoral ministry and from those whose sacramental proclivities are accompanied by whole-hearted endorsement of the sacerdotal policies of William Laud: Lake (1991); cf. A. Milton 8-9. 'Sacerdotal' means literally 'of the priesthood' and will henceforth refer to allusions, ideas or ecclesiastical policies reflective of the supernatural and divinely authoritative nature of ordained ministry.

2
Critical Context

This thesis is, in part, a response to and expansion of Malcolm Ross's comprehensive treatment of the Eucharist and seventeenth-century verse in his *Poetry and Dogma*, published some four decades ago. Yet another manifestation of T. S. Eliot's dissociation of sensibility doctrine, Ross's book regrets a poetic disintegration of psyche and sacrament, aligning the former with the fluid instability of metaphor (as opposed to analogy) and the 'metaphysics of process, in which symbolic belief and practice exist only to be annihilated in a metaphorical holocaust'. Distinguishing between 'Catholic rhetoric' and genuine 'Catholic dogma', and thus suspicious of the former being kidnapped and 'put to the service of Protestant Eucharistic dogma', Ross fails to recognize the complexity of verbal relations in Donne's and Herbert's sacramental thought.[4] That 'Herbert sees, as if before his very eyes'[5] underscores the iconographical significance of the mind's eye for the early modern religious psyche, thus undermining Ross's sacramental disdain for puritan psychologism. The admission poignantly illustrates the impossibility of discerning a 'genuine' or non-subjective sacramentalism in a poetic context. Surely the only 'objective' correlative of verse is its aural and graphic materiality. One may wish to distinguish between a poem which describes the experience of a thing from one which engages or conjures the thing itself. But the real difference here is one of rhetorical effect, the extent to which a poem succeeds in constructing the *illusion* (no less 'real' for being that) of Presence; whether the artist's experience (and manipulation of experience) is ever transcended by the 'reality' of the thing he addresses or describes is at the very least an epistemological impasse. All poetry, to the extent it is a reflection of the poet's experience, is 'psychological'; it accurately engages or communes with external reality to the degree it succeeds in suspending awareness of a mediating subject. That this ostensibly poetic and linguistic problem is central to sacramental theology is perhaps no more apparent than in

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[4] M. Ross 23, 179-80, 102.
[5] *Ibid.*, 176.

Ross's description of the rhetorical 'dress' of Truth as the 'accidents of place and time',[6] this latter echoing, perhaps deliberately, the Aristotelian categories of substance and accident informing scholastic and Tridentine Eucharistic formulae. While the present effort has affinities with Ross's book -- notably, a sensitivity to the poetic importance of the Incarnation and its imbrication of divinity in both nature and history[7] -- it is at odds with the absolute opposition Ross posits between a genuine sacramentalism and pietist psychology, and with the tendency to blame such as Donne and Herbert for allowing their Protestant convictions to descramentalize West European Christianity.

The concern to claim for Herbert and Donne a confessional identity, however definitive, has long been and continues to be an important feature of the critical landscape. Rosemond Tuve long ago recognized and documented in remarkable detail Herbert's debt to Roman Catholic tradition informing medieval verse and various devotional and liturgical materials. Though at one point allowing Herbert's preference for an internal temple over that of 'external rite and Law', she qualifies the notion by adding that for Herbert the imperatives of pietism 'brought a new danger bred of a new necessity', a danger which consists not so much in the ornate pomp of ritual as in the *lack* of a sufficiently balancing 'contrition'.[8] Louis Martz followed with an influential full-scale investigation into Ignatian spirituality as providing the formal and tonal materials of seventeenth-century devotional literature. While favouring the influence of continental Catholicism, Martz nevertheless recognized that it was 'the inward surge of Puritanism' combined with these older techniques which produced the distinctive quality of English devotion.[9] This 'Catholic Puritanism' allows that while the Eucharist is a weapon wielded against vice in, for example, Lorenzo Scupoli's sixteenth-century meditative treatise *Spiritual Combat*, it is nevertheless 'the weapon of mental communion' in Herbert 'which makes the sacraments

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[6] *Ibid.*, 19.

[7] *Ibid.*, 11. Ross also anticipates Rosalie Colie's observation that paradox in seventeenth-century literature is rooted in the Incarnation: Colie 6.

[8] Tuve (1952) 125.

[9] Martz (1954) 9.

flow from Christ's side.'[10] However, the 'new stage' in English puritanism characterized by 'Special Grace', 'inward researches' and 'mistrust of the senses' does not fully emerge until halfway through the century of revolution, *after* the likes of Donne and Herbert.[11]

The Anglo-Catholic model continued to dominate both Donne and Herbert criticism until the ground-breaking Protestant poetics of William Halewood and Barbara Lewalski. While his *Poetry of Grace* acknowledges that 'it is possible to find the fundamental Augustinian doctrines of the Puritans adequately represented in the doctrines of the anti-Puritans,' Halewood also maintains a rigid opposition between sacramental formalism and 'the internalizing of the spiritual life' symptomatic of puritan doctrine and practice.[12] According to Lewalski, the void left by this suspicion of sacramental divinity is filled by a word-centred piety that urges the sermon as a preparation for meditation, an application to self of scriptural truths preached.[13] More recently, Daniel Doerksen has defined the religion of Herbert and Donne as 'personal and biblical rather than institutional',[14] thus hyperbolizing Halewood's and Lewalski's legitimate findings in a manner as naive as claiming for a citizen of the Great White North the status of true Canadian as opposed to mere Tory, Liberal or New Democrat. This is the *sola fide-sola scriptura* fallacy of immoderate Puritanism critically reified, and it is astonishing that Doerksen can make such a claim after having so thoroughly characterized the conformist mainstream of the early Stuart church in precisely Calvinist terms. Celebrating the pietistic, evangelical strain of Donne's and Herbert's Calvinism, Doerksen's critique is essentially a defense of 'institutional' Reform theology,[15] and even includes an obligatory equivocation on the

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[10] *Ibid.*, 127-8, 299.

[11] *Ibid.*, 174-5.

[12] Halewood 65-73.

[13] Lewalski (1979) 155-6.

[14] Doerksen 139.

[15] In keeping with current historiographical practice, 'Reform' is used here and throughout to designate doctrinal if not ecclesiastical Calvinism: A. Milton 8 and n14. Some early Stuart divines, like Donne as we will see, were capable of embracing Calvinist and even predestinarian doctrine while maintaining a sacerdotal and sacramental style of divinity hardly acceptable to Calvin's more vocal champions.

apparently embarrassing matter of predestination. As for sacraments, the Eucharistic element in Herbert's poetry is 'overrated' by those who neglect to notice that most of the lyrics are about the speaker's heart.[16] As the present effort will demonstrate, it is not necessary to posit so rigid an opposition between sacrament and 'heart'. Doerksen in effect celebrates what Malcolm Ross derides: the desacramentalization of English devotional poetry. Both, however, are mistaken in denying a viable alternative, namely, the interpenetration or at least complex negotiation of sacramental and psychological pieties.

Protestant poetics and doctrine have been especially influential among Herbert scholars. Even Stanley Fish, who could hardly be said to harbour a particular confessional bias, nevertheless stresses the priority for Herbert's sacramentalism of Prayer Book calls to self-examination. Earlier, of course, it is the human-will-denying sovereignty of Calvin's deity that makes of *The Temple* a self-consuming artifact, and of external poetic form that which is always 'mended or completed or given meaning by God'.[17] Meanwhile, *via media* theories continue to discern an irenic balance of Protestant doctrine and Roman Catholic ecclesiastical traditions, though the middle road tends to veer in a decidedly Genevan direction. Gene Veith allows external ceremonial forms 'to have been closest to Herbert's experience', though 'intellectually he could discuss the sacraments in the more guarded terms of Reformed, Calvinist theology.'[18] More recently, Christopher Hodgkins has identified Herbert's *via media* as 'very nearly Calvinist. Very, very nearly.'[19] These studies have been of immense value in recognizing the importance of Calvinist thought for even the most 'Anglican' of English divines. Hodgkins in particular reminds us of the

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[16] *Ibid.*, 97. Other critics likewise observe that sacraments serve primarily to help Herbert experience the effects of God's already indwelling presence. While 'taste is possible only when the objects perceived are actually consumed by the body', the emphasis is on the 'soul' as it 'tastes the sweetness of the indwelling God'; Christ's 'sweetness is "in" the Eucharist by being "in" the believer': Sherwood (1989) 58-60, 72. Cf. McLaughlin and Thomas 116.

[17] Fish (1978) 111; Fish (1972) 203.

[18] Veith 218. Like Doerksen, Veith tends to downplay Calvin's *decretum horribile*. The chapter on predestination -- 'Unspeakable Comfort' -- blames Beza and other second generation Calvinists for predestinarian extremism, carefully citing passages in the *Institutes* which caution against inquiry into God's decrees, while ignoring those which explicitly advocate the curiosity unavoidably implicit in such doctrine.

[19] Hodgkins 20.

significant roles sacrament and ceremony play in Reform theology and ecclesiology, even if he advocates a homogeneity for Herbert's and Calvin's Eucharistic views indifferent to the nuances which render such an alliance problematic.[20]

The counter-Reform Herbert is certainly not without his champions. Following Martz and Tuve, and contrary to Malcolm Ross's disappointment at the Protestant declension of sacramental symbol, Heather A. R. Asals (Ross) posits a novel affinity between word and sacrament in *The Temple*. Equivocation, the Aristotelian notion that individual words have multiple significations, is the basis of a poetics which allows that the brokenness of language constitutes a multiplicity and indeterminacy parallel to the breaking of bread in the Eucharist and its implied interpellation of God and history.[21] Stanley Stewart also aims to correct recent critical emphasis on Herbert's 'Protestantism and/or Puritanism', though in citing *Musae Responsoriae* as evidence of Herbert's contempt for 'Puritans', Stewart neglects to recognize the primarily polemical currency of the term in 1620's religious debate; he thus confuses a defense of the church's rites and ceremonies with whole-hearted dismissal of other pietist values elsewhere associated with puritanism and toward which Herbert was sympathetic.[22] More pertinent and equally disdainful of Protestant piety is R. V. Young's erroneous characterization of Calvin and Zwingli as sharing a homogeneity 'typical of the Reformation'; his reading of 'The H. Communion', in its reluctance to recognize the poem's undeniably Protestant elements, complements Young's failure to acknowledge significant differences between Calvinist and Zwinglian views of the Eucharist.[23] Finally, Achsah Guibbory's recent and excellent *Ceremony and Community from Herbert to Milton* is similar to the present study in its characterization of ideological struggle in the Stuart church as between 'ceremonialist' and 'puritan' impulses,

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[20] *Ibid.*, 30-1. A somewhat more balanced advocate of the English *via media* allows that Herbert 'believed as strongly in predestination and the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace as he believed in the significance and beauty of the ritual': Summers 58.

[21] H. Ross (1981) *passim.*

[22] Stewart 29-33. For discussion of the term 'puritan' in the period see Collinson (1989) *passim.* For Herbert's puritanism in relation to *Musae Responsoriae* see Clarke 10-11.

[23] Young (1993) 190-1. On Calvin and Zwingli see below, 23 ff.

the former integrating 'inner and outer aspects of religious experience', the latter both 'suspicious of ritual forms' and focussing 'on the individual believer rather than the corporate religious community'.[24] My own view is that while the ceremonialist-puritan binarism may be useful in dealing with abstract religious or ideological categories, it must be approached cautiously when it comes to Herbert's actual poetic practice, where the integration of 'inner and outer' often accommodates the very puritanism that Guibbory would have it oppose.

If Herbert scholarship has for some time distilled the Protestant or at least *via media* elements of his writing, the exact opposite might be said of Donne's critics, many of whom observe a crypto-Catholic reluctantly acquiescing to a Protestant ecclesiastical hegemony. John Carey's *Life, Mind and Art* thus celebrates the creative energies of the artist while making much of the supposed 'Apostasy' of his later years, by which, presumably, Carey ironically intends Donne's conformity to English religious orthodoxy. While rightly sensitive to the stubborn persistence of an earlier Donne contaminating the pious integrity of the mature divine, Carey does not allow for the possibility that the reverse might also be true; rather, he sees the presence of 'theological niceties' in the more bawdy of earlier poems solely as evidence of the young Donne's blasphemous proclivities.[25] In thus allowing a partial secularization of the elder Dean's devotional persona while not permitting a complementary religious complexity for the posturing courtier, Carey's integration of multiple Donnes fails adequately to counter the Jack/John dichotomy institutionalized by Walton.

Carey's influence, nonetheless, has been considerable. Whereas, like Martz, Rosalie Colie was an admirable exponent of the interpenetration of divine and secular loves in Donne, Maureen Sabine bemoans the 'bloodless and fleshless Christ' of his Protestant theology.[26] Achsah Guibbory finds in the earlier poems a firm integration of spiritual and

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[24] Guibbory (1998) 45.
[25] Carey 106.
[26] Colie 129-35. Sabine 104.

erotic loves, which are thus sacramental in the Roman sense of being transubstantive, while the divine verse is plagued by the disintegration of soul and body reflected in Calvinist sacramental theology.[27] Thomas Hester also erroneously identifies Real Presence as exclusively Roman Catholic, thus allowing his detection of the doctrine in 'Songs and Sonets' to support a Roman Catholic reading, even if such an orientation is as impossible to discern as a Protestant one.[28]

Another notable feature of the recent critical literature is a tendency for Donne's 'religious' verse to be subsumed by a monolithic cultural materialism. Though allowing some room for personal agency, Ronald Corthell's divine Donne exercises an autonomy that must ultimately yield to ideological subjectification.[29] It is difficult to see how Donne's religious beliefs, as elusive as they may be, are based on merely 'arbitrary preferences' and yet provide insight into the presumably less elusive 'workings of his fancy'.[30] Arthur Marotti supports Carey's lack of sympathy for the possibility in Donne of a genuine religious impulse, reducing the devotional lyrics to 'the conversion of secular into religious values', a mere 'attempt to reaffirm self-worth and regain a measure of control in the most

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[27] Donne's loss of Ann, for example, is analogous to that of his Roman Catholic roots, his guilt in 'Since she whom I lov'd' over the inability to let go of Ann parallel to 'the idolatrous adoration, as Calvin would say, of the corporeal elements of the Sacrament'. Surely, however, 'the Catholic understanding that Christ mingles with the individual human soul when the bread and wine are taken into the body of the communicant' is as much Calvinist as it is Roman: Guibbory (1996) 209, 205. (See discussion of Calvin below, 24 ff.). David Aers and Gunther Kress, on the other hand, argue that the shifting emotional state of Donne's speaker in 'Holy Sonnets' precludes the 'introspective analysis' characteristic of a Calvinist devotional framework: Aers and Kress 66-7. It is, however, precisely in his sensitivity to and anxiety over an inconsistent and changing self that the speaker can be said to resist and thereby emphasize the absolute sovereignty and Will of a Calvinist God. Helen Gardner was closer to Donne's devotional sensibility when she recognized the essentially playful nature of the 'Holy Sonnets', that Donne's penitent, like his lover, is 'only feigning', only 'creating an image of himself at prayer', and that his mind 'is naturally sceptical and curious, holding little sacred': Gardner xvi-xvii.

[28] Hester (1996) 140. In an earlier article Hester is reluctant to assign any doctrinal specificity to Donne's sacramentalism: Hester (1990) *passim.* It is remarkable that Hester cites the speaker's begging his divine beloved in 'A Valediction of my name' to 'substantiate' the 'mortal accidents, the "glasse" and "lines" of [their] love' as supporting the poem's privileging of a Catholic reading: Hester (1996) 146. It is precisely the speaker's powerlessness, his despair in the face of an *untransubstantiated* encounter in that poem, that is analogous to the anxieties of the Calvinist speaker in 'Holy Sonnets'.

[29] The equivocating, divided self of 'If poysonous mineralls' surely suggests a problematizing of Foucauldian subjectification. The *poet's* awareness (and not just the sophisticated critic's) that 'intent or reason' is used against itself to produce this divided subjectivity (Corthell 147-9) constitutes at least some degree of emancipation, even if God's sovereignty is finally non-negotiable.

[30] Carey 14

unfavourable of social circumstances.'[31] It is as if the human desire for power or the anxiety over personal self-worth have never been eminently religious problems, inclusive of the social and artistic spheres that for Marotti and Carey dominate the spiritual. Religion is of course a social phenomenon; but it is no less subsumed by other areas of the social sphere than they in turn are affected by it. Rather than reduce his combinatory wit to any one aspect of his social being, I prefer to see Donne interrogating analogies which obtain among the various facets of his thought and experience. Surely attention to the presence of Calvinist elements in the 'Holy Sonnets' better explains the speakers' concern with self-worth and control than any theory of social posturing or courtly ambition. Courtly concerns, the quest for preferment and other social anxieties constitute but a limited, not exhaustive, set of historical coördinates relevant for the contextualizing of Donne's work. That he was able unabashedly to invest his divine verse with baldly 'secular' concerns suggests a conscious problematizing of any distinction between the two areas of experience, or at least a comfortable familiarity with their points of contact and shared vocabulary, an ease and tolerance sadly lacking in some of Donne's post-Victorian critics.

There are signs that the Protestant poetic dominating Herbert studies is receiving renewed interest among critics interested in the religious Donne. Anne Ferry, Terry Sherwood and Jeremy Maule all celebrate Donne's devotional spirituality,[32] while Paul Sellin has both initiated investigation into the nature of Donne's relationship with continental Calvinism and the Synod of Dort, and reopened debate with respect to the 'problematics of election and assurance' in the 'Holy Sonnets'.[33] Similarly appreciative of

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[31] Marotti (1986) 253. He later adds that Donne's reputation as pious Dean was largely 'fabricated' by Donne himself and the print culture which aimed to celebrate that aspect of his career: Marotti (1995) 247-56. The problem with this latter argument, of course, is the inference that the notorious Jack was the 'true' Donne, as if the 'private' sphere of coterie verse was not involved in its own brand of self-fashioning.

[32] Ferry 227. Sherwood allows that the body provides 'a pretext by which the operations of the soul are necessarily understood': Sherwood (1984) 93-101. Maule's *via media* Donne is sceptical of both Roman Catholic and Protestant patrology, preferring always the light of scripture: Maule 203-21.

[33] Sellin (1988) 109-134; Sellin (1996) 167.

the importance of Calvinist thought for early Stuart divines, if less celebratory than sombre, is John Stachniewski's examination of Donne's failure to escape Calvinist despair.[34]

More sensitive than Stachniewski to the playfulness of which Donne is as capable in religious contexts as elsewhere, P. M. Oliver's *Discourse of Feigned Devotion* is an important and thorough reading of Donne in light of the Reform theology so influential among early Stuart divines, from episcopalian and evangelical Calvinist to moderate and not so moderate puritan. Oliver rightly recognizes the affinities of Roman Catholic meditative tradition and Calvinist introspection, their shared concern for bridging the divide separating devotee and deity;[35] but he fails adequately to distinguish Loyolan meditative schemes, which call for active participation of the human will, from Calvinism's valorization of a devotional posture largely passive in its reflection on God's word and the inscrutability of his decrees.[36] Neither does Oliver recognize the extent to which Donne's complex appreciation of sacramental ministry complements this tension between passive and active wills in the process of Christian redemption.

Finally, though receptive to recent revisionist historians' appraisals of a Calvinist hegemony among the early Stuart ecclesiastical establishment, Oliver's appreciation of the religious dimension of Donne's art is essentially that of Carey, who holds that 'ridicule, wit, human love . . . challenge or displace' religious allusion.[37] Both critics acknowledge a Donne who is all of these things *and* religious, but are determined that secular preoccupations somehow triumph over devotional integrity. Oliver sees overt resistance to Calvinist ideas in the divine poems as authorial rejection rather than as symptomatic of the very Calvinism they elsewhere unambiguously promote.[38] He fails to recognize,

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[34] Stachniewski 264.

[35] Oliver 137-8.

[36] Halewood 75. Cf. Lewalski 264-82.

[37] Carey xxiv; cited in Oliver 136.

[38] I am thinking here of the depraved sinner of the 'Holy Sonnets' who is never 'chast, except you ravish mee' (14. 14), who only 'By thy leave . . . can looke' toward God (1. 10), who agonizes over the problem of how his 'black Soule' will acquire 'that grace to beginne' his repentance (4. 1, 10), and who not only repents but begs God to 'Teach mee how' (7. 13).

moreover, that in 'forcing onto the consciousness of their readers traits or types of behaviour with which the devout would not wish to identify'[39] Donne's speakers are less interested in subverting their own Christian status or in offending others than in expanding conventional notions of what Christian devotion might include. We cannot have it both ways. If Donne (or his speakers) is among the 'devout' of whom Oliver seems rather confidently knowledgeable, then the claim is a contradiction, tantamount to saying, 'The devout offend themselves'. Another possibility, of course, is that the early modern *religieux*, Donne included, are not what Oliver thinks they are. Recognition of religious or spiritual complexity is an infinitely more productive approach than the facile assumption that Donne's is a feigned devotion obscuring an essentially postmodern cynicism.

3
Theology

Because according to scripture it was instituted by Christ and because of its powerful ritual appeal, the Eucharist had long held a central place in Christian life and worship. As is true of any important aspect of the faith, interest in and controversy over the precise nature of the sacrament are not exclusive to the tumultuous Reformation. Indeed, long before the advent of the Latin church in the middle ages, and before Aquinas baptized Christian theology in Aristotelian thought, the Greek fathers were accustomed to thinking of sacramental presence as a changing of the ritual elements into the body and blood of Christ. Terms such as *transelementatio* and *metastoicheiosis* (*stoicheia* being the elements of bread and wine) described a process similar to but not exactly the same as that indicated by the later *transsubstantiatio.*[40] Just as, for Irenaeus, Christian conversion was a taking possession of the convert by the spirit of God or Pneuma,[41] so were the elements thought

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[39] Oliver 141.

[40] Schillebeeckx 65 ff. The term first became current in the twelfth century, possibly coined by Roland Bandinelli, later Pope Alexander III: *ibid.*, 71-2 n77.

[41] *Adv. Haereses* 5.9.3; cited in Schillebeeckx 67.

of as appropriated or assumed by God, the deity descending and possessing them through a 'pneumatic power'.[42] An early example of sensualist attitudes to Christ's words of institution is Theodore of Mopsuestia's claim, 'Christ did not say, "This is the symbolum of my blood," but "This is my blood," a change of the wine takes place'.[43]

As Theodore's antithesis implies, there had long been opposition to a literal reading of Christ's institution by the time of the well-known Berengar affair in the eleventh century. Indeed, King Charles the Bald's question put to Ratramnus in the ninth century, 'Is Christ present in the Eucharist *in mysterio an in veritate* [in mystery or in truth]?', suggests that the emphasis of Ratramnus' theological opponent, Paschasius Radbertus, on *veritas* in *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini* (831) was such that it excluded Ratramnus' allowance for *figura* in describing the sacrament.[44] To remove any ambiguity, Radbertus had asserted that the words of institution intend the very flesh and blood born of the Virgin Mary.[45] Radbertus insisted that Ratramnus was a heretic even though the latter agreed on a fundamental change or *conversio* for the elements.[46] We see in Ratramnus' thought, then, the affirmation of a real or substantial conversion of the Eucharistic species simultaneous with a reluctance to identify definitively the nature of the change. Whereas for some *figura* and *veritas* appear to have been mutually exclusive, for Ratramnus such distinction was not necessary.

The first major challenge to Radbertus' realist orthodoxy came in the eleventh century when Berengar of Tours asserted a symbolic function for the species as signs of a conversion that takes place principally and solely within the believer.[47] The inside/outside dialectic formerly referring to the elements themselves and concerned with positing a real though veiled conversion, becomes for Berengar a question of the sacrament's role in

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[42] Schillebeeckx 68-9.

[43] Cited in Schillebeeckx 67.

[44] Chauvet 293.

[45] Sheedy 102 ff. Berengar (999-1088) was excommunicated in 1050 for denying corporeal presence in the Eucharist.

[46] Schillebeeckx 74.

[47] Sheedy 102-7.

signifying or representing an ostensibly spiritual transformation located in the soul. Sharing Berengar's distaste for an ultra-sensualism, yet wanting to maintain and comprehend a doctrine of Real Presence, thirteenth century scholastics adopted Aristotelian categories to explain the continuing appearance of material bread and wine after they had supposedly been transformed into the body and blood of Christ. The doctrine of transubstantiation developed the idea that while the substance of the elements are wholly changed, the accidents or the elements' appearance remains, a view which survived later Tridentine reform and persisted through the early modern period.[48] True Aristotelianism, however, would have not tolerated such a division. Because for Aristotle substance is a complex of matter, 'which in itself is not a "this"', and form, 'which is that precisely in virtue of which a thing is called a "this"', so is it absurd to separate, except conceptually, 'the matter of a thing and that of which it is the matter.'[49] It was the proto-Protestant John Wycliffe, himself an Aristotelian at Oxford, who recognized the scholastic dilemma of appropriating a philosophical system resistant to the malleability projected on it. Reaffirming Berengar's symbolic interpretation, Wycliffe denied any *praesentia corporalis* in the sacrament and was condemned for it at the Council of Constance.

Given that one of the chief popish abuses of ecclesiastical power against which the Reformation reacted was the practice of offering the Eucharistic elements, on behalf of those who cared to pay, as sacrifices to appease God's wrathful judgment, it is not surprising that Berengar's emphasis on spiritual transformation becomes central to Protestant sacramental thought. But if Luther, Zwingli and Calvin were convinced of the fundamental role played by word and spirit in true religion, they were all reluctant, in varying degree, to abandon an efficacious status for sacraments.

Though opposed to Roman transubstantiation, Luther gradually assimilated a doctrine of Real Presence in his sacramental thought. That this was the chief impediment to

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[48] H. Davies 288-91.
[49] Aristotle 171-2.

his getting along with the Swiss reformers Zwingli and Oecolampadius and their ally Martin Bucer is evident in the Marberg Articles drawn by Luther following the 1529 Colloquy and endorsed by all the Swiss delegates. Agreement was reached on fourteen of the fifteen articles; of the fifteenth's six points dealing with the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, only the sixth, which addressed the question of Real Presence, was left unresolved.[50] Here Luther insists, against Zwingli's figurative reading of the words of institution, 'The mouth receives the body of Christ, the soul believes the words when eating the body', that 'Christ is in heaven and in the Supper', even though this appears to be contrary to nature, and that the figure of synecdoche best characterizes the nature of presence, rather than metaphor which 'abolishes the content altogether'. Thus, the 'body is in the bread as the sword is in the sheath'. Zwingli's preference, on the other hand, describes the primarily memorial function of the sacrament as 'metonymy, a byname, like the saying: "Tomorrow is Ascension".'[51] Perhaps to facilitate greater unity among reformers, Luther's *Admonition Concerning the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Our Lord* (1530) gestures toward Swiss emphasis on the memorialist aspect of the sacrament derived from Christ's words 'Do this in remembrance of me'.[52] Nevertheless, Luther here warns against the 'enthusiasts' who 'make mere bread and wine of the sacrament, peel out the kernel, and give them [the recipients] the husk',[53] and maintains that the Lord's Supper 'is a gracious, efficacious sacrament'.[54] Fearful, perhaps, that public opinion as to the putative agreement eventually reached between the Wittenberg and Swiss camps recognized a compromise in favour of the Zwinglians,[55] Luther sought to clarify his position in *Brief Confession Concerning the Holy Sacrament* (1544), which affirmed with renewed zeal the doctrine of Real Presence. It is here that Luther bases the consubstantiation of body and

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[50] Lehmann 12-13.
[51] Luther 38.21, 29-30, 33.
[52] *Ibid.*, 38.95, 105-7, 117.
[53] *Ibid.*, 38.110.
[54] *Ibid.*, 38.127.
[55] Lehmann 283.

bread in the sacrament on the hypostatic union, the 'humanity and divinity of Christ in one person',[56] having earlier offered a formula for understanding the sacrament in relation to word and spirit that is both equivocal and circular:

> . . . without the words the cup and the bread would be nothing. Further, without the bread and cup, the body and blood of Christ would not be there. Without the body and blood of Christ, the new testament would not be there. Without the new testament, forgiveness of sins would not be there.[57]

The objectivity and sacramental efficacy advocated here allow Luther to go so far as to insist that they do not even depend on the faith of those who administer the meal, though he does not say, in this passage at least, whether the faith of the receiver is necessary to obtain the benefits conferred.[58] Moreover, Luther also insisted, against the Swiss reformers, that the body consumed is a pre-ascension body, that of the earthly Christ who instituted the sacrament beforehand,[59] thus clarifying his Marberg claim -- that 'Christ is in heaven and in the Supper' -- as definitively comprehensive of Jesus' humanity.

Against Luther's affirmation of Real Presence and full integration of Christ's sustained divine and human attributes, Huldreich Zwingli sharply distinguished between Christ's two natures and insisted, as Calvin later would, that the ascended Christ is the divine Christ to which alone the sacrament refers[60] and that 'a channel or vehicle is not necessary to the Spirit, for he himself is the virtue and energy whereby all things are borne and has no need of being borne'.[61] As W. P. Stephens puts it, 'Zwingli stressed God's sovereignty over word and sacrament, while Luther stressed God's sovereignty in them'.[62] His emphasis with respect to sacraments is on the action rather than the thing itself, 'Take, eat' rather than 'this is my body', an emphasis conducive to Zwingli's Covenant theology and its broader concern for the role of the church in communally ratifying sacramental

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[56] Luther 38.306 ff.
[57] *Ibid.*, 37.338.
[58] *Ibid.*, 37.367.
[59] *Ibid.*, 38.300.
[60] Stephens 101-2.
[61] Cited and translated in Stephens 79.
[62] *Ibid.*, 79.

grace.[63] Zwingli, however, was not incapable of allowing sacraments an instrumental role: 'one and the same Spirit works all these things, sometimes without, sometimes with, the external instrument, and in inspiring draws where, as much, and whom he wills'.[64] Moreover, in his later years especially, Zwingli affirmed sacramental presence: 'We believe Christ to be truly present in the Supper, indeed we do not believe that it is the Lord's Supper unless Christ is present'.[65] However, the scripture Zwingli uses in support of this claim -- 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them' -- is hardly evocative of the sacramental species, but rather emphasizes again his Covenant theology and its concern for the corporate, ecclesiastical manifestation of Christ in the world. Again, as Calvin was to allow, the elements indeed are changed, but only insofar as they come to *signify* something other than what they materially are.[66]

Calvin's doctrine of the Eucharist, like Luther's, is a doctrine of Real Presence, though it differs significantly from the German reformer's in denying that Christ's body and blood are somehow manifested in or under the species of bread and wine. Calvin's emphasis is almost exclusively on the spiritual effects of the sacrament as they unfold within the soul of the individual believer, so that presence in terms of a material manifestation is simply not necessary. This does not mean that for Calvin presence is any less 'real' for being non-corporeal, but rather that his confidence in apprehending a truly efficacious communion with the divine does not rely on corporeal means. He seeks a *via media* that avoids, on the one hand, 'too little regard for the signs' to which the mysteries are 'so to speak attached', and, on the other, an immoderate extolling of the same signs which might 'obscure somewhat the mysteries themselves.'[67] Allowing that there is in fact 'no unanimity as to the mode of partaking', he does dismiss those who say faith is all that is required, or that 'to eat is only to believe'. Calvin prefers, instead, the formula 'we eat

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[63] *Ibid.*, 97.
[64] Cited and translated in Stephens 81-2.
[65] Cited and translated in Stephens 105.
[66] *Ibid.*, 106-7.
[67] Calvin 4.17.5.

Christ's flesh in believing, because it is made ours by faith'. Faith is no substitute for receiving the sacrament, not because *sola fide* is inadequate but because God instituted the rite and intends that his church exercise it. Eating, then, follows *from* faith, the result being that the communicant feels within the 'remarkable effect of [a] faith' which, presumably, is there apart from any material consummation.[68] Apparently recognizing the difficulty of articulating the Real Presence of a body that remains in heaven and cannot be in two places at once, Calvin's usual rigor occasionally yields to an *O altitudo* :

> And although my mind can think beyond what my tongue can utter, yet even my mind is conquered and overwhelmed by the greatnes of the thing. Therefore, nothing remains but to break forth in wonder at this mystery, which plainly neither the mind is able to conceive nor the tongue to express.[69]

This *mysterium tremendum* approach to sacramental presence is, however, uncharacteristic of Calvin. To maintain significance for the elements as set apart from ordinary wine and bread while avoiding what he would regard as a contamination of the resurrected Christ by merely material being, Calvin settles on an *arcana virtus*, the doctrine of 'virtualism' that is his singular contribution to sacramental theology: Christ's flesh, though 'separated from us by such great distance', nevertheless 'penetrates to us, so that it becomes our food'; the Spirit 'truly unites things separated in space.' Though the breaking of bread is a 'symbol' and not 'the thing itself', nevertheless, 'by the showing of the symbol the thing itself is also shown'.[70] Elsewhere he writes:

> Christ is not visibly present, and is not beheld with our eyes, as the symbols are which excite our remembrance by representing him. In short, in order that he may be present to us, he does not change his place, but communicates to us from heaven the virtue of his flesh as though it were present.[71]

This is in keeping with Calvin's general definition of a sacrament as 'an outward sign by which the Lord seals on our consciences the promises of his good will toward us in order to sustain the weakness of our faith'.[72] The 'outward sign', rather than an 'accident' veiling an inward 'substance' or, as for Luther, a consubstantial manifestation of the

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[68] *Ibid.*, 4.17.5.
[69] *Ibid.*, 4.17.6.
[70] *Ibid.*, 4.17.10.
[71] *Corpus Reformatorum* 49.489; cited in McDonnell 231.
[72] Calvin 4.14.1.

hypostatic union, is rather an Augustinian 'seal' ratifying a sacramental reality which takes place in the heart or soul of the communicant.[73] The material elements are important insofar as they are the means by which God chooses to indicate his gifts, serving to mitigate our inability to comprehend spiritual truths without material aids. Our 'small capacity' and the 'dullest minds' are led by 'analogy' from physical to spiritual things.[74]

Denying the doctrine of transubstantiation, Calvin accepts the conversion of the species to 'something else' but rejects the idea that the substance of the outward sign is 'wiped out'. Indeed, 'the signification would have no fitness if the truth there represented had no living image in the outward sign.' Interestingly, by insisting that the 'analogy' would be impossible with 'only the empty appearance of bread' rather than true bread,[75] Calvin ironically suggests that his doctrine is more not less affirmative of Real Presence than is transubstantiation. Again, however, it is a Satanic error to believe 'that Christ's body, enclosed in the bread, is transmitted by the mouth of the body into the stomach'.[76] Calvin repeatedly resists any such suggestion. His opponents 'think they only communicate with [the body of Christ] if it descends into bread; they do not understand the manner of descent by which he lifts us up to himself'.[77] The idea that the communicant is raised to Christ in the Eucharist rather than receives an incarnated Christ is offered in the context of a rejection of Lutheran ubiquity, which Calvin articulates through the complementary notion that at the Ascension Christ forever left behind his carnal existence.[78] We are joined to Christ in the Lord's Supper because we are lifted to him, human ascent entirely displacing divine descent : 'there is no need to draw Christ to earth that he may be joined to us.'[79]

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[73] For Calvin. Augustine and 'seal' see McDonnell 286.
[74] *Ibid.*, 4.17.3.
[75] *Ibid.*, 4.17.14. Cf. 4.17.17
[76] *Ibid.*, 4.17.15.
[77] *Ibid.*, 4.17.16.
[78] *Ibid.*, 4.17.30.
[79] *Ibid.*, 4.17.31.

Calvin's insistence on Christ's permanent removal from the earthly or material sphere corroborates his general theological concern to maintain a deity whose sovereignty and power would be compromised by any suggestion of carnal immanence. Because sacramental communion involves aspiring to a condition that is beyond physical comprehension, the communicant is fully dependent on the Spirit to effect his miraculous transport. Receiving the elements alone is no guarantee that the gifts are in fact conferred. Sacraments are 'poison' to the evil man who receives them in an evil manner, that is, he who concentrates on the visible sign and eats only outwardly, who 'presses with the teeth' rather than 'eats with the heart'.[80] But Calvin goes beyond the notion that those who receive in an unworthy manner get less (or more!) than they bargained for,[81] at one point reiterating the claim about poison in a manner highly conducive to the predestinarian doctrine governing his soteriology: the sacrament 'is turned into a deadly poison for all those whose faith it does not nourish and strengthen, and whom it does not arouse to thanksgiving and to love.'[82] That the sacrament may or may not nourish and arouse depends not on whether one receives in a worthy manner; rather, one receives in a worthy manner to the extent one is in fact nourished and aroused. Sacramental grace here is articulated in a manner starkly indifferent to human volition. Receiving the sacrament is not only no guarantee of its efficacy; it may prove poisonous regardless of one's efforts to partake worthily. Communicants' only recourse, even though possibly futile in the end, is 'to offer our vileness and (so to speak) our unworthiness to him so that his mercy may make us worthy of him' and, above all, 'to aspire to that unity which he commends to us in his Supper; and, as he makes all of us one in himself, to desire one soul, one heart, one tongue for us all.'[83] Self-abnegation and yielding of identity to the homogeneous body of

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[80] *Ibid.*, 4.14.15.

[81] Luther also allowed that sacraments are poison to the unworthy, even going as far as to suggest his opponent Zwingli as a candidate: Luther 38.26.

[82] Calvin 4.17.40.

[83] *Ibid.*, 4.17.42.

the elect in communion is the only escape from otherwise certain destruction. But to this one can, of course, only 'aspire'.

Calvin does not explicitly articulate the connection between his sacramental and predestinarian ideas. It is apparent, however, that in allowing a significant degree of sacramental efficacy and Real Presence while maintaining the risen Christ's transcendence of a material world that is in total subjection to him, Calvin's virtualist formula complements the radically sovereign and irresistible Will for which the doctrine of election is, for Calvin, a logical consequence. He thus accommodates the scandal of Christian Incarnation to which the Lord's Supper gestures while simultaneously upholding God's divine prerogative to feed only those souls that, in his infinite wisdom, are sealed by a mysterious and arbitrary grace. The ritual of Holy Communion for Calvin is thus subject to the same anxiety potentially resulting from reflection on the terrible decree that is double predestination, the idea that God not only predestines the elect but also damns the reprobate who, though 'justly charged against the malice and depravity of their hearts', have, 'at the same time . . . been given over to this depravity because they have been raised up by the just but inscrutable judgment of God to show forth his glory in their condemnation.'[84]

It is thus not difficult to understand that a sensualist regard for sacraments might alleviate the burden of recognizing that participation alone is no guarantee for actually receiving the benefits offered. The Pauline practice of indulging a quiet *mea culpa* prior to receiving the Lord's Supper is for a Calvinist susceptible of devolving into the despair attending too curious consideration of God's hidden decrees, or at least a too fervent sense of personal unworthiness and total depravity which both Calvin's predestinarian and sacramental thought promote. To the extent sacraments manifest a material Real Presence they provide objective access to a grace freely offered. As such, they facilitate escape from

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[84] *Ibid.*, 3.24.14.

the subjective and potentially febrile sphere of that Calvinist psyche which falls short of the confidence apparently enjoyed by Calvin himself.[85]

4
Church of England

That Calvinism was thought by some to threaten the integrity of sacramental ministry becomes increasingly apparent in the years prior to the publication of Herbert's and Donne's verse in 1633. Supporting the Arminian John Buckeridge's dispute with Thomas Morton over the doctrinal legitimacy of the ostensibly Calvinist Dortrecht articles of 1618, Dean Frances White of Carlisle asked whether predestinarians could 'say to all communicants whatsoever, "The Body of Our Lord which was given for thee," as we are bound to say? Let the opinion of the Dortists be admitted, and the tenth person in the Church shall not have been redeemed'.[86] A similar challenge confronted the English delegates at the Synod of Dort, evident in then Archbishop James Ussher's report of Samuel Ward's complaint that 'some of us were held by some half Remonstrants for extending the oblation made to the father to all and for holding sundry effects thereof offered *serio* and some really communicated to the reprobate'.[87] Indicative of the change in opinion to come, Ward's comments here may be compared with his advice some ten years later cautioning friend and fellow Dort delegate John Davenant to refrain from asserting that grace is conferred by Baptism, fearing 'this time when the Arminians cleave so close one to

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[85] Though Calvin warns against indulging curiosity with respect to the divine decrees, he also recognizes that the temptation to do so 'is all the deadlier, since almost all of us are more inclined to it than any other': *ibid.*, 3.24.4. Moreover, there is for Calvin an acceptable consideration of God's election. One is free to feel that the daily benefits of grace originate in 'that secret adoption' and one can count oneself 'numbered among his flock if we hear his voice.' Moreover, it is difficult to imagine how one can ever arrive at a finally positive conclusion when it is allowed that the reprobate may 'have signs of a call that are similar to those of the elect' but do not in fact have 'that sure establishment of election' the gospels proclaim: Calvin 3.24.4, 3.24.6, 3.24.7. As one theological historian asks, 'if the reprobate may believe that God is merciful towards them, how can *we* be sure our believing the same thing is any different from theirs? How can we be so sure that our "beginning of faith" is saving and is not the "beginning of faith" which the reprobate seem to have?': Kendall 24.

[86] Cited in Tyacke (1995) 65.

[87] Cited in Lake (1987) 59.

another'.[88] This was in 1629, the advent of Charles' personal rule and the almost *fait accompli* of anti-Calvinist orthodoxy among the ecclesiastical establishment.

While Arminian doctrine is essentially an alternative to the second generation Calvinism of Theodore Beza and is thus best seen as modifying rather than opposed to Reform orthodoxy, the views of Jacobus Arminius are distinct from Calvin's in one important way. While he shares Calvin's conviction of universal atonement (that Christ died for all even if not everyone is finally saved), the implication for Arminius is greater significance for human autonomy, unlike Calvin for whom universal atonement necessitates locating election in the divine gift of grace essential to receiving a salvation otherwise provided for all.[89] Whereas the Remonstrant controversy on the continent was almost exclusively concerned with doctrine, English Arminian thought included an emphasis on sacramental ministry as the external mark, as it were, of its distinctive character. Not having experienced the same degree of ecclesiastical reform as its continental Protestant counterparts, the English religious establishment had retained not only episcopal government but also the Prayer Book, which essentially was an adaptation of the Roman Catholic missal. In rejecting the arbitrary grace of a predestination indifferent to human will, English Arminian voluntarism advanced an essentially universalist doctrine of grace, freely offered in the sacraments and available to anyone who chose to receive them.[90]

Peter Lake locates the ideological origins of English Arminianism in Richard Hooker, whose vision of the sacrament 'really offering Christ's body and blood to all who received it in good faith' dispenses with the tendency to distinguish between the godly and

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[88] Cited in Lake (1987) 66.

[89] Kendall 141-50. Beza's doctrine of limited atonement was of substantial influence in the 'experimental' (experiential) predestinarianism of William Perkins, which promoted a severely introspective devotional attitude obsessed with scrutinizing the extent of one's godly or ungodly status. Perkins' influence on English Calvinism is extensive, his work published in seventy-six editions during his lifetime alone: *ibid.*, 29-38, 52-9.

[90] Tyacke (1995) 62-3. Tyacke allows some connection between English Arminianism and a remnant of Lutheran 'dissidents' but assumes that most or all of these latched on to Arminian ideas as expressive of their own sacramental interests. Lutheranism was of relatively minor influence in later Elizabethan and Stuart England; in particular, there was a general reluctance to endorse Luther's views with respect to the Lord's Supper: Hall 104-22.

ungodly as suggested by experimental predestinarian doctrine. But as Lake acknowledges, Hooker nowhere in the *Polity* explicitly attacks Calvinist thought,[91] even if the doctrinal implications of his episcopalian and ceremonialist biases sit uncomfortably next to Reform orthodoxy. Where, then, might we find the source of a movement that was eventually to tear the church asunder and thus precipitate the religious conflict of the English Civil War? While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to address such a complex problem, it is at least clear that what Professor Lake calls 'avant garde conformity', the aggressive promotion of *iure divino* episcopacy and the preëminently sacramental aspect of its ministry, had always been at least latent for an English reformation lacking definitive confessional identity. Similarly, while it is crucial to recognize that orthodox Calvinism is 'the theological cement of the Jacobean church',[92] and thus essential to our understanding of Herbert and Donne, it is also necessary to take into account the ambiguities which had always characterized English Protestantism, particularly in its sacramental attitudes, from the Elizabethan settlement to the Arminian disturbances of the Caroline era.

Sixteenth-century English views of the role and nature of sacraments are at best ambiguous. Prior to his conflict with Rome, Henry VIII was awarded the title *Defensor Fidei* by Pope Leo X for supposedly[93] defending the Roman sacramental system in *Assertio Septum Sacramentorum* (1521), to which Luther responded in *Contra Henricum*

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[91] Lake (1987) 42.

[92] Collinson (1982) 82. Collinson and other 'revisionist' historians of the early Stuart church agree that while there was often vehement disagreement over matters of church government and the externals of ceremonial worship, doctrinal Calvinism provided, for a time, a confessional identity of sorts. Cf. A. Milton 395-407, Sommerville 208. Nicholas Tyacke shows that 'puritan' as a derogatory label does not become specifically associated with doctrinal Calvinism and predestinarian thought until the 1620's when the rise of Arminianism inaugurates a process that eventually renders heterodox what had hitherto been the Reform core of English religious orthodoxy. Prior to this time, conformist and non-conformist alike had shared a doctrinally Calvinist heritage, so that the majority of conformist divines, whether inclining to a sacramentally centered ministry or one which emphasizes preaching and a private lay piety, may be called 'Calvinist episcopalians': Tyacke (1995) 55-6, 68. Peter Lake observes that while an anti-Calvinist element had always existed, the question is one of 'Calvinist hegemony'. Surely distaste for Reform orthodoxy did not prevent participation in Jacobean ecclesiastical life, nor, for that matter, opportunity for preferment. But the existence of such people is characterized by their relative silence and thus 'evidence of the extent to which Calvinism had established itself in control of the crucial cultural media of the day': Lake (1987) 34.

[93] Henry's authorship is at least doubtful, though Leo apparently thought otherwise: Croken 36 n11.

Regem Angliae by denouncing what he saw as the Mass's stress on human effort and word rather than on receiving the gifts signified in bread and wine.[94] William Tyndale's distaste for Lutheran sacramentalism (though in other respects Tyndale is justly regarded as England's first Lutheran), was based on what he perceived to be insufficient reform of the rite's sensualist accretions and thus lingering potential for being regarded as a popish sacrifice. Tyndale's suspicion of sacramental doctrine may have had something to do with his fondness for Zwingli's covenant theology and the latter's own dispute with Luther over the Lord's Supper.[95] Despite increasing Swiss influence on English reform during the reign of Edward VI, however, Archbishop Thomas Cranmer's doctrinal conservatism retained, for a time at least, a Lutheran emphasis on Real Presence (though even here he tended to emphasize that aspect of Luther's views stressing the spiritual nature of such presence).[96] By the time of Elizabeth Lutheran sacramentalism had become a target of approbation for such luminaries as Thomas Cartwright and Archbishop Whitgift who, while they disagreed vehemently on the issue of church government, had in common a willingness to identify as popery Lutheran ideas on Real Presence, images and sacramental trappings.[97]

With efforts to establish a distinctly English liturgy came the difficulty of accommodating Reform thought within traditional ceremonial forms. Whereas the Edwardian Prayer Book of 1549 was for the most part an adaptation of the Roman missal, that of 1552 constituted dramatic Protestant revision, evident especially in the 'Black Rubric' hastily added in response to the influence of the Calvinist presbyterian John Knox and his disdain for popish ceremonies. It is perhaps one of the chief reasons the staunchly Roman Catholic Mary Tudor repealed the book upon her accession in 1553, for in addition to denying that kneeling in any way implies adoration, the rubric is boldly Reform in its

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[94] *Ibid.*, 36.
[95] Hall 110.
[96] *Ibid.*, 119-20.
[97] *Ibid.*, 106-7.

denial of 'any real and essential presence there being of Christ's natural flesh and blood. For as concerning the sacramental bread and wine, they remain still in their very natural substances . . . And as concerning the natural body and blood of Our Saviour Christ, they are in heaven and not here'.[98] When the Book of Common Prayer was restored under Elizabeth in 1559, the controversial Black Rubric was removed, never to reappear.

In its Elizabethan and final version the wording of the Book of Common Prayer is a hybrid of the conservative Edwardian book of 1549 and the more radically Protestant version of 1552; it allows communicants to 'eat of the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood'. That both 'body and soul' are fed is repeated in the minister's prayer of thanksgiving, but the added phrase insisting that all is done 'in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving' qualifies any carnal tone the passage might otherwise have unequivocally endorsed.[99] The Act of Uniformity (1559) made adherence to the ceremonies of the Church of England legally binding. But the ambiguities already apparent in the wording of the Prayer Book took on even greater significance with the closing words of the Act:

> if there shall happen any contempt or irreverence to be used in the ceremonies or rites of the church by the misusing of the orders appointed in [the Prayer Book], the queen's majesty may, by the like advice of the said commissioners or metropolitan, ordain and publish such further ceremonies or rites as may be most for the advancement of God's glory, the edifying of his church, and the due reverence of Christ's holy mysteries and sacraments.[100]

If 'contempt and irreverence' suggest antisacramental disdain, especially given the passage's final clause, the same phrase might be interpreted as an *excessive* or undue reverence and thereby offer consolation to those churchmen hopeful of further reform.

The theological counterpart to the liturgy is the Thirty Nine Articles which, in their final form of 1571, are also not without ambiguity. According to Article 28, the sacrament is 'not only a sign'; rather, the reception of the bread and wine is a 'partaking' of the body

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[98] Cressy and Ferrell 48.
[99] *Ibid.*, 47.
[100] *Ibid.*, 59.

and blood of Christ for those 'such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same.' 'Transubstantiation' is 'repugnant to the plain words of scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.' Nevertheless, the 'body of Christ *is* given, taken, and eaten', though again, 'only after an heavenly and spiritual manner', while 'the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the supper is faith.' This careful balance affirming the physical act while subordinating it finally to spiritual mystery recalls Calvin's own reluctance to stress externals any more than is absolutely necessary. Moreover, Article 29 recalls Calvin's characterization of the wicked as he who 'presses with the teeth' rather than 'eats with the heart.'[101] The article states that those 'void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as St. Augustine saith) the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ: but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or sacrament of so great a thing'.[102] That the Articles' most sensuous language is applied to the wicked is perhaps a deliberate irony, but there is also the suggestion that the faithless, because they receive *only* in a carnal manner do not attain to the edification of *either* soul or body, whereas for those who receive 'worthily' and by 'faith' the sacrament is of *both* spiritual and bodily benefit, what Article 25 calls 'a wholesome effect or operation'.[103] Despite these and other echoes of Reform theology, however, the liturgical and doctrinal ambiguities traced here contributed to continuing dissatisfaction among those for whom Elizabethan reform was decidedly less than sufficient. This is perhaps most apparent in the 'View of Popish Abuses' that was appended to the puritan *Admonition to the Parliament* and followed hot on the heels of the Articles in 1572, recognizing there and in the liturgy remnants of popish ideas, including idolatrous kneeling and 'breadengod' worship. This

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[101] Calvin 4.14.15.
[102] Cressy and Ferrell 67.
[103] *Ibid.*, 66.

latter was further characterized as a 'half communion, which is yet appointed like to the commemoration of the mass'.[104]

It is clear, then, that the controversy over sacraments and other ceremonial forms that was to flare again during the Laudian archbishopric had long been a feature in the English church's struggle to establish a definitive confessional identity. Moreover, the doctrinal crux of the problem, both for the theological broils of continental reform and for the English liturgy, suggests a broader ideological conflict over the nature of such relationships as those which obtain between soul and body, spirit and matter, individual and society. The following exploration of sacramental topoi in Herbert and Donne suggests the relevance of sacramental thought for these 'other' fundamental human concerns.

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[104] *Ibid.*, 84.

Chapter One
Heart's Altar: George Herbert's Sacramental Devotion

Sacraments in *The Temple* point toward the Incarnation as the conceptual and creative heart of Herbert's devotional poetic. The dichotomies of matter and spirit, body and soul, immanence and transcendence, are involved in the idea of the Logos, or infinite Word, become flesh; these conceptually broad antitheses likewise inform Herbert's interrogation of matters central to his identity as early Stuart divine, religious devout, and poet. This chapter examines sacramental topoi as essential to Herbert's understanding of the relationships which obtain among spiritual and material aspects of religious experience, the incarnational poles of Word and flesh: these include (1) Deity and Eucharist, the theological problem of identifying the *modus* of Real Presence; (2) devotion and sacrament, the relationship between inner and outer, private and ceremonial pieties; (3) religious subject and body of Christ, the issue of identity in Herbert's communion with God; and (4) devotion and poetry, the interdependence of faith and art. While it is impossible to discern absolute gravitation toward any of these several poles, neither does a settled equilibrium or *via media* balance adequately characterize what in Herbert's verse is an (often rapid) oscillation of diverging views. Not unlike Dante's perplexity at the two-natured Gryphon reflected in Beatrice's eyes at the summit of the Purgatorio,[1] Herbert's response to sacramental paradox is sometimes sure, sometimes tenuous, but always complex and fascinating. It has been said that the Eucharist 'is the marrow of Herbert's sensibility.'[2] An anatomy of the many and various manifestations of that sensibility, the following advances a sacramental poetics as key to fresh encounter with *The Temple*.[3]

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[1] Purgatorio, canto 31.

[2] C. A. Patrides in Herbert (1988) 17.

[3] Except for some incidental observations, I have chosen to avoid the rather vexed issue of sequence. Though study of the order of poems may be of significant consequence, it is beyond the scope of this inquiry, whose interest lies rather in identifying and organizing discussion around the several thematic continuities suggested above. Moreover, I prefer to regard each poem in The Temple as individual, not only in terms of its internal logic, but also as a distinctive moment or point on a wide-ranging devotional continuum.

Unless otherwise indicated, Herbert references are to F. E. Hutchinson's Works. 1633, B, and W will henceforth refer to, respectively, the first edition printed by Thomas Buck at Cambridge, Buck's MS source transcribed by the Ferrars at Little Gidding (the Bodleian Library's Tanner 307) and supposedly based

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Modus

Historian Anthony Milton has identified Herbert as among the earliest of divines 'to proclaim the new Anglo-centric orthodoxy' of the English church. Whereas for earlier Stuart and Elizabethan conformists the Church of England was a leader in the Protestant cause against Rome, the new orthodoxy sought to distinguish itself from the political and confessional broils of continental Protestantism. This *via media*, it is important to note, was based not on the ideal moderation it eventually came to signify, but rather on complex issues of nationhood and, significantly, departure from an earlier Protestant identity.[4] This English 'middle way', distinct from foreign Calvinism, was reinforced under King Charles I by an ever increasing emphasis on the importance of sacrament and ceremony for the confessional identity of the church.[5] But if Herbert was among the exponents of an avant garde style of divinity, sacramental in emphasis as distinct from a more word- and pulpit-centred ministry, his poetry is nevertheless exemplary of the 'internal religious experience' Dr. Milton associates with puritan conformists.[6] One aspect of this tension between lay spiritual autonomy and institutional authority is controversy over the precise nature and extent of Real Presence in the Lord's Supper; the degree to which sacraments are thought to contain or otherwise effect the grace they proclaim is also an index of their sacerdotal status and thus their role in promoting the church's social and confessional cohesion.

In the *1633* 'H. Communion',[7] Herbert avoids explicit mention of the various doctrinal formulae comprising that of the earlier Williams MS. He does not explicitly *reject*

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on Herbert's 'little book' (now lost), and the earlier MS Jones B 62 now in the Williams Library, Gordon Square, London. For a discussion of the dating of this latter and its autograph status see Charles 78-87.

[4] The description of the English church as 'Catholic and Reformed' was shared by both conformists and non-conformists, though it was the Laudians who transformed its meaning from 'orthodox Protestantism' to 'an independent middle way peculiar to the Church of England': A. Milton 527-28.

[5] J. Davies 18-45.

[6] A. Milton 12.

[7] I do not include as part of 'The H. Communion' what in *B* and *1633* is apparently the poem's second half and what appears in the early *W* MS as the separate poem 'Prayer (2)'. For an account of possible editorial error see Huntley 65-76. Cf. Herbert (1941) 52. One critic, allowing the two-part version authority, discerns a dual motion of outward form toward inward spirituality and the subsequent movement of the grace-inspired soul toward heaven: Clarke 161. The movement she describes, however, is less a 'reversal' than one continuous 'lift', the destination 'heaven' being as elusive as the 'souls most subtile

'rich furniture', 'fine aray' and 'wedge of gold' (1-2), though his contemporaries would have recognized these as the accoutrements of the Roman mass. Herbert does, however, object to an emphasis on external trappings as themselves somehow conjuring or constitutive of real presence; the reason he offers is as practical as it is dogmatic: 'For so thou should'st without me still have been,/ Leaving within me sinne' (5-6). It does not follow, as Herbert suggests, that God's external presence precludes internal penetration; not only Roman Catholics, but also those subscribing to Lutheran ubiquity (the idea that the Eucharist is expressive of real presence because all of creation is imbued with divinity) are indicted by Herbert's logic.[8] But if the first stanza leads one to expect the species to be included among the external trappings of Roman excess, the second begins a description of sacramental efficacy far from impugning the doctrine of transubstantiation:

> But by the way of nourishment and strength
> Thou creep'st into my breast;
> Making thy way my rest,
> And thy small quantities my length;
> Which spread their forces into every part,
> Meeting sinnes force and art.
> (7-12).

If Herbert had wanted to place a neutral emphasis on *use* and the corporate act as the means by which sacramental grace is communicated, he might have chosen something other than this essentially physiological description, which, while avoiding altogether the problem of determining how or at which point in the process the elements take on the role of distributing the body and blood of Christ, nevertheless ensures their substantial and not merely significant involvement. It is in the gap between the first and second stanza, between disparaging comments on external finery and scrutiny of an inward, mysterious process, that the potential for controversy resides, a controversy Herbert deftly avoids. By steering clear of any explanation as to the manner by which the elements receive their peculiar powers and instead going straight to their internal operation, he maintains their

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rooms'. I contend, rather, that both inward and outward motions are apparent in the poem's 'first half' alone.

[8] On the other hand, in 'The Church Porch' Herbert cautions the potentially irreverent that in church, 'God is more there, then thou' (404), an assertion qualifying the Pauline notion that the believer's body is the true temple.

sensuous status while accommodating a Reform emphasis on the individual psyche as primary site of sacramental presence.

Again, the division of 'Our souls and fleshy hearts' (15), the focus of the following two stanzas, provides an essentially physical explanation for the mystery of sacramental grace. God's 'small quantities' are unable to overcome the wall and are thereby a restraint on mere 'rebel-flesh' (17). Meanwhile, 'the souls most subtile rooms' are penetrable only by 'grace', which, nevertheless, 'with these elements comes',[9] and which, having so entered the soul, is able to send 'Dispatches' to the sentinels or 'spirits refin'd' (19-24) that guard the door, who in turn, presumably, disseminate medicinal effects throughout the body. The entire process, a sort of military coup, may thus be summarized as follows: ceremonial trappings may accompany but certainly do not intimate divine presence which, nevertheless, *is* somehow involved with the material species, but only *after* ingestion (so far as we know or Herbert allows). These charged species then 'spread their forces into every part'; but only grace, the commander-in-chief, is able to breach the stronghold and gain central control of the entire terrain, which is then redeemed/colonized.

It is of course possible that what I have described as a sensualist sacramental position is but the figurative description of what in fact is *not* essentially a physical process. The presence of military imagery suggests as much. But just as the notion of a cosmic battle played out on an individual spiritual plane was perhaps for the early modern Christian an immanent reality, it is not unlikely that for Herbert the inner drama of redemption was more than a merely figurative war. In any case, the equivocal and forensic 'Not', 'But', 'Yet' and 'Onely' positioning each stanza are symptomatic less of an attempt to achieve some degree of modern or *via media* rationality than the irenic equivocation of

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[9] Erroneously aligning Calvin with Zwingli as part and parcel of a homogeneity 'typical of the Reformation', R. V. Young sees in this line 'an idea foreign to Reform thought.' God, says Young's Herbert, 'is present in the Eucharistic species': Young (1993) 190-1. The line, however, says 'with', not 'in', and as such allows precisely the Calvinist reading Young abjures.

the country parson, who, whatever his theological position, is content to know that God is 'not only the feast, but the way to it.'[10]

That this version of 'H. Communion' is sensitive to Laudian controversy over the importance of sacraments, ceremony and discipline *vis-à-vis* preaching and doctrine[11] becomes evident when contrasted with that found in the earlier Williams MS, where sundry theological strands are more readily identified.[12] Here, the interrogative first stanza suggests but two poles in the debate, Roman trans- and Lutheran consubstantiation, a choice between a doctrine of ubiquity wherein God's substantial presence does not exclude that of the bread, and the more radical notion that the bread's substance is wholly converted. Herbert goes on in the following stanza to insist that the relative presence or absence of bread is a non-issue, that what really matters is that his 'gratious Lord' (1) and 'all thy traine' (10) be *somehow* there. By the third stanza, ecumenical sentiment is expanded to include a more specifically Calvinist doctrine which, while asserting real presence, confines it to the soul of the recipient, the elements *indicating* as a seal or promise rather than in some way *constituting* that presence. It is this doctrine, explicitly allowed here, that silently bridges the gap between the first and second stanzas of the later poem, though there 'nourishment and strength' presume a distinctly physiological medium for God's penetration of the poet's 'breast'.

By the fifth stanza, an even more positive stance begins to emerge, beginning with a sarcastic rejection of 'Impanation' (25), a view of sacramental presence which focusses directly on the hypostatic union of divine and human beings at the Incarnation.[13] Rather

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[10] Herbert (1941) 258.

[11] Laudian reform has been described as 'the desire to transform English Protestants' perception of the relative importance of discipline *vis-à-vis* doctrine, and of sacraments *vis-à-vis* preaching': A. Milton 447.

[12] That the *W* version was finally excluded from *The Temple* may be evidence of Herbert's irenic attitude: Summers (1993) 24. Cf. McGill 21-2 and Stewart 54.

[13] The term was most often associated with the complementary Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation, both favourably and otherwise. Under 'impanate' and 'impanation' the OED cites the following: '1555 Ridley Wks. (Parker Soc.) 34 Saying: "We grant the nature of bread remaineth..and yet the corporeal substance of the bread therefore is gone, lest two bodies should be confused together, and Christ should be thought impanate"'; '1548 Gest Pr. Masse in H. G. Dugdale Life App. i. (1840) 86-7 Thimpanacion of Christes bodye..is..soch a presence of Christes body in the bread wherwyth they both

than bread becoming God, the divine substance becomes united with that of bread, just as the Word becomes flesh at his human birth. That God's nature takes on man's is, presumably, acceptable; but that it accommodates that of bread is decidedly not. Herbert is willing to tolerate various degrees of transformation with respect to the species, but he is wary of compromising the divine nature by associating it too closely with mere bread. Rather, it is 'My flesh, & fleshly villany' that 'made thee dead' (29-30), the implication being that if God's nature is at all compromised in the Eucharist, it is insofar as he dies in being united to the recipient's flesh. In the following stanza this new focus on Incarnation and hypostasis ironically cancels the poem's earlier ecumenism by questioning whether flesh is present among the species at all: 'That fflesh is there, mine eyes deny:/ And what should flesh but flesh discry,/ The noblest sence of five?' (31-2). We are now more firmly in the realm of Calvinist virtualism, the species signifying rather than embodying a process which occurs strictly between heaven and communicant. As with the later poem, we are again presented the impasse separating flesh and soul, though here the absence of any physiological explanation only affirms a finally mysterious connection with a radically transcendent God:

> Into my soule this cannot pass;
> fflesh (though exalted) keeps his grass
> And cannot turn to soule.
> Bodyes & Minds are different Spheres,
> Nor can they change their bounds & meres,
> But keep a constant Pole.
> (37-42).

The 'this' corresponding here to flesh is in the final stanza countered with 'This gift of all gifts', which, presumably, unlike flesh, can indeed 'pass'. This gift can be none other than grace, explicitly named in the later poem where it alone is able to get over 'the wall that parts/ Our souls and fleshy hearts'.

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shuld be unseverably personed and have al theyr condicions and properties'; '1725 tr. Dupin's Eccl. Hist 17th C. I. vi. iii. 247 [Peter Martyr] attack'd Transubstantiation, and supported the Opinion of Luther concerning the Impanation'.

In the Williams 'H. Communion', then, Herbert is reluctant to allow much in the way of commerce between flesh and soul, maintaining a Reform vision of sacramental grace as an essentially spiritual and non-bodily transaction. The later poem, on the other hand, while more equivocating and less polemical in tone, nevertheless promotes a more intimate and amorphous relationship among body and soul, grace and its material means. Whether these poems frame a linear development in Herbert's sacramental thought is difficult to say.[14] The time line does parallel a period in Stuart church history, from the 1618 Synod of Dort to the advent of Laud's archbishopric in 1633, which saw an increased emphasis on sacrament and discipline relative to preaching and doctrine. But does Herbert's accommodation of the ecclesiastical establishment's increasing sacerdotalism in fact indicate discomfort with puritan emphasis on more private pieties? Whatever their relevance for Herbert's theological itinerary, the two versions of 'H. Communion' are comprehensive of the array of sacramental theories available to his contemporaries, from Roman trans- and Lutheran consubstantiation, to Calvinist virtualism -- with the notable exception of the memorialist view advanced by Zwingli. Herbert thus shares with his English Protestant contemporaries a concern that the Eucharist involve Real Presence. It is the *manner* of that presence as expressed in the poetry, however, which suggests he was far from embracing the Laudian sacramental programme without recognizing a tension between spiritual and material aspects of religious experience. Herbert's beloved English *via media*, then, was less coherent integration of ceremonial and devotional pieties than a way fraught with struggle and uncertainty.

Though finally unacceptable in the Williams 'H. Communion', consubstantiation ('Impanation') is elsewhere considered in an apparently favourable light, perhaps because Herbert even in that poem approves of the doctrine of hypostasis on which Lutheran sacramentalism is in part based. In 'Love-joy', the poet's examination of a stained-glass

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[14] For an account suggesting an increasingly sensualist view bordering on transubstantiation see Ellrodt 324-5.

window is a sacramental reflection. While the emphasis is on simply recognizing and accepting the presence of Christ, the speaker, 'never loth/ To spend my judgement', cannot resist offering an explanation, to wit, the letters J and C 'be the bodie and the letters both/ Of *Joy* and *Charitie* ' (4-7). His interlocutor corroborates and adds 'It figures *JESUS CHRIST* ' (8). The simultaneous presence of both body and sign is common to most sacramental formulae; here, however, the letters are 'Anneal'd on every bunch' (3), thus suggesting an inscription which goes beyond the surface to share in a portion of the grapes' substance. The fruit is neither merely a vehicle for J and C, nor is it displaced by them. And because they do not simply reside on the surface, the letters are more than disembodied signs; rather, J and C do not cease to be J and C even as their being is integral with the matter by which they are manifest. If the poem allegorizes sacramental presence, it does so by exploiting the Incarnation and the paradox that a thing can be another thing while not ceasing to be itself, that the Word does not cease being the Word in becoming flesh.

In addition to the hypostatical union of the Incarnation, Lutheran consubstantiation is based on a doctrine of ubiquity. This latter is suggested by the fact that both speaker and interlocutor discover what is already there rather than witness some sort of transformation. Attending to his experience of the window in a spiritually reflective manner, Herbert allows its sacramental significance to become apparent, just as the Eucharistic species stand apart from other matter by virtue of consecration. This latter, presumably, is understood as accompanying or enjoining rather than effecting Presence, as in the Roman Mass. Emphasis on a significance for ceremony that avoids granting inordinate powers to either communicant or priest is of some consequence for the poet/priest in 'Providence', where ubiquity is the foundation for both office and muse. The opening stanzas of this lengthy hymn establish the speaker as God's instrument; they invoke Herbert's divine muse as him 'through whom my fingers bend/ To hold my quill' and who makes man 'Secretarie of thy praise' (3-8). That attending to rather than effecting divine Presence nevertheless invests

the poet/priest with sacerdotal authority is evident in a passage otherwise tempered by a more inclusive pronoun. All creation, while eager to sing their creator's renown, are 'lame and mute' (12) if not for 'Man', for whom 'the penne alone into his hand' (7) is given:

> Man is the world's high Priest: he doth present
> The sacrifice for all; while they below
> Unto the service mutter an assent,
> Such as springs use that fall, and windes that blow.
> (13-6).

It is man's discursive engagement with creation that both manifests its glories and, in doing so, formally ritualizes the gratitude and praise latent in its myriad being. In addition, then, to its sense of 'place before the altar', the verbal 'present' also suggests the sacramental intensity of 'make present', intimating a significant ontological role for man's creative capacities. In fulfilling his duty as one made in the image of an infinitely creative being, man brings forth the world in all its splendor, just as in Lutheran divinity the priest is authorized to consecrate the elements by which Real Presence is nonetheless effected apart from anything he might do or say. All is possible in the first place only through the ubiquitous presence of God in the world:

> Thou art in small things great, not small in any:
> Thy even praise can neither rise, nor fall.
> Thou art in all things one, in each thing many:
> For thou art infinite in one and all.
> (41-4).

Wherever one cares to look, God is already there, present in Nicolas of Cusa's notion of a circle whose center is everywhere and circumference nowhere. Poetic celebration of the world's wonder constitutes appropriate praise by virtue of the fact that in focussing on God's creation, man's adoration necessarily lights on God. The relationship between Herbert's faith and art is addressed more fully below; here it will suffice to note that a sacerdotal and sensualist view of sacramental ministry is based on a Lutheran doctrine of ubiquity which appears, in turn, to inform Herbert's view of the poetic enterprise.

If Herbert is occasionally wary of an overly materialist or potentially idolatrous attitude toward sacraments, he does not appear to have had much regard for the strictly

memorialist or representational views of the Swiss Zwingli. In 'Love Unknown' he implies that the 'many' who 'drunk bare wine' suffer considerable disadvantage relative to the speaker for whom 'A friend did steal into my cup for good' (42-3).[15] Moreover, this unambiguous tone is rarely if ever evident in passages potentially either critical or supportive of Roman Catholic views; overall Herbert is far from reluctant to indulge a sensualist sacramental orientation. In 'The Agonie', for example, 'Sinne is that presse and vice, which forceth pain/ To hunt his cruell food through ev'ry vein' (11-2) and

> Love is that liquor sweet and most divine,
> Which my God feels as bloud; but I, as wine.
> (17-8).

The juxtaposition of these two couplets is startling. The Christ who in Pauline terms 'becomes sin' (1 Pet. 2.24; 2 Cor. 5.21) is here literally filled with its poison, a poison which displaces his blood which in turn becomes that of the communicant who, presumably, was hitherto filled with the sin now coursing through his saviour's veins. The final line may suggest a moderate sacramental position; indeed, Herbert's modern editor calls it 'an inversion of the doctrine of transubstantiation'.[16] But 'feels' is at best ambiguous, allowing that the speaker's phenomenal experience of wine may only veil what is in fact a bloody reality, the two levels, appearance and reality, paralleling the categories of substance and accident invoked by the Tridentine canon. Moreover, the communicant's experience of wine rather than blood may be seen as an aspect of God's mercy in conferring sacramental grace. By this 'liquor sweet' the benefits of Christ's surrogate sufferings under the winepress of just wrath are transferred (or rather transfused) minus the sufferings themselves. Recourse 'Unto Mount Olivet' is, for the speaker, purely

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[15] It is perhaps possible to give the passage a moderate Calvinist gloss, Herbert reluctant to allow, as did Hooker, that the godly may in fact worship alongside the wicked: Collinson (1989) 31. If true, this suggests Herbert is actually so bold as to unambiguously identify himself as one of the elect.

[16] Herbert (1941) 488. An opposing view, though equally intolerant of those critics who see in Herbert's sacramentalism 'irenic ambiguities', is that of R. V. Young, who asserts that in 'The Agonie' 'Our Savior is truly present *under the form* of "sweet wine"': Young (1993) 187-9. I fail to see where in the poem Herbert is this specific; affirming real presence is not the same as identifying its *modus*. He indeed may 'not have been happy' with the 'Black Rubric' of the 1552 BCP, but the assertions of real presence in 1559 and subsequent versions no more provided Herbert with a rationale for sacramental *modus* than the poem allows Young's reading.

imaginative, even if excruciating; 'A man so wrung with pains, that all his hair,/ His skinne, his garments bloudie be' may suggest a meditative sharing of Christ's sufferings, but the lines' aesthetic or 'accidental' status renders sweet that which for another was truly agonizing.

Greater ambiguity characterizes 'The Invitation', where one is instructed to 'drink this,/ Which before ye drink is bloud' (11-2).[17] Whereas Jesus said simply 'drink' and 'this is my blood', Herbert adds a rather specific qualification, to which Hutchinson alludes in his anti-Roman note on 'The Agonie'. It is certainly possible Herbert means only to distinguish between what is taken in the sacrament and what flowed at Golgotha; but it is at least as likely he addresses the issue so carefully avoided in the 1633 'H. Communion', namely, the question of the spatial point and temporal occurrence of body and blood -- of when and where, exactly, the friend of 'Love Unknown' steals into Herbert's cup. Whereas the blank space between the first and second stanzas of the communion poem allow him to avoid dealing too specifically with the manner of sacramental presence, here Herbert appears to advocate a change in the species *prior* to ingestion, thus qualifying the moderate or virtualist position which allows only a spiritual or internal presence among the souls of the elect.

Herbert more often than not tries to avoid sacramental controversy. The *mysterium tremendum* argument, popular among irenic Jacobean and Stuart divines, maintained real presence without attending too precisely to its manner or *modus*.[18] Richard Hooker provided Herbert and others with a model of behaviour suitable for approaching Holy Communion: 'Let it therefore be sufficient for me presenting my selfe at the Lords table to know what there I receive from him, without searching or inquiring of the maner how

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[17] Jesus, according to scripture, never in fact added the temporal qualification. Herbert's inference is perhaps based on the present tense construction of Jesus' words; but the phrase 'before ye drink' is indicative of an interpretive licence bordering on the controversy Herbert more often than not seeks to avoid, the tone less irenic than polemical.

[18] Dugmore 61. Cf. A. Milton 197-98.

Christ performeth his promise . . . '.[19] Explicit endorsement of Hooker's view is apparent in 'Divinitie', where theological curiosity is as presumptuous as the new philosophy's obsession with astronomical inquiry. Among the objects cut and carved 'with the edge of wit' (7) is the Eucharist, which Herbert implies should be regarded as a simple matter and exempt from controversy:

> But he doth bid us take his bloud for wine.
> Bid what he please; yet I am sure,
> To take and taste what he doth there designe,
> Is all that saves, and not obscure.
> (21-4).

However, it may be the sacrament is not the least of 'Gordian knots' (20) after all. The first line of this stanza certainly *does* obscure, grammatically allowing both the innocuous analogy 'blood *as* wine' and the literal substitution 'blood *in place of* wine', the equivocation carried through with 'what' in the third line inviting the gloss 'whatever'.[20] The obscurity does not so much evade doctrinal commitment as deliberately avoid controversy and what can only amount to an absurd probing of that which is finally mysterious. However, 'yet' suggests some reluctance to rest content with the mysterious words of institution. It is as if Herbert either understands the scripture to be saying one thing and proceeds to assert another, or, more likely, is frustrated by an obscurity inherent in the institution itself and, though allowing the ambiguity to characterize his own assessment, has in mind a certain preference nonetheless. It may be recalled that whereas Christ says 'take and eat', Herbert says 'take and taste', which, while not alone conclusive proof, does suggest the need for as sensuous an apprehension of God's 'designe' as is possible.

Sensory vividness compromises *mysterium tremendum* in an earlier stanza, where the mutual proximity of 'broacht' species and pierced side are nevertheless accompanied by a warning against excessive curiosity:

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[19] Hooker 5.181.

[20] Richard Strier insists that Eucharistic readings of 'Divinitie' are erroneous insofar as they neglect the non-conducive order of the words 'bloud' and 'wine'; Herbert uses such words in *The Temple* only 'metaphorically': Strier (1983) 47.

> Could not that Wisdome, which first broacht the wine,
> Have thicken'd it with definitions?
> And jagg'd his seamlesse coat, had that been fine,
> With curious questions and divisions?
> (9-12).

'Wisdome' did indeed eventually thicken the wine he offered his disciples, but with blood, not definitions, which only accentuates the notion that the cup received in remembrance *is* somehow the blood it signifies. It would appear on this account that the curiosity in question does not pertain to any particular confessional formula, least of all one which emphasizes real presence; and yet the poem does condemn the scholastic rationalism which seeks precise formulae for what must remain a mystery, and which thus mocks a sacramental piety Herbert would save from being trivialized.

In the final stanza we find that 'Faith needs no staffe of flesh, but stoutly can/ To heav'n alone both go, and leade' (27-8). Only faith, which, like 'Divinities transcendent skie' is beyond material limitation, can provide the impetus truly to 'take and taste', to believe that in so doing one receives that which is 'all that saves' (24). Rather than advance theological formulae which render sacramental efficacy rationally palatable, Herbert advocates believing in the means of grace regardless. By instructing the 'foolish man' to burn his 'Epicycles' and 'Break all thy spheres' (25-6) he figuratively attacks Ptolemaic apologists desperate to defend their waning cosmology with sophisticated and ultimately misguided models. Trans- and consubstantiation, virtualism and Zwinglian memorialism -- these are as inadequate as their scholastic predecessors in addressing the mystery behind Jesus' words of institution. To persist in such scrutiny is tantamount to crucifying him anew, this time with 'curious questions and divisions'. The scene of crucifixion is brought within the realm of Herbert's own conscience, troubled with knowing himself to be as much the 'foolish man' as the man of faith, as much the converted centurion as the side-piercing soldier. He wants simply to 'take and taste' grace without trying to understand how it is imparted in the sacrament; but to do so is perhaps as difficult, finally, as retaining

for the universe an Aristotelian hierarchy while dismissing the models which render it intelligible.

Obscurity on this matter suggests placing Herbert squarely among those English divines whose reluctance to identify *modus* did not prevent them from indulging a sensualist sacramental orientation. It is interesting to note that while these churchmen were sure to distinguish, as Hooker before them, between simply corporeal and more mystical understandings of Real Presence, they were hardly eager to allow a similar reasonableness in the Thomist formula for transubstantiation -- which denied presence *in loco* and allowed the body and blood a reality only *per modum substantiae* -- even though their education would have afforded access to the doctrine itself rather than a merely popular understanding.[21] While it is not surprising that many saw in the Roman doctrine a too carnal and therefore idolatrous rendering, schooled divines would have recognized that the subtleties of the Thomist sacrament did not make such an interpretation necessary.[22] It is just such ambiguity which may have allowed Andrewes, Donne, Montagu, Neile, Cosin and even William Laud himself to endorse a quasi-Roman sensualism and sacerdotalism while maintaining, if sometimes disingenuously, an oppositionist stance toward the Roman church in general.[23] They may have identified transubstantiation with the simplified, vulgar interpretation common among both Roman Catholic laity and the puritan or more enthusiastically non-conformist detractors of Rome; or they may simply have recognized the futility of encouraging tolerance for a formula whose complexity precluded popular access, in which case their occasional anti-Roman outbursts may have been less doctrinally

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[21] Dugmore 26-27.

[22] Gene Veith recognizes that the doctrine of transubstantiation, because it abolishes the species, is actually *less* sensualist than, say, the Lutheran doctrines of ubiquity and consubstantiation: Veith 207. It should be pointed out, however, that popular understanding of the Roman doctrine, fueled by English antipopery, was often scathing toward 'breadengod' worship of any stripe, Lutheran or otherwise: A. Milton 385-6. Cf. Davies 292.

[23] In a speech before the 1629 parliament Laudian Bishop Richard Neile went so far as to dismiss not only the Church of Rome, but also the Mass and transubstantiation: Hunter MS 67/14 (Durham Dean and Chapter Library), cited in A. Milton 86. It is important to emphasize, however, that such vehemence among Laudians may have been less confessionally genuine than the expedient deflection of charges of Roman sympathy: A. Milton 84-91.

motivated than politically advantageous. In any event, it is clear these divines sought not only to promote sacraments as essential means of grace, but on occasion appeared to advance sacramental formulae indistinguishable from their supposed Roman foes and thus inadvertently exacerbated fears of crypto-popery.[24]

Herbert's simultaneous fondness for and distrust of the senses is evident in several lines from 'The Pearl':

> I know the projects of unbridled store:
> My stuffe is flesh, not brasse; my senses live,
> And grumble oft, that they have more in me
> Then he that curbs them being but one to five
> (26-9)[25]

In 'The Odour. 2 Cor. 2.15', on the other hand, '*My Master*' is not only a sweet sound; such words are 'a rich sent/ Unto the taster' (2-3) who would

> thrust into them both:
> That I might finde
> What cordials make this curious broth,
> This broth of smells, that feeds and fats my minde[,]
> (7-10).

thus investing reflection on the word with fleshly status. A gesture returning the favour shows Herbert eager to allow even God the physical indulgences enjoyed by His sublunary creatures. He would make '*My servant*' a sensuous experience for God, to 'creep & grow/ To some degree of spicinesse to thee!' (12-5). Though there is scriptural precedence elsewhere for the idea that the devout life is as a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God,[26] the passage sighted in the poem's title hardly seems appropriate, for there St. Paul writes of the smell of Christ in his followers as life to the saved or the stench of death to the reprobate. There is no mention of *God's* olfactory delight.

The sensuous extent of Real Presence for Herbert, then, is not only a doctrinal matter; it is at the very heart of his sacramental poetic. In 'Sepulchre' Incarnation and

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[24] The co-occurrence of Laudian ceremonial reform and *mysterium tremendum* explanations of real presence may also have contributed to paranoia over a perceived return of popish practices: A. Milton 204-5.

[25] The *W* version is comparatively calm, concerned less with the poet's reaction to life's pleasure than contemplation of the pleasure's themselves: Herbert (1977) 58v.

[26] Philippians 4.18.

sacrifice are addressed relevant to the grace of which they are an integral part. Persistent grace etches out a place in the stoniest of hearts, which here is as the slab on which the crucified body is laid. Unlike 'The Altar', there is no question of the speaker offering any sort of sacrifice; rather, 'cold, hard, foul' (22) characterizes the human heart's resistance to such grace. Notable here is the idea of the body of the word, of the crucified lord as an engraved character :

> And as of old the Law by heav'nly art
> Was writ in stone; so thou, which also art
> The letter of the word, find'st no fit heart
> To hold thee.
> (16-9).

It is in Christ's death that the Word-become-flesh, the Logos as body, is most significant. For it is in death, a death here brought about by the hardness, the resistance, of stony hearts -- perhaps, figuratively, of the body of the text against its pre-verbal logos -- that the infinite Word 'also [is]/ The letter of the word'. This is why the sacrament of the Eucharist, perhaps more than Christmas, celebrates the Incarnation. For by virtue of becoming flesh, the Word (word) undergoes death, sacrifices itself in order to be in the fullest ontological sense. Herbert does not violate the scandalous nature of divine sacrifice, does not succumb to the temptation to extricate the spirit of the word from the letter, the Logos from its inscribed/inscribing body. Rather, the poem closes with no sign of either love or stony resistance, word or flesh, giving in:

> Yet do we still persist as we began,
> And so should perish, but that nothing can,
> Though it be cold, hard, foul, from loving man
> Withhold thee.
> (20-3).

This acute sensitivity to the scandalous implications of the Incarnation explains why Herbert, like other avant garde divines, is reluctant to abandon a sensualist sacramental orientation; for it is through the insistent fleshly status of the Eucharistic species that the

paradox of word-become-flesh, potentially a 'stumbling block' and 'foolishness',[27] is stubbornly proclaimed.

In 'The Invitation', poetic structure mirrors the scandal of word become flesh replicated in the feast the poem celebrates. Herbert the humble parson extends generous welcome and mild admonition to those approaching the Lord's table, compared to which all previous meals have failed to satisfy vain appetites: 'taste' is 'waste' (1-2), wine is 'drunk amisse' (10) if not of 'the feast,/ God, in whom all dainties are' (5-6). And yet the most exquisite of human experiences is surpassed only by a joy which nevertheless resembles that which it putatively transcends:

> Come ye hither All, whose love
> Is your dove,
> And exalts you to the skie:
> Here is love, which having breath
> Ev'n in death,
> After death can never die.
>
> (25-30).

The balanced antithesis of Herbert's stanza lends formal support to the comparison. Secular love here is neither dull nor sublunary; neither does the love embodied in the Eucharist escape the death implicitly associated with sexual fulfillment. Indeed, the paradox that lovers' orgasm signals the obsolescence of their efforts is captured by the stanza's final line even as it states a theological commonplace. This mirroring in the second stanza of qualities associated with the love celebrated by the first is reciprocated, 'dove' evoking the Holy Spirit which both descended on Jesus to inaugurate his ministry, and on the Virgin Mary at the miraculous conception of Jesus.[28] This in turn suggests for 'breath' an association with the risen Christ's gift of the third member of the Trinity, breathed on the apostles just prior to the Ascension.[29] In hindsight, then, the 'All' of this penultimate stanza anticipates the identification of 'All' and 'All' in the final line, extends the invitation 'Come ye hither' to God, and thus advances the interpenetration of love and Love.

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[27] I Cor. 1.23.

[28] This latter is not scriptural but part of iconographical tradition.

[29] Jn. 20.22.

The hierarchical order evoked by a vertical structural arrangement (the fifth stanza's 'All', 'dove' and 'skie' followed by 'breath' and 'death') is dissolved from within when we discover that both the exalting terms and those concerned with more earthly matters are performing double duty. Similar complementary or imbricate pairs can be drawn from other stanzas: 'fare' (3) and 'feast' (5) in the first, 'pain' (13) and 'cheer' (17) in the third, and, above all, 'wine' (7) and 'bloud' (12) in the second. The poem is thus truly Eucharistic and incarnational, not only thematically but also formally, the careful arrangement of antitheses and their instability reflecting the paradox embodied in the sacrament. Finally, as if the scandal of the Incarnation were not available through poetic analysis alone, Herbert offers a theological assertion that echoes and thus appeals to messianic authority: 'drink this,/ Which before ye drink is bloud'; this moves away from *mysterium tremendum* toward a clearly corporeal presence. While baroque ingenuity is certainly a feature of 'The Invitation', Herbert is sure to include amid the dazzle a plain, and not obscure, statement of that which is the source of all the fuss.

2
Devotion and Sacrament

Though undoubtedly a keen proponent of the church's sacramental policies and practices, Herbert also cautions against an overly enthusiastic regard for the material trappings of ritual and ceremony. At issue here is conflict between, on the one hand, the sacerdotal vision of a church body whose piety consists in public and outward conformity, and, on the other, a puritan tendency to locate true religious piety in the private communion of God and individual. Controversy over the material extent of Real Presence in the Eucharist, then, is of no little consequence in determining the extent to which God's gifts are institutionally mediated.

In 'The Priesthood' Herbert is in awe of the ministerial office, especially the administering of sacraments. His profound respect for the rite is anticipated by subtle comparison of the Eucharist with the potter's art, which fits earth by 'fire and trade . . . for the boards of those/ Who make the bravest shows' (16-8). In the next stanza we find that

the inferior art is but earth delighting in earth, 'both feeder, dish, and meat' having 'one beginning and one finall summe' (21-2), and in the following stanza the play on 'boards' is confirmed:

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

Perplexity finally results in a hyperbolic display of submission, the poet and aspiring priest recognizing his status as 'lowly matter', the master potter's clay thrown 'at his [God's] feet' (35-6). The humble gesture, however, represents more than admiration and fear for the sacramental office. The 'Ark' (typologically the sacrament, the vessel of the new covenant) he hesitates to grasp seems to 'shake/ Through th' old sinnes and new doctrines of our land' (32-3).[30] It is difficult to determine precisely what is meant by 'new doctrines'. The poem's title and reverent tone suggest Herbert's target is puritan disregard for things holy; given the probable date of composition[31] it is not unlikely he was reacting to fears of the church's increasingly sacramental orientation. On the other hand, Uzzah's presumptuous approach to the presence housed in the Ark suggests Herbert just as likely condemns a too familiar and thus potentially idolatrous regard for sacraments.[32] The latitude allowed by 'new doctrines' may, finally, refer to *any* threat to an ideal balance of pious restraint and due regard.

Mysterium tremendum perplexity at the problem of Real Presence is appropriate for the priest's attitude toward his sacramental office. Herbert's country parson,

> being to administer the Sacraments, is at a stand with himself, how or what behaviour to assume for so holy things. Especially at Communion times he is in a great confusion, as being not only to receive God, but to break, and administer him. Neither finds he any issue in this, but to throw himself down at the

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[30] Uzzah was struck dead by God for presuming to touch the Ark of the Covenant, even if his motives seem to have been pure enough. (One of the oxen drawing the Ark 'stumbled'): 2 Sam. 6.6.

[31] The subject matter and the fact that the poem is absent from *W* together suggest a date approximating Herbert's anticipation of his ordination as priest in 1630: Charles 140-1.

[32] The Ark also contained the manna that is typologically significant of the Eucharist: Heb. 9.4.

throne of grace, saying, Lord, thou knowest what thou didst, when thou apointedst it to be done thus; therefore doe thou fulfill what thou didst appoint; for thou art not only the feast, but the way to it.[33]

The minister's prostrate supplication is also evident in 'The Priesthood' where, following the penultimate stanza's 'I throw me at his feet', Herbert imagines himself an empty vessel not unlike the Eucharistic species, presented and now humbly awaiting divine invigoration:

> There will I lie, untill my Maker seek
> For some mean stuffe whereon to show his skill:
> Then is my time.
> (37-9).

Quiet anticipation of miraculous transformation, whether of bread and wine or ministerial office, allows Herbert to indulge a sacerdotal celebration of his vocation, tempered by humility and short of endorsing the *iure divino* episcopacy advocated by some of his more zealous peers.[34] Though considerably enamoured of the special privileges such office affords and relishing the idea of his own hands being such 'pure things' as 'bring my God to me!' (29-30),[35] he is sufficiently self-effacing as to recognize the importance of sober and due submission, 'Lest good come short of ill/ In praising might' (40-1).

The priest's sacerdotal authority and preaching responsibilities are potentially at odds in 'The Windows'. Identified with stained glass, he is valued as much for his priestly status as for the word he is charged with administering:

> Doctrine and life, colours and light, in one
> When they combine and mingle, bring
> A strong regard and aw: but speech alone
> Doth vanish like a flaring thing,
> And in the eare, not conscience ring.
> (11-5).

Though focussed ostensibly on the relevance of personal conduct and reputation for the pulpit, the metaphor draws on long standing controversy over the relative value and importance of preaching versus the ceremonial beauty championed by Laudian divines.

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[33] Herbert (1941) 259.

[34] Though episcopacy by divine right was initially advanced, surprisingly, by the more rigidly Calvinist conformists as a way of asserting their autonomy against the crown's own *iure divino* claims, puritan reservation increased proportional to the doctrine's association with the sacerdotal policies and practices of the more avant garde divines: A. Milton 454-6.

[35] Henry Vaughan's perceptive gloss on these lines in 'The Mount of Olives' renders 'things' as 'hands': Vaughan 156.

Novel in this respect is the antithetical proximity of 'eare' to 'conscience', these usually being allies in support of those who favoured a word-centred as opposed to sacramentally-based ministry. The preacher here is a social *exemplum*, most valuable as a visible symbol of godliness, part of the very fabric of the church, its buildings and ceremonies -- a window through which the light of divinity might shine. While certainly not denigrating the word, Herbert does seem to suggest that it needs palpable support by way of living example in order to prevent its echoing in his auditory's ear as mere theological abstraction. The preacher's example, then, his 'Doctrine and life', his symbolic status in the community, accompany the word in going beyond the 'eare' or mere intellectual comprehension to effectively penetrate his auditory's conscience. Worth noting here is the confusion of visual and auditory metaphors: 'speech alone . . . vanish[es]' while 'colours and light', like the word, 'ring'.[36] Internal assimilation of the word is thus augmented by its association with the preacher's sacerdotal role, God's representative integral with the beauty of holiness he advances. Similarly, Herbert's Parson 'is not witty, or learned, or eloquent, but Holy', and preaching is sacramentally augmented '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.' The blood and Baptism echoes are not merely metaphorical; indeed, the preacher's purpose is 'an often urging of the *presence*, and majesty of God, by these, or such like speeches.'[37] While ultimately concerned with the internal effect of the word, Herbert knows that the priest's moral authenticity and sacerdotal authority complement his teaching, just as apprehension of God's presence in the sacrament is unthinkable apart from its material component.

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[36] A similar synaesthesia is evident in 'Christmas', where divine/human union consists in the interpenetration of the speaker's music and God's light: 'His beams shall cheer my breast, and both so twine,/ Till ev'n his beams sing, and my musick shine' (33-4).

[37] Herbert (1941) 233-4; emphasis added.

Right attitude and conduct are, of course, not confined to the ministerial role. After outlining the various moral and social responsibilities of the candidate poised for entry, the speaker/priest attending the Church Porch turns to the attitudes and behaviour appropriate for Temple worship:

> Twice on the day his due is understood;
> For all the week thy food so oft he gave thee.
> Thy cheer is mended; bate not of the food,
> Because 'tis better, and perhaps may save thee.
> Thwart not the Mighty God: O be not crosse.
> Fast when thou wilt but then, 'tis gain not losse.
> (391-6).

Hutchinson notes that Communion in Herbert's day was celebrated once per month, 'Twice on the day' therefore suggesting morning and evening prayers rather than the sacrament.[38] It may also be observed that the cautionary 'bate not', suggesting the potential for controversy, may apply both to sacraments and liturgical prayers, while, similarly, the qualifying 'perhaps may save thee' is a caution against presumption applicable to both forms of ministry.[39] It is not unlikely Herbert deliberately associates prayer, which after all is a form of communion, with the spiritual 'food' of the Eucharist.[40] Similarly, following a warning to 'Jest not' at preaching (439), Herbert alludes to the possibility of receiving sacraments in a manner not only ineffectual, but positively damning:

> None shall in hell such bitter pangs endure,
> As those, who mock at Gods way of salvation.
> Whom oil and balsames kill, what salve can cure?
> They drink with greedinesse a full damnation.
> (445-8).

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[38] Herbert (1941) 482. It is interesting to note, as does Hutchinson, that *W* 's 'Twice on *that* day' (12r) for *B* 's 'Twice on *the* day' (12v) emphasizes the 'Sundaies' of the previous stanza.

[39] In *A Priest to the Temple* Herbert warns that 'Contentiousnesse in a feast of Charity is more scandall then any posture': Herbert (1941) 259. (Herbert here also supports monthly, even less frequent, sacraments, 'yet at least five or six times in the year'). I am not aware of a similar warning with respect to prayer, though 'The Parson Praying' is anxious that the priest 'exacts of [the people] all possible reverence' and warns against 'any undutifull behaviour in them': *ibid.*, 231.

[40] One critic has proposed an intimate connection between prayer and the Eucharist in 'Prayer (1)': Bonnell 40. The emphasis in that poem, however, is on liturgical as opposed to private devotion. Terry Sherwood suggests Herbert's solution to Eucharistic controversy is to 'mingle the identities of the Eucharist and prayer. By treating them as inextricable expressions of the same truth, he reveals a subtle grasp of both biblical sacrifice and the reformed tradition': Sherwood (1989) 18-9. Neither Bonnell nor Sherwood appear to recognize the extent to which Herbert's prayerful devotion depends on rather than merely accommodates ceremonial forms.

Hearing the preached word is analogous to the bodily ingestion of sacramental benefits, as equally subject to abuse and as capable of causing harm.[41] A final warning that a contrite attitude and right understanding of doctrine are prerequisite to receiving sacramental grace is underscored in 'Superliminare', where the 'precepts' (1) documented in 'The Church-Porch' are to be assimilated in order to 'taste/ The churches mysticall repast' (3-4).

Herbert's respect for ceremony and ritual, then, is not confined to the institutional context they support and perpetuate; rather, sacramental attitudes are comprehensive of a faith whose quotidian realities persist beyond Sundays' rites and observances. If these latter sanctify and set apart that day as special, Herbert's poem 'Sunday' recognizes an integral relationship between the Sabbath and the other, less celebrated, days of the week. Sacraments are a key feature of Sunday's worship, here a divine signature or seal conferring on the day a promissory status :

> O Day most calm, most bright,
> The fruit of this, the next worlds bud,
> Th'indorsement of supreme delight,
> Writ by a friend, and with his bloud
> (1-4).

The fruit of the vine is the seed of graces yet to come, a taste of the marriage supper of the lamb to be celebrated at the end of history. Such fruit is the harvest rest crowning man's toil, Sundays the face and brow which knock against heaven, while 'The worky-daies are the back-part' (11). Here human labour finds purpose in relation to the ceremonial rest that is the Sabbath, parting the 'ranks and orders' of the 'fruitfull beds and borders/ In Gods rich garden' (26-8). The wine consumed in the Eucharist, while anticipating essential joys, also addresses the effects of Adam's curse, man's share in the sufferings which the second Adam experiences in full. Augustine's assertion that the church *is* the mystery on the altar in the Eucharist[42] is perhaps relevant for a garden whose fruit is delineated by human labour, and a source of ease 'for those/ Who want herbs for their wound' (41-2). Finally,

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[41] Resonant here is St. Paul's warning that those who receive the Eucharist unworthily bring damnation on themselves: 1 Cor. 11.27-30.

[42] Sermon 272; cited in Chauvet 291-2.

the cyclical aspect of such ritual is certainly no Blakean same dull round; seen as part of a succession, 'Thredded together on times string' (30), each Sunday performs an eschatological function, is

> a day of mirth:
> And where the week-dayes trail on ground,
> Thy flight is higher, as thy birth.
> O let me take thee at the bound,
> Leaping with thee from sev'n to sev'n,
> Till that we both, being toss'd from earth,
> Flie hand in hand to heav'n!
> (57-63).

As the Eucharist species combine the fruit of human and divine labours in a healing balm and rest for the weary pilgrim, so is the back-breaking toil of 'worky-daies' part of an expanding energy giddy with its own momentum.

It is this combination of reverence for things divine and homely sympathy for the human condition in Herbert's poetry that allows the church's official observances to reverberate beyond its sacred walls; a careful balance of respect and light-hearted familiarity or 'domestic simplicity' integrates stylized ritual with the rhythms of Christian existence.[43] Herbert's awareness of the incarnational paradox proclaimed in the Eucharist, its insistence on the historical fleshing of the Word, is the basis for recognizing sacramental significance in daily human life and labour.

This contiguity among sacraments and otherwise non-ceremonial spheres of Christian life is of considerable consequence for Herbert's devotional verse. The introspective, self-examining character of much of his poetry suggests a largely Reform theological orientation, this 'Protestant poetic' differing from Roman Catholic meditative

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[43] H. Davies 287. A good example of such homeliness with respect to sacraments is found among the six *W* poems absent from *B* and *1633*. The final stanza of 'The Knell' is suggestive of light refreshment:

> Lord make thy Blood
> Convert & colour all the other flood
> And streams of grief,
> That they may bee
> Julips and Cordials when wee call on thee
> ffor some relief.
> (13-8).

practice by focussing less on scriptural topoi and the *ars memorandi* essential to their psychological replication than on the spiritual and moral disposition of the contemplative sinner.[44] This turning inward does not, however, constitute a desacramentalization of Christian faith.[45] Rather, for Herbert the psychological drama of salvation unfolds sacramentally; the external and ritual aspects of sacraments are vividly realized as an integral component of self-reflection, part of the internal machinery addressing the penitent's spiritual depravity. The presence of sacrament and ceremony in *The Temple*, then, qualifies its ostensibly inward focus, cultivating private devotion as an extension of the social *ecclesia.* What we have, in effect, is a sacramental Puritanism, an integrating of institutional and private aspects of religious experience, as in 'Sinne (I)', where God's 'fine nets and strategems to catch us in' (7) include not only 'laws' (3), 'Pulpits and Sundayes', but also 'sorrow dogging sinne' and 'anguish of all sizes' (5-6). Together, these are 'Without, our shame; within, our consciences;/ Angels and grace, eternall hopes and fears' (11-2). Incorporated into the fabric of his devotional experience, sacramental topoi for Herbert signal escape from the anxieties and fears often attending private spiritual reflection; internalized guilt and shame are alleviated by gesturing toward the external means of grace even as these latter penetrate the private psyche and animate the otherwise intangible (and thus perhaps doubtful) motions of salvation.

Herbert's repeated and crushing realization of his own spiritual inadequacy is nonetheless accompanied by remarkable confidence. Alluding to the wormwood and gall of Jeremiah 9.15 in 'Repentance', he suggests a Eucharistic parody and the possibility of its reversal, the latter turning on a subtle messianic identification:

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[44] Louis Martz, often cited as the early champion of an Anglo-Catholic poetic, recognizes that although meditative practices had always had a strong psychological component, it was 'the inward surge of Puritanism' combined with older techniques that produced the distinctive religious devotion of the seventeenth century. It is 'the weapon of mental communion' in Herbert 'which makes the sacraments flow from Christ's side.' Martz even goes so far as to suggest for the period a 'Catholic Puritanism', but insists it is 'free of predestination': Martz (1954) 9, 299, 127-8.

[45] Malcolm Ross's answer to the question of whether Protestant Christianity failed to 'sacramentalize' the 'new individualism' is a resounding No: M. Ross 92 and *passim.*

Sweeten at length this bitter bowl,
Which thou hast pour'd into my soul;
Thy wormwood turn to health, windes to fair weather:
For if thou stay,
I and this day,
As we did rise, we die together.
(19-24).

The preceding confession appropriately anticipates Herbert's hope for sacramental absolution, while his implied identification with the sun and, inevitably, Christ and his Passion, augments this figurative transubstantiation of 'wormwood' to 'health'. The 'bitter bowl' thus recalls Gethsemane even as the confessional context suggests its sacramental function. The dual nature of the Eucharistic symbol, signifying both suffering and joy, wrath and mercy,[46] is appropriate for the poem's *felix culpa* theme.[47] But before 'Fractures well cur'd make us more strong' (36), there is a moment of doubt in 'if thou stay', a doubt which may also mask the rhetorical ploy of one anxious to secure his own interests by implying incompetence for God's failure to act on his behalf. Insofar as this 'bitter bowl' is not sweetened there looms the threat of a demonic reversal of the resurrection scheme; the rising Herbert, sun ('day') and son converge at the zenith of a decision whose outcome is obscured by the silence between confession and communion at the structural centre of the poem.

Epideixis is also a feature of 'Grace', where the elusive gift is typologically associated with sacraments in the third stanza:

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[46] Northrop Frye's theory of demonic parody has particular relevance for the Eucharist, for it is there that the identification of a ruthless, inscrutable will with its sacrificial counterpart or *pharmakos* is most concentrated: Frye (1966) 147-50.

[47] A similar duality surrounds the 'sweetned pill' of 'Affliction (1)', which the speaker 'took . . . till I came where/ I could not go away, nor persevere' (47-8). There may also be a sacramental aspect to the pill inasmuch as excessive confidence at the Lord's Supper might incur sickness and even death: the poet's joy in 'naturall delights' (5) and 'a world of mirth' (12) is presumptuous, leading him to seek God 'with fiercenesse' (18) rather than appropriate caution and reverence. On the other hand, because sacraments for Herbert involve a concern to identify with Christ's sacrifice, affliction is simply an integral part of grace. But even this recognition is a consolation no sooner allowed than withdrawn:

Yet lest perchance I should too happie be
In my unhappinesse,
Turning my purge to food, thou throwest me
Into more sicknesses.
(49-52).

The dew doth ev'ry morning fall;
And shall the dew out-strip thy Dove?
The dew, for which grasse cannot call,
Drop from above.
(9-12).

As elsewhere, God is challenged to act as much for the sake of his own reputation as in the interest of the plaintiff.[48] Herbert is the incapacitated grass, the depraved sinner in no way able to help himself, while the dew he desires is the manna from heaven which no earthly dew could hope to embody. The Calvinist dilemma of having to plead for that which no human plea can ever effect is alleviated through sacramental allusion,[49] challenging God's apparent reluctance and fleshing out his hidden decrees -- to the extent that is possible -- as finally favourable to the speaker.[50] In 'Sighs and Grones', Eucharistic mediation is again the merciful alternative to divine justice:

O do not fill me
With the turn'd viall of thy bitter wrath!
For thou hast other vessels full of bloud,
A part whereof my Saviour empti'd hath,
Ev'n unto death: since he di'd for my good,
O do not kill me!
(19-24).

But just as sacraments are not received without due reflection on one's unworthiness, so is mercy rarely without just chastisement, God having command over both 'life and death', being both '*Judge* and *Saviour, feast* and *rod,/ Cordiall* and *Corrosive* ' (26-8). Herbert's final cry, 'My God, relieve me!' (30), is as much exasperation in the face of a paradoxical theodicy as it is a plea for redemption.

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[48] Such boldness is even more evident in a struck stanza of *W* :

What if I say thou seek'st delayes;
Wilt thou not then my fault reproue?
Prevent my Sinn to thine own praise,
Drop from above.
(43r).

[49] For the story of dew become manna to feed the wandering Israelites see Ex. 16.13-22; its typological and Eucharistic significance is in Jesus' identification of himself as the new manna from heaven: Jn. 6.31-5.

[50] It should be noted that the majuscule initial of 'Dove' is exclusive to *W*, is miniscule in *B*, and lower case in *1633*, which suggests, if anything at all, the stanza's progressive shift *away* from the pneumatological emphasis suggested by the rhetorical question.

Though exasperation is not surprising given his limited human understanding, Herbert could also face the sinner's predicament with calm acceptance. 'Affliction (V)' begins with reference to God's 'floting ark', typologically indicative of Baptism, 'whose stay/ And anchor thou art onely, to confirm/ And strengthen it in ev'ry age,/ When waves do rise, and tempests rage' (3-6), initial deliverance from original sin having lasting effects on the baptized. But the many ills of subsequent life require a supplemental grace. The second stanza's final couplet alludes to this intervening sacrament as the point at which the sinner's griefs, drawing him to God, are shared with God, even as God in the Eucharist offers himself:

> At first we liv'd in pleasure;
> Thine own delights thou didst to us impart:
> When we grew wanton, thou didst use displeasure
> To make us thine: yet that we might not part,
> As we at first did board with thee,
> Now thou wouldst taste our miserie.
> (7-12).

We are reminded of the struck board of the Lord's Supper in 'The Collar', though here the recognition of divine empathy precludes frustration and momentary apostasy. The effect of the lines is that God in Holy Communion abandons any claim to the head of the table, rather joining his guests in a repast of shared joys and sufferings. It is this domestic familiarity at an otherwise solemn occasion which allows the fishing trope of the following stanza, where a distant pun on Angels (angle? angler?) contributes to the idea that both joys and griefs are baits whereby God, with his 'double line' (15-6), furnishes his table with guests. But just as harvest revelry in Robert Herrick's 'Hock-Cart' yields to fresh sprung pain, so here is the happy meal tempered by echoes of the pain it salves, the final stanza's trees both afflicted sinners 'whom shaking fastens more,/ While blustring windes destroy the wanton bowres', and reminiscent of the cross of atonement, wherein mercy and justice are reconciled, God's 'bright beams' taming his 'bow' (20-4).

In 'Miserie' a *contemptus humanitatis* indictment of man's blatant disregard for the free gift of grace becomes in hindsight a more private *mea culpa* reflection. God's mercy

and grace are so extensive that even in his unbridled appetites man has been provided for, God 'Not suff'ring those/ Who would, to be thy foes' (29-30). Ultimate sovereignty and prevenient grace, structurally evident in the poem's framing words -- 'Lord' (1) and 'My God' (78) -- are also suggested by a sacramental echo: '*Man is but grasse,/ He knows it, fill the glasse* ' (5-6). Sacramental prevenience becomes apparent in the following stanza where the speaker is astonished at God's patience, regretting that man, unlike God, will 'not lose a cup of drink for thee' (8), and is confirmed later where the same exasperation becomes a potentially heretical denial of the efficacy of atonement, the speaker asserting that man's 'humours reign' and 'make his life a constant blot,/ And all the bloud of God to run in vain' (62-4). This parodic association of recreational drink and the Eucharist recalls 'The Church-porch', where intemperance threatens to invalidate God's image and seal:

> Stay at the third cup, or forgo the place.
> Wine above all things doth Gods stamp deface.
> (47-8).

Sacramental grace in 'Miserie' subverts its parodic echo, the vain/vein pun complementing the suggestion that even in man's ribald excesses -- perhaps especially there -- Christ's atoning work has been operative, the sacrament preveniently retroactive even in the debauching of one of its central symbols. Recognizing his own depraved status in the final line -- 'My God, I mean my self' (78) -- Herbert is now more reluctant to dismiss as 'vain' man's only hope, for he now must know that his own attempt to flatter God has been, like all human praise, but 'infection/ Presum[ing] on thy perfection' (35-6). He has allowed that the 'glasse' of sin could only be a drink of condemnation; God, apparently, has always had other plans.

That the relationship between devotional and sacramental pieties is significant for the ongoing struggle between self-condemnation and grace is evident in 'Conscience'. The alternating voices of confident judge and guilty supplicant suggest psychological division, or rather the poet's capacity to sustain mutually contrary roles simultaneously. Conscience is, after all, a component of his own psyche. In the poem's sacramental context the

violence associated with crucifixion is directed against the guilt-obsessed 'pratler' (1) and his 'chatting fears' (5), Herbert's defense

> My Saviours bloud: when ever at his board
> I do but taste it, straight it cleanseth me,
> And leaves thee not a word;
> No, not a tooth or nail to scratch,
> And at my actions carp or catch.
> (14-8).

Notable here is the association of 'word' with the accusing Conscience, and, more significant, the silencing of this 'pratler' by the speaker's recourse to the Eucharist. The sacrament/Conscience dichotomy is clarified and the tables turned when in the final stanza we discover that the 'bloudie crosse' signified in the cleansing rite has become the speaker's 'sword', comprised of 'Some wood and nails to make a staff or bill/ For those that trouble me' (21-4). Introspective and sacramental pieties conflict violently; their contrarity, always potential in early Stuart church politics, is realized here within the devotional psyche itself. On the one hand, the speaker longs to escape Conscience's tortuous confines, finding in sacramental ritual an opportunity to escape from his present circumstances into an external and mythical drama; on the other, he seeks to appropriate the symbols of that myth as not only a healing balm but as a violent purge, paradoxically eradicating the accuser Conscience from whatever might then remain of his divided self. This dual motion, of private devotion toward external rite on the one hand, and sacramentalization of the devotional realm on the other, is succinctly stated in the second stanza where the speaker insists, 'My thoughts must work, but like a noiseless sphere' (8).

It is odd that the healing qualities of the Eucharist are aimed primarily at what is also a necessary component of the Christian psyche, the censor who convicts of sin and is essential to self-examination. Certain fair looks, presumably, *are* foul, certain sweet dishes sour, particularly if they garner a disproportionate share of one's devotional energies.[51] Yet

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[51] In 'Vanitie (2)', for example, the speaker's 'Poore silly soul' is cautioned to 'Heark and beware, lest what you now do measure/ And write for sweet, prove a most sowre displeasure' (1-6), conscience dutifully alert to what is *actually* sour, what sweet. In 'The Storm', guilt is a salvific catalyst:

> A throbbing conscience spurred by remorse

Herbert is apparently more concerned with exorcising Conscience than curbing those earthly desires and activities potentially threatening to devotional constancy. Indeed, perhaps music howls at all only because Conscience chides and clouds the ear, which otherwise is free to hear the 'Harmonious peace' (9) of 'noiselesse' thoughts and the Pythagorean music they properly echo.[52]

The violence which surfaces in 'Conscience' is understandable given the contradiction the poem addresses.[53] That Conscience can be both false accuser and the law which justly convicts is a reflection of God's own paradoxical duality, the same doubleness that allows the ultimate accuser to wreak havoc on poor Job only to restore him in the end (only, of course, after having quelled any hope of a rational explanation). That the Eucharist and that which it represents address this duality by placing God himself (in Christ) in the unenviable position of which Job's suffering is a type is captured by a succinct juxtaposition in 'The Bunch of Grapes': 'the Laws sowre juice sweet wine' (27). Herbert's typological meditation applies scriptural and sacramental topoi to his own spiritual condition, especially the plaint echoing the forsaken Christ in Gethsemane. Of

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Hath a strange force:
It quits the earth, and mounting more and more
Dares to assault thee, and besiege thy doore.
(9-12).

[52] In 'Sion', which follows 'Conscience' in *B* and *1633*, music is comprised of 'grones' resulting from this internal battle and which 'ever as they mount, like larks they sing' (21-3).

[53] That violence is an aspect of some of these poems is hardly surprising given the speaker's frustration at paradoxes whose relevance is often personal, not to mention the imagery conjured by the Eucharist itself. A formalized and ceremonious hymn, 'Antiphon (2)' recognizes sacramental violence:

Cho. He our foes in pieces brake;
Ang. Him we touch;
Men. And him we take.
(13-5).

The Eucharist, as Christ's body, is appropriately broken and identified with the sinners' bodies ('foes') it becomes and crucifies. It is also possible Herbert occasionally directs his frustration at Christ himself, or so thinks Random Cloud, who goes to some pains to demonstrate that the imped wing in 'Easter Wings' is *imposed* by the speaker, not only shared, suggesting Herbert willingly advances affliction in his Lord, thus 'getting back at the Punisher': Cloud (1988) 126-34. However perceptive with respect to the annotative prudery of Herbert's pious editors, these observations neglect to recognize Christianity's implicit notion that the sinner is responsible for his saviour's pain, torture and death. This is the paradox of Atonement, evoked by the Eucharist, wherein the supreme gift benefits those who make it necessary in the first place.

interest here is the sacramental character of certain types or 'adumbrations' of the New Testament in the old.[54] The 'Red sea, the sea of shame' (7) anticipates and is clarified by 'the Laws sowre juice' in the penultimate line. In fact, the 'vein' (4) of several lines previous is in hindsight suggestive of what follows. 'Noah's vine' does not only 'bring forth grapes good store' (24-5) but is also implicitly representative of the law which convicts of sin. We are reminded that the Eucharist for Herbert involves not only the gift of grace and final rest or peace for the weary soul, but also some of the agony -- which Christ experienced in full -- necessary for the purging of sin.[55]

Further typological connection is intimated in the final lines of the second stanza, 'Gods works are wide, and let in future times;/ His ancient justice overflows our crimes' (13-4), where 'overflows' recalls 'Red sea' and suggests the blood of atonement, once again focussing on justice and sin as opposed to mercy and grace-imputed righteousness. It is not until the third stanza that the speaker's questions address this absence. 'But where's the cluster? where's the taste/ Of mine inheritance?' (19-20) introduces the object of the poem's title, this explicit Eucharistic type complemented in the same stanza by 'Scripture-dew' (16) which appropriately combines the Israelites' manna with the Word of life that is both scripture and Christ, the bread of life. The speaker's expectation to 'as well take up their joy, as sorrow' (21) is revealed in the final stanza as having already been fulfilled:

> But can he want the grape, who hath the wine?
> I have their fruit and more.
> Blessed be God, who prosper'd *Noahs* vine,
> And made it bring forth grapes good store.
> But much more him I must adore,
> Who of the Laws sowre juice sweet wine did make,
> Ev'n God himself being pressed for my sake.
> (22-8).

Nevertheless, while 'sea of shame', 'justice', 'crimes' and the finally sacramental remedy suggest that release from sin's guilt is the primary object of the speaker's desire, 'Canaan', 'inheritance', and 'grapes good store' all intimate a more than merely spiritual thirst.

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[54] Stanwood and Ross 179.

[55] St. Paul seeks to share in Christ's sufferings for the sake of the church: Col. 1.24.

Indeed, it is quite possible 'Sev'n yeares ago' is an uncharacteristically biographical detail suggesting some sort of worldly disappointment. This is not to imply, as has been fashionable to say of Donne, that Herbert is merely frustrated courtier become godly vassal. It does suggest that his frail humanity is inclined to disguise fears, anxieties and disappointments in an effort to protect whatever sense of dignity and purpose remains. If in addition to his share of guilt and shame Herbert projects on the Eucharist a sense of brokenness and frustration, he only reveals what omniscience must already know.[56]

Vocational anxiety, regret and disappointment are nowhere more pronounced than in 'The Collar', the first lines' frustration concentrated on a central symbol of Herbert's ministerial office. 'I Struck the board, and cry'd, No more./ I will abroad' (1-2) posits a resolve augmented by a dichotomy opposing the narrow and sober confines of the Communion 'board' to the open vista suggested by 'abroad', the rhyme anticipating their eventual reconciliation. Like 'The Altar' and 'The Church' as a whole, 'The Collar' is framed by the Word that, according to 'The Flower', 'is all' (21), here the struck board of the Eucharist and the final lines' gently admonishing Father. What happens in between is a rehearsal of Adam's rebellion, the poet's impatience with 'lines and life' which, though potentially 'free as the rode',[57] are yet 'still in suit' (4-6) -- still aspiring, that is, to divine service. Eucharistic topoi continue to inform the rebellion: 'Harvest' expands to embrace a Pauline reference to 'thorn' (7),[58] which in turn evokes the crown of the crucified Christ -- an ironic anticipation of the 'bayes' Herbert lacks -- and allows transition to the more

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[56] If the frustrated courtier theory has been too rash in its judgements, Herbert's most celebrated editor has muted what may be evidence of the poet's reluctance to more boldly display his frustrations. What *B* witnesses as 'Alas! our murmurings come not at last' F. E. Hutchinson renders 'Alas! our murmurings come not last'. Calling 'at' a 'slip', Hutchinson may be concerned solely with metric consistency. But the omission alters the semantic content of the line, so that what in *B* tempers the quasi-daring questions which follow by denying their 'murmuring' status, becomes confident preface to the interrogation by removing a possible indicator of hesitation. Settling for 'the cluster' Herbert may nevertheless imply that it is not God alone 'being pressed for my sake': it may be he battles -- and drowns in 'sweet wine' -- his own discontent. Thus, where in other poems sacraments provide escape from the confines of a tortuous psyche, here they suggest a salve more repressive than liberating.

[57] In keeping with the poem's sometimes subtle celebration of prevenient grace, 'rode' may be an ironic pun on the middle English variant for 'cross'.

[58] St. Paul's thorn, not explicitly identified, is some sort of ascetic reminder not to think too highly of himself: 2 Cor. 12.7.

explicit allusions in 'wine' and 'corn' (10-1). The same grace which stoops in 'The Altar' to identify with that poem's broken heart shares the bitter harvest of the speaker here. The loss of worldly honour, 'cordiall fruit' (9), 'bayes', 'flowers', and 'garlands gay' (14-5), the 'wine' and 'corn' that were in abundance before his 'sighs did drie' and 'tears did drown' (11-2) them, are the speaker's unwitting oblation, the fruit of a prevenient and incomprehensible grace. He is unaware of his participation in messianic suffering and sacrifice, or that trepidation with respect to religious vocation is not solely his; that Jesus, both in Gethsemane and at the moment of greatest suffering, expressed considerable reluctance to follow through with his calling. Far from trivial, the doubt, loss, and suffering of the speaker are imbued with a divinity that acknowledges their significance, so that in the end the child is not merely obedient, but rather a highly valued creature whose 'fierce and wilde' (33) raving is an honest despair of which his Lord is more aware and sympathetic toward than he had imagined.[59] Far from dismissing the child's anxieties and frustrations, the final lines acknowledge and validate even as they silence.

If we see the poem in its entirety as the deliberations of a Herbert about to receive (and administer?) the Eucharist, we are witness to a protracted moment wherein the devout follows the Pauline instruction to examine himself. But rather than indulge a maudlin rehearsal of his undeserving sinfulness, Herbert simply reveals his frustration, chides his piety for depriving him of other pleasures, and thereby allows himself fully to recognize the frustration of which God, no doubt, is already cognizant. Genuine transparency and self-knowledge finally allow the speaker to realize an intimacy with God -- '*Child . . . My Lord*' (35-6). This final resolution is itself anticipated by the second and now considerably subdued 'I will abroad' (28), which occurs in the midst of the child's tantrum as a significant pause, a final desperate assertion which nonetheless echoes the arch-symbol of that which has all along been 'cordiall fruit'. Now finally restored, or rather rediscovered, wine and corn reemerge unsullied, even fortified, by hard won sighs and tears. Having

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[59] 'Christ's drama runs silently and invisibly behind the poem': Harman 81-2.

struck the board, Herbert is now able to embrace it with an expanded understanding of its significance. Whereas in 'Conscience' the imperatives of sacrament and word fight an unresolved psychological battle, here the still small *voice* (1 Ki. 19.12) of the Word facilitates return to the sacramental board and *body* which celebrate it.

The (in)adequacy of devotional prayer and its relevance for the material dimension of sacramental grace are explored in 'The Search', where, paraphrasing Psalm 42.3, Herbert is both distressed at God's apparent absence and sustained by his own efforts to rectify the loss: 'My searches are my daily bread;/ Yet never prove' (3-4). Seeking God is the Christian's food, the devotional quotidian supplementing occasional sacraments. The devout's posture is one appropriate for prayer but also identical to that which the Country Parson prescribes for receiving the Eucharist ('the Feast indeed requires sitting, because it is a Feast; but man's unpreparednesse askes kneeling'[60]):

> My knees pierce th'earth, mine eies the skie;
> And yet the sphere
> And centre both to me denie
> That thou art there.
> (5-8).

The juxtaposition of rooted knees and sky-piercing eyes suggest that the space separating the speaker and his God traverses his own body, from prostrate flesh to the limits of corporeal vision. Just as bread in the Eucharist is consumed and assimilated by the communicant, so this 'daily bread' combines a hunger for God with an appropriately receptive body, the latter straining its corporeal limitations to accommodate an ostensibly spiritual food. Just as various and often conflicting theologies attest to the *mysterium tremendum* that is Real Presence, and to the futility of identifying its *modus*, so is the devotional psyche subject to the anxiety of absence. Reluctant to entertain a radically transcendent deity, Herbert reasons that God may be busy attending to a parallel universe: 'Lord, dost thou some new fabrick mould[?]' (25). He discovers, however, that the cause of absence may be the divine will itself, a rather disconcerting notion; he would much

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[60] Herbert (1941) 259.

prefer the material barriers of 'brasse,/ Or steel, or mountains' to that for which 'all strength, all subtilties/ Are things of nought' (34-40).

To the extent they are thought to embody divine immanence sacraments attenuate the psychological anxiety of a Calvinism sensitive to the vagaries of an inscrutable and alien Will. Yet, as John Donne wrote, agreeing with Richard Hooker and the 29th of the Elizabethan Articles, for the wicked (non-elect?) sacraments offer no benefits at all.[61] And while the elements offered at board are perhaps no guarantee of divine favour, still less is *this* daily bread, kneaded in the close, private realm of the devotional psyche, an altogether adequate sustenance. Indeed, it is considerably less tangible, more elusive. But the marriage of Christ and his body, the church, toward which the Eucharist is a public, ceremonial gesture, can also be a private courtship or *pas de deux* ; just as the ritual is ideally inseparable from the presence it posits, so devout searches, while for the most part 'never prove', are psychologically inextricable from the occasional, fleeting realization of their objective: 'For as thy absence doth excell/ All distance known:/ So doth thy nearenesse bear the bell,/ Making two one' (57-60). Intimate nearness is just around the corner from infinite distance. For Herbert, whose *searches* are his daily bread, seeking and finding, presence and absence are but sistole and diastole of the same beating heart.[62]

The joy that accompanies fleeting spiritual fulfillment is vividly reified in 'The Glance':

> I felt a sugred strange delight,
> Passing all cordials made by any art,
> Bedew, embalme, and overrune my heart,
> And take it in.
> (5-8).

Wonder and the excitement elicited by analysis rush headlong until overcome by the experience itself, 'bedew' initiating a string of gentle pauses and assonances which together

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[61] Donne *Sermons* 5.7.163. The Article has 'The wicked, and suche as be voyde of a liuelye fayth . . . in no wyse are the partakers of Christe, but rather to their condemnation do eate and drinke the signe or Sacrament of so great a thing': Cressy and Ferrell 67. Hooker was concerned that the godly should participate in Communion even if it meant doing so alongside the wicked: Collinson (1989) 31.

[62] 'Herbert's God is tasted as much by his absence as by his presence': Wilcox 64.

evoke the typologically Eucharistic manna. This otherwise ineffable moment is drawn out until it fully assimilates the heart it woos, sating both consumer and consumed. Sacramental consummation is also suggested by the glance's association with 'seal' in the final stanza, 'A mirth but open'd and seal'd up again' (18). Here, however, it is Baptism that is suggested, for in the second stanza we find that this 'first glance' is associated with a 'sweet original joy' continuously working 'within my soul' (13-4). This combination of original salvific experience and its continued effects suggests *both* sacraments, Baptism providing deliverance from the soul's enslavement by original sin, Holy Communion a perpetual guard against and remedy for 'the malicious and ill-meaning harm' (11) and 'surging griefs' (15) of daily (fallen) life. Both look toward an eventual 'full-ey'd love' (20) and thus anticipate the water of life and wedding supper of the lamb of which they are types. Structurally, the poem's three stanzas mirror a progression from initial conversion, through subsequent spiritual struggle and the glance's sustaining power ('surging griefs' antithetically complementing the earlier 'sugred' experience), to final rest 'In heav'n above' (24). Again, it is sacramental topoi which salve the sinner's despair, the fleeting glance of a distant -- albeit 'sweet and gracious' (1) -- eye transubstantiated to penetrate and envelop Herbert's heart, much as a Renaissance sunbeam might congeal upon and bedew the earth it warms.

Herbert does not always rest so easy in God's Presence. 'Love Unknown' documents not only his efforts to comprehend the depth of personal depravity and the extent of God's love; it also reveals a devotional psyche reluctant to accept the repeated assurances of its undeserved salvation, even when such assurance is sacramental in form. The first attempt to appease his Lord results in Herbert's heart being 'seiz'd' and thrown in a font

> wherein did fall
> A stream of bloud, which issu'd from the side
> Of a great rock: I well remember all,
> And have good cause: there it was dipt and dy'd,
> And washt, and wrung: the very wringing yet
> Enforceth tears. (13-8).

The typology connecting the rock which fed the Israelites (Ex. 17.6) with Christ speaks of both Baptism and a spiritual food and drink (1 Cor. 10.1-4). Herbert's more explicit evocation of the blood of Atonement, along with the qualification 'yet', suggests the heart's continual need of sacramental renewal and anticipates the Eucharistic account at the center of the poem. Upon each discovery of the insufficiency of his sacrifices, Herbert acknowledges his friend's observations -- '*Your heart was foul . . . hard . . . dull*' (18, 37, 56) -- by following each with a brief confession. The second of these celebrates a Eucharistic remedy that also exemplifies the *mysterium tremendum* cautiousness characteristic of early Stuart divines' approach to sacramental doctrine:

> I found a callous matter
> Began to spread and to expatiate there:
> But with a richer drug then scalding water
> I bath'd it often, ev'n with holy bloud,
> Which at a board, while many drunk bare wine,
> A friend did steal into my cup for good,
> Ev'n taken inwardly, and most divine
> To supple hardnesses. (38-45).

Herbert clearly sees as disadvantaged those whose sacramental views lean toward a Zwinglian memorialism or otherwise merely representational ritual, 'bare wine' evoking a disenchanted, ineffective species. On the other hand, he is careful to qualify his friend's presence in the cup with 'Ev'n taken inwardly', thus connecting any substantial transformation with the act of ingestion. The sensualist tone thus actually reinforces a Reform emphasis on the inward grace with which the poem is chiefly concerned.

The first and third confessions, realizing human failure to merit salvation, are assuaged by a divine assurance. Plagued by knowledge of his many faults, the penitent 'still askt pardon, and was not deni'd' (21); and his sins, as it turns out, are 'by another paid,/ Who took the debt upon him' (60-1). It is in between, following the second confession (38-9), that the sacramental grace cited above intervenes to assuage his anxieties. Just as sacrifice, prayer and poetic effort are acceptable only when recognized as divinely initiated and sustained, so Christ's presence among the 'rich furniture and fine

array'[63] of sacrament and ceremony imbues what is otherwise meaningless custom with inexhaustible significance. Sensualist or potentially sacerdotal indulgence is softened both by the homely image of divine presence as a mischievous friend stealing his way into the cup, and by the emphasis on process and use; these latter allow the apparently embarrassing problem of *locus* to be avoided, even if the evocative image and diction -- 'bath'd', 'bloud', 'drunk', 'supple' -- complicate the evasion. On the one hand, Herbert is reluctant to allow the otherwise exhaustive autonomy of his God to be subject to the material limitations of carnal being; yet he also seems to suggest that the very notion of an undeserved grace depends on Christ's actual presence among both the means and 'suppling' effects of God's supreme gift. If antipapist precisians worried that the notion of Real Presence compromises radical transcendence and therefore divine autonomy, Herbert demonstrates such Presence is but the divinely instituted expression of the Incarnation, of a Will paradoxically divested of power and subjected to history, a body and death.

But 'Love Unknown' is essentially a psychological dramatization, gesturing only momentarily toward the soteriological efficacy of sacraments and the escape they provide from an incessant self-scrutiny.[64] Recourse to an external remedy, however fleeting, is the attempt to provide an objective means of grace independent of subjective disposition. But as significant as it may be, the Eucharist is nevertheless overwhelmed, 'Ev'n taken inwardly' -- swallowed, as it were -- by Herbert's ever vigilant Conscience. Even the comfort of divine identification is denied by an anxiety impervious to sacramental persuasion; immediately following the Eucharistic encounter, the still unconvinced penitent hesitates:

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[63] 'The H. Communion' (1).

[64] Debora Shuger argues that the 'confessional intimacy of the divine-human encounter in Herbert fulfills the need for a relationship *not* available in society': Shuger (1990) 104. In her efforts to establish a barely emergent 'modern' subjectivity in Herbert Shuger fails to acknowledge the extent to which the antinomian despair often attending such private intimacy is alleviated by repeated sacramental gestures and their affirmation of the social, discursive basis for a faith not finally subject to the anxieties of private devotion. I would allow the possibility for a reversal of what Shuger calls, disparagingly, 'the privatization of the sacred' (*ibid.*, 119), for this nostalgically implies there once existed a communal sphere not contaminated by private concerns.

But when I thought to sleep out all these faults
(I sigh to speak)
I found that some had stuff'd the bed with thoughts,
I would say *thorns.*
(49-52).

Far from a mere meditation on the crucified Christ, the metaphor transfers the crown of thorns to the speaker's psyche and allows his ephemeral tortures the dignity of messianic sacrifice. If, however, Herbert's sacramental vision suggests Roman sensualism and communal ritual, these serve primarily to ceremonialize the deliberations over salvation that are otherwise so insistently his own. There may perhaps be no rest for one who knows that even his prayers echo the chasm between ritual act and the manic-depressive vicissitudes of the devotional sphere -- 'Though my lips went, my heart did stay behinde' (59) -- unless, of course, he can finally accept that his friend's suppling 'holy bloud' has indeed made his heart '*new, tender, quick* ' (70).

3
Identity and Presence

Invitation to receive sacraments is ultimately an invitation to identify with their source, to commune, as it were, with the Christ whose death and atoning work they proclaim. Though occasionally sacerdotal in emphasis, Herbert's sacramental images are usually presented in surprisingly familiar guise; they thus facilitate an understanding of the Incarnation as rendering immanent and intimate that which is otherwise remote. Paradoxically, it is often the material aspects of sacrament and ceremony which inform private spiritual reflection. This colloquializing of otherwise highly stylized ritual is part of Herbert's broader design, namely, to envision human intimacy with God through identification with Christ, the *raison d'etre* of both devotional and sacramental enterprises. Following St. Paul's example of seeking to share in Christ's sufferings (Col. 1.24), Herbert at once entertains and interrogates an identification of his penitential griefs with Jesus' own sacrifice and sorrows. But accompanying this need to understand his devotional efforts as somehow contiguous with the Passion is Herbert's keen awareness of

the ultimately insignificant role they play in his own salvation. Sacramental topoi in this context are central to a crisis of identity in which Herbert's spiritual autonomy negotiates the body of the Word he knows is All.

A significant feature in the sacramental-devotional identification of Christ and communicant is Herbert's poetry of tears. Not only do lachrymal images allow penitential grief to identify with Jesus' Passion, inaugurated in the garden of Gethsemane where he is said to have wept or sweated blood (Lk. 22.44.); like sacraments, they span internal and external dimensions of religious experience, both in their material manifestation of a spiritual process, and by facilitating devotional reflection through a shared discourse, in this case a common religious and literary topos. And just as there is always some question as to the extent sacraments adequately convey that which they proclaim, so are tears potentially inadequate or even false, the penitent himself uncertain of their veracity -- especially *vis-à-vis* the blood of atonement with which he aspires to identify them.

The role of human agency in communion and sacrifice is addressed in 'The Altar' where Herbert pleads 'O let thy blessed sacrifice be mine,/ And sanctifie this Altar to be thine' (15-6). In the edition of 1633 the printer Thomas Buck rendered 'heart', 'sacrifice' and both occurrences of 'Altar' in small upper case type, with spaces between each letter,[65] perhaps visually evoking the association of Jesus' broken body and the bread of the Eucharist. Whatever the authority of these effects,[66] we do know that in the Williams MS 'blessed' was originally 'onely' before the author corrected it (15v). It is doubtful 'onely' was simply an error on the part of an amanuensis; more likely, Herbert boldly removed what amounts to a cautious qualification, i.e. denial that atoning sacrifice is replicated in the sacrament.[67] The change allows not only a more sensualist tone;[68] by no longer confining

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[65] Herbert (1968) 18.

[66] Though careful to avoid narrow characterization of his devotional orientation (her chapter on the poet is subtitled 'the art of contradiction'), Achsah Guibbory allows her appreciation of ceremonialist forms to erroneously attribute this particular editorial doctoring to Herbert himself: Guibbory (1998) 47. Neither *W* nor *B* provide authority for Buck's font creativity.

[67] Herbert's biographer asserts the autograph status of *W*: Charles 79-80.

[68] Several critics insist on a Reform orientation stripped of ambiguity. 'The sacrificial altar or

the Atonement to a single remote event, the poem suggests some ambiguity as to who gives and who receives the sacrifice in question, 'let thy blessed sacrifice be mine' suggesting both supplication and offering.

In 'The Sacrifice' itself Herbert explicitly assumes the messianic perspective, albeit with little, if any, of the blasphemous potential of Donne's 'Spit in my face you Jews'. Thorns, grapes and vine combine to recall the vineyard of Isaiah 5.1-7; but the lines also suggest *bloody* grapes -- divine fruit among oppressive briars:

> Then on my head a crown of thorns I wear:
> For these are all the grapes *Sion* doth bear,
> Though I my vine planted and watred there
> (161-3).

Earlier, blood is 'temper'd with a sinners tears' (25) to form a healing balm, the Gethsemane context suggesting Jesus' blood-tears, confirmed later in reference to the Apostles in the garden who failed to keep watch (Matt. 26.40-1): 'When all my tears were bloud, the while you slept' (150). Given the mix of atoning blood and penitential tears -- and the just previous mention of 'cup' (23) -- we are not far from the combined water and wine in the Eucharistic chalice. Indeed, the poem's penultimate stanza explicitly refers to Christ's pierced side from whence 'Sacraments might flow' (247), an allusion to the water and blood of St. John's Gospel (Jn. 19.34).[69] The dual significance of 'cup' -- both the Passion, which for Jesus at Gethsemane is imminent, and the reconciliation it procures -- together with its combined contents of blood and 'sinners tears' advances the poet's messianic perspective not only as mere role-playing, but as an empathetic communion.

If 'The Sacrifice' allows Herbert a formal identification with Christ, the combining of blood with sinner's tears elsewhere suggests for human suffering and Christian

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communion table is in the heart': McLaughlin and Thomas 116. Cf. Bienz 82 and Doerksen 97. A decidedly 'Anglican' view sees a settled balance, 'a thorough mixture' of inner spirituality and outer poetic form: Clarke 206. Similarly, 'the final shape of "The Altar" is *both* an *altar* and an *I* -- an image of the speaker's self and his Christ': Hester (1989) 112. Herbert's revision, in my opinion, suggests conflicting tendencies which are not altogether erased from the poem's final state.

[69] Though 'the combination of sacred word and Holy Spirit' are prominent in the poem, they do not necessarily, as one critic has suggested, preclude visual detail: Clarke 80. If ever Herbert indulged an *imitatio Christi*, this is it.

penitence a status of which the poet was nevertheless a little wary. In 'The Thanksgiving', for example, he doubts his own can ever match his saviour's grief: 'Shall I weep bloud? why, thou hast wept such store/ That all thy body was one doore' (5-6). The Gethsemane allusion this time questions the notion that tears can in any way approximate the blood of the Atonement. It is one thing for the speaker of 'The Sacrifice' to assume as much; it would be quite another for the penitent here, who instead halts at the thought of the Passion, recognizing his utter inability to offer anything in return. Similar reluctance to assume penitential agency characterizes 'H. Baptisme (I)', where the source of baptismal water, like the Eucharistic wine, is 'my deare Redeemers pierced side' (6).[70] Indeed, both sacraments are suggested by the following line's plural 'blessed streams' (7), which in turn are associated with the poet's tearful contribution (9). Just as the poem closes by affirming the prevenient exhaustiveness of Baptism in anticipating Herbert's 'future sinnes' (13), earlier lines also find his tears subsumed by an all-encompassing grace:

> O blessed streams! either ye do prevent
> And stop our sinnes from growing thick and wide,
> Or else give tears to drown them, as they grow.
> (7-9).[71]

Likewise, comparing human grief to that of his Lord in 'Affliction (II)', Herbert recognizes that the 'broken pay' he offers in dying 'over each houre of Methusalems stay' is no match for 'thy one death' (2-5):

> If all mens tears were let
> Into one common sewer, sea, and brine;
> What were they all, compar'd to thine?
> Wherein if they were set,
> They would discolour thy most bloudy sweat.
> (6-10).

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[70] Similarly, early in 'The Church Porch' Herbert warns that lust 'doth pollute and foul/ Whom God in Baptisme washt with his own blood' (7-8).

[71] An earlier version of these lines provides evidence that the importance of sacraments in Herbert's soteriology increased over the years. *W*'s 'O sweet streams/ You doe prevent most sins & for ye rest/ You give vs teares to wash them' (28v) allows for two distinct sets of sins and methods for dealing with them, while the later 'authorized' version establishes a firmer connection between the 'blessed streams' of Baptism and the private griefs they subsume. The earlier version maintains a greater distinction between sacramental and devotional pieties than does the later.

Prevenience is the culprit usurping the autonomy of penitence and pious grief, this time by way of an irrevocable down payment: 'Thy crosse took up in one,/ By way of imprest, all my future mone' (14-5), the final pun[72] emphasizing the inadequacy of devotional efforts in an economy of radical grace.

To the extent tears are associated more with sacramental grace than with human devotional effort are they invested with soteriological efficacy. Rather than inadequate sacrifice, they coincide in 'The Church-floore' with the crucial recognition that mere human effort cannot satisfy divine justice. Associated less with the devotional psyche than with a place of communal gathering, tears' sacramental value is indicated by their capacity to purge Adam's curse:

> Hither sometimes Sinne steals, and stains
> The marbles neat and curious veins:
> But all is cleansed when the marble weeps.
> (13-5).

'Patience' (3), 'Humilitie' (6), 'Confidence' (9) and 'Charitie' (12) are Christian qualities destroyed by sin and restored through penitence. Yet because weeping *follows* the description of an ideal 'floore', the suggestion is that the attempt to recover these qualities is both necessary and doomed to failure; recognition of the extent of its collective depravity is a prerequisite for the church's genuine repentance. *Felix culpa* is evident in 'Death', who, 'while he thinks to spoil the room . . . sweeps' (16-8), just as abrogation of the law is through grace turned to salvation. Similarly, as the floor 'weeps' blood through its 'curious veins',[73] the process allows grace to do its work, the 'Architect' having overseen his design from the beginning.

Tears and genuine repentance are a necessary part of receiving the grace conferred via sacraments. If the corollary is also true -- that is, penitence alone, however genuine, is insufficient -- 'Ephes. 4.30' nevertheless emphasizes the necessity of an appropriate

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[72] There is precedence for spelling 'money' as m-o-n-e, 'with demonstrative or possessive adj., designating a sum applied to a particular purpose or in the possession of a particular person': OED 'money' [sb.] 3.b.

[73] The pun on 'veins' and its relevance for the tears/blood conceit is a feature of 'Grief', where the speaker as microcosm pleads with God to 'Let ev'ry vein/ Suck up a river to supply mine eyes' (4-5).

devotional posture. The penitent mourns the Holy Spirit's grief and regrets his own inability to conjure adequate tears. The poem reconciles this lack by closing with a typical identification of tears and blood, the inadequacy of Herbert's grief supplemented by his saviour's: 'Lord, pardon, for thy Sonne makes good/ My want of tears with store of bloud' (35-6). This final stanza in hindsight suggests sacramental/typological significance for an earlier:

> Then weep mine eyes, the God of love doth grieve:
> Weep foolish heart,
> And weeping live:
> For death is drie as dust. Yet if ye part,
> End as the night, whose sable hue
> Your sinnes expresse; melt into dew.
> (7-12).

If dew suggests manna and, typologically, the bread of the Eucharist, then Herbert expands the tears/blood conceit to include the sacramental body. As night dissolves into dew, so sin, distilled through genuine repentance, is paradoxically transubstantiated into the bread of life, the Christ who was made a body of sin so that man and God might be reconciled (1 Pet. 2.24; 2 Cor. 5.21). Tears, blood and bread combine to sacramentalize the penitential psyche so that the weeping heart undergoes a kind of reverse distillation, the alembic of Eucharistic topoi dispersing the self among the dust and dew shrouded by night sky. Sacraments externalize otherwise private tears by allowing the isolation and guilt inevitably attending an inward devotional piety to be relieved through gesture toward a wider communal and mythical context.[74] Similarly, the excessively lachrymose penitent of 'The Dawning' is admonished to 'with his buriall-linen drie thine eyes', for 'Christ left his grave-clothes, that we might, when grief/ Draws tears, or bloud, not want a handkerchief' (14-6). The association of penitential tears and blood, followed by healing restoration,

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[74] Elizabeth Clarke believes that the extreme Baroque conceits in Herbert's poetry of tears manifest an ironic reluctance to allow the sincerity of external devotional forms, that 'concentration on the outward and physical effects of emotion, without regard to the inward cause, is . . . foreign to Herbert': Clarke 123. But surely the sincerity topos such poetry invokes involves an equally ironic self-aggrandizement. Herbert knows that 'inward' sincerity is at least as ephemeral as its outward manifestations, so that his sacramental appropriation of the tears tradition is but another attempt to give voice to his private fears and anxieties, the 'tradition' providing yet one more avenue of escape from devotional isolation.

again recalls the Pauline characterization of Holy Communion as a celebration tempered by the communicant's due consideration of his contribution to Christ's suffering and death; directed, however, toward a communally valorized symbol, Herbert's private grief is externalized and subsumed by the broader tradition of which it is but a part.

The relevance of sacraments for personal autonomy and Christian identification with an all-consuming Will is addressed in 'The Banquet'. Following, for obvious reasons, 'The Invitation', the poem shares its companion's formal elements of metrical arrangement and rhyme scheme, though here the priest turns from his auditory and addresses the elements of the Eucharist themselves. Though ceremonial in tone and context, the poem is less public proclamation than personal reflection, and thus more typical of Herbert's characteristic self-scrutiny. He begins by tentatively drawing parallels between sacramental Incarnation and several natural phenomena, which include the occult suggestion that in the Eucharist 'Is some starre (fled from the sphere)/ Melted there,/ As we sugar melt in wine' (10-2). Unlike Donne, Herbert rarely submits sacramental topoi to the play of extended metaphor and analogy; and even when he does, as here, the sacrament overwhelmingly carries the tenor of the verbal relationship. Indeed, he ultimately denies his chosen examples any true resemblance, even if the manner of doing so is as susceptible to deconstruction as the antitheses in 'The Invitation':

> Doubtlesse, neither starre nor flower
> Hath the power
> Such a sweetnesse to impart:
> Onely God, who gives perfumes,
> Flesh assumes,
> And with it perfumes my heart.
>
> (19-24).

'Onely God' dismisses both star and flower but immediately appropriates yet another figure. The assertion approximates the middle of the stanza and occupies the nether space between tropes, on one side a familiar occult analogy, on the other a slightly more playful metaphor. This motion from analogy to metaphor is an appropriate rhetorical accompaniment to the concern with identification indicated by 'Flesh assumes' -- God,

flesh, perfume and the speaker's heart melding in the brevity of the final line. An immanence based on medieval synthesis thus yields to one based on subjective experience; but if the devout gaze turns from the sky inward, olfactory and kinaesthetic figures continue to assert the emerging subjectivity's material orientation.

Having achieved the poetic equivalent of Eucharistic identification and drawn yet another analogy, this time comparing Jesus' broken body with pomanders which in 'being bruis'd are better sented' (25-7), Herbert proceeds to describe the effects of sacramental union as three distinct stages: identifying with the very sin that makes atonement necessary, 'God took bloud, and needs would be/ Spilt with me,/ And so found me on the ground' (34-6). From this metaphorical prostration, evocative of ceremonial kneeling, the speaker looks up toward God who 'In a cup/ Sweetly . . . doth meet my taste.' He is thus empowered to 'flie/ To the skie' and finally 'see/ What I seek, for what I sue' (38-46). The final stanza completes the motion from ceremonial proclamation to private spiritual drama by requesting sacrificial status for the poet's devotional efforts: 'Let the wonder of his pitie/ Be my dittie,/ And take up my lines and life' (49-51). Echoing 'The Collar', where Herbert strikes the Communion board, proclaiming his 'lines and life . . . free as the rode', he now submits the same 'under pain of death' to approximate Christ's own sacrifice, to 'Strive in this, and love the strife' (52-4).

In 'The Crosse' identification with Herbert's crucified saviour is frustrated by recognition that whatever he offers was never his to give. Total corruption of the sinner's will ensures that any just motions it might entertain are attributed solely to God's saving grace:

> things sort not to my will,
> Ev'n when my will doth studie thy renown:
> Thou turnest th' edge of all things on me still,
> Taking me up to throw me down:
> (19-22).

Herbert's only recourse in the end is to plead the Lord's Prayer, which in this context suggests a messianic identity:

> And since these thy contradictions
> Are properly a crosse felt by thy sonne,
> With but foure words, my words, *Thy will be done.*'
> (34-6).

The final referential ambiguity for 'my', however, is presumably intolerable earlier where the sacrificial status of all-too-human efforts are dismissed at the foot of the cross which cancels

> My power to serve thee; to unbend
> All my abilities, my designes confound,
> And lay my threatnings bleeding on the ground.
> (10-2).

In Donne's poem of the same title the cross is approached with a sober confidence critical of the psychological paralysis evident here, the 'selfe-despising' and 'dejections' that in their own way threaten to become a kind of pious posturing and 'selfe-love'. Donne, like Herbert, never fully escapes the Calvinist problem of trying to avoid both presumption and despair, ceaselessly crossing 'those dejections, when it downward tends,/ And when it to forbidden heights pretends' (38, 53-4). What both poems share is a determination to find in this central Christian symbol the reconciliation of otherwise irreconcilable divine and human wills. Herbert, more than Donne, seems sensitive to the problem that any attempt to think such a reconciliation is inappropriate because its very success would threaten the radical autonomy of divine grace; he is nevertheless just as tenacious as Donne, if more subtle, in his reluctance to abandon personal agency. Having wrestled with the 'contrarieties' and 'contradictions' (32-4) of his status as grace-awarded yet undeserving sinner, Herbert finds relief by projecting psychological paradox back onto the arch-symbol of its source, closing with the vision of a cross that is as much the embodiment of, as cure for, his 'smart' (31). And while the poem as a whole documents an essentially psychological drama, in another sense it seeks to escape those tortuous confines by allowing the paradoxes to be played out on a universal symbol; even as he assumes the 'crosse actions' which 'cut my heart' (32-3), even as he straps himself to the object that is both his relief and bane, this first Adam's voice -- 'my words' -- melts into that of the

second. We are not altogether sure -- as neither, perhaps, is Herbert-- just who is quoting scripture here, and for whose purposes. In hindsight, then, the bloody status of the poet's 'threatnings', sacrificed at the altar that is the cross, is perhaps indicative less of a desire to share in Christ's sufferings than for Christ to absorb his.[75]

Poised on the brink of tasting the ultimate repast, the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19.9) of which the Eucharist is but a type, the guest of 'Love (III)' continues to resist a thoroughly undeserved grace[76] until the sacrament intercedes to silence any soteriological perplexity.[77] Love's invitation and tender encouragement resemble the consolation offered an inadequate, even impotent, lover, who 'grow[s] slack' (3) at the initial encounter and whose confidence is subsequently restored.[78] However, such confidence consists not in a new found ability to perform; indeed, he who finally tastes is denied even the most menial of contributions to the impending union, Love sharply responding to the guest's offer to 'serve' with 'You must sit down' (16-7). This final communion, rather, marks the completion of a process wholly attributed to God, beginning with the Atonement and ending with the gift of grace it affords. Because Love 'bore the blame' (15) and has thus anticipated or 'prevented' the guest's 'shame' (13), the latter's sins are drawn back, going where they 'doth deserve' (14) -- in effect, back out the door -- even as the guest himself moves forward to receive his (un)due reward. As a response to the guest's perceived inability to 'look on' (10) him, Love's 'Who made the eyes but I?' (12) reminds the guest of his creaturely status while at the same time cautioning him against

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[75] Similarly, in 'Marie Magdalen', an offer to wash her saviour's feet results in Mary's own cleansing: 'in washing one, she washed both' (18).

[76] Michael Schoenfeldt places the exchange firmly within the conventions of Renaissance courtiership and hospitality. Love, he says, 'stoops to conquer' in order, finally, to become the dominating Host: Schoenfeldt 212. Cf. Singleton *passim.* Helen Vendler, anticipating Schoenfeldt and Singleton, got it right when she recognized for the poem's 'contest in courtesy' a 'gentle irony': Vendler 59. Similarly, Harold Toliver allows Herbert an ironic deconstruction of both the social and religious hierarchies the poem entertains: Toliver 249.

[77] The poem's close is perhaps the clearest evidence of Rosemond Tuve's claim that Herbert's sacramental images exude a 'quietness which is part of their power': Tuve 128.

[78] 'Love (3)' presents us with 'a sexual encounter between an impotent man and a gently loving, patient woman': Bloch 111. Chana Bloch's characterization is not only a provocative gender inversion of the marriage imagery traditionally associated with Christ and his church, but also grasps the simultaneously quiet and relentless nature of grace in Herbert's poems.

implying God's faulty workmanship. Crossing the threshold is the starting point of a radical separation -- the husk of sin from its redeemable kernel -- the guest's reluctance determined by the extent to which he so thoroughly identifies with the former and thus sees in its demise a threat to his very being.

To accept the invitation and accede to Love's conditions is to abdicate any sense of autonomous identity beyond that of passive recipient. This abdication of self begins when Love takes the guest's hand and asks, 'Who made the eyes but I?', the graphic identification -- 'I' and 'I' -- suggesting a semantic one -- 'me' and 'Love'. But if this 'I' is an 'equivocal predication', there is no question of democratic balance among its components.[79] The Eucharistic context may require the guest to eat, but in the end it is not the Host that is consumed.

4
The Art of Sacramental Devotion

Because *The Temple* as artifact constitutes a sacramentalization of private religious experience -- or, conversely, a psychologization of the grace sacraments publicly symbolize and confer -- Herbert is also concerned with the role of priest/communicant *qua* devotional poet: 'A verse may find him, who a sermon flies,/ And turn delight into a sacrifice', these words which approach 'The Church Porch' anticipating 'Superliminare's invitation to receive the sacrament or 'churches mysticall repast'. Rosalie Colie long ago recognized that Herbert's is an 'immanent God' whose involvement in the minutiae of existence is the model for continual poetic recreation.[80] Yet it must be allowed that Herbert's Reform piety and its severe self-abnegation are of considerable consequence for his creative autonomy

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[79] R. V. Young has recently qualified Heather Ross's theory of equivocity in pointing out that Thomist analogy actually tolerates *a degree* of equivocal predication, but recognizes that pure equivocation leads to Hobbesian agnosticism. Nothing at all can be predicated of God if two signifiers share essentially the same signified. Such predication would have especially serious consequences for Herbert's sacramental piety, presumably because it would obviate an identification of species and divinity that eliminates one or the other: Young (1995) 97. Ross recognizes, however, as Young does not, the extent to which Herbert's desire to commune with Christ conflicts with his need to retain autonomous identity and spiritual agency.

[80] Colie 210.

and the character of his art.[81] Herbert's lines, like his life, look to heaven even as they are rooted in earth; his verse is sacramental in that it embodies that which otherwise transcends embodiment, paradoxically gesturing beyond itself even while stubbornly, and sometimes dazzlingly, declaring its artifice.

That divinely inspired human creativity constitutes an integral feature of Herbert's sacramental world view is evident in 'Man'. The Eucharistic overtones[82] of waters which are 'Below our drink; above, our meat', and in both cases 'our cleanlinesse' (38-41), provide a pretext for Herbert's prayer that God 'afford us so much wit;/ That, as the world serves us, we may serve thee,/ And both thy servants be' (52-4). Wit is contiguous with this 'meat', part of an integrated sacramental world wherein 'symmetrie', proportion and correspondence describe a web of analogies and likenesses among creation's constituents, all centred around the microcosm man, whose 'head with foot hath private amitie/ And both with moons and tides' (13-8). The curative effects of sacraments, this cleansing 'meat' from above, are reflected in a cosmology wherein the medicinal properties of plants derive from their affinity with human bodies: 'Herbs gladly cure our flesh; because that they/ Finde their acquaintance there' (23-4). The capacity for devotional and creative wit is thus among a myriad of divine gifts, the meat from above whose sacramental contiguity revolves around man who 'is one world, and hath/ Another to attend him' (47-8). Realizing that world in all its splendour is an aspect of the service to which Herbert aspires, not unlike the 'Man' in 'Providence' made 'Secretarie of thy praise' (6-8).

Analogous to the Eucharist, writing in 'H. Baptisme (II)' supplements and reinforces the effects of the primary sacrament. The speaker's soul is opposed to flesh, the 'growth of flesh . . . a blister' (14), while spiritual innocence is associated with baptized childhood, and poetic effort a subsequent writing of the soul back into innocent flesh: 'O let

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[81] C. A. Patrides sees Herbert's piety in the context of a 'controlled turbulence' and avers that his apparent artlessness is qualified by a forceful and complex self-consciousness: Herbert (1988) 6. Cf. Guibbory (1998) 46-50.

[82] Patrides calls them 'inescapable': Herbert (1988) 107 n40. Hutchinson affirms only the meat/rain conceit: Herbert (1941) 509.

me still Write thee great God, and me a childe:/ Let me be soft and supple to thy will,/ Small to my self, to others milde, Behither ill' (6-10). And in 'The Quidditie', though poetry is no 'crown, /. . . point of honour', great courtier or the rest, it is, nevertheless, 'that which while I use/ I am with thee, and *Most take all* ' (11-2). Not merely self-reflective, verse actually facilitates communion with the Presence it celebrates. And while that Presence itself cannot be adequately described -- is known at all, in fact, only through a *via negativa* which places it above those things which are nevertheless more tangible -- it is, insist the title and the final '*most take all* ', the source of all these lesser presences. Herbert in effect applies sacramental theology to poetic craft, asserting the latter's status as a manifestation of the essence by which it is sustained, much as sacramental signs convey that which invests their otherwise mediatory, representational status with transcendent value. That the speaker is intimately familiar with the earthly pleasures he subordinates is evident in the possessive '*my* great stable or demain',[83] so that in distinguishing between devotional writing and courtly pursuits he nevertheless maintains for the former a status which, if it surpasses worldly pleasures, can be understood at all only in proximity to them. Divine poetry thus approximates sacraments insofar as it comprehends the ineffable only in respect of the familiar. Herbert's devotional art is based on the same Word-become-flesh paradox at the heart of the Incarnation; it is only by 'dwelling among us', as John's Gospel puts it, that the Word for Herbert is.

Keen sensitivity to the liminal nature of devotional verse is evident in the acrostic 'Coloss. 3.3', through which runs the motto '*My Life is Hid In Him That Is My Treasure*'. The poet's 'words & thoughts do both expresse' a 'double motion', one 'wrapt *In* flesh' and tending 'to earth', the other 'wind[ing] towards *Him* ', a duality fleshed out, so to speak, in the motto's oblique presence, just as the second of the sun's motions 'doth obliquely bend' (1-6). The device, like Herbert's shape poems, is clever; but it is also

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[83] My emphasis. Though both *B* (47r) and *W* (48r), where the poem is called 'Poetry') have 'my', *1633* has 'a' (61). Thomas Buck's Herbert was perhaps more pious than Herbert's.

sacramentally appropriate, both in the way it fleshes out the Word (here scripture), and in its homely portrayal of the sun's (son's) role as 'our diurnall friend' (3). Not only is his life hidden in Christ; Christ is also Herbert's '*Treasure* ', even if hidden in a (poetic) jar of clay (2 Cor. 4.7).

Herbert was not always at ease about the status of his devotional art relative to that which it celebrates. Crossing the river in 'Jordan (I)' typologically anticipates Baptism[84] and silently allegorizes Herbert's self-proclaimed overcoming of poetic artifice: where others are fond of the 'course-spunne lines' of 'enchanted groves' and 'sudden arbours shadow', he 'envie[s] no mans nightingale or spring', rather 'plainly' saying 'My God, My King' (6-15). This simple proclamation implies the possibility of a poetry paradoxically free of poetic convention, a poetry *sans* poetry. But just as sacraments provide material reinforcement for the spiritual communion they promote, so does 'Jordan (I)' reify the importance and necessity of poetic convention even as it asserts the latter's worldly transience. This all turns out to be rather disingenuous. If Herbert had in fact written only 'My God, My King', there would be no poem at all. The second stanza's subtle assonances and alliteration help to evoke the very world of Spenserian romance and pastoral they dismiss, just as the poem's overall formal and metric consistency attest to a firm control and calculated artlessness. It would seem, then, that the interrogative dismissal is less absolute than genuinely perplexing, both suspicious of and indebted to the poetic artifice leading to -- and rendering all the more effective -- the 'plain' proclamation of the final line. This tension is exacerbated by the ambiguous characterization of 'Shepherds' in the final stanza: 'Shepherds are honest people; let them sing' (11). Following immediately upon 'Must all be vail'd, while he that reades, divines,/ Catching the sense at two removes?' (9-10), the shepherd/poet trope both appeals to long standing tradition and suggests an affirmative answer to the question, even if 'honest' suggests the need for a

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[84] For the Israelites crossing the Jordan see Josh. 3-4; for Jesus' Baptism in the same see Matt. 3.13-17.

finally *true* bard, a *pastor fido* who will 'plainly say' what his predecessors obscured with the rich furniture of poetic finery.

Is Herbert's the voice of the honest shepherd? This is far from 'plainly' evident. Here is the entire final stanza:

> Shepherds are honest people; let them sing;
> Riddle who list, for me, and pull for Prime:
> I envie no mans nightingale or spring;
> Nor let them punish me with losse of rime,
> Who plainly say, *My God, My King.*
> (11-5).

Alluding to a game, the speaker challenges the reader to continue playing -- refusing, at this point anyway, to declare his hand. Echoes of Bacon's 'Of Simulation and Dissimulation', which cautions that 'if a man engage himself by a manifest declaration, he must go through or take a fall',[85] reverberate here and in another of Herbert's references to Primero. Addressing the 'sweet youth' of 'The Church Porch' Herbert avers that in discourse one may 'preserve' his own 'stock' by focussing on and drawing out that of his interlocutor. Particularly telling are the stanza's parenthetical lines signalling both a note of strategic caution and an ironic comment on the speaker's own position:

> Entice all neatly to what they know best;
> For so thou dost thy self and him a pleasure:
> (But a proud ignorance will lose his rest,
> Rather than shew his cards.) Steal from his treasure
> What to ask further. Doubts well rais'd do lock
> The speaker to thee, and preserve thy stock.
> (295-300).

Even if we allow that 'proud ignorant' corresponds to 'him', there is an ethical tension here between what Bacon might have called 'openness and frankness of dealing' and the first degree of dissimulation: 'closeness, reservation and secrecy'.[86] Enticing his reader/opponent to 'pull for Prime' (12) in 'Jordan (I)', Herbert is divided between the honest shepherd's plain song and the 'vail'd' sense that is the poet's stock and trade. If, by his own definition, he refrains from divulging his answers to the poem's pressing

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[85] Bacon 24.
[86] *Ibid.*, 22.

questions and is thus 'a proud ignorant', he effectively both raises doubts and preserves his own 'stock', shifting the burden of speculative interrogation to the imagined interlocutor or reader. An alternative explanation, however, is that the poet himself is among the puzzled members of his own audience. Herbert's vocational conflict, the poet's doubt as to the status of his craft in knowing and communicating the divine, is never resolved. He may conclude with plain and simple assertion, but the effectiveness of that conclusion is fully dependent on the dazzling artistry that on one level it forsakes. It is not that Herbert here fails to say what he means; rather, he fails (happily) to practice what he preaches. Artifice in devotion is, apparently, like the river Jordan: an obstacle to overcome. But immersion in its waters is the only way across.[87]

'Love (II)', like its namesake at the close of *The Temple*, is concerned with the interpenetration of identities Holy Communion affords. And just as the extent to which the Eucharistic species participate in conferring grace is potentially controversial, so here Herbert grapples with the value of his fleshly art relative to the spiritual truths it aspires to communicate. The lesser flame of human lust inspires wit and invention, which the poet offers on the altar of 'Immortal Heat' (1). Whereas Donne's 'Holy Sonnets' retain obvious traces of profane love, here it is fully identified as belonging more to that divine flame than to 'usurping lust' (12). The poem suggests less a strict dualism, however, than a hierarchical contiguity wherein the greater flame subsumes the lesser. In laying 'All her invention on thine Altar' (7) the poet's brain recognizes this contiguity, his now mended 'eies' seeing

> thee, which before saw dust;
> Dust blown by wit, till that they both were blinde:
> Thou shalt recover all thy goods in kinde,
> Who wert disseized by usurping lust
> (9-12).

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[87] 'Jordan (2)' is also concerned with artifice and substance, or 'trim invention' and 'plain intention' (3-5). The poet, 'as flames do work and winde, when they ascend', weaves himself 'into the sense' (13-4); devotional verse is thus a sacrificial offering, ascending in flames which achieve their end only in passing to ethereal vapour. The godly versifier, like Sidney's Astrophel chided to 'look in thy heart and write', is to replicate precisely and only the essence of love: '*There is in love a sweetnesses readie penn'd: / Copie out onely that, and save expense* ' (17-8).

The legal terminology clarifies the fact that human love has always belonged to God, that lust excludes recognition of this fact and is thereby the expense of spirit in a waste of shame. Lust seeks to consume all rather than allow itself to be consumed on Love's altar. In sacrificing his energies to this Heraclitean fire, the poet seeks a greater union than that in which the object of his love is consumed by his own wit. And while it is that wit which fashions this very sacrifice, the poetic act, because an act of recognition, is but the return of a flame to its origin, allowing lesser heat to 'in hymnes send back thy fire again' (8).

Love for the Divine is appropriately self-consuming.[88] Consummation in the Eucharist, the reception of ultimate sacrifice, asks sacrifice in return. The recipient thus reflects on his sin and subsequently relinquishes his corrupt will to God's. The grace allowing him to do so is effected in the sacrament, so that even as he eats he himself is consumed. This, again, is perhaps what Augustine meant by his assertion that the mystery on the altar is, in a sense, the church itself, that Christ's sacrificial body is also the corporate body of believers.[89] Human offering at the sacrament, the submission of a corrupt to an uncorrupt Will, is a sacrifice made possible by the original Atonement. Consuming and consumed, both God and church are involved in a *consummation.* In 'Love II' the same process is reflected as a consuming fire, the encompassing perimeter of poetic heat ultimately swallowed by the Immortal it cannot finally contain. But in being consumed, Herbert's art is far from erased; rather, the 'brain' which 'All her invention on thine Altar lay' is the source of such hymns as fuel Immortal Heat, by whom they are refined and, like the Atonement, anticipate Resurrection.

Poetic identification with atoning sacrifice is the subject of 'Good Friday', where Herbert struggles to 'measure out thy bloud' (2). Christ's 'foes' measuring his sufferings,

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[88] Stanley Fish is correct when he writes of Herbert, 'The moment of highest artfulness always coincides with the identification of the true source of that art' and that Herbert, 'in losing title to his poem also loses (happily) the presumption of its invention': Fish (1972) 203. Similarly, 'Herbert may write the words, but if they are accepted as a sacrifice on the altar and transformed into divine signs, that is none of his doing': Pahlka 200. Cf. H. Ross (1981) 6.

[89] See above, 59 and note.

all stars his death like the one that 'show'd thy first breath', and falling leaves his griefs (6-10) -- these are expanded in the fourth and fifth stanzas to include the poet's life, all through which Christ's 'distresse . . . may runne,/ And be my sunne' (15-6). Herbert's turning away from conceits based on his experience of the external world toward his own sin and griefs immediately follows the poem's structural and sacramental centre:

> Or cannot leaves, but fruit, be signe
> Of the true vine?
>
> (11-2).

The inward turn suggests a complete severing of spiritual truth from the material world and the poetic wit by which both are comprehended. This is particularly true of the poem as it appears in *W*. But in *B* and *1633* a revised version of *W*'s 'The Passion' follows 'Good Friday', sans title, suggesting the two may actually be one poem.[90] These latter stanzas once again recall the sacramental status of the sinner's private anguish, this time explicitly conflating the acts of sacrifice and writing. The sinner's heart is both inkwell and store of sin from which (and paradoxically on which) may be drawn the 'whips. . . nails . . . wounds' and 'woes' (26) of Jesus' bloody Passion:

> Since bloud 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:
>
> (21-24).

The idea of righteous displacing sinful blood in 'The Agonie' is also apparent here, but the pen through which flows this blood/ink may be more than merely figurative:

> Sinne being gone, oh fill the place,
> And keep possession with thy grace;
> Lest sinne take courage and return,
> And all the writings blot or burn.
>
> (29-32).

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[90] *W* (25v); *B* (24r); *1633* (30). Patrides and Hutchinson follow *1633* in having the three stanza's of *W*'s 'The Passion' follow 'Good Friday' as continuous with the latter. It should be noted, however, that while the 'Passion' stanzas follow in *B*, they do so on a new verso page. It is possible the scribe simply ran out of space in copying an authorized conflation; but it is also possible he neglected to include the title for what continued to be a separate poem. Whatever Herbert's intentions, the close proximity of the two poems in the later MS and first edition forces consideration of their mutual relevance.

That the ambiguous '*the* writings' bears the trace of a sacramental role for Herbert's verse is evident in the *W* version of this stanza's final couplet: 'ffor by the writings all may see/ Thou hast an ancient claime to mee' (25v). If the revision shows greater sensitivity to the ephemeral status of verse relative to the grace which makes it possible, there nevertheless remains conviction that the poet's life *and lines* are somehow integral with the whips, nails, wounds and woes he would have lodged in his heart. It is not finally clear just who is holding the pen.

The poet's heart in 'Obedience' 'doth bleed/ As many lines, as there doth need/ To passe it self and all it hath' (6-8) to God. The poetic 'Deed' (10) is compared to Christ's, whose

> death and bloud
> Show'd a strange love to all our good:
> Thy sorrows were in earnest; no faint proffer,
> Or superficiall offer
> Of what we might not take, or be withstood.
> (26-30).

Herbert then dismisses any legality which might make some portion of the Deed a 'gift or donation' (34). Rather, further to 'exclude the wrangler from thy treasure' (15), he adds a clause insisting that any such gift will 'by way of purchase go' (35); that is, the paper only formally grants what has always belonged to God in the first place. In hindsight, then, poetic bloodshed is at best imitative, the poet discovering that the power to write the deed was never his; the blood/ink that falls to the page may merge with Herbert's, but originates in quite another well. Sacramental gesture is finally extended to the reader:

> How happie were my part,
> If some kinde man would thrust his heart
> Into these lines; till in heav'ns Court of Rolls
> They were by winged souls
> Entred for both, farre above their desert!
> (41-5).

The poem is thus truly evocative of Holy Communion. In its implicit conflation of poet and priest it may even be described as sacerdotal: the one to one negotiations of lone devout and his God are expanded laterally to include a broader social awareness and pastoral responsibility, finally spanning both vertical (devotional) and horizontal (communal) axes

of sacramental experience. The first seven stanzas set forth legal representation of the speaker's obligations to God, but these legalities are exploded and mocked when his 'Deed' is compared with Christ's atoning work; in the seventh stanza he can only shrug and hand over what he knows is not his to give. So that poetic initiative is not entirely lost, however, Herbert now extends the gesture to his fellow debtor who may 'set his hand/ And heart unto this Deed, when he hath read' (37-8), the same ink/blood which ratifies that deed now inclusive of the poet/priest's beneficiary, the reader/communicant.[91]

This chapter has endeavoured to appreciate the importance of sacraments for Herbert's devotional poetic. In addition to addressing the theological controversies of his age, sacraments in *The Temple* advance the Christian paradox of Incarnation as conceptually central to Herbert's interrogation of spiritual and material aspects of religious experience.

Internal/external and private/public oscillation is a key feature of both sacramental worship and devotional versification: the Christian *mythos*[92] attending ceremony and ritual informs the communicant's private reflections whether at 'board', prayer, or quill and 'little book'.[93] Herbert's poetry, intended for publication, addresses matters and rehearses doctrines common among the members of a faith community even as it portrays one individual working out his salvation in fear and trembling. Central to this integration of

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[91] Something like this is suggested by Richard Todd's reader response approach to *The Temple*, in which God 'stands to the poet as the poet stands to the reader'; both Herbert's initial 'offering' and the reader's participation in the resulting text are 'sacramental' activities: Todd 8. Social obligation and blood sacrifice are connected with respect to friendship in 'The Church Porch':

> Thy friend put in thy bosome: wear his eies
> Still in thy heart, that he may see what's there.
> If cause require, thou art his sacrifice;
> Thy drops of bloud must pay down all his fear:
> But love is lost, the way of friendship's gone,
> Though *David* had his *Jonathan*, *Christ* his *John*.
> (271-76).

[92] Northrop Frye defines *mythos* as imitation of a 'generic and recurrent action or ritual' or of 'the total conceivable action of an omnipotent god or human society': Frye (1966) 366-7. I understand sacraments as comprehensive of both these definitions.

[93] According to Walton, this was Herbert's name for the volume of poems sent from his death-bed to Nicholas Ferrar, the authoritative basis for *B* and *1633* : Walton 286.

communal myth and private devotional sphere, sacramental topoi are a continual reminder of the individual Christian's *rôle* in a larger scheme, both his performative ritual duty, and his status with respect to the Christian eschaton, the register or book of life to which all hopeful souls aspire. The creative energy discernible in Herbert's verse consists in his repeatedly calling upon sacraments to mediate a grace whose presence the most sincere and confident of devotional psyches is unable to sustain. It is only through continual return to its institutional and carnal status as sacrament that Herbert can effectively think the Word-become-flesh and the radical grace it proclaims.[94]

A corollary of this effort to find in sacraments respite from the devotional self, the conscience that chides, is a desire to identify with the Christ whose body is consumed in the rite. Antithesis here is not only between the two entities, Herbert and Christ; at stake is the identity of a subjectivity divided between its own sense of personal autonomy and the body of myth (scripture) constituting the Christ with which it would identify to the point of self-erasure. Stanley Fish has eloquently shown how Herbert's poems are self-consuming artifacts; yet it cannot be denied that *The Temple* bears the marks of a distinctive and innovative artist, that at those moments when it is most self-censuring and deferential Herbert's voice is most conspicuously his. Perhaps this has something to do with the idea that only in relinquishing his life does the Christian truly know what it is to live, just as the increate Word, in becoming flesh and dying, redeems a world otherwise left to its own devices. Consuming and consumed, Herbert's devotional verse is itself sacramental, a liminal fleshing of the Word wherein both Deity and religious artist might together declare 'my hearts deare treasure/ Drops bloud (the onely beads) my words to measure'.[95]

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[94] Of Herbert's eating images Heather Ross remarks 'it is through indulgence in the senses that one transcends them and finds God, whereas it is through the repression and denial of our senses, our appetites, that we find ourselves': H. Ross (1995) 126. If hyperbole, the statement is nonetheless a frightening vision of where an antisacramental spiritualism might lead.

[95] 'The Sacrifice' (21-2).

Chapter Two
Sacrament and Word: Ceremony, Pulpit, Predestination

If *The Temple* documents the spiritual deliberations of a single individual, its personal voice nevertheless shares the concerns of a religious community. Sacraments play an important role in individual salvation by providing an external means of grace whose perceived efficacy is not dependent, finally, upon the communicant's subjective disposition; the ceremonies of Baptism and the Eucharist recognize and celebrate the social context of Christian faith, ritually subsuming the private devotional sphere within a broader framework, the living tradition whose central truths they rehearse.

Continuing to address the role of sacraments in the integration of internal and external aspects of religious experience, the present chapter examines the content and theopolitical circumstances of John Donne's 1626 Christmas sermon. Of particular interest here is the significance of sacramental doctrine for predestinarian controversy: for to the extent sacraments promoted the Church of England's broad-based membership, they theoretically conflicted with orthodox Calvinism and its generally pessimistic anticipation of a limited elect.[1] Because predestination was of potential threat to the inclusivist policies and unity of a state institution, conforming Calvinist divines were often careful to downplay or even positively dismiss the more distasteful elements of Reform doctrine in favour of a more edifying emphasis on sacraments and the free grace they were thought to confer. The Christmas sermon proves Donne no exception: inviting them to receive the benefits sacraments offer, he encourages his auditory to have no regard for the more extreme Calvinist notion of a terrible and arbitrary decree. But if explicit denial of a contentious and divisive doctrine places Donne firmly among those conformist divines concerned for the church's unity, the same sermon implicitly promotes an inward piety anxious to anticipate and establish its own elect status. The 1626 Christmas sermon thus constitutes Donne's attempt to reconcile a potentially divisive Calvinism with the increasingly sacramental

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[1] For a more detailed discussion of the relationship between predestination and Calvin's sacramental doctrine see Introduction 27 ff.

orientation of the religious establishment -- the inward spirituality of a scripture- and preaching-centered Puritanism with a more ceremonial and communally-based ministry.

While sacrament and sermon had always been complementary components of English Protestant divinity, from as early as the 1590's prominent churchmen such as Richard Hooker, Thomas Buckeridge and Lancelot Andrewes criticized the neglect of sacraments resulting from excessive regard for preaching. The antithesis becomes more apparent in the 1620's with the increasingly sacerdotal role of divines in providing the means of salvation; even otherwise puritan divines were known to subscribe to this particular aspect of a newly emerging style of divinity.[2] Donne's sermon advances as complementary the potentially contrary imperatives of word and sacrament by conferring Eucharistic status on both the 'elements' of his sermon and their desired or intended effect on his auditory. Hearing the word thus involves a spiritual ingestion whereby an exemplary moral figure (Simeon at the nativity) is analyzed according to his various attributes or 'characters', which are then absorbed and reassimilated by each communicant. It is, then, a vivid, albeit figurative, sacramentalization of the preached word that allows Donne's auditory to maintain reverence for public ceremony and the sacerdotal authority of the minister while experiencing as immediate and visceral the moral exempla he communicates.

It is not finally clear that this sacramental homiletic indicates support for the increasingly Laudian sympathies of the Stuart court, at least not in 1626. If sacramentalizing the word promotes the reconciliation of a fashionable sacerdotalism with Donne's more puritan proclivities, it also allows the otherwise prominent status of ceremonial forms to be subordinated to preaching and the private enthusiasms it encourages. We will see that even in direct violation of a royal decree six months previous Donne had not refrained from expressing distaste at the then ascendant political fortunes of anti-Calvinism. It is thus in the wake of theological controversy and amidst the changing face of establishment divinity in the 1620's that Donne's Christmas sermon advances the

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[2] A. Milton 471-2.

integration of sacrament and private religious experience -- the primary symbol and instrument of ecclesiastical unity, and that nether psychological realm wherein private faith negotiates God's hidden decrees.

Given the importance of Reform theology for early Stuart doctrine and ecclesiastical policy[3] it is appropriate that an examination of Donne's sacramental views *vis-à-vis* those of the foreign Reformed churches pay specific attention to Calvin, whose determination to maintain Real Presence while avoiding an explicitly carnal view was a formative influence on English sacramental thought. The comparison reveals that while Donne often shares Calvin's aversion to both carnal and memorialist extremes, and thus a reluctance to identify the *modus* of sacramental presence, he nevertheless advances a sacramental theology considerably more sensualist than Calvin might ever have allowed. Indeed, as we shall see, even after vociferously attacking Roman Catholic transubstantiation Donne is able to follow with a formula for Real Presence which differs little, if at all, from the Tridentine doctrine he explicitly denies.

The scripture upon which the 1626 Christmas sermon is based -- Simeon's response to the nativity in Luke 2.29-30, 'Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation' -- allows Donne to promote a Eucharistic meditation which consists in having his auditory identify with Simeon, thus rendering the latter's encounter with the Christ child theirs via both sacrament and word: 'Every manifestation of Christ to the world, to the Church, to a particular soule, is an Epiphany, a Christmas-day.'[4] Simeon, we are told, did not question the mystery of the Incarnation because he was satisfied that God had not promised an explanation but only the experience of salvation, Donne here launching into a diatribe on the excessive curiosity responsible for the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation. Insisting, however, that the bread

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[3] See Introduction 29 ff.

[4] Donne 7.11.279. All sermon references indicate volume, number and page in the Potter and Simpson edition of Donne's *Sermons.*

'is not the same bread, which was presented before', he specifies the change as resulting from God's ordinance that it be 'severed, and appropriated . . . to another use'.[5]

The twin emphases on mystery and use are characteristically Calvinist.[6] The 'manifestation and application of Christ in the Sacrament' are a 'holy action', the receiver's profit lies 'in the action it selfe'.[7] Donne also shares with Calvin a certain awe at the mystery of it all; in the *Institutes* Calvin writes:

> Now, if anyone should ask me how this [presence of Christ in the Eucharist] takes place, I shall not be ashamed to confess that it is a secret too lofty for either my mind to comprehend or my words to declare. And to speak more plainly, I rather experience than understand it. Therefore, I here embrace without controversy the truth of God in which I may safely rest.[8]

Uncomfortable with the Roman doctrine's implied identification of the Eucharistic species as the carnal locus of Christ's body and blood, Donne encourages his auditory to adopt an attitude similar to that of Calvin:

> But for the manner, how the Body and Bloud of Christ is there, wait his leisure, if he have not yet manifested that to thee: Grieve not at that, wonder not at that, presse not for that; for hee hath not manifested that, not the way, not the manner of his presence in the Sacrament, to the Church.

He further tells them to 'leave thy passion at home and referre thy reason, and disputation to the Schoole,' a stab anticipating the later attack on transubstantiation, and rather glaring in that it follows an admonition to dispense with 'a peremptory prejudice on other mens opinions, that no opinion but thine can be true, in the doctrine of the Sacrament, and an uncharitable condemning of other men, or other Churches that may be of another perswasion then thou art'.[9] Though he hesitates to present a sacramental position we might call properly theological, Donne does tell us what that position is *not*, and thus, like Calvin, betrays a certain ambivalence about whether to probe any further. Simeon's patience -- 'He waited, saies the story'[10] -- is a quality to which Donne aspires but, as we shall see, finds difficult to sustain.

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[5] 7.11.294.
[6] McDonnell 255.
[7] 7.11.281, 283.
[8] *Institutes* 4.17.32.
[9] 7.11.290-91.
[10] 7.11.290.

There are other significant points of contact between Donne and Calvin. The passage from the *Institutes* continues:

> He declares his flesh the food of my soul, his blood its drink. I offer my soul to him to be fed with such food. In his Sacred Supper he bids me take, eat, and drink his body and blood under the symbols of bread and wine. I do not doubt that he himself truly presents them, and that I receive them.[11]

There are several things to consider here: the relevance of word (both scripture and sermon) to ceremony, the nature and extent of Eucharistic sacrifice, the locus of sacramental transformation and the degree to which bread and wine participate in that supernatural change.

Early on Donne includes as necessary preparation for receiving the sacrament hearing 'that which was said before',[12] and later, after the lengthy digression on Roman folly, 'Since Christ forbore not to say, This is my body, when he gave the sign of his body, why should we forbeare to say of that bread, this is Christ's body, which is the Sacrament of his body.'[13] Relative to the numerous Eucharistic allusions throughout the sermons, reference here to the rite's scriptural institution is rather the exception than rule.[14] Biblical sanction for the Eucharist Donne rarely calls upon; when he does, it is to support rather than establish an authority whose status is already unquestionable. Speaking of Augustine on Baptism -- 'when the Word is joyned to the element, or to the Action, then there is a true Sacrament'[15] -- Donne associates superstitious consecration, where 'the very phrase, and forme of words sanctify', with the anabaptist position that a sermon and subsequent understanding must precede or accompany the rite. Though the identification seems odd -- the necessity of preaching and the Roman Mass's words of consecration are hardly equivalent -- it was not, after all, uncommon to lump papists and radical sectarians

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[11] *Institutes* 4.17.32.

[12] 7.11.280. Simpson and Potter note that Donne alludes to a sermon preached earlier the same day, prior to the administration of the Eucharist; the present sermon was likely preached sometime in the afternoon: 7.24. Having received the sacrament, Donne's auditory may have been particularly sensitive to his insisting they pay due attention to what follows.

[13] 7.11.295-96.

[14] According to Troy Reeves' *Index*, Matthew's account is mentioned twice, as is Luke's with its emphasis on remembering: Reeves 1.164, 144.

[15] 5.5.128.

together as equally threatening to the integrity of the English church. Donne's polemic works to identify excessive reliance on the preached word with sacramental idolatry, certainly a sensitive association for those he indicts.[16] He goes on to say that if the sacrament is 'without the *word preached*, yet it is never without the word, because the whole Sacrament, and the power thereof is rooted in the word, in the *Gospell.*'[17] Here, sacraments signify and encompass the word rather than the other way around; if this is true of Baptism, then what about the Eucharist, which requires *less* 'solemnity' and 'circumstance'?[18] 'A *Sermon* ', says Donne, 'is useful for the congregation, not necessary for . . . the accomplishment of the Sacrament.'[19] Scripture underscores the authority of sacraments, but that authority stands whether or not it is accompanied by explicit reference to scripture. Sacraments are capable of embodying the Word without the help of the preacher's words. Compare Calvin's view on the importance of scripture and doctrine with regard to the rite:

> God does not bring forward signs without the Word, for what would a sacrament be if we beheld nothing but the sign? It is doctrine alone that makes the sacrament, and therefore let us know that it is mere hypocrisy where no doctrine is taught, and that the Papists act wickedly when they lay aside doctrine, and give the name of sacrament to empty ceremonies.[20]

What would the sacrament be, indeed? Calvin here seems more readily aligned with the anabaptists than with the middle position Donne imagines, and he a Papist from the Calvinist standpoint. In a sermon some years later Donne's appreciation for the importance of doctrine with respect to sacraments is an implicit apology or defense against Calvin's position and the accusation of idolatry:

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[16] Consider the Zurich anabaptist Conrad Grebel's letter to Thomas Muntzer in 1524, condemning those who 'persist in all the old manner of personal vices, and in the common ritualistic and anti-Christian customs of baptism and of the Lord's Supper, in disrespect for the divine word and in respect for the word of the pope and of the antipapal preachers, which yet is not equal to the divine word nor in harmony with it': cited in Hillerbrand 123.

[17] 5.5.128.

[18] 5.5.127.

[19] 5.5.128.

[20] McDonnell 236.

That Church, which they call Lutheran, hath retained more of these Ceremonies, then ours hath done; And ours more than that which they call Calvinist; But both the Lutheran, and ours, without danger, because, in both places, we are diligent to preach to the people the right use of these indifferent things.[21]

The association of English and Lutheran churches to the exclusion of the Genevan advances doctrine not as superior or even primary but rather as supportive of the authority and importance of sacraments.[22]

Elsewhere, Donne fashions a Trinitarian conceit, whereby '*Spirit*, and *Water*, and *bloud*' are equated with '*Preaching*, and *Baptisme* and *Communion* ', going on to insist that sacraments are ineffective without a true hearing and acceptance of the word.[23] In the first sermon preached to the recently crowned King Charles, however, the order is changed, or rather preaching is absent from the list, which now consists of only two ways to God: 'The first way that God admitted thee to him was by Water, the water of *Baptisme* ' and, perhaps more significantly, 'The first way that *Christ* came to thee, was in *Blood* . . . And the last thing that hee bequeathed to thee, was his *Blood*, in the Institution of the Blessed *Sacrament*; Refuse not to goe to him, the same way too, if his glorie require that *Sacrifice*.'[24] If Donne at times adopts a Calvinist subordination of sacraments to the word -- 'Christ preached the Christian Doctrine, long before he instituted the Sacraments'[25] -- this is not always the case. Whereas his promotion of a balanced view is, appropriately, mild-mannered -- just as 'preaching . . . is common to all . . . so is this water of life in the

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[21] 8.14.331. It is important to remember that by 'Calvinist' here Donne may not mean Calvin himself. That 'that which they *call* Calvinist' suggests as much is supported by an earlier sermon, where, defending the liturgical calendar, Donne invokes both Geneva and 'the labours of that Reverend man' against those who supposedly 'that Church [the Genevan]. . . take for their patterne': 6.6.132. In a later sermon he enlists Calvin against those 'who trouble the Church now . . . of private Sacraments'. Presumably, these agitators cited Genevan practice, for Donne goes to some trouble to point out that Calvin's views and those of the Swiss church did not always coincide: 10.7.175. The distinction is perhaps more political than theological, Donne's chief reason for mentioning Calvin here being an appeal for ecumenical tolerance.

[22] Donne's willingness to accommodate Lutheran views is particularly notable given English aversion to consubstantiation and the doctrine of ubiquity on which it is based. The moderate Calvinist conformist John Davenant condemned ubiquitarians as 'adversarii nostri': cited in A. Milton 385. Donne's friend Thomas Morton seems to have shared the Dean's ambivalence, blaming the Lutherans for promoting breadengod worship even while advancing English-Lutheran alliance: cited in A. Milton 386.

[23] 5.6.149; cf. 6.11.223.

[24] 6.12.260.

[25] 10.2.69.

Sacrament, common to all'[26] -- his attitude toward the sacramentally disinclined often borders on a contempt as pronounced as any anti-Roman outburst:

> *our times* abound with such persons as undervalue, not onely all *rituall*, and *ceremoniall* assistances of devotion, which the wisdome, and the piety of the Church hath induced, but even the *Sacraments themselves*, of Christ's owne immediate institution, and are alwaies open to solicitations to passe to another church, upon their own surmises of errours in their own.[27]

Donne could at times be suspicious of preaching. Though an enthusiastic proponent of rhetorical eloquence, he was also aware of the danger of indulging *elecutio*, the expression of truth, at the expense of *inventio*, the discovery of truth in its transcendent, pre-verbal state.[28] Cautioning his auditory at the Christmas sermon against a 'licencious' or 'treacherous comming' to church, he warns that he who does so 'heares but the Logique, or the Retorique, or the Ethique, or the poetry of the Sermon, but the Sermon of the Sermon he heares not; but he that brings this disposition to the Sacrament, ends not in the losse of a benefit, but he acquires, and procures his owne damnation.'[29] Both sermon and sacrament offer benefits to those who would come with a righteous and just attitude not unlike Simeon's at the nativity. Sermon and sacrament would appear to differ quite markedly, however, when it comes to the ill-disposed, for whereas the sermon is perhaps but an empty husk of human ingenuity for such as come licentiously and treacherously, the sacramental sign, on the other hand, retains connection with its signified, only now it is a source of damnation, or, as Donne also says in this context, an ill-disposition is 'at the Sacrament, deadly'.[30] This, of course, is scriptural,[31] and it would appear that Donne's reading of such scripture is decidedly literal. What is interesting is that what applies to the sacrament is not extended to the sermon; that is, while the sermon's effects are, depending on the listener's disposition, either beneficial or absent altogether (except as insignificant

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[26] 10.6.153-54.

[27] 10.7.162.

[28] Quinn (1962) 276.

[29] 7.11.293.

[30] 7.11.293.

[31] Reverberation of St. Paul's warning that an insufficiently contrite attitude at the Lord's Supper may be a cause of illness (1 Cor. 11.30) would perhaps have had particular significance for a London recently familiar with plague.

language), those of the sacrament are never absent, but rather just different. Donne here resists applying to the sacrament as sign the same status he affords to the sermon, which for Calvin is the means whereby necessary doctrine contains and contextualizes the sacramental rite. The language of scripture or sermon can be both figurative and literal, or is even in some sense always in strictly metaphorical relationship with a content discernible only by a reverent attitude, while in the sacrament content and container seem to be somehow inextricably related. It would appear that the Eucharist is *never* an empty sign -- as the logic or rhetoric of a sermon may be -- but rather is always associated with Presence, whether as a blessing to the righteous or damnation to the ill-disposed.

Calvin's influence on Donne is also evident with respect to the target of sacramental efficacy. Just as 'every manifestation of Christ . . . to a particular soule, is an Epiphany', so is the sacrament 'a manifestation of Christs birth in your soules'.[32] Elsewhere, Donne is more explicit, referring to 'the true Transubstantiation, that when I have received it worthily, it becomes my very soule; that is, My soule growes up into a better state, and habitude by it, and I have the more soule for it, the more sanctified, the more deified soule by that Sacrament.'[33] Use of the term 'transubstantiation' is certainly curious in one who would otherwise deny the doctrine, even if immediately defused by an emphasis on worthy reception and a transformation effected not in the elements but in the recipient. Perhaps 'true Transubstantiation' manifests another Donnean ambivalence, again, one shared by Calvin himself, who had always denied a sacramentalism exclusive of Real Presence (like the memorialism of Zwingli), but was at least equally wary of an inordinate sensualism. The soul is 'fed by the substance of Christ's flesh', and that substance is 'vivifying'; those who exclude this substantial presence 'defraud themselves of the use of the supper.'[34] The dialectical tension characteristic of Calvin's theology constitutes, according to one of his

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[32] 7.11.280.

[33] 7.12.321.

[34] *Corpus Reformatum* 9.76; cited in McDonnell 233.

proponents, a pervasive ambiguity incapable of synthesis;[35] it is a tension extending to the soul/body dichotomy, yielding in Donne's preaching that major preoccupation of his poetry, interpenetration.[36] Echoing Tertullian, Donne says, 'All that the soul does, it does in, and with, and by the body.'[37] This Aristotelian integrity of body and soul is never an explicit characteristic of the sermons. Donne is usually anxious, rather, to protect the soul's status as divine image from bodily contamination. God's image is not in man by virtue of man's bodily constitution, but rather is a reflection in the soul: 'that's truly the *Vbi*, the place where this Image is'.[38] Donne would not that we worship 'Images of his [God's] body . . . more then him'.[39] Nevertheless, though (or perhaps because) the ineffable stubbornly resists representation, Donne's sensualist predilection tends to resist Calvinist nominalism, embracing instead a rhetorical vividness.[40] Thus, in the same passage, the repository of the divine image, the soul of man, is 'The Sphear . . . of this intelligence, the Gallery for this Picture, the Arch for this Statue, the Table, and frame and shrine for this Image of God'. The soul's involvement in receiving the sacramental gifts Donne imagines as more than mere rarefied spiritual experience:

> God hath not onely received a full satisfaction for all sinne in Christ, but Christ, in his Ordinances in his Church, offers me an application of all that for my selfe, and covers my sin . . . by comming to me, by spreading himself upon me, as the Prophet did upon the dead Child, Mouth to mouth, Hand to hand; In the mouth of his Minister, he speaks to me; In the hand of the Minister, he delivers himselfe to me; and so by these visible acts, and seales of my Reconciliation, *Tegit attingendo,* He covers me by touching me; He touches my conscience, with a sense and remorse of my sins, in his Word; and he touches my soule, with a faith of having received him, and all the benefit of his Death, in the Sacrament.[41]

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[35] McDonnell 228-31. McDonnell's gloss on Calvin's critique of transubstantiation is, I think, accurate. The Roman doctrine 'destroys the Platonic tension: sign becomes signified, the intelligible reality becomes the image, heaven comes to earth': *ibid.*, 231.

[36] For discussion of this aspect of Donne's poetry and its relevance for the sermons see Carey 137-66.

[37] 4.14.358.

[38] 9.2.79.

[39] 9.2.78.

[40] Carey convincingly argues Donne struggled with the Christian orthodoxy that the soul did not die with the body, but went to heaven to await the general resurrection of its physical counterpart. He is also perceptive in finding that in the sermons, the 'human body is densely present . . . even when it is being disparaged, and even when Donne is supposed to be talking about something quite unphysical': Carey 223, 135.

[41] 9.11.261.

The image of divine embrace is arresting, perhaps even shocking if it were not for the interposing priest and subsequent juxtaposition of 'soule' with the abstract 'conscience'. The passage moves from a subjective, inward piety toward a faith context more communal, public and ceremonial. The sensuous encounter suggested by Old Testament analogue, however, has become by the end the preached word (the minister's mouth) and a sacramental sign (the minister's hand), both word and sacrament identified as visible *acts*, the emblematic Augustinian 'seales' referring less to sacramental species than to the action or use to which they are put.[42] Though he emphasizes communal use and the church's corporate sacrifice, Donne does not embrace Augustine's sense of the elements' embodiment of that sacrifice and its union with Christs' atoning work; the otherwise sensuous tone is concentrated on the personal, internal effects of ceremonial participation, not on an external and carnal presence. Between the two 'washings' of Baptism and blood, Donne calls for 'the water of *Contrite*, and *repentant teares*.'.[43] And in a passage reminiscent of the famous meditation in *Devotions*, we are advised, approaching Lent, that 'He that will dy with Christ upon Good-Friday, must hear his own bell toll all Lent', for when we 'begin to hear Christs bell toll . . . our bell [is] in the chime'; 'preparatives' are thus called for before entering this 'Medicinal Bath', the 'blood of Christ Jesus, in the Sacrament.'[44] As for Simeon, his epiphany is ours in the sacrament when corporate use of the rite is combined with self-examination so that 'every penitent, and devout, and reverent, and worthy receiver, hath had in that holy action his [Simeon's] *Now* ', that 'Now' being the peace with which he (and his typological progeny, the corporate body gathered at St. Paul's this day in December 1626), might depart.[45]

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[42] However, where Augustine uses military imagery to describe a seal -- as a shield against the wiles of the devil -- Calvin finds a legal metaphor, an eschatological sign of redemption or receipt of pardon: Schleiner 105-8.

[43] 5.8.176.

[44] 8.7.174.

[45] 7.11.281.

Individual penitence in a corporate context also takes on a priestly authority. We learn that Simeon, according to patristic tradition, was a priest and that at the sacrament every man is 'a Priest, though . . . but a lay-man at home'. 'Live in remembrance', says Donne, 'that thou wast a Priest to day; for no man hath received Christ, that hath not sacrificed himself.'[46] The priesthood of all believers, *'a Royall Priesthood'* according to Donne echoing St. Peter,[47] is a hallmark of Reform Christianity. The transference of spiritual authority from clerical head to lay body, from one Priest to another, takes on a particularly polemical, even puritan, tone with regard to Eucharistic administration:

> A worthy Receiver shall rise in Judgement against an unworthy Giver: Christ shall be the Sacrifice still, and thou the Priest, that camest but to receive, because thou hast sacrificed thy selfe; and he the *Iudas*, that pretended to be the Priest, because he hath betraid Christ to himselfe, and as much lay in him, evacuated the Sacrament, and made it of none effect to thee.[48]

While inner spiritual status as a condition of sacramental efficacy is common to both Reform and Roman faiths, personal sacrifice here *competes* with that of the Priest whose empty ritual 'evacuates' the sacrament. Moreover, Simeon's exemplary moral and devout qualities, 'which prepared him for a quiet death,' are 'in the action it self',[49] 'appliable to us in that capacity, as we are fitted for the Sacrament, (for in that way only, we shall walk throughout this exercise)'.[50] The conventional piety associating contrition with reflection on one's own death becomes later in the sermon an unmistakably Donnean indulgence, a morbid fascination worthy of one who was later to preach *Deaths Duell*:

> God is most glorified in giving a resurrection to him, that hath been longest dead; that is, longest in the Contemplation of his owne sinfull and spirituall putrefaction. For, he that stinks most in his owne, by true contrition, is the best perfume to Gods nostrils, and a conscience troubled in it selfe, is *Odor quietus*, as *Noah's* sacrifice was, a savor of rest to God.[51]

Simeon's peace is enjoyed only by the communicant willing to undergo a spiritual death, to become a living sacrifice by virtue of inward penitence and *mea culpa* meditation.

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[46] 7.11.287.
[47] 7.11.286; 1 Peter 2.9.
[48] 7.11.286.
[49] 7.11.283.
[50] 7.11.281.
[51] 7.11.285.

If inward piety and self-scrutiny are prominent features of Donne's Eucharistic sensibility, there is an at least equal emphasis on ceremonial context and due reverence. Self-reflection and contrition are aspects of ritual which are difficult, even impossible, to regulate; appropriate bodily prostration thus has its spiritual counterpart so that the Calvinist dialectic tension between inner and outer, like that of divine and human 'substances' in Christ, is rigorously maintained.[52] In a sermon preached at St. Paul's in January of 1627, Donne says, with respect to the necessity of kneeling at Communion,

> Now this Sacrament, which as it is ministered to us, is but a Sacrament, but as it is offered to God, is a Sacrifice too, is a fearfull, a terrible thing . . . [H]ow terrible, how reverentiall a thing is the blood of this immaculate Lambe, the Sonne of God? And though God doe so abound in goodnesse towards us . . . That that Sacrament which we have injured and abused, received unworthily, or irreverently, at one time, may yet benefit us, and be the savour and seale of life unto us, at another, yet when you heare that terrible Thunder break upon you, *That the unworthy receiver eats and drinks his own damnation*, That he makes Christ Jesus, who is the propitiation of all the world, his damnation; And then, that not to come to a severe examination of the Conscience before . . .[53]

The need for and close proximity of frightful inward examination and appropriate bodily posture remind Donne's auditory that only worthily received sacraments are efficacious. Grammatical ambiguity allows that a sacrament received unworthily may yet have beneficial effects -- God's abundant 'goodnesse' and mercy suggest as much -- but it is more likely that mercy extends only so far as to allow the unworthy recipient an opportunity to make future amends. Nevertheless, Donne was keenly aware of the problem of asserting Real Presence while denying the unworthy its benefits, a problem circumvented by the Calvinist emphasis on use, which confines the mystery of sacramental communication to God and recipient, and confers on the mediating species the status of signs. Like Richard Hooker before him and in agreement with the twenty-ninth Elizabethan article, Donne held that 'The wicked may be a cause, that the Sacrament shall doe *them no good* ; but that the Sacrament, become *no Sacrament*, or that God should be false in his promises, and offer no grace, where he pretends to offer it, this the wicked cannot doe'.[54] Though there is a calm eye of

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[52] McDonnell 230.
[53] 7.12.321.
[54] 5.7.163.

mercy at the centre of its 'terrible Thunder', the storming passage both qualifies that mercy and places a limit on the extent to which personal reflection is a truly private shelter.

Donne and Calvin are in relative agreement with respect to the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist. In stressing the sacrificial as the distinguishing mark of 'Anglican' sacramental worship, Eleanor McNees charges Calvin's virtualism with diminishing presence 'by severing the *act* of eating and drinking from the *effects* the action produced'. Aligning 'low Anglicans' like Hooker with the virtualists, she associates Donne with 'high Anglicans' and their emphasis on a corporate reenactment of Christ's atoning sacrifice.[55] Calvin's virtualism does not in fact separate the act from sacramental efficacy:

> For we do not eat Christ duly and unto salvation unless he is crucified, when in living experience we grasp the efficacy of his death.
>
> The Lord's body was once for all so sacrificed for us, that we may now feed upon it, and *by feeding, feel in ourselves the working of that unique sacrifice.*[56]

So is the emphasis on corporate recollection as a participation in the original Atonement fully Calvinist:

> The cup and also the bread must be sanctified . . . in order to show that we have truly fed upon him, and being as it were grafted into him may have a common life, and that by the virtue of the Holy Spirit may be united to him, in order that the death and passion that he has undergone may belong to us and that that sacrifice, by which we are reconciled to God, may be attributed and imputed to us now as if we had offered it ourselves in person.[57]

By approaching Calvin through the English virtualists (and perhaps reluctant to explicitly associate Donne with the theological champion of Puritans, moderate or otherwise) McNees fails to make a distinction between Calvin and certain of his followers, a distinction Donne does make.[58] And while she is essentially correct in identifying Donne's chief sacramental concern as 'the contrite individual's identification with the crucifixion',[59] she does not give adequate consideration to the sensualist tendencies informing and qualifying that inward piety.

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[55] McNees (1987) 96.

[56] *Institutes* 4.17.4 and 4.17.1; cited in McDonnell 285; emphasis added.

[57] *Corpus Reformatorum* 49.665; cited in McDonnell 284.

[58] See above, 103 n21.

[59] McNees (1987) 95.

The dilemma faced by both Calvin and Donne, and the point at which they tend to part, has to do with the precise nature of the sacrifice embodied in the rite. For if ostensibly concerned with inner reflection and pious contrition as sacrificial prerequisites wrought by the Holy Spirit in accord with communal participation, Donne nevertheless betrays a more than passing interest in the corporeal nature of the atoning sacrifice. That Christ instituted bread and wine as appropriate sacramental elements is for Donne, as for Calvin, evidence of God's approval of matter and the right enjoyment of the earth's many fruits: 'God himself took his portion in this world so, in meat and drink, in his manifold sacrifices; and God himself gave himself in this world so, in bread and wine, in the blessed Sacrament of his body and his bloud'.[60] Though affirming his fleshly nature, Calvin denies for the risen Christ a local habitation, insisting instead that he resides forever at the right hand of the father in heaven. And yet he insists that in the Eucharist one encounters the whole Christ, spirit, body, and blood: 'in order that [Christ] may be present to us, he does not change his place, but communicates to us from heaven the virtue of his flesh as though it were present.'[61] Donne too would have Christ present, denying any doctrine that brings 'that body which God the Sonne hath assumed, the body of Christ, too neare', but going on to say that the body is in fact there 'in the *Vbi* . . . There, that is, in that place to which the Sacrament extends it selfe. For the Sacrament extends as well to heaven, from whence it fetches grace, as to the table, from whence it delivers Bread and Wine'. The body, however, is not there '*in modo* ', it 'comes not thither that way' (that is, not by mere virtue of the bread, even if consecrated).[62] Such as insist otherwise 'make Religion too bodily a thing.'[63]

Sometimes Donne's appropriations of Calvin refute Roman Catholic ideas even while borrowing papist terminology, as with the 'true transubstantiation' of the contrite

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[60] 7.5.145.
[61] McDonnell 231. For discussion of Calvin's 'virtualism' see Introduction 25-6.
[62] 9.2.79.
[63] 9.2.77.

soul at Communion. Similarly, he refers to the body of Christ -- which in true Calvinist fashion is 'removed out of our sight' -- as 'That powerfull, and precious, and onely Relique, which is given to us, against hell it selfe'.[64] If these passages are essentially witty indictments of the practices signified by such terminology, they also suggest Donne's need to invest psychological process and the absent object of adoration with concrete verification. That Donne's sacerdotal penchant for metaphor stems as much from theological necessity as metaphysical wit is suggested by none other than Calvin's understanding of the analogous relationship between the heavenly body of Christ and the earthly elements of the Eucharist. Defending his virtualist doctrine, Calvin writes, 'Because I say . . . that Christ, while remaining in heaven, descends to us by his virtue . . . I deny that I am substituting something different (i.e. from the body) which is to have the effect of abolishing the gift of the body'.[65] Against his literalist opponents -- 'I wish they were as literary as they long to be literal!' -- Calvin finds in analogy a solution to the problem of explaining how the body can both remain in heaven and somehow effect grace through the earthly species: '[A] kind of perpetual rule in regard to all sacraments is that the sign receives the name of the thing signified', and in *Institutes*, 'On account of the affinity which the things signified have with their signs, the name of the thing signified is given to the sign figuratively indeed, but very appropriately'.[66]

It is Christ's words at the institution -- 'this is my body', 'this is my blood' -- which lay at the root of sacramental controversy, which revolved around the question of how far the words of institution are to be taken literally. Donne certainly distinguished between the literal and figurative, as when, for example, he sarcastically denies Bellarmine's defense of the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory and Baptism for the dead as a 'metaphoricall' and therefore erroneous reading of 1 Cor. 15.29, 'Else, what shall they

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[64] 6.13.271.
[65] Cited in Wallace 203.
[66] *Ibid.*, 197-98.

doe which are baptiz'd for the dead? If the dead rise not at all, why are they then baptiz'd for the dead?':

> Now, the sense which should ground an assurance in Doctrinall things, should be the literall sense: And yet here, in so important a matter of faith as Purgatory, it must not be a literall, a proper, a naturall and genuine sense, but figurative, and metaphoricall; for, in this place, *Baptisme* must not signifie literally the Sacrament of Baptisme, but it must signifie, in a figurative sense, a Baptisme of teares. And then that figure must be a pregnant figure, a figure with child of another figure, for as this Baptisme must signifie teares, so these teares must signifie all that they use to expresse . . . And then, as there was a mother figure, and a daughter figure, so there is a grand-child too, for here is a *Prosopopoeia*, an imagining, a raysing up of a person that is not . . .[67]

The literal and figurative here are not necessarily opposed; rather, the distinction seeks to harmonize both as valid methods of exegesis, variously appropriate according to the extent the scripture in question pertains to doctrinal matters.[68] The relative doctrinal significance of various scriptures is of course open to question, so Donne adds what might be loosely described as a hermeneutic: 'We have a Rule . . . which is, Not to admit figurative senses in interpretation of Scriptures, where the literall sense may well stand'.[69] Nevertheless, there is still the matter of determining just when scripture warrants a figurative as opposed

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[67] 7.7.192.

[68] Donne would not have approved of a dichotomy opposing the literal to the figurative. Indeed, the medieval art of preaching he inherited did not sharply distinguish historical and literal categories of biblical exegesis from those allegorical, tropological and anagogical: Mitchell 44-5. Puritan resistance to Ciceronian rhetoric and to the medieval tolerance for layered allegory is based on the conviction that these are human creations and therefore adulterate the pure word of God. William Perkins in 1592 thus cautions that 'Humane wisdom must be concealed, whether it be in the manner of the sermon or in the setting forth of the words: because the preaching of the word is the testimony of God': cited in Mitchell 100. Perkins allows that 'humane wisdom' is appropriately employed in the preparation but not in the delivery of a sermon. This preference for apparent artlessness is for such as Perkins less a matter of artistic value than of potential threat to the right understanding of scripture.

A more succinct statement of the problem is found in Richard Baxter's *Reform'd Pastor* (1655): 'All our teaching must be as Plain and Evident as we can make it . . . He that would be understood must speak to the Capacity of his Hearers, and make it his business to make himself understood. Truth loves the Light, and is most Beautiful when most naked. It's a Sign of an envious Enemy to hide the Truth; and a sign of an Hypocrite to do this under the pretence of revealing it: And therefore painted obscure Sermons (like the Painted Glass in the Windows that keep out the Light) are too oft the Marks of painted Hypocrites. If you would not teach Men, what do you in the Pulpit? If you would, why do you not speak so as to be understood?': cited in Mitchell 104. Baxter is, perhaps, more literary than he longs to be literal, for here we have a call to clarity whose rhetorical force consists largely in the deployment of figure: truth as naked beauty and the denigration of 'obscure sermons' as stained glass suggest Baxter is far from dismissing the figurative outright. The passage suggests the inevitable influence of a text (scripture) -- which is itself filled with obscurity -- on one who would much rather get to the bottom of things, so to speak. The question here is whether the paint which obscures also permeates the glass through which the Light is supposedly revealed.

Contrary to Perkins and Baxter, Donne recognizes and celebrates the fact that language is always in some sense figurative, scripture and its explication the shadow of a fuller spiritual reality which, nevertheless, does not circumvent the necessity of verbal expression: Quinn (1960) 276 ff.

[69] 7.7.193.

to literal reading, a problem which becomes apparent when Donne's denial of Bellarmine's figurative reading is offered as a kind of just revenge:

> Since he will not allow us a figurative sense, in that great mystery, in the Sacrament, in the *Hoc est Corpus meum*, but binde us punctually in the letter, without any figure, not onely in the thing, (for in the thing, in the matter, we require no figure, we beleeve the body of Christ to be in the Sacrament as literally, as really as they doe) but even in the words, and phrase of speech, He should not look that we should allow him a figurative sense in that place [1 Cor. 15.29]

In an earlier sermon Donne insists that only a superficial reading could produce a literal interpretation of Christ's words, 'This is my body'. He places the saying in the same category as 'I am the vine' or 'I am the gate'.[70] But given the 'Rule' in the purgatory sermon, there is no reason to suppose that a literal reading of *Hoc est Corpus meum* could not 'well stand'. Donne wants, in effect, to distance himself from Bellarmine and Roman sensualism while maintaining Real Presence, and he does so, apparently, by distinguishing between Roman and English designations for *Hoc* -- between the species themselves and the sacrament as a whole. It is this reluctance to identify a spatial location for a nevertheless real or 'literal' presence that places Donne among those Stuart divines concerned to promote a preëminently sacramental style of divinity while avoiding the charge of popery. Admonition in the Christmas sermon to exercise Simeon's patience with respect to 'the manner of [God's] presence in the Sacrament'[71] is thus as much a matter of polemical necessity as it is pastoral instruction. In any case, theological speculation is hardly an avoidable aspect of Donne's vocation, and to have hidden from his auditory all signs of curiosity would have been for the sermons an impoverishment.

Both Donne and Calvin are inclined to rest secure in mystery and repeated denunciations of what the Eucharist is *not*. Echoing St. Paul, Donne hoped that one day 'I shall see all problematicall things come to be dogmaticall, I shall see all these rocks in

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[70] 5.1.39. I am using 'literal' here to refer to something like 'narrow in the extreme'. Following Aquinas, Donne understood 'literal' as the principal intention of the author, and not necessarily to the exclusion of allegorical, tropological or anagogical readings: Quinn (1962) 316.

[71] 7.11.290-91.

Divinity, come to be smoothe alleys'.[72] In the Christmas sermon, he has little patience for those disinclined to stand and wait:

> they that will assign a particular manner, how that body [of Christ] is there, have no footing, no ground at all, no scripture to Anchor upon: And so, diving in a bottomless sea, they poppe sometimes above water to take breath, to appeare to say something, and then snatch at a loose preposition, that swims upon the face of the waters; and so the Roman Church hath catched a *Trans*, and others a *Con*, and a *Sub*, and an *In*, . . . and rymed themselves beyond reason, into absurdities, and heresies[73]

Surfaces are usually preferred in matters of doctrine (remember the interpretive 'Rule'), but Donne's sarcastic remarks about Bellarmine -- 'here, in so important a matter of faith as Purgatory, it must not be a literall, a proper, a naturall and genuine sense, but figurative, and metaphoricall' -- might, without sarcasm, apply to 'so important matter of faith' as the sacrament. But 'Face of the waters' here suggests criticism less of a too superficial or literal reading of Christ's words of institution than of an erroneous insistence on deciding one way or the other. 'We offer to go no farther, then according to his Word' says Donne following his dismissal of the drowning heretics, 'and in that light wee depart in peace, without scruple in our owne, without offence to other mens consciences', that is, men other than those who would snatch at a 'Trans' or 'Con' or 'Sub' or 'In'. Reference to scripture as the final authority is always, of course, soundly orthodox; but it is also a convenient evasion. Those *refusing* to exercise Simeon's, St. Paul's and Donne's patience could also, presumably, point to scripture as authorizing their positive sacramental formulae. Indeed, just as Calvin himself eventually went so far as to endorse a theory of Real Presence which goes beyond mere assertion toward rational explanation, so Donne was not immune to theological curiosity.

Defining a position via dismissal of that which it is not is typical of those churchmen who would 'keep the road, the great wheele of the Church'.[74] Donne also shares with Sir Thomas Browne an occasional tendency toward the negative formulation of an essentially positive statement. In the Christmas sermon, following a lengthy anti-Roman

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[72] 3.3.111.
[73] 7.11.296.
[74] Browne 1.6.

attack, he provides a list of patristic authorities on the Eucharist, beginning 'we refuse not the words of the Fathers . . . Not *Irenaeus* . . . Not *Tertullians* . . . Not *Cyprians* . . . Not *Damascens* ', for all of whom the bread undergoes some sort of change, 'not only changed so in use, . . . but changed supernaturally'. Donne includes on this list

> *Theophylacts transformatus est* ; (which seems to be the word that goes farthest of all) for this transforming, cannot be intended of the outward form and fashion, for that is not changed; but be it of that internall form, which is the very essence and nature of the bread, so it is transformed, so the bread hath received a new form, a new essence, a new nature, because whereas the nature of bread is but to nourish the body, the nature of this bread now, is to nourish the soule.[75]

Momentary focus away from the communal act or 'use' and toward the bread itself gives way finally to the end for which the bread is intended: soul nourishment. But the terms Donne uses to characterize the transformation here give pause, for they suggest the scholastic categories of substance and accident and thus the very doctrine Donne is at pains to denounce. While 'outward' and 'internall' forms are far from heterodox to Reform sacramental discourse,[76] there is more than a little ambiguity as to what, exactly, these categories apply. Even if the 'soule' is the ultimate beneficiary, the focus on 'bread' discloses what may be a more sacerdotal preoccupation. The final word of the previous paragraph, the object of its ire, 'Transubstantiation', together with the opening of the present paragraph, 'But yet, though this bread be not so transubstantiated, we refuse not the words of the Fathers . . .', seems to deny the possibility such a doctrine might be entertained. And no, substance and accident are *not* the terms Donne uses; in fact, in the previous paragraph he insists the bread is *not* 'Transubstantiated to another substance'. But here he does say quite explicitly that one aspect of the bread changes while another remains, and this is precisely the Roman position. The second Tridentine canon on the Eucharist, in its final form, includes the following:

> Should anyone . . . deny this wonderful and unique changing of the whole substance of bread into the body and of the whole substance of wine into the blood, while the species of bread and wine nonetheless remain, which change the Catholic Church very suitably calls transubstantiation, let him be excommunicated.[77]

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[75] 7.11.295.

[76] McNees supports just such a reading, arguing that for Donne 'external visible change is specious; the change must come from within': McNees (1987) 103.

[77] *Concilii Tridentini Acta* 7.187; cited in Schillebeeckx 38. P. M. Oliver also notes Donne's

Donne's formula does not include the body or blood; the bread undergoes a change, but to what is not clear, perhaps Calvin's 'virtue'. But the metaphysical division of the bread into conceptual categories, whether substance and accident or outward form and essence, is remarkably parallel to the scholastic method adopted by the Council of Trent. Indeed, the substitution of 'species' for 'accident' while nevertheless maintaining 'substance', a feature of the Council's desire to shed Thomist and Aristotelian associations while retaining an essentially scholastic metaphysic, is paralleled by Donne's own disingenuous combining of 'outward form', 'internall form' and Aristotelian 'essence'. The vehemence with which Donne in the sermon attacks transubstantiation is countered by a Eucharistic formula remarkably similar in its *modus operandi.*

The sermons are filled with attacks on the Roman Catholic mass: papists 'mold [Christ] up in a wafer cake',[78] a 'sacramentall box';[79] they 'make millions of these bodies in the *Sacrament* ', dishonouring 'this body, whose honour is to sit in the same dimensions, and circumscriptions, at the right hand of God';[80] and in the Christmas sermon, theirs is 'a Pharisaicall Superstition', an 'Atheisme' that 'impute[s] contradictions to God'.[81] At one point Donne even refers to Aristotle as the 'Pope' of 'Philosophical Divinity in the Schoole'.[82] Elsewhere, however, he criticizes the Roman Church precisely for their condemnation of '*Aristotles Metaphysicks* ' as 'Heresie'.[83] The ambivalence over Aristotle even extends to the Roman church itself:

> They know the people doe commit Idolatry, in their manner of adoring the bread in the Sacrament, and they never preach against this error of the people, nor tell them wherein that Idolatry lies; It is true, that in their Bookes of Controversies, which the people could not understand, if they might read them, in those bookes they proceed upon safer grounds; There they say, that when a man adores the Sacrament, he must be sure, that he carry not his thoughts upon any thing that he sees, not only not upon Bread and Wine, (for, that they must not beleeve to be there, whatsoever they see or taste) but not upon those species and apparences of Bread and Wine, which they seem to see, but he must carry all his thoughts upon the person of Christ,

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simultaneous reluctance and certainty with respect to the manner of real presence in the sermon, but does not recognize the extent to which Donne's formula resembles the Roman: Oliver 244.

[78] 5.6.135.

[79] 7.4.139.

[80] 8.12.288-89.

[81] 7.11.289, 294.

[82] 7.4.131.

[83] 10.6.149.

who is there, though he see him not; for otherwise, say, they, if he should adore that which he sees, he should commit Idolatry.[84]

Eucharistic idolatry is more the province of the people than official Roman doctrine, even if the church leaders are in part responsible for the people's ignorance. This is a rather significant concession for one inclined to see the Roman church as an *'Italian Babylon* '.[85] When Donne in the Christmas sermon challenges the papists to go all the way and procure 'a trans-accidentation, that since the substance is changed, the accidents might have been changed too',[86] he may be simply berating them for their poor understanding of the philosopher. Donne's disdain for Aristotle as scholastic Pope might thus best be understood as reaction against the Roman church's erroneous appropriation and perversion of otherwise sound philosophy. But if in the Christmas sermon Donne had wanted to wrest Aristotle back from the papists in a manner akin to Wycliffe, he would have been less reluctant to use the terms 'substance' and 'accident' rather than 'outward' and 'internall' forms and, more significantly, would have denied the possibility of their separation. As we have seen, however, he does the opposite, sharing the Roman doctrine's physical separation: the stable, unchanging 'outward form' and the transforming 'internall form' or 'essence and nature of the bread' differ from Aristotle in both name and relationship, but avoid the doctrine of transubstantiation in name only.

That a single sermon accommodates both vehement anti-Roman sentiment and a sacramental formula strikingly similar to that of the supposed enemy may be explained as

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[84] 7.13.333.

[85] 10.6.153. This may suggest Donne's awareness that Aristotelian substance, according to Aquinas, is a pure potentiality which achieves actualization only through its corresponding accident: 'It offers no footing to any organ of sense or to the imagination, but only to the intelligence, whose object is the essence of things, as Aristotle says'. Thomas explicitly says that Christ is present not 'as in a place' but rather 'according to the special mode of the sacrament': *Summa Theologica* 3.76.7, cited in Chauvet 385. 'Substance' is thus not to be thought of as corporeal, but rather as purely intellectual and inaccessible to the senses: McDonnell 305. For a more detailed discussion of this point see Dugmore 23-9. It may be that Donne, like Wycliffe, saw that Aristotle would not have tolerated anything other than a conceptual distinction between substance and accident. It was on this basis Wycliffe rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, for if substance and accident are physically inseparable, it is impossible for one to change and not the other. The scholastic division was thus a violation of Aristotelian unity fashioned to explain the remaining of the species after the supposed *conversio* : Schillibeeckx 59.

[86] 7.11.295.

what one historian has recently identified as a tendency among late Jacobean and Caroline divines to buffer innovative or potentially controversial ideas with standard polemical caveats affirming the Church of England's confessional identity *vis-à-vis* the Roman church.[87] It may be the average lay person would not have recognized the subtleties of Donne's appropriation of a scholastic and specifically Tridentine sacramental formula; but the fact that such a formula is immediately preceded by a standard anti-papist litany suggests Donne's sensitivity to his auditory's theological sophistication, however limited.[88] But even couched in acceptable polemical guise, recourse to the formula suggests Donne's recognition of *via media* failure to develop a theory of Real Presence distinct from that of Rome yet adequately suited to the English church's increasingly sacramental orientation. Despite its attention to the significance of sacrifice, its denial of a purely signifying function for the elements, and its insistence on the Real Presence of the whole Christ, Calvinist sacramentalism for Donne may simply not go far enough in recognizing the incarnational aspect of the Eucharistic rite, the '*Deus corporeus* which scandalizes the world'.[89]

Calvin's reform brand of sacramental theology sought to repair the damage done by medieval scholastics enamoured of Aristotelian metaphysics. But in confining Eucharistic presence to an inward, psychologically discerned presence, Calvin may, for Donne, have inadequately accounted for the *deus corporeus* at the centre of Christian faith. Greater attention to the significance of the rite's outward manifestations, its ceremonial trappings and symbols, for many suggested a vulgar sensualism, for others (both for and opposed) a promotion of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the church, which conferred on the episcopate a considerably more prominent role in administering God's grace via sacraments. There is in Calvin, as we have seen, a significant sacrificial aspect to his sacramental theology, a fact easily neglected when an inordinate attention is paid his more radical proponents. But

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[87] A. Milton 541-4.
[88] *Ibid.*, 544.
[89] McDonnell 68.

Eucharistic sacrifice for him is exclusively a matter of contrition, and, though wedded to the corporate act as a communal participation in the Atonement, denies the seeming incongruity of crucified body and shed blood in the sacramental symbols. Donne does not escape this dilemma. He too is scandalized by the stumbling block that is the crucified Christ. But whereas for Calvin the species are the signs of an invisible virtue mysteriously infused and with which they never actually come in contact, for Donne in the 1626 Christmas sermon they are changed not only in use, but in their very essence.

It is perhaps an understatement to say that much of Donne's poetic output is obsessed with the relationship between spirit and matter, body and soul; it would be mistaken to suggest that the pious Dean has left this curious Jack behind. Calvin's Reform piety emphasizes heaven over earth, soul over body, transcendence over immanence, his Christology and the sacramental theology it so thoroughly influences celebrating the risen Christ at the expense of the incarnate Word made flesh. But while Donne's Eucharistic views are ostensibly those of his Genevan mentor, there remain in the sermons traces of a sacramental devotion decidedly less rarefied. Perhaps, 'given Donne's spiritual drift', the physicality of the sermons is 'truly remarkable'.[90] What is remarkable is the persistence of a modern critical sensibility surprised by a Renaissance spirituality that is anything but devoid of bodily concerns. It is mistaken to assume that early modern distinctions between body and soul, inner and outer, or even substance and accident were any less confusing or problematic than they are today: Donne's handling of sacraments indicates as much.

What we witness in his treatment of the Eucharist is a tension between theological and confessional loyalties, one perhaps exacerbated by Donne's unusual status as English priest of Roman Catholic heritage. Yet perhaps this is fitting. That such a prominent representative of the Church of England should be of papist stock may befit a state institution whose origin owes more to political expedience than particularly theological motives. Though the impact of continental reform on English theology, doctrine and

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[90] Carey 135.

ecclesiastical policy is undeniable, Henry Tudor's break from Rome is a pertinent reminder -- as indeed is the indulgences controversy immortalizing the Wittenburg door -- that Reformation issues have as much to do with authority and power as anything else. As a site of metaphysical tension between inner and outer expressions of Christian faith, sacramental doctrine is by and large concerned with establishing the loci and manner by which divine power is exercised, thus reflecting an issue which lies at the heart of English Reformation controversy, namely, the place of individual spiritual autonomy in the context of a state institution which assumes, ideally, an all-inclusive membership. To the extent the question of Real Presence is focussed on species, ceremony and priestly authority, the means of grace are aligned with episcopal control; conversely, a sacramental theology which identifies the psyche or soul of the communicant as the primary site of a purely spiritual incarnation suggests a diminished role for the institutional trappings with which that Presence is, nevertheless, connected.

That the church's authority and the all-inclusive scope of its membership -- facilitated and reinforced by public ceremonial worship -- met in predestinarian doctrine a potential threat, is apparent as early as Benjamin Carier's 1613 letter to James, where it is suggested that predestination renders the sacraments meaningless and thus serves to undermine episcopacy.[91] And of course, according to James' famous formula, any such threat encroached on the king's prerogative. To the extent predestination suggests an elect minority, the question of the *modus* of sacramental presence becomes a matter of some urgency: for while Calvin's doctrine theoretically denies the possibility of determining anyone's status with respect to election, the local presence of Christ among the species of the Eucharist suggests a non-discriminatory grace for all who willingly and worthily receive them. Richard Hooker sought to avoid the problem by reluctantly allowing that the godly 'should not abstain from the congregation'[92] even if it meant worshipping with the

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[91] Tyacke (1987) 5-6.

[92] Williams 110; cited in Collinson (1989) 31.

wicked; the non-elect were, for the sake of peace in the realm, equally subject to its combined secular-ecclesiastical authority. For enthusiastic proponents of a visibly discernible church, those not content as was Hooker to remain wheat among the tares, sacraments and ceremony in general implied a far too inclusive ministry, even if the twenty-ninth of the thirty-nine Elizabethan Articles allows that 'the wicked . . . do not eat the body of Christ'.[93]

As we have seen, Donne's sensualist regard for the Eucharist in the 1626 Christmas sermon is accompanied by anti-Roman diatribe. As such, it may be distinguished from his avant-garde contemporaries' much bolder sacramentalism, which advanced a 'negative popery' by failing to qualify sacerdotal emphasis with the usual anti-papist caveats.[94] Donne's apparent dismissal of predestination precludes the same sermon's 'negative Puritanism'; but it *is* accompanied by a slogan some may have recognized as puritan nonetheless. 'Man', says Donne,

> comes not into the world, nor he comes not to the Sacrament, as to a Lottery, where perchance he may draw Salvation, but it is ten to one he misses, but upon these few and easie conditions, Beleeve, and Love[95]

That same month, the Arminian John Cosin criticized those who 'preach us all Gospel and put no law among it, *bishops* and priests that will tell the people all is well if they can but say their catechism and here sermons [and] make them believe that there is nothing to be done more but to believe and so be saved.'[96] Believe and so be saved, indeed. Might his 'Beleeve, and Love' place Donne among those priests Cosin targets? Might it even be that Donne here responds to avant-garde conformist provocation, the notion that an evangelical, word- and psychology-centered piety threatens the disciplinary integrity of a sacramental and sacerdotal style of divinity? Though Cosin would have appreciated a

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[93] Hooker saw in the Eucharist an opportunity to avoid the problematic opposition of visible and invisible churches. By focussing on the real presence of the atoning sacrifice and salvific efficacy for all who received it, he promoted a Calvinist Christocentrism without worrying about the issue of election: Lake (1987) 42.

[94] A. Milton 63-72, 471-2.

[95] 7.11.283.

[96] Cited in Tyacke (1987) 124.

predestination/sacrament opposition, Donne's 'few and easie conditions' for approaching the Lord's table may for some have appeared too few and too easy.

Cosin was friend to Bishop Richard Neile and an associate of the latter's Durham House Circle, a group whose Arminian views had not prevented and perhaps had even advanced their rising political fortunes, evident in the fact that Cosin's remarks are part of a sermon delivered at the consecration of Francis White and attended by Buckingham's sister, the Countess of Denbigh. These divines would most certainly have sympathized with Donne's disparaging characterization of a predestinarian lottery, especially as it is associated with sacraments. But the slogan and puritan tone qualifying the dismissal would not have garnered the same level of support. It may even be that Donne does not so much attack predestination *per se* as anticipate the Arminian polemic which insisted on characterizing the doctrine as an extremely callous and arbitrary decree.[97] Given the sermon's overwhelming emphasis on private religious experience -- an emphasis which in this case, as we will see, appropriates Eucharistic topoi to sacramentalize psychological experience -- Donne may simply have anticipated and sought to avoid explicit puritan association. Moreover, conventional dismissal of predestinarian extremism does not prevent his promoting an introspective and scripturally-centred piety, any more than his

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[97] Calvin himself occasionally allows a 'soft' reading of his position: 'if anyone approaches us with such expressions as: "Why from the beginning did God predestine some to death who, since they did not yet exist, could not yet have deserved the judgment of death?" let us, in lieu of reply, ask them in turn, what they think God owes to man if He would judge him according to His own nature. As all of us are vitiated by sin, we can only be odious to God, and that not from tyrannical cruelty but by the fairest reckoning of justice. But if all whom the Lord predestines to death are by condition of nature subject to the judgment of death, of what injustice toward themselves may they complain?': *Institutes* 3.23.3.

Passages in Donne which seem to critical proponents of Anglican moderation evidence of anti-Calvinism are better seen as reflecting a certain heterogeneity both among Calvinists and in Calvin himself. Just as Calvin claims Augustinian authority for his formulation of predestination, so Donne cites Augustine in order to downplay a strict determinist position -- 'There is no predestination in God, but to good': 5.1.53; cf. 7.2.74. This, however, may just as well promote an infralapsarian position, one which locates election *after* the fall and holds that all are therefore justly doomed save those whom God redeems. Elsewhere, Donne finds it difficult to avoid the tension between human autonomy and Calvin's notion of an all-consuming, irresistible Will: 'God hath elected certaine men, whom he intends to create, that he may elect them; that is, that he may declare his Election upon them. God had thee, before he made thee; He loved thee first, and then created thee, that thou loving him, he might continue his love to thee . . . God hath not left out my selfe; He hath been my Helpe, but he hath left some thing for me to doe with him, and by his helpe': 7.1.63. Any hint of Pelagian tendency here is softened by the final qualification, 'with him, and by his helpe'; notice here also the suggestion of a *prelapsarian* decree.

attacks on the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation preclude a sensualist preoccupation with Real Presence. The admonition simply to 'Beleeve, and Love' may, then, for such as Cosin and Neile, have been suspect of too much gospel, not enough law.

Donne's attitude toward both predestination and the Durham House divines may appear less ambivalent in light of earlier events and their political circumstances. The 'peace' of Simeon's nativity epiphany, conferred on Donne's Christmas auditory via Holy Communion, echoes events of six months previous when a proclamation calling for 'the peace and quiet of the Church of England' was issued by the king in response to the intention of the Cambridge Commencement to maintain the thesis, 'No one disputes, save in error, against predestination.'[98] The king's proclamation, which included reaffirmation of the Elizabethan Articles as sole doctrinal authority,[99] prompted a largely Calvinist parliament to respond with a bill appropriating Charles' appeal for peace, but for an altogether different purpose. For 'the better continuing of peace and unity in the commonwealth' the June 14 document sought, to no avail, to expand the authority of the 1563 Articles (whose status regarding predestination is ambiguous) to include the Irish Articles of 1615, notorious for containing the unmistakably Calvinist Lambeth Articles of 1595.[100] The Commencement affair, royal proclamation and subsequent parliamentary unrest were in part occasioned by controversy over Richard Montagu's *Appello Caesarem* (1625) and its explicit endorsement of Arminian doctrine. In February the York House Conference under Bishop Neile had convened with a view to resolving the debate provoked by Montagu. (It was also at York House that Cosin and others corroborated the view expressed some years earlier by the recusant Benjamin Carier, to wit, that predestination necessarily abolishes sacraments).[101] That Charles had a year earlier intervened in parliament on Montagu's behalf provided support for Cosin's remarks at the close of the

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[98] Tyacke (1987) 48.
[99] *Ibid.*, 155.
[100] For Arminian opposition to the Lambeth Articles and Dort see Lake (1987) 62.
[101] Cosin *Works* II: 37.61-3; cited in A. Milton 544.

conference proceedings that the king 'swears his perpetual patronage of our cause.'[102] As prolocutor to the 1626 Convocation Donne would no doubt have been aware of these events, though Montagu's book, under the advice of Andrewes, was not discussed in the House because of the supposed Calvinist leanings of the bishops and clergy.[103]

Peace is rarely sought for its own sake. Donne's admonition in the Christmas sermon regarding the sacrament, to 'goe no farther, then according to his Word' and to 'depart in peace, without scruple in our owne, without offence to other mens consciences', may serve to cushion the impact of his very definite opinions on the matter: ecumenical tolerance, the admonition to refrain from 'peremptory prejudice upon other mens opinions', is, after all, accompanied by vociferous denunciation both of vulgar papists and those who would depart from 'the expresse Scriptures' by denying 'the body of Christ to be in the Sacrament'. Similarly, the royal decree in June had been prompted by Calvinist reaction against a feared rise in Arminian influence; parliament's rejoinder, in appropriating the language of Charles' order, indicates an ironic awareness that the call to peace was directed against those who would oppose that influence. Disappointment at the Durham House divines' new-found royal sympathy and their potential for influencing policy is evident in a sermon Donne preached one week after the June proclamation, where he offers comments which might be construed as an affront to the king's proclamation. Countering Bellarmine's appropriation of patristic authority in support of Baptism for the dead, Donne conveniently (and uncharacteristically) allows that the early fathers were sometimes mistaken. Included among patristic error is the affirmation, 'That the cause of God's election was the foresight of the faith and obedience of the Elect'.[104] It is difficult to

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[102] A. Milton 167.

[103] The same Convocation did, however, examine a sermon preached before the king by the Bishop of Gloucester, Godfrey Goodman; questionable passages reportedly contained too strong an emphasis on real presence in the sacraments. That the house 'came to no Decision' may suggest a relatively innocuous status for the passages: Bald 482. However, given the current controversy and Charles' demand for peace, it may just as well have suggested reluctance to establish a firm position on the matter and risk provoking further disquiet.

[104] 7.7.202.

imagine any but a strict predestinarian alternative to such 'error'; given very recent events, Donne may be acting as covert surrogate for the blatantly predestinarian designs of the Cambridge Commencement, the passage an explicit denial of a tenet central to the Arminian position on election, and Bellarmine but the decoy of a polemic aimed closer to home. Attempting to steer a characteristically middle course -- in effect, simultaneously to maintain and deny patristic authority -- Donne goes on to say that 'in the heat of disputation, and argument, and to make things straight' the fathers sometimes erred by countering one heresy with an equally heretical opposite. Even Augustine, in seeking to maintain human free-will without encroaching on divine sovereignty, was 'transported sometimes with vehemency against his present adversary, whether Pelagian, or Manichean.'[105] Aware of Augustine's shifting theological itinerary, Donne is concerned that extremes ultimately yield to a substantial middle, however elusive.

But this nostalgia for balance begins to take on a more contemporary tone when Donne goes on to say that the 'heat of disputation' afflicting Augustine and the other fathers

> is a disease that even some great Councels in the Church, and Church-affaires have felt, that for collaterall and occasionall, and personal respects, which were risen after they were met, *the maine doctrinall points, and such as have principally concerned the glory of God, and the salvation of soules*, and were indeed the principall and onely cause of their then meeting there, *have been neglected.* [106]

For the 1620's English Church the most recent of 'great Councels', concerned precisely with the doctrinal mare's nest of soteriological efficacy and election ('the glory of God and the salvation of soules'), was the 1618 Synod of Dort.[107] Donne's charge that such 'main doctrinall points . . . have been neglected' has particular resonance in light of both Dort and more recent events. The doctrinally Calvinist outcome of Dort was denied authority by Richard Montagu in his 1625 *Appello Caesarem* on the basis that it had never been officially enshrined by the English Church, even if the anti-Arminian English delegation to

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[105] 7.7.203.

[106] 7.7.203; my emphasis.

[107] The heading for the second chapter of the proceedings is 'Christs death and the redemption of men by it': *Judgement of the Synode* E1v. That Dort is of immediately recent memory for Donne is suggested a few lines previous where he refers to the much earlier 'Councel of Trent' as having taken place 'the other day': 7.7.202.

the 1618 synod was supported by James and Archbishop Robert Abbot.[108] Montagu's supporters at York House in February 1626, holding that Dort in effect denied the universal efficacy of the Atonement, opposed a Calvinist presence which called for an enshrining of the Dort findings as authoritative.[109] Charles' proclamation in June, favouring Neile and his Durham House associates, effectively sealed the fate of Dort's authority, the baldly predestinarian bias of the Cambridge commencement having played a card too provocative to ignore. That overzealousness was a chief cause in the failure of those wanting for Dort a more explicit political and ecclesiastical authority may inform Donne's disappointment at the 'neglect' of 'some great Councels in the Church':

> Men that came thither with a fervent zeale to the glory of God, have taken in a new fire of displeasure against particular Heretiques, or Schismatiques, and discontinued their holy zeale towards God, till their occasionall displeasure towards those persons might be satisfied, and so those Heresies, and Heretiques against whom they met, have got advantage by that passion, which hath overtaken and overswayed them, after they were met.[110]

I have been suggesting Dort as the principal 'councel' Donne has in mind. But given the failed Calvinist efforts at York House and the sermon's immediate proximity *vis-à-vis* the events of June, the more recent conference is just as likely a target. Indeed, the plural 'Councels' allows both possibilities, just as it facilitates a generic and politically innocuous reading of the passage as referring to no council in particular. This latter reading Donne is at some pains to encourage when, after further admonishing the zealous not to let God's 'Lieutenant and Vicegerent [be] wearied, and hardened towards us', he recognizes for his earlier comments a too specific political currency:

> God forbid that my praying that things may not be so, should be interpreted for a suspicion in me, that things are so; God forbid, that invocation upon God, should imply a crimination upon men; The Spirit of God, in sense of whom, and in whose presence I speake, knowes that my prayer is but a prayer, and not an Increpation, not an Insimulation[111]

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[108] Tyacke (1987) 47. On Donne's support for Dutch orthodox censure of Remonstrant rebellion, public endorsement of Dort policies, and general discussion of his ties with Reform luminaries see Sellin (1988) 124-5, 109-134.

[109] Tyacke (1987) 176-77.

[110] 7.7.203-4.

[111] 7.7.204.

If it is true, as Walton claims, that Donne preached from notes and only afterward wrote the sermons in full, here he appears to have left intact the window on a mind at work -- to pervert Morris Croll's well-known formulation, an actual polemic in progress[112] -- one perhaps not unlike that of the speaker in 'Elegy 14' who, disturbed at the citizen's fondness for 'my Lord of Essex dayes', 'sweats for fear of treason'. If Donne was later to become more explicitly supportive of what may be called Arminian ideas,[113] here he (cautiously) voices both resistance to a central tenet of such beliefs and regret that very recent events appear to favour those who hold them.[114]

It is not always apparent with whom Donne takes issue. If he is critical of over-zealous Calvinists, it is because such eagerness is advantageous to their opponents, not necessarily because their cause is erroneous. Another veiled critique of Arminian ideas is apparent in a sermon preached that same year on Whitsunday. Here Donne again is disdainful of unnecessary controversy, critical that 'Curious men are not content to know, That our debt is paid by Christ, but they will know farther, whether Christ have paid it with his owne hands, or given us money to pay it our selves . . . whether his active obedience in fulfilling the Law, or his passive obedience in shedding his blood.'[115] 'Curious men', it is important to note, are not those who would know the contents of God's register (though Donne has little patience for them as well); rather, they are those who will not rest content that the debt of human sin is paid in full by Christ, and would entertain the possibility that

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[112] The phrase is 'an actual meditation in progress': Croll 1074.

[113] Tyacke notes that by 1629 Donne was bold enough to attack, in a Paul's Cross sermon no less, those who are 'loth that Christ should spread his armes or shed his blood in such a compasse as might fall upon all': 9.4.119; cited in Tyacke (1987) 182. He neglects to observe, however, that by the end of the paragraph Donne resorts to the safety of the *via media* -- 'And these are one sect . . . that think there are men, whom *Christ cannot* save, And the other is of men that think they *can* save other men.' These latter, Donne goes on to say, are those who seek through '*sanctification*, and *holinesse of life* . . . to make God more beholden to them': 9.4.120. Notice also that Donne condemns not those who say Christ *does not* save, but those who say he *cannot*, and is thus perhaps less dismissive of predestination *per se* than of a polemically motivated and false characterization of the doctrine as threatening divine sovereignty, 'the glory of God'.

[114] It is notable that in an earlier sermon (4.7.178 and *passim*) Donne had defended James' 1622 *Directions to Preachers*, a royal admonition sharing with that of 1626 the concern that pulpits refrain from addressing predestinarian controversy: Tanner 81-2; cited in Oliver 253.

[115] 7.9.227.

we might in part 'pay it our selves'. Fearing disorder, Donne would that such curiosity yield to the order established at pulpit and altar:

> The holy Ghost works best upon them, which search least into Gods secret judgments and proceedings. But the order and judgment we speak of, is an order, a judgment-seate established, by which, every man . . . in the application of the promises of the Gospel by the Ordinance of preaching, and in the seales thereof in the participation of the Sacraments, be assured, that he hath received his Absolution[116]

A Cosin or a Neale might have been appreciative of this balanced combining of gospel and law, both internal application and visible ordinance. But a closer look at just who Donne means by 'curious men' suggests the excessively introspective are other than those Cambridge Calvinists silenced by Charles in June. Donne fashions a 'chain' of justification consisting of four links, at the top of which is God's purpose or 'efficient justification', followed by Christ's Atonement, faith therein, and finally works or 'declaratory justification'. He begins by neutrally criticizing those who would isolate any one of these: 'Neither of these can be said to justifie us alone, so, as that we may take the chaine in pieces, and thinke to be justified by any one link thereof; by God without Christ, by Christ without faith, or by faith without works'. But Donne is thinking of a very definite hierarchy:

> Consider we then ourselves, as men fallen downe into a darke and deepe pit; and justification as a chaine, consisting of these foure links, to be let downe to us, and let us take hold of that linke that is next us, A good life, and keepe a fast and inseparable hold upon that . . . God comes downeward to us; but we must go upward to God; not to get above him in his unrevealed Decrees, but to go up towards him, in laying hold upon that lowest linke[117]

'Declaratory' works, the external signs of faith which include conformity to the discipline and ceremonies of the church, are subordinate to faith, and all to God's 'gracious purpose'. The 'disorderly', it is implied, are those who would violate the hierarchy by using what is properly the lowest link in the chain -- works or 'A good life' -- to 'get above [God] in his unrevealed Decrees'. Any doubt as to who Donne might have in mind is dispelled by an allegory describing the rebel angels as those who

> come to their appointed perfection by themselves, to subsist of themselves, and to be independent, without any farther need of God, for that was their desire, *To be like the most High*, To depend upon nothing, but

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[116] 7.9.231.
[117] 7.9.228-29.

be all-sufficient to themselves. So they disordered Gods purpose; and they had once broke that chaine, when they had once put that harmony out of tune, then came in disorder, discord, and confusion, and that is sin.[118]

It would appear that those 'curious men' who attempt to get above God's hidden decrees are not predestinarian Calvinists, but rather those who place too great an emphasis on the role of works in justification -- those fond of, to reverse Cosin's disparaging formulation, too much Law, not enough Gospel. If Donne is careful to avoid explicit doctrinal controversy, he is less reluctant (if still careful) to identify those he thinks the chief controversialists.

If Donne recognized among certain of his conformist contemporaries a tendency to advance sacraments *at the expense of* an unadorned, evangelical piety -- and if, as might then be expected, he was critical of their contempt for the predestinarian aspects of Reform doctrine -- what, then, is his view of the nature of the relationship between psychological and ceremonial aspects of the Eucharist?

In the 1626 Christmas sermon the relationship between inward and outward, between private and ceremonial pieties, is characterized by a combination of temporal compression, typological layering, and, above all, an identification of word and sacrament. Donne directs his auditory toward their own epiphany, an encounter with the divine in which past and future, along with individual identity, are subsumed by a universal and sacramental present. The encounter may be understood conceptually as two interdependent axes: the horizontal flow of history comprising and comprised of the lives of Donne's auditory, and the vertical moment of communion with God in the sacrament. Directed toward that ritual epiphany is an examination of Simeon's qualifications and the effects of his encounter, which serve in turn as a measure against which each communicant is to examine his or her own spiritual status. Described as an act of writing, a reinscribing of scripturally valorized 'characters' on the collective church body, this examination follows

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[118] 7.9.230-31.

the rhetorical procedure outlined in the *divisio*, explicitly said to resemble the breaking, ingesting and assimilating of the sacramental gifts:

> The end of all digestions, and concoctions is assimilation, that that meate may become our body. The end of all consideration of all the actions of such leading and exemplar men, as *Simeon* was, is assimilation too; That we may be like that man. Therefore we shall make it a first part . . . [etc][119]

By drawing an analogy between sermon and Eucharist, both of which are to be received and applied by his auditory, Donne sacramentalizes the word and renders the sacrament a repository of homiletic exhortation. Receiving the material elements, it remains only that Donne's auditory ingest and assimilate moral actions and 'characters' of the exemplar Simeon.[120]

Having delineated in detail Simeon's godly qualities and characteristics, Donne turns to his spiritual benefactors:

> We cannot pursue this Anatomy of good old Simeon, this Just, and Devout Priest, so farre, as to shew you all his parts, and the use of them all, in particular. His example, and the characters that are upon him, are our Alphabet. I shall only have time to name the rest of those characters; you must spell them, and put them into their syllables; you must forme them, and put them into their syntaxis, and sentences; that is, you must pursue the imitation, that when I have told you what he was, you may present your selves to God, such as he was.[121]

This 'spelling' of Simeon as a personal imitation of his 'characters' is to be accompanied by a manifestation of the Holy Ghost as 'the spirit of Prophesie':

> Thou art a Prophet upon thy selfe, when thou commest to the Communion; Thou art able to foretell, and to pronounce upon thy selfe, what thou shalt be forever; Vpon thy disposition then, thou maiest conclude thine eternall state; then thou knowest which part of St. Pauls distribution falls upon thee; whether that tribulation and anguish upon every soule of man, that doth evill; Or that, But glory, and honour, and peace to every man, that worketh good. Thou art this Prophet; silence not this Prophet; doe not chide thy conscience for chiding thee; stone not this Prophet; doe not petrifie, and harden thy conscience against these holy suggestions.[122]

Holy Communion thus becomes an event like none other insofar as it is that around which all other events hover, a frozen moment against which is measured the recipient's proximity to a grace freely offered. The Eucharist is a fulcrum upon which turn the past and future

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[119] 7.11.280-81.

[120] Early in the sermon Donne speaks of the rite in the past tense -- 'this manifestation of Christ which you have had in the most blessed Sacrament this day, as you were prepared before by that which was said before': 7.11.280.

[121] 7.11.289.

[122] 7.11.289-90.

events of each individual life, which, from this vantage point, is viewed as a narrative that variously either conforms to or departs from the ideal embodied by our friend Simeon. It is at this point that one decides 'what thou shalt be for ever'. But the introspective communicant who does the examining, the 'conscience' that 'chides', is itself to be comprised of the 'example' of Simeon, the 'characters that are upon him' --- 'our Alphabet.' Though strictly speaking, Calvinist predestination does not allow speculation as to one's elect or reprobate status, it is hard to imagine those who believe it refraining from doing just that, and it is his auditory's concern for their eternal destiny which Donne appears to play on here: sacramental participation is intimately associated with the question of whether one's life as a whole, as a complete story made up of characters, syllables, words, and sentences, does in fact bear the status of election. Donne, as we have seen, opposes a doctrine of predestination to reprobation, the strictly arbitrary and terrible decree which would make of the sacrament a mere lottery. But his exhortation here appears to exploit the anxiety attendant upon consideration of God's foreknowledge and 'St. Pauls distribution', the outcome of an obscure but, from God's perspective, already written text. Good works are less the effort to obtain divine favour than they are the evidence that favour has indeed been granted, the signs by which one can know his election is sure. Receiving the sacrament, then, is not a simple matter of obedience and ceremonial conformity in exchange for the benefits of grace; it is an opportunity to reflect 'Vpon thy disposition' and 'conclude thine eternall state'. Donne may here identify with those who advocate the Atonement as the very source of good works, who hold that Christ has 'given us money to pay [our debt] our selves';[123] but the question of whether and to whom he has given remains a key factor in determining one's 'disposition' at the Lord's Supper. The prophet conjured at Communion to 'chide' is called upon to rewrite Simeon's characters on the parchment of a contrite, penitent soul; but it would appear that he is less co-author than copyist of an already written text.

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[123] 7.9.227.

As Donne and his auditory are identified with this early recipient of salvation, so is Simeon but one of a myriad of related Biblical types:

> Simeon had informed himself, out of Daniel, and the other Prophets, that the time of Messias coming was neare: As Daniel had informed himselfe out of Ieremy, and the other Prophets, that the time of the Deliverance from Babylon, was neare: Both waited patiently, and yet both prayed for the accelerating of that, which they waited for; Daniel for the Deliverance, Simeon for the Epiphany.[124]

By placing the communicant in proximity to a scriptural character who in turn is prefigured by others, Donne exploits a popular method of biblical interpretation.[125] Typology for Donne, as for others, is not confined to scripture as its fit object. Rather, it expands from exemplary Biblical models to include the seventeenth-century Christian within whom 'God's vast typological patterns' operate.[126] The Alphabet which constitutes Simeon's exemplary status, drawn from both scripture and the Church Fathers, is to be again spelled out in the life of each individual. Simeon's age, priesthood, righteousness, devotion and patience have their own scriptural correspondents, their own series of types; and all come to bear on the present repository of these reconstructed 'characters': each celebrant present this day at St. Paul's.[127]

There is also a sacrificial aspect to this conflation of types. Christ's parents offered him at the temple as 'the little body of a sucking childe', which 'in the Sacrament' is 'not sucking, but bleeding'; so Simeon is reputed to have made a customary offering, a pair

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[124] 7.11.290.

[125] Typology assumes that all of canonical scripture is unified by its internal relationships, that the Old Testament is comprised largely of 'prophetical adumbrations' of the New: Stanwood and Ross 179. As Donne says in an earlier sermon, 'the Old Testament is but a preparation and a pedagogie to the New': 1.8.291. Thus animal sacrifice anticipates its ultimate fulfillment in that of Christ and the flood purging global evil corresponds to the personal 'putting off of the old man' through baptism. Such stock examples reinforced the fact that typology is itself a scriptural practice, and thus warrants a certain amount of interpretive license. Numerous seventeenth century English publications bear in their titles a typological proclivity: John Abbott's *Jesus Prefigured: Or a Poem of the Holy Name of Jesus* (1623), Thomas Taylor's *Christ Revealed: Or the Old Testament Explained* (1635), and William Guild's *Moses Unveiled: Or those figures which served unto the Pattern and shadow of Heavenly Things pointing out the Messiah, Christ Jesus briefly explained* (1620) are but a few: cited in Galdon 71-2.

[126] Lewalski (1987) 82.

[127] Winfried Schleiner draws attention to Augustine's use of the term 'character' when speaking of sacramental 'seals', though neglects to mention its relevance for the 1626 Christmas sermon: Schleiner 105. Donne's pun on 'character' extends beyond the double meaning of moral quality and grapheme to include a sacramental sense inasmuch as it is these characters that are 'that meate' to be digested, concocted and assimilated by his auditory: see above, 131.

each of turtles and pigeons, and so are Donne's auditory responsible for a similar sacrifice. Turtle and pigeon represent, respectively, 'solitary and contemplative' and 'active, and sociable' lives, both affirmed as 'indifferent' -- that is, good and acceptable insofar as offered to God.[128] Simeon's private devotion and ceremonial piety are intimately related, thus comprising for Donne's auditory an ideal model of behaviour and attitude. The motion from temple presentation of the Christ child, to Simeon's sacrificial offering, to the supreme sacrifice of the Atonement, 'not sucking, but bleeding', is extended finally to the sacrifice of the corporate body at the sacrament of Holy Communion:

> And so having thus far made this profit of these circumstances in the action it selfe, appliable to us as receivers of the Sacrament, that as the childe Jesus was first presented to God in the Temple, so for your children, (the children of your bodies, and the children of your mindes, and the children of your hands, all your actions, and intentions) that you direct them first upon God[129]

These temporal offspring are analogous to both the sucking child of Simeon's Christmas epiphany and to the bleeding sacrifice of the Atonement; and all are gathered together 'in the action it selfe' at the sacrament, an observation rendered more poignant by Donne's reference to Simeon's characters as '*Elements* in the making up of this man'.[130] Those elements include not only the present disposition of the participant and the 'characters' derived from exemplary models in the past, but also future attitude and actions. As members of a priesthood of all believers, Donne's auditory are cautioned to be mindful of their priestly status; to come to Communion 'is to take Orders' and 'no man that hath taken Orders, can deprive himselfe, or devest his Orders, when he will. Thou art bound to continue in the same holinesse after, in which thou presentest thy selfe at that Table.'[131] Present spiritual disposition both dictates and depends on that of the future: 'the life that thou leadest all the yeare, will shew mee, with what minde thou camest to the Sacrament, to day'. The assimilation of Simeon's character on the part of the communicant includes a commitment to the responsibilities of priesthood. And just as the official priest is to live in a

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[128] 7.11.282-83.
[129] 7.11.283.
[130] 7.11.290; my emphasis.
[131] 7.11.287.

'continuall Epiphany', so is the individual believer bound through the Communion ceremony to imbue all of his/her remaining earthly moments with the same concentrated intensity exercised during that pivotal occasion. The vertical relationship of the communicant with the divine at the Eucharist is to inform all the lived plane of temporal existence, for the Priest/believer 'should never looke off from God'.[132] As Donne advises elsewhere, 'Wish every day a Sunday, and every meale a Sacrament, and every discourse a Homily'.[133] The Eucharist thus takes on an apocalyptic dimension, its temporal, ritual status gesturing beyond the present moment toward the whole life of each participant and his place in God's scheme -- in short, one's 'eternall state' or 'what thou shalt be forever'.

Donne's use of temporal condensation and typology complements a figurative identification of homily and sacrament. His auditory are encouraged to contextualize their religious duty and obligations as part of a vast design by which God orders his universe, just as local participation in the Eucharist places each communicant within immediate proximity of a dramatic, spiritual reality for which the trappings and gestures of ritual constitute but an episode in its continual reenactment. Spiritual reflection aided by homiletic exhortation is the psychological counterpart of an external rite, brought into relief through the suggestion that Simeon's 'characters' are 'meate' and 'elements' to be ingested by his auditory. It is such rhetorical sophistication that renders Donne's caution about hearing the sermon of the sermon rather than merely the rhetoric or logic of the sermon seem somewhat disingenuous. Doubt as to the extent rhetoric can be extricated from the truths it conveys is not unlike Donne's varying opinion as to the extent and manner by which the Eucharistic species participate in the gifts they represent. In both cases, it is a question of the degree to which the comprehension of spiritual realities is dependent upon external mediation, whether bread, wine or word.

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[132] 7.11.286.
[133] 5.18.373.

Sacrament and homily have in common the problem of communicating spiritual realities even while constituting, in their very mediatory status, a reminder of just how distant or ineffable those realities ultimately are. Debora Shuger identifies a tension in Renaissance thought, stemming from Aristotle, between *magnitudo* and *præsentia*, terms roughly corresponding to Donne's 'sermon of the sermon' and 'Logick' or 'Retorick' of the sermon. The sermon's essence, the sermon of the sermon, is humanly inaccessible, of course, apart from the logic and rhetoric which comprise its intelligibility; but this does not preclude its ontologically pre-verbal being. According to Aristotle, there is a gap between that which is intrinsically knowable, and that which is knowable by the finite human intellect; in other words, what humans know is only a partial apprehension of what is -- reality in its fullest sense -- access to which, presumably, is enjoyed only by the mind of God. Renaissance continental rhetorics advocate the role of rhetorical affectivity in addressing the gap between *magnitudo* and *praesentia* and thus moving the emotions to the love of God.[134] They promote an Augustinian psychology in which affectivity, far from irrational, is seen as a central element of the properly religious mind.[135] At the same time, however, Renaissance psychological theory maintained a hierarchy which, while affirming the ontological priority of images in cognition, nevertheless cast suspicion on their power. Ideally, reason processes and censors the image before granting access to other psychological faculties, but occasionally fails to intercept it, thus allowing for the danger of an unmediated image-idea reaching the appetitive faculty and moving the will to irrational action. But 'whether or not they believed in certain innate principles or moral axioms, those who wrote about the soul in the Renaissance accepted the Aristotelian postulates that all substantive knowledge derives from sense experience and that the mind cannot think without images of sensation.'[136] Francis Bacon, for example, allowed sensory experience a primary role in cognition: 'Sense sendeth over to Imagination before

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[134] Shuger (1988) 199.
[135] *Ibid.*, 46.
[136] *Ibid.*, 209.

Reason hath judged: and Reason sendeth over to Imagination before the Decree can be acted; for Imagination ever precedeth Voluntary Motion'.[137]

Whereas in the Christmas sermon Donne is careful to distinguish between the rhetoric of the sermon and the sermon of the sermon, elsewhere he acknowledges the *ars prædicandi*, along with sacraments, as effective means of marrying *magnitudo* and *præsentia*:: rhetoric is that which makes 'absent and remote things present to your understanding', while sacraments bring Christ 'nearer . . . in visible and sensible things.'[138] The parallel suggests that the rhetorical dress of homily, with its images, figures and conceits, corresponds to the material aspects of sacraments. Donne's fondness for antithesis, typological acrobatics and temporal compression with respect to Holy Communion celebrates the Aristotelian tension in all its complexity. Though both Simeon and Christ are otherwise absent, the former is in effect reconstituted by the faithful as they inscribe within themselves his 'characters' as 'syntaxis and sentences', while the latter is present via the sacrament accompanying the word. Both processes involve a kind of ingestion, 'that that meate', both Christ's body and Simeon's exemplary characters, 'may become our body'; that which is absent and remote is brought near, rendered visible and sensible by word and sacrament.[139] Though Donne might have hesitated to identify his auditory's assimilation of homiletic instruction and exempla as a sacramental process, the relative 'literal' or 'figurative' extent of the conceit is far from clear when it is considered that the vehicle, the Eucharist itself, apart from its metaphorical role here, inspired not a little confusion as to its own figurative/literal status. Just as it is more important to accept than fully comprehend the mystery of sacramental presence, or to understand the exact nature of the relationship between symbol and content, so is Donne's auditory expected to receive and assimilate Simeon's exemplary godliness *as if* they were elements to be

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[137] *The Advancement of Learning* 2.12.1; cited in Shuger (1988) 206.

[138] 5.6.144; cited in Shuger (1988) 198.

[139] An early proponent of a sacramental model for the sermons, Joan Webber recognizes style and subject matter as integral with Donne's beliefs: Webber (1963) 69. If perhaps too quick to assert his victory in the 'war with abstractions', she at least recognizes that the 'truce is not an easy one': Webber 84, 76.

ingested. While it is perhaps finally impossible for us to know the psychological effect of Donne's conceit, neither can we assume its purely figurative status, for if rhetoric involves a reconciliation of *magnitudo* and *præsentia*, then the rhetoric of the sermon is never 'merely' the rhetoric of the sermon, but rather is instrumental in bringing remote things near, a means of grace not unlike the word's sacramental coadjutor.

Homily and rhetorical procedure are Eucharistic: 'The end of all digestions, and concoctions is assimilation, that that meate may become our body. The end of all consideration of all the actions of such leading and exemplar men, as Simeon was, is assimilation too; That we may be like that man.' Structural division, the rhetorical organization whereby the relationship of scriptural text to sermon is established and anticipated, is imbued with sacramental significance. Analogous to the breaking of the consecrated bread and, by extension, to the sacrificial breaking of the Christ body, the sermon has become a means of grace, a necessary step in the redemptive scheme. Division, reassimilation, and their subsequent effect -- the ability to, like Simeon, 'depart in peace' -- are aspects of both sermon and sacrament, each of which, in its own way, manifests the Word become flesh.

For Donne, it is a thin line which separates ritual and homiletic art; like ritual, art facilitates greater comprehension of the ineffable truths theology can only dryly assert. The danger, however, as Donne well knew, is that the 'Logick' and 'Retorick' of the sermon may somehow contaminate, render less pure the eternal verities that are the 'sermon of the sermon'. The same anxiety informs Calvinist Christology, which is reluctant to compromise God's radical transcendence,[140] and Donne's diatribes against Roman Catholic transubstantiation, the local manifestation of Christ's body and blood. By focussing his auditory's lives -- past, present and future -- on the sacramental moment; by allowing a typological fluidity whereby communicant, Simeon, and Christ, sacrament, epiphany and Atonement, are the interpenetrating objects of metaphysical wit; by drawing

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[140] See Introduction 26 ff.

attention to the locally historicized, bodily and sacramental dimensions of the word; through all these means Donne promotes a vivid apprehension of the truths he imparts, so that hearing the word might approximate Simeon's experience of the Word -- 'actually, and really, substantially, essentially, bodily, presentially, personally'.[141]

The gathering together of Simeon's 'characters', 'our alphabet'; their assimilation and spelling by Donne's auditory into 'Syntaxis, and sentences'; the application of these characters to the personal history of the communicant contracted in the sacramental moment; all this accompanies reception of the Eucharist elements and an encounter with God. Elsewhere, Donne points out that Saul's conversion experience on the road to Damascus was not 'in a *Vidit*, but an *Audivit*. It is not that he *saw*, but that he *heard unspeakable things*.' That last phrase speaks volumes indeed about Donne's appreciation of a word-centred ministry that is nevertheless somehow insufficient. In the 1626 Christmas sermon, the proximity of word to sacrament suggests the need for a more palpable encounter:

> All that we consider in Simeon, and apply from Simeon, to a worthy receiver of the Sacrament, is how he was fitted to depart in peace. All those peeces, which we have named, conduce to that: but all those are collected into that one, which remains yet, *Viderunt Oculi*, that his eyes had seene that salvation; for that was the accomplishment and fulfilling of God's Word.[142]

Donne's respect for sacraments and other external marks of religious authority are combined with a self-scrutinizing, inward-looking Reform piety. By invoking the Eucharist as a metaphor for homily, Donne sacramentalizes the word and thus reifies the effects of pulpit oratory. But this is far from being just another Foucauldian *régime* penetrating the frontiers of private consciousness. For by exploiting the Eucharist's potential for self-reflection, by encouraging speculation as to 'what thou shalt be forever', by bringing that nebulous realm of spiritual reflection within such close proximity of the institutional signs that are its communal symbols and occasion, Donne inadvertently promotes the introspective curiosity he is sometimes eager to discourage. Public ceremony and ritual may

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[141] 7.11.280.
[142] 7.11.293.

extend, through word and pulpit, beyond the altar to define and regulate individual conscience; but there is little to prevent a bridge thus established from allowing private religious experience and spiritual reflection to subsume the authority of sacraments as means of grace. This is precisely why, as Carier's letter to James recognized, the doctrine of predestination threatened the integrity of sacraments and the all-inclusive membership of the Church of England they promote. It also explains Donne's handling of these issues; for while recognizing and supporting the need for ceremonial law and order, he knew that such signs are only tentatively involved with 'Gods unrevealed decrees'.[143] Divine grace may, finally, be inscrutable; but access is at least as much a private matter as it is a question of ecclesiastical discipline and conformity.

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[143] 7.9.228-29.

Chapter Three
Outside/In

Sacraments play an ambiguous role in the drama of personal salvation. If their efficacy depends less on individual subjective disposition than on divine prerogative, the communicant is nevertheless obligated to approach the Lord's Supper not only with due reverence but also sufficient penitence. But what constitutes sufficiency? A Calvinism sensitive to the implications of predestinarian doctrine is likely to stress St. Paul's call to self-examination not merely as prerequisite for receiving the sacrament but rather as an effort to find the marks or signs of election within, in this case an authentic contrition and comprehension of the extent of personal depravity. Hence exhortation in the Christmas sermon to 'pronounce upon thy selfe, what thou shalt be forever; Vpon thy disposition then, thou maiest conclude thine eternall state',[1] where Donne's assumption of his auditors' free will is paradoxically combined with implicit allusion to God's 'eternall' register. The Calvinist communicant thus not only repents; unlike the Roman Catholic at auricular confession, he goes beyond acknowledging sin to indulge an inquiry into the authenticity of his penitence, which, technically, depends less on his own efforts than on whether or not grace is in fact operative. Greater emphasis on the external and communal aspects of sacraments, though never exclusive of penitential obligation, nevertheless tends to extricate God's grace from the subjective anxieties of religious introspection.

Sacramental topoi and allusion in his religious verse[2] are integral to Donne's exploration of the relationship between inward spiritual deliberation and the external means of grace. A tension informing these spheres of religious experience turns on the inadequacy of either one or the other to secure or invoke God's presence. While the material aspects of ceremony and attention to Real Presence in the Eucharist advance the radical claim of

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[1] 7.11.289-90; cf. Chapter Two 132.

[2] References are to C. A. Patrides' *Complete English Poems* : Donne (1989). As with the chapter on Herbert, I am interested more in thematic continuities among Donne's many poems than what their published order or compositional chronology may suggest. The only exception to this is a general concern to question the traditional division of Donne's corpus into secular and divine periods or modes.

Christian Incarnation, they do not readily obviate the need to internalize spiritually the grace they putatively offer. A word-centred, psychologically oriented piety, on the other hand, in celebrating a spiritual experience which transcends the constraints of confessional and doctrinal identity or ceremonial obligation, tends to mute the historical, corporate and somatic exigencies of human being. This private sphere is also susceptible of predestinarian anxiety precisely because the question of election is a question of belonging, of identity: such election can never be sure because the invisible church to which the subject aspires theoretically jettisons any and all earthly connection. A sensualist view of sacraments objectifies Presence and locates the drama of personal salvation in a broader mythical context, reinforced by the ceremonies and rituals of a tangible institutional identity, the church or corporate body of Christ. A pietist view locates Presence within each individual and depends on the contents of God's hidden decrees for final verification: it is subjective disposition which, in practice if not in theory, determines the presence or absence of grace.

Insofar as Donne's divine lyrics are a public, performative manifestation of religious interiority, their function is analogous to that of sacraments: just as the Eucharistic elements are invested with a Presence which transcends the material bounds they impose, so these poems are highly stylized ritual enactments of rarefied spiritual processes. They are the outward signs of an internal faith, their performative status no more a threat to the authenticity of religious experience than the artifice of sacrament and ceremony is to the spiritual truths it embodies. Indeed, as sacraments ritually reinforce a grace not finally determined by subjective disposition, so Donne's devotional poems might be seen as an attempt to escape the isolation of an internal piety even as they articulate it. The Incarnation's Word-become-flesh characterizes the sacramental liminality connecting psyche and ceremony, spiritual and poetic experience.

The Renaissance English sonnet, with its combination of intense lyrical introspection and dialogue with an ostensibly absent interlocutor, is an ideal poetic medium

for exploring a Calvinist interiority.[3] Eucharistic allusion in 'La Corona' and 'Holy Sonnets' serves to punctuate the manic depressive turns of a lover/communicant who variously embraces and resists a radically transcendent deity.[4] As with 'Songs and Sonets', the issue here is one of control. Whereas Donne's profane and usually absent mistresses are rarely, if ever, allowed the upper hand, absence here is God's tactical advantage, the penitent's submissive anguish occasioned and governed by the lack of divine response.

The fifth sonnet in the 'La Corona' series indicates the mutual relevance of devotional concerns, predestination and sacramental doctrine. Whereas the closing line of the fourth 'La Corona' sonnet, 'Temple', refers to the advent of the young Jesus' earthly ministry, its meaning in 'Crucifying' is expanded to accommodate that poem's Calvinist orientation. 'By miracles exceeding power of man' describes Christ's earthly ministry; but varied reaction to these same miracles is indicative of God's sovereignty which 'faith in some, envie in some begat' (1-2). It is impossible to see the poem as merely recalling events in Judea or to ignore its controversial potential when it is recognized that God himself is said to be the cause of people's response to Jesus' deeds. The 'worst' who are also 'most', the reprobate multitude, are held responsible not only for Christ's death but for daring to usurp divine prerogative by prescribing 'a Fate' to 'the immaculate/ Whose

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[3] For Calvinist critiques of 'Holy Sonnets' see Halewood (1970) 80-5 and Lewalski (1979) 264-82. More recently, Paul Sellin cites Dortrecht Calvinism to support his division of the 'Holy Sonnets' into 'poems of Assurance' and 'poems of Angst': Sellin (1996) 163-4. Daniel Doerksen recognizes the pietistic, evangelical strain of Donne's and Herbert's Calvinism, but his distaste for Laudian sacerdotalism results in a Reform apologetic and not a little equivocating around the apparently embarrassing issue of predestination. As might be expected, little attention is paid the poets' handling of sacraments, though Doerksen does give a nod of approval to the combined pastoral ministry of sacrament and word: Doerksen (1997) 97 and *passim*. P. M. Oliver notes Halewood's anticipation of Lewalski and criticizes the proponents of Protestant poetics for failing to recognize in the 'Holy Sonnets' Donne's *dissatisfaction* with Calvinism: Oliver 141. Historian Patrick Collinson goes further, arguing that Calvinism, while certainly an intimate of print culture, did not extend its word-centred iconoclasm to the religious imagination: Collinson (1988) 121-5. As I hope to demonstrate, resistance to Reform theology is always a feature of the devotional sphere it inscribes.

[4] For an early and eloquent account of the interpenetration of divine and secular loves in Donne see Colie 129-35. Indeed, it would appear that Thomas Docherty's delight in the deconstructionist witticism 'res-erection' (mentioned three times on one page) is derived from Colie's observation that in Donne 'erection becomes a symbol for resurrection': Docherty 135; Colie 132.

creature Fate is' and thus 'Measuring selfe-lifes infinity to'a span,/ Nay to an inch' (4-9).[5] Furthermore, this presumptuous and absurdly misguided attempt to subvert the divine Will is implicitly associated with the Roman Mass, whose breadengod worship is thought to reduce Christ 'to an inch' and whose sacramental doctrine suggests *ex opere operato*, or access to grace by virtue of receiving the consecrated species. In hindsight, then, the association of 'Miracles' with the mystery of divine election -- 'Hee . . . begat' -- appropriates a term often pejoratively associated with transubstantiation. And though Donne pleads God's 'liberall dole', the 'one drop of thy blood' is associated with his 'dry soule' (13-4) and thus sufficiently abstracted to avoid association with the heresy implicitly condemned a few lines earlier. The Atonement is thus reinforced as wholly God's -- whose creature Fate is -- both in act and efficacy, radically transcending any human effort or presumption to obtain its benefits. The final line's imperative, then -- '*Moyst, with one drop of thy blood, my dry soule* ' (14) -- is somewhat of a surprise, though perfectly in keeping with the suppliant tone of the series; it identifies an unavoidable tension between Donne's need to act and his awareness that nothing he does can in the end make any difference apart from God's intervention.

That dependence is explicit elsewhere. In 'Thou hast made me' it is 'By thy leave' he 'can looke' and 'rise again' (10); in 'Oh my black Soule!' he recognizes the need for genuine repentance but also his soul's utter inability to conjure it: 'But who shall give thee that grace to beginne?' (10); in 'I am a little world' the speaker cannot drown his sins unless God will 'powre new seas in mine eyes' (7); and, most famously, the speaker of 'Batter my heart' will never be 'chast, except you ravish mee' (14). (Curiously, however, it is also in these other sonnets that Donne's resistance to Calvinist theology is most evident, as we shall see.) Though not as pronounced, the personal, psychological thrust of Reform piety is evident in 'La Corona' as well, despite its formal organization and the

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[5] Patrick O'Connell notes the Pelagian tendency of the first sonnet in the sequence, but fails to recognize a possible refutation of the same here: O'Connell 119-30.

ceremonial, kerygmatic tone of each sonnet's opening line. Positive allusion to Eucharistic grace in 'Crucifying' ('liberall dole' and 'blood') is circumscribed by warning against a too presumptuous, perhaps even Roman, approach to sacramental grace, and by a final emphasis on the essentially spiritual nature of the problem -- the speaker's 'dry soule.' Similarly, in the sixth poem, 'Resurrection', both the imperative construction of the reiterated 'Moyst, with one drop of thy blood, my dry soule' and its sensualist tone are qualified:

> *Moyst with one drop of thy blood, my dry soule,*
> Shall (though she now be in extreme degree
> Too stony hard, and yet too fleshly,) bee
> Freed by that drop, from being starv'd, hard, or foule
> (1-4).

The altered punctuation in the first line (vis-à-vis the last of the previous sonnet) helps to establish the moistening as an accomplished fact (even though it 'Shall . . . bee' only in the future) and leads to the speaker's confidence in receiving an effectual remedy. In between, however, the soul's stony resistance serves to accentuate the sole regenerative power of God's irresistible grace, the denigration of flesh complementing the ostensibly spiritual nature of both illness and cure.

We may recall the 1626 Christmas sermon, where conventional scorn of Roman transubstantiation is the necessary qualification of a potentially Tridentine sacramental formula, and a ridiculed predestinarian lottery the *caveat lectio* of an otherwise Calvinist *lector*. But here the oscillation of sensualist tone and (parenthetical) dismissal of flesh, and the related conflict of personal and divine autonomies, suggest less conscious rhetorical strategy than genuine perplexity and ambivalence. Neither Donne's stubborn sense of autonomy nor his avant garde enthusiasm for sacraments is easily quelled. 'Nor can by other meanes be glorified' (11) is ambiguous in reference: does it recall the expansive power of a single drop of God's blood, or rather his 'little booke' (8) -- little because, in keeping with Calvinist orthodoxy, containing few names? And whereas 'If' in 'If in thy little booke my name thou enroule' (8) indicates that sacramental efficacy depends on

whether the recipient makes the A-list, it may on the other hand be part of a strategy which threateningly implies that the speaker's exclusion would confirm the anti-Calvinist charge that limited Atonement implies divine failure.[6] John Stachniewski reads this sonnet as an example of Calvinist despair insofar as the speaker is dependent on his name being enrolled in God's 'little booke' and on receiving that one drop of blood.[7] It is, however, this atoning blood (the cup to which Herbert goes 'when I please'[8]) that offers hope in the midst of his despair. Whether or not he actually receives its benefits is perhaps another question, but the graphic invocation of blood in the context of a spiritual deliberation over election suggests sacramental escape from psychological despair. Moreover, the accentually activated pun of 'abled' -- 'by this death abled' (5) -- is a further play on sacramental soteriology and anticipates Donne's confident claim to the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection. The means of grace, then, involve a sort of pro-active acquiescence, Donne generously allowing God the triumph over death with the proviso that he be one of God's chosen. By this reading, the speaker's 'Nor can by other means' is both self-directed catechistic rehearsal, and a veiled reminder of God's obligations. *Ex opere operantis*, which allows the subjective disposition of the communicant to play an important role in determining sacramental efficacy,[9] is perhaps significant here; the identity of the operator, however, is rather difficult to discern. [10]

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[6] A similar strategy informs the close of the final poem , 'if' qualifying the suppliant tone of the sequence's first and final line(s), the crown's connecting clasp: 'if thy holy Spirit, my Muse did raise,/ *Deigne at my hands this crown of prayer and praise* ' (13-4).

[7] Stachniewski 273-4.

[8] 'The H. Communion' (39).

[9] Stelten 306.

[10] David Aers and Gunther Kress suggest that the shifting emotional state of Donne's speaker in the 'Holy Sonnets' precludes the 'introspective analysis' characteristic of a Calvinist devotional framework, and that Donne's desire for a fixed, stable identity is at odds with 'the fundamental idea of Christian Liberty': Aers and Kress 66-7. The need to obliterate a changing and thus realistic sense of self, however, is surely a response to the absolute sovereignty and irresistible will of Calvin's God, a desire to conform to the identity recorded in heaven's register. Donne's distinctive and stubborn personality is certainly at odds with this deity, but this only exacerbates his dilemma. Another critic seems to me more accurate in his assessment: 'Donne's "stubborn temper" gives psychological reality to the unregenerate will held to be common to all mankind': Stachniewski 270.

In 'Oh my black Soule!', one of several 'Holy Sonnets' agonizing over man's total depravity as a result of original sin, Donne concentrates in bloody imagery the mutual relevance of penitence and grace, admonishing his soul to

> make thy selfe with holy mourning blacke,
> And red with blushing, as thou art with sinne;
> Or wash thee in Christ's blood, which has this might
> That being red, it dyes red soules to white.
> (11-4).

That the moments of penitence and Atonement are more or less simultaneous is nicely illustrated by this 'blushing' soul. Similarly, in 'At the round earths imagin'd corners' repentance is 'as good/ As if thou'hadst seal'd my pardon, with thy blood' (13-4), sacramental seal being the promise or guarantee of effective grace. The emphasis here is more than merely a meditation on the *imago dei* or some other visual stimulus: rather, the speaker is concerned primarily with the genuineness of his repentance, just as in 'Oh my black Soule!' he is bent on ensuring that his soul's blushing matches the vermilion intensity of his saviour's blood. It is his sense of utter helplessness and spiritual bankruptcy coupled with a determination to *make* himself acceptable to God that is an outstanding feature of Donne's devotional attitude. Just as the impossibility of looking into God's hidden decrees does not preclude, even in Calvin, encouragement to do just that, neither does recognition of his total depravity and inability to merit salvation prevent Donne from advancing personal effort as somehow valid. Comic awareness of this situation along with a once again subtle ploy are evident when he implicitly demands that God wait a little before inaugurating final apocalypse: the imperative tone of 'blow' and 'goe' directed at 'Angells' and 'numberlesse infinities' (1-3) is maintained as the address shifts to God, 'let them sleepe, Lord, and mee mourne a space' (9). By approximating his penitential efforts to the blood of Atonement, Donne invests what is otherwise ineffectual with sacramental significance; projecting his internal deliberations onto a shared religious idea, he identifies with its power even as he recognizes its total and intractable sovereignty.

Such boldness (which, after all, in a context of supplication is not entirely without warrant) borders on outright impudence in 'If poysonous mineralls'. The Calvinist potential for making God both author of evil and vindictive tyrant (at least according to the polemic of anti-Calvinists) is broached by the frustrated speaker:

> Why should intent or reason, borne in mee,
> Make sinnes, else equall, in mee more heinous
> And mercy being easie, and glorious
> To God, in his sterne wrath, why threatens hee?
> But who am I, that dare dispute with thee?
> (5-9).

The charge implies that because both reason and will are ultimately divine creations 'borne in mee', man's freedom does or should not limit the extent of God's mercy. If 'But who am I . . .?' (9) implies a status of temporary insanity for what precedes, resolution is effected by the negotiated compromise of a sacramental 'Lethean flood' in which the penitent's tears are combined with 'thine onely worthy blood' (11) to abolish the memory of past sins -- including, perhaps, those of an excessively curious intellect. His tears are indicative of sacraments in several ways: Confession consists in spiritual grief; 'Lethean flood' is typologically comprehensive of the cleansing deluge and New Testament institution of Baptism;[11] and, of course, echoes of the chalice's water and blood (which flowed from the crucified Christ's pierced side) and Jesus' blood-tears at Gethsemane recall the Eucharist.[12] Such tears mark the integration of private and ceremonial pieties, both inward spiritual turmoil, and the institutional signs and scriptural commonplaces which inform it. By combining penitential tears with the atoning blood of the sacrament Donne has a hand in expanding the scope of mercy thought lacking earlier, thus validating his initial challenge even though now assuming a submissive posture. Again, acquiescence in a devotional context is always in some sense a ploy, an agreement to play a prescribed role in exchange for spiritual assurance.[13]

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[11] See also 'O might those sighs and teares' and 'I am a little world made cunningly'.

[12] For discussion of tears and sacraments in Herbert see Chapter One 76 ff.

[13] Anna Nardo finds Donne's devout persona 'pushing mercy (he thinks) to the limit, and making God chase this slippery sinner down': Nardo 158.

Combining spiritual introspection with external symbols facilitates escape from the ambiguities and transience of subjective faith through personal identification with an ultimately stable, non-transient power. This must be done with the greatest of subtlety, of course; one must appear to be the unworthy benefactor of an irresistible will and grace, even while actively determining one's inclusion in that will's overall scheme. The *volta* in this sonnet thus marks its division not into impudent rambling and contrary recognition of spiritual truth, but rather legitimate theological challenge and resolution in the sacramental mercy it calls forth. The speaker, after all, never does answer the question, 'who am I . . .?'; just as the octave's interrogations are never requited, so the first line of the sestet -- by anticipating the identification of 'my teares' and 'thine onely worthy blood' -- in fact 'dare[s] dispute with thee', self-determination vying with inscrutable Judgement.

This pattern of intense resistance followed by sudden resolution in the mysteries of sacramental grace is perhaps appropriate for Donne's unceasingly sceptical mind, for it allows alternation between the temporal limitations of thought, whose motions are the lifeblood of subjective identity, and momentary stabilization of that identity through association with a transcendent deity. Sacraments for Donne are the ideal representation of this process, for they rehearse and reiterate the paradox of divine Incarnation, itself the supreme negotiation of inner with outer, of coherent, stable identity with the obliterating flux of time and space, of God (in Christ) with history. The motion between psychological reflection and ceremonial participation described above is dual and mutual. Whereas 'If poysonous mineralls' concludes in sacramental acquiescence, 'Wilt thou love God' begins with an admonition that the speaker's soul 'digest . . . this wholsome meditation' (1-2) before proceeding to a consideration of Christian paradox. Another important difference, however, is the suggestion that the meditative process is itself of sacramental status, the elements reflected being consumed and digested by the soul, which consists not only of a rational but also vegetable and sensible components. The sacramental moment, far from being left behind for the meditative, instead provides the context within which spiritual

reflection takes place. It is thus fitting that the sonnet concludes with bewilderment at the paradox the Eucharist represents:

> 'Twas much, that man was made like God before,
> But, that God should be made like man, much more.
> (13-4).

What appears at first to be a metaphorical relationship between soul digestion and sacramental ritual is revealed in the end to be metonymic and participatory. Moreover, the negotiation between vertical and horizontal axes of Incarnation is itself an historical process: 'The Father having begot a Sonne most blest' is 'still begetting, (for he ne'r begonne)' (5-6). Donne's alternating, manic-depressive shifts between utmost despair and daring confidence are thus sanctioned by God's own dual (and perpetual) identity as both supreme deity and slain 'Sonne of glory'.

The sacramentalization of inward salvific process is perhaps most apparent in 'The Crosse':

> Who can blot out the Crosse, which th'instrument
> Of God, dew'd on mee in the Sacrament?
> (15-6).

The larger mythical reality of Christ's Atonement, sacramentally indicated by the doubly typological significance of 'dew'd' (both the manna given the wandering Israelites and the bread of the Eucharist),[14] grants significance to both the otherwise mundane 'Materiall Crosses' (25) of everyday human existence -- ship's mast, birds' wings, 'Meridians crossing Parallels', etc. (19-24) -- and to the internal drama of individual redemption. The man-as-microcosm trope may be characterized as 'sacramental' according to the medieval cosmology informing it;[15] here, this is especially so -- but with a decidedly Reform twist. Though implicitly preferred over the preached word -- 'From mee, no Pulpit, nor misgrounded law,/ Nor scandall taken, shall this Crosse withdraw' (9-10) -- sacraments are to be internalized as an ongoing form of spiritual purgation in which the recipient is

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[14] The permanence implied is also suggestive of Baptism: Oliver 74.

[15] I intend here both the old Ptolemaic hierarchy and the vast web of correspondences, sympathies and antipathies which traverse its space in early modern cosmologies: Foucault (1970) 17-34.

actively involved, alternately 'crossing' both pride and excessive self-censure, 'those dejections, when it downeward tends,/ And when it to forbidden heights pretends' (53-4). As in the 1626 Christmas sermon, participation in sacramental grace involves extending the ceremonial experience to encompass the manic depressive vicissitudes of the devotional quotidian round. Once again, ritual and ceremony intersect the horizontal movement of lived experience, their vertical orientation compromised (because subject to history and discourse) and yet their authority extended (because that same discourse is made sacred).

If elevating the word (rather than the host?) is evidence of a Protestant poetic, Donne nevertheless relies on older ideas in fashioning his 'spirituall' cross which, he writes, has 'chiefe dignity' in comparison to 'Materiall Crosses' (25-6). Such preference appears contradictory in proximity to the cloying image of a cross 'dew'd on mee in the Sacrament', as does the poem's emphasis on self-scrutinizing moral censure when juxtaposed with the earlier negative allusion to 'Pulpit'. The transition in focus from 'Materiall' to 'spirituall' crosses is effected, in part, by a Paracelsian analogy that helps to explain what Donne is up to:

> These [spiritual crosses] for extracted chimique medicine serve,
> And cure much better, and as well preserve;
> Then are you your own physicke, or need none,
> When Still'd, or purg'd by tribulation.
> For when that Crosse ungrudg'd, unto you stickes,
> Then are you to your selfe, a Crucifixe.
> (27-32).

Material crosses are rejected not so much for their materiality as because they are not as devastatingly painful as that which 'ungrudg'd, unto you stickes'. The implicit alignment of 'spiritual crosses' and 'extracted chemique medicine' constitutes a clever conceit, but the medical analogy also plays on the semantic complexity of 'spirit' in Renaissance thought. Physiologically indicative of the subtler of bodily fluids (which in turn are vectors of the operations of the soul or psyche), the term also allows the disembodied entity to which modern definitions are restricted. Like a sacrament, therefore, a spiritual cross somehow literally penetrates the body of the recipient, sacrament and cross each a kind of purge in the

Paracelsian sense of natural antipathy. While the preferred cross is representative of an inward spiritual process, it is nevertheless invested with a wider public currency, drawing its devotional power from an analogy that renders the Atonement, with its insistence on the torture and death of a historical body, visceral and personal.

In his anti-royalist reading of 'The Crosse' P. M. Oliver rightly aligns subversion of the Jacobean Oath of Allegiance with a move away from ritual, public gesture toward more private and 'metaphorical crosses'. He erroneously identifies Calvinism, however, as reinforcing the king's prerogative insofar as the doctrine of predestination denies the self-determination involved in making these metaphorical crosses. 'The Crosse', Oliver writes, 'enforces a concentration on the steps individuals can take toward their own salvation.'[16] Calvinism is more complex than this allows. Predestination encourages precisely the kind of speculation and self-determination it ostensibly disallows.[17] Oliver himself seems to recognize this when he writes that the 'Calvinist doctrine of the limited Atonement directly challenged the individual to believe that he or she was among those for whom Christ died' and that 'the elect know that grace is working in them -- that the merits of Christ's death have been applied in their cases.'[18] There is, moreover, a 'difficulty inherent in Calvinist doctrine with regard to the desirability of receiving tangible confirmation of elect status.'[19] One can only speculate as to why, given such qualifying remarks, Oliver aligns Calvinist orthodoxy, and especially the doctrine of predestination, with royal power. While undoubtedly Calvinism was of ubiquitous influence in Elizabethan and early Stuart religious thought, identification of its central tenets with the interests of the throne is an oversimplification. Benjamin Carier's 1615 letter to James proves that at least one contemporary (a Roman Catholic recusant at that) thought otherwise.[20] Oliver's

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[16] Oliver 80.

[17] See Introduction 27-8; cf. Chapter Two 132-3. For discussion of this contradictory aspect of Calvinist theology see Stachniewski 20-6.

[18] Oliver 90.

[19] *Ibid.*, 117.

[20] See Chapter Two 122 and note.

Royalist-Calvinist alliance, then, may be as much the product of current critical disdain for power -- secular and religious -- as his sensitivity to the potential subversiveness of private spiritual piety is a commonplace of Reformation historiography.

Because Reform doctrine paradoxically encourages both an intense awareness of one's lack of freedom and a determination to be among the chosen, the relative material/spiritual status of sacraments is all the more urgent a matter. For while the material objectification of Presence promotes universal grace, it is 'thy heart' in its 'dejections, when it downeward tends,/ And when it to forbidden heights pretends' that finds the more subtle 'spirituall' cross appropriate to its needs. Grace is never more one's own than when 'are you to your selfe, a Crucifixe.'

The intersection of external ritual and internal deliberation, of sacrament and word, is perhaps more properly understood as a conflict between claims to spiritual authority. 'The Annuntiation and Passion', framed by reference to the Eucharist, begins as a meditation on the paradoxes suggested by the coinciding in 1609 of Good Friday and the feast of the Annunciation, goes on to credit the church as the proper sphere in which to appreciate such wonders, and concludes with a conflation of messianic blood, church body and individual soul. The motion from bodily ritual toward inward deliberation is again traceable, though here the transition is obvious and sudden:

> Tamely, fraile body,'abstaine to day; to day
> My soule eates twice, Christ hither and away.
> (1-2).

The speaker's body is to be silent witness to the soul's meditation, the latter then repeatedly referred to in the third person as 'She': 'She sees him man, so like God made in this' (3); 'Shee sees him nothing twice at once, who'is all/ Shee sees a Cedar plant it selfe, and fall' (7-8); 'Shee sees at once . . .' (11-2). By the end of the poem, however, 'she' has become the church itself while the entity addressed directly in the second person has become 'my Soule' (45). The church has gradually displaced the speaker's soul as meditator and mediator of Christian paradox (including, of course, the Eucharistic paradoxes of both

Incarnation and Atonement), while the 'fraile body', once silent witness, now appears to be absent altogether. What remains is the interplay of church and soul, the former both an encouragement of and refuge from the perplexities of faith, not unlike the great wheel of Sir Thomas Browne's beloved English church: 'So God by his Church, neerest to him wee know/ And stand firme, if wee by her motion goe' (29-30).

The soul, having relinquished its direct apprehension of faith's paradoxes, is now to 'uplay' (45) these as given by the church. The institution's exhaustive authority culminates in the final lines where Christ's 'imitating Spouse' (39) is the conduit through which the blood of Atonement, the ultimate and excruciating focus of all paradox, flows:

> as though one blood drop, which thence did fall,
> Accepted, would have serv'd, he yet shed all;
> So though the least of his paines, deeds, or words,
> Would busie a life, she all this day affords;
> This treasure then, in grosse, my Soule uplay
> And in my life retaile it every day.
>
> (41-6).[21]

The speaker's body is a necessary locus, the effigy or site of convergence between the inner and outer, private and public aspects of religious discourse. But it is an impediment to this same discourse inasmuch as it calls attention to a gap between the fleshly reality of which the speaker is aware (yet apparently embarrassed about) and the theoretical 'body of Christ', the church. This irreconcilable tension is betrayed in these final lines where the symbolic or sacramental efficacy of 'one blood drop' is contrasted with the brutal reality of actual crucifixion, where 'least' is simultaneously contrasted with and reflective of *all* 'his paines, deeds, or words'. The body silenced at the outset and eventually dismissed, or at least left in the shadows, persists via reference to the flesh and blood of messianic sacrifice. Like the central symbol of 'The Crosse', the Atonement represented by the sacrament on this day when the speaker's 'soule eates twice' is inextricable from a discourse simultaneously dependent on and threatened by the reality of a historical body. What Donne

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[21] It should be noted that in at least one MS 'busie' is 'buy' and 'she' 'he': Donne (1989) 454 n44. Such a reading may suggest Jesus himself as sole mediator, but the church's role as imitator and visible manifestation of Jesus' authority is reinforced by reference to 'this day' -- the temporal coincidence of annunciation and passion afforded by 'the Church, Gods Court of faculties' (23).

writes of Christ's coming and of man's brief life might also describe the human experience of an elusive Real Presence in the Eucharist: 'He shall come, he is gone' (40).

Views as to the extent and manner by which sacraments manifest Real Presence may be plotted on a continuum, from identification and analogy to metonymy and purely representational metaphor. Donne's interrogation of this spectrum, though settling at one time or another on various nodes, tends as a whole to traverse its entire length -- sometimes within a single poem or passage. Aware of the dangers of idolatry and presumption associated with a too explicit identification of external symbol and deity, Donne allows the language of identity an internal application; this is true of 'The Crosse', where spiritual crosses, though distinguished from those material, nonetheless 'unto you sticke'. But the distinction is problematized by the fact that sacramental application involves the convergence of internal and external on the body of the recipient ('dew'd on me in the sacrament'), the point at which material and spiritual crosses overlap like the dew that congeals as earthly bread without ceasing to be manna from heaven.[22]

In moving toward pietistic as opposed to symbolic, ceremonially oriented religious experience, the language of identity often intensifies, carrying, as in 'The Crosse', the sensuous imagery of sacramental participation to the inner recesses of religious desire. In a letter to Goodyere, Donne defends 'A Litanie' as avoiding both Roman and Reformed criticism and confirms a notable feature of the poem, namely, its appropriation of ceremonial form for inward, spiritual examination. He refers to two ancient 'Letanies in Latin verse' which provide him with 'a defence, if any man; to a Lay man and a private, impute it as a fault, to take such divine and publique names, to his own little thoughts.'[23] In the poem the penitent longs for tribulation, to be purged of all 'vicious tinctures' (8), and to do so by vividly identifying with the crucifixion:

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[22] Marvell's famous poem nicely illustrates the sacramental liminality evoked by this typological symbol, the drop of dew 'Moving but on a point below' before 'dissolving . . . Into the glories of th'almighty sun': 'On a Drop of Dew' (35-40).

[23] Gosse 32-4; cited in Lewalski (1979) 260.

> O be thou nail'd unto my heart,
> And crucified again,
> Part not from it, though it from thee would part,
> But let it be by applying so thy paine,
> Drown'd in thy blood, and in thy passion slaine.
> (14-8).

The emphasis on messianic identification, bordering on the blasphemous in several of the love poems, is here, as in 'The Crosse', a necessary aspect of Christian experience; for it is in such identification, encouraged arguably by both the Gospels and St. Paul,[24] that the Christian finds refuge from the sin that condemns. Also similar to 'The Crosse' is a reluctance to allow such identification to go unqualified. Whereas in the former poem both idolater and idol are indicted -- it is the eye that 'most . . . needs crossing' (49) -- in 'The Litanie' it is the sacramental referent itself that appears to encourage misguided affection. The prayer includes a petition to be delivered 'From trusting so much to thy blood,/ That in that hope, wee wound our soule away' (138-9), a request favourably recalling the sentiment of John Cosin's disdain for those who 'preach us all Gospel and put no law among it'.[25] The danger here is not so much over-reliance on the blood given in the Eucharist; it is, rather, the theological abstraction which was declaimed from puritan pulpits at least as often as it found concrete expression in Baptism and the Communion wine. The same stanza cautions against 'thinking us all soule, neglecting thus/ Our mutuall duties' (143-4), so that together these lines condemn the antinomian implications of a Calvinism whose doctrine of the Atonement leaves little room for human agency.[26] 'Blood', then, is the arch-liminality of sacramental discourse, the symbolic hinge on which depend both sacramental realism and the most ephemeral of doctrinal abstractions. But if the letter to Goodyere advocates a balance of public and private pieties -- of law and gospel -- here, in

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[24] I am thinking of Jesus' insistence, apparently repulsive to his disciples, that they eat his flesh and drink his blood: John 6.51-61. St. Paul's profession of his desire that his flesh participate in Christ's afflictions is also notable: Col. 1.24.

[25] Cited in Tyacke (1987) 124; cf. Chapter Two 120 and note.

[26] I agree with Oliver that these lines suggest 'The Litanie' is an anti-Calvinist poem: Oliver 92.

this most Roman Catholic of poems, Donne directs his criticism primarily at pious enthusiasts, even when a more generic target seems apparent:

> When plenty, Gods image, and seale
> Makes us Idolatrous,
> And love it, not him, whom it should reveale . . .
> Lord deliver us.
> (185-9).

'Seale' suggests sacramental reference insofar as its proximity to 'image' and 'Idolatrous' evokes puritan criticism of the Roman Mass. These terms, however, are presented in such a way as to be subversive of that very discourse. They now indicate the gifts of wealth and affluence and thus constitute a warning against finding in social or economic status signs of God's special favour; the alliance of wealth and spiritual security constitutes an idol no less insidious than any breadengod.[27]

Donne's association of sacramental topoi such as 'blood' and 'seale' with the more objectionable elements of puritan piety may be a deliberate taunt directed at anticeremonial precisians. But given the tone and content of the poems described above, not to mention 'The Litanie"s intended audience identified in the letter to Goodyere -- Donne's 'own little thoughts' -- such passages are as much theological reflection and deliberation as they are polemic. Though a collective prayer whose liturgical tone and formality are complemented by the repeated first person plural 'us', 'The Litanie' allows the line separating idolatry and authentic worship to run through the author's own heart. This is perhaps most apparent in the supplication, 'When wee are mov'd to seeme religious/ Only to vent wit, Lord deliver us' (188-9), Donne having earlier assured God, 'I . . . excuse not my excesse/ In seeking secrets, or Poëtiquenesse' (71-2). The 'us' and 'I' are suspicious of a cleverness bordering on an idolatry as serious as any sacerdotal excess.

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[27] While my observations here may support the disappointed courtier theory of religious zeal, it should be noted that the letter to Goodyere is dated 1610, some five years prior to Donne's ordination as deacon.

That 'vent[ing] wit' suggests a specifically Calvinist self-pride is evident in the final image and context of 'The Crosse', where Donne's identity as poet emerges as an integral part of his religious orientation:

> Crosse those dejections, when it downward tends,
> And when it to forbidden heights pretends.
> And as the braine through bony walls doth vent
> By sutures, which a Crosses forme present,
> So when thy braine workes, ere thou utter it,
> Crosse and correct concupiscence of witt.
> (53-8).

The indictment of wit is startling (and hilarious) given the brilliance of the conceit, while the manic-depressive extremes of downward dejections and scaling 'forbidden heights' suggest the alternating despair and bold presumption of a thoroughly Calvinist sensibility, which, it appears, is complicit with the wit in need of venting. Moreover, this head of steam, so to speak, finds relief through none other than 'a Crosses forme', the latter's sacramental status and power inherent in its liminal spanning of inner and outer aspects of religious/artistic experience. Is it possible Donne recognizes for poetic wit a propriety contiguous with that of sacraments? After all, like much of his poetry, sacraments bring together widely disparate things (bread and body, wine and blood), even if their otherwise remote similarities are more readily apparent than those comprising even the least jarring of Donne's conceits. Because the power of such verbal ingenuity rests in its ability to confuse momentarily the boundaries separating entities one from another, the poet performs a task not unlike that of the God who effects Presence in the Eucharist. The poet's is the power of the magus, a manipulator of words who dislodges them from their commonplace 'realities', imbuing them with new meaning and significance in a manner not unlike, if less direct than, the kerygmatic assertions 'This bread is my body' and 'This wine is my blood'. In 'The Crosse', it is the Cross -- the intersecting axes symbolic of the fleshing of the word, the 'Crosses forme' through which devotional 'witt' finds appropriate and sober expression -- that provides Donne with a model for the creative process. The externalization of wit as words, of *inventio* as *elecutio*, is the sacramental essence of that process, just as

the pendulum swings of Calvinist manic depression would be condemned to a Blakean same dull round but for the grace which, outside the circle of self, only sacraments can offer.

In 'A Hymn to Christ, at the Author's last going into Germany' Donne's disappointing dismissal of his talents along with the 'Fame, Wit, Hopes (false mistresses)' (28) they afford is solemnized in a sacramental commitment to his new vocation, a poetic self-ordination.[28] But such denial, as part of his devotional strategy, is itself eloquent and therefore somewhat disingenuous. Recalling 'The Calme' and its sailors who 'on the hatches as on Altars lyes/ Each one his owne Priest, and owne Sacrifice' (25-6), 'A Hymn' begins with the promise that

> In what torne ship soever I embarke,
> That ship shall be my embleme of thy Arke;
> What sea soever swallow mee, that flood
> Shall be to mee an embleme of thy bloode
> (1-4).

That same sea is to be put 'betwixt my sinnes and thee' (13), and in the final stanza Donne speaks of his forsaken past in terms of a 'Seale' of divorce (25), thus reinforcing his vocational commitment through a sacramental consecration appropriately invoking both marriage and ordination. The exchange of past exploits for 'An Everlasting night' (32), however, is seemingly despairing. 'Seale', while equally a legal term and thus appropriate when speaking of a bill of divorce, is also, as has been observed, applicable to sacraments, including (for a Roman Catholic, anyway) that of marriage.[29] Thus, in marrying 'those loves, which in youth scattered bee', God is, in keeping with Biblical tradition, assigned

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[28] The occasion is Donne's chaplaincy on the Earl of Doncaster's diplomatic embassy, 1619-20: Donne (1989) 472 n1. The poem may also hopefully anticipate his promotion to Dean in 1621.

[29] Opposing the secular poems, with their full integration of erotic and spiritual loves, to the divine which allow disintegration of the same, Achsah Guibbory insists on the non-corporeal use of 'seale' as support for a Protestant reading of this poem's sacramental features: Guibbory (1996) 211. To the extent, however, that the term is here evocative of *marriage*, it suggests not the Calvinist Church of England so much as that of Rome, for which marriage was a sacrament. Guibbory elsewhere is aware of this, but her description of marriage in Donne as evocative of a Roman Catholic piety seems suspect. Marriage is 'constituted by the agreement between loving partners rather than by any officiating priest': *ibid.*, 205. The private, non-institutional, 'priestless' characteristics of Donnean love Guibbory celebrates are, if anything, Protestant.

the groom's role, but in another sense becomes surrogate for those 'false mistresses'. 'Seale', then, in signifying both divorce and remarriage, marks Donne's transition from courtier, lover and poet to devotee and priest. Try as he may, however, he cannot forsake wit or the propensity to exercise what Northrop Frye has called the Renaissance artist's 'centripetal gaze',[30] the poetic effort to establish union with the object of devotion, whether mistress, king or deity. Like the body that liminally spans the external and internal aspects of religious experience, the sacramental seal may also function as the temporal indicator of conversion, a transformation wherein the essential characteristics of one life are reconstituted and redirected in another.

This chapter has examined the relevance of sacraments to Donne's religious poetry. While calling attention to and thus sharpening the polarities of spirit and matter, soul and body, private devotion and public ceremony, his deployment of sacramental topoi is sensitive to their liminal status, their capacity for negotiating the integration of these conceptually divided spheres of experience. Central to this ability, of course, is sacraments' symbolic relation to the Incarnation, the supreme expression of unity among things human and divine. Having intimated that Donne was aware of the sacramental status of his art, of its role in externalizing and formally ritualizing his devotional experience, we turn in the following chapter to a detailed analysis of sacramental topoi in his 'secular' lyrics. In doing so, it is suggested that the Word-become-flesh paradox of the Incarnation had always informed Donne's distinctive art -- that it constitutes the basis for a sacramental poetics.

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[30] Frye (1966) 58.

Chapter Four
Secular Lyrics of the Religious Man

The primary problem in sacramental thought, from Augustine through Berengar, Aquinas and the scholastics, to the Reformation formulae of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, is that of determining how and to what extent sacraments evoke the central Christian paradox of Incarnation. The very notion of a sacrament derives from the Incarnation's claim that God becomes literally present while remaining transcendent, that God is simultaneously in Christ and in heaven; sacraments extend that paradox by positing the literal presence of a Christ who nevertheless maintains his post-Ascension status. In what manner, then, do sacraments manifest Presence, and from whence do they derive their power to do so? Turning to his secular verse, it becomes evident that sacraments had long held an important place in Donne's thought, not merely as fodder for fanciful conceits and blasphemies, but as an integral aspect of his expansive wit. Their deployment in the 'Songs and Sonets', satires, elegies and verse letters suggests for sacraments a significance that goes beyond the purely religious: sacramental and Incarnational thought, rather, play an essential and formative role in Donne's poetic experience.

This chapter documents Donne's expansive appreciation of sacramental ideas and topoi as evidence that the Incarnation was central to his understanding of the world. Reflecting the Incarnational paradox of Word-become-flesh, a conceptual aid to this investigation might appropriately consist of the Cross's intersecting axes: the vertical axis corresponds both to sacramental topoi and the spiritual dimension of human experience they address, including notions of transcendence, ecstasis, and otherwise eternal or stable realities thought immune to the flux of history and matter; the horizontal axis corresponds to the myriad of other topoi reflecting Donne's lively interrogation of human experience. Among these latter are the monetary, courtly-political and, of course, erotic subject matter that are essential features of his distinctive poetic œuvre. The point at which these axes intersect, Eliot's still point of the turning world, is the crux of Donne's Incarnational and sacramental poetic, the interpellation of sacred and profane.

In expanding the sacred dimension of sacraments Donne also addresses the relevance of the Word-become-flesh for his understanding of language as dynamic and proliferate, its semantic content the fluid product of ceaseless play among its aural and graphic constituents. Our axes model thus evokes Ferdinand De Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole*, between language as pre-verbal system and individual utterance.[1] The vertical axis is suggested by the static correspondence of a single signifier and its signified, or a group of related topoi whose meanings derive from the group's internal relationships; the horizontal axis, on the other hand, indicates that expanding totality of signs or semiotic grid, with its exchanges and *history*, without which the vertical dimension of language does not obtain.[2] In expanding sacraments' topological currency beyond purely religious contexts, Donne subjects their meaning and significance to a semantic play that in turn augments their relevance for the other topoi involved. The Incarnation, similarly, subjects the Logos to history, matter and even death, while at the same time imbuing that horizontal plane with a significance it might not otherwise have. No doubt sensitive to the primarily sacred nature of sacraments, Donne nevertheless allows their engagement with secular topoi to constitute a poetic fleshing of the Word and thus reflect the scandalous paradox of Christian Incarnation.

Sections one, two and three below investigate the sacramental significance of, respectively, human love, the nature and identity of monetary value, and the power and influence of the court. Thus, (1) just as the Eucharist addresses the gap between a transcendent God and his material immanence, so the love poems scrutinize the relationship between platonic and sensory love, inner virtue and external beauty, lovers' constancy and inconstancy, tumescence and detumescence. Similarly, (2) as sacraments' proclamation of

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[1] De Saussure 8-9.

[2] I do not wish to sustain a Derridean critique of Western metaphysics, though the notions of infinite play and sensitivity to the absence of a 'transcendental signified' seem to me anticipated by Donne's poetic. Whereas for the deconstructionist these are often evidence of the death of God, for Donne -- as, no doubt, for countless Christian thinkers before him -- différance, particularly its deferral-of-Presence aspect, would only have emphasized language's failure to contain the Word-become-flesh that constitutes its being.

an eternal Presence is inextricable from doctrinal formulae, controversy, religious institutions and their interests, so the nature of monetary value has to do with the extent of money's intrinsic and/or extrinsic worth, the magical glitter of precious metal and its commercial reputation and power as currency. Again, (3) the relationship between court and realm, the familiar anatomical trope of king as heart of the body politic, finds parallel in the notion of a God whose grace or graces are bodily disseminated by virtue of sacrament and ceremony; that Presence is a term shared by both court and sacrament is but one of the more notable features of their commonality. Just as words and the ideas they constitute, in being momentarily emptied of their semantic content, are subsequently reinvigorated with new and expanded significance, so the life of Logos consists in its becoming flesh and dying so that the latter can be invested with divine significance and both resurrected anew. This chapter appropriately closes, then, with (4) a reading of Donne's *Anniversaries* that addresses that most fundamental of Christian paradoxes: the idea that human life and even the life of the divine are somehow integral with death and loss. Elizabeth Drury is a world soul or life force whose messianic significance consists not only in her death and anticipated resurrection, but also the sacramental and sacrificial character of her being in the world.

A note on methodology: the readings which follow are sensitive to those words or topoi which in previous chapters have been more or less explicitly suggestive of sacraments. They include blood, body, wine, bread, meat, drink, taste, elements, dew, manna, sacrifice, altar, water, tears, transubstantiate (-ion), Presence, Baptism, marriage, ordination and seal. Many of these words, of course, are not exclusively sacramental; the extent to which they are will depend on context. But while never indiscriminately allowed to constitute sacramental allusion, such words may be deemed relevant according to the extent that the concerns of the poems in which they occur reflect those of the axes model outlined above. A given poem's sacramental currency, then, may depend more on its general affinities with that model than on the deployment of terms not exclusive to

sacramental discourse *per se*, in which case such terms are suggestive of sacraments only in light of critical reflection. The purpose here is not to identify authorial intention, to discern, that is, whether Donne at any given moment wields a sacramental conceit; rather, the following analysis draws attention to the ways in which, consciously or otherwise, sacramental and Incarnational ideas seem to inform a complex intellect and its articulation of multiple experiences and concerns.

I
Love

Donne's treatment of love and its proper object, like that of his Petrarchan antecedents, suggests the duality of platonic or transcendent ideal and its experiential and sensory manifestations, the vertical dimension of transcendent beauty, virtue and permanently tumescent bliss intersecting the horizontal realm of bodies, desire and detumescence. The still point of the axes model here articulates Donne's appreciation of love's eternal qualities as inextricable from their sublunary index. Whereas in 'The Undertaking', for example, outward beauty is rejected for 'lovelinesse within' (13), those who 'Vertue'attir'd in woman see' (18) lauded over 'all the *Worthies* ' (26), the love poems more often indicate a complexity among ideal and earthly loves not unlike the paradox of Incarnation.

In 'Valediction to his booke',[3] the lovers' love is of sacramental status, their letters canonized as the sacred records of Love's grace, while the lovers 'for loves clergie only'are instruments' (22). There is thus a sense in which the lovers' love is surpassed by a source for which they merely act as stewards, so that even while the sacred book contains or reflects the 'Annals' (12) or record of their relationship, that relationship is itself but the manifestation or 'instrument' of 'Love [which] this grace to us affords' (17). But just as sacraments are sacred despite their material character, so 'This Booke' is 'as long-liv'd as the elements' (19). While maintaining for experience and ideal an ostensibly hierarchical

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[3] I refer to C. A. Patrides' edition throughout: Donne (1989).

relationship, the poet prefers to accommodate all who would receive from love's book, both sensualist and platonic:

> Here Loves Divines, (since all Divinity
> Is love or wonder) may finde all they seeke,
> Whether abstract spirituall love they like,
> Their Soules exhal'd with what they do not see,
> Or, loth so to amuze
> Faiths infirmitie, they chuse
> Something which they may see and use;
> For, though minde be the heaven, where love doth sit,
> Beauty a convenient type may be to figure it.
> (28-36).

A weak or infirm faith is no barrier to receiving the benefits love offers; those dull sublunary lovers whose soul is sense are typologically incorporated into Love's vast design. Moreover, there is some ambiguity as to what in fact is here infirm, a particularly weak faith or the purely abstract love of souls exhaled, the latter not unlike those souls in 'The Extasie' who must to bodies go, 'Else a great Prince in prison lies' (68). As Donne reminds us in 'Loves growth', Love is 'no quintessence,/ But mixt of all stuffes, paining soule, or sense' (8-9):

> Love's not so pure, and abstract, as they use
> To say, which have no Mistresse but their Muse,
> But as all else, being elemented too,
> Love sometimes would contemplate, sometimes do.
> (11-13).

Here, the implied antitheses of purity and impurity, abstraction and substance, together with the more explicit Mistresse/Muse, and the classical humanist dichotomy of contemplative and active service, are attenuated by the realization that all things must be 'elemented', composed of the world's material constituents, even as sacramental Presence is integral with its species or 'elements'.

Though justly celebrated as innovative, Donne's verse is far from immune to the alternating hot and cold flashes of the traditional courtly lover. Where poems such as 'To his booke' celebrate (and offer consolation for the loss of) connubial or coital bliss, others, like 'Twicknam Garden', document the grief and sexual frustration of the spurned. Sacramental topoi here suggest deceit as much as the embodiment of love eternal. Donne

begins by playing on the Roman Catholic sacrament of extreme unction,[4] his speaker coming

> to seeke the spring,
> And at mine eyes, and at mine eares,
> Receive such balmes, as else cure every thing
> (2-4).

'Eyes' and 'eares' exploit the semantic duality of 'unction' as both religious rite and flattering speech, thus anticipating (with 'else') the plaint which follows. Reproaching his own gullibility, the speaker regrets having brought to the garden 'The spider love, which transubstantiates all,/ And can convert Manna to gall' (6-7). Whether anti-Roman polemic or drawing on the Pauline notion that sacraments ill-received are poisonous or otherwise harmful, the passage relies on both explicit Eucharistic terminology and a typological tradition which finds in the manna of Exodus 16 an anticipation of the Communion bread. However, it is not clear that Donne sharply distinguishes true from false love, authentic from counterfeit sacraments, for in the putatively 'True Paradise' a 'serpent' is present (9). And because this alone does not determine whether the lovers' Eden is pre or postlapsarian, there is some ambiguity as to the speaker's estimation of Love's purity. In the second stanza, finding that he occupies that no-place between transgression and its pleasures, moved to love but frustrated in his attempts, the lover would nevertheless be suspended inanimate, 'Some senselesse peece of this place bee' (16), rather than see it blighted by winter's 'grave frost' (12). Tumescent suspension is both frustrating and titillating, alternately 'Manna' or 'gall', depending on the whim of the 'spider love'.[5] The possibility of false or ineffective sacraments returns with the image of the weeping fountain:

> Hither with christall vyals, lovers come,
> And take my teares, which are loves wine,
> And try your mistresse Teares at home,
> For all are false, that tast not just like mine (19-22).

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[4] Patrides' gloss is, I think, accurate given other more explicit terms and the poem's sacramental tone: Donne (1989) 73 n3.

[5] This may also echo the twenty-ninth Elizabethan Article (1571), 'The wicked, and suche as be voyde of a liuelye fayth . . . in no wyse are the partakers of Christe, but rather to their condemnation do eate and drinke the signe or Sacrament of so great a thing': Cressy and Ferrell 67.

In a moment of messianic self-oblation the speaker discards his status as first Adam precariously straddling paradise and lapsarian detumescence to become that second Adam, the perfect sacrifice occupying precisely the same crucial point, but of course spanning the divide in reverse. 'Teares' are cleverly combined with 'loves wine' in a Eucharistic-typological conflation, the first/second Adam allusion complemented by a meeting of Edenic garden and Gethsemane, where Jesus, agonizing over the 'cup' he is about to receive, sweats blood.[6]

The analogy comprised of false women's tears and false sacraments is suggested in 'Loves diet'. The speaker seeks to prevent Love's nourishment, both by rendering his own weeping the product of 'scorne or shame' and by denying authenticity for his mistress' pining:

> If he suck'd hers, I let him know
> 'Twas not a teare, which hee had got,
> His drink was counterfeit, as was his meat;
> For, eyes which rowle towards all, weepe not, but sweat.
> (15-8).

Meat and drink, the mistress' sighs and tears, are the means or 'feast' (11) by which her 'favour' (21) is conferred -- or not, depending on who the beneficiary is -- and thus analogous to a Calvinist sacrament which, also depending on the identity of the communicant, is or is not an effective means of grace. 'For, eyes which rowle . . .' recalls Donne's ironic characterization of the whorish church in 'Holy Sonnet [18]', 'Who is most trew . . . When she'is embrac'd and open to most men' (13-4), or the erastian Graccus of 'Satyre 3', who 'loves all as one' (65). By contrast, sexual drink and meat distributed to all in 'Loves diet' lacks that 'which love worst endures, *discretion* ' (6), just as an ecclesiastical policy of broad-based membership, supported and reinforced by universal access to sacraments, tends to subvert the predestinarian prerogative of a Calvinist deity. But even if the speaker's mistress were to exercise discretion and have her 'eyes . . . rowle towards' him alone, he is not willing that Love should determine or govern his involvement

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[6] Luke 22.44.

with her. Though demanding fidelity, he is not satisfied with being among the few or the only member -- 'burdenous corpulence' (2) -- and 'name' of his mistress' 'entaile' (24); he prefers, rather, total claim to the arbitrary whim hitherto Love's alone: 'Thus I reclaim'd my buzard love, to flye/ At what, and when, and how, and where I chuse' (25-6). But just as the predestinarian psyche alternates between powerless anxiety and bold presumption, the speaker's final remarks are as suggestive of enslavement to a boring and relentless cycle as they are assertive of his mastery and control:

> And now as other fawkners use,
> I spring a mistresse, sweare, write, sigh and weepe:
> And the game kill'd, or lost, goe talk, and sleepe.
> (28-30).

Rather than indifferent, the speaker of 'The Primrose' rationalizes female inconstancy in a celebration of exaggerated polygamy. The dew of Israelite manna, typologically the Eucharist, forms flowers radiant with the reflection of their heavenly source:

> Upon this Primrose hill,
> Where, if Heav'n would distill
> A shoure of raine, each severall drop might goe
> To his owne primrose, and grow Manna so;
> And where their forme, and their infinitie
> Make a terrestriall Galaxie,
> As the small starres doe in the skie:
> I walke to finde a true Love; and I see
> That'tis not a mere woman, that is shee,
> But must, or more, or lesse then woman bee.
> (1-10).

The marriage of heavenly purity and earthly fecundity, particularly in the oxymoron 'terrestriall Galaxie', addresses the sacramental paradox of Incarnation, whose reconciliation of Word and flesh is not unlike the integration of celestial influence and sublunary matter in medieval cosmology. The distillation of a heavenly substance or quintessence into a typologically sacramental repository is here preparatory to interrogating the presence of 'true-Love' (13) in woman. Reasoning that four or six-leaved flowers are 'monsters' or aberrations -- that both she who is 'lesse than woman', or promiscuous, and she who 'would get above/ All thought of sexe, and think to move/ My heart to study her,

and not to love' are freaks of nature (13-8) -- the speaker settles on the 'true number five' (22). Post-Petrarchan disdain for the conventions of courtly love is momentarily withheld as we are led to believe the number five is somehow indicative of a stable balance of sensuous beauty and chaste virtue. Such expectations are 'by art' (20) -- both Donne's poem and the whole discourse on love for which falsehood in women is the only alternative to their being paragons of chastity -- thoroughly shattered in the final stanza, 'women may take us all' (30) celebrating the promiscuous side of their failure to adhere to the impossible mean. Donne thus advocates 'Falshood in woman' through an elaborate sacramental conceit in which the poet identifies with manna dew, by extension the Eucharist, and thus becomes the 'distill[ation]' or transubstantiation[7] of one in search of an earthly bride -- who, as it turns out, is most true when open to most men.

That one sacrament (the Eucharist) implicitly rationalizes the undoing of another (monogamous marriage) is certainly daring if not blasphemous. But on another level, this is but an (albeit extreme) exploration of the intersecting axes of rarefied spiritual love and carnal manifestation. Donne of course draws on a long tradition of versification which addresses just this relationship: Dante's Beatrice and Petrarch's Laura are only the most famous of mistresses whose beauty radiates from a transcendent source. Characterizing the ladder of love as 'the energy and labour of creation', Northrop Frye cites the opening lines from Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowles* to suggest that poetic endeavour and the *ars amore* are analogous:

> The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne,
> Th'assay so hard, so sharp the conquerynge,
> The dredful joye, alwey that slit to yerne:
> Al this mene I by Love
> (1-4).[8]

For Donne, as for Chaucer, such yearning is perhaps never to be satisfied, even if he jokes about it, as in 'Negative Love':

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[7] OED 'transubstantiation' cites the following: '1594 Plat *Jewell-ho.* iii. 65 The Vintners practising . . . sometimes even real transubstantiations, of white wine into Claret'. The proximity of 'distill', 'dew' and 'manna' might very well have suggested the term to a contemporary.

[8] Cited in Frye (1992) 226.

> My love, though silly, is more brave,
> For may I misse, when ere I crave,
> If I know yet, what I would have.
> (7-9).

Sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, are in the Renaissance among the most profound expressions of human desire. Donne's use of such topoi demonstrates as much their importance in considering the mysteries of love as it does his poetic fancy or capacity for far flung conceits. Their presence in 'Songs and Sonets' recognizes that sublunary and divine loves share a common desire for an ostensibly unattainable union with their respected beloveds. Sexual encounter and ingestion of the Eucharist elements are parallel intimacies, the sacraments of marriage and Holy Communion both deriving from the bridegroom-bride relationship traditionally characterizing Christ's love for the church and complemented by the physiological notion that lovers were thought to exchange vital bodily fluids -- the sighs and tears or drink and meat, as it were, of 'Loves Diet'. The conventional identification of coitus and religious imagery is frequent in Donne's poetry. Even 'The Flea', with its combination of cloister, marriage, communion and blood, suggests a sacramental twist to a literary commonplace.[9] Other poems include 'Elegie VIII: The Comparison', in which lovers are as 'devoutly nice' as 'Priests in handling reverent sacrifice' (49-50); 'Epithalamion made at Lincoln's Inn', where the bride is 'Like an appointed lambe, when tenderly/ The priest comes on his knees t'embowell her' (89-90); 'Elegie [14]: A Tale of a Citizen and his Wife', where 'wine' and 'Signe' (the wife's suggestive glance) comprise the rhyme in the final couplet (70-1).

The more than merely etymological relationship between sexual consummation and Eucharistic consumption is a feature of 'The Relique'. The poem begins by exploiting the Renaissance connection between coitus and death, Donne sanctifying as relic of his vaginal grave 'A bracelet of bright haire about the bone' (6). Having in the second stanza exercised his capacity for messianic posturing -- 'Thou shalt be a Mary Magdalen, and I/ A

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[9] For a translation of Carmen de pulice, a poem ascribed to Ovid and credited as among the earliest of many in which poets fancied themselves fleas slapped to death by their beloveds, see Brumble 148-9.

something else thereby' (17-8)[10] -- and having granted the poem scriptural status as didactic 'paper' (21), thus providing these 'Reliques' (16) with their corresponding text, Donne makes two almost inscrutable Eucharistic allusions:

> First, we lov'd well and faithfully,
> Yet knew not what wee lov'd, nor why,
> Difference of sex no more wee knew,
> Then our Guardian Angells doe,
> Comming and going, wee,
> Perchance might kisse, but not between those meales.
> Our hands ne'r toucht the seales,
> Which nature, injur'd by late law, sets free,
> These miracles wee did
> (23-31).

Like 'The Ecstasy', this poem offers two versions of the same sexual union, here progressing in platonic fashion from the purely material realm commemorated by the bracelet-relic, to the miraculous domain of 'harmelesse lovers' (22). This latter domain falls outside human history, that framed by the two 'meales' of Christ's last supper and the eschatological marriage supper of the lamb in Revelation, 'seales' indicating the *mysterium tremendum* status of genitalia which mark the boundaries of ordinary sexual experience. That such boundaries are by nature 'set free', a freedom 'injur'd' only 'by late law' -- artificial as opposed to natural law -- probably alludes to the scriptural notion that there is no marriage in heaven.[11] Because here interpenetration or union is total, complete, there is no need for the relatively limited act of coitus; neither are sacraments necessary when their *raison d'etre* has become obsolete. But again, just as in 'The Ecstasy' souls must 'descend/ T'affections, and to faculties' (65-6), so here the past tense of the final stanza integrates the miraculous experience with that which it has putatively surpassed. The final lines are less platonic celebration than sensualist reluctance:

> but now alas,
> All measure, and all language, I should passe,
> Should I tell what a miracle shee was. (31-3).

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[10] Patrides' gloss is cautious -- 'possibly Christ?': Donne (1989) 112 n18. John Shawcross argues for the poem's concern with a mis-devotion enamoured more of things -- relics -- than of God. He suggests King David for 'something else', a sinner who finds grace in the relic's miraculous powers: Shawcross 58-9. He thus approaches my sacramental reading -- relic as means of grace -- but Patrides' hunch, albeit reluctant (because certainly blasphemous), seems to me more plausible.

[11] Mt. 22.30; Mk. 12.23.

The joke that 'measure' and 'language', the poem that is 'The Relique', *do* indeed 'tell' complements the implied notion that 'shee', like the variously false/chaste mistress of Petrarchan convention, is associated as much with sensual 'mis-devotion' (13) as the more rarefied mysteries to which 'seales' and 'those meales' can only gesture.

Sexual revenge or conquest in 'The Funerall' turns on a similar conceit. A 'subtile wreath of haire' is 'The mystery, the sign you must not touch' (4), recalling the sexually inhibiting 'seales' of 'The Relique'. Messianic posturing is once again evident, if muted, this time supplemented by royal authority. In Chapter Two it was suggested that in sacraments and ceremony the early Stuart kings recognized a binding social force promoting ecclesiastical cohesiveness and uniformity.[12] Here, the speaker's sacramental or 'outward Soule' (5), the 'mystery, the sign' which 'crowns' (3) his arm, is also

> Viceroy to that, which unto heaven being gone,
> Will leave this to controule,
> And keep these limbes, her Provinces, from dissolution.
> (6-8).

But if the wreath is the *speaker's* 'outward Soule', it becomes in the second stanza that of 'a better braine' (13), the reminder of one absent 'she', who intends that he, by this token, should suffer pain, 'As prisoners then are manacled, when they'are/ condemn'd to die' (14-6). Interpenetration is thus achieved symbolically, both souls converging on this somewhat dubious manifestation of their union. Exploiting once again the sex-death trope, the spurned lover will 'bury some of you' (24), an act of revenge which, because 'she', like his soul to 'heaven . . . gone' (6), is absent, can only be explained as autoerotic. The object of desire, though absent, is yet made present through a mysterious and sexually cathected sign. But the relic which 'crowns' *this* king's arm, viceroy to his absent soul/lover, is the host of a private Mass -- sacrament to a lone communicant's masturbatory devotion. The entire poem, then, is built on an irony not unlike that of a Chaucerian monologue, enjoyed by poet and reader at the expense of a speaker who fancies

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[12] See Chapter Two 97 and 122 ff.

for himself the upper hand, so to speak. But because masturbation is neither something to be particularly ashamed nor proud of, the speaker too may share the status of *eiron*, both cynically aware of the phantasmal nature of his enterprise while nevertheless fashioning and playing the roles it suggests.

Jealousy, polygamy, marriage as sacrament and religious controversy inform the opening lines of 'Elegie 3: Change':

> Although thy hand and faith, and good workes too,
> Have seal'd thy love which nothing should undoe,
> Yea though thou fall backe, that apostasie
> Confirme thy love; yet much, much I feare thee.
> (1-4).

The sanctifying authority of a sacramental seal is applied to the pledging 'hand' of marriage, but the faith/works dichotomy central to Reformation controversy anticipates the poem's tolerance for *coitus varietas.* Augustinian *felix culpa* lies behind the love-confirming apostasy: approving the beloved's reclining (lapsarian) posture as an occasion to exercise faith, Donne qualifies the paradox of the fortunate fall with the standard proviso that it in no way condones sin.[13] 'Much I fear thee', however, is more indicative of Donne's jealousy than it is moral exhortation: not unlike the simultaneously chaste and sexually generous paragon in 'The Primrose', the beloved's wanton behaviour here paradoxically augments the value of her fidelity. Good works are nice; but *sola fide* has worth only in proximity to *femina culpa.* That the 'seal' of hand, faith and works 'should' not rather than will not be undone allows for the possibility that it may, just as the cleansing gifts of body and blood in the Eucharist do not preclude subsequent sins and the need for continued sacramental renewal. Sexual monogamy and fleeting coital bliss share with sacraments their material grasp or experience of otherwise spiritual transcendence, the species or 'accidents' changing from encounter to encounter while the 'substance' is essentially the same. The (ec)stasis to which sexual encounter aspires (the ideal permanence

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[13] St. Paul grapples with the paradox that grace increases proportional to the degree of transgression and sternly cautions against the conclusion that sin somehow advances God's glory: Rom. 5.20-6.23.

symbolized by the sacrament of marriage) is reconciled with carnal ephemerality by what can only be described as serial monogamy, a confluence of eternity and change:

> To live in one land, is captivitie,
> To runne all countries, a wild roguery;
> Waters stincke soone, if in one place they bide
> And in the vast sea are more putrifi'd:
> But when they kisse one banke, and leaving this
> Never looke backe, but the next banke doe kisse,
> Then are they purest; Change'is the nursery
> Of musicke, joy, life, and eternity.
> (29-36).

In no one place are the waters of love as pure as when they are in perpetual ebb and flow; each lap is the return to a permanence whose eternal status consists only in its constant deferral. This is indicative of a paradox central to the poetry of love: desire seeks its own perpetuation as much as its obsolescence. Marital fidelity, chastity, the ecstatic moment separating sexual tumescence and detumescence, religious ecstasy or spiritual permanence -- these ideals are recognized at all only in relation to their material and temporal counterparts, just as they invest the latter with meaning and value. If religious ceremony and ritual are eschatological, gesturing toward a fulfillment finally greater than their representational status, there is also a sense in which they resist their obsolescence. Marriage as sacrament reflects and anticipates the triumphant union of Christ and Church, even as the Eucharist looks forward to the heavenly supper where the distinction between Host and guest is perhaps finally obliterated.[14] But the temporal aspect of all such rites provides a vital and necessary counterpoint to the static *telos* whose realization is their end.

The idealized union of lovers, and that of devotee and God, rely on the sensory experience apart from which they are in danger of becoming rarefied beyond human grasp. Such is the Incarnational argument of 'Farewell to Love', where 'Things not yet knowne [and] coveted by men' are comparable to the gingerbread man 'from late faire/ His highnesse sitting in a golden Chaire' (8-12). For both, 'Our desires give them fashion, and

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[14] That the church is also the 'body of Christ' suggests an eschatological connection between the sacraments of marriage and the Eucharist. The dissemination of that body in the sacrament of Holy Communion anticipates the final supper of the lamb, which is also a wedding banquet. Herbert's 'Love (3)' addresses precisely this connection.

so/ As they waxe lesser, fall, as they sise, grow' (9-10). In a playful reversal of orthodoxy, the inexperienced lover who thinks there to be 'some Deitie in love' (2) is compared with 'Atheists' who call 'at their dying houre . . . what they cannot name, an unknowne power' (4-5). Donne's approbation of agnostics, possibly an allusion to St. Paul's encounter with the Athenian philosophers,[15] is less an assault on Love's acolytes than resignation to the ultimately insatiable nature of desire. If the gingerbread man echoes religious idolatry,[16] it suggests the tendency of ritual to become mechanical, emptied of significance, in short, stale. Love, like religious ceremony, is constantly in need of revitalization, otherwise 'What before pleas'd' will soon become a 'sorrowing dulnesse to the minde' (18-20). Yet it is not at all clear that an alternative to the cycle of worship, enjoyment and decay is offered, for even celibacy -- or atheism proper -- is 'but applying worm-seede to the Taile' (40): sooner or later the cycle must resume its inexorable motion.

If 'Farewell to Love"s gingerbread man and the cynicism of Donne's frustrated lovers suggest mediocrity or *ennui*, it is not so much due to the failure of sexual (or religious) experience to intimate adequately the mysteries it defers as it is a general failure to recognize and accept the dynamic quality of all meaningful experience, spiritual or otherwise. By setting into play the still point at which platonic ideal and transcendent bliss intersect more palpable realities, and by implicating sacramental topoi as an integral part of that process, Donne's exploration of human love suggests an Incarnational poetic in which 'His highness', so to speak, must come down from his 'golden Chaire' if his status as valorized sign is to have any real significance.

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15 'Unknowne power' echoes Acts 17.22-23, though there St. Paul is more lenient with the Athenians than Donne's 'Atheists' might have allowed.

16 In Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, the puritan minister Zeal-of-the-Land Busy denounces dolls and gingerbread as pagan effigies: Jonson 3.6, 5.5.

2
Value

Interrogation of the relationship between constancy and change lies at the heart of Donne's poetic enterprise insofar as he exploits the capacity -- indeed, the inevitable tendency -- of signs to entertain multiple significations, to base any meaning they may have on their traffic with other signs, which are, finally, the stuff of any single sign's semantic 'content'. That a flea may represent the bawdy union of lovers depends on an already established convention; that the same 'living walls of Jet' (15) constitute a cloister stretches signification to such an extent that the student of Donne can no longer see a flea in the same way, just as the student of Eliot can never entirely dissociate the concrete image of low lying fog from the abstract notion of dream-dispersed consciousness. The integration of sacramental and more profane topoi expresses a sense of immanence largely foreign to post-Reformation religious thought. The Yuletide scattering of nuts, for example, once said to be symbolic of Christ's body,[17] is at odds with a religious culture whose deity, if theoretically nearer than ever (*via scriptura* and *sola fide*), is less susceptible of apprehension through common and ordinary experience.

While on the one hand the cultural significance, or rather uniqueness, of sacrament is attenuated according to its status as but one of many poetic topoi, on the other its breadth of involvement with those other topoi embodies the very Incarnational drama sacraments proclaim. Viewed as signs, as mimetic representations, surrounded by doctrine which merely asserts their efficacy as conveyors of Incarnational truth, sacraments to a certain extent deny that very truth by failing to vitalize and embody it. Understood, on the other hand, as a symbol, as what Louis-Marie Chauvet has called the locus of a 'cultural pact' and apart from which it has no identity at all, the sacramental sign facilitates a mutual recognition among communicants, with their unique and shared experiences, who enjoy its benefits.[18] By radically extending the boundaries of such a 'pact' beyond the traditional

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[17] Collinson (1988) 53.

[18] Chauvet 121.

context of church, altar, ceremony and received doctrine, Donne allows sacraments to inform a poetic fleshing of the Word they otherwise indicate only through official religious observance. Human experience, in all its variety, is embraced in the Incarnation by the Word that is all; it is only appropriate, then, that in a poetic context as semantically dynamic as Donne's the primary symbols of that most radical of Christian claims are fully interpellated among his wide ranging concerns and interests.

Given the traditional characterization of sacraments' soteriological function as redemption or the purchase of pardon, it is thus not surprising to find Donne combining sacramental and monetary topoi. As the intersection of heavenly and sublunary loves marks a point analogous to the Incarnation's integration of supreme Love and flesh, so is the nature or character of monetary value a matter analogous to the question of sacramental *modus*. Just as the capacity of a sacrament to manifest Presence is inextricable from the religious discourse which characterizes it, so does the power of money to signify wealth derive from both its apparently inherent worth and its socially determined status as *currency*.

Preference for woman's 'Centrique part' (36) over woman's virtue in 'Elegie [18]: Loves Progress' is analogous to fondness for pagan over civil religious ceremony and for infernal gold apart from its heavenly correspondence. Love is 'an infernal god and underground . . . where gold and fire abound', the sacrifices due its godhead lying not 'on Altars' but rather 'pits and holes'. And 'Although we see Celestial bodies move/ Above the earth,' it is 'the earth we Till and love' (29-34). The occult tie joining metals and their celestial counterparts is all but severed, the collapse of its vertical stability complemented both by the motion from 'Altars' to 'pits and holes' and by the phallic/agricultural plow of Donne's lover/husbandman. The glitter of precious metals, the carnal essence of woman, pagan sacrifice: these are perhaps the 'strange shapes' of a love 'oe'r lick[ed]' by one who fails to 'propose/ The right true end of love' (2-5):

> I when I value gold, may think upon
> The ductilness, the application,

> The wholesomness, the ingenuitie,
> From rust, from soil, from fire ever free:
> But if I love it, 'tis because 'tis made
> By our new nature (Use) the soul of trade.
> (11-5).

But the opposition Donne draws here is as disingenuous as it is ingenious, for the qualities he ascribes to gold as intrinsic are surely part of the discourse or 'Use' which invests the metal with value in the first place. That the motions of trade could have a soul only augments the sly observation that whatever intrinsic value a thing may have is impossible to extricate from the complex web of extrinsic qualities, notions, and abstractions which bring it to our attention *as such* -- which unearth it, so to speak.

Whereas Donne's erotic poetry concerns the relationship between constancy and change, spiritual and earthly love, here the appropriate dichotomy comprising the vertical and horizontal components of our axes model consists, respectively, of value-sign as ontologically self-possessing (i.e., as embodying the value it signifies), and that which is derived from circulation or '(Use) the soul of trade.' In his archaeology of wealth in early modern Europe, money, according to Michel Foucault, derived its power as standard from 'the basis of its own material reality as wealth.' On the other hand, 'the monetary sign cannot define its exchange value, and can be established as a mark only on a metallic mass which in turn defines its value in the scale of other commodities.'[19] This tension between 'money-as-sign' and 'money-as-commodity'[20] seems to me analogous to that which obtains between sacrament as static symbol and sacrament as the fluid product of a culture's vested interests. Calvin's emphasis on communal *use*, while nevertheless maintaining for sacraments an ulterior divinity, is symptomatic of precisely this tension. The problem, of course, is not new to the contemporaries of Foucault's early modern episteme: it is, rather, the same old paradoxical problem the theologians call Incarnation.

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19 Foucault (1970) 168-74.

20 *Ibid.*, 181.

In recognizing the inevitability of change, Donne also knows that overuse can devalue a thing, just as the value of a currency may drop proportional to the abundance of its circulation. Something of this is evident in 'Elegie II: The Anagram' where 'Women are all like Angels; the faire be/ Like those which fell to worse' (29-30). The pun on 'Angels' suggests a triple conceit: beautiful women are more in demand and thus cheapened through sexual use, not unlike the pride or over-estimated worth of the heavenly host which fell with Satan, nor again the increased circulation of coinage and its resulting devaluation. The less admired of women may prove in the end a better investment:

> Oh what a soveraigne Plaister will shee bee
> If thy past sinnes have taught thee jealousie!
> (37-8).

Flavia's 'Anagram of a good face', like a sacrament, acts as medicinal for 'past sinnes', while the pun on 'soveraigne' (king and coin) establishes both the royal status afforded courtly Presence (in this case, perhaps, the King's touch as cure for scrofula as much as for 'jealousie') and the anagram's currency as acceptable substitute for 'good Angels'. It is the surface arrangement of that face or coin, its 'accidental' appearance or currency rather than its substance, which solicits admiration, envy or worship. Just as the intrinsic value of a sacrament is inextricable from the institution which valorizes it; just as the value of a currency is the unstable product of need, trade and the circulation of wealth; so too woman's beauty is best viewed as the fortuitous arrangement of common materials, the same 'leane dearth of words' put 'but one way' (17-8).

The economics of inside/outside or intrinsic versus extrinsic value are concentrated on the poetic endeavour itself in 'To the Countess of Bedford. On New-yeares day', where the doctrine of transubstantiation is implicitly analogous to the dangers inherent in the art of praise. The poet's verse, like a sick body, is enlivened by 'strong agents' and 'extracts' (18-20) which also have the capacity to obliterate that body:

> So, my verse built of your just praise, might want
> Reason and likelihood, the firmest Base,
> And made of miracle, now faith is scant,
> Will vanish soone, and so possesse no place,

> And you, and it, too much grace might disgrace.
> (21-5).

Reformation polemic surfaces with the observation that the multiplication of miracles is a poor substitute for faith, just as excessive flattery undermines its own ends. But the sense here is not so much a fear of excess or undue praise as an inability to contain that which far surpasses the boundaries of poetic encomium. Just as in 'La Corona' Donne is disdainful of those who would reduce Christ, 'selfe-lifes infinity to'a span,/ Nay to an inch' ('Crucifying' 7-8), so here he wonders

> how I
> One corne of one low anthills dust, and lesse,
> Should name, know, or expresse a thing so high,
> And not an inch, measure infinity.
> (27-30).

Praise is sacrificial, and, not unlike the communicants' offering of self at Holy Communion, always falls short of the praise due its object, or, like the Eucharist species, embodies that which must surely exceed its grasp. Like a sacrament, praise must avoid both excessive show, which draws more attention to itself than the object it represents, and despair at total inadequacy, which would render the whole effort pointless. The solution is to turn all over to God, who 'useth oft, when such a heart mis-sayes,/ To make it good, for, such a praiser prayes' (34-5). Thus far we have seen Donne repeatedly demystify sacraments by drawing them from their vertical dimension into the horizontal flow of secular topoi. Here, because both poem and poet receive their grace from patron and deity respectively, it would appear that it is the horizontal axis that is rotated upward into alignment with its vertical counterpart. On the other hand, though the instructions which follow are assumed to be of divine authority -- 'I cannot tell them' (31) -- it is nevertheless the speaker who confidently corroborates God's decrees with the repeated 'He will' (ten occurrences from 36-53). This appropriation of the divine voice to sanction his admonishing of Lucy's conduct at court ends by invoking a Reform-inflected Baptism -- penitential tears and heavenly register included:

> From need of teares he will defend your soule,
> Or make a rebaptizing of one teare;
> Hee cannot, (that's, he will not) dis-inroule
> Your name; and when with active joy we heare
> This private Ghospell, then'tis our New Yeare.
> (61-5).

Even the parenthetical qualification, highlighting as it does one of the chief implications of (and objections against) predestinarian theology, questions this external Will's sovereignty and thus calls attention to the speaker's self-deifying posture. In hindsight, then, the cipher which in the opening stanza the speaker fancies himself to be reverberates the paradoxes of negative theology: 'of stuffe and forme perplext,/ Whose *what*, and *where*, in disputation is,/ If I should call mee *any thing*, should misse' (3-5). What begins as an epideictic strategy disclaiming its own artifice in an effort to elevate the object of praise ends, willy nilly, by establishing *itself* as both officiating priest and stubborn (if always deferred) Presence.

The relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic value is interrogated in Donne's verse letter, 'To the Countesse of Huntingdon: Man to Gods image'. Beginning with the conventional notion that woman's inferiority is scripturally sanctioned, Donne proceeds to make an exception of Egerton's stepdaughter, comparing her to the miraculous appearance of a star among others whose 'milde innocence' (9) is but that of 'vagrant transitory Comets' (5). Initially like the star which guided the magi to the nativity, the Countess is then afforded a more boldly messianic status. Virtue, in falling 'So low as woman' and thus apparently 'neare her end' (20), is in fact

> not stoop'd, but rais'd; exil'd by men
> She fled to heaven, that's heavenly things, that's you;
> She was in all men, thinly scatter'd then,
> But now amass'd, contracted in a few.
>
> She guilded us: But you are gold, and Shee,
> Us she inform'd, but transubstantiates you,
> Soft dispositions which ductile bee,
> Elixarlike, she makes not cleane, but new.
> (21-8).

Herself the Incarnation of virtue, Huntingdon is earthly host to its otherwise transcendent being. Where 'ductilness' of gold in 'Loves Progress' is subordinated to the lover's desire

or 'use', here the elasticity of the soft metal is subject to a more divine manipulation. Again, as with the New Year's letter to the Countess of Bedford, the poet denies that his praise constitutes the subject's value; rather, 'my ill reaching you might there grow good,/ But I remaine a poyson'd fountaine still' (53-4). Allusion to the Roman doctrine (and alchemical transformation), however, is part of a celebration of immanence analogous to that of the Incarnation embodied in the Nativity. On one level the Countess is to virtue what the Magi's star is to the infant Jesus, or what the Virgin is to the same, or, again, what the Eucharist is to the Presence it embodies; indeed, 'woman' is the nadir of Virtue's sun-like progress. And yet the 'low names' of wife and mother in which, 'for our sakes', virtue 'abide[s]' (29-36) are integral with 'The manger-cradled infant', in whom, also for our sakes, divinity abides, 'God below' (14). It is that Incarnational paradox which does not allow Donne to separate the husk of woman-wife-mother from the kernel of an unsullied and transcendent virtue. But just as Tridentine orthodoxy insists that the species become God in transubstantiation -- and not the converse, as anti-Roman charges of breadengod worship imply -- so Huntingdon is redeemed insofar as she is 'soft' and 'ductile', willing to have the substance of her being -- woman-wife-mother -- displaced by the elusive 'vertue' with which the poet is finally obsessed. Ben Jonson's disdain for 'An Anatomy of the World' -- concerned that that poem's 'shee' receives praise more properly belonging to the Virgin Mary -- might have equally applied here; but Donne's response that in *The First Anniversary* he intended the idea of a woman and not as Drury was[21] finds parallel in this poem's reluctance to conflate Huntingdon and 'vertue' in a single 'shee'. As the final proviso clarifies, 'I was your Prophet in your yonger dayes,/ And now your Chaplaine, *God in you to praise* ' (69-70; emphasis added).

The sacramental significance of money is perhaps nowhere more explicit than in 'Elegie [11]: The Bracelet', a poem which deals with otherwise serious matters in a rather playful and lighthearted manner. The lover here bemoans not so much his loss of a love

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[21] See below, 200.

memento or 'silly old moralitie' (5) as that of the gold 'Angels' (9), the 'twelve innocents' (17) which he must now smelt to form the 'seavenfold chaine' (7) symbolizing the lovers' union. Midway through this longest of Donne's elegies we find the distraught speaker responding to his mistress' attempt to console him:

> Thou say'st (alas) the gold doth still remaine,
> Though it be chang'd, and put into a chaine,
> So in the first faine angels, resteth still
> Wisdome and knowledge; but'tis turn'd to ill:
> As these should doe good workes; and should provide
> Necessities; but now must nurse thy pride,
> And they are still bad angels; Mine are none,
> For, forme gives being, and their forme is gone:
> (69-76).

Apparent again is the familiar conceit identifying deflated coinage with the Satanic rebels of Christian mythology. Denying, in effect, that angels so fallen retain their essential or substantial goodness, the speaker implicitly compares the error to the scholastic separation of matter and form which, we recall, allows the doctrine of transubstantiation to assert the presence of the body of Christ despite appearances.[22] Aware of Aristotelian categories, he knows that substance does not reside under or prior to form, but rather that matter and form together comprise any substance. Now a mere chain rather than the liquid asset ('angels') it once was, his gold no longer *is*, for 'forme gives being, and their forme is gone'. And yet, though seeming to have accepted his total loss by asserting the sovereignty of change -- substance subject to formal manifestation, gold to angels or bracelet -- the speaker follows with an optimism tantamount to conceding the scholastic perversion: 'Pitty these Angels yet; their dignities/ Passe Vertues, Powers, and Principalities' (77-8). Obsession with a finally intrinsic, immutable value is particularly apparent in the sequence of dismissals opening the poem, where the bracelet's status as token reminder of both the beloved's hair and hand, and the lovers' union, is but 'leaven of vile soder' relative to the gold's 'first state of . . . Creation' (10-2). On the other hand, the angels were never more

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[22] Elsewhere Donne asserts that 'if all the *Substances* were spent,/ 'Twere madnes to enquire of Accident': 'Elegie on the untimely death of the incomparable Prince, Henry' (67-8).

nor less than the means to an end, 'To gaine new friends, t'appease great enemies' (15), though even here the *power* to gain and appease is derived from their prior intrinsic value.

Though not explicitly endorsing Augustinian depravity, the poet does refuse to accept as consolation the capacity of these now fallen (smelted) angels still to 'doe good works' and 'provide/ Necessities' (73-4). As we have seen, however, their status is at the very least ambiguous: we should thus be wary of assigning much confessional or polemical value to the theological allusions. It would be erroneous, for example, to assume Donne piously denounces excessive reliance on external means of grace. Indeed, in the following lines --

> But, thou art resolute; Thy will be done;
> Yet with such anguish, as her onely sonne
> The Mother in the hungry grave doth lay,
> Unto the fire these Martyrs I betray
> (79-82)

-- the speaker assigns his angels veiled messianic status while reserving for himself the role of Virgin Mary, quite a blasphemy for one concerned with theological niceties. If sacramental efficacy is dismissed altogether -- suggested by the speaker's assertion that the smelted angels, 'in the furnace throwne,/ And punisht for offences not their owne . . . save not me' nor 'doe not ease my paines,/ When in that hell they'are burnt and tyed in chains' (19-22) -- the dismissal's dogmatic currency is subordinated to the poem's intellectual playfulness. While their ubiquitous presence suggests Donne's profound interest in matters theological, the poem's ironic tone and ostensibly non-theological *inventio* allows various dogmas to be explored, rigorously assumed, confused or abandoned, according to rhetorical expedience. This is not to say that such matters are *only* poetic accoutrements; that they are woven into the poem with such subtlety suggests Donne had thought rather extensively about them. Rather, the poem reveals the doctrinal iconoclasm of a restless and complex religious sensibility, one possessing a keen theological understanding and yet willing to subject such knowledge to a boundless and expansive creative impulse.

If sacramental and soteriological topoi appear to provide but light amusement in a poem ostensibly indifferent to theological concerns, their very obscurity may contribute to what is in fact political-religious polemic after all. In a lengthy reference to Catholic/Protestant conflict on the continent, the speaker valorizes his Angels above foreign currencies. Whereas French crowns are dismissed for their debased value -- 'So pale, so lame, so leane, so ruinous' even if 'French Kings most Christian be' (26-27) -- 'Spanish Stamps' (29) are not so easily written off. The former fall by 'their countreys naturall rot' (24), while the latter stubbornly maintain value despite their intrinsic vileness: 'unlickt beare-whelps, unfil'd pistolets' (31). Indeed, 'as Catholique as their King' (30), such coins carry substantial influence and power -- but in the negative sense of false sacraments:

> Which, as the soule quickens head, feet and heart,
> As streames like veines, run through th'earth's every part ,
> Visit all Countries, and have slily made
> Gorgeous *France*, ruin'd, ragged and decay'd,
> *Scotland*, which knew no State, proud in one day,
> And mangled seventeen-headed *Belgia*
> (37-42).

Whereas the speaker's pure gold when 'put into a chaine' does *not* 'still remaine', Spanish gold, in keeping with the doctrine of transubstantiation, retains its inherent or substantial (in this case evil) value whatever the fortunes -- or accidents, so to speak -- of political power. False or poisonous sacraments -- or Spanish currency -- are as gall to those whose spiritual or economic constitutions are suited to more worthy fare (like the speaker's English Angels!), or potentially (and deceptively) beneficial to the disaffected who, like Scotland, might find them attractive because temporarily empowering. Later, in what is perhaps a further veiled jibe at the parti-coloured pict,[23] the speaker includes in his litany against the (un)lucky finder of the bracelet (adulterated Angels) the curse that he 'be with forraine gold brib'd to betray/ Thy Countrey, and faile both of it and thy pay' (97-8). That the eventual undoing of the bribed is analogous to that of those receiving popish sacraments is suggested in the speaker's wish that 'the next thing thou stoop'st to reach, contain/

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[23] Marvell's name for the unruly and, it is implied, disloyal state: 'Horatian Ode' (105-6).

Poyson, whose nimble fume rot thy moist braine' (99-100) and eventually prove a false and therefore ineffectual rite: 'at thy lives last moment,/ May thy swolne sinnes themselves to thee present' (109-10). And though the final *volte face* accommodates true grace, *this* messiah-madonna's sincerity remains somewhat ambivalent:

> But, I forgive; repent thee honest man:
> Gold is Restorative, restore it then:
> But if from it thou beest loath to depart,
> Because 'tis cordiall, would 'twere at thy heart.
> (111-4).

The analogy of foreign influence and false sacraments is based on that ubiquitous anatomical trope, the body-politic. And though 'Catholique' Spain receives much blame for the contamination of otherwise godly states, both loathed 'finder' and bracelet (the latter signifying *formerly* English coin) suggest even greater contempt for domestic (Scottish) as opposed to continental communicants. As sacraments may be positively efficacious or not according to confessional context; as a currency's value is contingent upon economic and political factors external to its intrinsic worth (not the king's real but rather his stamped face); just so are domestic political bodies offered cordial or poison -- invited to commune or excommunicated -- according to whether they bear the appropriate marks of national identity, for in the end it is 'forme gives being'.

Donne's interest in the nature of a given thing's identity -- of whether it is somehow innate or externally determined or both -- has a personal as well as an intellectual dimension. The issue of self-determination and personal agency must have been crucial for one whose vocational fortunes may have seemed somewhat imposed; but while his eventual ordination hardly marks Donne's resistance against circumstances beyond his control, his later verse and sermons bear witness to a vibrant and idiosyncratic personality. That Donne was sensitive to the partly royal nature of those forces governing his destiny is evident in a verse letter, 'To Mr Tilman . . .', in which sacramental and monetary topoi

inform a rumination on the nature and authority of the priestly office. Responding to Edward Tilman's ordination, apparently a surprise *volte face*,[24] Donne writes

> Thou art the same materials, as before,
> Onely the stampe is changed; but no more.
> And as new crowned Kings alter the face,
> But not the monies substance; so hath grace
> Chang'd onely Gods old Image by Creation,
> To Christs new stampe, at this thy Coronation
> (13-8).

The Aristotelian categories of substance and accident, intrinsic to scholastic and Tridentine sacramental thought, are involved in an ostensibly non-sacramental analogy linking the authorities of ordination and coin.[25] If (sur)'face' and 'substance' echo transubstantiation, however, the analogy *denies* change for the latter. Just as currency has value by virtue of bearing the king's stamp while its material significance is unchanged, so is Tilman's ordination the external mark of an authority which, though otherwise absent, continually informs his office. If the king is deposed or withdraws his authority, the coin may become worthless even though it bears his visage or mark; likewise, Donne implicitly cautions, ordination does not confer power in such a way as to preclude its ever being withdrawn. It is 'Christs new stamp', the *use* to which Tilman is put, the office with which he is charged, that ultimately carries authority. Similarly, according to Reform theology, sacramental efficacy is never *ex opere operato*, never conferred on the species by virtue of priestly manipulation or in such a way as to grant them intrinsic value. The Tridentine formula is subverted insofar as its categories are appropriated to ensure that the conferral of power is limited, always in some way held back, and in such a way as to guarantee total return, just as the flow of sacramental 'virtue' in a Calvinist scheme never compromises the radically transcendent status of its always absent source.

Viewed one way, the analogy reinforces the king's *iure divino* status, for his role is identified with the elusive source of both priestly and sacramental authority; viewed another

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[24] Tilman became Deacon in 1618, but not after having expressed, like Donne himself, considerable reluctance to take orders: Gardner 639 and Appendix D.

[25] It was not uncommon among Jacobean and Caroline divines to treat ordination as a sacrament, even if Baptism and Holy Communion were the only officially sanctioned sacraments: A. Milton 475-9.

way, however, the coin analogy's valorization of 'accidental' as opposed to 'substantial' change suggests a more complex relationship among God, king, priest and representations of power. Contrary to anti-Roman polemic, the doctrine of transubstantiation may in fact *deny* certain powers to the priest inasmuch as it suggests an autonomous efficacy for the species, once consecrated. The priest's sacerdotal authority and even episcopacy *iure divino* may actually be augmented by a Calvinist view of the Eucharist which insists on the reality of Incarnation while yet withholding full sensuous presence. In privileging an authority finally extrinsic to the elements which carry its mark, such doctrine ensures that Presence is always deferred, never settling on one identifiable locus, subject to ceaseless negotiation among recipient, God and priest; and yet the latter stands as the *visible* and *audible* mediator of that Presence, even if he too, in ordination, is but the substance over which Presence presides without ever making more than 'accidental' contact. Preachers, writes Donne, 'give kingdomes to more/ Than Kings give dignities' and 'As Angels out of clouds, from Pulpits speake', bringing 'man to heaven, and heaven againe to man' (39-48). Thus the coin analogy also allows that while the substance of a thing always remains, its malleable or 'accidental' surface (or the priest's earthly authority) is of a significance that is in fact *substantial.* If the preacher's second birth is but the stamp of an authority never fully his own, it is nevertheless of a currency whose value surely exceeds that of the earthly crown.[26] An analogy in which ordination corresponds to royal minting may, by virtue of syllogism, imply the priest's *sub-* ordination to that crown: as coin is to king and priest to God, so therefore is priest to king. But analogy, of course, is not absolute identification. Donne's valorization of the pulpit allows that the priestly conduit of divine virtue is invested with powers exceeding those of God's secular viceroy. When divested of an unequivocal Real Presence and instead assigned the status of metaphor or token symbol of

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[26] It is important to remember that the Oath of Allegiance was initially James' response to the threat of papal authority surpassing that of the secular ruler: A. Milton 56-7. That Donne's poem reinforces royal prerogative while yet elevating priestly access to the divine a notch or two higher attests to the ambivalences of an ecclesiastical establishment traditional in its respect for clerical succession and authority while sympathetic to the nationalist polemic in which it found itself implicated.

remote realities, the species are separated from their referent by a space into which a host of theological formulae are then put into play, each one vying to bridge the divide. Similarly, the priest's status as God's representative, though 'accidental' in the scholastic sense, is nevertheless reinforced to the degree in which his ministry is effective -- in preaching as an angel and thereby bringing men to heaven. This allows for considerable ambiguity as to the final extent of his authority, just as, in a reverse manner, royal authority is limited by the efficacy of its representations, in this case the currency of its visage.

The fluid and current value of a sacrament or coin is an essential aspect of their power to signify, whatever the extent of their intrinsic worth. Incarnation characterizes the intersection of cultural or social pact with the *mysterium tremendum* of a valorized symbol, whether the Presence thought to resonate in, with or through consecrated bread, or the magical glitter of gold. The letter to Tilman extends the interrogation of value and identity to include somewhat veiled reflection on the nature and mutual relevance of royal and priestly power; it thus anticipates the subject of the following section, namely Donne's relationship with that most elusive of interests, the Stuart court. If sacramental Incarnation characterizes the dichotomies of intrinsic/extrinsic value and rarefied/sublunary loves, it also suggests a royal analogy in the intersection of realm and court, the constituents and heart of the body politic -- or, inverting 'Satyre 3's critique of Power, the 'rough streame' and its 'calme head' (104).

3
Court

The intersecting axes model may characterize Donne's understanding of the relevance of sacramental topoi for court politics and social identity. Because the vertical or transcendent dimension of the Eucharist is never apprehended apart from some horizontal or spatio-temporal manifestation, the point of intersection determines in what manner and on whom

such divine grace is conferred. In wrenching sacramental topoi from their sacred contexts to explore erotic and platonic love or the nature of monetary signification, Donne exercises a power over language that destabilizes given objects' received cultural identities and establishes new relationships that expand our understanding of their respective natures. If this poetic prerogative permits a relatively innocuous activity, it is of more immediate social and political relevance when king and court are included in the cultural sphere it investigates.

The student of Shakespeare knows well the anatomical identification of king and nation as components of a vast body. *Richard II* investigates the idea that the king is quite literally the lifeblood of his realm; with its highly ritualized scenes dramatizing the transfer of royal power, together with Richard's hyperbolic sense of self-sacrifice, the play ceremonially documents and interrogates the issue of divine right. Similarly, Hamlet's speech comparing the effects of Claudius' drunken revelry (metaphorically, of course, his unfitness to be king) to the 'o'erleaven[ing]' of 'some vicious mole' that threatens national reputation is one of the more famous appeals to the intimate connection of royal and common weal.[27] Contrary to the threat of a corrupted royal power *within*, Donne's bracelet elegy, as we have seen, exploits the notion that a *foreign* currency may act as a false sacrament contaminating the body politic from without. However, if sacramental topoi may serve a xenophobic nationalism, Donne was also capable of deploying such imagery to address the more insular politics among court, courtier, and king.

In 'Metempsycosis' or 'The Progresse of the Soule', the 'deathlesse soule' of the poem's subtitle is at one point described as a 'Prince' who 'sends her faculties/ To all her limbes, distant as Provinces' (334-5), the great fish in which she resides sucking in 'every thing/ That passeth neare' (325-6). The whale has no need to hunt for its food; 'as an officer' he simply 'Stayes in his court, at his owne net, and there/ All suitors of all sorts

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[27] *Hamlet* 1.4.23-38. For an anthropological treatment of the royal/sacramental conflation see Frazer 264-93 and 479-94.

themselves enthrall' (321-3). Eucharistic imagery is associated with this leviathan court, both by way of the conspiring 'Thresher, and steel-beak'd Sword-fish' who are unable to do 'Good to themselves by his death (they did not eate/ His flesh, nor suck those oyles, which thence outstreat)' (344-51), and by way of those who *do* benefit from this otherwise unfortunate death:

> a scoff, and prey, this tyran dyes,
> And (his owne dole) feeds with himself all companies.
> (359-60).

That the soul's leviathan-body and not the soul itself is the sacrificed 'slaine king' allows for the king's resurrection, so to speak, among the followers for whom he is sacrificed and consumed. These now transfer their adoration to some palpable (and powerful) object, the new Prince, for 'h'is now dead, to whom they should show/ Love' (363-8).

'Satyre 4' combines court and sacramental topoi with the question of religious confessional identity to document the divided mind of one whose contempt for the courtier's social extravagancies is tempered by a recognition of his own courtly aspirations. The tale of his encounter at court is recounted by the speaker from the perspective of one who has passed through a purgatory, 'such as fear'd hell is/ A recreation, and scant map', and is about to take Holy Communion: 'Well; I may now receive, and die' (1-4).[28] Pausing to reflect on his (mis)adventures, he compares himself with 'Glaze which did goe/ To'a Masse in jest' (8-9), got caught, but was reluctant to pay the fine. Just so, says the speaker,

> it pleas'd my destinie
> (Guilty of my sin of going), to think me
> As prone to all ill, and of good as forget-
> full, as proud, as lustfull, and as much in debt,
> As vaine, as witlesse, and as false as they
> Which dwell at court, for once going that way.
> (11-6).

About to receive a true sacrament, the speaker turns, for comparison, to the false mass of the Roman Catholic church, thus framing the two extremes of his experience: reluctant but

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28 Donne (1989) 229 n1.

enthralled courtier, and newly devout penitent. But if the Roman Mass is demonized in its alignment with the nefarious court, the suggestion of a purgatorial remission for sins and the suggested context of auricular confession -- the speaker's tale prior to receiving the sacrament -- are far from immune to charges of popery. The irony anticipates and underscores the speaker's reluctance to abandon the court he vociferously denounces, and, implicitly, the Roman Catholic church with which it is aligned. The perspective of confident hindsight with which he begins his tale is thus immediately short-circuited, casting suspicion on the righteous indignation which follows.

The court/mass analogy is further exploited when the speaker finds to his dismay that in opposing the macaroon he succumbs to a *tête à tête* itself not unlike the sparring of court wits, and describes his naivety with a pun suggesting the Roman sign of the cross:

> But as Itch
> Scratch'd unto smart, and as blunt iron ground
> Into an edge, hurts worse: So, I (foole) found,
> Crossing hurt mee
> (88-91).

Whereas the mention of purgatory and auricular confession undermine explicit antipopery, 'Crossing' here nicely captures the speaker's awareness that by virtue of engaging the despised courtier's braggadocio he implicates himself in the court 'mass' he despises. More telling is the reference to court as 'our Presence' and 'the Presence'. The first occurrence of the term is with respect to the mockery of the English court by a 'waxen garden' imported from Italy: 'Just such gay painted things, which no sappe, nor/ Tast have in them, ours are' (169-73). Disdain for the shallow trappings of courtly posturing is complemented by contempt for gaudy Italian fashion which 'at London flouts our Presence' (171), thus again suggesting the Roman mass and, perhaps, the sacerdotal proclivities of the more avant garde of English divines. This becomes more clear when the third and final occurrence of the term coincides with a description of the vainly apparelled courtier, whose entrance at court/mass is preceded by a kind of auricular confession turned spectacle and made all the more incriminating, from a Protestant perspective, in its association with Islam:

> Would not Heraclitus laugh to see Macrine,
> From hat, to shooe, himself at doore refine,
> As if the Presence were a Moschite, and lift
> His skirts and hose, and call his clothes to shrift.
> Making them confesse not only mortall
> Great staines and holes in them; but veniall
> Feathers and dust, wherewith they fornicate:
> (197-203).

Appearance and dress are formally offered as evidence of the courtier's worthiness to proceed to the inner sanctum, just as confession is the prerequisite for receiving the Eucharist. This particular mockery underscores the speaker's ironic stance, for the poem itself is confessional, the final and personal revelation of one about to receive sacramental pardon and enter fully into a Presence of another sort.

The confusion of identity charted by the speaker's ironic involvement in court practices he ostensibly loathes is similar to the preacher of the 1626 Christmas sermon who engages in anti-Roman scorn while nevertheless endorsing a sacramental theology differing little, if at all, from that of his perceived Roman adversary. As we have seen, the poem incorporates just such a duplicity into its rhetorical framework, figuratively identifying Whitehall as the locus of popish ceremony and then subverting the speaker's pretended aloofness. The collapse of boundaries distinguishing true from false sacraments ironically suggested in the opening lines anticipates, we said, an undermining of authentic Reform penitence. The analogue linking the issues of religious and social identity becomes glaringly evident in the figure of the courtier compared to 'a young Preacher' (209) who both 'protests protests protests/ So much as at Rome would serve to have throwne/ Ten Cardinalls into the Inquisition' and 'whispered by Jesu, so often, that A/ Pursevant would have ravish'd him away/ For saying of our Ladies psalter' (212-17). The artful wit, whose chameleon qualities allow him comfortably to negotiate his social world, is not unlike the politic divine, comfortable among puritan moderates while appreciative of his Roman Catholic heritage. In any case, 'Preachers which are/ Seas of Wits and Arts' have recourse to Baptism by which they might 'Drowne the sinnes of this place'. The speaker, who is 'but a scarce brooke' -- and perhaps a soon-to-be 'young Preacher'? -- is happy 'To wash

the staines away' (237-41) by settling for the sacrament of the Eucharist, thus to 'receive, and die'. But in coming full circle he is back to where he started -- on the verge of an absolution already contaminated by the world it ritually forsakes. Similar to the 1626 Christmas sermon, where the Eucharist marks the intersection of divine Presence and the temporal lives of Donne's auditory, sacramental grace here instantiates the ambivalence of his courtly aspirations. His speaker recognizes that the only way to enjoy the benefits emanating from that mysterious Presence at court is through the rituals which both inscribe and are derived from its value as a source of social prestige, power and influence. And though asserting preference for a Presence divorced from the exigencies of courtly ritual, he knows that his 'loneness is', after all, 'but Spartanes fashion' (68), forever implicated in that which it proposes to leave behind.

Donne's ambivalent relationship with the court is suggested in 'Satyre 4' by a potentially autobiographical remark alluding to the circumstances surrounding 'Ecclogue: 1613. December 26' and the 'Epithalamion' it accompanies. Titled in several manuscripts 'Epithalamion at the Marriage of the Earl of Somerset', these poems celebrate the scandal-plagued nuptials of Robert Carr and Lady Frances Howard, who were soon to be convicted for the poisoning of Sir Thomas Overbury, who, as secretary to Somerset, had been outspoken in his opposition to the marriage, which followed Howard's all too recent divorce from the Earl of Essex. Donne's subsequent appointment to Overbury's old post may thus be related to Idios' reluctant courtiership, and perhaps provide the background for a reference in 'Satyre 4' to one 'who by poyson/ Hasts to an Offices reversion' (101-2).[29] If the latter poem can thus be dated as roughly contemporary with the Overbury scandal, it may provide some insight into Donne's thoughts at a time when his vocational destiny was still uncertain but about to be decided.

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[29] For more on Donne's involvement in the Overbury scandal and the relatively late dating of 'Satyre IV' see Patterson (1990) 51-2. Patrides notes John Shawcross' dating of the satires in the 1590's but allows that several may have been composed later: Donne (1989) 213.

Donne's ambivalent attitude toward the court is also apparent in the 'Ecclogue'. A description of the nature and scope of royal power echoes Calvin's virtualist sacramental theology, which holds that Christ's body, while really and truly present by virtue of the sacrament, nevertheless remains in heaven.[30] At first rejecting Idios' insistence that 'As heaven, to men dispos'd, is every where,/ So are those Courts, whose Princes animate,/ Not onely all their house, but all their State' (40-2), Allophanes argues that closer contact is necessary, that metal buried in the earth has the value of gold only if 'heaven gild it with his eye' (64). In keeping with his name, which suggests duplicity, Allophanes then advances a description of court not unlike Idios' own:

> As, for divine things, faith comes from above,
> So, for best civill use, all tinctures move
> From higher powers; From God religion springs,
> Wisdome, and honour from the use of Kings.
> Then unbeguile thy selfe, and know with mee,
> That Angels, though on earth employd they bee,
> Are still in heav'n, so is hee still at home
> That doth, abroad, to honest actions come.
> (65-72).

Like a Calvinist sacrament, angels (and would-be courtiers) carry the royal 'tincture' by virtue of 'use' or, more accurately, 'honest actions'. As such they not only refer back to court as from a distance but in fact manifest its central Presence, bearing, so to speak, the Kings real *and* his stamped face. But just as sacramental grace, like heaven, is 'every where' only 'to men dispos'd' -- and, in a strict Calvinist scheme, such as are disposed by God alone -- so does Idios' exclusion from court compromise its authority over him. This is ironically evident in a series of questions by which Allophanes celebrates the real court as implicitly superior to Idios' 'Country of Courts', asking, for example, whether for the latter

> there is no ambition, but to'obey,
> Where men need whisper nothing, and yet may;
> Where the Kings favours are so plac'd, that all
> Find that the King therein is liberall
> To them, in him, because his favours bend
> To vertue, to the which they all pretend? (79-84).

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[30] See Introduction 26-7.

Allophanes implies that the real court does in fact possess such qualities, which, for Idios perhaps, is less promotion than criticism of a world from which he is estranged: that obedience can equal ambition, together with both the ambiguous object of 'pretend' ('vertue' or 'favours'?) and its pun (aspire or dissimulate?), suggests that Allophanes' court may be one in which it *is* 'levity to trust' and where 'Kings' *are* in fact *not* just. That Idios cannot produce a 'history' book containing any precedent for Allophanes' just court (76) is only a further indictment of the realm Allophanes adores. Idios finally confirms the irony of Allophanes' praise by citing its content as the very reason he left: 'To know and feele all this, and not to have/ Words to expresse it, makes a man a grave/ Of his own thoughts' (93-5). But is this really much different from the alternative, a 'reclus'd hermit', even one who may 'know/ More of heavens glory' than the zealous at court? (48-9). While Idios would rather not 'stay/ At a great feast, having no grace to say' (95-6), and would complete the self-abnegation with a burnt offering (227), his alter-ego Allophanes intercepts the otherwise obscure sacrifice in order to 'lay'it', as he says, 'upon/ Such Altars, as prize your devotion' (234-5).

If Allophanes and Idios differ as to who is better off, they agree on one essential point: that the influence of the court, like that of heaven, is far reaching. Allophanes avers that only at court can one fully adore and appreciate royal presence, while Idios maintains a less ceremonial, unadorned and private piety -- in the 'heart' where 'man need no farther looke' (50-2); but their descriptions of royal sovereignty are almost identical, whether Idios' animating prince of states, or Allophanes' divine 'tinctures' that 'move/ From higher powers' as 'from God religion springs'. But unlike opposed sacramental doctrines, for which Presence can only be a matter of opinion, the Presence at court is a present reality; whereas Idios echoes Allophanes in promoting kings' ubiquity, he also knows (but does not explicitly concede) Allophanes' point that nothing compares to the real thing. Sacramental analogy may or may not in the end suffice to reinforce the vast reach of royal power. It is one thing to receive the externals of grace in company with one's fellow

communicants, not knowing who, finally, is among the chosen; it is quite another to trust and obey from afar when an elect above the rest are so palpably near but out of reach. Idios' ambiguous assertion, 'I am not then from Court' (54), suggests both the contiguity of his world and Allophanes' -- 'I am not *away* from Court' -- and an ironic recognition that he is indeed far from 'that brest/ Where the Kings Counsells and his secrets rest' (89-90) -- 'I am not *of* the Court'.

If 'Satyre 4' and the 'Ecclogue' are contemporary with a Donne on the brink of forever abandoning courtly aspirations, a much earlier poem suggests a prescient sensitivity to the vicissitudes of vocational fortune. A haunting vision of sacrificial voyagers/species anticipates the *cri du coeur* of a young and anxious would-be courtier in 'The Calme':

> on the hatches as on Altars lyes
> Each one, his owne Priest, and owne Sacrifice.
> Who live, that miracle do multiply
> Where walkers in hot Ovens, doe not dye.
> (25-8).[31]

That self-oblation here represents Donne's own weariness and uncertainty about his future prospects (the letter was likely written on his 1597 expedition to the Azores) is suggested a few lines later:

> Whether a rotten state, and hope of gaine,
> Or to disuse mee from the queasie paine
> Of being belov'd, and loving, or the thirst
> Of honour, or faire death, out pusht mee first,
> I lose my end: for here as well as I
> A desperate may live, and a coward die.
> (39-44).

Voyage becomes here a powerful image of desire, anticipating Donne's frustrated courtly aspirations, his sense of the essentially unfulfilling nature of sensual love, and a final

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[31] The New Testament sacrament may seem only tenuously linked to the Old Testament allusion until we recall that the miracle multiplied was often interpreted typologically, the survival of Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego in the fiery furnace due to the presence of a fourth whose appearance, according to the KJV, was 'like the Son of God': Dan. 3.25. The multiplication of miracles was of course a common charge against the Roman Catholic Mass, just as the lay priesthood suggested by 'Each one, his owne Priest' was an unmistakable feature of Reform piety. Such detail in 'The Calme' cautions us never to assume that sacred topoi in Donne's secular poems serve a 'purely' rhetorical or figurative function, even if their status is secondary to whatever might be the ostensible subject matter.

appeal to posterity for an honorable reputation, all of which might culminate in death if not for the punning suggestion ('I lose my end') that even death (or rather especially death) intimates an ultimate absence of purpose. The earlier image of bodies stretched out and totally vulnerable, possessing nothing but their own fragile existence, is thus, in hindsight, appropriately associated with the Eucharist, for it recalls one who, in crying 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani' (God, why have you forsaken me?), endured alienation from the ultimate court and Presence.

4
Death

Donne's combining of sacramental with erotic, monetary and political/courtly topoi constitutes a playful reflection of the Incarnation and thus a sacramental poetics: just as the Word-become-flesh indicates God's human identity, his immanent relationship with history and matter, so the extended metaphors, catachreses, and contrived analogies constituting Donne's expansive wit are suggestive of the dynamic nature of language, of each word's identity or meaning as ontologically contiguous with the vast network of all words or, as Herbert might say, the Word that is all. Perhaps the most notable and celebrated examples of Donne's willingness to invest otherwise commonplace themes with sacramental significance are the *Anniversaries*, of the first of which Ben Jonson is said to have remarked that it was 'profane and full of blasphemies' and that 'if it had been written of the Virgin Mary, it had been something'. And while there is much in both poems suggesting innocuous platonic allegory, there is also much to suggest that Donne's famous disclaimer -- 'that he described the Idea of a Woman, and not as she was'[32] -- was somewhat disingenuous; for if the *Anniversaries* are only ostensibly about Elizabeth Drury, they nevertheless celebrate a decidedly immanent Presence.

The poems commemorating the death of Elizabeth Drury address what is perhaps the central point of our axes model, the Christian paradox of life in death and loss. A visual

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[32] Jonson (1982) 127.

metaphor in *The First Anniversary* regarding the 'contracted' nature of man's postlapsarian status turns that model on its head, or rather its side: 'Onely death addes t'our length: nor are we growne/ In stature to be men, till we are none' (145-6). Man's inevitable prostration is the only point at which he might finally identify with the Christ who saves him from total annihilation and subsequently 'lengthens' him, the second Adam restoring the stature which, under the centuries of the first Adam's curse, has been eroded. In the scandal of the cross the vertical axis is in dialectical relationship with the horizontal, the one drawn inexorably downward even as the other is charged with new life and significance. Sacraments in the *First* and *Second Anniversaries* interrogate, respectively, the relative presence of Presence in a fallen world, and the role of the individual soul in both recognizing that Presence and negotiating the chasm separating the earth-bound soul and its world from the ultimate satisfaction of their desires.[33] Moreover, these problems of Incarnation and reconciliation are of consequence for Donne's poetic enterprise, the sacramental capacity of words to communicate presence questioned in the 'Funerall Elegie' accompanying the 1612 edition: 'Can these memorials, ragges of paper, give/ Life to that name, by which name they must live?' (11-2) and 'can wee/ Who live, and lacke her, here this vantage see?' (47-8).[34]

The most explicit of sacramental images is found early in *The Second Anniversary, Of the Progres of the Soule.* Having once again mourned the loss of that 'shee' and marvelled at the perpetuity of a world decapitated -- 'as sometimes in a beheaded man' (9) -- the poet addresses her and turns to admonish himself:

> These Hymns thy issue, may encrease so long,
> As till Gods great Venite change the song.
> Thirst for that time, O my insatiate soule,
> And serve thy thirst, with Gods safe-sealing Bowle.
> (43-6).

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[33] The whole creation 'groans', writes St. Paul, in anticipation of its redemption: Rom. 8.22.

[34] Donne's interest in the sacramental potential of language is explicit in the letters exchanged between Donne and 'Mr. *T.W.* ', which are twice said to *be* sacraments. In 'Pregnant again . . .', T. W.'s letter is said to 'bountifully' feed a 'poore starveling', his 'body risen againe, the which was dead'. And in 'At once, from hence . . .', Donne, in his familiar messianic pose, offers his own lines as a 'bare Sacrament' which 'if in them there be/ Merit of love bestow that love on mee'.

The poems are thus associated with Eucharistic sacrifice, both hymn and thirst anticipating 'Gods great Venite', the last judgment when all the dead in Christ will rise. Just as in the Pauline formula one eats and drinks Christ's death until he returns, so here both sacrament and song are associated with death and final Resurrection. Such praises, 'though not Revive, embalme, and spice/ The world, which else would putrify with vice' (39-40). The Eucharistic significance of the poem is thus further reinforced in its function as moral/medicinal corrective. Just as the sacrament of the Lord's Supper provides medicine for quotidian sins, and Baptism the initial and decisive deliverance from the damning stain of original sin -- while both anticipate final Resurrection and deliverance from the body of death[35] -- so these celebrations of 'shee' sustain a world from which she is otherwise absent. Encomiastic verse, then, is sacrificial praise which celebrates the ultimate sacrifice and sustaining grace communicated by the Eucharist.

That the communicant identifies with atoning sacrifice is potentially blasphemous, yet receives patristic support in Augustine's insistence that the mystery on the altar is the church itself, the body of Christ.[36] Something of this may lie behind the Baptismal allusion in the first poem, *An Anatomy of the World*, where the 'unnam'd' child 'kept from the Font, untill/ A Prince, expected long, come to fulfill/ The Ceremonies' is analogous to the world whose name is identical with 'hers': 'Her name defin'd thee, gave thee forme and frame,/ And thou forgetst to celebrate thy name' (33-8).[37] Divine/human identification is of course at the heart of Christian Incarnation; Donne's proposal to render his poetic praise sacramental offering is heretical only if the capacity to do so is self-derived. The passage

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35 Rom. 7.24

36 'Because you are the body of Christ and his members, it is your own mystery that lies on the altar, it is your own mystery that you receive': Augustine, Sermon 272, cited in Chauvet 291-2. Chauvet outlines the history of the decline of the importance of symbol in sacramental expression. Augustine's *in sacramento* is not to be translated 'in *the* sacrament' as if the Christ body is somehow *behind* the species; rather, the Eucharistic sacrifice 'is the symbol of what we are'. Though Augustine maintains a distinction between Christ and church, it is nevertheless impossible to speak of one without invoking the other.

37 Ronald Corthell recognizes in the Baptism conceit a dual significance for Elizabeth Drury: in keeping with Hooker's defense of the trappings of sacramental ritual, 'Shee' is both accessory ('Prince') and essential element, her presence both naming externally and animating the world of which she is the soul: Corthall 119-21.

from *The Second Anniversary* quoted above is preceded by a supplication wherein the object of the poet's praise, who 'wouldst refuse/ The name of Mother', is invited to impregnate his muse and thus father 'These Hymes' which in turn 'may work on future wits, and so/ May great-Grandchildren of thy praises grow' (33-8). However, if this constitutes the qualification of potentially erroneous doctrine, Ben Jonson's charge of blasphemy is not without justification. After all, the mere appropriation of sacramental imagery to celebrate anyone other than Christ is by nature blasphemous; while not explicit, the proximity of 'Gods safe-sealing Bowle'[38] to praises offered Elizabeth Drury constitutes an example of Ezra Pound's notion of metaphor-by-juxtaposition. Moreover, the subtle change in addressee -- from 'Immortal Mayd' (33) to 'my insatiate soule' (45) -- occurs precisely at the point of Eucharistic reference, the latter appropriately serving as the site of initial progress toward the identification of the poet's soul with that of 'shee' -- whoever 'shee' might be.

But neither doctrinal fidelity or deviance is paramount. Rather, because this central symbol of Christian experience addresses so profoundly the conflict of life and death, it is, with no apparent disrespect, conducive to Donne's poetic concerns. The soul's progress toward transcendence is a justification by grace mediated by both Eucharistic absolution and the necessity of enduring the same rite of passage undergone by Christ and represented in the sacramental ritual.[39] Told to 'trust in the th'immaculate blood to wash thy score' (106), the soul is first admonished to imagine

> that death is but a Groome,
> Which brings a Taper to the outward roome,
> Whence thou spiest first a little glimmering light,
> And after brings it nearer to thy sight:
> For such approches doth Heaven make in death.
> (85-9).

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[38] Maureen Sabine is reluctant to allow much sacramental significance for the *Anniversaries* in general and argues that the bowl here contains 'a less substantial fluid' than the truly sacramental requires: Sabine 104.

[39] Baptism is traditionally more representative of death and rebirth than is the Eucharist. My concern here is to focus on the believer's identification with Christ through his own death and Resurrection, an identification made possible by receiving the elements of broken body and shed blood. For treatment of 'sanctifying' versus 'actual' grace' in the *Anniversaries* see Stanwood (1971) 227-38.

The progress of the soul begins with a descent into death, with the obligatory 'rot', 'Wormes' (115-8) and general putrefaction. Recalling the parable of the ten virgins, the passage identifies death with the bridegroom Christ and implicitly reinforces the imperative to be ready when he arrives, a preparation involving both penitent meditation on death -- 'Thinke thee laid on thy death bed, loose and slacke' (93) -- and recourse to 'th'immaculate blood' in the Eucharist. In contrast with Holy Sonnet X, the inevitability of death is *prevented* (anticipated) and compensated for by sacramental access to atoning sacrifice.[40]

The paradoxical necessity of death is again associated with the Eucharist in a passage that is also daring for its messianic identification of Elizabeth Drury:

> Shee, shee embrac'd a sicknesse, gave it meat,
> The purest Blood, and Breath, that ere it eat.
> And hath taught us that though a good man hath
> Title to heaven, and plead it by his Faith,
> And though he may pretend a conquest, since
> Heaven was content to suffer violence,
> Yea though he plead a long possession too,
> (For they'are in Heaven on Earth, who Heavens workes do,)
> Though he had right, and power, and Place before,
> Yet Death must usher, and unlocke the doore.
> (147-56).

Given the diction -- food, eating, and sacrifice (she 'embrac'd', not 'succumbed' to, her illness) -- the alliteration and assonance of 'Blood' and 'Breath' suggest a third element, Bread, so that 'sicknesse' itself becomes a sacramental communicant, feeding on the body of 'shee' whose purity undergoes the bloody Baptism which all, both 'good man' and faithful, must eventually endure. This Shakespearean attitude toward death as inexorable and ruthlessly democratic,[41] not to mention Donne's often morbid preoccupation with bodily decay, seems misplaced in a poem ostensibly about platonic ascent. Such passages evoke an exhilarating resignation not unlike that suggested by the meditation in *Deaths Duell.* In approximating death and the Eucharist, Donne emphasizes the importance of

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[40] The idea that burial 'Laies thee to sleepe but a saint Lucies night' (120) also recalls the sonnet's 'One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally' (13).

[41] I think especially of the Gaoler/Hangman's 'reckoning' summation of Posthumous Leonatus' debts and credits -- 'your neck, sir, is pen, book , and counters; so the acquittance follows': *Cymbeline* 5.4.158-72.

recognizing in the latter a blatant manifestation of the Pauline scandal, wherein the Incarnation and death of God in Christ are said to be a stumbling block to those (for St. Paul, perhaps the early Gnostics) incapable of grasping or otherwise fully accepting the bodily -- and in death, ignominious -- reality of the man-God. And certainly Donne himself (nor, perhaps, any Christian for that matter) is not exempt from vacillating at the idea. Fortunately, however, *The Second Anniversary*, like the Christian myth, goes beyond this decisive moment in the soul's journey to depict its ascent and eventual reconciliation with that illustrious 'shee'.

An anatomy of sacramental topoi in *The First Anniversary*, however, suggests a Donne less certain about the acceptance of dissolution for 'accidentall joyes' countenanced by the *Second.* And while it is not difficult in hindsight to see the two poems as a single work comedic in shape -- the first mourning the world's loss, the other celebrating its redemption -- it is important to remember they were composed a year apart. If *The First Anniversary* is in many respects echoed and counterbalanced by the *Second*, it nevertheless warrants scrutiny on its own terms.

Whereas the Eucharist in the *Progres* is a medicinal balm or preservative anticipating a greater health yet to come, the *Anatomy* forgoes eschatological rehearsal in favour of reflection on what has been lost in Elizabeth Drury's demise and a concern for determining the manner by which some trace of her yet remains. These two concerns are far from incompatible, reflection on the world's decay and one's complicity therein being the prerequisite to receiving grace which allows the change of direction and the soul's ascent. In *The First Anniversary*, the necessity of such reflection is at one point associated with a Eucharistic description of Elizabeth Drury's presence in the world. Encouraged that 'the twi-light of her memory doth stay' and even 'Creates a new world' (74-6), we are then instructed that

> The matter and the stuffe of this,
> Her vertue, and the forme our practice is.
> And though to be thus Elemented, arme
> These Creatures, from hom-borne intrinsique harme . . .

> This new world may be safer, being told
> The dangers and diseases of the old:
> (77-88).

'Her Vertue', with its eschatological and material promise of a new world, and 'Elemented' alert us to the sacramental potential of Elizabeth Drury's immanence. The integral relationship among bodily humours, their just correspondence to the four elements, and the health benefits of such an arrangement (protection against 'hom-borne intrinsique harme' or the effects of sin) intimate a ceremonial splendour for her ubiquitous and sustaining presence. Though the poet may look forward to the 'safe-sealing bowle' provision of *The Second Anniversary*, the Eucharist here is more than a seal or promise of future benefits. 'Her vertue' yet somehow conveys her: though gone,

> yet in this last long night,
> Her Ghost doth walke; that is, a glimmering light,
> A faint weake love of vertue and of good
> Reflects from her, on them which understood
> Her worth
> (69-73).

Elsewhere in the poem 'shee' is described not exclusively as the platonically inflected 'first originall/ Of all faire copies' (227-8), but rather in overtly sensualist terms; she is, indeed, the beauty, proportion and colour embodied by the world that is 'the Microcosme of her' (236). This suggests that Donne's Eucharistic sensibility is concerned as much with manifesting presence as with patiently enduring absence. And the Zwinglian implication of looking backward, 'her memory', is immediately qualified -- as is the sentiment of 'first originall' in the blazon it precedes (227-36) -- by the intimation of 'a new world' (74-6), one neither completely lost nor promised and presently withheld, but rather 'The matter and the stuffe of this,/ Her vertue, and the forme our practice *is* ' (emphasis added).

Veiled Eucharistic allusion again precedes rumination on the misfortunes of a lapsed world, this time following an alchemical conceit in which 'shee' is said to be able to 'drive/ The poysonous tincture, and the stayne of *Eve*,/ Out of her thoughts, and deeds; and

purifie/ All' (179-82).[42] The medicinal qualities of Elizabeth Drury's 'vertue' draw attention to her messianic status (a second Eve as opposed to a second Adam), reinforced by the sacramental image which follows:

> except thou feed (not banquet) on
> The supernaturall food, Religion,
> Thy better Grouth growes withered, and scant;
> Be more than man, or thou'rt lesse than an Ant.
> (187-90).

The cautionary 'not banquet' ('do not eat sparingly nor irreverently'[43]) encourages appetite even as it advocates moderation, a balance reinforced in a conflation of the vegetable soul, that of growth, with its rational superior ('better'). The 'supernaturall food' may thus be regarded as somehow substantial if not earthly, just as the soul for Aristotle is never without a body.[44] Something of this is evident at the outset of the *Anatomy*, where Elizabeth Drury's demise is described as a bleeding of the world's 'strongest vitall spirits' (13), those which in Renaissance physiology establish a subtle connection between body and soul. If the partial severing of these essential elements of human being is one aspect of the Fall, then 'Religion' and, implicitly, sacraments feed man in order to restore the unity upon which his former stature depended. Whereas in *The Second Anniversary* 'The purest Blood, and Breath' sacrificed to sickness are accompanied by a description of the tripartite soul in which the rational portion is poisoned by the lesser two or 'small lump of flesh' it subsumes (160-4), here the emphasis is on a restoration and healing characterized by looking back, not forward, to a pristine, forgotten era in which man 'was a span' before being 'Contracted to an inch' (136).

That there has ever been an historic watershed wherein divine immanence ceased to characterize people's sense of their surrounding world and universe is an issue far beyond the scope of this thesis. We do know that the anatomist and celebrant of the *Anniversaries*

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[42] Thomas Hayes identifies sacramental with alchemical processes, each of which is 'the outward and visible sign of an inward spiritual grace': Hayes 58-9.

[43] The OED has 'eat lightly' for 'banquet' while 'lightly' allows 'wantonly' in addition to its more familiar 'sparingly'.

[44] Aristotle 173-7 (2.1.413a-414a).

was not the last of poets to celebrate such a world and mourn its demise. From Milton to Hopkins, for whom 'the dearest freshness deep down things' is evidence that the 'world is charged with the grandeur of God',[45] poetic imagination, religious or otherwise, has always been concerned with integration, contiguity, unification, immanence: these indeed are the essential qualities of metaphor, the lifeblood of literary imagination.[46] But the late Renaissance marks or approximates a sea change in the Western episteme; unlike modern poets for whom the synthesis of heaven and earth is but a figurative, if powerful, idea, Donne's poetic celebration of Elizabeth Drury suggests he thought himself witness not merely to the decline of a world view but to the actual disintegration of ties between sub-lunary and heavenly realities.

The following passage from *The Anatomy of the World*, certainly one of the most eloquent of paeans to a waning era, also discloses the sacramental character and consequences of such loss:

> What Artist now dares boast that he can bring
> Heaven hither, or constellate any thing,
> So as the influence of those starres may bee
> Imprisond in an Herbe, or Charme, or Tree,
> And doe by touch, all which those starres could do?
> The art is lost, and correspondence too.
> For heaven gives little, and the earth takes lesse,
> And man least knowes their trade, and purposes.
> If this commerce twixt heaven and earth were not
> Embarr'd, and all this trafique quite forgot,
> Shee, for whose losse we have lamented thus,
> Would worke more fully'and pow'rfully on us.
> Since herbes, and rootes, by dying, lose not all,
> But they, yea Ashes too, are medicinall,
> Death could not quench her vertue so, but that
> It would be (if not follow'd) wondred at:
> And all the world would be one dying Swan,
> To sing her funerall prayse, and vanish than.
> But as some Serpents poyson hurteth not,
> Except it be from the live Serpent shot,
> So doth her vertue need her here, to fit
> That unto us; she working more than it.
> But she, in whom, to such maturity,
> Vertue was growne, past growth, that it must die,
> She from whose influence all Impressions came,

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[45] 'God's Grandeur'.

[46] For a rare discussion of the relevance of sacraments for Milton, see Ulrich 32-56; for Hopkins, see McNees (1992) 69-109.

> But, by receivers impotencies lame,
> Who, though she could not transubstantiate
> All states to gold, yet guilded every state,
> So that some Princes have some temperance,
> Some Counsaylors some purpose to advance
> The common profite; and some people have
> Some stay, no more then Kings should give, to crave;
> Some women have some taciturnity;
> Some nunneries, some graines of chastity.
> She that did thus much, and much more could doe,
> But that our age was Iron, and rusty too,
> Shee, shee is dead; shee's dead; when thou knowst this,
> Thou knowst how drie a Cinder this world is,
> And learnst thus much by our Anatomy,
> That 'tis in vaine to dew, or mollifie
> It with thy Teares, or Sweat, or Bloud: no thing
> Is worth our travaile, grief, or perishing,
> But those rich joyes, which did possesse her hart,
> Of which shee's now partaker, and a part.
> (391-434).

The consolatory confidence of 'God's safe-sealing Bowle' in the *Progres* is absent here. Nevertheless, this remarkable *contemptus mundi* passage is itself sacramental, verbalizing the interanimation of divine and sublunary worlds which sacraments, reflecting the incarnated Christ, recall and ritually instantiate. We are told that Elizabeth Drury's death is exacerbated by the loss of a once prevalent world-view, that her potentially medicinal remains, her 'vertue', is ineffective due to the cessation of 'commerce twixt heaven and earth'. Her already messianic status is augmented by comparing that 'vertue' (in Calvin, we recall, the term for sacramental Presence) with serpents' poison, certainly a strange comparison unless we recognize that in Renaissance medical lore serpents' poison was thought to contain healing properties. This would suggest an allusion to the Israelites' similar belief and to their fiery serpent-rod which for Donne's Christian contemporaries was a type of the crucified Christ. The otherwise odd approximation of poison with healing virtue may thus be understood in light of the idea that on the saving cross sin itself is crucified; as Donne once preached, 'the groveling Serpent' meets his match in 'the crucified Serpent', Christ.[47] But the evocation of Christ, and by extension the efficacy of sacramental virtue, is curtailed; for the positive effects of 'vertue' alone are severely limited

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[47] *Sermons* 10.189. For the Israelites and the serpent-rod see Nm. 21.5-9; for its typological significance see Jn. 3.14. My gloss relies on C. A. Patrides' annotation: Donne (1989) 343 n409-12.

by the absence of 'shee' from which they spring. Even when 'shee' was *here* to make good her potential influence, 'Receivers impotencies lame' barred the miracle (transubstantiation) alchemists -- and papists -- dare to claim *after* she has gone.

The feared ineffectiveness of sacramental virtue due to the apparent absence of its animating source is perhaps most apparent near the close of the passage, where the typological echo in 'dew', combined with the blood, sweat and tears reminiscent of Gethsemane, is denied the capacity to 'mollifie' or otherwise redeem the world. And yet, by way of consolation and anticipation of *The Second Anniversarie* we are instructed to forsake all for 'those rich joyes' which, if equivalent to the 'essentiall' joys of the later poem, transcend the 'accidentall joyes' of this anatomized carcass.[48] If that equivalence holds, the irony of Donne's final hope here is that it constitutes acquiescence to the very cosmological dissociation he mourns: having sung a dirge on the withdrawal of Presence from a once enchanted world, Donne has no choice in *The Second Anniversary* but to embrace an abstracted essence and the relentless deferral of Presence it guarantees. Nonetheless, those same joys of which 'shee's *now* partaker, and a part' are also those 'which *did* possesse her hart' (emphases added) when she animated the earth, suggesting Donne's stance with respect to the world he knows and that which he imagines is at best Janus-faced: indeed, not unlike sacraments, the Renaissance artist's verse 'hath a middle nature' (473).

It will have been noticed that this chapter's title is a riposte to Arthur Marotti's own 'The Religious Prose and Verse of the Secular Man'.[49] While we share a tendency to see in Donne's corpus a continuity which defies the eventful trajectory of his career, my own position differs from that of Marotti, Carey (and, more recently, Oliver) in recognizing the

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[48] Paul Stanwood sees 'essentiall' and 'accidentall' joys in *The Second Anniversary* as a play on the Tridentine categories of substance and accident. In accompanying Elizabeth Drury on her progress Donne acts as priest and thus officiates at grace's transubstantiation of the world: Stanwood (1975) 395; cf. Lewalski (1973) 111-12.

[49] Marotti (1986) 253 and *passim.*

resiliency and pervasiveness of Christian thought *qua* Christian thought -- rather than as the mere cultural matter or ideological coördinates informing an otherwise independent artistic impulse.[50] Religious ideas are less constituent of Donne's poetic arsenal than the very foundation of his notorious fascination with words and their seemingly inexhaustible capacity to distill his experience of the world.

In subjecting sacramental topoi and ideas to the mill of fancy, Donne's poetic embodies a paradox central to the Christian myth of Incarnation -- that only in relinquishing its self-possessing essence can a thing truly *be* in any human sense. The Word-become-flesh describes not only the material immanence of an otherwise transcendent Being; it also suggests that the power of words to embody ideas resides in their contiguity with other words, each self-contained or vertically stable sign inextricable from the horizontal flow of signs which inform any content it might have. Such a description, of course, can easily be applied to any sort of verbal relation in which x is rendered more intelligible by the presence of y -- where death, for example, is realized in the fading of a rose, or a broken and bleeding body in broken bread and wine. But the specifically Incarnational aspect of this process that is the being of language is particularly evident when sacramental topoi themselves are interpellated among those compared to which sacraments are otherwise remote and rarefied symbols. Sacraments' communion with the poetry of love, their currency with respect to monetary value and identity, the secular-religious parallel of Court-realm-subject and God-world-creature, of Presence and Presence, and the sacramentally absent presence of the *Anniversaries'* Elizabeth Drury -- these mark the Christian poetic of Donne's secular verse, his own unique fleshing of that which ultimately fleshes him, the Word that is all.

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[50] Carey 14. For discussion of Carey and Marotti see Introduction 15 ff.

Conclusion
Toward a Sacramental Poetics

The Incarnational model of intersecting axes articulates the convergence of competing spiritual and material claims to religious identity. The Word-become-flesh, its duality at once implicitly tending toward polarization and conflation, is the paradoxical essence of sacramental thought and the epistemological basis of Donne's and Herbert's poetic experience. Sacramental topoi and allusion are central to their interrogation of dualisms which, though certainly important for Christian thought and tradition, are of a much broader cultural significance. Indeed, interest in such dichotomies as spirit and matter, soul and body, meaning and language, individual and community, mind and art is by no means exclusive to the religious domain, even if concern for the nature of the relationships which obtain among deity and sacrament, private devotion and ceremony, or doctrine and ecclesiastical politics is. But perhaps this distinction between Christian and secular culture is more or less anachronistic, at least as concerns Herbert and Donne, for whom the relationship between the Word-become-flesh and these other human dualities was apparently less metaphoric than analogical, less a matter of a conceptual basis around which experience might be organized than a present reality with which all experience is imbued. The Incarnational paradox, by their account, is embedded in day to day life, fleshed out, so to speak, in a world constitutive of divine immanence, and whose significance, moreover, is inexhaustible: 'Thy word is all', writes Herbert, if only 'we could spell.'

This study has indicated a number of ways in which sacramental topoi and ideas inform religious and poetic experience. In addition to its relevance for the theological problem of sacramental *modus* and the devotional issue of private piety *vis-à-vis* sacrament and ceremony, the Incarnation in Herbert's *Temple* also informs his sacramental treatment of individual Christian identity, the religious artist's relation to both his craft and his God. Herbert's devotional art, we discovered, is itself sacramental, a liminal fleshing of the Word facilitating the communion of artist and deity.

If *The Temple* is a public performance of private devotional experience, Donne's 1626 Christmas sermon promotes the public, communal and ceremonial aspects of sacramental worship as appropriate complement to private spiritual reflection. In a period when long standing doctrinal tensions within the ecclesiastical establishment were becoming ever more apparent, Donne advances a sacramentalism and even popish sacramental formula that might have pleased the most avant garde of English divines; yet six months earlier he had expressed considerable reluctance to tolerate the same divines' anti-Calvinist political manoeuvres. In a masterful stroke of irenic accommodation, Donne manages in the Christmas sermon to render the Eucharist an occasion for (veiled) predestinarian reflection, the communicant charged to come to the sacrament not as to a lottery, but to consider nonetheless 'what thou shalt be forever'. If sacraments in Herbert's *Temple* provide an objective means of grace and thus escape from the subjective anxieties of private spiritual scrutiny, here they are more or less integral with the 'conscience' that 'chide[s]'.[1]

Whereas in the pulpit Donne is concerned that sacraments form part of the machinery of spiritual interrogation and admonition, his divine verse intimates their capacity for alleviating spiritual uncertainty and soteriological fear. Moreover, it is apparent that not only sacraments proper provide an external and material focus for consideration of internal and therefore elusive spiritual verities; Donne's art, like Herbert's, is itself of sacramental value, externalizing and formally ritualizing his devotional experience, playfully portraying the chiding conscience as but an ephemeral accuser 'prevented' and surpassed by sacramental grace.

That devotional poetry incarnates spiritual experience suggests words' sacramental capacity. In Donne's secular verse, sacramental topoi permeate his perception and poetic experience, interpellating sacred and profane in a manner reflective of the Incarnation. That sacraments share with erotic, monetary and courtly topoi a tension between relatively static

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[1] See Chapter Two 132.

and fluid realities -- between chaste virtue and sexual indulgence, intrinsic and extrinsic value, idealized court or courtier and social politics, king and realm -- suggests their topological fitness in exploring such areas of Renaissance culture. In allowing the otherwise sacred to be thus contaminated, these poems are exemplary of the Incarnation's claim to imbue creation with divinity, to invest sublunary realities with celestial significance. The semantic play to which Donne subjects sacraments -- and all language, for that matter -- is reflective of the Word-become-flesh which in a religious context they explicitly proclaim: that words derive their meaning only in relation to other words, that any semantic content a sign might have is itself fully verbal and therefore contiguous with yet more signs, is central to Donne's expansive appreciation of sacraments' relevance for apparently unrelated phenomena. This, moreover, is a paradox reflective of the profound mystery of Incarnation, for it is there that the Logos dwells among us, its divine significance discernible only in its human realization.

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