BARBARA KIEFER LEWALSKI

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Princeton University Press
Princeton, New Jersey

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Published by Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey
In the United Kingdom: Princeton University Press, Guildford, Surrey

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Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data will be found on the last printed page of this book

Publication of this book has been aided by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

This book has been composed in Linotype Janson
Clothbound editions of Princeton University Press books are printed on acid-free paper, and binding materials are chosen for strength and durability.

Printed in the United States of America by
Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey

ISBN 0-691-06395-8
ISBN 0-691-01415-9 (pbk.)

First Princeton Paperback printing, 1984

TO MY MOTHER

IN MEMORY OF MY FATHER

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Foreword

This study explores the thesis that the spectacular flowering of English religious lyric poetry in the seventeenth century occurred in response to a new and powerful stimulus to the imagination—the pervasive Protestant emphasis upon the Bible as a book, as God's Word encapsulated in human words and in the linguistic features of a variety of texts. Viewed in this light, as a book requiring philological and literary analysis, the Bible became normative for poetic art as well as for spiritual truth. The argument proceeds by extrapolating from contemporary Protestant materials a substantial and complex poetics of the religious lyric, and examining in some detail the precepts it holds forth—regarding religious lyric genres, figurative language, symbolism, modes of meditation and self-analysis, ways of perceiving and portraying the vacillations of the spiritual life, ways of conceiving the poetic persona, and theories about rendering divine truth in human art. These contexts and concepts have some importance for intellectual history, but I survey them for a literary purpose, to define the Protestant poetics variously reflected in the major religious lyric poets of the century—Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, Traherne, and Edward Taylor. Combining literary history and criticism, this book undertakes to describe the course taken throughout the century by the distinctive literary current this poetics produced, and also to illuminate the individual poets work by considering what and how each one drew from the common stream.

The argument is revisionist in proposing that the major seventeenth-century religious lyrists owe more to contemporary, English, and Protestant influences than to Counter Reformation, continental, and medieval Catholic resources. It is revisionist also in asserting that these poets and most of their contemporaries shared a broad Protestant consensus in regard to doctrine and the spiritual life, grounded upon belief in the absolute priority and centrality of scripture and upon paradigms afforded by the Pauline epistles, a consensus overarching the Anglican-Puritan divide and having great significance for religious poetry. I do not wish to propose a new "school" or a new terminology for seventeenth-century poetry to replace the familiar labels—metaphysical, meditative, baroque, Augustinian. But this study does look beyond those familiar and very elastic categories to a more precise definition of aesthetic principles and practices, and in so doing recognizes a new configuration in seventeenth-century lyric poetry.

A book long in the making incurs many debts, some of which will inevitably be overlooked in any attempted enumeration. Of first importance are long-standing intellectual debts to seminal studies by Ernst R. Curtius, Erich Auerbach, Lily B. Campbell, Louis L. Martz, Joseph A. Mazzeo, Rosemond Tuve, and Rosalie Colie, among others. In its evolution this book has profited immensely from the incisive questions and comments of audiences who have heard some part of its argument—at MLA, the Academy of Literary Studies, the International Association of University Professors of English, the Clark Library, Cornell University, Bryn Mawr College, the Universities of Wisconsin, Oslo, and Trondheim, and at Renaissance Colloquia sponsored by the New England Renaissance Society, Brown University, and the University of Massachusetts. It has also benefited greatly from the criticism and contributions of my fellow participants in the Princeton seminar on literary uses of typology (1974) organized by Earl Miner, and from lively discussions with participants and my co-director, Mason I. Lowance, Jr., in an NEH summer seminar at Brown on the Puritan imagination (1976). Occasional references in the notes cannot properly record the stimulation and insights I owe to several former doctoral students whose published and unpublished research has explored related issues—Heather Asals, Elizabeth Jefferis Bartlett, Clark Chalifour, Jeannie De Brun Duffy, Ellen Goodman, Alan Kimbrough, Mary Ann Cale McGuire, Jason Rosenblatt, James Scanlon, Winfried and Louise Schleiner, David Watters, Steven Zwicker. Elizabeth Kirk, Mason Lowance, Ellen Goodman, and Susanne Woods saw the manuscript in one or another of its versions and raised dozens of helpful issues and questions. Joseph A. Wittreich and Mary Ann Radzinowicz read the book for the Press with meticulous care, offering penetrating criticism, invaluable suggestions for improvement, and much-too-generous praise. Obviously, blame for what faults remain should fall squarely upon my own head.

Research for this study was partially supported by a National Endowment for the Humanities Senior Fellowship in 1974-75, and by special research funds from Brown together with a research leave in 1978. The librarians and staff of the British Library, the Bodleian Library, the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Houghton and Widener Libraries of Harvard University, the Beinecke Library, and the John Hay, John Carter Brown, and Rockefeller Libraries of Brown University were most helpful with research materials. Some portions of chapter four, in an earlier formulation, were incorporated in essay contributions to Illustrious Evidence, *ed. Earl Miner (University of California Press, 1975), and* Literary Uses of Typology from the Late

Middle Ages to the Present, *ed. Earl Miner (Princeton University Press, 1977); some portions of chapter six were incorporated in "Emblems and the Religious Lyric: George Herbert and Protestant Emblematics,"* HSL, *6 (1978). I want to thank the British Library for supplying and permitting reproduction of all the emblems in this volume with the exception of Figures 8 and 10, kindly supplied to me by the Bibliothèque Nationale. Meg Lota Teagarden, Rebecca Fullerton, and Deborah Courville helped at various times as research assistants; Deborah Courville and Shirley Rodrigues typed the manuscript. Toni Oliviero brought her unique combination of research and editorial skills to bear upon the manuscript in its final stages and also prepared the index. Mrs. Arthur Sherwood of Princeton University Press gave the book her intelligent and painstaking editorial attention throughout, and its author her constant support.*

My deepest thanks, as always, go to my husband, Kenneth F. Lewalski, for intellectual stimulation and comradeship in all the offices of life, to my son David for his infectious good humor and unfailing good nature, and to both for bearing with the book's constant presence and its author's occasional absence during the years of its writing. The book is dedicated to my mother, Vivo K. Delo, and to the memory of my father, John P. Kiefer.

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List of Abbreviations

AL	*American Literature*
ANCL	Ante-Nicene Christian Library, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, 24 vols. (Edinburgh, 1867-1872)
AQ	*American Quarterly*
ArlQ	*Arlington Quarterly*
AUMLA	*Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association*
EAL	*Early American Literature*
EIC	*Essays in Criticism* (Oxford)
ELH	*Journal of English Literary History*
ELR	*English Literary Renaissance*
ES	*English Studies*
HLQ	*Huntington Library Quarterly*
JEGP	*Journal of English and Germanic Philology*
JWCI	*Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*
MLR	*Modern Language Review*
MP	*Modern Philology*
NEQ	*New England Quarterly*
Pat. Lat.	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus . . . Series Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844-1864)
Pat. Graec.	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus . . . Series Graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 162 vols. (Paris, 1857-1912)
PBSA	*Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*
PMLA	*Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*
PQ	*Philological Quarterly* (Iowa City)
RES	*Review of English Studies*
RN	*Renaissance News* (*Renaissance Quarterly*)
SEL	*Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*
SP	*Studies in Philology*
SRen	*Studies in the Renaissance*
TLS	*Times Literary Supplement*

List of Emblems

Figures may be found following page 210.

Figure 1 Hugo, *Pia Desideria*
Figure 2 Hugo, *Pia Desideria*
Figure 3 Wither, *Emblemes*
Figure 4 Wither, *Emblemes*
Figure 5 Hulsius, *Emblemata Sacra*
Figure 6 Lipsius, *De Cruce*
Figure 7 Montenay, *Emblemes, ou Devises Chrestiennes*
Figure 8 Heyns, *Emblemes Chrestienes*
Figure 9 van Haeften, *Schola Cordis*
Figure 10 Messager, *Vis Amoris*
Figure 11 Cramer, *Emblemata Sacra*
Figure 12 Cramer, *Emblemata Sacra*
Figure 13 Cramer, *Emblēmata Sacra*
Figure 14 Cramer, *Emblemata Sacra*
Figure 15 Cramer, *Emblemata Sacra*
Figure 16 Cramer, *Emblemata Sacra*
Figure 17 Heyns, *Emblemes Chrestienes*
Figure 18 Cats, *Silenus Alcibiadis*
Figure 19 Camerarius, *Centuriae*
Figure 20 Wither, *Emblemes*
Figure 21 Arwaker, *Divine Addresses*
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Figure 25 Cats, *Silenus Alcibiadis*

Protestant Poetics and the
Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric

CHAPTER I

"Is there in truth no beautie?": Protestant Poetics and the Protestant Paradigm of Salvation

Most sixteenth- and seventeenth-century poets and theorists of poetry would have met Herbert's rhetorical question from "Jordan I" by affirming as positively as he could wish that truth is indeed the proper subject of poetry, that beauty and truth are finally one. But the key terms of that question may carry diverse meanings, reflecting quite different assumptions as to just how poetry conveys truth. One prominent strain of Renaissance theory and poetic practice, described in recent studies of Renaissance poetics by John M. Steadman, Michael Murrin, Don Cameron Allen, and S. K. Heninger, presents the poet as maker of fictions which allegorically conceal and reveal profoundest philosophic truths; or as the inspired shaper of myths and symbols which shadow forth cosmic truth and divine revelation; or, in Sidney's terms, as the creator of a golden world which embodies and mediates a truer vision of the real than can nature's brazen world.[1] But it is just these notions of poetry as pointing by means of fictions to philosophical truth, or shadowy revelation, or the platonic ideas, that Herbert eschews in "Jordan I":

> Who sayes that fictions onely and false hair
> Become a verse? Is there in truth no beautie?
> Is all good structure in a winding stair?
> May no lines passe, except they do their dutie
> Not to a true, but painted chair?
>
> Is it no verse, except enchanted groves
> And sudden arbours shadow course-spunne lines?
> Must purling streams refresh a lovers loves?
> Must all be vail'd, while he that reades, divines,
> Catching the sense at two removes?

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.*[2]

The poetics implied in the final line of Herbert's poem proposes instead a direct recourse to the Bible as repository of truth: the speaker calls upon biblical models and biblical poetic resources (the quotation from Psalm 145:1), and associates himself straightforwardly with the Psalmist in heartfelt and uncontrived (plain) utterance.

The biblical poetics which Herbert here partly articulates and which (I shall argue) several other notable Protestant poets of his period follow, is parallel to, but at the same time distinct from, another kind of "true" poetry, the biblical prophetic mode various critics (M. H. Abrams, Angus Fletcher, Joseph A. Wittreich, William Kerrigan, Northrop Frye, Murray Roston) have found relevant to the major poetry of Spenser, Milton, and a number of the Romantics.[3] Prophecy, though often directed to the mind and heart, is a public mode, concerned to mediate through testimony, archetypal symbol, and story the prophet's inspired visions of transcendent reality or of apocalyptic transformations, present or future. The great biblical models are the Old Testament prophets (Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel), and especially the Book of Revelation, which is said to subsume them all. Religious lyric, though often didactic in intention or effect, is a private mode, concerned to discover and express the various and vacillating spiritual conditions and emotions the soul experiences in meditation, prayer, and praise. The great biblical model is the Psalmist with his anguished cries *de profundis*, and his soaring *te deums* of praise.

I do not intend to maintain, with Northrop Frye, that the Bible is in fact the comprehensive storehouse and source of western literary genres, archetypes, and forms,[4] but will only observe that some such assumption seems to inform a good deal of the major poetry, epic and lyric, of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I do assert that, despite the impact of biblical language upon the eighteenth-century sublime, and of the discovery of the true principles of Hebrew versification upon the Romantic poets' perception and use of the Bible as poetic model, the articulation and practice of a fully-developed theory of biblical aesthetics is not a pre-Romantic or Romantic but a Renaissance/seventeenth-century phenomenon.[5] Specifically, my concern here is with the biblical, Protestant poetics informing a major strain of English seventeenth-century religious lyric: the chief characteristics

of that poetics can, I suggest, be clearly discerned, and the history of its literary impact traced with some precision—from the quickening response of Donne to the developing theory, to the exhaustion of this particular tradition in the American colonial poet Edward Taylor.

This study, then, will argue two propositions. First, that an extensive and widely accessible body of literary theory, chiefly pertaining to the Bible and to fundamental Protestant assumptions about the spiritual life and about art, can be extrapolated from such sixteenth- and seventeenth-century materials as biblical commentaries, rhetorical handbooks, poetic paraphrases of scripture, emblem books, manuals on meditation and preaching. Second, that such theory, and the biblical models it identified, helped to shape contemporary attitudes about religious poetry, contributing directly to the remarkable flowering of the religious lyric in the seventeenth century, and especially to that major strain represented by Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, Traherne, and Taylor. The argument should begin with some justification for studying these particular materials and poets in terms of a biblical and Protestant aesthetics.

My contention that the poetics of much seventeenth-century religious lyric derives primarily from Protestant assumptions about the poetry of the Bible and the nature of the spiritual life calls for some adjustment of scholarly directions. Several basic studies have pressed claims for medieval and Counter Reformation influences upon these poets: Louis L. Martz has located the dominant influence in Ignatian and Augustinian meditative traditions; Patrick Grant has specified the Augustinianism of the medieval Franciscans (modified by certain countervailing Renaissance concepts) as the primary intellectual context.[6] By contrast, Malcolm M. Ross finds this poetry to be Protestant and aesthetically the worse for it, in that Protestantism undermined incarnational eucharistic symbolism, fragmented the medieval analogical universe, and so brought about the attenuation of analogical poetic symbolism—flattening symbol into metaphor or simile.[7] But this is surely a curiously blinkered approach to some of the finest religious lyric in the literature.

I suggest rather that the primary poetic influences upon the major devotional poets of the century—Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, Traherne, Taylor—are contemporary, English, and Protestant, and that the energy and power we respond to in much of this poetry has its basis in the resources of biblical genre, language, and symbolism, the analysis of spiritual states, and the tensions over the relation of art and truth which were brought into new prominence by the Reformation. Of course Roman Catholic theology, spirituality, and aesthetics were far

from monolithic, even after Trent, and we can find precedents and analogues for some elements of Protestant biblicism, theology, spirituality, and aesthetics in the Augustinian tradition, the nominalists, Erasmus, the *Devotio Moderna* movement, the Jansenists, and even in the scholastic and Tridentine mainstream. Nevertheless, these common Christian elements took on distinctive form within the total frame of English Protestantism, and that contemporary milieu is the immediate source of a new Protestant poetics. The poets described here do not derive their principal strength from the tag-ends of medieval or Counter Reformation spirituality and symbolism which they sometimes exhibit, but rather from their active engagement with new modes of religious thought and their eager experimentation with new resources for religious poetry.

Some modification is in order also in regard to theories relating this poetry to an "Augustinian" poetics derived primarily from the *De Doctrina Christiana*.[8] According to J. A. Mazzeo's illuminating essay, Augustinian poetics presupposes a symbolic universe in which the movement of thought is Platonic—"through the words to the realities themselves, from the temporal realities to the eternal realities, from talk to silence, and from discourse to vision."[9] Though Mazzeo does not draw the inference, it seems clear that the Augustinian position must finally depress the significance of poetry along with all arts of human discourse, since, though words are important as signs, truth is conveyed not by words but by revelation and intuition. In describing Herbert's poetics, both Joseph H. Summers and Arnold S. Stein have appealed to Augustine's directive that the preacher seek wisdom and truth rather than eloquence, and Stanley E. Fish has pressed hard the implications of the Augustinian poetics in relation to Donne's sermons, Herbert's poetry, and various prose works of the seventeenth century.[10] Fish argues that the seventeenth-century writers in the Augustinian tradition ultimately renounce human art, and enact this renunciation by undermining the expected logical and rhetorical development of their works—a strategy calculated to demonstrate the incapacity of human art to present divine truth, and to display the need for utter dependence upon God to gain an intuition of truth.

We should, however, approach Augustinian aesthetics not in medieval but in Reformation terms, taking account of the important new factor introduced by the Reformation—an overwhelming emphasis on the written word as the embodiment of divine truth. In this milieu the Christian poet is led to relate his work not to ineffable and intuited divine revelation, but rather to its written formulation in scripture. The Bible affords him a literary model which he can imitate in such

literary matters as genre, language, and symbolism, confident that in this model at least the difficult problems of art and truth are perfectly resolved. My proposition is, then, that far from eschewing aesthetics for a rhetoric of silence or a deliberate anti-aesthetic strategy, these poets committed themselves to forging and employing a Protestant poetics, grounded upon scripture, for the making of Protestant devotional lyrics.

A. Biblical Poetics and the Emergence of a Protestant Aesthetics

Ernst Curtius has provided both the term "biblical poetics" and some consideration of the early history of the concept in the Patristic period and the Middle Ages.[11] In essence the concept affirms the poetry of the Bible to be analogous to, and usually prior and superior to, pagan poetry. Over the centuries this concept was invoked, variously, to defend the literary quality of the Bible as against pagan literature, to defend the practice of poetry among Christians by appeal to biblical authority, and to propose the Bible as (in certain respects) a model for Christian poets. In this vein the patristic Christian poet Sedulius identified David the Psalmist as the true model for Christian poets, and the mid-seventeenth-century Protestant commentator Edward Leigh asserted that "The Book of the *Psalms*, *Job*, and the *Songs of Moses*, are the only patern of true Poesie."[12] Early and late, the chief categories for describing the poetic nature of scripture were genre, figurative language, and symbolic mode (typology).

The *loci classici* for discussions of genre in the Bible are provided by Jerome and Isidore of Seville. Basing his comparisons chiefly upon the supposed metrical similarities of biblical and classical poetry, Jerome declared that the Book of Job was written in hexameter (epic) verse, and that the Psalms, in various lyric meters, invite comparison with the great classical lyrics.[13] Isidore greatly expanded the list of literary and non-literary kinds to be found in the Bible, and indeed asserted their biblical origin: Moses first wrote hexameter verse in Deuteronomy 32, "long before Pherecydes and Homer"; hymns in praise of God were first composed by David; the first epithalamium was Solomon's; the inventor of threnody was Jeremiah and only later Simonides among the Greeks; Isaiah first wrote rhetorical prose; the first historian was Moses.[14]

The poetic nature of the Bible, or at least of certain portions of it, was also urged on the basis of figurative language—the presence of the recognized rhetorical and poetic figures and tropes. Cassiodorus dis-

covered over one hundred and twenty rhetorical figures in the Psalms alone, and both he and the Venerable Bede claimed the prior appearance in scripture of all the figures of language and thought.[15] The claim that the Bible is "strewn with figures of speech" was reaffirmed by Charlemagne in outlining his program for the reform of studies, and much later by Petrarch in arguing the harmony of poetry and theology: "When Christ is called now a 'lion,' and now a 'lamb,' and now a 'worm'—what is that if not poetic?"[16]

Perhaps the most important feature identifying the Bible as poetry was its presumed symbolic mode. The basic medieval formula, enunciated by Augustine and repeated constantly, recognized a literal or historical meaning of scripture residing in the signification of the words, and, in addition, a spiritual meaning whereby the things or events signified by the words point beyond themselves to other things or events.[17] Aquinas' classic account of the so-called four-fold method of exegesis recognized in addition to the literal meaning three spiritual senses: allegorical or typological, tropological or moral, and anagogical.[18] The method is illustrated by Dante's famous reading of Psalm 114, on the Exodus theme:

> If we consider the letter alone, the thing signified to us is the going out of the children of Israel from Egypt in the time of Moses; if the allegory, our redemption through Christ is signified; if the moral sense, the conversion of the soul from the sorrow and misery of sin to a state of grace is signified; if the anagogical, the passing of the sanctified soul from the bondage of the corruption of this world to the liberty of everlasting glory.[19]

Dante's discussion of the *Commedia* in these terms provides the most notable medieval example of a poet taking the symbolic mode of scripture as a model for his own religious poetry.

My contention is that the new focus on scripture occasioned by the Protestant Reformation promoted in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England a specifically biblical poetics, which revived and further developed these ancient assumptions under the impetus of Protestant theology and the new literary and philological interests of the period. I suggest further that this biblical poetics is itself the most important component of an emerging Protestant aesthetics.

A pioneering study by Lily B. Campbell has pointed to the multiplication in sixteenth-century England of verse translations, metaphrases, and poetic versions of the so-called poetic parts of the Bible—Psalms, the Song of Songs, Isaiah, Lamentations, Proverbs, the Book of Job—and also the widespread use of the stories of Abraham, Moses,

Noah, David, Judith, and Job as subject matter for narrative or "epic" poems and for religious drama.[20] On the theoretical side, Protestant Englishmen of the period testified in some numbers to the need to create a biblically inspired substitute for the supposedly licentious or scandalous or worldly poetry of their contemporaries, rallying to the standard of Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas' new muse for Christian poetry—the erstwhile muse of Astronomy, Urania.[21] In a dream-vision poem, Du Bartas recounted Urania's visit to him, urging him to reclaim for God the noble gift of poetry which had originated in the Bible, but was then perverted to idolatrous and immoral uses. The poem was translated into English by King James I (1585) and Joshua Sylvester (1605); and Urania's arguments, or dream-visions modeled upon that of Du Bartas, are recounted in the prefaces to several contemporary religious poems.[22] Urania's arguments for the writing of Christian poetry draw upon the ancient precepts of biblical poetics, and these precepts were marshalled for similar purposes by Sidney, Puttenham, Lodge, Quarles, Vaughan, Milton, and many others.

In a series of ground-breaking articles Israel Baroway has investigated the patristic sources and Renaissance development of certain of these concepts—the notion of the "Hebrew hexameter" for example, and of the metrics of the Psalms.[23] Other literary scholars have explored the impact of biblical poetics theories upon specific poets and genres in the period—e.g., the effect of Protestant attitudes toward the Old Testament upon the choice and treatment of biblical materials in the drama, or the influence of Hebraic biblical rhythms and dialogic modes upon the Metaphysical poets, several prose writers, and especially Milton.[24] In particular, several Miltonists have explored Milton's major poems with reference to the Exodus "epic," the Mosaic prophetic voice, the Jobean brief epic, and the model of tragedy or prophecy in the Apocalypse.[25] It is not at all surprising that Milton's poetry has given rise to some of the most extended and suggestive inquiries into biblical poetics, since he was himself a forthright exponent of the theory, making frequent comparisons between biblical and classical forms and implying, if not overtly maintaining, the influence of biblical models upon his own poetry. The most explicit passage is the familiar one from *The Reason of Church Government*:

> Time servs not now, and perhaps I might seem too profuse to give any certain account of what the mind at home in the spacious circuits of her musing hath liberty to propose to her self, though of highest hope, and hardest attempting, whether that Epick form whereof the two poems of *Homer*, and those other two of *Virgil*

and *Tasso* are a diffuse, and the book of *Job* a brief model: . . . Or whether those Dramatick constitutions, wherein *Sophocles* and *Euripides* raigne shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary to a Nation, the Scripture also affords us a divine pastoral Drama in the Song of *Salomon* consisting of two persons and a double *Chorus*, as *Origen* rightly judges. And the Apocalyps of Saint *John* is the majestick image of a high and stately Tragedy, shutting up and intermingling her solemn Scenes and Acts with a sevenfold *Chorus* of halleluja's and harping symphonies: and this my opinion the grave autority of *Pareus* commenting that booke is sufficient to confirm. Or if occasion shall lead to imitat those magnifick Odes and Hymns wherein *Pindarus* and *Callimachus* are in most things worthy, some others in their frame judicious, in their matter most an end faulty: But those frequent songs throughout the law and prophets beyond all these, not in their divine argument alone, but in the very critical art of composition may be easily made appear over all the kinds of Lyrick poesy, to be incomparable.[26]

Interestingly enough, despite Milton's large claims for the lyric poetry of scripture, the contribution of biblical poetics theory to seventeenth-century devotional poetry has not been much explored. To be sure, the presence of biblical allusion, structure, and style in some of these poems has been noted, as well as the special influence of the Psalms and Psalm commentary upon them.[27] But we need to know much more about assumptions current in the Renaissance regarding the genres, figurative language, symbolism, and other poetic elements in scripture, to determine the full impact of such assumptions upon Protestant poets attempting a serious but subtle and artful use of the biblical tradition in their own religious lyric.

In addition to the theory of biblical poetics, several popular genres of religious writing also contributed to the development of a Protestant aesthetics of the religious lyric. These genres—meditation, emblem literature, arts of preaching, and minor devotional poetry—were transformed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the emergence of characteristically Protestant forms reflecting the new biblical emphasis, the Protestant paradigm of the Christian life, and Protestant ideas regarding the use of art in the presentation of sacred truth.

The very extensive contemporary literature on meditation is clearly important for the poets studied here: three of them (Donne, Vaughan, Traherne) produced their own manuals of meditation, and a fourth, Edward Taylor, labelled his poems "Preparatory Meditations."[28] I shall argue, however, that the primary influence comes not from the

Ignatian and Augustinian modes so thoroughly studied by Martz, but rather from the several emerging Protestant kinds—deliberate meditation on scripture texts, meditation on the creatures, occasional meditation, meditation on personal experience, heavenly meditation.

Emblem books also contributed to contemporary theories about poetic language and symbolism in the seventeenth century. As several pioneering studies have shown,[29] the emblem manner generally, as well as individual emblems, influenced the structure and imagery of particular poems and collections of poems. But, although religious emblem books have been regarded as virtually a Jesuit preserve, I shall urge the special significance for the poets here studied of the numerous Protestant books of moral and sacred emblems, both revisions of Jesuit originals and new collections. These emblem sequences often provide close and suggestive analogues for the ways in which the Protestant poets render biblical tropes, allegorical images, nature symbols, and the course of the Christian life.

Contemporary Protestant *ars praedicandi*, and also certain poetic precedents, afford other relevant contexts. The questions, posed most insistently by George Herbert but important to all the major Protestant poets, as to what kind of art may be used in presenting sacred subject matter and as to how sinful, fallen man may write of divine truth, were explored in greater depth in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Protestant debates about the framing of sermons than anywhere else. Moreover, these treatises often addressed such specifically literary issues as levels of style in relation to subject, plainness or ornateness of language, and the uses of simile and metaphor. Finally, major seventeenth-century poets writing out of an emerging Protestant aesthetics had to engage the question of how a poet using biblical materials and models can find his own artistic stance and release his own poetic voice through these materials. For this issue, other poets provide a useful context: the poets of the Bible, about whom some theory had evolved concerning the relation of their own experiences, conceptions, and artistry to divine inspiration; and the experiments with poetic personae undertaken by predecessors and contemporaries, upon which better poets could build.

I have not attempted to treat the liturgy as an independent context for this poetry, because it is often not possible or profitable to distinguish between general biblical influences conveyed through private reading, study, sermons, and the like, and biblical influence conveyed through the liturgy.[30] Cranmer's preface to the Book of Common Prayer proclaims that the basic principle of that liturgy is the restoration of the Word of God to the central place in Christian worship:

"vayne and superstytious" extra-biblical material from the inherited liturgy is deleted, and scripture readings are expanded from selected verses to entire chapters and passages. The order of services calls for the Psalter to be read through once each month, the Old Testament once a year (except for portions of certain books thought not to be edifying), and the New Testament three times a year (except for the Apocalypse, from which only chapters 1 and 22 were assigned).[31] Moreover, the fact that most parishes celebrated Holy Communion only a few times a year meant that the liturgical experience for most worshipers most of the time centered upon the extensive scripture readings which chiefly comprise the services for Morning Prayer, the Ante-Communion, and Evening Prayer, together with a sermon or homily.[32] Puritan worship focused even more exclusively upon the Bible for readings and sermon texts. Such constant communal reading and hearing was surely a major means by which poets became conscious of the poetic elements of scripture, and of the models it might present for Christian lyric poetry.

A word is now in order about the selection of these five poets—Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, Traherne, and Taylor—as the primary exemplars of a Protestant aesthetics of the religious lyric, constituting a distinct strain or "school." Readers may find something odd in the inclusion of Donne or Traherne among the exponents of a Protestant aesthetics, and may well protest certain omissions. I hasten to confess that of course Milton and Marvell belong in this company: they were excluded only because they have written very few (though very great) poems specifically in the genre of the devotional lyric,[33] and I am concerned here with poets for whom this form is a major vehicle of poetic expression. Herrick, despite some influences from biblical and Protestant materials, does not seem to belong here, for he does not scrutinize his soul and his art in the serious terms the Protestant aesthetics demands. Crashaw writes out of a very different aesthetics emanating from Trent and the continental Counter Reformation, which stresses sensory stimulation and church ritual (rather than scripture) as means to devotion and to mystical transcendence.

The five poets of my argument, despite large differences among themselves in style and in thought, all wrote major devotional poetry calling variously upon biblical poetics, and upon the other Protestant traditions discussed here. This Protestant poetics links them together, as forming a clearly recognizable major strain in the religious lyric of the period, and their poetic production, spanning the century as it does, unfolds diverse possibilities within a common aesthetics. Donne presents a fascinating example of beginnings, of a conscious alignment

with, and creative development of, the new poetics, together with some admixture of older patterns. And the poetry of Edward Taylor in America provides an eminently satisfying sense of an ending, since it seems at once to exhaust many of the poetic conventions for the religious lyric produced by this biblical, Protestant aesthetics, and at the same time to open out to new ways with language and imagery.

B. The Protestant Paradigm of Salvation

Besides looking to the Bible as source and model for the presentation of sacred truth as art, Protestant poetics also calls for the treatment of another kind of truth in religious lyric poetry—the painstaking analysis of the personal religious life. Working in these terms, the Protestant lyric poet must explore such questions as his relationship to God, the state of his soul, and his hopes of salvation with direct reference to his own theological assumptions, whereas the dramatic or epic poet may, if he wishes, treat the biblical stories in themselves. For this reason, a fundamental ground for the poetics I am describing, and a major influence, thematic and structural, upon the poetry of its chief exponents, is the classic Protestant paradigm of sin and salvation. The poets of this study reflect some spread of theological opinion, and their poems highlight different aspects of the spiritual life, but all plot the experience treated in their lyric sequences in relation to this widely accepted schema.

It is hardly necessary now to argue that the theological tenor of the English Church in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was firmly Protestant, even Calvinist, though literary critics have been in some danger of forgetting that fact as they stress Roman Catholic influences upon Donne or the medieval literary heritage of Herbert, or the contribution of both to the emerging spirit of Anglicanism.[34] As H. R. McAdoo has noted,

> Calvinism . . . was in the ascendant in England until the middle of the [17th] century. The disagreement between Anglican and Puritan began with questions of church order and not of teaching, and it has been said that there was hardly one of the Elizabethan bishops who was not a Calvinist. . . . The fall of Laud and the convening of the Westminster Assembly [1642] mark the summit of its development in England.[35]

Or as Norman Pettit well states, " 'Anglicanism' in a normative sense did not become a reality until after the Restoration"; Lancelot Andrewes and George Herbert preached within the same tradition of re-

formed theology as did such Puritans as Richard Greenham, Richard Rogers, Arthur Hildersam, and William Perkins.[36]

The influence of this theological milieu upon the so-called Metaphysical poets has begun to be recognized. In *The Protestant Mind of the English Reformation* Charles H. and Katherine George assimilate Donne to the dominant Calvinist doctrinal consensus, concluding that he was "in a general sense unqualifiedly Protestant" and that "his revolt from the Church of Aquinas is in some ways the most absolute of that of any English divine."[37] Substantiating this view, I have elsewhere argued that Reformation theology and Protestant modes of meditation are of primary importance for several of Donne's poems.[38] Similarly, William H. Halewood argues that the pervasive Augustinianism of the period—Augustine as interpreted by the Reformation—led Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, Marvell, and Milton to develop a poetic mode exploring man's radical sinfulness and God's overpowering grace.[39]

In stressing the Calvinist theological milieu I do not of course deny the importance or the divisiveness of the major theological disputes which raged throughout the century—predestination versus Arminianism; total versus less-than-total depravity; the sole authority of scripture versus some appeal to reason and tradition; unconditioned free grace versus human cooperation with or preparation for grace. Nor do I suggest that the somewhat different stances on these and other issues taken by various Protestant poets—those here studied and others such as Herrick, Marvell, and Milton—are without significant impact upon their poetics. My point here is simply that Calvinism provided a detailed chart of the spiritual life for Elizabethan and seventeenth-century English Protestants, and that this map also afforded fundamental direction to the major religious lyric poets.

The theological ideas that chiefly influenced the way in which these poets portrayed their own (and everyman's) spiritual condition were for the most part derived from the Pauline epistles. Both Luther and Calvin wrote influential commentaries on Romans and Galatians which achieved early translation into English, and William Perkins' advice to preachers to begin their study of scripture with the Epistle to the Romans seems to have been widely followed.[40] Thomas Draxe is typical in finding Romans to contain "the *Quintessence* and perfection of saving *Doctrine*," and the eighth chapter to be a conduit conveying the waters of life to the Church.[41] The crucial verses from Romans are the following:

> There is none righteous, no not one (3:10).

Therefore by the deedes of the Law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight (3:20).

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,
Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ (3:23-24).

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his sonne. . . .
Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified (8:29-30).[42]

From Paul's epistles, the Protestant extrapolated a paradigm against which to plot the spiritual drama of his own life. In the first place, he understood that his very nature, as originally created in integrity and holiness, had been marred almost beyond recognition by original sin, and that the image of God according to which Adam had been formed was in him obliterated. In the Thomistic formula the effects of the Fall chiefly involved the disordering of the faculties and the rebellion of the senses against reason, resulting from the removal of the supernatural perfection and harmony man enjoyed in innocence.[43] For the Protestant however, the Fall meant the depravity of all his natural faculties—the blinding of the intellect and the bondage of the will in Luther's formulation. For Calvin also "nothing remains after the ruin except what is confused, mutilated, and disease-ridden"; "the mind is given over to blindness and the heart to depravity."[44] Donne also spoke in these terms: man in the condition of original sin "hath no interest in his own natural faculties; He cannot think, he cannot wish, he cannot do any thing of himself" toward supernatural ends; original sin is "that indeleble foulnesse, and uncleanesse which God discovers in us all," and the death attendant upon it "hath invaded every part and faculty of man, understanding, and will, and all."[45] Because man's natural state is so desperate, there can be no question (as in some Roman Catholic formulations) of a man's preparing himself through moral virtue for the reception of grace, or of performing works good and meritorious in themselves; everything that he does of himself is necessarily evil and corrupt. As the tenth of the Thirty-nine Articles of the established church put it, "The condition of man, after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turne, and prepare himselfe by his owne naturall strength, and good workes, to faith, and calling upon God, wherefore we have no power to doe good workes pleasant, and acceptable to God, without the grace of God preventing us, that we may

have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will."[46] The drama of man's spiritual restoration, his regeneration, must then be understood wholly as God's work, effected by the merits of Christ and apprehended by a faith which is itself the gift of God; failure to recognize one's utter dependence upon grace, or laying claim to any kind of merit or desert for any of one's own works is a dangerous sign of reprobation.

The Pauline terms—election, calling, justification, adoption, sanctification, glorification—mark the important stages (some of them concomitant rather than sequential) in the spiritual life of any Protestant Christian, who was urged by dozens of manuals to seek constantly for the evidence of those stages in his own life. Inaugurating the whole process is God's *Election* from all eternity of certain persons to salvation and eternal life. Reformation theology gave rise to various views as to whether God's predestinating decrees of election and reprobation are in any way conditional, and as to whether God laid down those decrees before or after the Fall; some—Donne among them—took exception to the so-called "double predestination," denying that the decree of reprobation can be wholly unconditional, and a matter of God's first intention.[47] Yet English Protestants of the period were in general agreement as to what election is. In Perkins' words, "Election, is Gods decree, whereby on his owne free-will, he hath ordained certaine men to salvation, to the praise of the glorie of his grace."[48] Englishmen were, however, constantly warned (for the peace of the state and that of their souls) not to dwell upon abstruse theological questions concerning when, how, and why the elect are chosen, but rather, as Perkins put it, to gather "by signes and testimonies in our selves . . . what was the eternall counsell of God concerning our salvation."[49]

The *Calling* of the elect Christian involves God's awakening in him at whatever time God has appointed and by whatever means (extraordinary, as when he struck Paul off his horse on the way to Damascus, or ordinary, by the voice of the minister preaching the gospel) such a sense of his desperate sinfulness but also of the gospel promises that he is prepared to receive the accompanying gifts of effective repentance and saving faith.[50] This process is wholly of God's causation; the Christian will be aware of the effects within himself, and some theologians assign him duties in preparing his heart to receive the call,[51] but neither the preparation of the heart nor the effectual calling is achieved by his own efforts.

Justification, which alone makes possible the sinner's salvation, is also God's gift; for the Protestant it involves forgiveness of his sins by

Christ's satisfaction for them, and the imputing of Christ's righteousness to him as a cloak or covering to hide his true filthiness and wickedness. As Calvin explained, when God regards the justified man he does not see that sinner but the merits and righteousness of his own perfect image, Christ: "He does not justify in part but liberally, so that they may appear in heaven as if endowed with the purity of Christ."[52] The Reformers were adamant in their insistence that this justification is only imputed to the sinner, not infused into him as the Roman Catholics held, so as actually to restore God's image in him; however, the imputed righteousness is really his because he is joined to Christ as body to head. Accordingly, the Protestant apprehended his spiritual condition in terms of a radical paradox, whereby he is perfectly holy in Christ in heaven even while he remains radically sinful in his earthly state. This paradox is nowhere better stated than in Luther: "A Christian man is both righteous and a sinner, holy and profane, an enemy of God and yet a childe of God. . . . These two things are quite contrarie: to wit, that a Christian is righteous and beloved of God, and yet notwithstanding he is a sinner . . . most worthy of Gods wrath and indignation."[53]

Because the Christian remains radically sinful in himself, this justification and imputed righteousness alone can give him peace of mind, assurance of forgiveness and salvation, and finally an awareness of his *Adoption* as a son of God and heir of heaven with Christ. As justification defines the Christian's new legal relation to God the law-giver, so adoption defines his new personal relation to a loving father. This adoption is based upon several Pauline texts, notably Romans 8:15-17:

> For ye have not received the spirit of bondage againe to feare; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, father.
>
> The spirit it selfe beareth witnes with our spirit, that we are the children of God:
>
> And if children, then heires; heires of God, and joynt heires with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that wee may bee also glorified together.

Explaining the term further, William Ames declared:

> All the faithfull doe expect Heaven as it were by a double title, namely by the title of redemption which they have by justification, and by the title as it were of Son-ship, which they have by Adoption . . . The faithfull are taken as it were into Gods Family, and

> are of his household. Gal. 6.10. That is, they may be alwayes under the fatherly tuition of God, depending upon him, for nourishment, education, and perpetuall conservation. . . .
>
> Together with the dignity of sons there is joyned also the condition of heires, *Rom.* 8.17 . . . this inheritance to which the faithfull are adopted, is blessednesse eternall.[54]

Reformation Protestants also held that at the time of justification the process of *Sanctification* is also begun, for God's graces come not singly but together. Sanctification involves the actual but gradual repairing of the defaced image of God in the soul, whereby it enjoys a "new life." Luther declared that this sanctification "has merely its beginning in this life, and it cannot attain perfection in this flesh."[55] Calvin, defining the restored image in terms of Ephesians 4:24 as "righteousness and true holiness," held that the elect cooperate in the gradual development of these qualities by keeping the commandments and practicing the Christian virtues, but the process itself must nevertheless be seen as wholly God's work: "This restoration does not take place in one moment or one day or one year; but through continual and sometimes even slow advances God wipes out in his elect the corruptions of the flesh, cleanses them of guilt, consecrates them to himself as temples . . . this warfare will end only at death."[56] Moreover, because the godly are still sinners, and their good works are always incomplete and redolent of the vices of the flesh, there can be absolutely no question of human merit attaching to any good works which they do; performance of the works of righteousness (the Commandments) are the evidences of election, and the natural fruits of conversion and faith, but are not in any degree meritorious for salvation.[57] The final stage, *Glorification*, or the perfect restoration of the image of God in man and the enjoyment of eternal blessedness, may begin in this life but is fully attained only after death.

This paradigm of regeneration was widely accepted by English Protestants of whatever persuasion regarding church order and discipline; it was in no sense peculiar to Puritans. Even Richard Hooker, that eloquent defender of church establishment, liturgy, sacraments, and the natural law's comprehensibility to fallen reason, distinguished these essential doctrines of Protestantism sharply and with admirable clarity from those of Rome. On the question of justification he observed:

> This grace [of justification, the Roman Catholics] . . . will have to be applied by infusion . . . so the soule might be righteous by the inherent grace: which grace they make capable of increase . . . the

augmentation whereof is merited by good workes, as good works are made meritorious by it. . . . But the righteousnesse wherein we must be found if we wilbe justified, is not our owne: therefore we cannot be justified by any inherent quality. Christ hath merited righteousnesse for as many as are found in him. In him God findeth us, if we be faithfull, for by faith we are incorporated into Christ. Then although in our selves we be altogither sinnefull, and unrighteous, yet even the man which is impious in him selfe . . . him God upholdeth with a gracious eie; putteth away his sinne by not imputing . . . and accepteth him in Jesus Christ, as perfectly righteous, as if he had fulfilled all that was commanded him in the lawe: shall I say more perfectly righteous, then if him selfe had fulfilled the whole law?[58]

With regard to sanctification Hooker insists that it is necessarily incomplete in this world, and that the works it promotes are in no way meritorious for salvation:

Now concerning the righteousnesse of sanctification, we deny it not to be inherent; wee graunt that unlesse we worke, we have it not: . . . [But] God giveth us both the one justice and the other . . . The proper and most immediate efficient cause in us of this later, is the spirit of adoption we have received into our hearts. . . .

The best things which we doe, have somewhat in them to be pardoned. How then can wee doe any thing meritorious, or worthy to be rewarded? . . . We acknowledge a dutifull necessity of doing well; but the meritorious dignity of doing well, wee utterly renounce.[59]

Donne also describes Christian salvation in terms of the familiar Calvinist paradigm, with the same emphasis upon man's depravity, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, the slow process of sanctification, and the inability of any to perform meritorious works:

No man hath any such righteousness of his own, as can save him; for howsoever it be made his, by that Application, or Imputation, yet the righteousness that saves him, is the very righteousness of Christ himself.

David does not say, Do thou wash me, and I will perfect thy worke. . . . Let him that is holy be more holy, but accept his Sanctification from him, of whom he had his Justification; and except he can think to glorifie himself because he is sanctified, Let him not think to sanctifie himself because he is justified; God does all.[60]

For many English Calvinists, including most Puritans and Separatists, these Protestant doctrines received clear, rigorous, and sanctioned formulation in the five points of the Synod of Dort (1618-1619): total depravity, unmerited election, limited atonement (for the elect only), irresistible grace (admitting no element of human cooperation or free response), final perseverance of the saints. Among the poets here studied, the Puritan Edward Taylor held firmly to the principles of Dort. On the other hand, as J.F.H. New points out,[61] many English Calvinists who remained within the established church inclined to moderation and ambiguity in regard to certain of these points: they tended to find some value (and therefore less than total depravity) in the natural faculties of man and the goods of the natural order; to see (with Richard Hooker) the realms of nature and grace as hierarchically ordered rather than dialectically opposed; and to reserve some role, however ambiguously stated, for human response to divine grace. Such attitudes are evident in Donne's comments on man's responsiveness to grace: though grace is always God's free gift and must always preempt and enable any human response, yet man "can answer the inspiration of God, when his grace comes, and exhibit acceptable service to him, and cooperate with him."[62] Donne discusses in the same way, and with the same reservation of God's entire freedom, causality, and initiative, the proper use of our natural faculties in preparation for grace, so that "that *free will* which we have in *Morall* and *Civill* actions, [may] be bent upon the *externall duties* of *Religion*, (as every naturall man may, out of the use of that *free will, come to Church, heare the Word preached, and believe it to be true*)."[63] Many of the same assumptions seem to underlie the moral discipline of Herbert's "The Church-porch," which is presented as an appropriate preparation for, though not the cause or sure guarantee of, the elect youth's entry into "The Church." As we shall see, such differences of theological emphases are not unimportant for the attitudes of Protestant poets toward the role of grace in the creation of religious poetry.

Of particular interest to this study are the feelings which sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Protestants understood to accompany the working out of this paradigm of the spiritual life in the elect Christian's soul. These feelings involve well-defined emotional, psychological, and spiritual states or conditions which the Christian was urged to try to discern in himself and his own experience. This emphasis upon the constant scrutiny of personal emotions and feelings is a primary cause of that introspective intensity and keen psychological awareness so characteristic of seventeenth-century religious lyrics. The conventional descriptions of the affective states of the elect provide an illuminating

perspective upon the subject matter and manner of treatment in such lyrics.

Responding to God's calling, the Christian first undergoes a conversion experience, which is the great crisis or turning point of his spiritual life. As an essentially passive instrument acted upon by God's grace, he experiences a purging, or mollifying, or breaking of the heart which readies it for the gifts of repentance and saving faith. The understandings and sensations attendant upon this mollifying of the heart are well-described by William Perkins, with reference to the usual prooftext on the subject from Ezekiel:

> The heart . . . must be bruised in peeces, that it may be fit to receive Gods saving grace offered unto it. Ezech. 11. 19. *I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within their bowels: and I will take the stonie heart out of their bodies, and I will give them an heart of flesh.*
>
> There are for the bruising of this stony heart, foure principall hammers. The first, is the knowledge of the Law of God. The second, is the knowledge of sinne, both original and actuall, and what punishment is due unto them. The third, is compunction, or pricking of the heart, namely, a sense and feeling of the wrath of God for the same sinnes. The fourth, is an holy desperation of a mans own power, in the obtaining of eternall life.[64]

Recognizing that this bruising and preparation of the heart is in essence God's work, some Protestants also point to a role for the Christian in the process of afflicting, pricking, and purging his own heart by meditating intently upon his own sins and God's Law. On this point Richard Sibbes declared that we must "join with God in bruising ourselves," and "lay seige to the hardness of our own hearts and aggravate sin all we can,"[65] though all power of accomplishment of this work is understood to rest in God only.

The next experiential state is that of repentance. Concomitant with, or precedent to, repentance is the beginning of saving faith in the elect, but the repentance shows itself visibly first. Perkins waxes eloquent on the sorrow the elect experience as God makes them aware of their desperate sinfulness and their imminent danger of damnation:

> When the spirit hath made a man see his sinnes, he seeth further the curse of the Law, and so he findes himselfe to be in bondage under Satan, hell, death, and damnation: at which most terrible sight his heart is smitten with feare and trembling, through the consideration of his hellish and damnable estate.

> This sorrow if it continue and increase to some great measure, hath certen symptomes in the body, *as burning heat, rouling of the intralls, a pining and fainting of the solide parts.*
>
> Repentance is a worke of grace, arising of a godly sorrow; whereby a man turnes from all his sins unto God, and bringeth forth fruites worthie amendment of life.[66]

This sorrow and repentance usually show themselves with special force at the time of conversion and again on the deathbed, but they continue throughout life. Calvin notes that "the more earnestly any man measures his life by the standard of God's law, the surer are the signs of repentance that he shows."[67]

God's gift of saving faith may now be experienced by the broken and humbled sinner, whereby he understands that the Gospel promises of salvation pertain to him, and that Christ's grace and merits may be applied specifically to himself. Explaining much of this out of David's Psalms, and especially Psalm 51, Perkins provides a suggestive analysis of the psychological states involved:

> In the next place it is to be considered how the Lord causeth faith to spring and to breed in the humbled heart. . . . First, when a man is seriously humbled under the burden of his sinne, the Lord by his spirit makes him lift up himselfe to consider and to ponder most diligently the great mercie of God offered unto him in Christ Jesus. . . . He comes in the second place to see, feele, and from his heart to acknowledge himselfe to stand in neede of Christ, and . . . of every droppe of his most precious blood. Thirdly, the Lord stirreth up in his heart a vehement desire and longing after Christ and his merits: this desire is compared to a thirst. . . . Lastly, after this desire he begins to pray, not for any worldly benefit, but onely for the forgivenes of his sinnes. . . . Now this prayer, it is made, not for one day onely, but continually from day to day: not with lips, but with greater sighes and groanes of the heart then that they can be expressed with the tongue. . . . After this, Christ Jesus will temper him a plaister of his owne heart blood; which beeing applied, he shall find himselfe revived, and shall come to a lively assurance of the forgivenes of all his sinnes.[68]

Richard Rogers observes that this faith grows throughout the elect Christian's life. At the time of his conversion it may be only a "little faith," whereby he understands his sins to be pardonable but is not sure that they are forgiven; subsequently, he may attain to some weak assurance but will often lose it and need to strive hard to recover it. At

length he attains to a ripe and strong faith, so that most of the time he has a full persuasion of the mercy of God effecting his own salvation, unless God remove that assurance for a season, to try him.[69] This faith is the vehicle for justification and adoption, which conditions manifest themselves also by certain emotional states, according to Perkins: a sense of reconciliation with God; a consciousness that affliction is not punishment but only fatherly chastisement; peace and quietness of conscience; a sense of God's favor; an awareness of spiritual joy in the heart; and an expectation that all the good things God has begun in the elect will be accomplished.[70]

As regards sanctification, Protestants could find in Richard Rogers' *Seven Treatises* a detailed account of the mental and psychological states attending the gradual restoration of the image of God in the elect.[71] The work is addressed to those already converted and embarked upon the Christian life, and in a prefatory epistle Ezechial Culverwell terms it "the Anatomie of the soule, wherein . . . we may as it were, with the eye behold . . . the right constitution of the whole and every part of a true Christian."[72] Rogers finds the emotions attendant upon sanctification to be uneven and fluctuating, like the process itself, though over the long term the Christian experiences growth in holiness and perfection. He invokes the metaphor of a plant to explain this growth: "They being *the Lords plants*, take not their full perfection at once: but according to the nature of a plant, require a daily watering and dressing, whereby in the end they attaine to a full growth in Christ."[73] At the beginning of sanctification, "at the first conversion of a sinner," the purging and cleansing of the heart occurs, renewing our good will and causing hatred of sin and amendment of life, but thereafter the Christian must watch and examine and keep his heart with diligence throughout his life, "seeing no man can watch so carefully, but that much evill will creepe in."[74]

The Christian is warned by Rogers to expect great vacillations in his emotional temper. As he is sensible of God's great gifts, he will often feel an outpouring of love and joy in his heart, moving him to praise God and giving "matter and occasion *of singing and making melodie to the Lord*"—a stimulus the Christian poet must feel with special urgency.[75] On the other hand God sometimes removes the sense of his presence from the Christian, stirring him to quite other responses: "God doth, as it were, hide himselfe sometime for a season . . . that they may with more earnest desire mourne for Gods wonted grace; and that when they have obtained it againe, they may with more joyfulnesse of heart praise him."[76] This state is poignantly portrayed in such Herbert poems as "Deniall," "Grace," "The Glimpse," "The Flower."

Rogers designates three principal stages of the Christian's life, which are relevant to the poetic sequences we shall be examining. Those who are as yet little children in the spiritual life will often be sad, anxious, and distrustful when their comforts cease and their sense of assurance departs: "As in all trades or sciences, the beginnings are hardest and fullest of discouragements; so it fareth with Christians, namely, that their first entrings are most doubtfull, and fullest of weakenes."[77] Those who are in the middle age of the Christian life experience that life as a "combate and a conflict" against sinful lusts, unruly desires, and all manner of temptation, as well as a pilgrimage in the course of which they experience many lets and hindrances. This is the period in which the Christian is especially aware of himself as a wayfarer or as a *miles Christi*, and in which he undergoes constant emotional vacillations "betwixt feare and hope, sorrow and joy"[78]—such as Donne, for example, records vividly in Sonnet XIX. The final stage is that of mature, experienced Christians upheld by many proofs of God's saving grace and constant help which "kept many of them from sore falles, holden them from manifold and great afflictions."[79] Such Christians have the sense of steady progress toward the final perfection to be achieved at their glorification in heaven.

Perkins' somewhat different terms for the psychological states evoked by the process of sanctification are also relevant to this poetry. He describes four "sanctified affections"—zeal for God's glory, fear and awe from the sense of being in God's presence, hatred and detestation of sin and especially of a man's own corruptions, joy of heart in contemplating the day of judgment.[80] He also distinguishes three principal temptations and trials of a Christian life and the emotions attendant upon them: (1) A constant "fight and battell betwixt the flesh and the spirit," the course of which he illustrates out of Paul's Epistles. (2) A disquieted and troubled heart and mind because of a distant relationship with Christ, or because Christ seems to be departed for a time, or because he himself seems to forego the relation by seeking the vanities of the world (illustrated out of Canticles). (3) Heavy and bitter outward afflictions, driving him sometimes to impatience or a fear of God's wrath and displeasure, but at length to a settled consciousness of peace and righteousness.[81] This spectrum of feeling has close consonance with the emotions portrayed in Herbert's five poems entitled "Affliction," and indeed in "The Church" as a whole.

The Protestant-Pauline paradigm of salvation and the emotional states supposed to accompany it influenced variously but profoundly the religious lyrics of Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, Traherne, and

Taylor, in regard to subject matter, structure, and range of feelings portrayed. In one way or another, all these collections concern themselves centrally with the progress of the speaker's soul in terms related to this paradigm.

John Donne's "Holy Sonnets" focus especially upon the beginnings of the process, dramatizing the speaker's pleas for justification and regeneration in language often remarkably precise: "Impute me righteous," "make me new."[82] The sonnets explore the spectrum of emotional states associated with conviction of sin, conversion, repentance, faith, and spiritual struggle; and the emotions portrayed run the gamut from anguish, terror, dread, fear of God's rejection, anxiety about election, and near despair, to grief for sin, love of Christ, and dismay that the vacillations of mind and heart persist throughout life. The sonnet sequence as a whole reflects the Calvinist sense of man's utter helplessness in his corruption, and total dependence upon God in every phase of his spiritual life.

George Herbert's *The Temple*, and especially the collection of lyrics, "The Church," has as its primary subject the whole, lifelong process of sanctification, presented under the metaphor of building the Temple in the Heart. The speaker is devoted to the visible church—its ritual, architecture, sacraments—but his theology is Calvinist: he affirms the double predestination (in "The Water-course") and he struggles hard throughout the volume to relinquish any claim to any good thing as emanating from himself: all is from God. After an analysis of the externals of the Christian life in "The Church-porch," the speaker presents himself in "The Church," where the major motifs are: 1) the struggle to understand, accept, and respond to justification through Christ's sacrifice—beginning with the broken heart of "The Altar" and culminating in "Repentance" and "Faith"; 2) an extended portrayal of the joys and griefs, pleasures and trials, victories and backslidings attendant upon the slow process of sanctification; and 3) the attainment of something like a plateau of assurance. The speaker's frequent distresses and anxieties are not directed to the issue of his election (which he takes largely for granted) but are rather elicited by his persistent sins and afflictions, and especially by the condition of spiritual barrenness he often experiences.

Henry Vaughan[83] also focuses upon the process of sanctification, explored through the motif of the wandering pilgrim or exile. The opening poem, "Regeneration," presents the effectual calling: the speaker turns from the primrose path of sin, attempts to live by the Law (the scales), is called into the Garden of the Church and there confronts the mystery of election: the Spirit blows "*Where I please*,"

awakening some souls and leaving others dormant. The two parts of *Silex Scintillans* display two stages in the spiritual life—an initial, more troubled stage in which the new life struggles to maintain and augment itself in an atmosphere of death, dimness of vision, and distance from God; and a higher plane, a plateau of assurance in which the dominant mood is the speaker's longing for transcendance.

Thomas Traherne,[84] with his ecstatic celebration of infant innocence which all but denies hereditary original sin, his Neoplatonic conception of man's dignity and unlimited potential for spiritual growth, his insistence upon the freedom of the will and the uses of good works, and his celebration of vision as the means by which the Christian can even now experience eternity, seems to diverge very far from the Protestant paradigm. Indeed, on some of these points Traherne occupies a unique position well beyond the Anglican pole of Reformed Protestantism. Yet the contours of the speaker's spiritual life as exhibited in the poems conform to the paradigmatic spiritual history of the human race—initial innocence, fall into sin and grief, and a process of restoration through Christ. And the turning point for the speaker's restoration is the thoroughly Protestant experience of discovering the Bible to be a full commentary on his own life and spiritual condition. We may see Traherne's poems as developing (in an admittedly singular way) a late stage in the Pauline paradigm, in that they analyze the privileges of adoption, exploring just what it means to be the son of God and heir to all things. This focus encourages Traherne's remarkable near-fusion of the states of sanctification and glorification, for the Christian who knows himself adopted by God has claim even now to his full inheritance, if he can but see and enjoy it.

Edward Taylor[85] occupies the Puritan pole. His poems everywhere reflect the theology of Dort in their dominant theme of the unfathomable gulf between God's greatness and goodness and the speaker's abject depravity, a gulf which can be bridged only by irresistible grace. The occasion of most of Taylor's poems is the reception of the Sacrament, seen in Calvinist terms as a "Seal" of regeneration and so also as the sign of full membership in the gathered church of elect saints. Though fairly confident of his election, the speaker is led by the occasion of the Sacrament days to consider over and over again whether, and how certainly, he wears the "wedden garment" of justification and sanctification required of all who partake of the sacrament. Though Taylor's *Second Series* suggests some development in the spiritual life, conforming in very general terms to the familiar Protestant pattern of recurring conflicts, distresses, and struggles which culminate in something like a plateau of assurance, all the poems es-

sentially repeat the same experience. Every time the speaker considers any topic relating to the spiritual life the same question must be confronted: has the speaker the right to apply to himself the spiritual promises and goods described? The posing of this question is seldom agonized, since the speaker has grounds for assurance, but his resolution is almost always tentative, conditional, petitionary; and he can seldom move beyond this fundamental, overwhelming question to reach some higher spiritual state.

The Pauline paradigm informs these collections of poems in various ways. It may make a more or less direct contribution, as in Donne's "Holy Sonnets"; it may undergird sequences related to other parts of the Bible—the Psalms in Herbert, Canticles in Vaughan and Taylor; and it may serve as a norm against which a significantly different range of spiritual emotions and experiences may be set for contrast, as in Traherne. Calvin, Perkins, and many others illustrated the emotional states attendant upon conversion from David's Psalms, with special focus upon Psalm 51 (Herbert's starting point as well); many also explicated Canticles (so constantly a reference point for Vaughan and Taylor) as a portrait of the fluctuations of mind and spirit the elect experience as Christ by turns approaches and departs from them. This disposition to relate the lyric sections of the Bible to the fundamental Protestant paradigm of salvation influenced the ways in which poets used certain biblical books as generic and stylistic models for Christian lyric poetry. To that resource we now turn.

PART I

Biblical Poetics

CHAPTER 2

Biblical Genre Theory: Precepts and Models for the Religious Lyric

Protestant poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries looked to the Bible and its commentators both for genre theory and for generic models for the religious lyric. For most other kinds of poems, classical genre theory and classical exemplars provided direction, but the poets had not that resource for their religious lyrics. Though classical hymns to the gods were constantly cited in Renaissance defenses of poetry as evidence of the seriousness, the antiquity, and the didactic function of poetry,[1] Christian poets felt some compunction about writing praises of the Christian God in the forms used to praise Venus or Apollo. And there were no classical models for the introspective, soul-searching, analytical religious lyrics which are among the era's most impressive poetic achievements. But the Bible was a potential model, in that several parts of it had been identified as poetry in the Hebrew tradition, and in Christian commentary from patristic times onward. From such sources we can deduce some basic assumptions about Biblical lyric kinds which influenced the major poets of this study.

As Wellek and Warren note, genre may be examined in terms of broad categories based on manner of imitation—narrative, dramatic, lyric—and also in terms of such historically recognized kinds as comedy, tragedy, elegy, ode, and epigram. Classical definitions of the historical genres were based on the meter used, whereas modern (and Renaissance) definitions regard both outward form (specific meter and structure) and inner form (attitude, tone, subject, audience, purpose).[2] Both broad and specific approaches to biblical genres emerge from Renaissance biblical commentary. General discussions differentiating the poetic parts of the Bible from the prose parts identify a rather large corpus of biblical verse, of considerable range and variety, from which poets might learn. More specific comments, pointing to biblical examples of particular lyric genres or dividing that compendium of religious lyric, the Book of Psalms, into lyric categories, may suggest how Renaissance theorists conceived of the biblical lyric kinds.

A. Compendiums of Biblical Lyric

The corpus of Biblical lyric poetry was identified to the Renaissance reader or poet in several ways. One was through the tradition of labeling, and sometimes giving separate publication to, the so-called poetical part of scripture. This tradition originated in the Hebrew Bible's specification of three principal parts of sacred scripture, the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographia—which includes three poetical books (Psalms, Proverbs, Job), the five M[e]gillôth (rolls) associated with various festivals (Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther), and three late narrative books (Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles).[3] In the Christian tradition five books—Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon—were often identified as the poetical "third part" of scripture, a classification used in Coverdale's Bible, and the influential Protestant Latin Bible of Junius and Tremellius.[4] These five books were often published separately in duodecimo or smaller format for use in private devotions—in the Geneva version in 1580, 1583, 1614, and 1616, and in the Authorized Version in 1632 and 1642.

A concomitant English Protestant tradition beginning with the Matthew Bible (1537) and its revisions—the Great Bible of 1539 and the Bishops' Bible of 1568—provided the basis for regarding this third or poetical part of scripture as a compendium of lyric poetry. Perhaps responding to the tradition identifying the Book of Job as an epic poem in hexameter verse,[5] these bibles assimilated Job to the historical part of scripture, leaving the third "poetical" part comprised of Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles. This third part received separate publication in Taverner's version in 1550.[6] Also, though it does not number or label the parts of the Bible, the Authorized Version of 1611 reflects this conception in that it sets the Book of Psalms off from the preceding book, Job, and makes another such division after the Song of Songs.

The lyric poetry of the Bible received further display, encouraging its use as model for Christian poetry, in several collections of verse which brought together metrical selections from the "poetic" books of the Bible, songs and hymns from other biblical books, traditional medieval liturgical hymns in vernacular translation, and original compositions presented as analogous in some respects to the above. The early German hymn books were broadly inclusive, randomly organized collections of this kind,[7] and Luther's contributions to them were various: close metrical paraphrases of psalms (e.g., of Psalms 12, 14, 124); free vernacular descants on other biblical lyrics such as the

Angels' song to the Shepherds (Luke 2:10-14); vernacular versions of traditional hymns such as Sedulius' *Herodes hostis impii* and the Gregorian hymn, *O lux beata Trinitas*; several original hymns; and most interesting of all for our purposes, hymns grounded upon the Psalms but developed so freely in regard to New Testament and contemporary reference as to be virtually new poems on the same themes—for example, *Ein' feste Burg* (from Psalm 46).[8] In his preface to a 1525 hymn book, Luther cites the Old Testament prophets and early Christian poets as models he has endeavored to follow, so that "we may boast, as Moses doth in his song (Exodus xv) that Christ is become our praise and our song."[9]

Miles Coverdale's *Goostly Psalmes and Spirituall Songes drawen out of the Holy Scripture* (published sometime before 1539 and greatly influenced by Luther)[10] includes metrical selections from scripture—both close paraphrases and free elaborations—offering these as a substitute for licentious popular ballads and secular songs and sonnets:

> Would God that our minstrels had none other thing to play upon, neither our carters and ploughmen other thing to whistle upon, save psalms, hymns, and such godly songs as David is occupied withal! And if women, sitting at their rocks, or spinning at the wheels, had none other songs to pass their time withal, than such as Moses' sister, Glehana's wife, Debora, and Mary the mother of Christ, have sung before them, they should be better occupied than with *hey nony nony, hey troly loly*, and such like phantasies.[11]

He obviously hopes to stimulate original composition in the biblical mode: "Why should not we then make our songs and mirth of God, as well as they?"[12] John Hall's collection, *The Courte of Virtue* (1565), intensifies the *paragone* with secular verse by offering "Many holy or Spretuall Songes, Sonnettes, psalms, & shorte sentences, as well of holy Scripture as others" specifically as a counter to the popular miscellany of love poetry, *The Court of Venus* (1549-1550?); he also invites other "godly men" to add to his compilation.[13] Hall includes a long dream-vision poem modeled on the prefatory poem of *The Court of Venus*, poems on various virtues chiefly paraphrasing Pauline definitions and exhortations, metrical versions of Psalms 51-92, an *omnium gatherum* of other poems or poem-like passages of scripture, and even some sacred parody of secular lyrics—notably by Wyatt.

Other compendiums, often conceived as song-books for the Church, were predominently or exclusively biblical.[14] These restrictive collections might seem to discourage the writing of original poems in this mode and certainly did exclude such from church services, but they

had the effect of focusing yet more sharply upon the corpus of biblical lyric available as models for private religious poems. In the more liberal tradition, the vernacular metrical psalters by Sternhold-Hopkins, Matthew Parker, and Thomas Ravenscroft, among others, also included the New Testament canticles which had been used traditionally in the medieval offices (the *Magnificat*, Luke 1:48-55; the *Benedictus*, Luke 1:68-79; the *Nunc Dimittis*, Luke 2:29-31), together with vernacular poetic versions of other biblical passages, liturgical hymns, and chants—the Song of the Three Children, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the *Pater Noster*, the *Gloria Patri*, the *Veni Creator*, the *Te Deum*.[15] On the other hand, several reflected the Calvinist belief that *only* biblical songs are appropriate to Christian worship lest God's Word be contaminated by human invention, and so presented a selection of biblical poems to supplement the central corpus of songs for Christian worship, the metrical psalms. In this tradition, Michael Drayton subtitled his *Harmonie of the Church* (1591) "The Spirituall Songes and holy Hymnes, of godly men, Patriarkes and Prophetes . . . ," and his preface disclaimed original composition for the better way of strict biblical paraphrase:

> Gentle Reader, my meaning is not with the varietie of verse to feede any vaine humour, neither to trouble thee with devises of mine owne invention, as careing an overweening of mine own wit: but here I present thee with these Psalmes or Songes of praise, so exactly translated as the prose would permit, or sense would any way suffer me.[16]

George Sandys' *Paraphrase upon the Divine Poems* (1638) is among the most complete and most instructive of these compilations.[17] It contains the whole of Job; the Psalms as set by Henry Lawes; Ecclesiastes; Lamentations; and the usual additions—Moses' two songs (Exod. 15 and Deut. 32); the song of Deborah and Baruch (Judges 5); the song of Hannah at the birth of Samuel (1 Sam. 2:1-10); the lamentation of David over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1:19-27); three songs from Isaiah (Isa. 5, 26, and 28); the song of Jonah (Jon. 2); 2 Samuel 7:18-29; Habbakkuk 3; and the three New Testament Canticles from Luke. Of special interest is the intimation in several commendatory verses that the poems in Sandys' collection (including Job) share common lyric features, in that together they express the full range of human passions. Henry Rainsford's dedicatory poem describes this range:

> Afflicted Job a Veile of Sorrow shrouds;
> But heavenly Beams dispell those envious Clouds.

The Royall Psalmist, borne on Angels wings,
Now weepes in Verse, now Halelu-jahs sings.
Converted Salomon to our eyes presents
Deluding Joyes, and curelesse Discontents.
That good Josiah's Name may never dye,
Thy Muse revives his Mournfull Elegy.
With the same Zeale, doth to our Numbers fit
All the Poeticke Parts of Holy Writ.
And thus Salvation thou maiest bring to those
Who never would have sought for it in Prose.[18]

The New England *Bay Psalm Book* (1680) stands in this same tradition, bringing together metrical versions of the Psalms, the Song of Songs, Lamentations, and the usual Old Testament and New Testament lyrics—expanded to include five poems from Isaiah and nine from the Book of Revelation.[19]

A few of these inclusive biblical collections hark back somewhat to earlier models in that they include some non-biblical material. George Wither, who perhaps contributed more than any other single person to the theory of biblical lyric poetry in England, supplemented his remarkable *Preparation to the Psalter* (1619) and his metrical version of the Psalms (discussed below) with collections intended to provide a large corpus of biblical lyrics and related poems. The most complete such collection was *The Hymnes and Songs of the Church* (1623), set forth with the claim that James I had approved it as a supplement to the Psalter for liturgical use.[20] Wither presented the poems approximately in their biblical order, adding a few to those found in Sandys: The Song of Songs, 1 Chronicles 39:10, Nehemiah 1:5, Proverbs 31:10, Isaiah 12, 37:15-20, and 38:10-20, The Angels' nativity hymn (Luke 2:10-14), and a song from Revelation (15:3-4). He also included metrical versions of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, ancient liturgical hymns such as the *Veni Creator* and the *Te Deum*—and, as Part II of his collection, original "spiritual songs" for feast-days and other public ceremonials, an addition which stirred up a storm of controversy. Moreover, Wither directly encouraged contemporary writing in the biblical mode by suggesting adaptations to contemporary occasions of certain biblical songs (such as Nehemiah's prayer), and by directing poets to David's lamentation over Jonathan "as a Patterne for our Funerall Poemes."[21] A somewhat similar project was undertaken for the Church of Scotland by Zachary Boyd, who offered a supplement to his metrical version of the Psalms with much the same content as Wither's; significantly, Boyd's inclusion of George

Buchanan's nativity hymn, "A Morning Hymn for Christ," just after the New Testament songs from Luke intimates that the modern poem is in the biblical mode.[22]

On the theoretical side, influential literary and exegetical formulations helped to articulate and extend the assumptions underlying such collections, and thereby to further the development of a theory of biblical lyric genres. Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* emphasized the analogy between biblical songs and classical hymns:

> The chiefe [poets] both in antiquitie and excellencie, were they that did imitate the unconceiveable excellencies of God. Such were *David* in his Psalmes, *Salomon* in his song of songs, in his *Ecclesiastes* and *Proverbes*. *Moses* and *Debora*, in their Hymnes, and the wryter of Jobe: Which beside other, the learned *Emanuell Tremelius*, and *F. Junius*, doo entitle the Poeticall part of the scripture. . . . In this kinde, though in a full wrong divinitie, were *Orpheus*, *Amphion*, *Homer* in his himnes, and manie other both *Greeke* and *Romanes*: and this *Poesie* must be used by whosoever will follow S. *Paules* counsaile, in singing Psalmes when they are mery.[23]

From another vantage point, John Donne, preaching on a text from Deborah's song (Judges 5:20), waxed eloquent about the range, variety, excellence, and emotional power of the lyric poetry of scripture, claiming that God's revelation is,

> sweetest of all, where the *Holy Ghost* hath been pleased to set the word of *God* to Musique, and to convay it into a Song; . . . God himselfe made *Moses* a Song [Deut. xxxii], and expressed his reason why; The children of *Israel*, sayes *God*, will forget my Law; but this song they will not forget; . . . This world begun with a Song, if the *Chalde Paraphrasts*, upon *Salomons Song of Songs*, have taken a true tradition, That assoone as *Adams* sinne was forgiven him, he expressed . . . his peace of conscience, in a Song; of which, we have the entrance in that *Paraphrase*. This world begun so; and so did the next world too, if wee count the beginning of that (as it is a good computation to doe so) from the comming of *Christ Jesus*: for that was expressed on Earth, in divers Songs; in the blessed *Virgins* Magnificat; *My soule doth magnifie the Lord*; In *Zacharies* Benedictus; *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel*; and in *Simeons*, Nunc dimittis, *Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace*. This world began so, and the other; and when both shall joyne, and make up one world without end, it shall continue so in heaven, in that Song of the *Lamb*,

> *Great and marveillous are thy workes, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy wayes, thou King of Saints.* And, to Tune us, to Compose and give us a Harmonie and Concord of affections, in all perturbations and passions, and discords in the passages of this life, if we had no more of the same *Musique* in the *Scriptures* (as we have the Song of *Moses* at the *Red Sea*, and many *Psalmes* of *David* to the same purpose) this Song of *Deborah* were enough, abundantly enough, to slumber any storme, to becalme any tempest, to rectifie any scruple of Gods slacknesse in the defence of his cause.[24]

Looking to the Bible itself for theoretical principles, many Protestants found in two Pauline verses the starting point both for a biblically sanctioned poetics of the religious lyric, and for the theory of biblical genres. Colossians 3:16 urges, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdome, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalmes, and Hymnes, and Spirituall songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Ephesians 5:19 employs the same terms, "Speaking to your selves, in Psalmes, and Hymnes, and Spirituall songs, singing and making melodie in your heart to the Lord." There was constant controversy throughout the period as to whether extra-biblical songs are allowable in congregational worship, and whether instrumental accompaniment is permitted. But English Protestants generally agreed that these Pauline stipulations about the origin of such songs in the hearts of the faithful and their function in teaching and admonishing must forbid the use of Latin hymns not understood by the congregation, as well as any highly artful music more noteworthy for the art than the substance. As Robert Rollock's comment on Colossians suggests, these precepts would also seem to govern imitations of the biblical models for private use, which all sides were promoting:

> All the matter of Psalmes, Hymnes, and Canticles, should be spirituall. For why? they come from the riches of the word in the heart. If thou have this substance within thee, all thy songs will be of Scripture, of heavenly things, and all to glorifie thy God, and to edifie thy brother. . . . The forme of singing . . . should *be gracious*, that is, it should have such gratiousnes, and gravitie, as might convey grace to the heart of the hearer. . . . This word *grace* condemnes all, [that] . . . feede not the heart with the words and sentences of the Scripture, but feed the eare with a vaine tune. . . . The chiefe Organ, that is, the instrument wherewith they should sing . . . is not with the Organs of the Papists, no not with thy tongue; but it is with the heart, and with the affection of a well ruled heart. . . . Even so

> before thou sing, temper thou thy heart; and let thy song rise, not from thy throte, but from the depth of thine heart, that is, from thine affections set upon God.[25]

The Pauline verses were seen to urge a poetics for the religious lyric in which artfulness of expression is not pursued for its own sake, but in which the goodness of the (biblical) matter and of the speaker's heart give rise to appropriate forms of expression.

Moreover, though it is misleading to suggest agreement on the matter, there was some disposition to regard the three "kinds" identified in the Pauline verses—psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs—as the basic categories under which the corpus of biblical lyric could be distributed, and also as the categories for original compositions in the biblical mode. Definitions of these three categories sometimes focused upon manner of presentation (psalms were intended to be accompanied upon the psaltery whereas songs were for vocal presentation only),[26] but the more usual definitions called attention to distinctions in subject matter as well. The annotation to Colossians 3:16 in the Geneva Bible reads, "By Psalmes hee meaneth all godly songs which were written upon divers occasions, and by Hymnes, all such as conteine the praise of God, and by spirituall songs, other more peculiar and artificious songs which were also in praise of God, but they were made fuller of Musicke."[27] Nehemiah Rogers provides a more ample definition of the three kinds in his exposition of Isaiah 5:1-17, which he terms Isaiah's "Parabolical Song of the Beloved":

> Three kindes of Songs were in use especially amongst the Jewes: Some they called *Psalmes*; othersome *Hymnes*; and another sort they had which they called *Songs* or *Odes*: . . . The first of these were such as were artifically framed in a certaine full number of words and measure . . . and containeth in it holy matter, of what argument soever: whether *Precatorie*; Praiers for benefits to be received: or *Deprecatorie*; Petitions against adversities: or *Consolatorie*; Matter of comfort and consolation. These were wont to be sung both with *Instrument* and *voice*.
>
> The second sort, were speciall songs of praise and thanksgiving, and come of a word which signifieth the lifting up or exaltation of the voice . . . and these are properly those that set forth the Almighties praise: therefore saith *Chrysostome; A Hymne is more divine than a Psalme*. These were wont to be sung either with the *Instrument*, or without.
>
> The third kinde contained in them doctrine of the chiefe good, or mans eternall felicitie, with other such like Spirituall matter, and

were artificially made, and after a more majesticall forme than ordinary. These were sung only with the *voice*, without any Instrument. . . . As for this Song of our Prophet, it is of this latter kinde, and was most artifically composed, and set out with the most exquisite skill that might be. It is of the like nature and kinde with that of *Solomons*, which is called the Song of Songs.[28]

We find, then, in general, three chief kinds of biblical lyrics identified on the basis of the Pauline texts. The first kind are prayer-like or meditative poems called psalms, evidently lending themselves especially to self-probing and petitionary postures. The second are hymns—praises of and thanksgivings to God in a particularly sublime and exalted style; this generic conception is in line with the classical and neoclassical location of the hymn to the gods at the apex of the epideictic kinds—the "highest and stateliest" of all poetry, as Puttenham declared.[29] The third kind are "spiritual songs," evidently artful, elegant, ode-like poems celebrating special occasions and lofty matters. All these kinds, and several sub-genres, were understood to be represented in the Book of Psalms, the most often translated, heavily annotated, and widely imitated of all the biblical books. Contemporary discussion of this book is accordingly the most fruitful source of insights into the biblical lyric genres and their would-be imitators.

B. The Book of Psalms

The Book of Psalms was widely recognized as the compendium *par excellence* of lyric poetry—a view reinforced by the avalanche of metrical versions of the Psalms in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[30] Beginning with Coverdale's imitations of Luther's psalm translations, major and minor poets of the period and dozens of hack writers included metrical versions of some psalms (often some or all of the seven penitential psalms) in their poetic *œuvre*.[31] By 1640 there were well over three hundred editions (in several versions) of the complete psalter in English verse.[32] Among the most significant were: Robert Crowley's, the first complete metrical psalter in English (1549); the Sternhold-Hopkins Old Version (1562), in simple common meter and often doggerel rhyme, which became the standard version for congregational singing and achieved well over two hundred editions by 1640; versions by Archbishop Parker, King James I, Thomas Ravenscroft, George Sandys, George Wither, and Henry King, many of which claimed greater accuracy or poetic elegance than Sternhold-Hopkins but did not replace it for general congregational use; the French

Marot-Bèze psalter (completed in 1562) impressive for its metrical diversity and adaptation of contemporary love tunes to the psalm texts; the Sir Phillip Sidney-Countess of Pembroke psalter (written and widely circulated between 1589-1599) which was particularly striking for its stanzaic and metrical variety; and the *Bay Psalm Book*, the authorized text for congregational singing in New England (1640).[33]

The several reasons advanced for turning the Psalms into English meter highlight the importance and the difficulty of the undertaking. In the tradition of Luther and Coverdale, the Sternhold-Hopkins title page presents the Psalms as a wholesome substitute for licentious secular lyric—"Very mete to be used of all sortes of people privately for their solace and comfort: laying apart all ungodly Songes and Ballades, which tende only to the norishing of vyce, and corrupting of youth."[34] The psalm-books would also make available to the Congregation scripturally sanctioned songs for public worship. The *Bay Psalm Book* urged this point in a prefatory essay, "declaring not onely the lawfulnesse, but also the necessity of the heavenly Ordinance of singing Scripture Psalmes in the Church of God."[35] Attempting to meet these needs, many psalm versifiers felt a special challenge to find an appropriate poetic garb for works which were in themselves superlative poetry in the Hebrew originals. In this regard, Wither observed that the Psalms had long been deprived of their "naturall ornaments of *Poesy*" in English, whereas the Holy Ghost had presented them in that form partly because of the "extraordinary majesty and pleasingnes which is in *Numbers*."[36]

The prefaces to these metrical versions, together with countless commentaries and sermons upon the Psalms, developed several grounds for considering them to be superlative religious lyrics in themselves and particularly suitable models for Christian poets. In the first place, the Hebrew Psalms were thought to be in meter—indeed in something closely resembling if not identical to the classical lyric meters. The *loci classici* on the topic from the patristic era were well known. They include Josephus' declaration that "David . . . composed songes and hymnes to God of divers Metres, some trimetres and some quinquemetres"; Eusebius' comment that Exodus 15 and Psalm 119 are in "Heroicall Metre" and that "They have also . . . other, as well *trimetres* and *tetrametres*"; Jerome's often reprinted observation in his "Preface" to Paulinus that "David [is] our Simonides, Pindar and Alcaeus, Flaccus and also Catullus and Serenus"; and Jerome's rhetorical question to Eusebius—"What can be more musical than the Psalter! Like the writing of our own Flaccus [Horace] and the Grecian Pindar, it now runs along in sonorous Alcaics, now swells in Sapphics, now marches in

half-foot meter."[37] In the Renaissance such texts were quoted and expanded upon by the famous Hebrew scholar Franciscus Gomarus, by Thomas Lodge and Thomas Churchyard, and perhaps most succinctly by Henry Hammond: "*Simonides, Pindar*, and *Alcaeus* among the *Greeks*, and *Horace*, and *Catullus*, and *Serenus* among the *Latines*, were famous for their *Odes* or *Poetick* songs, but *David* to us supplies abundantly the place of all them."[38] Even those more sophisticated writers and exegetes—e.g., Philip Sidney, Henry Ainsworth, George Wither—who discarded the theory of Hebrew metrical equivalents to the classical meters nevertheless stated that the Psalms were metrical, though their rules "be not yet fully found."[39]

The significance of the Psalms as a compendium of lyric poetry was enhanced by the well-nigh universal agreement as to the range and inclusiveness of its subject matter. The book was described as the epitome of the entire scripture, the compendium of all theological, doctrinal, and moral knowledge in lyric form. The Douay Bible summarized the Fathers' agreement "that it is the abridgement, summe, and substance of al holie Scriptures, both old and new Testament."[40] Both Matthew Parker's *Psalter* (1567) and the ubiquitous Sternhold-Hopkins psalter reprinted an extract from Athanasius, declaring that "whatsoever was conteyned abroade in the whole Scripture, was fullye reported in the Psalter booke: . . . The bokes of the Psalmes (beyng wel resembled to a pleasant garden of all deliciousnes) did universally by Metre expresse them all, by playing them as it were sweetely upon musicall instrumentes."[41] Basil expanded at length upon the universal knowledge of religion and virtue comprehended in this epitome:

> The booke of the psalmes comprehende in it selfe, the whole commoditie of all their doctrines aforesaid, for it prophecieth of thinges to come, it reciteth the histories, it sheweth lawe for the governaunce of life, it teacheth what ought to be done, and to be shorte, it is a common storehouse of al good doctrine. . . . The Psalme is an introduction to beginners, it is a furtherer to them which go forwarde to vertue, it is to the perfect man a stable foundation to rest on, it is the swete voyce, the onely mouth of the spouse of Christ the church. . . . Now as for the matter and content of the Psalme, what is there, but that a man maye learne it there? Is not there to be learned the valiauntnes of fortitude? The righteousnes of justice? The sobernes of temperance? The perfection of prudence? The forme of penaunce? The measure of patience? Yea and whatsoever soundeth to vertue or perfection is it not there taught?

> In the Psalme is conteined absolute divinitie, both prophecy of christes comming in the flesh. The thretfull warninges of the judgement. The hope of our rising agayne. The feare of Gods punishmentes. The promises of everlasting joye. The revelation of all mysteries, all these be laide and couched up in the Psalter booke, as in a great treasure house common to al men.[42]

Writing in this tradition, Luther termed the Book of Psalms "a little Bible; for in it all things that are contained in the whole Bible are . . . condensed into a most beautiful manual"; the Junius-Tremellius introduction virtually paraphrases Basil in declaring the Book of Psalms to be a most elegant epitome of the Law and the Prophets and the sum of all theology; and the "Argument" to the *Dutch Annotations* terms it "the compleat Summary or compendious rehearsal of the whole Bible, Law and Gospel."[43]

Of still more importance in intimating the significance of the Psalms as lyric models was the idea that they present an epitome of human emotions, a searching analysis or anatomy of the soul of each and every Christian. This view was also firmly rooted in the patristic tradition. Basil emphasized particularly the comprehensive emotional range of the Psalms, able to work, as Plato thought the Greek modes did, upon all men's passions and temperaments: "The psalme is the rest of the soule, the rodde of peace, it stilleth and pacifieth the ragyng bellowes of the minde, for it doth asswage and mollifie that irefull power and passion of the soule, it induceth chastity, where reigned wantonnes, it maketh amitie, where was discorde, it knitteth frendes together, it returneth enemies to an unitie againe."[44] Athanasius laid the groundwork for seeing the Psalms as an anatomy of the soul—"it conteyneth the motions, the mutations, the alterations of every mans hart and conscience described and lively paynted to his owne sight."[45]

Protestants found this view especially sympathetic, and drew out all its implications. Luther declared that the Psalms record the emotional history of all the faithful:

> We have . . . the feelings and experiences of all the faithful, both under their sorrows and under their joys, both in their adversity and their prosperity: . . . The Holy Spirit . . . himself has drawn up this manual for his disciples; having collected together, as it were, the lives, groans, and experiences of many thousands, whose hearts he alone sees and knows. . . . You have therein, not only the works and acts of the saints, but their very words and expressions, nay, their sighs and groans to God, and the utterance in which they conversed with him during their temptations; . . . the very hidden treasure of