THE TEMPLE

[ABRIDGED]

SACRED POEMS
AND PRIVATE
EJACULATIONS

BY MR. GEORGE HERBERT

Late ORATOUR 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 8/40 by the 1571 Room Press of the Kelly Writers House,
"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- And make us strive, who shall sing best thy
1633) 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

visual inclinations

and con- JESU

straints of

Herbert in

his manu-

script (a

picture of

the many

spiritual

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 Church Porch

Stanza LXXVI
Sum up at night, what thou hast done by day:
And in the morning, what thou hast to do.
Dress and undress 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,
Perirrhanteum.

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.

Perirrhanteum

The Church Superliminaire
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.

Perirrhanteum
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.

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
preacheth all hii life, but diverily clothed, illustrated, and
enlarged. For though the world is full of such composes, 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 yields an ocular representation, your meeters being by good symetrie reduced into certaine Geometricall figures, whereby the maker is restrained to keep him within his bounds, and sheweth not onely more art, but serveth also much better for

**ALTER**

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’tool hath touched the same
A HEART alone
Is such a stone,
As nothing
Thy pow’r but
doth cut
Wherefore each part
Of my hard heart
Meet 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 blessen
SACRIFICE be mine,
and sanctify this ALTAR to be thine.

**IN FIGURE**

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 exercis to keepe them from idlesesse. -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,
Til 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.

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.

OF VAINE SUBTILTIES,

"There are certaine frivolo us and vaine inventions, or as some call them, subtillities 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 Eggs, Wings, Hatchets, Crosses, Globes, Columns, and divers other such like figures anciently fabling this wise.

...OR SUBTILL DEVICES...

... 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 imbecilitie, that it should commend and allow of things, either for their raresesse or noveltie, or for their difficultie, though neither goodness or profit be joyned unto them."

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE ESSAYS, 1580
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
transcendental place,
To be a window,
through thy grace.

But when thou
dost anneal in glass
thy story. Making thy life to shine
within The holy
Preacher’s; then the
light and glory
More rev’rend grows, and more
doeth win: Which
e else shows wat’rish, bleak, & thin.

Doctrine and life,
colours and light, in one,
When they combined 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’n’s 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 alarms.
As good go anywhere, they say, As to bemumble
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 3.3°
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 is hid, and doth obliquely bend,
One life is wrapt in flesh, and tends to earth;
The other winds towards 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
Amoung 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 FRENCH
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

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{A} \\
\text{Life} \\
\text{Strife}
\end{array} \]

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

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{A} \\
\text{Salvation} \\
\text{Damnation}
\end{array} \]

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

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,

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.

SEPULCHRE

O blessed body! Whither art thou thrown? No lodging for thee, but a cold hard stone; 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?

Where our hard hearts have took up stones to brain thee And missing this, most falsely did err in thee, Only these stones in quiet entertain thee, And order, As of old, the law by heavenly 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.
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.


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.


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 masterpiece of verse and fish, The Compleat Angler.

THE LIFE OF GEORGE HERBERT

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.

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