

## George Herbert: Converting the Heart, Converting the Realm

### 1. "The Altar"

A broken A L T A R, Lord, thy servant reares,  
Made of a heart, and cemented with teares:  
Whose parts are as thy hand did frame;  
No workmans tool hath touch'd the same.  
A H E A R T alone,  
Is such a stone,  
As nothing but  
Thy pow'r doth cut.  
Wherefore each part  
Of my hard heart  
Meets in this frame,  
To praise thy Name:  
That, if I chance to hold my peace,  
These stones to praise thee may not cease,  
Oh let thy blessed S A C R I F I C E be mine,  
And sanctifie this A L T A R to be thine.

### 2. From "The Church-Porch"

Resort to sermons, but to prayers most:  
Praying's the end of preaching. O be drest;  
Stay not for th'other pin: why thou hast lost  
A joy for it worth worlds. Thus hell doth jest  
Away thy blessings, and extreemly flout thee,  
Thy clothes being fast, but thy soul loose about thee. (408-13)

...  
Though private prayer be a brave designe,  
Yet publick hath more promises, more love:  
And love's a weight to hearts, to eies a signe.  
We all are but cold suitours; let us move  
Where it is warmest. Leave thy six and seven;  
Pray with the most: for where most pray, is heaven. (397-402)



#### 4. From "The Church Militant"

But as in vice the copie still exceeds  
 The pattern, but not so in vertuous deeds;  
 So though Sinne made his latter seat the better,  
 The latter Church is to the first a debter.  
 The second Temple could not reach the first:  
 And the late reformation never durst  
 Compare with ancient times and purer yeares;  
 But in the Jews and us deserveth tears.  
 Nay, it shall ev'ry yeare decrease and fade;  
 Till such a darknesse do the world invade  
 At Christs last coming, as his first did finde:  
 Yet must there such proportion be assign'd  
 To these diminishings, as is between  
 The spacious world and Jurie to be seen.  
 Religion stands on tip-toe in our land,  
 Readie to passe to the American strand.  
 When height of malice, and prodigious lusts,  
 Impudent sinning, witchcrafts, and distrusts  
 (The marks of future bane) shall fill our cup  
 Unto the brimme, and make our measure up;  
 When Sein shall swallow Tiber, and the Thames  
 By letting in them both pollutes her streams:  
 When Italie of us shall have her will,  
 And all her calender of sinnes fulfill;  
 Whereby one may foretell, what sinnes next yeare  
 Shall both in France and England domineer:  
 Then shall Religion to America flee... (242-71)

## Preaching and the Politics of Conversion at Paul's Cross

### 1. HERESY AND AUTHORITY

**John Fisher, *The sermon of John the bysshop of Rochester made agaynst the pernicious doctryn of Martin Luther*. London: Wynkyn de Worde 1521.**

Whan the lyght of fayth (that shyneth from the spirituall sonne almyghty god) hathe ben clere & bryght a good season, hath rysen many a tyme som blak clowde of heresy, & stered suche a tempest & made suche a lyghtnyng and so terribly thonderyd that many a weyke soule hath myscaryed therby ... And now suche an other clowde is rayed a loft, one Martyn Luther a frere, the whiche hath stered a mighty storme and tempest in the chirche, and hath shadowed the clere lyght of many scryptures of god, & he maketh yssue from hym a perylous lyghtnyng, that is to say a false lyght of wrong understandyng of scryptures, which passeth not from the spiryt of trouthe, but from the spiryt of errour, and from the spiryt of this tempest of his moost perillous heresy. Ferthermore he terribly thonderyth agaynst the popes autorite, agaynst the generall concelles, agaynst the tradicions and ordinaunces left unto vs by the apostles, agaynst the doctryne of the fathers, & doctours of the chirche.

### 2. CONVERSION AND REGIME CHANGE:

**Richard Smith, *A godly and faythfull Retractation made and published at Pavles crosse in London*. London: Reginald Wolfe, 1547.**

... All these sayinges I doo now Revoke, Disanull and Condempne as erroneus and false. And do professe and acknowledge fyrst that the auctorite aswell of the Bysshop of Rome, whose auctorite is justly and lawfully abolyshed in this Realme as of other Bisshops and other called the ministers of the church, consisteth in the dispensacion and ministracion of Gods woorde, and not in makyng Lawes, Ordinaunces and Decrees over the people besyde Gods word without the consent and auctoritie of the Prince and people.

Sermon text: *Omnis homo mendax*.

**Thomas Watson, *Two notable sermons made the thirde and fyfte Fridayes in Lent last past, before the Quenes highnes, concernyng the reall presence of Christes body and bloude in the blessed Sacrament*. London: John Cawood, 1554.**

Dr Watson, Chaplain to the Bishop of Winchester, preached at Paul's Cross surrounded by 200 of the Queen's Guard. He declared "the obedience of subjects", and exhorted the people to build no new temple, "not to believe the preachers [i.e. the evangelicals Bradford, Rogers, Becon, et al] but that their faith should be firme and sure ... to keep the ould faithe, and edifye the ould Temple againe."

A description of Watson's sermon by **Henry Machyn, *Diary*, 41.**

### 3. COMMEMORATION AND CONVERSION:

**John Whitgift, *A Most godly and Learned Sermon, Preached at Pauls Crosse the 17 of November 1583.* London: Thomas Chard, 1589.**

Read the Histories, sacred or prophane, you shall plainely see, that disobedience to Magistrates, was never or very seldome suffered to be unpunished. Experience it selfe dooth teach so much. For mine owne part, in inferior governments, I have sundrie times noted, that those, which have shewed themselves contentious against their Governours, have either never come to bee Governours themselves, though they have desired it, or else if they have attained thereunto, have received the same measure. But howsoever disobedient persons in this worlde escape temporall punishments, sure it is, that they shall not escape eternall in the worlde to come, unlesse they repent. S. Paule saithe, That they which resist and disobey, procure unto themselves damnation. And in another place, hee reckoneth disobedient persons, among those which shall never come into the kingdome of heaven.

### 4. CONVERSION AND LOYALTY

**William Barlow, *The sermon preached at Paules Crosse, the tenth day of Nouember being the next Sunday after the discouerie of this late horrible treason.* London: John W[indet], 1606.**

In the week of “this late tragi-comicall treason”, the Bishop of Rochester invited hearers to consider the “cruell Execution, an inhumane crueltie, a brutish immanitie, a devilishe brutishness, and an Hyperbolicall, yea an hyperdiabolicall devilishness.”

### 5. CONVERSION AND OBEDIENCE—Pulpit and Stage

HOMILY ON OBEDIENCE from “Book of Homilies” (1547)

*The homilies (or sermons) from this book were commonly read in English parish churches; The following selection is from the beginning of this particular Homily, and some of its spelling and language has been modernized.*

Almighty God hath created and appointed all things in heaven, earth, and waters, in a most excellent and perfect order. In Heaven, he hath appointed distinct and several orders and states of Archangels and Angels. In earth he hath assigned and appointed Kings, Princes, with other governors under them, in all good and necessary order. The water above is kept, and raineth down in the proper time and season. The Sun, Moon, Stars, Rainbow, Thunder, Lightning, Clouds, and all Birds of the air, do keep their order. The Earth, Trees, Seeds, Plants, Herbs, Corn, Grass, and all manner of Beasts keep themselves in order: all the parts of the whole year, as Winter, Summer, Months, Nights and Days, continue in their order: all kinds of Fishes in the Sea, Rivers, and Waters, with all Fountains, Springs, yea, the Seas themselves keep their comely course and order: and man himself also hath all his parts both within and without, as soul,

heart, mind, memory, understanding, reason, speech, with all and singular corporal members of his body in a profitable, necessary, and pleasant order: every degree of people in their vocation, calling and office, hath appointed to them their duty and order: some are in high degree, some in low, some Kings and Princes, some inferiors and subjects, Priests, and lay men, masters and servants, fathers, and children, husbands and wives, rich and poor, and every one have need of other, so that in all things is to be lauded and praised the goodly order of God, without the which no house, no City, no Commonwealth can continue and endure, or last. For where there is no right order, there reigneth all abuse, carnal liberty, enormity, sin, and Babylonicall confusion.

Take away Kings Princes, Rulers, Magistrates, Judges, and such estates of God's order, no man shall ride or go by the highway unrobbed, no man shall sleep in his own house or bed unkilld, no man shall keep his wife, children, and possession in quietness, all things shall be common, and there must needs follow all mischief, and utter destruction both of souls, bodies, goods, and commonwealths. . . .

Therefore, let us subjects do [the duties to which we are bound], giving hearty thanks to God, and praying for the preservation of this godly order. Let us all obey even from the bottom of our hearts, all their godly proceedings, laws, statutes, proclamations, and injunctions, with all other godly orders. Let us consider the Scriptures of the holy Ghost, which persuade and command us all obediently to be subject, first and chiefly to the Kings Majesty, supreme governor over all, and the next to his honourable counsel, and to all other noble men, Magistrates, and officers, which by God's goodness, be placed and ordered.

2) Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida* (1602), I.iii.88-129.

The heavens themselves, the planets and this centre  
 Observe degree, priority and place,  
 Insisture [persistence], course, proportion, season, form,  
 Office and custom, in all line of order;  
 And therefore is the glorious planet Sol [the sun]  
 In noble eminence enthroned and sphered  
 Amidst the other; whose medicinable eye  
 Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil,  
 And posts, like the commandment of a king,  
 Sans cheque [without stop] to good and bad: but when the planets  
 In evil mixture to disorder wander,  
 What plagues and what portents! what mutiny!  
 What raging of the sea! shaking of earth!  
 Commotion in the winds! frights, changes, horrors,  
 Divert and crack, rend and deracinate  
 The unity and married calm of states  
 Quite from their fixure [place]! O, when degree is shaken,  
 Which is the ladder to all high designs,

Then enterprise is sick! How could communities,  
Degrees in schools and brotherhoods in cities,  
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,  
The primogenitive and due of birth,  
Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,  
But by degree, stand in authentic place?  
Take but degree away, untune that string,  
And, hark, what discord follows! each thing meets  
In mere oppugnancy [opposition]: the bounded waters  
Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores  
And make a sop of all this solid globe:  
Strength should be lord of imbecility,  
And the rude son should strike his father dead:  
Force should be right; or rather, right and wrong,  
Between whose endless jar justice resides,  
Should lose their names, and so should justice too.  
Then every thing includes itself in power,  
Power into will, will into appetite;  
And appetite, an universal wolf,  
So doubly seconded with will and power,  
Must make perforce an universal prey,  
And last eat up himself. Great Agamemnon,  
This chaos, when degree is suffocate,  
Follows the choking.