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At first glance, it is surprising that C. S. Lewis lists among the ten most important books to shape his "vocational attitude" and "philosophy of life" George Herbert's *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*.[1] Lewis's references to Herbert in his published writings are infrequent and widely scattered; while he devotes an entire essay to Herbert's contemporary, John Donne,[2] Lewis never writes extensively about Herbert, even in the volume where we might most reasonably expect him to offer a concentrated discussion of Herbert, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama*. Yet a closer view reveals that Herbert influences Lewis in at least three profound ways. The first is the "poetic" voice that gives expression to Lewis's spiritual life as revealed in his religious poetry. The second is the "pastoral" voice Lewis develops as a correspondent to the many who write him letters concerning their spiritual difficulties. The third

[1] C. S. Lewis, "Ex Libris" or "Booklist submitted in response to this department's query: 'What books did most to shape your Philosophy of life?'" in *The Christian Century*, 79 (6 June 1962), 719. This feature ran for several issues of *The Christian Century* beginning with the introductory article by Martin E. Marty, "Books That Have Influenced: A Preface to a New Christian Century Feature," in *The Christian Century*, 79 (2 May 1962), 575-6.

[2] C. S. Lewis, "Donne and Love Poetry in the Seventeenth Century" in *Studies Presented to Sir Herbert Grierson*, ed. by John Dover Wilson, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), 68-84. Reprinted in C. S. Lewis, *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. by Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 106-25.

is the "pathos" of Lewis's voice in *A Grief Observed*. This essay explores how *The Temple* serves as one of the most important "spiritual directors" in the poems, letters, and late prose of Lewis.[3]

First, a brief review of the life and work of George Herbert. Born on 3 April 1593, Herbert was the fifth of seven sons in a family of ten children. His father, Richard, died when he was four, and his mother, Magdalen, remained a widow twelve years, remarrying when Herbert was sixteen. Her remarriage was fortunate since her second husband was the brother and heir of Lord Danvers, Earl of Danby. In this role, she became a patron of the arts, later supporting, among many others, John Donne.[4] Herbert was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, being awarded the Master of Arts in 1615. In 1619, he was appointed Orator for the University, continuing in this important role until 1627. He accounted himself so well as Orator that he drew the attention and favor of James I. For a time, it appeared Herbert would find an important post in the king's court; however, when James died in 1625, so did Herbert's hopes regarding a royal appointment. Accordingly, he decided to enter sacred orders, and in 1630, he assumed pastoral duties in the small country parish of Bemerton in Wiltshire. His only volume of poetry, *The Temple*, was published shortly after his death in 1633.[5] Herbert was not sure his poems were worth publishing, asking near his death that they be sent to his friend, Nicholas Farrer:

> I pray deliver this little book to my dear brother Farrer, and tell him he shall find in it a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my soul, before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus my master: in whose service I have now found perfect freedom. Desire him to read it; and then, if he can think it may turn to the advantage of any dejected poor soul, let it be made public; if not, let him burn it; for I and it are less than the least of God's mercies.[6]

[3] An earlier version of this present essay appeared in David Werther and Susan Werther, eds., *C. S. Lewis's List: The Ten Books that Influenced Him Most* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 67-92. Used by permission of Bloomsbury Academic.

[4] See Donne's sonnet tribute to her, "To the Lady Magdalen Herbert, of St. Mary Magdalen," in *The Complete Poetry of John Donne*, ed. by John T. Shawcross (New York: Anchor, 1967), 333. In addition, Donne preached her funeral sermon in the parish church of Chelsea.

[5] In addition, his reflections on his life as a priest were posthumously published as *A Priest to the Temple* (or *The Country Parson*) in 1652. Lewis's personal library held by the Marion E. Wade Center at Wheaton College contains his copies of both *The Temple* and *A Priest to the Temple*; both contain extensive underlining.

[6] Izaak Walton, *The Lives of Doctor John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr. Richard*

Izaak Walton, Herbert's first biographer, writes that "he lived, and . . . died, like a saint, unspotted of the world, full of alms-deeds, full of humility, and all the examples of a virtuous life."[7] While some might fault Walton for hagiography, Herbert's saintly reputation was widely hailed. After his death, he was often referred to as "Holy Mr. Herbert," and he influenced a number of other seventeenth-century poets, including Henry Vaughan, Richard Crashaw, and Thomas Traherne.

Lewis's few references to *The Temple* appear both in his letters and books. In his 3 October 1929 letter to his friend Arthur Greeves, Lewis shares that he is coming out of an emotional low, referencing Herbert's poem from *The Temple*, "The Flower": "I once more feel the sun and rain / And relish versing."[8] On 26 March 1940, Lewis writes to Mary Neylan, who had asked him to recommend helpful books of theology. As a part of his response, he tells her "you wd. also find it most illuminating to re-read now many things you once read in 'Eng. Lit' without knowing their real importance—Herbert, Traherne, *Religio Medici.*"[9] Later, after Greeves embraces Unitarianism, Lewis offers a pointed critique in his letter of 11 December 1944: "Where are the shining examples of human holiness wh. ought to come from Unitarianism if it is true? Where are the Unitarian 'opposite numbers' to St Francis, George Herbert, [John] Bunyan, Geo. Macdonald, and even burly old Dr. [Samuel] Johnson?"[10] To another correspondent, Warfield M. Firor, he writes on 27 March 1951, regarding how difficult it is to maintain the sense that God is in control of his everyday life:

> The whole difficulty with me is to keep control of the mind and I wish one's earliest education had given one more training in that. There seems to be a disproportion between the vastness of the soul in one respect (i.e. as a mass of ideas and emotions) and its smallness in another (i.e. as central, controlling ego). The whole inner weather

Hooker, Mr. George Herbert, and Doctor Robert Sanderson (London: Methuen, 1985), 223. Walton's *Lives* originally appeared in 1670.

[7] Walton, *The Lives*, 226.

[8] C. S. Lewis, *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, ed. by Walter Hooper, 3 vols. (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2004-7), 1:830 (hereafter, *CL*). The exact quote is: "I once more smell the dew and rain / And relish versing." George Herbert, *The Poems of George Herbert*, ed. by Helen Gardner (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 156 (hereafter *Poems of Herbert*).

[9] Lewis, *CL*, 2:376

[10] Lewis, *CL*, 3:1555

changes so completely in less than a minute. Do you read George Herbert—

If what soul doth feel sometimes
My soul might always feel—

He's a good poet and one who helped bring me back to the Faith.[11]

When Mary Van Deusen asks Lewis how to endure a bad parish priest, Lewis replies: "The motto wd. be of course Herbert's lines about the sermon 'If all lack sense, God takes a text and preaches patience.'"[12] Still later, he relates to Corbin Scott Carnell that *The Temple* is among those works that "were incomparably more important [to his spiritual life] than any professed theologians."[13] On 9 May 1961, Lewis tells Margaret Gray that "George Herbert at his best is extremely nutritious."[14]

The most telling of these references is when Lewis writes that Herbert is "a good poet and one who helped to bring me back to the Faith." In his autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis underscores this debt to Herbert. As Lewis's atheism comes under assault, he says: "A young man who wishes to remain a sound Atheist cannot be too careful of his reading. There are traps everywhere—'Bibles laid open, millions of surprises,' as Herbert says, 'fine nets and stratagems.' God is, if I may say it, very unscrupulous."[15] The Herbert poem Lewis has in mind is the sonnet "Sinne (I)":

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

Pulpits and Sundayes, sorrow dogging sinne,
Afflictions sorted, anguish of all sizes,

[11] Lewis, *CL*, 3:105-6. The exact quote from Herbert's "The Temper (I)" is: "If what my soul doth feel sometimes, / My soul might ever feel!" Herbert, *Poems of Herbert* 47.

[12] Lewis, *CL*, 3:397. The exact quote from Herbert's "The Church-Porch" is: "The worst speak something good: if all want sense, / God takes a text, and preacheth patience." Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 19.

[13] Lewis, *CL*, 3:978.

[14] Lewis, *CL*, 3:1265

[15] C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1955), 191,

nets and stratagems to catch us in,
Bibles laid open, millions of surprises,

Blessings beforehand, tyes of gratefulnesse,
The sound of glorie ringing in our eares:
Without, our shame; within, our consciences;
Angels and grace, eternall hopes and fears.

Yet all these fences and their whole array
One cunning bosome-sinne blows quite away.[16]

A few pages later in *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis singles out Herbert from a group of other writers who were inadvertently leading him out of his atheism:

> But the most alarming of all was George Herbert. Here was a man who seemed to me to excel all the authors I had ever read in conveying the very quality of life as we actually live it from moment to moment; but the wretched fellow, instead of doing it all directly, insisted on mediating it through what I would still have called "the Christian mythology."[17]

Later, he compares himself to a fox being hunted, and includes Herbert in the "pack" of writers and thinkers who he claims are chasing him.[18] And regarding how the human conscience sometimes bothers us, Lewis writes in *Letters to Malcolm*: "When our conscience won't come down to brass-tacks but will only vaguely accuse or vaguely approve, we must say to it, like Herbert, 'Peace, prattler'—and get on."[19]

I think the most important comment Lewis makes regarding his debt to Herbert is his phrase that Herbert conveys "the very quality of life as we

[16] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 38-9.

[17] Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 214.

[18] Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 225. Lewis makes passing reference to Herbert in many other letters, as well as in books including *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (1936); *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (1954); *Studies in Words* (1960); *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (1966); *Spenser's Images of Life* (1967); and *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics* (1970).

[19] C. S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1964), 52. The exact quote from Herbert's "Conscience" is: "Peace pratler, do not lowre: / Not a fair look, but thou dost call it foul: / Not a sweet dish, but thou dost call it sowre: / Musick to thee doth how!" Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 96.

actually live it from moment to moment"; that is, *The Temple* resonates with Lewis because, as Herbert says, it is "a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my soul." As a result, the poems in *The Temple* expose a heart before God that is open, vulnerable, honest, and longing for intimacy, while at the same time it is questioning, entreating, demanding, troubled, and discontent. Herbert's poems are transparent conversations: sometimes with himself, sometimes with God, and sometimes with his warring notions of himself and God. His poems probe matters of faith and unbelief, certainty and doubt, joy and despair, delight and depression, obedience and rebellion. Herbert addresses God sometimes as a loving father and other times as a distant taskmaster. As Herbert plumbs the depths of his spiritual life, we are permitted an inside view of a soul that is supremely aware of itself and yet desperately longing for union with God. When we read his poems, we are permitted to look upon a soul whose devotional struggles are akin to our own felt experiences; moreover, what emerges in *The Temple* is Herbert's growth as the pastor of his own soul—informed by the grace, mercy, and love of God as expressed in the person of Jesus Christ. Lewis, whose pilgrimage to faith was not without "many spiritual conflicts that . . . passed betwixt God and [his] soul," found the poems in *The Temple* to portray with sharp, startling, and often surprising poignancy his own spiritual trials.

Herbert's poetic voice in *The Temple* has a striking influence on Lewis's poetic voice, particularly in his religious verse. Lewis began his publishing career, not as a prose writer, but as a poet. In fact, his first two published works were volumes of poetry: *Spirits in Bondage* (1919), a volume of lyrical poems, followed by *Dymer* (1926), a long narrative poem in rhyme royal (both published under the pseudonym, Clive Hamilton). Moreover, throughout his life—indeed up until the last year of his life—Lewis continued to write poetry. Some poems were included in prose works like *The Pilgrim's Regress*, the Chronicles of Narnia, and the Ransom Space Trilogy, and others were published independently in magazines, journals, and newspapers. Many were collected by Walter Hooper and published as *Poems* (1964) and *Narrative Poems* (1969). Of the more than two hundred and fifty poems he wrote throughout his life, over fifty (or one fifth of all his poems) may be classed as religious.

A quick survey of these poems illustrates Lewis's journey of faith from

atheism to Christianity. Lewis's religious verse begins with his youthful, jaundiced perception of God as found in *Spirits in Bondage* where he portrays God as cruel and malicious. Moreover, Owen Barfield says that Lewis's early poem, *Dymer*, "is practically the only place where the voice of the earlier Lewis [pre-conversion to Christ] . . . is heard speaking not through the memory of the later Lewis but one could say in his own person."[20] However, a radical shift in his understanding of God is revealed in the poetry of *The Pilgrim's Regress*—Lewis's autobiographical allegory that chronicles his movement from atheism to Christianity; this shift corresponds with Lewis's conversion to Christ in 1931. While my focus here is on the religious poems found in *The Pilgrim's Regress*, it is important to note that Lewis's later religious poems offer seasoned ruminations on life as a Christian, focusing upon the character of God; biblical themes, events or motifs; and the religious life, including prayer, the nature of love, joy in Christ, spiritual pride, the incarnation, the resurrection, angels, thanksgiving, grief, doubt, heaven, hell, and temptation.[21] In many of these religious poems, Lewis's poetic voice reflects the influence of Herbert's poetic voice from *The Temple*. In what follows, I suggest how Herbert's honest efforts to understand the mysteries of Christian theology—especially the actions of God—in poems from *The Temple* find expression in some of the religious poems of *The Pilgrim's Regress*.

By the time Lewis published *The Pilgrim's Regress* in 1933, fourteen years after *Spirits in Bondage* and two years after his conversion to Christ, his view of God had undergone profound changes. He no longer viewed God as malicious, arbitrary, and cruel.[22] The sixteen poems of *The Pilgrim's*

[20] Owen Barfield, "BARFIELD ON LEWIS," an address given at Wheaton College, on 16 October 1964. Sound recording call number: OB-V / SR-4, Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL. Compare Owen Barfield, "C.S. Lewis" in *Owen Barfield on C. S. Lewis* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1989), 6.

[21] Given the popularity of *The Problem of Pain*, *Miracles*, and *Mere Christianity*, more attention should be given to his religious verse since many poems offer commentary on his prose apologetics as well as powerful insights into his maturation in Christ.

[22] Many passages in *Surprised by Joy* chronicle this change. The culmination of Lewis's evolving view of God is revealed where he writes of his conversion from atheism to theism, perhaps the most quoted portion of *Surprised by Joy*: "You must picture me alone in that room in Magdalen, night after night, feeling, whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work, the steady, unrelenting approach of Him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. That which I greatly feared had at last come upon me.

Regress reflect this changed perspective, and as a group they rank among the best of Lewis's poetry, perhaps in part because they so intimately and immediately reflect aspects of Lewis's new life in Christ. Yet while in *The Pilgrim's Regress* Lewis is no longer in open conflict with God, a number of the poems illustrate his tentative understanding of what it means to live as a believer under a God he once regularly referred to as the great "Interferer." The first poem to appear in *The Pilgrim's Regress*, "He Whom I Bow To," a sonnet written in rhyming alexandrines, does not appear until three-quarters of the way through the book. This late appearance suggests that as John, the hero of *The Pilgrim's Regress*, awakens to the truth of his broken spiritual condition and need for God's grace, he gives evidence of this awakening through the seemingly spontaneous overflow of poetry.[23] The speaker admits that he embraces "in heart / Meanings, I know, that cannot be the thing thou art."[24] He confesses that language used to address God is so inadequate that "prayers always, taken at their word, blaspheme."[25] In essence, the poem is an open admission that because we cannot truly

In the Trinity Term of 1929 I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed: perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England. I did not then see what is now the most shining and obvious thing; the Divine humility which will accept a convert even on such terms. The Prodigal Son at least walked home on his own feet. But who can duly adore that Love which will open the high gates to a prodigal who is brought in kicking, struggling, resentful, and darting his eyes in every direction for a chance of escape? The words *compelle intrare*, compel them to come in, have been so abused by wicked men that we shudder at them; but, properly understood, they plumb the depth of the Divine mercy. The hardness of God is kinder than the softness of men, and His compulsion is our liberation" (Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 228-9).

[23] I use here the word "seemingly" because versions of most of the poems in *Pilgrim's Regress* were written as early as 1930. In the "Introduction" to the *Poems of C. S. Lewis* Walter Hooper writes that "fourteen of [Lewis's] religious lyrics were sent to Owen Barfield during the summer of 1930 under the general title 'Half Hours with Hamilton,' and they are some of the most beautiful poems Lewis wrote. Ten of these poems were to appear in *The Pilgrim's Regress*. They were always Lewis's favourites of his own poems." C. S. Lewis, *Poems of C. S. Lewis*, ed. by Walter Hooper (Glasgow: Fount, 1994), xv. "Half Hours with Hamilton or Quiet Moments" in holograph is available at the Marion E. Wade Center. The manuscript bears this epigraph: "It is hoped that this little selection from my works, from which all objectionable matter has been carefully excluded, will be found specially suitable for Sunday and family reading, and also to the higher forms of secondary schools." C. S. Lewis, MS "Half Hours with Hamilton or Quiet Moments," CSL/ MS-53, Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL.

[24] Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*, 183.

[25] Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*, 183.

understand the God to whom we pray, our words in prayer are empty, impotent, null. God, then, has to translate our feeble words; otherwise "all men are idolaters, crying unheard / To senseless idols, if thou take them at their word."[26] Indeed, God must "protect" us from false worship by transforming "our literal sense" and "our halting metaphor" into words that genuinely communicate what we mean.[27]

Herbert's sonnet "Prayer (I)" shares a similar perspective. However, unlike Lewis's "He Whom I Bow To," which is itself a prayer to God, Herbert's poem is a series of phrases, similes, metaphors, and apostrophes that offer brief, multifaceted descriptions of prayer. For instance, prayer is "the Churches banquet," "the soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage," "reversed thunder," "a kinde of tune, which all things heare and fear," and "exalted Manna,"[28] The last two lines link directly to "He Whom I Bow To": "Church-bels beyond the starres heard, the souls bloud, / The land of spices; something understood."[29] That is, Herbert relates that prayer works in a way that we can only partially understand—it is "something understood" intuitively rather than rationally—something that hints at what we really mean. It is "Gods breath in man returning to his birth."[30] Both poems suggest there is a divine mystery about the way in which human prayer "works," with all the credit given to God.

Among the most powerful poems in *The Pilgrim's Regress* is "You Rest Upon Me All My Days," recalling poems in *Spirits in Bondage* which accuse God of being cruel and malicious; the difference in this poem, however, is that Lewis comes to see that God, while demanding and jealous, loves rather than hates the speaker.[31] The speaker grapples with a fierce omnipotence,

[26] Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*, 183.
[27] Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*, 184.
[28] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 44.
[29] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 44.
[30] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 44.
[31] The poem is found in *The Pilgrim's Regress*, Book 8, Chapter 6; the chapter is entitled "Caught." John, the protagonist, having thought he had escaped from the Landlord, suddenly awakened to the fact that there was nowhere to escape him: "In one night the Landlord—call him by what name you would—had come back to the world, and filled the world, quite full without a cranny. His eyes stared and His hand pointed and His voice commanded in everything that could be heard or seen . . . all things said one word: CAUGHT—Caught into slavery again, to walk warily and on sufferance all his days, never to be alone; never the master of his own soul, to have no privacy, no

much as a dog straining at the leash of an unyielding master. He feels like a person trapped in a burning desert bathed by unrelenting, suffocating light and heat. God, like the sun, is the "inevitable Eye" that confines a desert traveler in smothering tents and "hammers the rocks with light." God here is an unyielding, unrelenting, uncompromising force. In desperation, the speaker longs for "one cool breath in seven / One air from northern climes / The changing and the castle-clouded heaven / Of my old Pagan times."[32] It is difficult not to slip into the "personal heresy" and to read these lines as recalling Lewis's affection for Norse myth and literature in terms of both its religious and metaphorical influences on his youth and young adulthood. Regardless, these lines suggest a powerful longing for freedom from the "heat" of God's eye; the speaker is ready to retreat from the demands of an unyielding God toward the comfortable fastness of his pagan days. Such an option, however, is denied him: "But you have seized all in your rage / Of Oneness. Round about / Beating my wings, all ways, within your cage, / I flutter, but not out."[33] Here God is pictured as possessive, jealous, and demanding, and the speaker pictures himself as a bird trapped in a cage, straining earnestly, though vainly, to wing his way out.

The poem leaves two distinct impressions. The first is of a "convert" who yearns for his pre-conversion days where, rightly or wrongly, he believes life held more freedom, more satisfaction. Indeed, the tone is similar to George Herbert's "The Collar"; the title offers a triple pun: the white collar a priest would wear; an animal collar attached to a leash used to restrain a raging beast; and choler, an irascible spirit or disposition to irritation. In the poem, Herbert fumes against his life as both a Christian and a priest; indeed, the opening line pictures Herbert kneeling, perhaps at the altar of his own church, and suddenly furiously smashing his fist down on the altar: "I struck the board, and cry'd, No more. / I will abroad. / What shall I ever pine, and sigh? . . . Shall I be still in suit? Have I no harvest but a thorn?"[34] Then he recalls, in the manner of Lewis in "You Rest Upon Me All My Days," earlier periods in his life when all was rich, blessed, and

corner whereof you could say to the whole universe: This is my own, here I can do as I please" (187).

[32] Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*, 187.

[33] Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*, 188.

[34] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 143.

fruitful: "Sure there was wine / Before my sighs did drie it: there was corn / Before my tears did drown it."[35] As he rages, he tells himself to throw over his spiritual life and instead to "recover all thy sigh-blown age / On double pleasures." He mocks and belittles his impotent efforts to live a Christian life: "Leave thy cold dispute / Of what is fit and not. Forsake thy cage, / Thy ropes of sands, / Which petty thoughts have made."[36] As in Herbert's poem, Lewis's speaker is frustrated ("beating my wings") yet thwarted ("I flutter, but not out").

The second impression of Lewis's poem is that God is an all-encompassing, smothering, demanding deity, uncompromising in His jealous possession of a follower. Such a God seizes "all in [His] rage / Of Oneness." These impressions combine to highlight the speaker in "You Rest Upon Me All My Days" as one who regards with nostalgia his pre-conversion lifestyle, yet he also has grudging appreciation for this jealous God because now he senses it is Yahweh, not Moloch that he worships. On the other hand, Herbert's "The Collar" ends with a dramatic reversal of tone. The speaker continues to fume against the sterility of his Christian life, but then unexpectedly he is brought up short: "But as I rag'd and grew more fierce and wilde / At every word, / Me thoughts I heard one calling, *Child!* / And I reply'd, *My Lord.*"[37] His stiff-necked bucking against God—and his mistaken view of the real character of God—is instantly broken once he hears in his conscience the gentle, comforting call of a loving father to a recalcitrant, rebellious child.

Since "You Rest Upon Me All My Days" largely resolves the question of God's character, the remainder of Lewis's religious verse in *The Pilgrim's Regress* turns to consider what it means to live as a Christian. For example, "My Heart Is Empty,"[38] with its alternating alexandrines and trimeters,

[35] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 143.

[36] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 143.

[37] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 144, emphasis in original.

[38] The poem is found in *The Pilgrim's Regress*, Book 8, Chapter 10; the chapter is entitled "Archetype and Ectype." John and the hermit (History) discuss John's fear that "the things the Landlord really intends for me may be utterly unlike the things he has taught me to desire." The hermit assures him that the Landlord is the author of desire and that only He can fulfill John's desire. Furthermore, the hermit affirms that John's loss of his initial desire is normal: "First comes delight: then pain: then fruit. And then there is joy of the fruit, but that is different again from the first delight. And mortal lovers must not try to remain at the first step: for lasting passion is the dream of a harlot and

examines the contradiction between living the expected "abundant life" and the cold reality of spiritual torpor, linking it in some ways to Herbert's "The Collar." "My Heart Is Empty" is a candid admission that the speaker's spiritual life is a dry, arid wasteland: "All the fountains that should run / With longing, are in me / Dried up. In all my countryside there is not one / That drips to find the sea."[39] What is worse, he has no desire to experience God's love, except as it serves to lessen his own pain: "I have no care for anything thy love can grant / Except the moment's vain / And hardly noticed filling of the moment's want / And to be free from pain."[40] Yet the speaker avoids despair by calling out to the one "who didst take / All care for Lazarus in the careless tomb."[41] The vigor of his faith in Christ is seen in his belief that if God will intervene in his own Lazarus-like life, he may survive for later rebirth, much as a seed "which grows / Through winter ripe for birth."[42] Just as the dormant seed avoids the chilling winter wind, so he will endure this winter of his life: "Because, while it forgets, the heaven remembering throws / Sweet influence still on earth, / —Because the heaven, moved moth-like by thy beauty, goes / Still turning round the earth."[43]

The pleading tone of Lewis's poem is similar to Herbert's "Dullness": "Why do I languish thus, drooping and dull, / As if I were all earth? / O give me quickness, that I may with mirth / Praise thee brim-full!"[44] The reason for the speaker's dullness is never explained. Herbert's dullness, however, is directly connected with his vision of God's beauty and his inability to give expression to this in his verse. Unlike "the wanton lover" who finds beauty in "his fairest fair" —especially "her curled hair" —Herbert sources beauty in the actions of Christ, particularly his "bloudy death . . . [that] makes thee / Pure red and white."[45] In spite of his acknowledgement of this, he is

from it we wake in despair. You must not try to keep the raptures: they have done their work. Manna kept, is worms." Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*, 207. The hermit sings the poem and is overheard by John.

[39] Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*, 207.
[40] Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*, 207.
[41] Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*, 208.
[42] Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*, 208.
[43] Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*, 208.
[44] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 105.
[45] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 105.

burdened with writing dull, ineffective poetry: "Where are my lines then? my approaches? views? / Where are my window-songs?"[46] He blames his feeble flesh, certain God has imbued him with a mind for writing beautiful poetry that reflects the beauty of Christ. His final plea is a simple prayer: "Lord, cleare thy gift, that with a constant wit / I may but look towards thee: / *Look* onely; for to *love* thee, who can be, / What angel fit?"[47] In Lewis's moments of spiritual drought, Herbert's poetic musings on a similarly arid period in his life must have been a solace.

I mentioned earlier that later religious poems by Lewis may be influenced by Herbert. One example occurs in his "Yes, You Are Always Everywhere" where Lewis explores the mystery of the Eucharist. After admitting that he has tried to pursue God's "scent" in forests, stars, music, and poetry—all in his longing to be intimate with Christ—he finally turns "to the appointed place where you pursue." When he does so, the elements of communion take on a mysterious beauty and resolve his search:

> Not in Nature, not even in Man, but in one
> Particular Man, with a date, so tall, weighing
> So much, talking Aramaic, having learned a trade;
> Not in all food, not in all bread and wine
> (Not, I mean, as my littleness requires)
> But this wine, this bread . . . no beauty we could desire.[48]

Herbert's "The Bunch of Grapes," also exploring the mystery of communion, may have influenced Lewis's poem. In his poem, Herbert confesses he has lost his joy but finds solace in ideas he draws from Numbers 13, the biblical account where spies sent by Moses into the land of Canaan bring back a cluster of rich grapes, emblematic of the rich inheritance God wants to give the Israelites when they enter the land. However, the Israelites reject this blessing because of the fearful report the spies bring with them about the people of Canaan. Finding himself consumed by his broken, sin-filled human flesh, stricken by the Law and unable to meet its demands, Herbert

[46] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 105.
[47] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 105, emphasis in original.
[48] C. S. Lewis, *The Collected Poems of C. S. Lewis*: *A Critical Edition*, ed. by Don W. King (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2015), 422.

wonders "where's the cluster? the taste / Of mine inheritance."[49]

What Herbert realizes, however, is that because of God's new covenant with humankind, he has access to much more than did the Israelites:

> But can he want the grape, who hath the wine?
> I have their fruit and more.
> Blessed be God, who prosper'd *Noahs* vine,
> And made it bring forth grapes good store.
> But much more him I must adore,
> Who of the Laws sowre juice sweet wine did make,
> Ev'n God himself being pressed for my sake.[50]

The beautiful analogy Herbert creates—comparing Christ to a cluster of grapes and His blood to wine ("God himself being pressed for my sake")—makes articulate one of the deepest mysteries of the Eucharist. If Lewis can find in holy communion a beauty not to be found anywhere else, Herbert gives voice to this beauty in an extraordinarily striking manner.

While I could offer dozens of other examples of how Herbert's poems may have influenced Lewis's poetic voice, I turn now to the way that Herbert's sweet, tender, sympathetic, and kindly pastoral voice in *The Temple* may have influenced Lewis's own pastoral voice.[51] Once Lewis became well known—primarily because of books such as *The Problem of Pain*, *The Screwtape Letters*, and *Mere Christianity*—he received thousands of letters from correspondents seeking spiritual counsel.[52] In his response to many of these spiritual seekers, I believe Lewis assumes Herbert's pastoral voice. There are so many rich examples of this in his letters that I will limit myself to Lewis's spiritual advice to a selected correspondent, New Zealander, Rhona Bodle. She writes Lewis first in late 1947 about her difficulty in believing that Christ was God. In his reply of 31 December 1947, Lewis replies:

[49] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 119.

[50] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 119.

[51] Other notable poems for comparison include Herbert's "The Temper (I)" and Lewis's "Legion"; Herbert's "The Windows" and Lewis's "The Apologist's Evening Prayer"; and Herbert's "Conscience" and Lewis's "Out of the Wound We Pluck."

[52] Walter Hooper, Lewis's literary executor, estimates that Lewis wrote upwards of 10,000 letters in his lifetime.

> I think it possible that what is keeping you from belief in Christ's Divinity is your apparently strong desire to believe. If you don't think it true why do you *want* to believe it? If you *do* think it true, then you believe it already. So I wd. recommend less anxiety about the whole question. You believe in God and trust Him. Well, you can trust Him about this. If you go on steadily praying and attempting to obey the best light He had given you, can you not rely on Him to guide you into any further truth He wishes you to know? Or even if He leaves you all your life in doubt, can't you believe that He sees that to be the best state for you? I *don't* mean by this that you should cease to study and make enquiries: but that you shd. make them not with frantic desire but with cheerful curiosity and a humble readiness to accept whatever conclusions God may lead you to. (But always, all depends on the steady attempt to obey God all the time. 'He who *does* the will of the Father shall know of the doctrine.') . . . It is only fair to tell you that my impression is that you are in fact v. much nearer to belief in Christ than you supposed.[53]

Then, after suggesting some helpful books for her to read, Lewis adds:

> I'm pretty sure where you'll land, myself, and you will then wonder how you ever doubted it. But you needn't keep looking over your shoulder too often. Keep your eye on the Helmsman, keep your conscience bright and your brain clear and believe you are in good hands.[54]

Lewis's friendly advice to Bodle may have been informed by a sonnet such as Herbert's "The Holdfast":

> I threatened to observe the strict degree
> Of my deare God with all my power & might.
> But I was told by one, it could not be;
> Yet I might trust in God to be my light.
>
> Then will I trust, said I, in him alone.
> Nay, ev'n to trust in him, was also his:
> We must confesse that nothing is our own.
> Then I confess that he my succor is:

[53] Lewis, *CL*, 2:823, emphasis in original.
[54] Lewis, *CL*, 2:824.

> But to have nought is ours, not to confesse
> That we have nought, I stood amaz'd at this,
> Much troubled, till I heard a friend expresse,
> That all things were more ours by being his.
> What Adam had, and forfeited for all,
> Christ keepeth now, who cannot fail or fall.[55]

Perhaps, just as Herbert had been to Lewis "a friend" expressing spiritual wisdom in his own struggles with faith, so Lewis through his "pastoral" correspondence was being a friend to Bodle during her pilgrimage to belief.

After Bodle reports some success in following Lewis's advice, he replies on 22 June 1948:

> Splendid! As long as you keep in your present way *holding fast* to God, whether the Incarnation can be accepted or not—you can't go wrong.[56] Because, you see, it is not really you who are *holding fast* to Him but He to you: and He will bring you to wherever He wants. . . . You are wondering if the Incarnation is true. Well, if it's not true God doesn't want you to believe it.[57]

He goes on to say: "Your own argument, that you at any rate have come to know God only thro' Christ is a v. strong one: I don't mind betting you will come to the Xtian belief in the end."[58] On 10 February 1949, he sees her moving ever closer to faith in Christ:

> I doubt whether I, or anyone else, needs to interfere. The route you are following at present seems to be the right one. Adding to Pascal's 'if you had not found me you wd. not seek me' (a sentence I have long loved), the very obvious further step 'And if I had not drawn you, you wd. not have found me,' and seeing both in the light of Our Lord's words 'No man cometh to me unless the Father have drawn him'—well, it is pretty clear that you are being conducted.[59]

In subsequent letters, Lewis, though no Calvinist, urges Bodle to see the work of God in her life as irresistible grace. Other letters follow in which

[55] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 133-4.

[56] Before his conversion, Lewis struggled with the doctrine of the Incarnation. See C. S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves, October 18, 1931, *CL*, 1:975-77.

[57] Lewis, *CL*, 2:857, emphasis added.

[58] Lewis, *CL*, 2:857.

[59] Lewis, *CL*, 2:915.

he responds to her queries about systematic spiritual reading and the like. After she tells Lewis she has come to faith in Christ, Lewis's response is delightfully short and gracious: "Welcome home!"[60] This recalls the simple yet profoundly moving tone of Herbert's poem, "Love (III)":

> Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
> Guiltie of dust and sinne.
> But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
> From my first entrance in,
> Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
> If I lack'd any thing.
>
> A guest, I answer'd, worthy to be here:
> Love said, You shall be he.
> I the unkinde, ungratefull? Ah my deare,
> I cannot look on thee.
> Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
> Who made the eyes but I?
>
> Truth Lord, but I have marr'd them: let my shame
> Go where it doth deserve.
> And know you not, sayes Love, who bore the blame?
> My deare, then I will serve.
> You must sit down, sayes Love, and taste my meat:
> So I did sit and eat.[61]

In Lewis's correspondence with Bodle, we see gentleness, kindness, insight, honesty, and, above all, grace—in short, a pastoral voice informed at least in part, I believe, by Herbert's pastoral voice as revealed in *The Temple*. Moreover, having fully experienced God's grace himself after many years of agnosticism and atheism, Lewis was both awed and honored to be something of a spiritual midwife for Bodle and countless others. Lewis's pastoral voice is all the more remarkable when we consider that for many his reputation is based on the rhetorical power of his lectures and apologetics, his sharp public debates at the Socratic Club, and his "no-holds-barred" arguments with members of the Inklings and other colleagues.

The final aspect of *The Temple*'s influence upon Lewis centers on how

[60] Lewis, *CL*, 2:947
[61] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 180.

the pathos of Herbert's voice in many of his poems may have influenced the pathos we find in Lewis's *A Grief Observed*, perhaps his most unsettling book.[62] So disturbing is its tone of pathos, that some argue it is not about Lewis's anguish over the death of his wife, Joy Davidman, but it is instead a fictional account of grief. Mary Borhek critiques the position of those who hold this view:

> The only reasons I can see for believing the book to be a fictionalized account are a desire to distance oneself from the extreme discomfort of confronting naked agony and an unwillingness to grant a revered spiritual leader and teacher permission to be a real, fallible, intensely real human being.[63]

Others object to Lewis's candid expressions of anger at God, suggesting the book demonstrates Lewis's loss of faith:

> There is no case for Christianity in this book. Gone are the persuasive arguments and the witty analogies. Gone, too, are the confidence and urbanity evident in *The Problem of Pain* . . . The fundamental crisis of the book is a crisis of *meaning*, a crisis of such paralyzing magnitude that Lewis tries to distance himself from it in every possible way.[64]

An excellent study by Noelene Kidd argues the book "is not simply a record of Lewis's grief at the loss of his beloved wife . . . but a dissection of grief itself. The work is chiefly an apology concealed by art."[65] In conversations with Lewis scholar Michael Ward, I have heard him offer a terse summary of *A Grief Observed* as the yelp of a wounded animal. Still others find the book, while a deeply moving account of loss, overly introspective and emotional, verging on the maudlin. Yet Lewis avoids sinking into self-

[62] That Lewis knew this would be the case explains why it was published under the pseudonym N. W. Clerk, the N. W. (Anglo-Saxon shorthand for *nat whilk*, "I know not whom"), a return to the way he signed many of his topical poems. In fact, the book was never published under Lewis's name while he lived.

[63] Mary V. Borhek, "A Grief Observed: Fact or Fiction?" in *Mythlore* 16:4 (Summer 1990), 9. See also George Musacchio, "C. S. Lewis's *A Grief Observed* as Fiction," in *Mythlore*, 12:3 (Spring 1986), 24-27.

[64] John Beversluis, *C. S. Lewis and the Search for Rational Religion* (Eerdmans, 1985), 41, 161, emphasis in original. See also his "Beyond the Double Door," in *Christian History*, 4:3 (1985): 28-31.

[65] Noelene Kidd, "*A Grief Observed*: Art, Apology, or Autobiography?" in *The Canadian C. S. Lewis Journal*, 97 (Spring 2000), 4.

pity in part because of a clipped prose style characterized by short, simple sentences and brief, almost snapshot-like paragraphs. In effect, he becomes a surgeon analyzing a patient's medical chart; ironically, he is both surgeon and patient. I believe Lewis found in the pathos of several poems from *The Temple* a model for the pathos he gives expression to in *A Grief Observed*.

Examples of Lewis's pathos in *A Grief Observed* are ubiquitous. Early in part one, he writes:

> Not that I am (I think) in much danger of ceasing to believe in God. The real danger is of coming to believe such dreadful things about Him. The conclusion I dread is not 'So there's no God after all,' but 'So this is what God's really like. Deceive yourself no longer.'[66]

Later in the same section, he notes: "Cancer, and cancer, and cancer. My mother, my father, my wife. I wonder who is next in the queue."[67] One poem from *The Temple* that may have influenced the pathos of these reflections is "Affliction (IV)":

> Broken in pieces all asunder
> Lord, hunt me not,
> A thing forgot,
> Once a poore creature, now a wonder,
> A wonder tortur'd in the space
> Betwixt this world and that of grace.
>
> My thoughts are all a case of knives,
> Wounding my heart
> With scatter'd smart,
> As watring pots give flowers their lives.
> Nothing their furie can controll,
> While they do wound and prick my soul.[68]

Both writers call into question the character of God. Is He really loving, caring, and compassionate? Or is He actually cruel, callous, and capricious? Both writers bare raw emotions, hoping perhaps that by articulating their pain and grief they may find some relief. It is worth noting, however, that

[66] C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), 9-10.
[67] Lewis, *Grief Observed*, 14.
[68] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 80-1.

Herbert's pathos is different from Lewis's. While Lewis is reacting violently to the loss of his wife, Herbert's pathos is more humble, less strident, and more intercessory than is Lewis's. Lewis comes near to "cursing God and dying"; Herbert, on the other hand, is more bewildered than blaspheming. Herbert's pathos is that of a lover longing to get nearer to his beloved; Lewis's pathos is that of an injured animal struggling to get out of the jaws of a trap. To use a metaphor Lewis would approve of, Herbert never puts God in the dock; Lewis puts God in the dock, and then he becomes the prosecuting attorney, packed jury, and prejudiced judge.

In part two of *A Grief Observed,* Lewis continues such questionings, commenting bitterly: "Oh God, God, why did you take such trouble to force this creature out of its shell if it is now doomed to crawl back—to be sucked back—into it?"[69] Still later in this section he says,

> 'Because she is in God's hands.' But if so, she was in God's hands all the time, and I have seen what they did to her here. Do they suddenly become gentler to us the moment we are out of the body? And if so, why? If God's goodness is inconsistent with hurting us, then either God is not good or there is no God: for in the only life we know He hurts us beyond our worst fears and beyond all we can imagine. If it is consistent with hurting us, then He may hurt us after death as unendurably as before it.[70]

In Herbert's "Longing" we find a similar tone:

> With sick and famisht eyes,
> With doubling knees and weary bones,
> To thee my cries,
> To thee my grones,
> To thee my sighs, my tears ascend:
> No end?
>
> My throat, my soul is hoarse;
> My heart is wither'd like a ground

[69] Lewis, *Grief Observed*, 18.
[70] Lewis, *Grief Observed*, 24-5.

Which thou dost curse.
My thoughts turn round,
And make me giddie; Lord, I fall,
Yet call.[71]

In both cases, Lewis and Herbert honestly confess their doubt, anguish, and uncertainty; neither is sure of the goodness of God.

In the third and fourth parts of *A Grief Observed,* Lewis's anger begins to subside, and his pathos slowly moderates, replaced by reasoning:

> Feelings, and feelings, and feelings. Let me try thinking instead. From the rational point of view, what new factor has H.'s [Joy's] death introduced into the problem of the universe? What grounds has it given me for doubting all that I believe? I knew already that these things, and worse, happened daily[72]

Earlier, his most memorable simile in *A Grief Observed* posits Heaven as an uninhabited house with locked doors:

> Go to Him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that, silence. You may as well turn away. The longer you wait, the more emphatic the silence will become. There are no lights in the windows. It might be an empty house. Was it ever inhabited?"[73]

But in part three he ameliorates this view, noting "I have gradually been coming to feel that the door is no longer shut and bolted. Was it my own frantic need that slammed it in my face? . . . Perhaps [my] own reiterated cries deafen [me] to the voice [I] hoped to hear."[74] Still later he adds, "my mind no longer meets that locked door"[75] The last time he refers to the door, he seems reconciled to the lack of an answer: "[It is] a rather special

[71] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 139.
[72] Lewis, *Grief Observed*, 31.
[73] Lewis, *Grief Observed*, 9.
[74] Lewis, *Grief Observed*, 38.
[75] Lewis, *Grief Observed*, 49.

sort of 'No answer.' It is not the locked door. It is more like a silent, certainly not uncompassionate, gaze. As though He shook His head not in refusal but waiving the question. Like, 'Peace, child; you don't understand.'"[76]

In *The Temple,* several poems reflect a similar kind of reasoning and engagement, all efforts by Herbert to understand the workings of God in his life. In his poem "Grief," Herbert's tone touches upon the depth of the pathos he feels: "O who will give me tears? Come all ye springs, / Dwell in my head & eyes: come clouds, & rain: / My grief hath need of all the watry things, / That nature hath produc'd."[77] He looks to draw the water from rivers to supply his tears since his two eyes are "two shallow foords, two little spouts." Even poetry—Herbert's default coping response—is inadequate:

> Verses, ye are too fine a thing, too wise
> For my rough sorrows: cease, be dumbe and mute,
> Give up your feet and running to mine eyes,
> And keep your measures for some lovers lute,
> Whose grief allows him musick and a ryme:
> For mine excludes both measure, tune, and time.
> Alas, my God![78]

While Herbert's "The Flower," unlike "Grief," celebrates his sense of God's "return" in his felt experience, it, too, gives evidence of reasoning and engagement with God:

> Who would have thought my shrivel'd heart
> Could have recover'd greenesse? It was gone
> Quite under ground; as flowers depart
> To see their mother-root, when they have blown;
> Where they together
> All the hard weather,
> Dead to the world, keep house unknown.[79]

Herbert then notes his further amazement that God seems alternately to quicken and to wither him spiritually, ending the poem with an analogy

[76] Lewis, *Grief Observed*, 54-5.
[77] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 154.
[78] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 155.
[79] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 156.

Lewis would have been proud of: "These are thy wonders, Lord of love, / To make us see we are but flowers that glide: / Which when we once can finde and prove, / Thou hast a garden for us, where to bide."[80]

Happily, Lewis's dark view of God lifts a bit toward the end of *A Grief Observed* so that he is able to suggest God may be a gardener—so careful of his plants that he prunes them when necessary—or a smith—so expert with the anvil and hammer that he beats the raw metal into perfect shapes. This view is best seen when Lewis comes to see God as "the great iconoclast" since he is nothing like what metaphors intimate:

> Not my idea of God, but God. Not my idea of H., but H. Yes, and also not my idea of my neighbour, but my neighbour. For don't we often make this mistake as regards people who are still alive—who are with us in the same room? Talking and acting not to the man himself but to the picture—almost the *précis*—we've made of him in our own minds? And he has to depart from it pretty widely before we even notice the fact. In real life—that's one way it differs from novels—his words and acts are, if we observe closely, hardly ever quite 'in character', that is, in what we call his character. There's always a card in his hand we didn't know about.[81]

Herbert's "Discipline" captures a similar thought and could serve as an epilogue to *A Grief Observed*:

> Throw away thy rod,
> Throw away thy wrath:
> O my God,
> Take the gentle path.
>
> For my hearts desire
> Unto thine is bent:
> I aspire
> To a full consent.
>
> Not a word or look
> I affect to own
> But by book,
> And thy book alone.

[80] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 157.
[81] Lewis, *Grief Observed*, 53.

Though I fail, I weep:
Though I halt in pace,
Yet I creep
To the throne of grace.

Then let wrath remove;
Love will do the deed:
For with love
Stonie hearts will bleed.

Love is swift of foot;
Love's a man of warre,
And can shoot,
And can hit from farre.

Who can scape his bow?
That which wrought on thee,
Brought thee low,
Needs must work on me.

Throw away thy rod;
Though man frailties hath,
Thou art God:
Throw away thy wrath. [82]

I need not provide additional examples. The marked contrast between the tone of *A Grief Observed* and almost everything else Lewis wrote has proven problematic. My point is that Lewis may have been profoundly influenced to write so personally and introspectively as a result of his reading, thinking about, and meditating on poems from *The Temple*.

I have argued in this essay that George Herbert's *The Temple* serves as one of the most important "spiritual directors" in the poems, letters, and late prose of C. S. Lewis. Lewis knew Herbert's poems and prose quite well and may have patterned his own work as a religious poet and pastoral correspondent on this seventeenth-century country priest. When Herbert was about to enter sacred orders, a friend tried to dissuade him, arguing

[82] Herbert, *Poems of Herbert*, 154.

that such a vocation was "too mean an employment, and too much below his birth, and the excellent abilities and endowments of his mind." Herbert replied:

> It hath been formerly judged that the domestic servants of the King of Heaven should be of the noblest families on earth. And though the iniquity of the late times have made clergymen meanly valued, and the sacred name of priest contemptible; yet I will labour to make it honorable, by consecrating all my learning, and all my poor abilities to advance the glory of that God that gave them; knowing that I can never do too much for him, that hath done so much for me, as to make me a Christian. And I will labour to be like my Saviour, by making humility lovely in the eyes of all men, and by following the merciful and meek example of my dear Jesus.[83]

I cannot help but believe that Lewis was deeply moved by Herbert's humility, piety, and winsome voice, finding in these qualities the very things he needed as anodynes to his own besetting sin of pride as he suggests in his poem "The Apologist's Evening Prayer":

> From all my lame defeats and oh! much more
> From all the victories that I seemed to score;
> From cleverness shot forth on Thy behalf
> At which, while angels weep, the audience laugh;
> From all my proofs of Thy divinity,
> Thou, who wouldst give no sign, deliver me.
> Thoughts are but coins. Let me not trust, instead
> Of Thee, their thin-worn images of Thy head.
> From all my thoughts, even from my thoughts of Thee,
> O thou fair Silence, fall, and set me free.
> Lord of the narrow gate and the needle's eye,
> Take from me all my trumpery lest I die.[84]

Herbert was an exemplar for Lewis and central to Lewis's journey to faith in Jesus Christ. As Lewis put it, Herbert was "one who helped bring me back to

[83] Walton, *The Lives*, 192-3.
[84] Lewis, *Collected Poems*, 328.

the Faith."[85] For that reason, all who love Lewis owe it to themselves to read, meditate upon, and fasten to their souls the poems found in *The Temple*. Such an activity may lead to a spiritual transaction of the most profound kind—an encounter with the holy, leading to a deeper understanding of the compassion, grace, and mercy of God.[86]

[85] Lewis, *CL*, 3:106.

[86] I thank my student assistants, Lexi Hudson and Fiona McClanahan, for copy-editing and proofreading this essay.