

THE TEMPLE

[ABRIDGED]

SACRED POEMS
AND PRIVATE
EJACULATIONS

BY MR. GEORGE HERBERT

Late ORATOIR of the
University of CAMBRIDGE

*Together with his LIFE with
several Additions.*

PSAL. 29

In his Temple doth every man speak of his honour



Hand set and printed 8/60 by the 157th Room Press of the Kelly Writers House,
an imprint of the Common Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

THE PRINTERS TO THE READER'

"The dedication of this work having been made by the author to the Divine Majesty only, how should we now presume to interest any mortal man in the patronage of it?"

Parson **DEDICATION**

& Poet Lord, my first fruits present themselves to thee,
George Yet not mine neither, for from thee they came
Herbert And must return. Accept of them and me,
(1593-1633) And make us strive, who shall sing best thy name.
is report- Turn their eyes hither, who shall make a gain:
ed in his Theirs, who shall hurt themselves or me, refrain.
biography by Mr. Izaak Walton, to have said to a
Mr. Duncon, "Sir, I pray deliver this little book to
my dear brother Ferrar," the book being an early
manuscript of THE TEMPLE, Mr. Ferrar being the
man responsible for its 1633 printed edition. Some
-where in between these two iterations is a fair
copy manuscript (Bodleian MS Tanner 307) in
which the amount of poems doubles in comparison
to those found in the manuscript Herbert handed over
on his death-bed. He died of consumption.
"The world therefore shall receive it in that naked simplicity
with which he left it without any addition either of support
or ornament more than is included in itself"

"Only for the clearing of some passages we have thought it not unfit to make the common Reader privy to some few particularities of condition and disposition of the Person."

Given the **JESU**

visual in- JESU is in my heart, his sacred name
clinations Is deeply carved there: but th'other week
and con- A great affliction broke the little frame,
straints of Ev'n all to pieces: which I went to seek:
Herbert in And first I found the corner, where was J,
his manu- After, where ES, and next where U was graved.
script ('a When I had got these parcels, instantly
picture of I sat me down to spell them, and perceived
the many That to my broken heart he was *I ease you,*
spiritual And to my whole is *JESU*.
conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my
soul,' he said of the work) in combination with a
language largely related to the printing room itself
(see JESU above) the typographers think it fit to
adapt them to the present edition you find here
before you, in which the finality of their authority in
the process of doing so is emphasised.
"And there are but a few of many that might be said, which
we have chosen to premise as a glance to some parts of the
ensuing book, and for an example to the Reader."

THE CHURCH² PORCH

STANZA *SUPERLIMINAIRE* LXXVI

Sum up at night,
what thou hast
done dy day:
And in the
morning. what
thou hast to do.
Dress and un-
dress thy soul:
mark the decay
And growth of
it: if with thy
watch, that too
Be down, then
wind up both:
since we shall be
Most surely
judged, make thy
accounts agree,

PERIRRHANterium

STANZA LXXVII

In brief, acquit
thee bravely:
play the man.
Look not on
pleasures as they
come, but go.
Defer not the
least virtue: life's
poor span
Make not an ell,
by trifling in thy
woe.
If thou do ill:
the joy fades,
not the pains:
If well; the pain
doth fade, the
joy remains.

THE CHURCH *SUPERLIMINAIRE*³

Avoid profaneness; come not here:
Nothing but holy, pure, and clear,
Or that which groaneth to be so,
May at his peril further go.

Thou, whom the former precepts have
Sprinkling and taught, how to behave
Thyself in church: approach, and taste
The church's mystical repast.
*PERIRRHANterium*⁴

O Book! infinite sweetness! let my heart
 Suck ev'ry letter, and a honey gain,
 Precious for any grief in any part;
 To clear the breast, to mollify all pain.
 Thou art all health, health thriving till it make
 A full eternity: thou art a mass
 Of strange delights, where we may wish & take.
 Ladies, look here; this is the thankful glass,
 That mends the looker's eyes: this is the well
 That washes what it shows. Who can endear
 Thy praise too much? thou art heav'n's lidger here,
 Working against the states of death and hell.
 Thou art joy's handsel: heav'n lies flat in thee
 Subject to ev'ry mounter's bend'd knee.

THE PARSON'S KNOWLDEGE

But the chief and top of his knowledge consists in the book
 of books, storehouse and magazine of life and comfort,
 the holy Scriptures. There he sucks and lives. In the Scriptures
 he finds four things: percepts for life, doctrines for
 knowledge, examples for illustration, and promises for comfort;
 these he hath digested severally.

O that I knew how all thy lights combine,
 And the configurations of th' ir glory!
 Seeing not only how each verse doth shine,
 But all the constellations of the story.
 This verse marks that, and both do make a motion
 Unto a third, that ten leaves off doth lie:
 Then as dispersed herbs do watch a potion,
 These three make up some Christian's destiny:
 Such are thy secrets, which my secrets, which
 And comments on thee: for in ev'rything
 Thy words do find me out, and parallels bring,
 And in another make me understood,
 Stars are poor books, and oftentimes do miss:
 This book of stars lights to eternal bliss.

The country parson...hath compiled a book and body of
 Divinity, which is the storehouse of his sermons and which he
 greacheth all hii life, but diversly clothed, illustrated, and
 enlarged. For though the world is full of such composures, yet
 every man's own is fittest, readiest, and most savoury to him.
 -HERBERT, A PRIEST TO THE TEMPLE, 1632.

THE ALTAR

A broken ALTAR, Lord, thy servant rears,
Made of a heart, and cemented with tears:
Whose parts are as thy hand did frame;
No workman's tool hath touched the same.

A HEART alone
Is such a stone,
As nothing but
Thy pow'r doth cut
Wherefore each part
Of my hard heart
Meets in this frame,
To praise thy name:

That if I chance to hold my peace,
These stones to praise thee may not cease.
O let thy blessed SACRIFICE be mine,
And sanctify this ALTAR to be thine.

OF PROPORTION

Your last proportion is that of figure, so called for that it yelds an ocular representation, your meeters being by good symetrie reduced into certaine Geometricall figures, whereby the maker is restrained to keepe him within his bounds, and sheweth not onely more art, but serveth also much better for

THE

ALTER⁹

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Made of a heart, and cemented with tears:
Whose parts are

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as thy hand did frame;

No workman's tool hath touched the same

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Is such a stone,

As nothing

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Wherefore

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of my hard

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Meet in this frame,

To praise thy name:

That if I chance to hold
These stones to praise thee

my peace,
may not cease.

O let thy blessing
and sanctify this

SACRIFICE be mine,
ALTAR to be thine'

IN FIGURE⁷

And for the same respect are also fittest for the prettie amourets in Court to entertaine their servants and the the time withall, their delicate wits requiring some commendable exercise to keepe them from idlenesse. -GEORGE PUTTENHAM, THE ART OF ENGLISH POESIE, 1589.

EASTER WINGS

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more,
Till he became
Most poor:
With thee
O let me rise
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day thy victories:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

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OF VAIN SUBTILITIES,

"There are certaine frivolous and vaine inventions, or as some call them, subtilities of wit, by means of which, some men doe often endeavour to get credit and reputation: as divers Poets, that frame whole volumes with verses beginning with one letter: we see Egges, Wings, Hatchets, Crosses, Globes, Columns, and divers other such like figures anciently

EASTER WINGS

My tender age in sorrow did begin:
And still with sickness and in shame
Thou didst so punish sin,
That I became
Most thin.
With thee
Let me combine,
And feel this day thy victory
For if I imp my wing on thine,
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

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...OR SUBTILL DEVICES⁹

... with the measure and proportion of their verses, spreading, lengthning, and shortning them, in such sort as they justly represent such and such a figure... It is a wonderful testimonie of our judgments imbecillitie, that it should commend and allow of things, either for their rarenesse or noveltie, or for their difficultie, though neither goodnesse or profit be joynd

Lord, how can man
 preach thy eternal word
 He is a brittle crazy glass
 Yet in thy temple
 thou dost him afford
 This glorious and
 transcendent place,
 To be a window,
 through thy grace.

But when thou
 dost anneal in glass
 thy story. Mak-
 ing thy life to shine
 within The holy
 Preacher's; then the

light and glory
 More rev'rend
 grows, and more
 doth win: Which
 else shows wat'ri-
 -sh, bleak, & thin.

Doctrine and life,
 colours and light, in one,
 When they com-
 bined and mingle, bring
 A strong regard and awe
 but speech alone Doth
 vanish like a glaring
 thing, And in the ear,
 not conscience ring.

VERSE: The heav'ns are not too high,
 His praise may thither fly:
 The earth is not too low.
 His praises there may grow:

CHORUS: Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
 My God and King.

VERSE: The church with Psalms must shout,
 No door can keep them out:
 But above all the heart
 Must bear the longest part.

CHORUS: Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing.
 My God and King.

When my devotions could not pierce Thy silent ears;
 Then was my heart broken, as was my verse: My breast
 was full of fears And disorder: My bent thoughts, like a
 brittle bow, Did fly asunder: Each took his way; some
 would to pleasures go, Some to wars and thunder Of al-
 arms. As good go anywhere, they say, As to be numb
 Both knees and heart, in crying night and day, Come,
 come my God, O come, But no hearing.

O that thou shouldst give dust a tongue To cry to thee,
 And then not hear it crying! all day long My heart was
 in my knee, But no hearing. Therefore my soul lay out
 of sight, Untuned, unstrung: My feeble spirit, unable to
 look right, Like a nipped blossom, hung Discontented.
 O cheer and tune my heartless breast, Defer no time;
 That so thy favours granting my request, They and
 my mind may chime and mend my rhyme.

COLOSSIANS 3.3¹⁰

OUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD

MY words and thoughts do both express this notion,
That LIFE doth with the sun a double motion,
The first IS straight, and our diurnal friend:
The other HID, and doth obliquely bend,
One life is wrapt IN flesh, and tends to earth;
The other winds t'wards HIM whose happy birth
Taught me to live here so THAT still one eye
Should aim and shoot at that which IS on high--
Quitting with daily labour all MY pleasure,
To gain at harvest an eternal TREASURE.

PARADISE

I bless thee Lord, because I GROW
Among the trees, which in a ROW
To thee both fruit and order OW

What open force, or hidden CHARM
Can blast my fruit, or bring me HARM
While the inclosure is thine ARM

Inclose me still for fear I START
Be to me rather sharp and TART
Than let me want thy hand and ART

When thou dost greater judgments SPARE
And with thy knife but prune and PARE
Ev'n fruitful trees more fruitful ARE

Such sharpness shows the sweetest FRIEND
Such cuttings rather heal than REND
And such beginnings touch their END

THE WATER-COURSE

Those who dost dwell and linger here below,
Since the condition of this world is frail,
Where of all plants afflictions soonest grow;
If troubles overtake thee, do not wail:
For who can look for less, that loveth



Life
Strife

But rather turn the pipe, and water's course
To thy sins, and furnish thee with store
Of sov'reign tears, springing from a true remorse:
That so in pureness thou mayst him adore,
Who gives to man, as he sees fit



Salvation
Damnation

CHURCH LOCK-AND-KEY

I know it is my
sin, which locks thine
ears, And binds thy
hands, Out-crying
my requests, drowning
my tears; Or
else the
chillness
of my faint
demands. But as
cold hands are angry
with the fire, And mend
it still; So I do lay the want
of my desire, Not on my
sins, or on coldness, but thy will.
Yet hear, O God, only for his blood's
sake Which pleads for me: for though
sins plead too, yet like stones they make
His blood's sweet current much more loud to be.

CHURCH

1

While that my soul repairs
to her devotion, Here I entomb
my flesh, that it
betimes May take acquaintance
of this heap of dust;
To which the blast of
death's incessant motion,
Fed with the exhalation
of our crimes, Drives all at
last. Therefore I gladly trust

SEPULCHRE

O blessed body! Wither art thou thown?
No lodging for thee, but a cold hard stone?
So many hearts on earth, and yet no one
Receive thee?
Sure there is room within our hearts' good store;
For they can lodge transgressions by the score:
Thousands of toys that dwell there, yet out of door
They leave thee.
But that which shows them large, shows them unfit
Whatever sin did this poor rock commit,
Which holds thee now? Who hath indicted it
of murder?

2

My body to this school, that it
may learn To spell his elements
and find his birth Written in
dusty heraldry and lines: Which
dissolution sure doth best
discern, Comparing dust with
bust, and earth with earth.
These laugh at Jet and Marble
put for signs,

3

To sever the good fellowship
of dust, And spoil the meeting.
What shall point out
them, When they shall bow
and kneel, and fall down flat
To kiss those heaps, which
now they have in trust?
Dear flesh, while I do pray,
learn here thy stem And
true descent. that when
thou shalt grow fat,

Where our hard hearts have took up
stones to brain thee
And missing this, most falsely did
arraign thee;
Only these stones in quiet entertain thee,
And order,

As of old, the law by heav'nly art
Was writ in stone; so thou, which
also art

The letter of the world, find'st no fit heart
To hold thee.
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.

MONUMENTS

4

And wanton in thy cravings,
thou mayst know, That flesh
is but the glass, which holds
the dust That measures all
our time; which also shall Be
crumbled into dust, Mark
here below How tame these
ashes are, how free from lust,
That thou mayst fit thyself
against thy fall

1. THE PRINTERS TO THE READER: We the printers, in order to set a more perfect text, do hereby forfeit all responsibility for the opinions express'd hereafter.
2. THE CHURCH PORCH: The first seventy-five stanzas were deemed too boring by scholar Peter B. Stallybrass this one time we were talking & were cut.
3. SUPERLIMINAIRE: John Tobin, editor of the Penguin of Herbert, tells us that the word refers to the stone above the threshold at the doorway of the church.
4. PERIRRHANTERIUM: The same, that title refers to the instrument used for sprinkling holy water.
5. THE PARSON'S KNOWLEDGE...: First published in 1652.
6. THE ALTER: (sic) An attempt at a shape poem (you can never have enough) according to the logic of the text.
7. OF PROPORTION IN FIGURE: From "The Art of English Poesie," by George Puttenham, At London. Printed by Richard Field dwelling in the black-Friars, neere Ludgate. 1589.
8. EASTER-WINGS: Of the same poem we have included 2 versions: one based on the shape of the 1633 printed edition, the other (horizontal) one, Herbert's notebook.
9. OF VAINE SUBTILTIES...: Montaigne knew a thing or two.
10. COLOSSIANS 3.3: Forgot what I wanted to write here.
11. CHURCH LOCK-AND-KEY: At the suggestion of Mr. Puttenham's fine book (see note 7 above).
12. THE LIFE OF GEORGE HERBERT: An unreliable biography from the greatest author-ironmonger of the English Renaissance, Izaak Walton, who wrote the masterpeice of verse and fish, *The Compleat Angler*.

THE LIFE OF GEORGE HERBERT¹³

He then proceeded to rebuild the greatest part of the parsonage house, which he did also very completely and at his own charge: and, having done this good work, he caused these verses to be writ upon or engraven in the mantle of the chimney in his hall:

TO MY SUCCESSOR

If thou chance for to find
A new House to thy Mind
And built without thy Cost:
Be good to the Poor,
As God gives thee store,
And then my Labour's not lost.

IZAACK WALTON, THE LIFE OF MR.
GEORGE HERBERT, 1670.