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Mimetic Process In The Sermons Of John Donne

Paul Wesley Harland

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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE NOUS L'AVONS RECEUE
MIMETIC PROCESS

IN THE SERMONS OF

JOHN DONNE

by

Paul Wesley Harland

Department of English

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Graduate Studies

The University of Western Ontario
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This dissertation argues that Donne's homiletic method manifests a fictive and processive structure which imitates God's historically revelatory workings with his people. Integral to this mimetic structure are several dramatic techniques which forward the action.

Donne's "theory" of mimesis may be constructed by analyzing his comments concerning the imitation of historical precedents. Such comments reveal Donne's trust in the ability of experience to purify the soul and his belief that growth may be induced by doubt, affliction, and virtuous choice, actions which imitate the actions of the faithful witnesses who make up Christ's body. Donne asserts that the beauty which best moves individuals is active and familiar; consequently, the preacher depicts action through the use of personae, soliloquies, dramatic monologues, varying esthetic distances with the audience, and realistic description.

These individual techniques are placed within the sermon's overarching structure, representing a spiritual pilgrimage or plot in which the auditor's faculties are reoriented. Close scrutiny of Donne's view of the soul's faculties shows how he exercises and reintegrates them, thus offsetting the effects of sin. Each sermon manifests several stages in a psychological journey, including an offer of reconciliation, the fearful recognition of sin, the exercise of the faculties through choice, a feeling of tragic joy and catharsis, and an implied resolution, ultimately accomplished by the auditor's active incarnation of Christ.
Donne's willingness to portray characters realistically depends upon his conviction that historical process, from nature to grace to glory, manifests a universal pattern in a particular example. History must be represented so that the auditor can claim it as his own. Since the wisdom acquired from history is not conceptual information about God, but imitative knowledge leading to charitable acts, Donne dramatically depicts historical "types" and collates past experiences which reveal providence's direction. These historical representations encourage the auditor to participate in God's evolving design.

Donne's mimetic principles are summarized in an analysis of his sermon on St. Paul's conversion.
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CHAPTER I:
INTRODUCTION

Donne's sermons constitute an imitation of an action: an action discerned in the revelatory workings of God with his people. This mimesis manifests a fictive and processive structure, which, like God's action, persuasively restores those whom it engages. Integral to this mimetic structure are several dramatic techniques which forward the action. Thus, various ways of depicting realistic individuals, who are God's instruments, in their relationships, conflicts, and development are a necessary part of Donne's homiletic design. Donne's mimetic method is based on his conviction that God is known only in his activity: "God himselfe would not be spoken to by us, but as hee speaks of himselfe; and he speaks in his works." An accurate homiletic representation of God's works therefore demands that the preacher reflect this dynamic quality as the biblical text is "dilated, diffused into a Sermon" (V, 1, 56). Donne's mimesis of historical action also has the effect of provoking a regenerative psychological development in the auditor. As Arthur Barker's view of Sidney's theory shows, mimesis may also represent "the process involved in an action, though by a making of something like but the same ... and ... it does so in order to indicate or reveal something significant for us in the process that would not otherwise be so fully perceived." Donne's sermons, like poetry, manifest and suggest to the auditor a kind of embodied knowledge which simple statement or an
undramatized history cannot achieve. Consequently, the sermon's structure, along with its personae, characterizations, dramatic monologues, and descriptions of action, to name a few techniques, purge and revitalize the fallen faculties. Donne's mimetic method thus fulfills the preacher's primary purpose of "Edification, and a holy stirring of religious affections" (VIII, 3, 95). This affective imitation is one reason why Donne delights in reminding his auditors that "we are not upon a Lecture, but upon a Sermon" (II, 15, 320).

The idea of the Donnean sermon as a mimetic structure advanced by dramatic techniques has, of course, been suggested, though never fully elaborated, in previous criticism. Donne's talent in dramatic representation has long been recognized. Carrithers views the sermons as a "drama of changing selves" and Joan Webber sees Donne's "baroque personality" adopting various poses for purposes of self-definition. But neither critic relates this dramatic performance to a progressive action deliberately conceived to evoke a purgative and reorienting response in the auditor. Indeed, despite attempts by critics to re-evaluate Donne's dramatic presence positively, the spectre of Donne's supposedly "strong emotional temperament" and "romantic" personality, most influentially described by T. S. Eliot, still haunts much criticism. Thus, Douglas Bush's authoritative study, reflecting a parallel belief in this unrestrained, egotistical, and exhibitionist personality, assigns Donne the pejorative title of "theatrical spellbinder." Such criticism betrays an inability to appreciate the provisional nature of his dramatic techniques. This failure allows critics to divorce Donne's homiletic representations from the sermon's psychological momentum and development. It also
explains a tendency to judge portions of the sermons as extractable and therefore not integral to an internally motivated process. Interestingly, even Carrithers, who admits a sense of process when she describes the sermons as an existential journey of self-awareness, does not clearly identify the dynamic psychological pattern which Donne evokes in his auditors.

Many critics' perception of Donne's homiletic imitation is limited to the imitation of scriptural style, that is, the Bible's eloquence and harmony, its intensity of metaphors and figures. Thus, according to Austin Warren, one of Donne's comments, which praises God's literary style, "sounds strangely like a description of Donne's own." This insight into Donne's imitation is broadened by Dennis Quinn's awareness that, as much as the sacrament, preaching may be seen as "manifesting Christ," and as such is "a kind of incarnation." In Quinn's view, "The preacher cooperates in the sacramental application of Christ's merits to men's souls by imitating the divine process visible in Scriptures." When this happens, Donne's sermons "are conceived not as exhortation but as action." Unfortunately, Quinn does not elaborate the manner in which this imitation of an action takes place. Margaret Johnson enhances Quinn's argument by pointing to the central place of mimesis in Donne's theory and practice and by appraising Donne's attempt to induce a creative response in his auditors, often by using patterns and examples. Jeanne Shami further proposes that examples help shape a directional pattern in the sermons similar to that of the Satyres and Anniversaries. Yet because their dissertations involve topics other than Donne's sermons, both Johnson and Shami have little scope to analyze thoroughly the dramatic
techniques, the theological and psychological underpinnings of Donne's mimetic theory, or the purgative effects which such imitation has upon the auditor.

Our attempt to understand the psychological action in the sermons has been aided in recent years by studies of Donne's view of the faculties. Most of these studies examine the memory, understanding, and will, though memory especially has been recognized as an important tool in persuasive discourse. Several significant insights have arisen out of such explorations, such as the fact that memory and imagination are closely related, that memory may aid the process of purgation, and that Donne's imitation allows "for the healthful exercise of the imagination" as the auditor conceives what the preacher creates. Yet despite this work, the need, as Hickey recognized it, for a study of Donne's remarks concerning "the role of the senses and of the fancy or imagination in the process of persuasion" remains largely unanswered. Further, the complex interrelationships among the faculties, including the affections, imagination, senses, bodily powers, as well as the rational faculties, has been as yet neglected. Since, in Donne's conception, all faculties fell in Adam and all must cooperate in the regeneration of the whole man, this dissertation examines each faculty and its relationship with other powers. For Donne, a mimetic process is the most effective means of restoring and improving all the human faculties so that they may perform charitable acts.

For some time, critics have understood the great value which Donne accords the created world and its temporal progress towards fulfillment. Thus, Bush's notion that Donne sought "to resist and escape from" a certain "fascination of life and world" undergoes
substantial revision by Mahood when she stresses three themes in Donne's sermons: the dignity of human nature, the happiness attainable in this life, and the value of the body. Likewise, William Mueller perceives that Donne has a finely attuned sense of God's gradual and historical self-revelation. However, little attempt has been made to link those attitudes to Donne's homiletic method of persuasion. Other research associates Donne with mainline Protestant thought in his attempt to preserve the "literal" sense of Scripture, in which several shades of meaning inhere. This research clarifies our understanding of his historical approach. Further, current interest in typology indicates that Donne perceives types not as two-dimensional anticipators of Christ, but as examples of persons who took part in the struggle which is fundamentally continuous with Christ's and that of all mankind. Once again, however, Donne's exegetical and historical theory needs to be understood as a rationale for his impersonations of realistic characters and his descriptions of biblical personalities. These depictions will be appraised here as part of a developing homiletic structure which imitates God's movement in history. Unfortunately, several critics who initially applaud Donne's affirmation of earthly life and the dynamic process of history seem to undercut their own arguments. Thus, Mahood assumes that the end of most seventeenth-century humanists is the "Paradise Within," and Lewalski suggests that "the Christ of the eschaton rather than the incarnate Christ of the Gospel is the ultimate antitype for all the types." In both cases, the dramatic interaction of earthly living is abandoned in favour of a static and ahistorical idealization. In contrast, this dissertation argues that Donne's celebration of the created world and its history
provides the esthetic motive for his lively imitations of characters as well as the revelatory structure of each sermon's "history."

Critical assessment of Donne's theology has also suffered from the inclination to ignore the mimetic action of the sermon. For example, we often see Donne represent a perspective which is qualified or enhanced later in the sermon's psychological progress. Since Donne's sermons imitate religious experience, a persona may declare at one point a feeling or opinion which is later modified and contextualized by another persona, or a more mature perspective. One takes a risk in accepting such isolated statements at face value, for Donne often attempts to balance, counter, anticipate, or challenge the urges of those professing different religious inclinations. Strangely, McAdoo's study of Anglican theological method virtually ignores Donne's own homiletic method. As well, the conflicting views of Donne's theology arise, in part, from a failure to appreciate Donne's dramatic process. M. A. C. Johnson describes Donne as "orthodox"; Mitchell claims Donne for the Anglo-Catholic party; the Georges' historical study declares him to be virtually an Arminian; Merrill identifies him as a preaching theorist, to be a Puritan; Lewalski finds him a model for a Protestant poetic; Grierson and William Mueller categorize him as a preacher of the middle way. Certainly Donne has an identifiable theology, but the knowledge of God which the auditor confronts in the sermons is more usually embodied knowledge, rather than intellectual abstraction. Thus, Donne's sermons dramatize a variety of religious experiences in order to induce the auditor to undergo a process of spiritual growth and reorientation. Further, they intentionally endeavour to value and support the universal Church's many traditions.
As a brief review of the criticism shows, no comprehensive analysis of mimesis in the sermons has yet been attempted. This study begins (Chapter II) by reviewing Donne's "theory" of mimesis, by analyzing his comments about the imitation of historical precedents. Donne stresses that experience rightly used is a way of purifying God's image in the soul. Imitation, in living as in preaching, must be seen to be inclusive, answering the intricacy and variety of the human condition. The most persuasive kind of imitation is that which exhibits familiarity and verisimilitude. Donne's theory also recognizes that the harmony of the created order admits discord through sin which is returned by Christ's incarnation, passion, and resurrection. People attain harmonious relationship among their faculties and with others by imitating Christ's sacrificial actions in the world. Since the ability to grow defines human nature, growth, caused by doubt, affliction, and virtuous choice, is God's method of evoking a response in people which embodies his truth. This divine artistic procedure, involving harmonious inclusiveness and implied closure or fulfillment is recreated by the preacher as he imitates God's scriptural pattern. Thus, Donne's procedure is to reproduce God's process of inviting human choice, of making Christ incarnate, and ultimately of pleasing and restoring the auditor. Yet Donne realizes that the beauty which moves men is active, and thus a preacher's words must imitate action. Donne's mimetic "practice" is manifested in the structure of the sermon, which is itself a psychological action representing several stages of development in the auditor's soul. But various dramatic techniques move the action forward. Several kinds of personae, theatrical soliloquies, dramatic monologues, a relationship with the audience utilizing different degrees of esthetic distance, realistic
descriptions of persons, actions, and psychological states all contribute to the auditor's developing awareness that authentic knowledge of God is active, incarnate, and processive.

The sermon's structure is the imitation of an unfolding spiritual pilgrimage or plot in which the auditor's faculties are reordered so that he may give God glory in "reasonable service" (II, 17, 342). Since Donne's view of charity implies that saving knowledge of God is inseparable from the practice or enactment of truth, Donne's sermons try to convince more by an exemplary dramatic method than by the force of his particular theology (Chapter III). This method exercises all faculties and reintegrates them so that they overcome the divorce caused amongst them by sin. A close scrutiny of each faculty and its interaction with others demonstrates how this cooperation takes place. Further, this method guides the auditor through an imitated journey leading to a fuller relationship with God in the communion of the Church. While the precise order of these stages varies, each sermon manifests or implies an offer of reconciliation, the recognition of sin which evokes fear and then contains it, the exercise of the faculties through discrimination and choice, a feeling of tragic joy and resultant catharsis achieved by one's assumption into Christ's body through pity and an admission of sin, and an implied resolution by the auditor's incarnation of Christ in the performance of outward action (Chapter IV). Donne can be seen to use several dramatic techniques to represent each step.

Donne's attempt to imitate action manifests an interest in revivifying the sense of significance of God's works as seen in history (Chapter V). For Donne, Christianity is a religion based
upon the facts of what God has already accomplished. This historical basis offers great resources for persuading his auditors to act according to the lives of men and women who have played their parts as "lively stones" (1 Pet. 2.5) in edifying the Church. Because Donne believes that the historical progress from nature to grace to glory is gradual and reveals an underlying constancy, his portrayals of former religious experiences are realistic and recognizable to the contemporary auditor. History must be presented as an account which the auditor can claim as his own. Indeed, the wisdom acquired from history is understood best not as the accumulation of conceptual information about God, but as imitative knowledge: the recollection of stories which impels one to perform charitable acts. Donne's respect for the individuality of persons declares itself in his dramatic depictions of historical "types," and his discernment of a purposeful pattern can be seen in the collation of similar past experiences. The sermons encourage the auditor to respond to Donne's historical representations by participating in God's evolving design.

The overall effects of Donne's mimetic principles can be summarized by briefly considering a representative sermon. An interesting commemoration of Paul's conversion, taken from Acts 9.4, exemplifies the contribution of specific techniques to the sermon's progressive action (Chapter VI).
Notes

1 All references to the sermons are from John Donne, *The Sermons of John Donne*, ed. George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson, 10 vols. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1953-62). This particular citation is from vol. VIII, sermon 1, p. 121. Subsequent references to this edition are indicated parenthetically by volume, sermon number, and page.


3 Also see III, 14, 293.


See L. P. Smith, p. xxi; Eliot, p. 353, where he asserts Donne "can be read-in detached passages . . . and they can be read by those who have no interest in the subject"; Bush, p. 323, who claims "most readers may well be content with the intoxications of Donne's purple passages"; and Wilson, pp. 44-45, who believes that the preacher's talents have endeared Donne to the literary connoisseur and anthologist." Irving Lowe resists this tendency and realizes that "Donne's darkest passages are always qualified" and that he writes "under the exigencies of preaching." See "John Donne and the Middle Way: The Reason-Faith Equation in Donne's Sermons," JHI, 22 (1961), 395.


Quinn, "Christian Eloquence," pp. 284, 294. Also note J. M. Mueller, p. 39: "Yet it was Donne alone who evolved an eloquent style to mirror not only the inferred intent of the Holy Ghost in a text but the movement of his own mind in undertaking to penetrate its meaning."

Margaret Anne Cummings Johnson, "Homiletic Theory and Practice in the Sermons of John Donne and Lancelot Andrewes," Diss. Univ. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign 1970, pp. 149, 263-67, 301. Also note p. 335: "There is no sense in Andrewes, as there is in Donne, of the minister's discovering a truth in the process of unfolding it, an effect which is deliberate in both cases."


17 Hickey, "Art of Memory," p. 36.


21 Mahood, p. 305; Lewalski, Protestant Poetics, p. 126.


24 The most complete overview of Donne's theology combines covenant theology with the classical Protestant doctrine of justification by faith. Even in this balanced study, the provisional nature of homiletic statements is not evaluated. See E. Randolph Daniel, "Reconciliation, Covenant and Election: A Study of the Theology of John Donne," ATR, 48 (1966), 14-30.

25 References to the Bible are from the King James Version.
CHAPTER II: MIMESIS

II.1 Introduction to Donne's Mimetic Theory

Donne's great homiletic interest is imitation—the imitation of God's ways to men, the imitation of biblical and contemporary characters as they deal with their very human and complex situations, the imitation of an auditor's soul as it responds to experience and to the word of God. In all these individual imitations, Donne attempts to portray a common dynamic pattern, a common mimesis. Accordingly, he devises several mimetic techniques which depict the historical drama of selves in action. The use of personae, soliloquies, dramatic monologues, fictionalized auditors, along with descriptions of persons, actions, and psychological states, all offer a vivid sense of the particular and individual participants in God's history. But Donne also situates these individual examples within the sermon's evolving pattern. The sermon's structure manifests a fictive process that recreates God's restorative actions within the Church throughout history. This fictive process is a psychological evolution which persuades the auditor that any individual experience participates in providential history and must be, therefore, a microcosm of God's larger purposeful movement. Thus, Donne is able to describe for his auditors the long-range view, the distillation of historical experience without the falsification of it. But his manner of presentation is advanced by the realistic representation of identifiable individuals encountering life's
afflictions, perplexities, and exaltations. Delighted by this diversity of personalities and their responses, yet confident of God's fundamental constancy towards his human creation, Donne imitates the persuasive style and development of Scripture, itself a compendium of human experiences. In so doing, Donne relates scriptural events to each other and enacts the Bible's artistic pattern: "That which must try thee, is the whole Booke, the tenor and purpose, the Scope and intention of GOD.in his Scriptures" (VII, 2, 87).

Donne, therefore, combines realistic, personal representations, which evoke an immediate response from the auditor, with the purposeful psychological structure of the sermon. Together, these components imitate the dramatic progression of God's providence by individual human agents. By this method, Donne fulfills Sidney's description of the poet since he "coupletth the general notion with the particular example;" and Aristotle's portrayal since he speaks not only of "particulars" but also of the "universals" arising from the probable norm gathered from experience. The distrust of sensuous reality and the emotions, so evident in Plato's mimetic conception, is absent in Donne's understanding. As in Aristotelian mimesis, Donne's sermons depict reality in the process of becoming, incrementally fulfilling its goal or completion; they also rely upon the affections to move the auditor. In Donne's eyes, the principles of reality do not transcend the sensory world but are revealed by it. Donne's sermons reflect the Aristotelian conviction that knowledge achieved through mimetic representation is direct knowledge, not filtered insight into philosophical truths. Further, as Aristotle's poet is a maker of plots, so Donne imitates the actions of historical persons within the complete
psychological action of the sermon. The dramatic structure, like tragedy, stimulates recognition, raises and transforms the strong emotions, fear and pity, and ultimately produces cathartic relief. Going beyond Aristotle, however, the structure also offers a sense of restorative joy and reintegration. 3 "Christ himself," says Donne, "as he was God himself, is Purus Actus, all Action, all Doing" (VIII, 15, 342); the manifestation of Christ in the sermon must imitate this dynamism. The goal of Donne's sermons is uncovered through gradual organic development based on their own internal motivation. 4

Initially, Donne's sermons may seem to exemplify Erich Auerbach's conception of mimesis: the merging of the "serious" with the "everyday" made possible by the new imaginative reality demanded by the Incarnation. 5 As we have already suggested, Donne is an author who grapples with people's present ordinary existence and attempts to reveal within it a power and a dimension which partakes of a universal design. Certainly he has an eye for precise detail and a talent for articulating the processes of thought and feeling in the human soul. In one sermon, for example, a fictionalized persona enacts a scene which, while carefully individualized, reflects upon a universal human experience. A man at prayer calls upon God, yet when God in all his majesty arrives to listen, the speaker realizes, "I neglect God and his Angels, for the noise of a Flie, for the ratling of a Coach, for the whining of a doore. . . ." As the speaker talks on, he imagines to his horror being asked when he last thought of God. He cannot honestly recall. Stumped by the mystery of human psychology, the speaker's pondering trails off in a catalogue of possible, arresting, realistic distractions: "A membry of yesterdays pleasures, a feare of to morrows dangers, a
straw under my knee, a noise in mine eare, a light in mine eye, an
any thing, a nothing, a fancy . . ." (VII, 10, 264-65). This intimate
dramatized scene, complete with its gentle touches of humour and
irony, reflects Donne's mastery at joining the serious with the everyday.

While one component of Donne's mimesis, the realistic, dramatic,
and detailed depiction of ordinary reality, seems to parallel Auerbach's
conception, the other component, the representation of historical process,
shows where the two perceptions diverge. For, in Auerbach's figural
history, "the fact is subordinated to an interpretation which is fully
secured to begin with." That is, an ideal prototype existing in an
unhistorical realm outshines the types which forshadow it. Such an
understanding, in Auerbach's words, "recalls Platonistic notions"
and in so doing undercuts the value inherent in the events, persons,
and processes which precede the revelation of the ideal model. It is
almost as if the particular is accepted as a vehicle which may partially
portray the universal, but which may be dismissed as unintegral to the
fuller design. In contrast, Donne believes the particulars of history
are its very substance and meaning; only out of an awareness of their
cumulative direction and momentum can a universal pattern be discerned.

These general comments about Donne's mimesis need to be supported
by his own statements concerning the theory of imitation. To begin
with, we find many statements which at first glance seem to favour
a Platonic rather than Aristotelian scheme of imitation, an under-
standing of Ideas and forms as the ideal rather than the potential
being of a thing. For example, Donne's use of God's creation of the
world according to the Idea of it, taken from the Timaeus, occurs
several times. The ideal form that is taken for imitation seems to be what is indicated when Donne comments, "whatsoever is made, in time, was alive in God, before it was made, that is, in that eternall Idea, and patterne which was in him" (VII, 1, 60). The notion of God creating by means of a pattern is not introduced by Donne, however, to suggest that the world is merely a reflection of something intrinsically better or more real. Rather, the fact that God creates in this way is offered to give impetus to people to do likewise: that is, they should further imitate the creative imitations of God. Consequently, when Donne considers what kind of imitation he should employ in preparing a sermon, he looks largely to incarnate actions: if God asks what is "an Idea of my Sermons," he hopes to be able to reply, "It is that which the Analogy of Faith, the edification of the Congregation, the zeale of thy worke, the meditations of my heart have imprinted in me" (VII, 1, 61).

Often Donne presents God creating according to an idea in order to remind his auditory that the experiences which they undergo are not discrete events, but events belonging to a tradition within the universal Church. Consequently, former experiences can offer guidance and comfort to the present generation. Mindful of the dangers of separatist individualism and monastic privatism, Donne suggests that proper imitation in religion as well as literature conforms one to a regenerate course of life:

Goe thou then the same way. If God wrought by a pattern, and writ by a copie, and proceeded by a precedent, doe thou so too. Never say, there is no Church without error: therefore I will be bound by none; but frame a Church of mine owne, or be a Church to my selfe. What greater injustice, then to propose no Image, no pattern to thy selfe to imitate; and yet propose thy selfe for a pattern, for an Image to be adored? Thou wilt have singular opinions, and singular ways differing from all other men; and yet
all that are not of thy opinion must be heretiques; and all reprobates, that goe not thy wayes: Propose good patterns to thy selfe; and thereby become a fit pattern for others. God, we see, was the first, that made Images; and he was the first, that forbad them. He made them for imitation; he forbad them in danger of adoration. (IX, 2, 75)

Donne obviously is using the Platonic concept of the divine Ideas; but his more dynamic understanding of mimesis begins to show itself as he recasts this conventional concept. Donne's mimesis, like Aristotle's, is more concerned with the process or activity of imitation than with the result of a close reproduction. His counsel in this instance is that we are to take up the task of building the Church of God, with the helps and also the limitations of tradition, accepting Christ as our pattern; his counsel is not to despair because we may not achieve a perfect copy. The action of imitating is itself a vehicle with which to know the divine nature. The more pristine attempt to gain intellectual perception of an exact likeness of God as he is in himself is a delusion. Elsewhere Donne argues that the preacher's purpose is not to speak of God's "intennall, and eternall purposes in himselfe, but of his works" (VIII, 4, 121). Abstruse and static imitations of God's essence are not appropriate to human capacity. In Donne's understanding godliness inheres in the exercise rather than the apprehension of virtue, and therefore true mimesis is the imitation of the historic workings of God among his people. By such an act, one protects oneself from the danger of fallacious private inspiration or egocentric idolatry.

What may initially have seemed to be a sympathy on Donne's part for a Platonic conception of representation thus gives way to another sort. God's creation of the world is no mere shadow of a more perfect reality; it is the enactment of what was before only potential:
"But these Ideas's, these conceptions produced not a creature, not a worme, not a weed; but then, Dixit, & facta sunt, God spoke, and all things were made" (VIII, 4, 720). In like manner, people must seek to make their corrupt and fallen beings full and actual by creative imitation. Thus Donne questions, "How should we know any Decree in God, of the creation of Man, according to his image, but by the execution?" (V, 1, 54). Knowledge of what God ultimately knows in his decrees of election and reprobation is not a matter which is left to man; to man is left the sphere of enactment, of obedience to God seen in his works, of dynamic imitation.

Donne's concept of the imitation of action is enhanced by the value given to the present life, as a setting for the creation of an authentic selfhood. The story which a man tells in the life he leads is a project demanding not a contempt of the world but full participation in it:

This life is not a Parenthesis, a Parenthesis that belongs not to the sense, a Parenthesis that might be left out, as well as put in. Therefore where the Apostle sayes of this life, Peregrinamur à Domino, We are absent from the Lord, yet he sayes, We are at home in the body: This world is so much our home, as that he that is not at home now, he that hath not his conversation in heaven here, shall never get home. (III, 13, 288)

The present life is not to be endured, but transformed. The world has the potential to declare God's glory, and not to work to make this so is a sin of ingratitude against him. Since this is true, every moment, every step in life's journey may be imbued with a sacred character. Donne explains that all the steps in life's journey must be valued and taken; certainly none may be neglected for Christ's sake:
We must not coast and cross the nearest way, and so think to meet Christ in his end, which was glory, but we must go after him in all his steps, in the way of humiliation; for Christ's very descent was a degree of exaltation; and by that name he called his crucifying a lifting up, an exaltation. (I, 9, 315)

It is the working out, the process which validates any end, that may be called glorious. The action must be complete; it must lead from its own premises to a conclusion which is the more or less inevitable result. Important to recognize is Donne's insistence upon the crucifixonal descent, the purifying way of difficulty and complexity. This descent causes men to strip away what is extraneous, and thereby to encounter God. The "nearest way," the immediate apprehension of Christ, is a false avenue because it ignores imitation; it does not participate in the process which God undertook in his entry into history. Unless all the steps in life's journey, especially those which lead to the cross, are taken, there can be no cathartic purgation and restoration, no meaningful completion of action which results in "exaltation."

In a fascinating sermon, a sermon which might be characterized as examining the dark side of God, Donne makes plain his view that mimesis is a continuing creative action. Experience in the world is an occasion, among those who see by faith, for the refining of God's image, for progressive illumination. The image of God in every man must not be protected from experience, but exposed to it. Since the divine image is defaced in the Fall, only experience rightly used can purify it:

So then the children of God, are the Marble, and the Ivory, upon which he worke; In them his purpose is, to re-engrave, and restore his Image; and affliction, and the malignity of man, and the deceits of Heretiques; and the tentations of the Devill him selfe, are but his instruments, his tools, to make his Image more discernible, and more durable in us. (III, 8, 193)
Mimesis in these terms is a continuing action. The creation of man is not complete, for each event in an individual's history may be an occasion for the re-creation of God's image in him. Donne often reminds his auditory that God's image "can never be burnt out of us" (I, 1, 160); here, however, Donne shows that the image of God, insofar as fallen men are concerned, cannot be known apart from the unfolding process of temporal events. There is no place and no time which escapes God's governance. He gives to men opportunity to see him where he is most unexpected. Thus, even human evil, the deception of heretics, and the devil's snares are means by which God can declare his presence and incarnate himself within the souls of men.

The "artful" procedure of God, whereby he re-engraves his image through experience, may also be seen in Scripture, since it imitates history most effectively. Each part of Scripture is a chapter belonging to one cohesive book. The variety of God's workings all conduce to one end: the gradual revelation of himself through time. As one contemporary theologian explains, the writings of the Bible "disclose structures of human existence, structures of life in the world, structures of love and despair as man experiences them." The important word is "structures," for Scripture moves from its own premises deliberately through its innumerable occurrences to a conclusion fitting to its poetic demands. Consequently, all events, even those resisting the triumph of truth, must be accounted for, in order that truth may be accepted as a worthy champion. A story which cannot compass the breadth and variety of forces in life by representing them within it cannot claim to reach a fitting conclusion or telos. If it cannot do this, it cannot speak to the human condition. But Donne understands the Bible to be fully inclusive in its process:
But when the Holy Ghost is the workman, in the true Scriptures, we have a glorious sight of this Mosaic, this various, this mingled work; where the words of the Serpent in seducing our first parents, The words of Balaams Ass in instructing the rider himself, The words of prophane Poets, in the writings and use of the Apostle, The words of Calaphas prophesying that it was expedient that one should dye for all, The words of the Divel himself (Jesus I know, and Paul I know) And here in this text, the words of a Thief executed for the breach of the Law; do all concur to the making up of the Scriptures, of the word of God. (I, 6, 253)

Donne's understanding of the drama of Scripture, the rhythm of historical events, the pattern of initiation and response, all acting as parts of God's word is a component of the same sensitivity which values a variety of literary forms in Scripture. The deity is not content with sameness, but delights in abundance. For that reason, God uses many forms to show himself and to declare different aspects of his nature. The different biblical genres, or methods of literary imitation, are manifestations of the divine versatility. In one sermon Donne describes the many ways men have to understand God through his names; God is our Father, potter, minter or statuary, steward, physician, neighbour, gardener, architect, fisher, and shepherd. It is only appropriate that the God who appears through many shapes should also express himself in a variety of literary forms:

The book of Job is a representation of God in a Tragi-Comedy, lamentable beginnings comfortably ended: The book of the Canticles is a representation of God in Christ, as a Bridegroom in a Marriage-song, in an Epithalamion: God in Christ is represented to us, in divers formes, in divers places, and this Chapter is his Pastorall. The Lord is our Shepheard, and so called, in more places, then by any other name; and in this Chapter, exhibits some of the offices of a good Shepheard. (IX, 5, 132)
God uses a variety of genres because different literary forms answer better to particular human conditions. Donne sees that only individual literary modes can describe certain aspects of God's workings and that some persons respond only to certain forms of expression. While God's essence remains immutable, his dealings with people are many and various. Thus, comments Donne, "We know that God is alike in all places, but he does not work in all places alike" (IX, 8, 208). Donne's interest in "things, which belong to the way" (IX, 11, 256), whether in history or Scripture, underscores his desire to imitate the particular variety of human experience. For the pilgrimage to God, whatever its process of discovery, reveals a structure of a similar design.

The benefits of the imitation of action—whether that action take place in Scripture, history, or personal experience—are great. The most significant of these is that such mimesis is persuasive. Examples of an on-going temporal process convince in a way that abstract principles or even rhetorical devices do not. In Donne's view, auditors are best motivated to regenerate action by their consideration of experiences which relate directly to their own lives:

All ways of teaching, are Rule and Example: And though ordinarily the Rule be first placed, yet the Rule it selfe is made of Examples: And when a Rule be of hard digestion to weake understandings, Example concocts it, and makes it easie: for, Example in matter of Doctrine, is as Assimilation in matter of Nourishment, The Example makes that that is proposed for our learning and farther instruction, like something that we knew before, as Assimilation makes that meat, which we have received, and digested, like those parts, which are in our bodies before.

(IX, 12, 274)
Here Donne makes clear that all our knowledge has a basis in experience—experience either personal or belonging to others. Even the Rules which are made for human conduct arise from examples and require examples for their formulation. When a general notion has been constructed out of individual occurrences, if the meaning is to be clearly understood, one must again have recourse to an individual example. We think of a rule as prior, says Donne, but it is the example which is truly prior. Still, individual experience and generalized "interpretation" must co-exist together and thus David and Solomon used this method: "Poet, and Preacher, proceed in these wayes in both, Rule, and Example, the body and soule of Instruction" (IX, 12, 274). Donne's technique of representing fictional and historical characters makes this point effectively.

Accomplishing more than assisting the "digestion" of prescribed rules, examples penetrate one's being and actions; they participate organically in one's mode of living. In the same sermon, Donne strives to articulate God's method of teaching according to what is basically a mimetic principle:

When we consider the wayes of instruction, as they are best pursued in the Scriptures, so are there no Books in the world, that doe so abound with this comparative and exemplary way of teaching, as the Scriptures doe; No Books, in which that word of Reference to other things, that Sicut is so often repeated, Doe this, and doe that, Sicut, so, as you see such and such things in Nature doe; And Sicut, so as you finde such and such men, in story, to have done. (IX, 12; 276)

Donne takes the Bible to be the literary standard in the use of the method which relates or imitates the incidents of man's past. More than any other book, the Bible draws examples of human events into
itself. We notice that the Bible refers, compares, and exemplifies in order to teach. And the "things" to which reference is made are not objects, but actions. The "sic ut" of Scripture indicates a march of temporal events: the reader of Scripture is to "doe" as former examples from "story" have done. The emphasis in Donne's mimesis is on enactment or performance.

Human history or individual history is a means of illumination which can be trusted. Interestingly, Donne believes that those examples which touch the experience of the individual concerned are the best suited for his auditors. In a sense, this assertion is an argument in favour of verisimilitude in action. We note, for instance, that Donne expansively pronounces: "Of all Commentaries upon the Scriptures, Good Examples are the best and the liveliest; and of all Examples those that are nearest, and most present, and most familiar unto us . . ." (VIII, 3, 95).

Donne's fascinating sermon preached to the Virginia Company demonstrates his assurance in the convincing power of familiar examples. The sermon was preached after news of a massacre of Virginian settlers had reached England and anger had fomented against the Indians. As a poem by Donne's friend, Christopher Brooke, shows, the temptation to believe the Indians subhuman and totally depraved abounded; this temptation buttressed a call for their extermination. Aware of the Company's anger, as well as its crass materialism and corruption, Donne's difficult task is to remind the Company members that their primary obligation is not to gain a temporal kingdom but to manifest Christ in their endeavours. Taking a text from Acts 1:8,
Donne opens his sermon by explaining that, although some twenty-two sermons appear in that book of Scripture, its name comes from another source:

yet the booke is not called the Preaching, but the Practise, not the Words, but the Acts of the Apostles: and the Acts of the Apostles were to convey that name of Christ Jesus, and to propagate his Gospel, over all the world: Beloved, you are the Actors upon the same Stage too: the uttermost part of the Earth are [sic] your Scene: act over the Acts of the Apostles. . . . (IV, 10, 265)

Here at the beginning of his sermon, Donne makes the concept of imitation of action quite explicit by use of his stage metaphor. And far from preaching a conventional sermon about the importance and urgency of gaining converts for Christianity, Donne reminds his auditors that belief in Christ must be translated into a living embodiment of Christ through action: "To be Witnesses for Christ, is to be like Christ; to conforme your selves to Christ. . . ." (IV, 10, 275). Neither does Donne fail to spell out the manner in which the practical gospel must match the doctrinal gospel: the members of the Company must embody "Justice," "Civilitie," and "Religion" (IV, 10, 280). But the most comforting, as well as the most difficult part of the sermon—considering the massacre which has occurred and the corruption which has infested the organization—comes when Donne calls upon them to recognize the good in themselves. They should imitate their own former examples:

for when I, by way of exhortation, all this while have seem'd to tell you what should be done by you, I have, indeed, but told the Congregation, what hath beene done already: neither do I speake to move a wheele that stood still, but to keepe the wheele in due motion; nor perswade you to begin, but to continue a good worke, nor propose .foreigne, but your own. Examples, to do still, as you have done hitherto. (IV, 10, 281)
Donne trusts that the more generous and religious actions which existed in Virginia before the desire for revenge began to rage are examples which, because so close, so recognizable, are most likely to persuade his auditory. He preaches nothing novel or foreign. Addressing a somewhat hostile audience, he commends them by pointing to an unimpeachable model, their own actions; at the same time, he shows his abhorrence for their cruel reaction to the massacre. They must reform by reverting to their better selves. Only in this way, not by unrestrained exploitation, can something like the image of God shine in America by the process of enactment. In their better selves, they are not only merchants and traders, but Apostles who must "give God his leisure" (IV, 10, 270) in revealing himself. Armed with such patience, they may become instruments of God's gradual providence, and thus will not seek their own immediate desires. They may be true believers when they re-perform the acts of the Apostles, empowered "to be witnesses of Christ, that is, to make his doctrine the more credible, by your testimony, when you conforne your selves to him, and doe as he did." (IV, 10, 267). The credible doctrine is the one which imitates action, seen originally in Christ, and lately in their own action of only a few years ago.

In summary, Donne's statements on imitation recall several Aristotelian principles. According to Donne, reality manifests itself in becoming and imitation is conceived not as a pale reflection but as an unfolding pattern of meaning. Clearly, he is interested in representing God as he appears in his works rather than his essence. This concept of the imitation of action is enhanced by the value he ascribes to the present life and his belief that experience may
refine God's image in the soul, especially when experience exposes one to the purgative way of the cross. In Donne's view, Scripture celebrates life's breadth and plenitude in its generic variety and validates the use of exemplary actions as the most effective method to persuade others. The discerning preacher reconstructs this biblical characteristic of representing examples and developmental action in his sermons.

II.2 Donne's Mimetic Theory: The Persuasive Representation of Creation, History, and God's Word

Donne believes that God's work in any of its manifestations—creation, history, personal experience, or Scripture—reflects its inherent and dynamic structure again and again. All the world is a vast instrument upon which God plays creatively, responding to elements of cacophony by transforming them into harmony. The part which any faithful person performs in his vocation imitates God's work, containing the impulse towards chaos within an artistic form and encouraging redirected energies. Even before God declares himself in his Scriptures, the natural order proclaims the intricate ordering of God's hand. For Donne, the "correspondence and relation of all parts of Nature to one Author, the concinnity and dependence of every piece and joyst of this frame of the world" is clearly "an admirable piece of musick and harmony," and God does "play upon this Organ in his administration and providence by naturall means and instruments" (I, 8, 289-90). But God's sense of harmony is also social; it involves the relationships among a person, his God, and his neighbour. Their relationships may re-establish the concord which God first intended before the Fall: "Heaven and earth are as a musical Instrument; if
you touch a string below, the motion goes to the top: any good done to Christ's poor members upon earth, affects him in heaven... 

(III, 1, 59). Like any musical composition, however, God's harmony is contained in a limited form. Responsible Christians do not seek abstruse knowledge privy to God alone, but 'hearken to the "language of workes," which is close at hand because in it alone "is the true harmony of the Spheres, which every man may heare" (X, 4, 109-10).

It should be clear that, in his use of the metaphor of the world as instrument, Donne does not attempt primarily to advance the argument from design but to stress the relational nature of God, who involves himself in the historical acts of men. Donne's understanding of God's artistry is broader than a view which simply marvels at the intricacy of the mechanism of the cosmos. His view of mimetic structure takes full account of the perversity of human nature, which seeks its own rather than the divine will. As a result, Donne does not minimize the immense suffering which is the result of sin, and pain which comes for apparently no reason at all. These too have their part in the divine symphony. The affliction which man feels makes up most of his history; it cannot be brushed aside in favour of the simplistic assertion of universal harmony. Rather, the harmony of which Donne speaks is that whereby God meets human suffering, the result of sin, by undergoing humiliation and suffering himself. The discord of men is met with God's judgment and also with his mercy; both restore harmony but at the tremendous cost of divine love poured out upon a cross:
God made this whole world in such an uniformity, such a correspondency, such a concinnity of parts, as that it was an instrument; perfectly in tune: we may say, the trebles, the highest strings were disordered first, the best understandings, Angels and Men, put this instrument out of tune. God rectified all again, by putting in a new string, semen mulieris, the seed of the woman, the Messiah: And onely by sounding that string in your ears, become we musicum carmen, true musick, true harmony, true peace to you. (II 7, 170)

If we recall one of Donne’s prayers in his earlier Essays, a prayer which illuminates his Good Friday poem, it is apparent that, while God always seeks to reconcile man with himself, such reconciliation is bought at great price. The note which ministers sound to their congregations is the harmonious note that is the good news of Christ, yet this Christ is he who took the way of the cross:

These distempers, thou only, O God, who art true, and perfect harmonie, canst tune, and rectify, and set in order again. Doe so then, O most Mercifull Father, for thy most innocent Sone sake: and since he hath spread his armes upon the cross, to receive the whole world, O Lord, shut out none of us (who are now fallen before the throne of thy Majesty and thy Mercy) from the benefit of his merits. . . . 18

Christ opens his arms to embrace and to retune the world; at the same time, he positions them to receive the nails which bind them to the shame of the cross. Only when the cost of suffering for the sake of atonement is measured can the peculiar quality of God’s harmony be evaluated. God’s mercy is indeed fathomless since it uses the occasion of sin as an opportunity to re-create goodness and as a chance to redirect men’s perverted wills: “For, as poisons conduceth to Physick, and discord to Musick, so those two kinds of evil, into which we contract all others, are of good use, that is malum poenae, the evil of punishment, affliction, adversity; and malum culpae, even sin itselfe, from which the punishment flowes” (VI, 11, 237). Donne’s recognition of the inclusive nature of God’s artistry leads him, in one sermon, to
speak of St. Augustine's amazement when he realized that no occurrence could be estranged from God's plan:

The same Father speaking of this order and judgement of providence, says, *Nihil ordini contrarium*. Nothing can be contrary to that order; He is in a holy rapture transported with that consideration, That even disorders are within Gods order; There is in the order and judgement of his providence an admission, a permission of disorders *(VIII, 8, 231)*

But, obviously, a permission of disorders admits the contingency of the groaning of the whole creation in travail, to be delivered only by a suffering servant. Donne's purpose is to emphasize the greatness of the creator by demonstrating the magnitude—and also the horrifying gravity—of man's choice through free will. The Lord declares his glory not by demanding involuntary obedience, but by gathering to him those who would seek him in the breadth of free choice, in the knowledge that his service is perfect freedom: "Christ beats his Drum, but he does not Press men; Christ is serv'd with Voluntaries" *(VII, 5, 156)*. His governance permits participation in the fulfillment of his purpose; it does not gather all power to itself but expends it in grace: "Almighty God made us for his glory, and his glory is not the glory of a Tyrant, to destroy us, but his glory is in our happiness" *(II, 8, 180)*. In other words, though God could exploit all power, he restricts it according to his goodness, since he has covenanted with men by acting to support and sustain them *(I, 8, 296)*. The happiness of men is God's abiding purpose, but the quality of that happiness must be whole:

If man had been made *impeccable*, that he could not have sinned, he had not been so happy, for then, he could only have enjoyed that state, in which he was created, and not have risen to any better; because that better estate, is a reward of our willing obedience to God, in such things, as we might have disobeyed him in. *(II, 4, 123)*
The essence of man's happiness, as God created him, then, resides in man's ability to grow, to transform himself from one condition into a better one. Man's happy state, even in Eden, is not a static perfection designed to remain intact, but a condition which must seek to reformulate itself, and to discover the possibility of new conditions. Growth can only take place when freedom is complete. In this growth is man's identity. As Donne explains, were man created an angel in a confirmed state, or a beast without a reasonable soul, he would not have fallen. Yet, had he been so made, he would not be what defines him as a unique creature: "but God myght have prevented this perversenes, he myght have made him soe stronge as that he cold not have perverted himselfe. But then God had not made him man" (II, 6, 152). To be human means to grow, and not to attempt to fulfill this principle of evolution deviates from God's purposeful activity: "God produced plants in Paradise therefore, that they might grow; God hath planted us in this world, that we might grow; and he that does not endeavour that by all lawfull meanes, is inexcusable, as well as he that pursues unlawfull" (VI, 15, 308).

The necessity of growing in order to remain faithful to one's nature is just as true in a postlapsarian world. We recall that the pilgrimage of purgation is the means by which God's image is refined in men. In the fallen world, good influences are mixed with evil, yet growth still may be born out of encounters with evil, depending upon one's response to them. However, growth is contingent upon choice; and the change which man undergoes may equally well be one of debasement. As Donne suggests, the uniqueness and ultimate
dignity of human nature lies in its changeability. "For that faculty and power of the will, is Virtus transformativa; by it we change our selves into that we love most, and we are come to love those things most, which are below us" (IX, 17, 373). However, much men's choices tend toward evil, there is no necessity of doing evil, and God's purpose to bring us, by growth, to happiness, to participation in his nature, remains constant. Indeed, the example of Christ's actions in the world is ample evidence for the significance of provoking within oneself the desire to expand and progress:

Christ himself, increased in wisdome, and in stature, and in favour with God, and Man; so must a Christian also labour to grow and to encrease, by speaking and speaking again, by asking more, and more questions, and by farther, and farther informing his understanding, and enlightening his faith. . . . (II, 10, 232)

The last quotation introduces the importance of questioning in the process of growth. In Donne's mimetic theory it is more important that an individual stand in relation to God than that he resolve upon the most acceptable relationship. A person may gradually proceed towards that final goal; first and foremost, however, a person must be challenged to confront God's profound desire to be present to that person. One need not fear the manner in which one offers oneself to God. More important is that the offering take place:

If you finde it hard to come, or if you finde an easinesse to fall backe, though you doe come, come to consult with God, how you may come, so as you stay, when you are come. Nay, there is a venite & arguite, Come and reason with God, argue, plead, dispute, expostulate with God, come upon any conditions: The venite is multiplied, infinite invitations to come; but the Ite maledicti, Depart ye accursed, is but once heard from God's mouth, and that not in this world neither. . . . (VII, 2, 88-89)

God attempts to provoke relationship; he will work upon whatever response he receives, but initially there must be a response. Argument,
pleading, disputation, and expostulation with God are all legitimate methods of answering his call. Even the matter of doubt does not unsettle Donne. His belief is that any thoroughgoing doubt will issue purposefully. Doubt has a profoundly useful purpose in testing the value of a person's assumptions. The doubting of God still may engage him; and should one delve deeply enough into doubt, one cannot fail to sense God seeking oneself, for the Holy Spirit will guide one into all truth. Referring to St. Chrysostom, Donne suggests: "As no man resolves of any thing wisely, firmly, safely, of which he never doubted, never debated, so neither doth God withdraw a resolution from any man, that doubts with an humble purpose to settle his owne faith, and not with a wrangling purpose to shake another mans" (V, 1, 38).

To Donne, doubt is not a wayward inclination; humble doubt is generated by God, who abhors ignorance and complacent acceptance.

If growth is enhanced by questioning, it is also increased by making decisions as a result of living in the world. Donne's counsel is always to engage the world and to learn from the penitential experience which it offers. The possibility of making a wrong choice should not deter any man from action, for God, even in his punishing anger, seeks to restore the men whom he loves (VII, 2, 82). Growth results from his wrath:

Therefore God does not continue his anger, so as to discontinue his worke. It was but a Catechisticall anger, such an anger as S. Bernard begges at Gods hands, Trascaris mihi Domine, O Lord, be angry with me, and leave mee not to my selfe; thou hast an anger, that instructs in the way; but thou hast a heavy and indignation, that confounds, and exterminates in the end. (VIII, 5, 154)
God's anger is catechistical; it is instructive. God is in the process of revealing himself, and the suffering which men feel is an example of his probing methods of reaching them. Donne confidently believes that God forwards his creative work in his anger and does not withdraw from it. Consequently, the temptation to sin that men encounter Donne courageously accepts as a part of an individual's journey towards God and imitation of his work. A soul worthy of possession must be tried. If the Christian is to be true to his calling, he must not rest, but imitate the ceaseless activity of God. Conflict is the very element in which the Christian exists and attempts to manifest the way of his Saviour:

For, this life, is... a business, and a perplexed business, a warfare, and a bloody warfare, a voyage, and a tempestuous voyage. If we understand this rest to be Cessation, Intermission, the Saints in heaven have none of that, in this service: It is a labour that never wearies, to serve God there. As the Sun is no wearier now, then when he first set out, six thousand years since; As that Angel, which God hath given to protect thee, is not weary of his office, for all thy perversenesses, so, howsoever God deale with thee, be not thou weary of bearing thy part, in his Quire here in the Militant Church. (VIII, 1, 53)

The rest which tends towards inaction is contrary to God's perpetual, creative movement. Spiritual growth is the human activity which imitates the works of God in history. For Donne, such growth is impossible without the complex struggle that engagement with the world demands. Each of the metaphors Donne chooses to illustrate the holy life of the saints—business, warfare, and voyage—is intensified by an adjective which underscores its tumultuous character. The retired, contemplative life plays its part, but the proof of its worth is demonstrated by the fight to serve God actively in the midst of life's stormy assaults. 23
As we have suggested, the freedom to grow permitted by God to mankind also implies the likelihood of sin. Donne's oratory is powerful when he speaks of the magnitude of sin and the grievous harms which it accomplishes. He is distraught by the description of sin as a privation of the good, and tries to show its strength and power over our actions, and how such sin deforms the body of God in its members, for sin has "not onely a beeing, but a dominion, even in our best actions" (II, 3, 100). However, powerful though Donne's preaching is in his denunciation of sin, he is ready to see that sin may be directional if repentance weans the sinner from the insensitivity of repeated sin. Growth springs even from sin when God prunes its deformity:

Vertit in bonum, says Joseph to his brethren, you thought evil, but God meant it unto good; and I shall have the benefit of my sinne, according to his transmutation, that is, though I meant ill, in that sinne, I shall have the good, that God meant in it. There is no evil in the City, but the Lord does it; But if the Lord doe it, it cannot be evil to me. 24 (IX, 2, 88)

God is able to meet the individual sins of each person by transforming the effects of sin to good. In the short run, the effects of sin are damaging and the source of divine punishment. But in the long term, there is no action which cannot be made part of the providence of God. God's judgment may damn utterly, but his purpose is always to save, to restore things to himself, yet allowing freedom to his human creation. Individual sinful acts cannot pervert his ultimate design, and even those acts may become beneficial if the sinner accepts God's "transmutation" of them. God's actions in redeeming history are all part of an esthetic structure leading to a meaningful conclusion.

The result of God's attempts to turn men from sin, the result of his refining fire, is a purging which offers comfort. This comfort is partially of a process worked through, of a trial undergone, of
a catharsis achieved after conflict. So, in the midst of a struggle, Donne pleads with his auditory not to despair of process, not to give up because delivery is not instantaneous. After all, this despair was the rebellious angels' error. They rejected God's appointed means and refused to await his leisure in drawing them gradually to fulfillment: "The Angels sin was pride; but their pride consisted not in aspiring to the best degrees that their nature was capable of: but in this, that they would come to that state, by other means then were ordained for it" (IX, 17, 378). The angels sought to be perfect as God is perfect, but they attempted to accomplish this work by self-sufficiency. They would not accept the procedure God had ordained for their estate. In like manner, human beings sin if they attempt to avoid the offices of this life and society or if they wish to abandon the hard-won pilgrimage through time.

The confidence which Donne places in the completeness of God's works, in the gradually revealing structures of existence, is ultimately a trust in the unity of God and the possibility of integrity in the individual who imitates him. Donne affirms, "God hath purposed a building in thee; he hath sat down, and considered, that he hath sufficient to accomplish that building, as it is in the Gospel, and therefore leave him to his leisure" (V, 17, 362). If one is to imitate God's unity and the wholeness of his deliberate works, one must call upon all one's faculties and draw upon all one's resources. In fact, one must struggle to be whole, and in so doing, to work with God in achieving a regenerate conscience:
It is a kinde of denying the Infinitenesse of God, to serve him by pieces, and ragges; God is not Infinite to me, if I thinke a discontinued service will serve him. It is a kinde of denying the Unity of God, to joyn other gods, Pleasure, or Profit to him; He is not One God to me, if I joyn other Associates, and Assistants to him, Saints or Angels. It is a kinde of diffidence in Christ as though I were afraid there might rise a new favorite in heaven, to whom it might concerne me to apply my selfe, if I make the balance so eaven, as to serve God and Mammon. The Lord promised a power of seeking, and an infallibility of finding; but still with this totall condition, Ye shall seeke mee, and ye shall finde me, because ye shall seek me with all your heart. (IX, 14, 327)

Donne is anxious to let experience teach, to let history direct one toward God. These structures in their processive way will instruct one in the truth. There is only one caveat which Donne makes, however, which he derives from Scripture; that is, that one attempt to be wholly engaged in the pilgrimage. A person cannot fail to find God if he seeks the Lord with all his heart, and all his soul. (IX, 14, 327; Deut. 4.29). The attempt to achieve an integrity within the soul in order to accomplish the task is itself an imitation of God's unity in himself and his unity of action in governing the world. Once this devotion to God is complete, one is able to perceive every created thing not as a temptation but as a sacred instrument with which to serve him: "But use the creatures of God, as creatures, and not as God, with a confidence in them, and you shall find all the hid treasures of wisdome and knowledge." (III, 1, 39-60).

Up to this point of the section, we have been discussing the esthetic tenor of God's work in creation and history. These two works are inseparable from one another since creation is a continuing act and since God renews his creation in every regenerate soul throughout time. God's artistry is revealed in the structure that unfolds in men's ancestral and personal development, whether in perplexity,
conflict, torment, or the cooperation which is the result of God's grace. The process is one of trial and accomplishment, one which offers purging catharsis as an ingredient of its completing pattern. A similar artistic structure is evident in God's Scripture, which is the record of creation and re-creation in the people of God, whether as individuals or as a collectivity.

Since we have already considered the historical process which Scripture intensifies, we now need to examine how the style of the Bible lends itself to the mimesis of experience. The comments which Donne makes concerning the artistry of Scripture are numerous and often quoted. He is determined not to divide style from content, and believes that God's esthetic procedure has as much purpose as the doctrines which may be garnered from the Bible. As we have noted earlier, Donne marvels at the abundance of forms or genres which God employs in his word. God's bounty spills over even into his mode of expression. Once, echoing the Psalms of which he is particularly fond, Donne pronounces concerning the forms of the Bible: "He does not onely feed us, but feed us with marrow, and with fatnesse" (II, 1, 49). It is thoroughly understandable, therefore, why Donne finds such delight in the range of Biblical articulation. He thinks that there are not in all the world so eloquent Books as the Scriptures; and that nothing is more demonstrable, then that if we would take all those Figures, and Tropes, which are collected out of the secular Poets, and Orators, we may give higher, and livelier examples, of every one of those Figures, out of the Scriptures, then out of all the Greek and Latine Poets, and Orators; and they mistake it much, that thynke, that the Holy Ghost hath rather chosen a low, and barbarous, and homely style, then an eloquent, and powerfull manner of expressing himselfe. (VI, 1, 56)
This passage emphasizes Donne's exuberant excitement for the majestic style of sacred writing. It stresses the extent to which the Holy Spirit will go to be eloquent. Yet elsewhere, Donne makes it plain that the Holy Spirit is temperate, and while he exults in heights of figures, the perfection of style demands an ordered restraint which does not permit Euphuistic extremes: "The Holy Ghost is an eloquent Author, a vehement, and an abundant Author, but yet not luxuriant; he is far from a penurious, but as far from a superfluous style too" (V, 14, 287). The eloquence of Scripture also depends upon the fact that its style is not uniformly grand; nor does it sustain a single level of stylistic elegance. It is ornamented, but not ornate.

Donne's close attention to the very manner of God's expression shows his fascination with the relationship between one's presentation and one's being, a fascination for an incarnate mimesis. Proper eloquence demands that the two merge, that there be no gap which allows for subtle deception. The measure of God's greatness is that word and act are simultaneous and indistinguishable. What God pronounces is wrought into actual fact by his Word itself. In creation, God speaks and it is so; in covenant, God performs his promises; in the Incarnation, the Word is made flesh. Obviously, the matter of speech and communication is potentially a much greater issue than one of "esthetics," if defined in the narrow sense. We note Donne's interest in courteous discourse, and his effort to restore "compliment" to its original, full meaning:
We have a word now denized, and brought into familiar use amongst us, Complement; and for the most part, in an ill sense; so it is, when the heart of the speaker doth not answer his tongue; but God forbid but a true heart and a faire tongue might very well consist together: As vertue it self receives an additon, by being in a faire body, so do good intentions of the heart, by being expressed in faire language. (IV, 14, 346-47)

The perverse meaning now applies whereby the speaker's words belie his thoughts. But this unfortunate condition need not continue, for fairness in word and thought, and in word and deed, belong together, not apart. The best eloquence is that which speaks truth, and speaks it with a beauty befitting only truth. This is the compliment which the Bible gives, the courtesy of the style it offers. Since, as Puttenham notes of human authors, some call "stile, the image of man," so the style of the divine writings declares God's image: "for in all the books of the world, you shall never reade so civill language, nor so faire expressions of themselves to one another, as in the Bible" (IV, 14, 347). 27 Donne's depiction of courteous interaction is sustained since even the books of the Bible are relational, responding with compliment to one another. Donne's strong inclination is to see matter and presentation as wedded in the Bible. 28 Such a work is most persuasive and compelling to men because of its organic unity and proportionate artistry. In one sermon, therefore, Donne begins by considering "not onely the powerfulnesse of the matter, but the sweetnesse and elegancy of the words of the Word of God in generall ..." (VIII, 12, 270). As in Donne's understanding of God's work in creation or history--be it individual experience or the collected histories of our spiritual ancestors--Scripture reveals an underlying esthetic structure. Its harmony is the truth
of lived experience and the fairness of its eloquence chiming together.

II.3 Donne's Mimetic Theory: The Preacher's Imitation of the Word of God

A particularly significant facet of Donne's homiletic imitation of God's ways to men is his determination to enlarge the sphere of human choice and responsibility. Avoiding an inclination among some Puritans to characterize God's grace as irresistible or among Catholics to make profession of their religion a matter of compulsion, Donne reminds his congregation that God did not deal with people thus, and that servants of the Church ought not either: God "came to save us by calling us, as an eloquent and a persuasive man draws his Auditory, but yet imprints no necessity upon the faculty of the will. . . ."
(I, 9, 313). Consequently, he sees God as offering abundance of life, but coercing no one to accept it:

we are poore and beggerly creatures, we have nothing to put on; Christ is that garment; and then Christ is the very life, by which we stretch out our arms and our legs, to put on that garment; yea he puts it upon us, he doth the whole worke: but yet he doth not thrust it on: He makes us able to put it on: but if we be not willing, then he puts no necessity upon our will: but we remaine naked still: (V, 7, 155)

The "manifest ministery of the Gospell" in preaching, declares Donne, is "an influence from God, but an influence that works in thee by way of perswasion, and not of compulsion; It convinces thee, but it doth not constraine thee" (VIII, 13, 310). While Donne admits that a minister must at times correct sin with severity, he also points to a more significant element in preaching: "That reproving then, which is warrantable by the Holy Ghost, is not a sharp increpation,
a bitter proceeding, proceeding onely out of power, and authority, but by inlightning, and informing, and convincing the understanding" (VI, 16, 317). Even when the preacher corrects his congregation, his preaching must reflect God's method of communication with men. The preacher corrects so that some illumination may come out of the exercise; he does not chastise for the sake of chastising.

The great significance which Donne accords the office of preaching ultimately hearkens back to its importance in the time of Christ and his apostles. It is their pattern especially which Donne remembers and imitates. Indeed, Donne seems to betray a belief in the greater value of preaching over the sacraments:

that when Christ had undertaken that great work of the Conversion of the World, by the Word, and Sacraments, to shew that the word was at that time the more powerfull means of those two, (for Sacraments were instituted by Christ as subsidiary things, in a great part, for our infirmity, who stand in need of such visible and sensible assistances) Christ preached the Christian Doctrine, long before he instituted the Sacraments. . . . (X, 2, 69)

Preaching becomes the conduit of grace, the means by which a holy life may be possible. It is the illumination which can render experience into the working of God. In Donne's understanding, the process of regeneration takes place step by step, the result of deliberate attention to the word of God preached and its consequent actualization in ordinary existence:

This then was his [Christ's] way, and this must be ours, and it must be your way too. Christ preached, and he wrought great works, and he preached again; It is not enough in us to preach, and in you to heare, except both doe and practice that which is said, and heard; Neither may we, though we have done all this, give over, for every day produces new tentations, and therefore needs new assistances. (X, 2, 70)
As individuals progress (or even retrogress) in their spiritual development, preaching must be the assistance which interprets their lives to them and offers the ever-new possibility of life lived in the Spirit. Every moment of time changes us from who we were and every day presents its mixture of shadings of good and evil amongst which we must choose. Preaching itself may communicate the influence of Christ; its periodic rehearsal of God's workings, by a method similar to that which God uses, recalls men to their best selves and thereby builds up the mystical Body of Christ.

Donne values preaching so highly that he understands that for most people it is the singular occurrence wherein spiritual sloth is shaken off. Christ's coming to any man is a mystery, but it is not primarily for Donne something which is shrouded, hidden, or private. God publicly declares himself in his works, and the public pronouncement of the work through preaching re-creates those works. Thus, Donne emphasizes God's "ordinary proceeding" (I, 6, 255):

There is no salvation but by faith, nor faith but by hearing, nor hearing but by preaching; and they that thinke meanliest of the Keyes of the Church, and speake faintliest of the Absolution of the Church, will yet allow, That those Keyes lock, and unlock in Preaching, that Absolution is conferred, or withheld in Preaching, That the proposition of the promises of the Gospel in preaching, is that binding and loosing on earth, which bindes and looses in heaven.

Donne here claims for Protestantism certain biblical passages used by Catholics to assert the intrinsic authority of Peter's successors above Scripture. At the same time, he shows the grave responsibility inherent in preaching. It is through the preaching and hearing of the Gospel that the great divine actions of forgiveness and salvation are accomplished. Only by preaching can the validity of a privately inspired
voice be tested by those who have studied and compared texts and who perceive the overall movement of God acting in history. The danger of a Church which ceases to preach, as Roman Catholicism had been accused of doing, is that it may forget the reason for its existence.

In this fearful instance, "there is a danger of losing Christ" (VII, 5, 157). Indeed, Donne, along with other reformers, understands the Word of God preached as a reanimation of Christ among believers. Thus, Donne explains, "he that is made flesh comes in the word, that is, Christ comes in the preaching thereof..." (II, 12, 251). The comment accords well with Calvin's understanding of preaching:

Therefore, though He (Christ) be absent from us in the body, and is not conversant with us here on earth, it is not that He hath withdrawn Himself as though we could not find Him; for the sun that shineth doth no more enlighten the world than Jesus Christ showeth Himself openly to those who have eyes of faith to look upon Him, when the Gospel is preached.  

Knott describes Luther's attitude by saying, "For him the Word was Christ as revealed in Scripture through the action of the Spirit." As a part of the reformed tradition, Donne believes that the homiletic imitation of Christ may become the actual incarnation and presence of Christ. Without sermons, the manifestation of Christ would not be possible.

Plainly, Donne views the responsibility involved in preaching to be a great one, not the least because the authentic minister imitates both God's words and his style as he speaks to his congregation. Yet the responsibility is not only grave, but delightful, for God's style and content are attractive and endearing. Since, according to Donne, "The Word of God is made a Sermon, that is, a Text is dilated, diffused into a Sermon" (V, 1, 56), the sermon must re-create the
artistry which is everywhere evident in the eloquent Scriptures.
In one of his sermons, Donne recalls that Christ "preached methodically,"
that he "eased his hearers" with landmarks, divisions, and transitions,
and that he indicated points as they arose (VII, 16, 393). Certainly
Donne is conscious of the esthetic form inherent in the divine works
which he imitates. He also has a historic sense of the role which
"men of letters" have had in proclaiming the Gospel, since the
apostles themselves were "frequent in Epistles, assiduous in Sermons"
(VIII, 10, 237). And among the Fathers, Donne recognizes a lively
attempt to make sermons things of pleasure and interest, for "they
had a holy delight to be heard, and to be heard with delight." The
Fathers understood that "No man profits by a Sermon, that heares
with paine, or wearinesse" (VIII, 5, 149). The sermon must be
structured according to some esthetic which offers emotional
stimulation and intellectual play. Without this, it falsifies the
word of God out of which it springs, and torments its listeners.

While Donne is fully conscious of the importance of artistry
in a good sermon, he realizes that in imitating the Scripture of
the Holy Ghost—"an abundant Author, but yet not luxuriant" (V, 14, 287)
—he too must find the most effective style, one which is neither
too full, nor too spare. Essentially, Donne sketches the dilemma of
the Christian-humanist. As a result, he adamantly condemns the often
clumsy unpremeditated sermons of the extemporal preachers. Yet Donne
is just as aware of the tendency to lean too far in the other direction,
through overuse of "humane ornament" (X, 6, 147). He sums up his
opinion on the right balance required in the use of humanistic arts
when he explains: "In a word, in sheep-pastures you may plant fruit
trees in the hedge-coves; but if you plant them all over, it is an Orchard;
we may transfer flowers of secular learning, into these exercises; but if they consist of those, they are but Themes, and Essays" (X, 6, 148).

It is interesting to note that Donne sees himself as entirely a moderate in the controversy over preaching style, avoiding the extremes of either over-refinement or homely language. Some historians have been quick to place Donne amongst the most conservative factions in the English Church. Explaining that "Sermon style was not a matter of taste and preference, it was a party badge," Perry Miller places Donne firmly with those to whom the Puritans most vigorously objected, the Laudian party with its "extravagences in sermon style." Clearly Donne would have been uncomfortable with this assessment, since he is the first to condemn homiletic excesses which remove the auditor's attention from his focus upon the Scriptures. He shows his impatience with ministers who misuse their vocation when he explains the difference between declaiming and true preaching:

when as others which come to declame, and not to preach, and to vent their own gifts, or the purposes of great men for their gifts, have onely a proportionable reward, winde for winde, Acclamation for Declamation, popular praise for popular eloquence: for, if they doe not truly beleeve themselves, why should they looke that others should believe them? (IV, 5, 156)

The preacher's words ideally must admit their dependence on the biblical text and not wittily stand apart from it. Those who profess to be fishers of men, as Christ intended, realize that "Eloquence is not our net; Traditions of men are not our nets; onely the Gospel is" (II, 14, 307). Genuine fishers of men magnify Scripture and thereby diminish themselves, humbly understanding that it is Christ working in them who creates anything of worth:
It is not many words, long sermons, nor good words, witty and eloquent sermons that induce the holy Ghost, for all these are words of men; and howsoever the whole sermon is the Ordinance of God, the whole sermon is not the word of God: But when all the good gifts of men are modestly employ'd, and humbly received, as vehicula Spiritus, as S. Augustine calls them, The chariots of the Holy Ghost, as meanes afforded by God, to convey the word of life into us, in those words we heare: The word, and there the word and the Spirit goe together. . . . (V, 1, 36-37)

Thus, we may see that, in Donne’s understanding, the claims of the sermon may be great only if the preacher’s contribution is artfully restrained. The preacher’s challenges lie in finding the proper relationship between the apparently dead letter of scriptural text and provocative animation from his own informed intellect and imagination.

Donne’s close attention to the literary style of sermons is a significant component in his attempt to imitate God’s artistry in creation, history, and Scripture. In a sermon on Ezekiel 33.32, Donne relates God’s esthetic workings to the preacher’s homiletics in terms of the “harmony” metaphor already mentioned. The text reads, “And lo, thou art to them as a very lovely song, as one that hath a pleasant voyce, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not” (II, 7, 164-78). Donne interprets this text as meaning that, while the people enjoy and show reverence for the preacher’s words, their hearing is unprofitable because they do not perform the words preached. As he sketches a more desirable relationship between preacher and congregation, he also relates two esthetic principles which aid a responsible preacher. The first is to be as a trumpet, “to awaken with terror” (II, 7, 166), or to alert the congregation to its alienation from God. The second
is to transform the frightening trump into a composed assurance which delights in God: "so he shall be musicum carmen, musicke, harmony, in re & modo, in matter and in manner" (II, 7, 167). In order to accomplish this second task, the preacher must be able "to sing Gods mercies in their ears, in reverent, but yet in a diligent, and thereby a delightful manner..." (II, 7, 167). To proclaim the atoning love of God requires a manner suitable for the subject; to represent the reconciliation between God and man demands the delightful sound and order of words which celebrate such a new reality. When the minister recounts the offer of love and mercy provided in the sacrificial gift of his son, the minister himself becomes a love-song, a measured composition announcing the marriage of Christ with his Church (II, 7, 171). In Donne's estimation, man was made for the hearing of God's word, and therefore, the amount of pleasure received by an auditor is directly proportionate to what he understands of the Gospel with his regenerate heart.

In this sermon, Donne advances a concept especially relevant to our argument concerning mimesis when he describes the minister's special difficulty and responsibility: "How beautifull are the feet of them that preach the Gospel! Men look most to our feet, to our wayes: the power that makes men admire, may lie in our tongues; but the beauty that makes men love, lies in our feet, in our actions" (II, 7, 173). The contrast is between the sudden awakening of the listener aroused by exciting speech and his thoroughgoing delight made possible only by love, evoked by the preacher's actions. Love is possible when it hears not just the trumpet, but the song to the instrument. The congregation has already been prepared for this
interpretation, for Donne has earlier explained that in his reading of
the text he did not view the playing of the instrument as the preacher
"working upon the understanding and affections of the Auditory" (II, 7,
167). Surely such a reading is true in part. But Donne is determined
to describe his meaning precisely. The image of himself as preacher
playing on the congregation as an instrument has the faults of implying
the preacher is a manipulator and the congregation a passive receiver
of his orchestration. This is not how God works with his people; it is
not how the preacher works with his congregation. Rather, the preacher
must be seen to embody the congregation and act on its behalf. To
a student of literature, such a realization may seem unfortunate
because it points beyond his mandate, the written record of the
sermons, to the sketchy uncertainties of Donne's biography. But to
Donne the life of a man is directly related to what he says, and his
literary strategy is totally dependent upon his own life lived outside
the pulpit. The obvious but incisive question which Donne raises is:
"Who will believe me when I speak, if by my life they see I do not
believe my self?" (II, 7, 172-73). Preparation, preaching, and works
are all parts of the same process of incarnation. However, the
student of literature need not be frustrated by this gesture beyond
the literary world, for it is itself an explication of Donne's esthetic
method. For if the beauty which convinces lies in the actions rather
than the words of the preacher, then the preacher, as much as he is
able, must strive for words which have the appearance of action. The
words must do more than exhort; they must imitate action. Donne's
principle of harmony depends not upon manipulative orchestration of
an auditory, but upon the representation of an action performed by
the minister resonating so that it will initiate sympathetic resonance
in the congregation. When the action is represented adequately, thus inspiring love in the congregation, the very words of Scripture may be read in the actions of the hearers, and so Donne may declare with Paul: "Vos estis, you are our Epistle, not written with ink, but with the spirit of the living God: so a man, by hearing, is become Evangelium sibi, a Gospel to himself . . ." (II, 7, 176).

In summary, Donne’s mimetic theory seems to be distinct in its attempt to represent the unfolding and revelatory process of growth by exposure to a variety of experiences in the world. And although other preachers thought that they reproduced the homiletics recorded in Scripture, for many it was because their sermons attempted to be "as encyclopedic as possible."40 Donne’s mimesis is more consciously the imitation and intensification of historical action. It implies an evolving organic structure based on its own internal motivation, and reveals the nature of truth by embodying it.41 All the perplexing, frightening, challenging, and delightful facets of life’s journey must be represented in order that the mimesis may be judged harmonious, esthetically complete, and convincing. Only in this way does Christ truly become incarnate in the sermon. For fallen human nature, the homiletic process demands penitential purging. Consequently, the preacher guides the auditor through several psychological stages. We will examine these stages more closely in Chapter IV. But first, the techniques by which Donne animates this historical evolution must be explored. For it is in these techniques that Donne incarnates his theory and through them that the auditor recognizes himself.
II.4 Donne's Mimetic Practice

In the last three sections, we have discussed the "theory" behind Donne's mimetic practice and have indicated that Donne stresses the importance of process and progressive revelation. It is now necessary to explain and to give instances of his mimetic techniques. Chapter IV will demonstrate that the Donnean sermon may be understood as itself a psychological structure which is a mimesis of the stages of growth included in the relationship between people and their God. Chapter V will show that each sermon is a short history which imitates a pattern of events disclosed by either Scripture or experience, eventually leading to spiritual insight. But within these overarching structures, there are other individual mimetic elements which highlight the sense of dramatic enactment central to Donne's homiletic practice.

Donne had occasion to declare, "Vertue that is never produced into action, is scarce worthy of that name" (IX, 10, 238). This conviction surely lies behind Donne's inclination to preach in a style which has the appearance of action. For him, the preacher's task lies in actively embodying the works of God so that his auditors will actively endeavour to embody their faith in works. Yet, Donne is well aware of the human tendency to revert to a passive or static posture in dealing with God or even in conceiving of him: "wee rather admire then goe about to expresse his unexpressible mercy, who had that tendernes in his care, that he would provide man meanes proportionable to man . . . " (V, 13, 254).42 Donne rejects inert admiration in favour of active embodiment and is wary, therefore, of the literary problems associated with statement as opposed to enactment.
Simple propositions do not have the power to move in the manner in which a dramatic or fictive embodiment does. What saves Donne's sermons from dullness is his reliance upon Scripture as a pattern for imitation. Although Christians often like to abstract from the Bible central canons or maxims, Donne thinks that the unique character of the Bible lies in its historicity, in the fact that it tells a story. Donne strives to capture this scriptural sense of providential action within his sermons. In this, his practice clearly is at odds with several Puritan preachers of his day, since among many of them, "The first work of a preacher was always to translate the Bible into doctrines..." Contrary to Donne's method, "Rhetoric was a tool with which Puritans could plane off the colors of speech from Scriptural utterances, leaving the smooth white surface of 'that one entire and natural sense.'" Clearly, Donne opposes reducing Scripture to points of doctrine or a new law. Instead, he insists that the human, dramatic, historic character of the Bible's processive action be preserved. The sermon can achieve its chief end of edification only if it resounds with God's scriptural harmony "in re & modo, in matter and in manner" (II, 7, 167). Donne accomplishes this by animating biblical characters and the situations in which they find themselves.

Thus, Donne frequently turns to the techniques of drama. Pierre Legouis was an early critic to recognize the dramatic quality of Donne's poetry. What Legouis means by "dramatic" is the engagement of two characters. Admittedly the second character is mute, but the presence of a listening character still causes itself to be felt. In the sermons, Donne continues to make use of character interaction. In fact, on one occasion, Donne defends the use of actual dialogue, with both characters talking, an instance of which does not occur in his poetry. He recalls a precedent in an earlier preacher:
Damascen hath a Sermon of the Assumption of the blessed Virgin, which whole Sermon is but a Dialogue, in which Eve acts the first part, and the blessed Virgin another; It is but a Dialogue, yet it is a Sermon. If I should insist upon this Dialogue, between God and David, Tu me, Tu me, Doe thou worke upon me, it would not be the lesse a profitable part of a Sermon for that. (V, 15, 305)

Indeed, Donne goes on to construct a dialogue between God and David. The preacher provides a narrative bridge between the two voices, but the dramatic nature of the conversation is fully realized: "we hear David ... cry out ... and may have heard God ... say ... we may heare David reply. ... When we heare God say ..." (V, 15, 305).

The imagined scene's action develops as David's pleas become more intense and strident. Further, this passage is not an isolated example of Donne's use of dialogue; the speaking of two characters to each other is suggested, to a greater and lesser extent, throughout the sermons.

Donne's support of dialogue presented in sermons should at least challenge Victor Harris's view that Donne disdains the theatre and its devices. Unfortunately, Harris seems to base his opinion on Donne's supposedly "profound contempt of the world," a contempt which makes him believe "Court, theatre, world—all offer only mimicry, only illusion, and the truth cannot be known in their distorted image."

Such a view conflicts strongly with a Donne who celebrates the value of human purgation and spiritual growth induced by means of an experiential pilgrimage in the world and its social offices. Interestingly, Harris marshalls much evidence favouring a Donne interested by the theatre before citing quotations to the contrary. Such evidence includes Baker's 1643 letter ("a great frequenter of Playes"), Donne's friendship with Jonson, company with Inigo Jones, his position as Master of the Revels at Lincoln's Inn, references to Tamburlaine and other
masques and plays in his poetry and letters, the fact that Ignatius His Conclave may be considered a sort of play, and a sermon in which "comedies" as "recreation" are judged lawful physic (V, 16, 321). It is important to remember that Donne's negative comments about the theatre have to do with the substitution of theatrical performances for acts of religious devotion or with wanton overindulgence in this activity, rather than with theatre per se. After all, to the extent that the preacher recognized his office was in direct competition with the stage, he could not tolerate his parishioners' neglect of religious duties. Donne's occasionally disparaging comments should thus be read in this light. Further, Donne offers many comments in his sermons where drama is seen in a more salutary light. Life may be understood as a play at which God himself makes up the audience: "Make account that this world is your Scene, your Theatre, and that God himself sits to see the combat, the wrestling" (VI, 4, 104) Or to reverse the metaphor, God may be seen as acting out a scene through his natural agents: "our sight of God here, our Theatre, the place where we sit and see him, is the whole world" (VIII, 9, 220). The fact that other critics recognize echoes of Marlowe's work in the sermons should also indicate Donne's interest in dramatic portrayal.

In exploring Donne's dramatic technique, we need not be bound by Legouis's definition of drama alone, though a great many of Donne's sermons either present or imply two characters. For, in the sermons, there is a spectrum from exposition to narrative to full-blown dialogue. There are degrees of enactment. Whether Donne vividly depicts a biblical scene or speaks in a character's voice, thereby performing a role, he strives to imply a dramatic situation. Can
description count as enactment? Perhaps, if the description amounts
to a characterization or the creation of a setting in which action
takes place, or if it involves exploration of an action. Enactment
is now more and then less intense, and thus, as in his poetry, we
should feel free to note the "distinctly Elizabethan" intermixture
of dramatic and expository passages. 52

Of course the term "dramatic" has various meanings attached to it.
Obviously Donne's sermons cannot claim to represent the pure dramatic
action of characters relating to one another unimpeded by narrative
comment and interpretation. But they fully reflect a drama manifested
by the involvement and conflict of characters, emotions, and ideas in
an interplay guided by the speaker towards resolution. 53 Perhaps part
of the reason why critics have hesitated to accept the idea of mimetic
enactment in the sermons is because of the middle nature of the orator
as neither wholly himself as a person nor wholly an imaginative
conception. Walter J. Ong thus typifies the problem when he says,
"The bard who sings the ballad is not the same person who sits down
to eat afterwards. The courier who brings news by word of mouth is.
The orator, being partly creative, both is and is not the same." 54

So while no sermon can claim to be as "dramatic" as pure theatre or
fiction, in Donne's case, the creative and dramatic possibilities of the
sermon genre are greatly extended. It is small wonder, then, that as
perceptive a critic as Janel Mueller finds a passage where the speaker
reflects upon the vanity of popular favour (VI, 15, 305-06) to be
"particularly reminiscent of Shakespeare's and Daniel's depictions
of Bolingbroke's London reception and the disgrace of the deposed
in his sermons, Donne creates dramatic characters in several ways. He may speak in the voice of a persona, by taking on the personality of David or Paul, or by assuming a particular human disposition. He may speak in such a way that he suggests "a varying and fictional listener," or he may speak with such poetic intensity that his words act as a soliloquy. The persona he creates may further forge a dramatic bond with the auditory. Finally, Donne's compelling descriptions of persons, historical or fictional, or of psychological states, serve as a kind of character depiction. One of the reasons for Donne's use of characterization is to attempt to gather and compare the individual experiences of "so great a cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12.1), the Church throughout time, in order that the auditor might know that his experiences are not isolated but a part of a developing pattern in the building up of Christ's body.

An important aspect of characterization is the characterization of God according to the metaphors and styles warranted by Scripture. God's accommodation of himself to human language need not be seen as a falsification of his nature but as the truest vehicle suited and adapted to human needs, beyond which lies errant speculation. As the Incarnation of Christ is a restricted but utterly true portrayal of the divine nature in history, so the biblical figures and descriptions of his acts are genuine authority by which to conceive God. As Lewalski puts it, "This pervasive theoretical concern among Protestants with scripture tropes and figures was not primarily directed to them as ornament, but in the most precise apprehension
of divine truth." The psychological rationale behind Donne's characterization of God is so that his auditory will increasingly feel genuine affection, as well as awe, for God and therefore yearn to be like him, especially in his sacrificial love.

In Donne's use of personae, there is also a spectrum. Anything from definite role-playing to a mere echoing of a certain kind of person may fall into this category. Donne may assume the voice of a historical person, or speak with the authority of prophetic diction. He may speak as a fictional sinner, as a frightened or confused person, as all mankind, or as a stance-taking figure. The distance between the persona and Donne's actual self is tailored to the sermon's needs at any particular moment.

One of the instrumental uses of personae is for demonstrating a process of gradually changing situations. If a persona develops in the course of his speech, then he may serve as a model for the auditors to imitate in their own spiritual growth. Often this development takes place as a result of insight gathered from a tragic experience which moves towards cathartic resolution. Carrithers has also considered this "drama of changing selves" and Webber understands Donne's use of personae as an attempt "to define the self by flaunting the self, by appearing on stage in pose after pose." Unfortunately, this latter notion does not take account of the persona as either a developing figure, or an individual expression within a larger processive action. Donne does not flaunt versions of himself so much as represent different biblical persons or responses, which all contribute to the unfolding of providential history.
Donne uses a first-person persona for two pages when, at Lady Danvers's commemoration service, he considers the terrors associated with the Day of Judgment. Basically, the persona multiplies the terrors one might feel if one were to fall "into the hands of the living God." First, he reflects upon the divine power to damn: "I consider, what God did with one word, with one Fiat he made all; And, I know, he can doe as much with another word; With one Per酋eat, he can destroy all." The persona then passes to a new terror, the thought that the coming of that day will surprise him unprepared, as Scripture warns, "as a Thife in the night." But the fearful persona's imagination is further spurred to conceive of all the possibilities of this dreadful coming, and thus to invent deeply distressing situations to coincide with it. The most distressing of all, he decides, is if all these circumstances were to conspire against him: "So hee may come upon mee . . . when all these nights of Ignorance, of Wantonnesse, of Desperation, of Sickness, of Stupidity, of Rage may bee upon mee all at once." The persona seems to want to substantiate his fears by having recourse to Scripture's awesome images of devastation by fire, fury, noise, flood, and even the passing away of the heavens. The "Holy Ghost meant to make a deepe impression of a great Terror in me," declares the persona as he cites passages of destruction from Revelation and the prophetic books. But the suffering and lamentation caused by such disasters is brought to a poignant extremity when he imagines looking upon Christ himself: "how shall I be affected then, confounded then to see him so mangled with my sinnes?" More frightening still is the
inability to identify his numerous forgotten sins, not found in the redeeming wounds of Christ. For all this scene of terror, the sight of Christ seems to work a change in the persona, for the scene resolves itself when the persona speaks words of comfort from a psalm:

"Nevertheless, my soule, why art thou so sad, why art thou disquieted within mee?" (VIII, 2, 67-69).

This instance of resolving various concerns into a biblical text is one of Donne’s favourite techniques for manipulating Scripture.

Elsewhere Donne explains his own response to the words of Scripture that were incorporated into a sermon:

Truely, when I reade a Sermon of Chrysostom, or of Chrysoplugus, or of Ambrose, Men, who carry in the very signification of their Names, and in their Histories, the attributes of Honey-mouthed and Golden-mouthed Men, I finde my selfe oftentimes, more affected, with the very Citation, and Application of some sentence of Scripture, in the middest or end of one of their Sermons, then with any witty, or forcible passage of their owne. (VIII, 12, 273)

If this was Donne’s own experience of a sentence of Scripture, it is likely that he would construct his own sermons dramatically so that the biblical words may act to manifest an emotional climax—as they do in the instance just cited. Donne extends the Psalmist’s words of comfort by assuring, "Thou hast a Goshen to rest in, for all this Aegypt; a Zoar to flie to, for all this Sodome; a Sanctuary, and Hornes of the Altar, to hold by, for all this storme" (VIII, 2, 69).

In so doing, he confirms the auditor in the belief that such fear has its place as a holy response if it leads beyond itself, if it acts as the beginning of wisdom. Fear must be grappled with, multiplied, and finally expended, before mercy greets it, as here,
in the Psalmist's "Nevertheless," or in the persona's remembered instances of former deliverance. The auditor leaves instructed, by representation, in the ways to endure the fears which may come to torment him.

Another sermon, preached after Doane's return to London after the 1625 outbreak of plague, also depicts the growth and development of a first-person persona. The persona initially laments his affliction, yet accepts this penance as a kind of bargaining point to exchange for the disgrace of an earlier youthful wantonness: "Let me wither and wear out mine age in a discomfortable, in an unwholesome, in a penurious prison, and so pay my debts with my bones, and recompense the wastefulnesse of my youth, with the beggary of mine age." Thus the persona, representing the mind in action, reflects upon the sins of the ungoverned flesh and seeks some sort of reconciliation for these excesses. He finds rather an easy relief from this urgency when he considers that, if God offers his grace and the speaker is able to call "my passion his Action," then the offense will be judged minor, as if "but a caterpiller got into one corner of my garden." The speaker feels that the damage is limited and has been contained. But this security soon evaporates. A new element of suspense briefly hovers over the persona's summary comment, "The body of all, the substance of all is safe, as long as the soule is safe." Of course, instances where the soul is imperilled flood his mind:

But when I shall trust to that, which wee call a good spirit, and God shall deject, and empower, and evacuate that spirit; when I shall rely upon a morall constancy, and God shall shake, and enfeeble, and enervate, destroy and demolish that constancy; when I shall think to refresh
my selfe in the serenity and sweet ayre of a good conscience, and God shall call up the damps and vapours of hell it selfe, and spread a cloud of diffidence, and an impenetrable crust of desperation upon my conscience, when health shall flie from me, and I shall lay hold upon riches to succour me, and comfort me in my sicknesse, and riches shall flie from me, and I shall snatch after favur, and good opinion, to comfort me in my poverty; when even this good opinion shall leave me, and calumnies and misinformations shall prevale against me.

Each spiritual defense which the person constructs to protect his integrity is swept aside, for each of these defenses is based upon his own merit rather than upon trust in God's mercy. A good spirit, moral constancy, good conscience, riches, popular favour, or reputation—all these human devices are useless unless they are centred on God's purpose. So the speaker is driven by the thought that he will be stripped of all rectitude for lack of a sincere faith. But the direction towards which these thoughts drive him is to God himself. For at this point, the speaker undergoes a shock of recognition, where he finds himself at the end of his own resources. After casting about to name his afflictions, he identifies his assailant: he calls upon God's name, and no longer misconceives him to be an objective exterior force:

when I shall need peace, because there is none but thou, O Lord, that should stand for me, and then shall finde, that all the wounds that I have, come from thy hand, all the arrowes that stick in me, from thy quiver; when I shall see, that because I have given my selfe to my corrupt nature, thou hast changed thine; and therefore thou hast given over being good towards me.

Now the speaker passes from self-deception into self-recognition, where he realizes his actual situation and confronts the God who awaits him. Finally he realizes that his enemy is not "an imaginary enemy" or "a transitory enemy" but the "Lord of Hosts himselfe."
The preacher then detaches himself from the fictive persona somewhat,
and reflects that, unless this God places his hand in the balance of judgment, one will be lost irrevocably (VII, 1, 56-57).

Certainly, the persona in this instance develops from a bargaining character, relatively assured, to a person agitated by his projected spiritual condition, and finally to a wiser but fearful self confronting his God. But the place of this fictional realization in the sermon’s progress is also worthy of note. The sermon’s text is "Because thou hast been my helpe, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice" (VII, 1, 51; Ps. 63.7), a verse which Donne considered a condensation of the psalm from which it is drawn and that psalm a condensation of the whole psalter (VII, 1, 52). The persona’s passage occurs only after Donne has established its context in David’s desire to be united again with God’s temple as a result of his exile in the wilderness (VII, 1, 52-53), after Donne has rehearsed the afflictions of other biblical characters (VII, 1, 53-54), and after he portrays the suffering of humankind by illustrating it out of biblical instances (VII, 1, 54-55). Donne takes on this persona to give a vivid, identifiable example of a man who has seen affliction, yet not as some of God’s more faithful servants have.

Following the passage where the persona speaks, the preacher points out that this was not David’s case (VII, 1, 57). What Donne has done, is to present a literary portrait so that he may present an alternate portrait, that of David (VII, 1, 57-58). By means of liberal citations from the Psalms, Donne recalls for the auditor David’s own complaints in affliction, and his yearning after God. Thus, the auditor has been presented with two human responses to God-given afflictions. In one, the self-assured persona is brought,
too late and desperate, to a recognition of his dependence upon God; in the other, holy but imperfect David, in the midst of his suffering, mournfully sings to God of his vehement desire to return to the temple from which he has been exiled. Clearly the first-person persona advances the action of the sermon and summons the auditor to undergo a sympathetic spiritual reorientation. It is little surprise that a different persona, a more perfectly evolved creation, declares later in the sermon, "if I have the shadow of his wings, I have the earnest of the power of them too" (VII, 1, 67). Later still, a persona asserts with an even greater degree of holy confidence that "as . . . in the face of the Devill, when he attempts me, I shall see the face of God, . . . so in the agonies of Death . . . I shall have a joy" (VII, 1, 71). The dramatic enactments of first-person personae are used by Donne to advance, at critical junctures, the psychological action by representing growth in individual experiences through a speaking voice.

In both these instances of Donne's use of personae, a speaker moves through an intense emotional purgation leading to a new-found perception. But Donne often uses a more restrained, less vehement persona. In one instance, for example, a pensive first-person persona considers in turn two propositions which do not satisfy him, "that sin is nothing in it selfe," and "that my sin, having occasioned my repentance, hath done me good." These lead him to a last assertion which he can embrace, that "Christ Jesus is the sinner, and not I"; that is, Christ assumes the sins of the repentant and incorporates the sinner into his own body. At this point, Donne uses the persona
to demonstrate that the thoughts of the soul must have practical consequences. Thus, the persona, having arrived at the perception that the repentant make up Christ's body, begins actively and charitably to look upon his brothers and sisters as Christ:

this consideration . . . takes me off from my aptnesse to mis-interpret other mens actions, not to be hasty to call indifferent things, sins, not to call hardnesse of accesse in great Persons, pride, not to call sociableness of conversation in women, prostitution, not to call accommodation of Civill businesses in States, prevarication, or dereliction and abandoning of God, and toleration of Religion. . . . (VI, 11, 239)60

The persona in this instance almost performs the function of a chorus by approving the insight gained previously. But more than that, the persona enacts the translation of rational thought into salutary action and thereby models an action which the auditors are encouraged to imitate.

Another use of the persona similar to that involving the portrayal of development and growth is where the persona plays a ritual and therapeutic role in representing the people of the congregation. He acts not in their stead, but dramatizes the parts each of them should attempt to play. When Donne preaches about the creation of man according to God's image, he employs the first-person plural to show that he is the leader of a collective exercise—in this case, a ritual assumption of guilt:

He made us all of earth, and all of red earth. Our earth was red, even when it was in God's hands; a rednesse that amounts to a shamefastnesse, to a blushing at our own infirmities, is imprinted in us by God's hand. For this rednesse, is but a conscience, a guiltinessse of needing a continuall supply, and succession of more, and more grace. And we are all red, red so, even from the beginning, and in our best state. (IX, 1:64)
By his use of "we," the persona reflects the universal participation in fallen human nature and encourages his auditors to accept responsibility for this state by giving assent to this corporate utterance. Unlike what mere exhortation or the imparting of knowledge could accomplish, Donne accepts a burden, dramatically, on behalf of his auditors, and thus is able to evoke a religious sense of shame without the condescension of shaming them. The almost incantatory repetition of the words "red" and "redness," in this passage and the long paragraph that extends beyond it, insinuates itself into the auditors' consciousnesses until they feel saturated by it. Naturally, the ritual process continues while a number of biblical associations of redness (and later, of whiteness) are extrapolated, until the auditor may finally participate in the liberation from guiltiness by the red blood of Christ: "We have dyed our selves in sinnes, as red as Scarlet; we have drowned our selves in such a red Sea. But as a garment, that were washed in the Red Sea, would come out white ... so doth his whitenesse work through our red ..." (IX, 1, 66).

Occasionally, Donne lets his persona depict the common experience of mankind, yet he declares this universal notion from an individualized perspective. Since God's accomplishments in history should be relevant to each person, it is logical that a single character should propound them as though they happened to him, since indeed, they happened for him:

God found me nothing, and of that nothing made me; Adam left me worse then God found me, worse then nothing, the child of Wrath, corrupted with the leaven of Original sin; Christ Jesus found me worse then Adam left me, not onely
sowed with Originall, but spotted, and gangered, and
dead, and buried, and putrified in actual and habitual sins,
and yet in that state redeemed me; And I make my selfe
worse then Christ found me, and in an inordinate dejection
of spirit, conceive a jealousie and suspition, that his
merit concerns not me, that his blood extends not to my
sin; And in this last and worst state, the Holy Ghost finds
me, the Spirit of Consolation, and he sends a Barnabas,
a son of Consolation unto me.

Again, in ritualistic manner, the persona speaks personally out of
a corporate memory. In so doing, the persona performs a function
similar to the saying of a creed, which is understood best not as
a test of orthodoxy but as a testimony of a shared experience in
faith. Here, the persona briefly recapitulates the Christian scheme
of salvation, from creation, through the Fall, through redemption, and
finally to the seal and application of redemption by the Holy Ghost.
Yet, with homely metaphors of sickness and jealousy, the speaker
particularizes the universal experience of the Church. And further,
the Holy Ghost's agents, or sons of consolation, later appear in the
guise of a physician, a loving friend, a preacher—all recognizable
manifestations of the continuing divine presence. However, this
ritualized embodiment of mankind in a particular man is not complete
until his particularity is fully realized; Christ's "Consummatum est"
may not be uttered until his sacrifice is brought home to that one,
singular man's heart.

All were not finished that concerned me, if the Holy Ghost
were not ready to deliver that which Christ sealed, and
to witness that which were so delivered, that that Spirit
might testify to my spirit, That all that Christ Jesus
said, and did, and suffered, was said, and done, and suffered
for my soule. (VII, 4, 136)

The persona's personal voice is highly effective in representing the
crucial confessional events on behalf of the whole Church and every
member of it. In so doing, the persona supports the liturgical action
of freeing the soul from sin.
However, Donne often highlights the individual contribution to providential history by using a voice to portray real historical persons. There are many variations to this technique, and some are more conscientiously dramatic than others. We find that Donne may actually speak in a historical person's voice, drawing from the scriptural account but creating his own fictional character. Thus, we hear Job complaining to God:

\[
\text{Thou renewest thy witnesses against me; Thou sent' st a}
\text{witness against me, in the Sabaeans, upon my servants;}
\text{and then, thou renewedst that witness in the Caldiaens}
\text{upon my cattell; and then, thou renewedst that in thy}
\text{stormes and tempests, upon my children. (IX, 9, 228)}
\]

The substance of Scripture is offered to the auditory, but in a manner which makes Job more immediately alive for having spoken in his own voice. Indeed it is certainly not peculiar in this sermon to hear Job's voice reanimated since in the introduction Donne has already implied such a resurrection. After laying before his auditory Job's ruined condition, Job's "Sceleton," Donne calls it, he asks on Job's behalf, God's question to Ezekiel, "Doeest thou beleeeve that these bones can live? (IX, 9, 214; Ezek. 37.3). As in the earlier precedent, these bones are restored to life. Donne's Job persona is one way of demonstrating this.

In other cases of historical impersonation, Donne may select passages from various parts of Scripture to expand and extend the meaning of another part. This is reasonable since the whole of Scripture is present by implication in each of its constituent parts. Interestingly, this dilation of Scripture by Scripture is possible within a discourse spoken by the preacher's conception of a historical
character. When Donne takes on the persona of the angel who appeared to the women at Christ's empty sepulchre, Donne intensifies the angel's question by invoking Christ's titles from other parts of Scripture:


The last two citations show a deliberate acting out of biblical characters' roles. A more subtle form of characterization occurs when Donne assumes a persona identifiable with scriptural characters as a result of his adoption of their speaking style and manner. An excellent illustration of this less pronounced technique occurs in a sermon on Job 19.26. In it, the persona questions if there is anything which is not false:

What have I ever seen in this world, that hath been truly the same thing that it seemed to me? I have seen marble buildings, and a chip, a crust, a plaster, a face of marble hast pilld off, and I see brick-bowels within. I have seen beauty, and a strong breath from another, tells me, that that complexion is from without, not from a sound constitution within. I have seen the state of Princes, and all that is but ceremony; and, I would be loath to put a Master of ceremonies to define ceremony, and tell me what it is, and to include so various a thing as ceremony, in so constant a thing, as a Definition. I see a great Officer, and I see a man of mine own profession, of great revenues, and I see not the interest of the money, that was paid for it, I see not the pensions, nor the Annuities, that are charges upon that Office, or that Church. (III, 3, 111)

Whose sentences do these echo if not those of Ecclesiastes? Though their subject matter is contemporary, the style belongs to that other preacher. Ecclesiastes, who declares, "whatsoever mine eyes desired,
I kept not from them" (Eccles. 2.10), punctuates the lessons of his experience with the formulaic "I saw" and "I have seen." Here Donne preserves the same tone of ennui and lassitude which characterizes Ecclesiastes as he echoes these familiar phrases. Donne readily causes his persona to speak these words because there is a biblical precedent for this imperfect attitude. In biblical history, this expression of vanity in worldly things must give way to a more perfect, joyful acceptance of salvation manifested in Christ. Thus, even Ecclesiastes' feelings of satiety and weariness are redeemed in the fuller revelation. Donne expresses this transformation by redeeming the phrase identified with Ecclesiastes, for it may also express a future promise as well as past vanity: "I shall see nothing but God, and what is in him; and him I shall see In carne, in the flesh" (III, 3, 112). A phrase from Job renews those phrases from Ecclesiastes, and a partial vision finds completion.

The imitation of the style and manner of scriptural figures is a familiar feature of Donne's sermons, especially his representations of a Pauline or Davidic persona. "Even as Donne discusses Paul's "chief of sinners" notion (1 Tim. 1.15), for example, he reflects something of Paul's manner, by asking leading questions, culminating in Paul's familiar expostulation: "Is this S. Paula Quorum, his Dignity, his Prudence; I must be saved, because I am the greatest sinner? God forbid. God forbid we should presume upon salvation, because we are sinners; or sin therefore, that we may be surer of salvation" (VII, 5, 161).

Sometimes, in echoing historical characters, Donne consciously draws attention to the role which he is assuming. When Donne preaches
to King James on a text from Amos, he cannot help remarking on a certain irony in the situation. For, when Amos prophesied, Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, warned King Jeroboam that Amos was interfering with state affairs. Amaziah gave these instructions to Amos, "Eate thy bread in some other place, but prophecy here no more, for this is the Kings Chappell, and the Kings Court" (II, 18, 348; Amos 7.13). Donne, standing in the king's chapel and the king's court, points to the parallel situations. While he decorously assures that the congregation will find "no mis-interpreting Priest here" since "we are far from having a Jeroboam," nonetheless, he confesses that something of the ancient scene is reproduced in his own breast:

> every man that comes with Gods Message hither, brings a little Amasias of his owne, in his owne bosome, a little wisperser in his owne heart, that tells him, This is the Kings Chappell, and it is the Kings Court, and these woes and judgements, and the denouncers and proclaimers of them are not so acceptable here. But we must have our owne Amos, aswell as our Amasias, this answer to this suggestion, I was no Prophet, and the Lord tooke me and bad me prophecy. (II, 18, 348-49)

Taking courage from Amos's rebuttal, Donne also takes on the prophetic voice with power and conviction. Later in the sermon, Donne calls upon the members of the congregation to take stock of themselves, in this Lenten season, when he prophetically foreshadows the Day of Judgment. His searing imagery is worthy of his predecessor, Amos:

> Be not deceived, this day of the Lord is darkness and not light, the first blast, the first breath of his indignation blowes out thy candle, extinguishes all thy Wisdome, all thy Counsells, all thy Philosophicall sentences, disorders thy Seneca, thy Plutarch, thy Tacitus, and all thy premeditations; for the sword of the Lord is a two-edged sword, it cuts bodily, and it cuts ghostly, it cuts temporally, and it cuts spiritually, it cuts off all worldly reliefe from others, and it cuts off all Christian
patience, and good interpretation of God's correction in thine own heart. (II, 18, 353-354)

Frequently, especially towards the conclusion of a sermon, Donne assumes a prophetic voice without introduction, and without identifying himself with any particular prophet. In these cases, Donne may read the future, offering a prospect of heaven or hell, or he may simply read the times, and understanding the general pattern of history, apply what he knows God's response will be. At the end of a sermon on the penitential psalms, for instance, Donne speaks in prophetic diction:

the childe of God shall feel the hand of God grow heavy upon him. He shall finde the Pluits laqueus, a shoure of snares to have been powred downe upon him. He shall finde the hand of God in Adversity, and love it, because he shall deliver him; He shall find his hand in prosperity, and be afraid of it; because that prosperity hath before, and may againe lead him into tentations. (IX, 12, 294)

Even in these few sentences, Donne implies a progressive movement from negligent prosperity through purgative correction to a wiser, faithful reliance. Yet the effect of the prophetic voice is to instill confidence in the movement of providential history because it suggests a certainty. The prophetic voice is a powerful one, strong to rebuke and strong to comfort. This is so not only because the use of "shall" in the second and third persons denotes futurity, but also because it implies determination, promise, obligation, or inevitability. Consequently, it has the effect both of evoking reverence for a prescient interpretative ability and of commanding respect for an authoritative presence. Donne's use of the prophetic voice allows him to bring to life, in a dramatic way, one of the most significant modes of declaring God's purpose in the Judeo-
Christian heritage.

Personae also function as models of those undergoing religious or errant experiences. Izaak Walton writes that Donne succeeded in "inticing others by a sacred Art and Courtship to amend their lives; here picturing a vice so as to make it ugly to those that practised it; and a vertue so, as to make it be beloved even by those that lov'd it not...." One of the methods by which Donne achieves this transformation in his auditory is the representation of virtue or vice in homiletic personae. The congregation may hear a joyful, regenerate persona exclaim:

here in this world, so far as I can enter into my Masters sight, I can enter into my Masters joy. I can see God in his Creatures, in his Church, in his Word and Sacraments, and Ordinances; Since I am not without this sight, I am not without this joy.... I cannot put off mortality, but I can look upon immortality; I cannot depart from this earth, but I can looke into Heaven. (V, 14, 287)

The fictional speaker manifests his spiritual condition by testifying from his own experience, thereby giving a more authentic impression than objective statements about God's beneficence ever could. But Donne also allows the wicked to have their say and to express the perplexity of their situation. Thus, the congregation listens to the account of a sinner finally brought to a recognition of his sins:

Lord! how have I mistaken my selfe, Am I, that thought my selfe, and passed with others, for a sociable, a pleasurable man, and good company; am I a leprous Adulterer, is that my name? Am I, that thought my selfe a frugall man, and a good husband; I whom fathers would recommend to their children, and say, Marke how he spares, how he grows up, how he gathers, am I an oppressing Extortitioner, is that my name? Blessed be thy name, O Lord, that hast brought me to this notum facti, to know mine own name, mine owne miserable condition.... (IX, 13, 300)
By not merely describing sin, but by portraying an individual in the very moment he recognizes his duplicity, Donne places himself in a better position to induce a similar experience in some of his auditors. The immediacy of a fictionalized portrayal has the ability to persuade more successfully than rhetorical demonstration alone.

Donne also uses personae to imitate a particular attitude which may become a stage in the process of approaching God. A portion of the same sermon on the penitential psalms illustrates this technique. In the sermon, a first-person persona assumes an attitude of humility and incorporates within himself the experiences of Jerome, Chrysostom, and Peter. Jerome confessed his sins against himself; Chrysostom said every man is "a Satan to himselfe"; and Peter fell at Christ's knees, saying "Depart from me, for I am a sinfull man, O Lord" (IX, 13, 310). Yet these historical instances only punctuate the persona's own reflections upon his spiritual state. He then continues to prostrate himself before God in his own words, bringing himself to an almost desperate extremity:

And if I be too foule for God himselfe to come neare me, for his Ordinances to worke upon me, I am no companion for my selfe, I must not be alone with my selfe; for I am as apt to take, as to give infection; I am a reciprocall plague; passively and actively contagious; I breath corruption, and breathe it upon my selfe, and I am the Babylon that I must bee out of, or I perish. (IX, 13, 311)

Yet after this vehement self-accusation, the speaker again contexts his anguish by repeating the words of abasement spoken by major figures of the Christian consciousness: Jacob, the centurion, the prodigal son, and Peter. These words are woven throughout the persona's testimony and give authority to his attitude. For he claims, along
with his predecessors, that he is "Not worthy the least of all thy mercies" (Gen. 32.10), "not worthy that thou shouldst come under my rooife" (Matt. 8.8), "Not worthy to be called thy sonne" (Luke 15.21), and "not worthy to stoop down, to fall down, to kneele before thee" (Mark 1.7) (IX, 13, 311). By this manipulation of scriptural citations, Donne's aggregate persona enacts a particular human attitude and sanctifies it by relating it to the holy persons of Christian history.

Donne strives to make the reading of Scripture strike the auditor as coming forth from the very mouth of God. One technique Donne employs to achieve this end is to let God speak as a persona. Thus, when Donne preaches on the creation of man according to God's image, Donne is determined that the event should not be portrayed as irrelevant history but as a present reality. God speaks, creates by his Word, whenever Scripture is duly read and faithfully heard; and therefore the Genesis account of creation may take place in the present moment. Consequently, Donne can hear God's voice interpret those words from the first creation in a contemporary situation. God's words are directed at his ministers:

he says Faciamus, Let us, us both together, you and we, make a man; join mine Ordinance (your preaching) with my Spirit, (says God to us) and so make man. Preach the oppressor, and preach the wanton, and preach the calumniator into another nature. Make that ravening Wolfe a man, that licentious Goate a man, that insinuating Serpent a man, by thy preaching. (IX, 1, 58)

In this way the creation is able to take place again so that it is palpable and audible to the congregation. God continues to act in history, but, Donne believes, God must also be seen to act.

The preacher's dramatic representations of him enhance this effect.
Perhaps a more convincing method of portraying God's own speech is to present it in the human form which God himself assumed in Christ. To invoke the voice of Jesus is a daring, yet entirely reasonable thing to do, if one is committed to a belief in the Incarnation. For the mimetic literary portrayal of Christ is another way of making the Logos flesh. In one instance where Donne takes on Christ's voice, he naturally uses Scripture as his point of departure, and then expands and applies its meaning:

learn of me, make me your pattern, because I am meek, and gentle; not suspicous, not froward, not hard to be reconcil'd; not apt to discomfort my spouse, my Church; not with a sullen silence, for I speak to her always in my Word; not apt to leave her unprovided of apparell, and decent ornaments, for I have allow'd her such Ceremonies, as conduce to edification; not apt to pinch her in her diet; she hath her two Courses, the first, and the second Sacrament: And whencesoever she comés to a spirituall hunger and thirst under the heat, and weight of sin, she knowes how, and where there is plentifull refreshing and satisfaction to be had, in the absolution of sin. (V, 5, 120)

The end no less than the beginning of the passage precisely reflects the spirit of the Gospel, since the satisfaction promised is that offered by Christ: "Come to me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11.28-30). While Donne here has Christ speak colloquially about the Church as would any husband about his wife, yet he maintains the poise and generosity of tone present in the biblical passage that serves as its model.

Obviously, to assume Christ's voice, if done with delicacy, offers a tremendous literary opportunity to move the auditor's affections and religious sensibilities. In this case, it is clear that Donne speaks as Christ with gentleness and authority and thereby makes a touching appeal to the auditory.
Donne's careful retelling of the story of the young rich man is another opportunity for the preacher to assume Christ's voice. In this illustration, however, the effect is more subtle because the retelling is punctuated by elements of Christ's own style in the beatitudes, rather than by a full dramatization of Christ as a character. In the second part of the sermon, what Donne calls the "Pretext," are several sentences which echo Jesus' Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are they that come to Christ Jesus, before any collateral respects draw them..."; "Blessed are they who make haste to Christ, and publish their zeal to the encouragement of others..."; "Blessed are they, who bring the testimony of a former zeal to God's service..."; "Blessed are they that inanimate all their knowledge, consummate all in Christ Jesus" (VI, 11, 226-27). In these formulations, Donne imitates the manner and spirit of Christ's words, while progressively forwarding the plot, the action of the story. For each of these benedictions describes the action of the young rich man, who "came of himself," who "came running," who "fell upon his knees to Christ" and who, though learned, "acknowledged that he had somewhat more to learn of Christ" (VI, 11, 226-27). In one more thing is the young man blessed, however, for he inquires what Christ would have him do in order to inherit eternal life. Thus, Donne again applies a general benediction to his action: "Blessed are they that bring their knowledge into practice; and blessed again, that crown their former practice with future perseverance" (VI, 11, 228). These benedictions lead, structurally, to what it is that the young man, many-times blessed, finally lacks. Donne's sentences are designed.
to foreshadow Christ's own words, later in the third part of the sermon. Christ's words are the culminating fulfillment of the former partial benedictions: "Blessed are the pure in heart... for they shall see God" (VI, 11, 235; Matt. 5:8). This, then, is what the young man, whom Jesus certainly loved, did not possess: the pureness of heart which would have enabled him to recognize Christ's authority and desire to obey him. The young man cannot link Christ's prodding question, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God" (Mark 10:18), with the command to sell his goods to the poor and to follow Christ. The inability to affirm Christ's goodness as divine and to act upon that recognition turns the man to sorrow. Again, Donne's manipulation of Scripture enhances the dramatic power of the sermon.

In canvassing the wide array of homiletic personas which Donne adopts, from those demonstrating development and imitating historical persons to those modelling different experiences and assuming a particular attitude to the adoption of the divine voice, one must also mention the relatively few occasions when Donne appears to speak in his own private voice. Infrequently, the distance between performing orator and self seems to disappear. Yet even on these occasions, Donne does not try to impose his personality upon his auditory, in the manner which Eliot assumes. Rather, he presents himself as actor in a play who performs but one part in God's developing action. In one sermon, Donne marvels that he should be called to the ministry; he wonders at the fact that
from so poore a man as stands here, wrapped up in clouds of infirmity, and in clouds of iniquity, God should drop raine, pour downe his dew, and sweeten that dew with his honey, and crust that honied dew into Manna, and multiply that Manna into Gomers, . . . and give every particular man his Gomer, give every soule in the Congregation, consolation by me. . . . (VII, 4, 134)

In this act of self-deprecation, there is a touch of Paul's "chief of sinners" attitude which at first glance seems excessive, and even indiscreet self-aggrandizement. Yet if we consider what Donne thought of Paul's declaration, we can better assess Donne's testimonial. Paul, says Donne, "respected his own natural disposition, and proclivity to great sins, and out of that evidence condemned himself." Further, Donne understood that "He that hath these natural dispositions is likely to be the greatest sinner, except he have some strong assistance to restrain him" (I, 9, 316-17): Donne's purpose in his own testimony is similar: not to magnify himself but to glorify God whose power it is which transforms the disposition to sin into the service of God and his people. Donne does not distract the auditory with his sins, nor even his would-be sins, but praises the assisting hand of God. In so doing, he makes his own self-reference a particular instance of God's universally bountiful grace, not an occasion to flaunt his own personality.

We pass from Donne's many-faceted use of personae to a more particular category of fictive speaking voice. Again, it is necessary to borrow terms from other genres in order to describe Donne's mimetic technique adequately. Frequently, the "characters" in Donne's sermons speak with such fervent expressiveness or intellectual intensity that their statements resemble theatrical soliloquies. In other instances, a lyric tone and a suggested listening character
parallel the dramatic monologue of the sort Browning would have enjoyed. In both cases, there is an emotional and imagistic concentration as well as a vigour and acuity in the language which distinguishes these speeches from other parts of the discourse, but not from the sermon’s dramatic momentum, which they help to advance.

A soliloquy of such dramatic intensity occurs when Donne assumes a hyperbolic, one might say, histrionic persona, to lament the sinful condition of humankind:

Miserable man: a Toad is a bag of Poyson, and a Spider is a blister of Poyson, and yet a Toad and a Spider cannot poyson themselves; Man hath a dram of poyson, originall-Sin, in an invisible corner, we know not where, and he cannot choose but poyson himselfe and all his actions with that; we are so far from being able to begin without Grace, as then where we have the first Grace, we cannot proceed to the use of that, without more. (I, 8, 293)

This hyperbolic persona is designed to confront the auditors with a particular truth, the unavoidable fact of original sin. In so doing, the persona forces the auditor to dismiss any presumption which he might hold as to the efficacy of his own works. Yet at the same time, it embodies, and so anticipates a common fear tending to despair in the auditor. But this dramatic gesture is so placed as to imply a forward movement beyond such a partial insight. Why else would Donne later go on to assure that "we are the generation and of-spring of God, since Grace is our Father, that Parent that begets all goodness in us" (I, 8, 293)? The sermon then continues by exploring God’s faithfulness through covenant as a means of justifying sinners.

Clearly, the hyperbolic persona’s purpose is to induce a humility in the proud, to arrest a fearfulness in the despairing, and to
forward the psychological action of the sermon.

Another poetic meditation which amounts to a soliloquy occurs when a Donnean persona reflects upon the meaning of death. The scene is full of the same ironies and mysteries which so move Hamlet at the graveside as he wonders if Alexander's earth might not stop a beer barrel or if Caesar's might not stop a hole "to keep the wind away";

The dust of great persons graves is speechlesse too, it sayes nothing, it distinguishes nothing: As soon the dust of a wretch whom thou wouldest not, as of a Prince whom thou couldest not look upon, will trouble thine eyes, if the winde blow it thither; and when a whirle-winde hath blowne the dust of the Church-yard into the Church, and the man sweeps out the dust of the Church into the Church-yard, who will undertake to sift those dusts again, and to pronounce, This is the Patrician, this is the noble flowre, and this the yeomanly, this the Plebian bran? (IV, 1, 53)

The soliloquy represents another stage in a process. The biblical text is. "a Text of the Resurrection" (IV, 1, 45) and this Lenten sermon moves towards Easter. But as Donne realizes, there can be no authentic spiritual resurrection without reflection upon the awesome levelling capacity of death. Only from this perspective may resurrection be celebrated in its renewing power. The sermon foreshadows its direction by remarking that even Christ was invaded by this enemy (IV, 1, 54). The auditor may, by participating in Christ, join not only in the final, glorious resurrection, but may experience, in this life, "a Resurrection from dejections and calamities in this world" and a "Resurrection from sin" (IV, 1, 56). Consequently, the persona's contemplation of mortality quoted above may not really be viewed as a final pronouncement about Donne's understanding of death, but rather as the fictive enunciation of a
humble but nevertheless incomplete perspective in the course of a
spiritual pilgrimage.

As all good dramatic monologues do, Donne's homiletic
examples of this mode imply the essential qualities of the silent
listener with whom the speaker converses. For while the speaker
illuminates his own character by the twists and turns of his thought
and discourse, the reaction of the mute listener defines itself in
the speaker's accommodations and anticipations. A prayer is a fine
example of this form, since God serves as the ideal silent listener.
In one prayer to Christ the Saviour, the speaker can be seen as a
foil who discloses the nature of Christ (V, 12, 235-36). The speaker
in this case is limited in compassion and thereby incredulous at
the boundless mercy of Christ. In almost indignant tones, the
speaker, after his invocation, asks questions about Jesus' own prayer
to the Father that his tormentors be forgiven:

\[\text{And what shall they hear? what doest thou ask? Forgive them, forgive them? Must murderers be forgiven? Must the offended ask it? And must a Father grant it? . . . Was not thy passion enough, but thou must have compassion? And is thy mercy so violent, that thou wilt have a fellow-feeling of their imminent afflictions, before they have any feeling? } (V, 12, 235-36)\]

The speaker's outraged demeanour with its hyperbole ("mercy so
violent") highlights the intensity of Christ's love and the vastness
of his compassion. Christ, the silent listener, thus receives clear
definition against this scandalized monologue. The unrelenting attitude
of the speaker is typified when he goes on to admit, "I that cannot
revenge thy quarrell, cannot forgive them" (V, 12, 236). Such a
constrained generosity serves to magnify, by contrast, the self-renewing
nature of divine love and points to the gulf between unsaid human
justice and divine mercy. Of course, the mute listener resists these expostulations and by his silence reminds the congregation that he is "God and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee" (Hos. 11.9). Donne even pushes the matter farther when the speaker wonderfully says to Christ, "Thou seemest not so much as to presume a repentance; which is so essential, and necessary in all transgressions, as where by man's fault the actions of God are diverted from his appointed ends, God himself is content to repent the doing of them" (V, 12, 236).

Here the dogmatic structure of the Church (which Donne was bound to uphold and therefore explains) seems only able to stand amazed at Christ's lack of presumption. Christ's love exists beyond the grasp of dogma and all human formulations.

It is interesting to note that much of the same sermon is a disquisition on prayer. In it, Donne finds that one of the first obstacles to prayer, whether prayer be mental, vocal, or active, is a "stupidity and indisposition to prayer" (V, 12, 233). Donne can appreciate many people's inability and hesitation to begin to pray. But, suggests Donne, there is a remedy: "So whosoever thou be, that canst not readily pray, at least pray, that thou mayst pray" (V, 12, 233). Thus, the prayer we have cited, framed by an incredulous speaker, is just such an imperfect, expostulatory prayer. It reacquaints the auditor indisposed to prayer with how to approach God; it reminds him that an awkward searching for answers is an excellent place to start. Nevertheless, it is only an initial step towards conforming one's will to God, as represented by the much more careful, attentive, contrite, generous, and willing tone of the sermon's concluding prayer (V, 12, 243-44).
Another illustration of Donne's homiletic use of dramatic monologue serves to demonstrate that he is capable of using the technique in situations other than prayer. In a sermon which issues from the events following Paul's shipwreck on Malta (VIII, 14, 312-34), Donne attempts to conscript even pagans to argue on his behalf against atheism, a topic which he addresses squarely towards the end of the sermon. While Donne points to the limitations of the natural man, he also acknowledges that the natural man, by logic, may grasp God's existence and providence: "The natural man knowes God" (VIII, 14, 328). Indeed, Donne cleverly suggests that the natural man is so willing to believe that he often multiplies God into many deities. As a consequence, pagans reproach the atheist even more than Christians. Yet, for Donne, the final appeal to the atheist is not one of logic, important as it may be, or a comparison with natural men, revealing as it may be, but an appeal to the inmost privicy of the heart to testify in favour of God's existence. Donne's method for this appeal is dramatic monologue. Thus, in mock exasperation, the speaker addresses the atheist, not as a fearful and contemptible opponent, but as a pathetic creature:

Poore intricated soule! Riddling, perplexed labyrinthicall soule! Thou couldest not say, that thou beleevest not in God, if there were no God; If there were no God, thou couldest not speake, thou couldest not thinke, 'not a word; not a thought, no not aginst God; Thou couldest not blaspheme the Name of God, thou couldest not swear; if there were no God. . . . (VIII, 14, 332)

This direct address begins to sketch the implied listener for the congregation. The object of the speaker's pity is not seen as unfortunate because he is stupid or ignorant. He is more sophisticated than that: he has a soul capable of being "intricated," "Riddling," "labyrinthicall." And yet, implies the speaker, the
solution to the listening atheist's perplexity is near and evident; the solution does not need the intricacies with which he invests it.

The speaker continues to flesh out the implied listener by proposing certain hypothetical situations that will marshall evidence against him:

If I should ask thee at a Tragedy, where thou shouldest see him that had drawne blood, lie weltring, and surrounded in his owne blood, Is there a God now: If thou couldst answer me, No, These are but Inventions, and Representations of men, and I beleev a God never the more for this; If I should ask thee at a Sermon, where thou shouldest heare the Judgements of God formerly denounced, and executed, re-denounced, and applied to present occasions, Is there a God now? If thou couldst answer me, No, These are but Inventions of State, to souple and regulate Congregations, and keep people in order, and I beleev a God never the more for this; Bee as confident as thou canst, in company; for company is the Atheists Sanctuary. (VIII, 14, 332)

The first situation which the speaker proposes, at a tragedy, is significant because it shows the theatre as being potentially instructive, since it may present a valid representation of history's pattern. But further, along with its companion situation at a sermon, it continues to define the silent listener's attitudes. The responses which these situations elicit, as the speaker imagines them, are aloof dismissals; nonetheless, they are precise analytical assessments touching on the inadequate machinations of human arts and the subtle political coercions of the Church. The speaker's further remark makes it clear that the implied listener is not isolated, but sociable, since his views have gathered a "company" of like-minded individuals about him.

The speaker's last challenge recalls his original characterization of the listening atheist as pathetic, for a judgment hangs over the
listener and the execution of the verdict suspensefully draws nearer:

I respite thee not till the day of Judgement, when I may see thee upon thy knees, upon thy face, begging of the hills, that they would fall downe and cover thee from the fierce wrath of God, to aske thee then, Is there a God now? I respite thee not till the day of thine own death, when thou shalt have evidence enough, that there is a God, though no other evidence, but to finde a Devil, and evidence enough, that there is a Heaven, though no other evidence, but to feele Hell; To ask thee then, Is there a God now? I respite thee but a few hours, but six hours, but till midnight. Wake then; and then darke, and alone, Heare God ask thee then, remember that I asked thee now, Is there a God? and if thou darest, say No. (VIII, 14, 332-33)

With each advancement of the execution date, the speaker projects the listener's situation in order to evoke pity, and then fear.

The atheist is imaged begging the mountains to fall upon him and facing the Devil in his death. But, suggests the speaker, these images, while true, are not immediate enough to demonstrate the aimless emptiness of atheism. The utter solitude of the heart at midnight is the truest test of atheism. At that moment, the assured and sociable bravado that accompanied earlier denials rings false in the stillness of the man's bedchamber. Through this dramatic monologue, revelatory of both speaker and fictional listener, Donne is able to bring his sermon to an emotional climax. The dénouement follows, a discussion of the varieties of atheists: the universal atheist who denies God; a particular atheist, who denies Christ; and a practical atheist who denies the Holy Ghost. In this dénouement, the auditor, though initially unwilling to call himself an atheist, may recognize himself in the pithetic fictional character whose "respite" is almost over.

Donne's use of the dramatic monologue raises a related issue,
his esthetic relationship to his audience. When Donne speaks in a dramatic monologue, he naturally makes use of the second-person in order to establish the character of the implied but mute listener. Yet at other times, the use of "you" or "thou" is intended for the auditors themselves. But Donne also varies the distance between his speaker and the audience by alternating between addressing the second-person as the general congregation and associating certain attitudes or ideas with a more particularized second-person. So the auditory may be allowed to be itself or it must accept a degree of fictionalizing which is not detached enough to be called a separate character, yet tends in that direction.

Certainly Donne is aware of the creative possibilities open to the preacher in employing the second-person. In one sermon, Donne discusses the manner in which the Bible deals with "you" and "thou," and what the implications are for the preacher (IX, 16, 358-60). He wonders why Scripture, "more then any other bookes" speaks "in this singular person, and in this familiar person," thou and thee (IX, 16, 358). He notes that scriptural style is very conscious of retaining reverence for position and rank.

Nonetheless, the propensity for the other form is marked: "The Scripture phrase is as ceremoniall and as observant of distances, as any, and yet still full of this familiar word too, Tu and Tuus, Thou and Thine" (IX, 16, 358). Particularly worth noting is Donne's recognition that this feature of scriptural style is more acceptable in a preacher than others: "And we also who deal most with the Scriptures, are more accustomed to the same phrase then any other kinde of speakers are" (IX, 16, 358). Indeed Donne points out that
this form would not be heard in parliament or the courts; even the king would refrain from addressing his subjects as "thou." It is otherwise in the Church, for "in the presence of the greatest, we [ministers] say ordinarily, Amend thy life, and God be mercifull to thee, and I absolve thee of all thy sinnes" (IX, 16, 358).

Donne arrives at two reasons for this usage in the Bible:

in the Scriptures, God speaks either to the Church, his Spouse, and to his children, and so he may be bold, and would be familiar with them; Or els he speaks so, as that he would be thought by thee to speake singularly to thy soule in particular. (IX, 16, 358)

The second reason underscores Donne's belief that the gift of God's salvation is presented to every individual. Of Christ, Donne affirms, "if there had been none given him, but Thou, rather than have lost Thee, he would have given the same price for Thee, that he gave for the whole world" (IX, 16, 359). Because Scripture is personal and not abstract, it has universal application, since, "This word, Thee, excludes none" (IX, 16, 360).

From these comments, it is clear that Donne is sensitive to the preacher's capability to use familiar and personal address in a way not permissible in other social domains, except in intimate circumstances. Donne makes full use of this convention to interrogate, entreat, rebuke, and console. There are, consequently, in the preacher's address to the audience, occasional and varying degrees of the same techniques which we have associated with the dramatic monologue. When Donne declares the following statement, part of a much longer passage in the same style, he really does not talk to the congregation per se, but creates a dramatic monologue with a
fictional listener, obviously a sinner: "Poore bankrupt! that hast
sinned out thy soule so profusely, so lavishly, that thou darst
not cast up thine accounts, thou darst not aske thy selfe whether
thou have any soule left . . ." (IV, 5, 149). Clearly, in this
use of "thou," Donne hopes to touch those members of the congregation
who recognize themselves in this fictional representation though he
does not speak directly to the congregation. Yet, at other points,
Donne merely suggests this technique. In part of another sermon
(IV, 6, 166–68), Donne speaks generally, using the plural second-
person: "If you will thinke, that Chance did it, and fortune, then
fortune must be your God. . . ." As the passage continues, however,
Donne becomes more specific and personal. He first speaks of an
abstract impersonal everyman: "Every man hath a delight, and
complacency in knowledge." Then he narrows the field: "Many a man,"
says the speaker, "who lets the Bible dust, and rust" because of its
reverence, is more comfortable with human authors. Then, however,
the speaker focusses more closely on an identifiable "character,"
yet still preserves some distance. He uses a conditional "thou":
"But if thou let the Bible, and Fathers alone," what work does not
declare God, inquires the speaker. Then the speaker moves to an
interrogative, and more involving "thou": "Dost thou love learning . . .?"
Donne’s ultimate point is that the style and learning of the greatest
human authors is superseded in the music, poetry, and persuasive power
of the Bible. But the manner in which he achieves this point is by
touching on the methods of dramatic monologue. Donne gives now more,
then less, distance between his speaker and his created character,
and between the character and the auditor. This method, especially in its use of the second-person, is employed strategically to persuade the auditor by moving the auditor's affections through personal relationship implied in the phrase of address.

One of the advantages of the frequent use of the second-person, often employed in a dramatic sense, an implied dialogue, is that the form may act as a model for the auditors. They may realize that the rhythmic give and take of dialogue is the necessary process involved in a growing relationship with God. We can clearly see that this is Donne's purpose at the conclusion of a sermon which develops the meaning of liberality. Understandably, the Christian finds his ability to be liberal to himself and others in the liberality of God. One of the consequences of knowing God's liberal nature is realizing that, if one asks, one shall be satisfied. Thus, to complete the action of the sermon and to initiate the auditor's action outside the church building, Donne poses one of God's scriptural questions, "What could have been done more to my Vineyard?" (Isa. 5.4). It is up to the auditor to reply, and Donne formally accounts for this necessity by coaching the auditor on how to perform his part of the dialogue. He does this by using the familiar second-person imperative, but his purpose is to invite the auditor to participate in a personal conversation with heaven:

Doe but tell him [God], and he will doe that. Tell him, that he can remove this dampe from thy heart; Tell him as though thou wouldest have it done, and he will doe it. Tell him that he can bring teares into thine eyes, and then, wipe all teares from thine eyes; and he will doe both. Tell him, that he did as much for David, as thou needest. . . .

(VIII, 10, 262)

Thus, Donne's esthetic relationship with his audience is a complex and changing arrangement of varying distances and degrees of fiction—
alizing.

We have centred much of our discussion of Donne's mimesis, his dramatic enactment, on his creation of "characters" within the sermons. Whether in personae, soliloquies, dramatic monologues, or a slightly fictionalized auditor, Donne creates characters who advance the action of his sermons. Less purely theatrical, perhaps, but nonetheless preserving a dramatic atmosphere, are his realistic descriptions of persons, actions, and psychological states. Donne often offers brief rehearsals of scriptural stories, or represents individual experiences which have a religious thrust. Here, Donne's technique uses more and more the devices of prose fiction.

Donne's retelling of the story of Rebecca's introduction to Isaac demonstrates his attention to detail and his psychological delicacy. He provides the context and occurrences demanded by Scripture, yet further casts an eye towards human manners and behaviour:

At the first meeting of Isaac and Rebecca, he was gone out to meditate in the fields, and she came riding that way, with his fathers man, who was employed in making that marriage; and when upon asking she knew that it was he who was to be her husband, she tooke a vaile and covered her face, sayes that story. What freedome, and nearnesse soever they were to come to after, yet there was a modesty, and a bashfulnesse, and a reservednesse required before; and her first kindnesse should be but to be seen. (V, 17, 340)

In brief space, Donne establishes the scene and the characters, yet savours the meaning of Rebecca's gesture of bashfulness. In the same sermon, Donne still considers this holy reservedness (and indicates that God's response to it is generous) when he turns to
the story of the diseased and hesitent woman who wished to touch
the hem of Jesus' garment (Matt. 9.20-22). The extremely brief
story is drawn out and the action slowed, so that the eye may rest
upon every detail and its significance. Donne does not merely
explain the scene but recreates it, imaginatively filling in the
spaces where Scripture is silent:

Presently he turned about, says the Text: and this was
not a transitory glance, but a full sight, an exhibiting of
himself to the fruition of her eye, that she might see
him. He saw her, says S. Matthew: Her; he did not
direct himself upon others, and leave out her; And then,
he spake to her, to overcome her bashfulnesse; he called
her Daughter, to overcome her diffidence. . . . (V, 17, 343)

Superficially, the encounter is a glance and a summons, but Donne
dilates the intricacies of human feelings and interaction and thereby
makes this event a recognizable moment in social intercourse. Jesus
appears admirable, not because of his divine powers, but because of
his simple kindness in this instance of ordinary human need. The
situation is heightened by Donne's psychological acuity.

The purpose of this kind of reanimation of Scripture is to
make the auditor feel as though the events of the Bible, in slightly
altered forms, are happening all around him. Rebecca gracefully,
shyly, plans her future husband's first gift; Jesus overcomes a
hurting woman's reserve by looking her full in the face and accepting
her with a father's love. These are mysteries worth fathoming,
worth acting upon. In Donne's understanding, living out the Gospel
does not mean merely being obedient to its precepts and teachings;
it means becoming imaginative and discerning (and therefore reason-
able) enough to perceive the events of Scripture occurring in the
present. Warns Donne, "there is in every miracle, a silent chiding of the world" for its need of miracles (VII, 15, 374). The fabric of ordinary life is God's great tapestry, and the man of faith sees God's actions in it as clearly as in Scripture. The faithful man puts himself imaginatively into the place of God's saints and walks with Christ: "whether I heare Hosannaes, acclamations and commendations, or Crucifiges, exclamations and condemnations from the world, I shall stil finde the voice and tongue of God, though in the mouth of the Devill, and his instruments" (X, 4, 110-11).

Part of Donne's apparatus of mimetic enactment, therefore, also reminds one of the devices of drama and fiction. Donne provides his sermons with the scenes and situations in which personal interaction takes place. While Chapter V will more fully describe Donne's understanding and representation of historical persons and events, it is important at this juncture to suggest that Donne's descriptive talent complements his sense of the dramatic movement of God acting in time.

In one depiction of Christ's passion, reminiscent of his Good Friday poem, Donne uses a first-person persona to record the realistic detail of the scene. At the same time, the speaker responds to the scene by underscoring the situation's ironies, and thereby provides a pattern for the auditor to imitate:

I see those hands stretched out, that stretched out the heavens, and those feet racked, to which they that racked them are foot-stooles; I heare him, from whom his nearest friends fled, pray for his enemies, and him, whom his Father forsake, not forsake his brethren; I see him that cloathes this body with his creatures, or else it would wither, and cloathes this soule with his Righteousnesse, or else it
would perish, hang naked upon the Crosse; And him that hath, him that is, the Fountaine of the water of life, cry out, He thirsts, when that voyce overtakes me, in my crosse wayes in the world, Is it nothing to you, all you that passe by?

The speaker establishes a dramatic relationship with the scene on which he looks. The auditor, who sees through the speaker's eyes and hears with his ears, is also moved by the same scene, imagined though it may be. The speaker views the scene as a bystander to the crucifixion might, except that he reads the event with the greater knowledge which awareness of the whole scheme of salvation history supplies. The speaker then guides the auditor's response even further by describing his feelings:

When I conceive, when I contemplate my Saviour thus, I love the Lord, and there is a reverent adoration in that love, I love Christ, and there is a mysterious admiration in that love, but I love Jesus, and there is a tender compassion in that love, and I am content to suffer with him, and to suffer for him.

Thus, the speaker here described, and the speaker enacts. He performs a regenerate act of the imagination by envisaging the scene of Christ's death, then acts out the desired response.

Donne ends this paragraph by issuing warnings against him "that loves not thus" (III, 14, 308). In context, "thus" means, "as I have demonstrated this love, as I have enacted it for your edification." By such an enactment, Donne is able to include both a "Catholic" composition of place and a "Protestant" personal application.

Donne does not always depend upon the Bible to provide the events for his scenes, though indeed he preserves the style, the
persuasive intent of Scripture. Some of his descriptive scenes involve imaginary, exemplary situations, which nonetheless are imbued with realistic and dramatic elements. In one such "scene," Donne uses very traditional metaphors, but enlivens them by making them props to a dramatic interaction (IX, 10, 236-37). God opens three books which speak to the "inconsiderate man": a book of creatures, a book of the Church, and a book of the man's own heart. Though the notion of these books was a Renaissance commonplace, Donne makes them perform. For example, in the first volume, "Every ant that he sees asks him, Where had I this providence, and industry? Every flowre that he sees, asks him, Where had I this beauty, this fragrancy, this medicinall vertue in me?" Here the underpinnings of a dialogue manifest themselves as the book literally speaks, and in so speaking recalls Proverbs' lesson to the sluggard (Prov. 6.6) and Christ's admonition to the anxious (Matt. 6.28). The book of the Church, the Scriptures, also complains as though it had a voice of its own, "Why am I here, to meet thee, to wait upon thee, to performe Gods purpose towards thee, if thou never consider me...?" Donne does not cause the last book, that "manuall," that "pocket book" to speak, but it manifestly acts the part of an actual book: it has a "clasp" which may shut it hard; it may be interlined with other knowledge and studies, or choked with commentaries; it may even have some leaves torn out when sins are forgotten. But, of course, this book can never be cast away. Thus, even when Donne uses traditional emblems, almost allegorical in nature, he retains many of the features associated with dramatic interaction and fictional selection of
objective detail.

We would be untrue to Donne’s variety of scene creation if we did not offer an example of an objectified narrative description. Donne certainly assumes the role of an omniscient narrator when it suits him, as it does when he considers "the silent sinner." This point of view seems particularly effective because it makes the person described appear even more cut off and isolated, since the concern manifested in a dialogue or the pathos evoked by a personal confession is here denied him. The detached speaker says of him:

The hand of God shall grow heavy upon a silent sinner, in his body, in his health; and if he conceive a comfort, that for all his sickness, he is rich, and therefore cannot fayle of helpe and attendance, there comes another worme, and devours that, faithlesnesse in persons trusted by him, oppressions in persons that have trusted him, facility in undertaking for others, corrupt Judges, heavy adversaries, tempests and Pirats at Sea, unseasonable or ill Markets at land, costly and expensive ambitions at Court, one worme or other shall devour his riches, that he eased himselfe upon. If he take up another Comfort, that though health and wealth decay, though he be poore and weake, yet he hath learning, and philosophy, and morall constancy, and he can content himselfe with himselfe, he can make his study a Court, and a few Books shall supply to him the society and conversation of many friends, there is another worme to devour this too, the hand of divine Justice shall grow heavy upon him, in a sense of an unprofitable retirednesse, in a disconsolate melancholy, and at last, in a stupidity, tending to desperation. (IX, 12, 293)

Although the speaker has removed himself from the immediate situation, and the scene offers no character interaction, the scene is nonetheless a rich and vivid portrait of a man’s degeneration. Clearly the description does not present a static situation, but sketches the history of a man’s miserable decline at the hands of his own efforts to stave off repentance and inevitable judgment. The account colourfully characterizes the sinner by his actions, his ineffectual
attempts to comfort himself with goods, society, and learning—any of which could have been instruments of grace, but which he has used instead for self-satisfaction. The worm imagery reinforces the auditor's recognition that the portrait depicts a living death. Consequently, by the characterization of a man, and by the suggestion of the process of degeneration, Donne again employs touches of dramatic technique.

In this section, we have indicated the major categories in Donne's spectrum of mimetic techniques, which are everywhere evident in his sermons. Through these techniques, he represents the dramatic and persuasive process inherent in the style of Scripture. The lively drama which he depicts as occurring between God and his people is the most successful manner to restore the human faculties, corrupted in the Fall. As we shall demonstrate in the next chapters, the structure of Donne's sermons is itself a mimesis of the process of psychological growth and recovery.
Notes


3 Aristotle, pp. 25, 34, 36-40; 28, 35-37, 42, 45, 49, 63; 25.


6 Auerbach, "Figura," trans. Ralph Manheim, in Auerbach's *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (New York: Meridian, 1957), p. 59. Auerbach's figural view is summarized on p. 59 and appears in another translation in *Mimésis*, p. 73. Also cf. Mann, p. 613, concerning Donne: "the spiritual inheres in the literal, is invalid without it, but is fundamentally inseparable from it."

7 See M. A. C. Johnson, p. 86. Also note VII, 1, 60; IX, 2, 73; IX; 12, 276.


9 See Carrithers, p. 103.

10 Also see I, 11, 247; VI, 7, 159.


Note a comparable passage in IV, 6, 163: "Saint Paul cites sometimes the words of secular Poets, and approves them; and then the words of those poets, become the word of God."

14 See Boyd, p. 219: "Plato's thrust toward the ideal tended to be vague about the shadowy areas of experience, in the interest of the more inclusive unity exercised by the master forms which they obscurely reflected; Aristotle's search for the forms in experience tended naturally to specify and characterize them according to their genus and species. Plato tended to overlook differences among things and processes. . . . Aristotle was interested in differences among things and processes, for the form of the mind was actualized by the form of the objects it knew."


16 Also see VIII, 5, 155.

17 Also see II, 7, 170.


19 See M. A. C. Johnson, p. 187.

20 Also see I, 5, 24; V, 9, 197; VI, 5, 128; X, 10, 221; and II, 14, 291: "not onely in spirituall things, (for so every man is bound to be better and better, better today then yesterday, and to morrow then to day, and he that growes not in Religion, withers; There is no standing at a stay, He that goes not forward in godlinessse, goes' backward, and he that is not better is worse) but even in temporall things too there is a liberty given us, nay there is a law, an obligation laid upon us, to endeavour by industry in a lawfull calling, to mend and improve, to enlarge our selves, and spread, even in worldly things."

21 See M. A. C. Johnson, p. 200.

22 See Shami, "John Donne's Voices, p. 270.

23 Note IV, 2, 85: "There is nothing more contrary to God, and his proceedings, then annihilation, to Bee nothing, Do nothing. Think nothing." Also see Carrithers, p. 61: "All of this rests on the general assumption that history is divinely teleological, though vicissitudinal, and that a man's lively freedom requires commitment to such a view."
Also see IV, 3, 97.

Also see VII, 8, 230.

See, for example, VIII, 4, 120.


Mann, pp. 607-16.

See W. R. Mueller, p. 79: "Though Donne follows both Calvin and the Thirty-nine Articles in viewing the Church as that institution where the Word is truly preached and the sacraments duly administered, he speaks more frequently and more fully of the saving power of the sermon than of that of the sacraments"; and Dāniel, p. 21: "Preaching is the church's chief means of reconciliation." Also see Merrill, pp. 602-03, and Webber, Contrary Music, p. 98, for Donne's exaltation of preaching to sacramental status. This theological tendency is, however, somewhat balanced in IV, 3, 105.

A similarity may be noted in John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), IV, 11, 1, p. 1213: "We conclude that in those passages the power of the keys is simply the preaching of the gospel, and that with regard to men it is not so much power as ministry. For Christ has not given this power actually to men, but to his Word, of which he has made men ministers." For God's tangible disclosure of himself, also see IV, 8, 225; VII, 1, 46.

Also see II, 13, 280; V, 1, 44; VIII, 9, 227-28.


John R. Knott, The Sword of the Spirit: Puritan Responses to the Bible (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 18. T. F. Merrill, p. 601, suggests, "The Word was not mere Scripture; it was Christ, immediate and present, mediated through the Holy Spirit in the ordinance of preaching." For other comments identifying preaching with Christ's presence, see VI, 10, 217; VII, 16, 400. Also see Quinn, "Christian Eloquence," p. 282.

Donne's interest in the methods of the Fathers and in the history of preaching is traced in Hickey, "Donne's Art of Preaching," TSL, 1 (1956), 72-73.

See IX, 9, 215 and I, 7, 170; "Religion is a serious thing, but not a sullen; Religious preaching is a grave exercise, but not a sordid, not a barbarous, not a negligent."
36 For Donne's condemnation of extemporal preaching see I, 6, 260; II, 7, 167 and 171; IV, 3, 99; IV, 7, 196; V, 1, 42; VI, 1, 104; VIII, 5, 147; X, 5, 133; X, 7, 174.

37 It is interesting to note Richard Sibbes's comments in A Christian's Portion; or, A Christian's Charter, in The Complete Works, ed. Alexander Balloch Grosart, IV (Edinburgh; London; Dublin, 1863), p. 18: "Again, 'all things are ours.' Therefore truth, where- soever we find it, is ours. We may read [a] heathen author. Truth comes from God, where-soever we find it, and it is ours, it is the church's. We may take it from them as a just possession. Those truths that they have, there may be good use of those truths; but we must not use them for ostentation. For that is to do as the Israelites; when they had gotten treasure out of Egypt, they made, a calf, an idol of them. So we must not make an idol of these things. Therefore with a good conscience we may make use of any human author." Also see IV, 4, 134.


39 See Carrithers, pp. 76-77: "He shows regular awareness of both hierarchies of diction, the one he took to have been constructed by God, and the one constructed by man, and equal awareness of the energy that may derive from combining or counterpointing them. Flat, prosaic English, the 'faint word,' echoes the degenerate fallen world. Emotionally and intellectually energetic language, metaphorical or learned, strives toward regeneration. . . ."


41 Boyd, pp. 54, 70. A corollary to this view is that Donne's sermons exhibit a literary pattern which cannot be explained by formal rhetorical pattern alone. For an alternate perspective, see John S. Chamberlin's closely argued work on Donne's use of grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric, Increase and Multiply: Arts-of-Discourse Procedure in the Preaching of Donne (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1976).

42 Donne goes on to describe three active ways in which people may "express" God's "unexpressible" activity: preaching, sacraments, and "provocation to a good life" (V, 13, 254-55). Note that Donne here uses "admire" in a weak and pejorative sense. The use of the word may be sharply contrasted to his vital pre-Romantic usage of the word "wonder." See Quinn, "Donne and the Wane of Wonder," ELH, 36 (1969), 626-47.
See John Baillie, *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1956), p. 50, where he suggests that the sacred books of other religions "are composed mainly of oracles which communicate what profess to be timeless truths about universal being or timeless prescriptions for the conduct of life and worship. But the Bible is mainly a record of what God has done."

Miller, pp. 341, 343.


Legouis, p. 50.

See, for instance, IV, 12', 320-21; V, 15, 305-06; VI, 17, 347; VII, 12, 312; VIII, 12, 289; X, 8, 182.


Also see VII, 10, 274; VIII, 14, 332.


Legouis, p. 40.

See Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, (Chicago: Phoenix-Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 162, for his assessment of the familiar scene in Joseph Andrews, where the hero, naked and beaten by thieves, is approached by a coach. Booth declares: "If to be dramatic is to show characters dramatically engaged with each other, motive clashing with motive, the outcome depending upon the resolution of motives, then this scene is dramatic. But if it is to give the impression that the story is taking place by itself, with the characters existing in a dramatic relationship vis-à-vis the spectator, unmediated by a narrator and decipherable only through inferential matching of word to word and word to deed, then this is a relatively undramatic scene."


[Thompson], M. Geraldine. "John Donne and the Mindes Indeavours," SEL, 5 (1965), 119, 1


Lewalski, Protestant Poetics, p. 83.

Carrithers, p. 121: Webber, Contrary Music, p. 27. Webber also categorizes Donne's use of "I" in this way, pp. 115ff.: (i) in making a point, i.e. his own experiences as exempla; (ii) in a general way to show how men think or believe; (iii) in a comprehensive sense, making himself a symbol of man; (iv) in presenting "I" as the soul of man, incorporating the whole history of man into himself.

The passage reflects the spirit of 2 Cor. 5:16: "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more."

This strategic use of Ecclesiastes' perspective as one step in the sermon's progressive movement may be sharply contrasted to Robert Bozanich's argument in "Donne and Ecclesiastes," PMLA, 90 (1975), 270-76, where Donne's attraction to the book is seen simply as a result of his personal fascination with vanity.


Eliot, p. 352.

Interestingly, the "soliloquy" is one of Richard Sibbes' methods of individual devotion. An inner dialogue, the soliloquy is meant to keep the soul "in a holy exercise." Richard Baxter, too, encourages this method, which he describes as "Preaching to ones self." Obviously, Donne's imaginative soliloquies more consciously represent characters. See Holt, pp. 58, 71.


Mahood, pp. 89-90, cites this monologue as reminiscent of the last scene of Doctor Faustus.
CHAPTER III:  
THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESS IN THE DONNEAN SERMON:  
INTRODUCTION

III.1 The Relation of Mimesis to Psychology

Since the movement of providential history itself may be educational and restorative, Donne's mimesis of God's ways also prompts a regenerate response from his auditors and invites them to imitate Christ in history. Donne's sermons work in this manner only because he incisively anticipates the psychological processes within his hearers and stimulates all the faculties of their souls, for his purpose is "Exhortation principally and Edification, and a holy stirring of religious affections," and only secondarily the raising of doctrinal matters (VIII, 3, 95). The spiritual growth and reorientation which Donne seeks for his congregation is won by guiding his auditors through a psychological pilgrimage. Indeed, N. J. C. Andreasen's use of the term "plot" to describe the psychological development towards "assent" in the Devotions is not inappropriate to our discussion of the changes affecting heart and mind through the course of individual sermons. But whether one speaks of plot or of pilgrimage, Donne's sermons record several stages of inducement to growth as the auditor moves from one psychological state to another.
Donne's objective is to grasp the auditor in his own situation, sinful and perplexed though it may be, and reach him by means of his emotional and intellectual responses. To engage these responses, to understand them sympathetically and to offer a method of transforming them so that they achieve their great potential is a key to Donne's homiletics. Haller said of the Puritan preacher of Donne's day, "his real concern was to shape and direct feeling and conduct. His doctrine became in fact a theory of human behaviour, a system of psychology." Donne accepts to a degree the Puritan insight into the significance of psychological participation with its emotional demands and renewing possibilities. In a carefully considered passage, Donne concludes, "For, though zeal without discretion produce ill effects, yet not so ill as discretion without zeal, worldly wisdom without Religion, for that is an evident preferring of thy worldly safety before the glory of God" (IX, 8, 199). Apathy, for Donne, is a greater enemy than doctrinal error. Lukewarmness is a blight upon the Church and a response utterly contrary to the joyful and charitable faith which the Gospel should inspire. The involvement which Donne seeks is, however, of both head and heart, and of soul and body: "Zeal forthers our salvation; but it must be Secundum scientiam, Zeal according to knowledge" (IV, 3, 121-22).

Yet to Donne, the knowledge needed for salvation is not a cerebral accomplishment; it is a reordering and reorienting of all the faculties and members of the human being. Donne asserts that "as every man was in Adam, so every faculty of every man ... concurred to that sin ..." (II, 3, 106). The process of regeneration, the
mimesis of which Donne enacts in his sermons, requires that, since all faculties participated in the Fall, they must all participate in their restoration. An important perception on Donne's part is that all faculties are in need of healing, and that none of itself is intrinsically evil. They are restored only by grace, and through grace by aiding and supporting each other. This restorative procedure is ultimately confirmed by the joy which the individual experiences as a result of his approach to God: "all thy natural faculties shall be employed upon an assent to the Gospel, thou shalt be able to prove it to thy self, and to prove it to others, to be the Gospel of Salvation: And then Exultabit spiritus, Thy spirit shall rejoice in God thy Saviour..." (II, 12, 262-63). 6

The knowledge which one gathers during the course of the spiritual pilgrimage and psychological reorientation which comprise the Donnean sermon is more than the possession of certain facts or theological propositions. Knowledge of truth for Donne, is rather a matter of attitude or approach. It is a psychological action of the whole man: a way of believing, thinking, and acting. That which is to be known or discovered may only be perceived by a process of participation. Donne's sermons are best characterized as mimetic because they portray truth as a thing in progress, in relation, in time. Doctrines are often "models" or particular insights by which we imagine the Godhead. If taken too rigidly, if taken too far, on their individual, narrowly defined bases, doctrines neglect other aspects of the deity and other valid experiences of the sacred in human life.
These views are reflected by Donne's lively sense regarding the meaning of "charity." To achieve knowledge of God demands participation in him and in the beloved community. Thus, knowledge, when understood in a purely subjective-objective way, is not desirable. Donne recalls Augustine's Confessions when he declares, concerning the conflict among factions within the Church: "They dispute, and they wrangle, and they scratch, and wound one another's reputations, and they assist the common enemy of Christianity by their uncharitable differences, Et sine pace, And without peace, and mildness, and love, and charity, no man comes to know the holy Ghost, who is the God of peace, and the. God of love" (IX, 3, 101). To hold a point of belief in disregard of another person's situation, by departing from charity, is to empty the belief of truth. If one is to speak of truth, one may do so only by accommodating another individual's concerns and perceptions of reality.

The utterance of truth automatically requires that one stand in genuine relation to one's neighbour, and in relation to one's better self:

Beloved, Reproofes upon others without charity, rather to defame them, then amend them, Reproofes upon thy selfe, without showing mercy to thine own soule, diffidences, and jealousies, and suspitions of God, either that he hated thee before thy sin, or hates thee irremediably, irreconcilably, irreparably for thy sin, These are Reproofes, but they are Absente spiritu, In the absence of the Holy Ghost. . . . (VI, 16, 312)

Donne's intent is always to bring the auditor to the realization that the regenerate functioning of the human personality is based upon right relationship—between a person and his God, a person and his brother, a person and the Church. Righteousness can be attained
only when the faculties are in proper relationship to each other and when they are all directed toward the very love of both neighbour and deity. Donne's view of "charity" is significant to his homiletic practice because it implies that one's vision of truth is inseparable from one's presentation of it. As the quotations above have demonstrated, without peace and love, one does not know the God of peace and love; if one inflicts reproof without mercy, one denies knowledge of God. What is this but to say that there is no knowledge of God, no growth in the Spirit, without a mimetic knowledge of God, an enactment of truth, the imitation of Christ? Recalling 1 Timothy 1.5, that the end of the commandment is charity, Donne tells his auditors that knowledge of God reaches even beyond an individual's understanding. He believes that the peace of God which passes all understanding is itself charity. Thus, he contends,

That men should subdue and captivate even their understanding to the love of this peace, that when in their understanding they see no reason why this or this thing should be thus or thus done, or so and so suffered, the peace of God, that is, charity, may passe their understanding, and goe above it. 

(III, 7, 185)

Donne conceives the knowledge of God as largely a psychological disposition whereby truth is filled with meaning only when all faculties embody it and seek the amendment of a neighbour's condition. The homiletic implication of this conception is that Donne's sermons are structures which grasp the auditor in the perplexity of sinful alienation and provide opportunities for psychological purgation and finally a renewed covenant with fellow men and God. The structures of his sermons demonstrate the means
of regeneration.

The truth of Donne's sermons, then, is first of all relational: it accounts for the immediate psychological situation of the hearer. Secondly, the truth of Donne's sermons is processive: it moves the auditor through a challenging psychological series of events. In such psychological imitation, Donne convinces more by means of method than by the force of his individual theology, comprehensive and systematic though it may be. It is rather Donne's extraordinary literary talent that allows him to persuade by the truth of experience and thereby to overcome theological wrangling between church factions. In his sermons, Donne is more concerned with the psychological ramifications of doctrine than an exact scholarly presentation of it. While his theology influences the formulation of his sermons, his insight into the psychological consequences of certain views changes the nature of his theology.

If we consider several of Donne's comments concerning topical theological questions, it becomes clear that he anticipates the psychological response of his hearers. Donne's strategy is usually to argue against the abuse of a particular doctrine, rather than against the doctrine itself, no matter what faction espouses it. He exemplifies this method when he handles the issue of saving faith and good works. Abuse of the classical Protestant doctrine of justification by faith occurs when one neglects the works of charity out of an extreme belief that, because none of men's works merit salvation, the performance of works is without value. The more Catholic interpretation is that works performed in fulfilling the
commandments are a means of salvation, though all is dependent upon the mercy of God. The abuse of this view takes place when God's will is diminished by the will of man in the accomplishment of good works and when a radical change of heart becomes extraneous to the process. In effect, salvation may be bought instead of received as the free gift of God. While Donne is certainly a Protestant, it is interesting to see how he anticipates abuse and reconciles doctrines in such a way that the auditor is offered psychological growth and is invited to act.

Preaching upon Romans, Donne makes it clear that he is intent upon sustaining the doctrines of the faith. He never undermines fundamental doctrine, but instead builds the capacities of his hearers:

for the circle of this Epistle of S. Paul, this precious ring, being made of that golden Doctrine, That Justification is by faith; and being enamelled with that beautiful Doctrine of good works too, in which enameled Ring, as a precious stone in the midst thereof, there is set, the glorious Doctrine of our Election, by God's eternal Predestination, our Text falls in that part, which concerns obedience, holy life, good works; which, when both the Doctrines, that of Justification by faith, and that of Predestination have suffered controversy, hath been by all sides embraced, and accepted; that there is no faith, which the Angels in heaven, or the Church upon earth, or our own consciences can take knowledge of, without good works. (III, 18, 377)

The doctrines of justification by faith, election, and predestination are affirmed; but Donne does not quibble about the exact manner in which these divine actions take place. The import for men lies in the inextricability of faith and works. The abuse of doctrine is corrected, while the doctrine remains intact; the psychological perplexity concerning the validity of human action is set at rest while the doctrine itself is not tampered with.
The delicate tension in which Donne holds the matter of faith and good works is not a fixed or rigid tension, but one which issues in renewed confidence to accept forward movement. The end of one sermon offers encouragement to take up both sacred activities: "Trust in the Lord, says David, and doe good, (performe both, stand upon those two leggs, faith, and works; not that they are both alike; there is a right and a left legge: but stand upon both; upon one in the sight of God; upon the other in the sight of Man;)" (V, 9, 197). The simple image is more complex than it seems. Donne first assures by use of Scripture: doing good works springs out of a trust in God. Secondly, he implies that in order to stand before God, in order to be justified, one must present both faith and works. Yet, thirdly, Donne will admit no equality of the two acts: one is inferior to the other: what God sees is more genuine than what man sees. Nonetheless, without both, one is cast down. Perhaps most delightful of all is the fact that the image itself has a further hidden implication related to the sermon's opening in its biblical text. Of course one does not possess legs only to stand upon, but to walk upon: justification must lead to sanctification. It is only fitting, therefore, that the sermon's end recalls its beginning: "Arise and depart, for this is not your rest" (Micah 2.10). The sermon's final assurance in faithful action comes with its last sentence. God swears, says Donne, that he "doe not onely make a new contract with us, but give us withall an ability, to performe the conditions, which he requires" (V, 9, 197). Donne's purpose is directed towards the psychological end of enabling
his parishioners to confront and transform the world beyond the confines of the church walls.

Much of what Donne has to say about faith and works is aimed at alleviating crippling anxiety. His auditors are concerned that what they do is insufficient, that they can do nothing because their fate is predestined, or that their attempt to accomplish good highlights an inner hypocrisy wherein they stand condemned. These anxieties or varieties of melancholy are based on confused and desperate interpretations of Scripture and doctrine. When alluding to the doctrine of justification by faith, not works, Donne does not approach the matter in abstract theological terms concerning the supremacy of the will of God, but in identifiably human psychological terms. Why do works not satisfy? Because we know by experience how impure our motives and involvements are in any purportedly good work:

there is no works of ours so good, as that wee can looke for thanks at Gods hand for that worke; no worke, that hath not so much ill mingled with it, as that wee need not cry God mercy for that worke. There was so much corruption in the getting, or so much vaine glory in the bestowing, as that no man builds an Hospitall, but his soule lies, though not dead, yet lame in that Hospitall; no man mends a high-way, but he is, though not drowned, yet mired in that way; no man relieves the poore, but he needs reliefe for that reliefe. In all those worke of Charity, the world that hath benefit by them, is bound to confesse and acknowledge a goodnesse, and to call them good workes; but the man that does them, and knows the weaknesses of them, knows they are not good works. (VII, 10, 265)

In their hearts, men know that all their attempts at good action are undercut by tainted desires. In each of the three cases listed, men's utter poverty in the midst of their best efforts is revealed for what it is. Indeed, the passage above is selected from the sermon given at Sir William Cokayne's funeral, and his dealings
in the cloth trade were widely known to be unscrupulous. Thus, Donne's remarks gain added weight when the auditors meditate upon the dead man lying before them. This is the great truth of justification by faith, instead of works, presented in an existential manner. And yet the force of this experienced reality is later balanced, in the same sermon, by the complementary part of the insight: that it is Christ's incarnation and passion which grant righteousness to men who believe in him. When one "puts on Christ," one's sins are covered such that "God shall know no man from his own Sonne" (VII, 10, 273). Indeed, lest one fear to act because of one's innate deficiency, Donne elsewhere further assures his congregation that "all Gods works are intire, and done in him, at once, and perfect as soon as begun." Therefore, what one hopes to accomplish is "perfected in the eyes of God, as soone as it is seriously intended in our heart" (IV, 2, 76-77).

Once again, however, Donne would have no one slip too easily from anxiety to assurance by means of the advocacy of Christ. Certainly when we put on Christ, "we shall beare his name and person" and be accepted as the Lord himself (V, 7, 159-60). But there is still a proviso to faith and works. We must bear the marks of imitation exactly:

he must so inwrap himselfe in Christ, and in his Merits, as to make all that to be his owne. No man may take the frame of Christ's merit in peeces; no Man may take his forty days fasting and put on that; and say, Christ hath fasted for me, and therefore I may surfeit; No man may take his Agony and pensiveness, and put on that, and say, Christ hath been sad for me, and therefore I may be merry. He that puts on Christ, must put him on all; and not onely find, that Christ hath dyed, nor onely that he hath died for him, but that he also hath died in Christ, and that whatsoever Christ suffered, he suffered in Christ. (V, 7, 157)
Donne here tests the authenticity of religious works. One is imputed righteous by the righteousness of Christ, but imputation is more than a justifying tag; it is an incorporation into Christ's body and a manifestation of the presence of the Spirit. The works of charity must always be measured against the example of Christ, who humbly bore the world's evil and iniquity. When we suffer in imitation of Christ, not only do we bear pain as he bore it, but Christ suffers our own individual trials. God forgives when man fails in his attempt. Yet confidence in God's grace must not lead to a presumption of divine forgiveness, nor a slackness or partiality in devotion. Enabling power flows from God to those who have faith; to neglect to use such power is indifference to his love:

Truely, he that doth as much as he can, is almost a Miracle; And when Christ appealeth to his Miracles he calleth us therein, to the best works we can doe. God will be loved with the whole heart, and God will have that love declared with our whole substance. I must not thinke I have done enough, if I have built an Almes-house: As long as I am able to doe more, I have done nothing. (IX, 4, 122)

The psychological impact of Donne's sermons is to open new and creative possibilities for a person previously hampered and constrained by sin. They offer encouragement to dare to accomplish what one who is enslaved by popular misinterpretation of, or selectivity in, doctrine could not.

A feature related to the faith and works issue is the psychological intimidation caused by the abuse of the Calvinist understanding of the divine decrees of election and reprobation. Fear over God's
judgment of the individual soul, concentration on the eternal verdict, could lead to a neglect of works or a feeling of uselessness in performing them. Donne gathers together human experiences and varieties of knowledge about God in order to allay this fear:

So there are Decrees in God, but they are hid in God; To this purpose and entendment, and in this sense, hid from God himselfe, that God accepts or condemnes Man Secundum allegata & Probata, according to the Evidence that arises from us, and not according to those Records that are hid in himselfe. Our actions and his Records agree; we doe those things which he hath Decreed; but onely our doing them, and not his Decreeing them, hath the nature of evidence. God does not Reward, nor Condemne out of his Decrees, but out of our actions. (VII, 9, 240-41)

Donne opposes the hunt for secret undisclosed meanings either about God's intent or the status of men's eternal life. There is not a vast gulf between a man's desire to grow towards God, and God's loving purpose for him. What men yearn for, though perverted by sin, and what God plans for them possees some relation to each other. Were it otherwise, human life would bear too much resemblance to a game of chance, a relentless fate rather than a cooperative venture, a communion of divine and human persons working towards the creation of a holy kingdom: "He comes not into the world, nor he comes not to the Sacrament, as to a Lottery, where perchance he may draw Salvation, but it is ten to one he misses, but upon these few-and easie conditions, Beleeve, and Love; he may be sure..." (VII, 11, 283). The workings of the cosmos may not be perceived as utterly different from what they appear to be. Providence promotes faith in itself by progressing along a sure, though not entirely discernible course; it does not confound by gambling with men's final ends in a way discontinuous
with their means of living.

Many of Donne's comments cited concerning faith and works tend to encourage the auditor to manifest his faith in actions. Nevertheless, Donne still cleaves to the Protestant belief in the primacy of faith. Thus, of Timothy, Donne says, "Till he have found faith, and beleefe in God, he never calls upon good works, he never calls them good; but when we have Faith, he would not have us stop nor determine there, but proceed to works too" (I, 8, 295). It is perhaps because Donne assumes the desire for genuine faith amongst his hearers that he continually provokes them to manifest that faith. Yet he often returns to the indisputable source so that works may not stand as good in themselves. Without faith in the Trinity, Donne warns,

morall vertues are but diseases; Liberality is but a popular baite, and not a benefit, not an almes; Chastity is but a castration, and an impotency, not a temperance, not mortification; Active valour is but a fury, whatsoever we do, and passive valour is but a stupidity, whatsoever we suffer. (VIII, 1, 59-60)

From our brief consideration of Donne's views on the matter of faith and works, we may draw several conclusions. First, Donne grasps doctrinal points firmly and expresses them precisely. Secondly, he accepts fundamental points of doctrine as given, but the abuse or misconstruction of doctrine stirs his eloquent interpretive abilities. Thirdly, the thrust of his presentation of doctrine is aimed at psychological growth and reorientation: his purpose is to re-establish proper functioning of an individual's natural faculties so that that individual may seek a mutual communion with God and his fellow men. Consequently, it appears that, as far
as Donne's sermons are concerned, the articulation of a theological proposition is valuable only when embodied by a shaping methodology, a literary structure whose aim is therapeutic. This literary embodiment amounts to a change in the nature of merely descriptive theology, elevating it above the level of fractious dispute.

Thus, we must stress that the sermons are more than the elucidation of a theology or the literary consequences of a theology. The structure of each sermon records stages of psychological development which are advanced by dramatic techniques. The auditor is encouraged by this process of persons represented and scenes enacted to grow into a more complete person. Therefore, when every sermon opens with an offer of reconciliation, Donne does not only indicate his central theological concern that God's intention towards people be seen as loving and that God's desire is for every person's salvation. More importantly, he dramatically represents those actions of God throughout history in creation, convenant, law, prophecy, redemption, and resurrection where God invites people to participate in a deeper relationship with him. This imitation, through biblical examples or realistic appeals to personal experience, performs the psychological function of enkindling the desire for a better state. Hope for a fuller communion, provided by a comforting opening, drives the mind forward into the sermon. Usually after the formal division of the sermon, the auditor is confronted by the condition of life as he knows it in his sinfulness. A speaker's hyperbolic lament or a description of the wasting effects of sin, for example, may force the auditor to turn from his initial hope and to face the extent of
his separation from God. And indeed, Donne's theatrical heightening of man's forlorn condition is often shocking to the point of being discouraging. Donne's purpose is ultimately to demonstrate that such alienation may be compassed by God's boundless love and that the auditor's participation may overcome discouragement.

Donne proceeds to demonstrate that the process of suffering is not itself only aimless agony or overwhelming punishment, but God's attempt to spur the sinner to seek him. Suffering therefore is not a negative phenomenon to be regretted, but a value to be accepted and cherished as a means of access to the Godhead. Suffering and complexity come in many forms and Donne represents them variously by inducing the auditor to recognize his involvement in sin, to discriminate among difficult choices, and to exercise the faculties of the soul. The auditor's experience of suffering, which the sermon has rehearsed, often by representative historical or fictional characters, results in a purgative relief. This catharsis is possible since, according to Donne, adversity softens the heart, making it receptive to God's saving word. The consequent visceral awareness in the auditor of a co-sufferer in Christ permits a kind of transaction whereby as one suffers with Christ, in imitation of him, rather than in ignorance of him, one also shares Christ's divine potential in resurrection. By suffering in Christ, the auditor's experience of judgment is more fully translated into mercy. The catharsis allows a redirection of energies whereby the auditor feels that God enables him to perform good works through divine power. The auditor may sense the cooperation of his faculties as his will remains free and uncoerced, but agreeable to serving God and fellow men.
These stages of psychological development receive detailed individual scrutiny later, in Chapter IV. But before we undertake such a study, it is crucial first to investigate Donne's adaptation of the current theories of faculty psychology. Donne develops and applies dramatic techniques, paralleling those of the Bible, in order to match the workings of the soul and to motivate it to regenerate action. His particular understanding of psychology demands a mimetic preaching method which exercises all the faculties, and in so doing, aids them in regaining their full potential.

III.2 Regeneration of the Faculties: Body, Imagination, and Memory

Donne's understanding of human psychology and, consequently, his method of constructing sermons to fit the working of the mind depend ultimately upon his conception of the relation between soul and body. Not only does the soul require the body's senses to gather information about the world's physical and spiritual properties; it also needs the body to execute its will, which the faculties together determine. For Donne, human nature, by definition, comprises an integrity of body and soul; the nature of a regenerate Christian is a further refinement of this integrity:

In the constitution and making of a natural man, the body is not the man, nor the soul is not the man, but the union of these two makes up the man ... as there are spirits in us, which unite body and soul, so there must be subsequent acts, and works of the blessed spirit, that must unite and confirm all, and make up this spiritual man in the ways of sanctification. ... (II, 12, 261-62)

The unity of body and soul is given a greater fulness in the Christian because the body is reanimated to accomplish works of charity when the Spirit of God joins it to the regenerate soul. Divine intention gathers together body and soul for the enhanced service of God and
men. It is only the promptings of sin which attempt to tear asunder what God has joined together. 12 Donne thus warns, following Tertullian, "Never go about to separate the thoughts of the heart, from the colledge, from the fellowship of the body. . . . All that the soule does, it does in, and with, and by the body." (IV, 14, 358).

According to Donne, it is when men turn away from God that body and soul suffer alienation. The initial separation of the spiritual and physical sides of man took place in the Fall, and this separation recurs whenever the old man in a person repeats Adam's disobedience: "God made the first Marriage, and man made the first Divorce: God married the Body and the Soule in the Creation, and man divorced the Body and Soule by death through sinne, in his fall" (VII, 10, 257). God's intention for a unity of body and soul is revealed in the individual concurrence of each person of the Trinity, not only in the first creation, but also in the continuing creative acts of redemption and sanctification:

wonder at this; That God, all Spirit, served with Spirits, associated to Spirits, should have such an affection, such a love to this body, this earthly body, this deserves wonder. The Father was pleased to breathe into this body at first, in the Creation; The Son was pleased to assume this body himself, after, in the Redemption; the Holy Ghost is pleased to consecrate this body, and make it his Temple, by his sanctification; In that Faciamus hominem, Let us, all us, make man; that consultation of the whole Trinity in making man, is exercised even upon this lower part of man, the dignifying of his body. (VI, 13, 265-66) 13

The Godhead tries to repair the estrangement that resulted from the Fall first in the Son's historical act of taking on human flesh and secondly in the Spirit's quickening of each individual to imitate the incarnate Son. Donne is intent upon demonstrating that the body
is not overcome or vanquished in the Incarnation. God's gift of his Son is a way of reclaiming the body's value and thus of enhancing human nature's entirety. By his gift, God reaffirms and honours his original creation:

the Godhead did not swallow up the manhood; but man, that nature remained still; The greater kingdom did not swallow the lesse, but the lesse had that great addition, which it had not before, and retained the dignities and privileges which it had before too. (III, 14, 299)14

People see in the example of Christ the perfect reintegration of body and soul. When they seek to imitate Christ by relating all facets of their nature, they express faith in their ultimate telos, the resurrection, and consequently bring God's heavenly kingdom: "But then is flesh and spirit reconciled in Christ, when in all the faculties of the soule, and all the organs of the body we glorifie him in this world; for then, in the next world wee shall be glorified by him, and with him, in soule, and in body too, where we shall bee thoroughly reconciled to one another ..." (IV, 11, 301). God's purpose, therefore, is not for men ultimately to transcend their bodies but to sanctify them. For one to gain salvation implies the utter interdependence of both parts of one's nature: "The soule and the body concurred to the making of a sinner, and body and soule must concur to the making of a Saint" (VII, 3, 106). In the final resurrection, the degenerate responses to the body will be purified. No longer will men wrongly consider the body a hindrance and a cause of woe; no longer will men contemptuously disregard it as the mere mechanism of egocentric gratification. The body's final purpose is to join with the soul in singing God's praises:

such a gladnesse shall my soul have, that this flesh, (which she shall no longer call her prison, nor her tempter,
but her friend, her companion, her wife) that this flesh, that is, I, in the re-union, and redintegration of both parts, shall see God; for then, one principal clause in her rejoicing, and acclamation, shall be, that this flesh is her flesh; In carna mea, in my flesh I shall see God. (III, 3, 112)

It is typical of Donne to use the image of men's destiny as an instrument to reflect upon their purpose in their present lives. The "redintegration" of soul and body shall occur perfectly in heaven. But, for the Christian, a foretaste and foreshadowing of this correspondence must first manifest itself in everyday life. In a sermon on the resurrection, Donne develops the marriage metaphor as a means of perceiving the regenerate relationship between body and soul. The sermon considers the meaning of resurrection in two parts: as it recurs in the present life of grace, and in the next life, in glory. When he refers to men's present existence, he first reflects upon how men's actions deviate from God's loving Intention. In the background of his preaching, Donne demonstrates his concern for what he considers a contemporary manifestation of deviation from God: the extremes either of superstitious vision or privatistic enthusiasm:

whereas God hath made the body to be the Organ of the soule, and the soule to be the breath of that Organ, and bound them to a mutuall relation to one another, Man sometimes withdraws the soule from the body, by neglecting the duties of this life, for imaginary speculations; and oftener withdraws the body from the soule, which should be subject to the soule, but does maintain a war; and should be a wife to the soule, and does stand out in a divorce. (VII, 3, 104)\[5\]

If one believes in resurrection as a fundamental tenet of belief, Donne tells his auditors, it has a meaning which must declare itself in everyday life. This organic relationship between body and soul suffers abuse by men's unwillingness to let each part of
their being guide and support the other. The body's actions must proclaim their thoughtfulness; and the mind must be directed upon the practice of charitable ends. Sole reliance upon one or the other distorts Christ's image in man, thus leading to vain conceptions of Christ and vainer attempts at imitating him. Man fulfills God's purpose and reinvokes God's presence when he reconciles body and soul:

Now the Resurrection, from this first fall into a Divorce, is, seriously and wisely, that is, both piously and civilly to consider, that Man is not a soule alone, but a body too; That man is not placed in this world onely for speculation; He is not sent into this world to live out of it, but to live in it; Adam was not put into Paradise, onely in that Paradise to contemplate the future Paradise, but to dresse and to keep the present; God did not breathe a soule towards him, but into him; Not in an obsession, but a possession; Not to travaille for knowledge abroad, but to direct him by counsell at home; Not for extasies, but for an inherence . . . as long as we are in our dwelling upon earth, though we must love God with all our soule, yet it is not with our soule alone; Our body must also testifie and expresse our love. . . . (VII, 3, 104)

Donne's firm belief in the interdependence of body and soul is the foundation upon which he constructs his understanding of human psychology. He adopted no revolutionary stance in his conception of the workings of the soul, but the traditional view of the faculties dating from the middle ages. Indeed, his understanding of the relation of body and soul is partly a result of the conception of the three souls—vegetable, sensible, and rational—whereby the superior parts include the inferior, but the three together make us human. In this conception man sums up and encompasses within him the rest of creation and so becomes "a little world." Perry Miller summarizes the traditional view of the powers of the soul:
the impression of an object produces in the senses an image or replica of the thing, generally called the "phantasm" or the "species"; the phantasm is then picked up at the eye or ear by the animal spirits and carried posthaste to the common sense in the central chamber of the brain; this faculty apprehends the phantasms; distinguishes one species from another, and relays them to the imagination, fancy or "phantasy", which, located in the front part of the brain, judges and compares one phantasm with another, retains them when the objects are absent, and sways the sensual inclination by holding and vivifying the objects of desire; after meaning and intelligibility have been attached to phantasms, they are stored in the memory, which is situated in the posterior lobe of the brain, where they may be "committed to it to keepe, as to their secretarie"; the reason or the understanding, which dwells somewhere above the middle, summons phantasms before its judgment seat from either the imagination or the storehouse of memory, determines which are right and true, and sends the image representing its decision, by the agency of the animal spirits, along the nerves to the will, which lives in the heart; the will then embraces true images as the good to be pursued, and commands the "sensitive appetite," which consists of affections or passions; the proper emotions, being thus aroused, transmit the impulse to the muscles.18

Donne assumes a similar process in the functioning of the soul, though his homiletic practice shows him to be less mechanistic and more inclined to think in terms of methods which heal the soul, than in asserting its idealized operation. Thus, Donne parallels Miller's description when he cites Calvin, by saying that "The soule is the seat of Affections, the spirit is rectified Reason. It is true, this Reason is the Soveraigne, these Affections are the Officers, this Body is the Executioner: Reason authorizes, Affections command, the Body executes ..." (V, 2, 65). But even in this instance, Donne earlier stresses a distinction between soul and spirit, a spirit extrinsic to natural, postlapsarian man, and therefore assumes that the regenerate working of man is not mechanical, but depends upon a further active relationship with God which infuses enabling assistance.
Miller points to a great fallacy in many Puritans' use of contemporary faculty psychology. It is a trap which John Donne consciously avoids:

Had Puritans pushed their thinking upon the nature of man to its logical limits, as did the great dramatists, they too would have discovered a conflict in their theory, a possible struggle between irresistible passions and a controlling reason or queenly will that would have permitted a tragic sense of life, but they never recognized it because they held to the vision of an ideal state in which all faculties harmonized, in which the passions voluntarily depended upon the will and the will upon right reason.19

In contrast, Donne does not turn from tragedy but accepts it as a central fact of human existence. In his understanding, however, the failure in human psychology is not in the rebellion against reason or will by the affections, but the conspiratorial concurrence of all faculties in sin. The problem of evil is more profound than a weak link in the psychological chain of command, or a part of the mechanism gone askew. Donne further resists the Stoic tendency to assert rational control over the passions since he realizes that regenerate reason cannot operate until the Spirit of God establishes, through practice, a collegial fellowship among all the powers of the soul.20 The understanding holds primacy only when it operates in proper relation to the other faculties. Therefore, it is quite possible, in Donne's view, to suborn the "Essence of man, Reason, and understanding, to the service of sin." In this hideous instance, all the higher powers of the soul are bent against God:

we come to sin wisely and learnedly, to sin logically, by a Quia, and an Ergo, that, Because God does thus, we may do as we do, we shall come to sin through all the Arts, and all our knowledge, To sin Grammatically, to tie sins together in construction, in a Syntaxis, in a chaine, and dependance, and coherence upon one another: And to sin Historically, to sin over sins of other men again, to sin by precedent, and to practice that which we had read: And we come to sin Rhetorically, persuasively,
powerfully; and as we have found examples for our sins in History, so we become examples to others, by our sins, to lead and encourage them, in theirs. . . . (I, 4, 225-26)²¹

For the most part, Donne does not speak in abstract terms about human psychology, nor does he idealize the power of reason. He is too profoundly aware of the consequences of the Fall, of the immense gulf which lies between the actual and the impeccable. He affirms that "there is nothing in this world perfect" (VII, 10, 259), even among spiritual things. Earthly knowledge of God is but "an obscure Riddle" or an "enigma" (VIII, 9, 225).²² Yet his recognition of the world's decay and the sinfulness of human faculties does not amount to a despairing pessimism, but rather reminds him of the work of transformation to be accomplished. Donne puts it succinctly when he says, "there are but two things necessary to us to know, how ill we are, and how good we may be; where nature hath left us, and whether Grace would carry us" (I, 9, 315). And therefore, he concentrates his attention on anticipating and redirecting his auditors' responses.

So while all faculties are culpable, none is intrinsically evil. Donne recalls that, "death hath invaded every part and faculty of man" (VI, 5, 117). This is humankind's tragic condition which demands full recognition. But the invasion by death is far from total, for even "That soul that descends to hell, carries the Image [of] God in the faculties of that soul thither, but there that image can never be burnt out" (II, 11, 247). The corrupt faculties themselves will be active participants in their renewal, a renewal which is effected by grace. God's love, Donne believes, is the initial act restoring confidence and ability in the psychological
processes of the soul. This love is like the robe placed on the prodigal son by a gracious Father: "It was a Robe that was put upon him; it was none of his own; but when it was put upon him, it rectified and restored those faculties, which were his own" (I, 1, 163). In fact, an individual's movement from innocence to fallen experience and finally to responsibility established by grace offers even more: God works "beyond restoring us, beyond preserving us; for he betters us, he improves us, to a better condition, than we were in, at first" (I, 1, 163). The acceptance of God's love, demonstrated in Christ's sacrifice, empowers man to govern his nature creatively and thus to imitate Christ, for God's acts work "to unty our bands, and by his grace to make our natural faculties, formerly bound up in a corrupt inablility...now able to concurre with him, and cooperate to good actions" (I, 9, 313). Yet God works gradually, through imperfect instruments, and employs impure faculties. His glory is greater for doing so, since in this manner he brings voluntary participants to himself:

A compass is a necessary thing in a ship, and the helpe of that compass brings the ship home safe, and yet that compass hath some variations, it doth not looke directly North; Neither is that starre which we call the North-pole, or by which we know the North-pole, the very Pole it selfe; but we call it so, and we make our uses of it, and our conclusions by it, as if it were so, because it is the neerest starre to that Pole. He that comes as neere uprightness as infirmities admit, is an upright man, though he have some obliquities. (VII, 9, 245)

The analogy of compass and pole-star is appropriate for understanding the fragility and yet nonetheless the efficacy of preaching. The auditor's psychological equipment is faulty, and the preacher's
direction is far from perfect: and yet they both may serve divine providence and bring about reconciliation with God. This is the "foolishness" of preaching, because as fools, men admit they have no innate power. They trust God will empower the weak who recognize their condition and therefore rely on him; they also believe he will invigorate humble literary forms: "God makes great things of little still; And in that kinde hee works most upon the Sabbath; when by the foolishnesse of Preaching hee infatuates the wisdome of the world." (VII, 12, 300). Preaching, when its responsibility is understood, is the best form of persuasion, for it assumes its power to be God's, yet demands the preacher's intense study so that he may be God's fit instrument. 23

An auditor's faculties achieve peaceful reconciliation by participating in a sermon in a way similar to what they undergo in personal experience or human history. Preaching is an intensification of the edifying process of life, but it is no more than that. As a result, Donne's sermons vindicate the "ordinary way" of achieving knowledge unto salvation—through the impression of the senses, by means of the imagination, and then by the action of all other faculties together. Donne speaks out against what he considers the false purity among elements of the Roman Church and among separatists threatening the Anglican Church. The separatists he accuses of spiritual pride: holding none pure but themselves, they believe themselves to be without sin. But his castigation of some Catholics sheds light on his understanding of the proper role of the faculties in preaching. Among the Catholics are those, he charges, who have forsaken their natural faculties in order to attain direct communica-
tion with God:

There is a Pureness, a cleanness imagin'd (rather dreamt of) in the Roman Church, by which (as their words are) the soul is abstracted, not only Passionibus, but Phantasmatisbus, not only from passions, and perturbations, but from the ordinary way of coming to know any thing; The soul (say they) of men so purified, understands no longer, per phantasmata rerum corporalium; not by having anything presented by the fantasies to the senses, and so to the understanding, but altogether by a familiar conversation with God, and an immediate revelation from God; whereas Christ himself contented himself with the ordinary way; He was hungry, and a fig-tree presented itself to him upon the way, and he went to it to eat. (I, 3, 186)

Donne perceives that the senses and fantasiy may aid men in understanding life's riddles. Indeed, Donne records the irony of the situation where Catholics, believing themselves transported beyond the fantasy, become slaves to its defects. They disdain the fantasy, Donne realizes, and thereby through their abuse of it, are victimized by it. Catholics err in dissociating the means from the ultimate good. 24

Donne makes it clear that the senses have a prominent role in knowing God. This genuine method he relates specifically to preaching: "The ordinary way, even of the holy Ghost, for the conveying of faith, and supernatural graces, is (as the way of worldly knowledge is) by the senses: where his way is by the eare, by hearing his word preached..." (IV, 8, 225). This is why God calls common men to be ministers and summons others with his word in their mouths. Such ministers are, Donne explains to his auditors, "taken from amongst your selves, and that therefore you are not to looke for Revelation, nor Extasies, no Visions, nor Transportations, but to rest in Gods ordinary meanes..." (VIII, 1, 46). Donne emphasizes the fact that God seeks to use men's senses ultimately
in his service; what God desires is the senses' transformation, not their obliteration:

It is not an utter destroying of thy senses, and of thy affections, that is enjoyed thee; but as when a Man had taken a beautiull Woman captive in the warres, he was not bound to kill her, but he must shave her head, and pare her nailes, and change her garments, before he might marry her; so captivate, subdue, change thy affections . . . . (VI, 9, 203)

The senses and affection's, so transformed, become instruments by which we may know and praise God. Donne recalls Augustine's perception wherein "every one of our senses is called a Seeing" and goes on to state that "In all our senses, in our faculties, we may see God if we will . . ." (VI, 11, 236). With such an intense awareness of the indispensability of the senses, Donne preached his sermons conscious that he must engage the senses in order to restore them.

In seventeenth-century psychology, the close relationship between the senses and the fantasy or imagination often works to discredit them both. Although Donne realizes that both faculties play a significant, though limited, role in the soul's regeneration, this belief is far from universal. William Roskyl, in his fascinating summary account concerning the imagination's place in Renaissance thought, suggests that "about the senses hangs the suggestion of immorality, in which fantasy, their neighbor, shares: imagination, like the senses, is attracted by things of the body." The disrepute is not biblically based, and is likely Platonic in origin. And while this disrepute is not a systematic philosophy, it remains a fixture of Donne's milieu. The imagination also suffers by being
linked to madness and melancholy. Further, the passions are seen to distort the imagination and the Devil is likely to imprint sinful images upon it. But not only is the imagination a passive receptor of these unfortunate influences; it could also, if ungoverned, create its own images by joining false and true impressions and thereby distort reality. Another instance of the dangerous potential of the imagination is its alliance with the emotions, and consequently with action. Though the emotions are not intrinsically evil, false images create exaggerated emotions and may lead to perverse deeds.

But while these negative associations abound in the literature of the Renaissance, Rossky also points to the salutary powers of the imagination. The regenerate soul can take advantage of a helpful imagination. The imagination can figure forth future possibilities; it is responsible for inventions; and it creates the arts and sciences. Rossky presents Sidney and Puttenham as prominent defenders of the imagination, and it is they who distinguish between the good uses of imagination in poetry, where its creations may be moral, purposeful, rational, and controlled, and the abuse of imagination in false speculation and idle or immoral conceits. Thus, imagination need not be constrained by strict verisimilitude in order to be "true": "in this process the necessity for reasonable and plausible as well as vivid resemblance to real life requires the poet's control over feigning, yet leaves room for the poet's license to create more than exact reproductions." Once liberated from the exact, literal truth, the writer "may better convey a higher truth." What some Renaissance apologists complain of in
the imagination—its close connection with the senses and the emotions—may be turned to good ends. Of the poet, Rosky states:

it is precisely because his feigning stirs emotion most strongly—exactly because his feigned images of vice and virtue move more completely than exact copies of life, and can, under the wisdom of the poet, be molded to secure the proper moral emotional effect—that the poet is the best persuader to the good.26

As we have seen, Donne accepts the good use of the imagination as integral to a healthy soul: His sermons' purpose is edification and a stirring of religious affections, and the fantasy's creation of desirable and fearful images is a fit instrument for that goal. But, while Donne does not distrust the imagination in and of itself, he understands the varieties of abuse to which men subject it. He recognizes that one of the principal causes of abuse arises when the imagination feigns without regard to what it knows of reality gathered from history and experience. Consequently, when Donne speaks of the improper use of imagination, he often directs his accusations against heretics, papists, and separatists—those who have not allowed the imagination to be governed by anything more worthy than narrow beliefs or personal feelings. Donne's greatest fear is that one element of life or one aspect of God may be misimagined as the whole of providence or of the divine nature. Thus, Donne speaks disparagingly of the separatists: "So those imaginary Churches, that will receive no light from Antiquitie, nor Primitive formes, GOD leaves to themselves and they crumble into Conventicles" (VII, 2, 83). He warns that meditation and contemplation of God "may determine in extasies, and in stupidities, and in uselesse and frivolous imaginations" (VIII, 4, 119) if they do not lead to
virtuous action. Of the despairing misinterpreter of predestination, Donne asks rhetorically if he will "teare open the jawes of Earth, and Hell, and cast thy self actually and really into it, out of a mis-imagination, that God hath cast thee into it before?" (X, 4, 117). These false imaginations are based on extreme beliefs that contradict the broad consensus gained by Scripture, tradition, experience, and the further concurrence of the rational faculties. As such, they are simply symptoms of a diseased soul. Again, Donne counsels, such disease often develops as a result of sloth:

"this easiness of admitting imaginary apparitions of spirits in the Papist, and this easiness of submitting to the private spirit, in the Schismatik, hath produced effects equally mischievous: Melancholy being made the seat of Religion on the one side, by the Papist; and Phrenzy on the other side, by the Schismatick. (VIII, 5, 135)

Sometimes slothfulness allows one to let the imagination govern itself instead of adhering to the counsel of the understanding, memory, and will. Such a usurpation can only assist one to live in a world of false appearances:

"if thou make imaginary revelations, and inspirations thy Law, or the practise of Sectaries thy Precedent, thou doest but call Fancie and Imagination, by the name of Reason and Understanding, and Opinion by the name of Faith, and Singularity, and Schisme, by the name of Communion of the Saints. (VII, 10, 263)

The imagination's power to conceive becomes a danger when its false impressions are taken as true. The most terrible instance of illusory conceit is when one perceives God as other than he is. When this happens, one no longer remains in relationship with the living God, but creates an idol out of the machinations of one's limited perspective. In a treatise on the imagination, William Perkins warned that one "way whereby a man denyeth god in thought"
is by placing in the room of the true God, an Idol of his owne
braine: This men doe, by thinking some other thing beside the
ture God to be their chiefest good. . . ."27 Certainly Donne is
aware of the trap into which the idolator falls by abusing his
imagination. If the imagination breaks apart impressions from
sense experience, and as Juan Huarte puts it, joins together figures
"(after the order of nature) those which are vnpossible and of them
growes to shape mountains of gold, and calues that flie,"28 then
it can dissect the Godhead and make the divine to appear as less
than itself. It is a problem for Donne's contemporaries as much
as it was for the Gentiles:

For, this was the wretched and penurious narrownesse to
which the Gentiles were reduced, that being unable to
consider God intirely, they broke God in pieces, and
crumbled, and scattered God into as many several gods,
as there are Powers in God, nay almost into as many several
gods, as there are Creatures from God; and more then that,
as many gods as they could fancie or imagine in making
Chimera's of their owne, for not onely that which was not
God, but that which was not at all, was made a God.
(III, 12, 262)

The question of idolatry is, of course, a question of what the
appropriate image is for man to respond to God by. Donne recognizes
that the original words for image "have sometimes a good, sometimes
a bad sense in the Scriptures" (VII, 17, 431). When the imagination
works to conceive of God, it bears this ambiguity and can create a
shape which the living God may inhabit or a form which he may
abominate. The horrifying thing about idolatry is its air of
complete unreality. Donne states simply that "No Image, but the
Image of God can fit our soule" (IX, 2, 80). The attempt to use
another image to fit the mold causes frustration, anxiety, and a
sense of purposelessness. Yet it is the perverse predilection of men to traffic with this sacred treasure: "The Image of God is more worth than all substances; and we give it, for colours, for dreames, for shadowes" (IX, 2, 81). Ultimately the wages of the sin of misimagination are a vast and aimless human waste. Richard Sibbes reflects on this waste when he comments:

By reason of the distemper of the imagination, the life of many is little else but a dream. Many good men are in a long dream of misery, and many bad men in as long a dream of happiness, till the time of waking come, and all because they are too much led by appearances. And as in a dream men are deluded with false joys and false fears, so here; which cannot but breed an unquiet and an unsettled soul. 29

Certainly Donne is conscious of the fearful consequences arising from the easy dreamlike state that typifies the idolatry inherent in misimagination. In one sermon, he offers several metaphors which heighten the absurdity of this diseased condition:

We should wonder to see a Mother in the midst of many sweet Children passing her time in making babies and puppets for her own delight. We should wonder to see a man, whose Chambers and Galleries were full of curious master-peesces, thrust in a Village Fair to looke upon sixpenny pictures, and three farthing prints. We have all the Image of God at home, and we all make babies, fancies of honour, in our ambitions. The master-peece is our own, in our bosome; and we thrust in countrey Fairs. . . . (IX, 2, 80)

Naturally, it is the preacher's responsibility to stimulate the imagination to conceive of God in such a way that the conception is adequate to "fit" a man's soul and consequently to challenge him in a dynamic and vital relationship.

Since the imagination may serve as an organ to spawn idolatry, it may act as the Devil's entrance to the soul. Donne knows that the Devil uses the seemingly innocuous reveries of the mind in order
to gain a foothold upon the conscience. Like Milton's Satan squatting toad-like by Eve's slumbering ear, the Devil often insinuates his power into the phantoms of the mind. Thus Donne prays to the Holy Ghost to be

With me in my sleep, to keep out the Tempter from the fancy, and imagination, which is his proper Scane and Spheare, That he triumph not in that, in such dreams as may be effects of sin, or causes of sin, or sins themselves. (VII, 18, 440)

The imagination may be an especially fertile area for evil images to be nurtured, but Donne nevertheless also realizes that the Devil's indwelling is a parody of God's residence in the temple of the soul. God maintains a holy purpose for the imagination which was his original creation, though evil has sought to thwart that design. Donne counsels those who stand in fear of God's judgment and despair of any reconciliation with him to consider that these feelings may be a misimagination, a distortion of their sense of responsibility: "for, as God hath given the Soule an Imagination, and a Fancy, as well as an Understanding, So the Devill imprints in the conscience, a false Imagination, as well as a fearefull sense of true sin" (IX, 13, 306). In this way Donne explains that, while the imagination is especially susceptible to the Devil's influence, it need not be so influenced, and still remains God's creature.

Since the imagination can act as the Devil's playground, there is good cause to be fearful of its machinations. In many ways, the imagination can powerfully instigate rebellion against God. Sibbes indicates the seriousness of disorders arising in the imagination:

Imagination is the first wheel of the soul, and if that
moves amiss, it stirs all the inferior wheels amiss with it. It stirs itself, and other powers of the soul are stirred by its motion; and therefore the well ordering of this is of the greater consequence. For as the imagination conceiveth, so usually the judgment concludes, the will chooseth, the affections are carried, and the members execute.30

Yet, while Donne, as we have seen, recognizes the gravity of false representations projected by the diseased imagination, he nonetheless seems to tolerate the imagination's explorations. Certainly one does not have to fulfill in action what one conceives in one's imagination in order to stand accused of sin; one may sin "but imaginarily, (and yet Dammably)" (VI, 9, 199). Still, it is Donne's inclination to avoid an over-scrupulosity of conscience in the matter of the soul's reveries. To pay too much attention to light fancies overdignifies their worth:

there may arise some Paradoxicall imaginations in my selfe, and yet these never attaine to the setlednesse of an opinion, but they float in the fancy, and are but waking dreames; and such imaginations, and fancies, and dreames, receive too much honour in the things, and too much favour in the persons, if they be reproved, or questioned, or condemned, or disputed against. (VI, 16, 317-18)

Donne's attitude anticipates Adam's speech to Eve in Paradise Lost in which he suggests that the will must assent to the knowledge of evil if a sin is to be committed: "Evil into the mind of God or Man / May come and go, so unapprov'd, and leave / No spot or blame behind. . . ."31

Interestingly enough, even when sin is deliberately committed in the imagination or by means of the other faculties, Donne does not despair of amendment. For he trusts that experience in time will eventually shed light on false paths, providing that one still seeks to follow God. Dammable sinfulness, as Donne understands it, does not arise from images of evil penetrating through the imagination, thus
converting the soul to evil's disorder. Rather, such sinfulness occurs when sin springs spontaneously from the self once the heart is hardened by habit against any promptings of remorse:

When a man receives figures and images of sin, into his Fancie and Imagination, and leads them onto his Understanding and Discourse, to his Will, to his Consent, to his Heart, by a delightful dwelling upon the meditation of that sin; yet this is not a setting of the heart upon doing evil. To be surpris'd by a Tentation, to be overthrown by it, to be held down by it for a time, is not it. It is not when the devil looks in at the window to the heart, by presenting occasions of tentations, to the eye; not when he comes in at the door to our heart, at the ear, either in lascivious discourses, or Satyrical and Libellous defamations of other men: It is not, when the devil is put to his Circuit, to seek whom he may devour, and how he may corrupt the King by-his Council, that is, the Soul by the Senses: But it is, when by a habitual custom in sin, the sin arises meerly and immediately from the self: It is, when the heart hath usurp'd upon the devil, and upon the world too, and is able and apt to sin of it self, if there were no devil, and if there were no outward objects of tentation. ... (I, 2, 178-79)

Damnation does not follow ineluctably from false conceptions engendered in the imagination and received in the other faculties. Only when the soul so isolates itself as to become comfortably evil without exterior prompting does it finally reject God's offer of salvation.

In short, like all faculties, the senses and the imagination may serve as means by which to see God and to embrace genuine reality: "As he that fears God, fears nothing else, so, he that sees God, sees every thing else: when we shall see God, Sicuti est, as he is, we shall see all things Sicuti sunt; as they are" (III, 3, 111). Discernment, or true seeing, a portion of which we know in this life, occurs by means of sense and imagination. And thus, as Donne admits in a letter, one regenerate use of the imagination is the framing of a sermon. Apologizing to Sir Robert
Ker, he writes: "Sir, I took up this paper to write a letter, but my imaginations were full of a sermon before, for I write but a few hours before I am to preach, and so instead of a letter I send you a homily." 32

Donne's belief in the regenerate uses of the imagination therefore bears some resemblance to that of Richard Sibbes. Sibbes understands that God, who reveals himself in word and sacrament, expects people to use their imaginative resources to seek him. When this happens, "A sanctified fancy will make every creature a ladder to heaven." God's earthly means of disclosure depends upon sense and imagination:

Whilst the soul is joined with the body, it hath not only a necessary but a holy use of imagination, and of sensible things whereupon our imagination worketh. What is the use of the sacraments but to help our souls by our senses, and our faith by imagination: As the soul receives much hurt from imagination, so it may have much good thereby. 33

In Donne's conception, those things in which the imagination and senses delight find their fulfillment in God's manifestations of himself. These faculties also yearn for perfection, and are restless until they find their peace in him. They are put to good use when they dwell upon the arts employed by virtuous authors; they are put to their best use in considering and applying the writings of the Bible:

Thou that lovest the Rhetorique, the Musique, the wit, the sharpnesse, the eloquence, the elegancy, of other authors, love even those things in the Scriptures, in the word of God, where they abound more, then in other authors. Put by thy affections out of their ordinary sinful way, and then Lavasti pedes, thou hast washed thy feet; and God will take thy work in hand, and raise a building farre beyond the compasse, and comprehension of thy foundation; that which the soule began, but in good nature, shall be perfected in grace. (V, 8, 177)
Thus, while the imagination is ambiguous in its function—able to summon good or evil phantasms—when it is properly exercised and sanctified by the beauty of holiness, its representations become true because they draw men into meaningful relationship with God. The sanctified imagination reveals the loveliness of the real. Its inventiveness creates charitable relations and beneficial conditions among men in the militant Church and figures forth God’s glory in his triumphant Church. Donne’s approach to the imagination recalls George Puttenham’s comments:

Euen so is the phantastical part of man (if not disordered) a representor of the best, most comely and bewitfull images or appearances of thinges to the soule and according to their very truth. If otherwise, then doth it breede Chimeres and monsters in mans imaginations, and not onely in his imaginations, but also in all his ordinarie actions and life which ensues. Wherefore such persons as be illuminated with the brightest irradiations of knowledge and of the veritie and due proportions of things, they are called by the learned men not phantastici but euphantasticote, and of this sorte of phantasie are all good Poets, notable Captaines strategematique, all cunning artificers and enginers, all Legislators Polititiens & Counsellours of estate, in whose exercises the inventiue part is most employed and is to the sound & true judgement of man most needful.34

Puttenham might well have added preachers to his list, since it is this regenerate imagination which Donne uses in framing his sermons and which he seeks to evoke in his listening congregation.

Donne contends that the imagination is most genuinely in touch with the real when its image of God is continuous with the depictions of God recorded in Scripture and preserved in fundamental doctrines. These are the test which one must apply to one’s own imagination. Donne is wary of private inspiration because the imagination may not perceive with due regard to history. Thus he warns, "No word is certain, not in the mouth of an Angel, but as it is referred to
the former word of God" (IX, 8, 212). This perspective accounts for his disparagement of the Roman Church's use of legends and its elevation of tradition to equal stature with Scripture. Both practices spring from a false imagination not firmly grounded in experience and history. The legends, he charges, "did not only faine actions, which those persons never did, but but they fained persons which never were"; further, "they did not onely "mis-canonicalize men, made Devills Saints, but they mis-christened men, put names to persons, and persons to names that never were." The evil consequences of such legends manifest themselves by perverting human knowledge of God's purpose: "And these legends being transferred into the Church, the sheep lacke their grasse upon the ground, that is, the knowledge of Gods will, in his house, at Church" (X, 6, 145). Because God is so intimately connected with his revealing actions in history, to misrepresent history is equivalent to distorting the Godhead itself. Thus, preaching in the reformed Church can have no such basis in false imagination. Rather, the imagination must be tested by historical experience:

let us cheerfully and constantly continue this duty of preaching and hearing the Gospel; that is, first the Gospel onely, and not Traditions of men; And the next is, of all the Gospel, nothing but it, and yet all it, add nothing, defalke nothing; for as the Law is, so the Gospel is, Rea integra, a whole peace. . . . take therefore the Gospel, as we take it from the Schoole, that it is historia, and usus. . . . (V, 13, 259)

Donne perceives the integrity of God's artistry and thus resists any individualistic fury of imagination which might deface the divine work. False speculation is checked and true imagining is fostered
by Donne's reformulation of a principle of St. Vincent of Lérins dating from the fifth century. One's thoughts and imagination must agree with "that which all Churches always have thought and taught to be necessary to salvation" (III, 9, 209). 35

What is implicit in Donne's sermons is his belief that the imagination must be shaped and informed by the memory. 36 The memory enables the imagination to cast accurate images concerning God and his providence and thus assists people in working out their salvation. Donne asserts that the preacher's task is not to provide proof, but to stimulate the memory: "So that our labour never lies in this, to prove to any many, that he may see God, but onely to remember him that he hath seen God: not to make him beleve that there is a God, but to make him see, that he does beleve it" (IV, 6, 169). Donne's close association of imagination and memory is perhaps best seen in one of the imagination's legitimate functions. Rossky describes it thus: "the imagination feigns healthily when it conjures up images of future possibilities." 37 Since the imagination speculates and creates possibilities, its field of action is often the future. For Donne, healthy conjuring can only take place when the memory is likewise engaged, recalling the events related in Scripture, or in recollecting the scriptural application of personal experience. Thus, when he preaches on a Psalm, Donne declares:

"David in this Text, is a Janus too; He looks two wayes, he hath a Prospect, and a Retrospect, he looks backward and forward, what God had done, and what God would doe. For, as we have one great comfort in this, That Prophecies are become Histories, that whatsoever was said by the mouthes of the Prophets, concerning our salvation in Christ, is affected, (so prophecies are made histories) so have wee another comfort in this Text, That Histories are made Prophecies; That whatsoever we reade that God had
formerly done, in the relief of his oppressed servants, we are thereby assured that he can, that he will doe them againe; and so Histories are made Prophecies. (VIII, 4, 112)

Donne's auditor may choose a course of action more confidently because memory helps him to imagine the future. "The Lord hath, and therefore the Lord will" (VI, 1, 39) is Donne's dictum which demonstrates this continuity throughout history. Therefore, that good work which Puttenham sees accomplished by memory and imagination in historical poetry is similar to what Donne achieves by means of the historical sermon. The use of memory, in regard to historical poetry, writes Puttenham, is that it maketh most to a sound judgement and perfect worldly wisedome, examining and comparing the times past with the present, and by them both considering the time to come, concludeth with a stedfast resolution, what is the best course to be taken in all his actions and advices in this world.

The imagination's work in envisaging the future is supported when the memory reveals the purposeful direction of history. Such an attitude explains Donne's care in presenting historical figures so that they are both imaginatively believable to the auditor and scripturally accurate.

III.3 Regeneration of the Faculties: The Rational Trinity, Affections, and Rectified Reason

To speak of Donne's conception of memory involves relating it not only to the senses and the imagination, but also to the other superior faculties of the soul, the will and the understanding. Much study has already been devoted to Donne's rational trinity,
but a review and re-evaluation of these faculties' functions is necessary if we are to assess the psychological process present in the sermons. Memory is certainly the key faculty in Donne's psychology and his approach to it distinguishes him from his contemporaries.

Like Augustine and Bernard before him, Donne finds the image of God represented in the three superior faculties of the soul: "As the three Persons of the Trinity created us, so we have, in our one soul, a threefold impression of that image, and, as Saint Bernard calls it, A trinity from the Trinity, in those three faculties of the soul, the Understanding, the Will, and the Memory" (II, 2, 72-73). But unlike these Church Fathers, Donne relates the persons of the Trinity and their attributes to different human faculties. Whereas Augustine and Bernard associate God the Father with the memory, the Son with the understanding, and the Holy Ghost with the will, Donne in general relates the Father to the understanding, the Son to the will, and the Holy Ghost to the memory. Both Donne and the Church Fathers accord Father, Son, and Holy Ghost the attributes of power, wisdom, and goodness respectively. While Donne discriminates among the functions of the Trinity as he does the faculties of the soul, neither Trinity nor soul should be seen to operate in a mechanistic fashion. Donne's tendency is to see the cooperation and concurrence in the Trinity, and the soul, which bears the Trinity's image, ought to reflect a similar functioning. Donne affirms that the "Attributes of God, Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, be all three in all three Persons of the Trinity," and
consequently they all possess "a joynt-Almighinesse, a joynt-Wisdome, and a joynt-Goodnesse". (III, 15, 327). In other words, the attribute accorded each person of the Trinity is not exclusive, but flows among the other persons. He thus suggests both Son and Holy Ghost are Fathers: the Son is the Father of mercies, and the Holy Ghost the Father in that adoption by which Christ is applied to us (III, 12, 265-69). Elsewhere, Donne suggest there is "a Holy Ghost in all the holy offices of Christ" (VI, 16, 314). Further, Donne sees a concurrence of all divine persons in the creation of man and in the work of salvation.  

In a like manner, the functions of the soul are not neatly compartmentalized. In one statement, which recalls the Augustinian-Bernardian paradigm, Donne sees the interpenetration of psychological functions:

we attribute Power to the Father: And because the Son proceeds Per modum intellectus, (which is the phrase that passes through the Fathers, and the Schoole) That as our understanding proceeds from our reasonable soule, so the second Person, the Son, proceeds from the Father, therefore we attribute Wisdome to the Son: and then, because the Holy Ghost is said to proceed Per modum voluntatis, That as our soule (as the roote) and our understanding, proceeding from that soule, produce our will, and the object of our will, is evermore Bonum, that which is good in our apprehension, therefore we attribute to the Holy Ghost, Goodnesse. (III, 15, 328)

So while it is true that Donne developed his own conception of the relationship of the divine persons imaged in the human soul, he was also able to consider a complementary conception, and thus he demonstrates his acceptance of the mingling and cooperation among the faculties.

Donne believes that the will proceeds from understanding, and that, ideally, these two faculties in the Christian agree with each other: "His understanding and his will is all one faculty" (VIII, 7,
190). But Donne, in his sermons, does not preach to ideal auditors, and must find a way to motivate the fallen faculties to regenerate cooperation. Following the scholastics, he can assert that "The first act of the will is love" and can consequently advance the corollary that "First our Understanding must present it [a thing] as Verum, as a Knowne truth, and then our Will imbraces it as Bonum, as Good, and worthy to be loved" (VIII, 9, 222). But again, these maxims do not solve the problem of faculties invaded by sin. Indeed, Donne expresses to his congregation his perplexity with the human faculties. Their unmanageability and the vain attempts to explain their operation are difficult factors with which he struggles. The will especially remains unfathomable and uncontrollable:

For, for the understanding, we know how to worke upon that; we know what arguments have prevayled upon us, with what arguments we have prevailed upon others, and those we can use: so far, Vt nihil habeant contra, & si non assestantur, That though they will not be of our minde, yet they shall have nothing to say against it. So far we can go upon that faculty, the understanding. But the will of man is so irregular, so unlimited a thing, as that no man hath a bridle upon anothers will, no man can undertake nor promise for that; no Creature hath that faculty but man, yet no man understands that faculty. It hath beene the exercise of a thousand wits, it hath beene the subject, yea the knot and perplexity of a thousand disputations, to find out, what it is that determines, that concludes the will of man so, as that it assents thereunto. For, if it were absolutely true which some have said that Ultimus actus intellectus est voluntas, that the last act of the Understanding is the Will, then all our labour were still to worke upon the Understanding, and when that were rectified, the Will must follow. But is is not so. . . . (VI, 16, 321)

Experience contradicts the scheme which posits that the will follows the understanding's perceptions. And while Donne believes one should not neglect rational argument, such a tool is all for naught.
if the will ignores the conclusions of the understanding. It certainly is true that Donne declares "God is Logos, speech and reason: He declares his will by his Word, and he proves it, he confirms it, he is Logos, and he proceeds Logically" (V, 4, 103). He likewise affirms "sin is but fallacy and Sophistry; Religion is reason and Logique; The devill hides, and deludes, Almighty God demonstrates and proves". (V, 4, 104) God coerces no one against free will and the preacher must follow God's example. Even reproof from the pulpit "is but an argument, it is but a convincing, it is not a destroying" (IV, 16, 319). Finally, however, Donne's practice is not to appeal directly to the understanding because it simply is not effective in reorienting his hearers. After all, as Donne reminds his hearers, he does not lecture, but preach. Thus, concludes Hickey, "Donne rejects logical reasoning as the principal means of winning men to God."48

Instead, Donne turns to the memory as a means to reach his auditors. It does not suffer as profoundly from the liabilities which have befallen the other faculties: "The surest way, and the nearest way to lay hold upon God, is the consideration of that which he had done already" (VII, 1, 63). When a person reflects upon what God has accomplished for all people throughout history, he responds in gratitude and love. Such a person is thereby more amenable to God's directions; he is eager to seek God's will and to count upon God's future aid. The memory is the preacher's best means to penetrate the soul:

Of our perversenesse in both faculties, understanding, and will, God may complain, but as much of our memory; for, for the rectifying of the will, the understanding must be rectified, and that implies great difficulty. But
the memory is so familiar, and so present, and so ready a faculty, as will always answer, if we will but speak to it, and ask it, what God hath done for us, or for others. The art of salvation, is but the art of memory. (II, 2, 73)

The other two superior faculties have severe limitations placed upon them by the Fall. The understanding "requires long and cleer in-struction" and the will "is in itself the blindest and boldest faculty." But the memory, says Donne, in relation to God, "is the nearest way to him" (II, 11, 235). So while different faiths may dispute and question because of "beclouded" understandings and "perverted" wills, all agree in offering genuine thanks when they remember God's mercies to them (II, 11, 237).

Of course, Donne does not elevate the memory as a faculty unscathed by the effects of sin. No part of human nature is free from corruption. The memory too falls victim to evil's sway, and thus Donne warns, "yet if thou touch upon the memory of that dead sin, with delight, thou begettest a new childe of sin" (I, 3, 194). But the memory, because it relies upon the strong impression of unmistakable past events, is less easily shaken than the will or understanding. Logical reasoning, if it be pure, arrives at the same conclusions which remembrance does. But an effective understanding and will require sound premises, no faults in the process of discriminating choices, and the final desire to obtain a perceived good. The more reliable way is to trust the propositions of history, which are unalterable because preserved in time. The memory therefore works salvation in the ceremonies of the Church "because their signification is clearer to us, and more apprehensible by us, being
of things past, and accomplished already" (II, 12, 259). Donne graphically describes why he relies on the memories of his auditors when he preaches:

And truly the Memory is oftner the Holy Ghosts Pulpit that he preaches in, then the Understanding. How many here would not understand me, or not rest in that which they heard, if I should spend the rest of this house in repeating, and reconciling that which divers authors have spoken diversly of the manner of Christ presence in the Sacrament, or the manner of Christs descent into Hell, or the manner of the concurrence, and joynt-working of the grace of God, and the free-will of man in mens actions? But is there any man amongst us that is not capable of this Catechism, Remember to morrow but those good thoughts which you have had within this house, since you came hither now... If he would remember his own holy purposes at best he would never forget God; If he would remember the comfort he had in having overcome such a tentation yesterday, he would not be overcome by that tentation to day. The Memory is as a conclusion of a Syllogisme, which being inferred upon true propositions, cannot be denied: He that remembers Gods former blessings concludes infallibly upon his future. (VIII, 11, 261-62)

The memory arrives at the same truth as syllogistic logic without involving the steps which cause many people to stumble and fall. The memory, in effect, performs logic's many functions at once. In another illuminating analogy, Donne employs Bernard's metaphor to describe the memory, and calls that faculty "the stomach of the soul" which "receives and digests, and turns into good blood, all the benefits formerly exhibited to us in particular, and exhibited to the whole Church of God" (II, 11, 236). Thus; the memory itself is able to initiate the work of reorientation by intuitively making sense of experience. One of the remarkable capacities of the memory is that it not only helps to rectify itself, but it beneficially influences the other faculties as well. In a metaphor of his own, Donne presents the memory as the "Gallery of the soul"
and thus explains the reciprocal effects which remembering God has for the rest of the mind: "And as a well made, and well plac'd picture, looks alwayes upon him that looks upon it, so shall thy God look upon thee, whose memory is thus contemplating him, and shine upon thine understanding, and rectifie thy will too" (II, 11, 237). The remembering process, if God lends his grace, ultimately reaches beyond the memory and stimulates the understanding to perceive clearly and prompts the will to choose rightly.  

The memory's guiding and healing of the other faculties is related, by Stookey, to the terminology of remembrance contained in the Bible itself. Stookey asserts, "Memory is not the static mental recall of that which is past or absent but an active appropriation of the thing remembered." To remember is thus not a looking backward, but an action which involves all tenses—past, present, and future. Remembrance calls forth a covenant relationship in both God's faithfulness and promises and man's obedience and gratitude. In short, when men remember God, they are drawn into a relationship with the living God who requires the implementation and actualization of belief. So whether one is enjoined to remember the Sabbath (Exod. 20.8), to remember the Creator in the days of one's youth (Eccl. 12.1), to accept the cup and loaf in remembrance of the Lord (I Cor. 11.23-26), or to remember the words of Jesus (Acts 20.35), one is asked to respond in love and action. In Scripture, the commandment to remember is fulfilled neither by simple recollection or credulity, but by the enactment of a revelatory symbol. Consequently, for Donne, the glorifying of God "consists especially in these two declarations, Commemoration, and Imitation; a due celebration
of former founders and benefactors, and a pious proceeding according
to such precedents" (X, 3, 100). The proper use of memory implies
the performance of commandments and imitation of holy examples.
This is why Donne paraphrases the words of the dying St. Paul as:
"Observe, recollect, remember, practise that which I have delivered
unto you" (VIII, 6, 160). If one puts the memory of either personal
experience or Scripture to best use, one puts on Christ, and becomes
a new creation.

The memory, as it strives to accomplish the work of incarnation,
is aided by the cooperative action of the Holy Ghost and the preacher.
For while the Holy Ghost is the agent of transformation, the preacher
is the means. The Holy Ghost awakens the memory, but the method
by which this awakening usually takes place is through the efficacy
of preaching. Donne sketches the complex interrelationship amongst
auditors, preacher, and Holy Ghost:

Preaching it selfe, even the Preaching of Christ himselfe,
had beene lost, if the holy Ghost had not brought all those
things to their remembrance. And if the holy Ghost do
bring these things, which we preach to your remembrance,
you are also made fishers of men, and Apostles, and (as
the Prophet speaks) Salvatores mundi, men that assist
the salvation of the world, by the best way of preaching,
an exemplar life, and holy conversation. (VIII, 11, 269)

Donne's auditors have benefit of the Scriptures by "remembering them
by the way of Preaching" (VII, 16, 401), and by remembering in such
a way that biblical truth is imitated. The preacher is, therefore,
like the angel who appeared to the women looking for Christ after
his resurrection. Donne tells his auditors that the angel had to
remind the women of Christ's words which he had spoken to them in
Galilee, "The Sonne of man must be delivered into the hands of sin-
full men, and Crucified, and the third day, rise again." Donne observes, concerning the women who finally recall Christ's words, "Then they remembered them, when they heard of them again; but not till then" (IX, 8, 205).53 Donne indicates that the whole import of the empty tomb would have been lost on these women were it not for the angel's causing them to remember. Meaning is impossible to attain without the comparative accretions of memory. The preacher's role in remembering on behalf of the congregation is a calling forth of an incarnate reality out of the dead letter.54 The Scriptures themselves are barren unless they are publicly remembered, by an ordained minister, and applied to the auditors: "Nothing is Gospell, not Evangelium; good message, if it be not put into a Messenger's mouth and delivered by him . . ." (VII, 16, 396).55 The incarnation—through remembrance—of the Word in the Church and in the temple of the individual soul is not complete until confirmed by the auditor's action beyond the Church walls: "to doe the Gospel, is to doe what we can for the preservation of the Gospel: (II, 7, 177).56

Despite Donne's strong reliance upon the faculty of memory, it is clear that the understanding must be involved in order for the soul to contribute to God's work on earth. Indeed, the gift of memory is useless unless its images are submitted to the understanding. "Beasts doe remember," declares Donne, "but they doe not remember that they remember; they doe not reflect upon it, which is that that constitutes memory."57 The human memory, if it is to be
worthy of the name, must have recourse to "a ruminated, a reflected knowledge" (IV, 12, 306). This discursive, or reflective ability sets humankind apart from the animals. Donne agrees with contemporary thought by affirming that inanimate creatures have being, plants life and growth, and animals sense and feeling. Angels possess "reason and understanding," but "Man hath them all" (V, 13, 253-54). Man is elevated above the rest of the earthly creation because of his understanding; but he is unique in that he is a microcosm of all orders.

Much of Donne's lament concerning human psychology is that men do not employ all their powers and faculties. They stop before the circuit of faculties is completed. Often this is because the understanding is slighted in the process. Donne asserts, "The Mind implies consideration, deliberation, conclusion upon premisses; and wee never come to that; we never put the soule home; wee never bend the soule up to her height..." (VIII, 14, 326). If people were more willing to let the psychological process follow its full course, the soul would be more likely to detect error and redirect its impulses and actions to godly ends. This is why Donne insists that "The Imaginations... before it [sic] come to be a formall and debated thought" are only evil continually (II, 6, 153). It is not that the imagination is intrinsically evil, but that without the confirmation of the whole reasoning process, its images cannot be identified as good. Donne's persistence in encouraging his auditors to complete the psychological circuit, by including reason, is apparent when he speaks of God's manner of working:
sometimes he workes upon the phantasie of Man; as in those
often Visions, which he presented to his Prophets in
dreames; sometimes he workes upon the senses, by preparing
objects for them; So he filled the Mountaine round about
with horses, and chariots, in defense of Elisha; but
alwayes he workes upon our reason; he bids us feare no
judgment, he bids us hope for no mercy, except it have
a Quia, a reason, a foundation, in the Scriptures.
(V, 4, 103)

The implication of this statement is that both the prophets' visions
and the sensible phantasms used in Elisha's defense were reasonable.
They stood up under the understanding's scrutiny. That is, they did
not conflict with reality, the genuine workings of providence.
The statement provides an important rationale for Donne's mimetic
techniques, for while his characterizations and scene dramatizations
are fictional creations, they nonetheless accord with the universal
patterns which the understanding is able to discern by sorting through
the memory's storehouse of events. Donne's fictive representations of
persons in action, like prophetic dreams, are also reasonable and godly.

Images and senses must remain evil until the understanding
examines them, because unless men use all their rational faculties,
they accept less than is demanded of their order of being, and thereby
are guilty of sin. This is the heresy which the Catholic commits,
for he resolves upon belief and action without benefit of discursive
reasoning. "Ignorance is Implicite Belife," warns Donne, and as
such is a sin against the Son, "who is true and onely Wisdome"
(LII, 15, 329). But even if one believes in true doctrine without
submitting it to rational examination, one undermines the truth,
making it evil in the sight of God:

For God requires no such faith, nay he accepts, nay he
excuses no such faith, as beleeves without reason; beleeves
he knowes not why. As faith without fruit, without works, is no faith; so faith without a root, without reason, is not faith, but an opinion." (V, 4, 102)

In Donne's conception, to do right for the wrong reason, or in the absence of reason, is equivalent to doing what is wrong. The understanding is, therefore, one of man's most precious possessions.

Much of what Donne has to say about the understanding concerns its relation to faith. As we have already indicated, there is no contradiction between faith and reason: a continuum of meaning exists between them. Sherwood suggests that for Donne "rational knowledge is prior in time to belief." That is to say, man must proceed by understanding to a point where he must let faith lead him further. Natural reason takes us to the foot of the hill which leads to the mysteries of religion, says Donne. To possess it, we must rely only on the strength of faith (VII, 1, 54). This metaphor does not fully articulate Donne's assumptions, however. Sherwood further contends, "By necessity reason is part of the modus operandi of faith even though paradoxically denied complete comprehension of its own premises as it moves higher in the realm of faith." Faith, therefore, does not replace reason: faith is only further buttressed by it. Sherwood sees Donne following Augustine: "man as a rational creature must reason before and after belief."59 One of the understanding's highest recommendations is that it acts as the preparation for belief and as faith's subsequent aid and support. Simply stated, "the understanding is the receptacle of Faith" (IX, 17, 386). This implies no base role, however. Another way of expressing the matter is to say that no other instrument is fit to receive grace: "nature, and naturall reason do not produce
grace, but yet grace can take root in no other thing but in the
nature and reason of man" (II, 12, 261). Grace is the seed which
requires the fertile soil of reason so that it may sprout and find
nourishment. Donne uses no condescension in discussing this aspect
of man: "yet this Understanding in our Text, though it be but
the natural faculty, is a considerable thing, and hath, in part,
the nature of materials for God to work upon" (IX, 17, 382).
Faith and reason are so intimately related that faith cannot exist
without its complement. And though a person may be unaware of his
own use of the understanding as he exercises his faith in God, if
it is a genuine faith, Donne insists that faculty is intricately
involved in the process:

as howsoever a man may forget the order of the letters,
after he is come to read perfectly, and forget the rules
of his Grammar, after he is come to speak perfectly, yet
by those letters, and by that Grammar he came to that
perfection; so, though faith be of an infinite exaltation
above understanding, yet, as though our understanding be
above our senses, yet by our senses we come to understand,
so by our understanding we come to believe. (IX, 16, 357)

The analogy is a highly appropriate one, for though a person may be
unaware of his use of letters and grammar, he still depends on these
principles and underlying structures once he has succeeded in speak-
ing effectively. Likewise, though one's belief may supersede all
else in importance, faith still relies on the understanding as a
tool in perceiving clearly. Reason remains the firm foundation of
faith: "Mysteries of Religion are not the less believ'd and embrac'd
by Faith, because they are presented, and induc'd, and apprehended
by Reason" (I, 2, 169).
An analysis of Donne's perspective on the understanding is also complicated by his recognition of the difference between the innate human faculty and the more inclusive rational power after it has been transformed by grace. Donne distinguishes between the two capacities, for one "is but that naturall faculty of man, where-with God enlighteneth every man that commeth into the world..." (IX, 17, 382). The two are not utterly different, of course, for the latter encompasses the former. Nonetheless, the informing presence of Christ revitalizes the natural faculty: "For, a regenerate Christian, being now a new Creature, hath also a new facultie of Reason: and so believeth the Mysteries of Religion, out of another Reason, then as a meere naturall Man, he believed naturall and morall things" (III, 17, 359).

Sherwood relates Donne's distinction between these different rational states to Augustine's two functions in the faculty of reason: "Ratio is the discursive reason, which moveth from one kind of earthly knowledge to another; intellectus, however, refers to intuitive understanding of higher truth," that is, wisdom. We shall presently discuss Donne's superedified understanding. It suffices at this moment to say that Donne expects the "common Reason" (III, 17, 359) to operate, at all stages, and in concurrence with the other faculties, in the life of a Christian.

The understanding also holds a close association with the will. As we have already suggested, the will can be viewed as the last act of the understanding, and the understanding, therefore,
needs to be cleared before the will can act properly. Donne states, "first our understanding is settled, and that understanding leads our will" (V, 2765). But, of course, the process is not as simple as this assertion leads us to believe. As with the memory, the understanding also participates in a joint-working with the will. Indeed, the understanding cannot operate without the will's active agreement:

Man can instruct, God onely can make us understand. And then it is Faciam te, I will make Thee, Thee understand; The worke is the Lords, The understanding is the mans: for God does not worke in man, as the Devill did in Idols, and In Pythonissis, and In Ventriloquis, in possessit persons, who had no voluntary concurrence with the action of the Devill, but were meerely Passive; God works so in man, as that he makes man worke too, Faciam Te, I will make Thee understand; That that shall be done by mee, but in Thee; the Power that rectifies the act is Gods, the Act is mans... (IX, 16, 351-52)

So while the understanding often prompts the will, even in the initial movement towards regeneration, the understanding needs the will to consent before it can perceive as it ought.

Donne's psychological assessment of the nature and function of the human will is linked to the question posed by the theological debate over grace and free will. Typically, Donne rejects extreme positions, which assume either that salvation may be reached by free will or that the good offices of the natural faculty can be denied:

That as the Pelagian wounds the glory of God deeply, in making Naturall faculties joyn-Commissioners with Grace, so do they diminish the glory of God too, if any deny naturall faculties to be the subordinate servants and instruments of Grace; for as Grace could not worke upon man to Salvation, if man had not a faculty of will to
In the matter of will, God's glory must be preserved, but so must man's dignity. Donne insists that man's will is vitally involved in his own salvation, but not to the extent that his individual will actually accomplishes the work. In the work of redemption men are instruments, not authors: "not that our will payes one penny towards this purchase, but our own will may forfeit it; it cannot adopt us, but it may disinherit us" (I, 8, 293). Without the ability to choose, man sinks below himself. God does not eclipse man's will but persuades it to make beneficial choices. 

Free will is not a commodity which can be possessed absolutely, however. The onslaught of sin destroys the power to choose without limitation and hindrance. By exercising the will through poor choice, one may subvert the will. Concerning Adam, Donne maintains, "It was in his own power whether he would keep a free-will, or no, and he spent that stock, he lost that free-will" (I, 1, 162). All people fall under the shadow of Adam's misuse of will. In Donne's view, however, every person's complicity in Adam's sin is not so much a consequential necessity as it is an existential truth. Donne on one hand sees Adam's successors as unwilling victims of original sin: "we inherit death from him, and incurre death whether we will or no; before any consent of ours be actually given to any Sin, we are children of wrath, and of death" (I, 8, 293). On the other hand,
however, Donne acknowledges individual compliance with Adam's sin, in that we not necessarily, but inevitably, embrace sin through our actions: "as all our other faculties were, so omnium voluntates in Adam, All our wils were in Adam, and we sinned wilfully, when he did so, and so Original sin is a voluntary sin: Our will is poisoned in the fountaine . . ." (VII, 8, 218). In the providential scheme of salvation, one man's perverted will is restored by a perfect will which is both human and divine: "There was nothing more free, more voluntary, more spontaneous then the death of Christ" (X, 11, 244). In perfect love, Christ freely used his volition to become man and to die for all humankind.

Paradoxically, the will—that faculty which initiates the execution of one's desires, and consequently has an air of independence and individuality about it—is not really free until it seeks not itself, but further relation to the divine will. To exercise the will so as to sever relations is actually to imprison it in illusion. The will as part of the soul, is not personal property, but God's possession, and thus he who finds his life will lose it: "As Pirates take other mens subjects, and then make them slaves, we usurp the faculties of the soul, and call the will ours, we usurp the soul it self, and call it ours; and then deliver all to everlasting bondage" (VII, 18, 447). Therefore, if the will is truly to be rectified, it does not need its own sufficiency as much as reliance, not as much its assertion as compliance. The will must make itself humble before God, and consent, allowing God access to oneself, even as Mary did:

Let us present our own will as a mother to the father of light, and the father of life, and the father of love, that
we may be willing to conceive by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, and not resist his working upon our souls; but with the obedience of the blessed Virgin, may say, Ecce ancilla, Behold the servant of the Lord, fiat mihi secundum tuum, Be it done unto me: according to thy Word; I will not stop mine eares to thy Word, my heart shall not doubt of thy Word, my life shall express my having heard and harkened to thy word, that word which is the Gospell, that Gospell which is peace to my Conscience, and reconciliation to my God, and Salvation to my Soul. . . . (I, 8, 294)

Clearly, submitting the will to God's working, in Donne's thinking, primarily means hearing God's word in the Scriptures through his ordinance of preaching, and then manifesting the word in action.

The will's determination is not the final act of the soul, though it is the third and last faculty of Donne's rational trinity. The superior faculties must give effect to their own considerations, and this requires the involvement of the affections or passions.

We have already made passing reference to this aspect of the soul, and clearly in Donne's psychology, they work to enforce the mind's plans. These emotions must be stimulated before the conscience can activate the muscles of the body. Thus, Donne makes use of St. Paul's method, which is "to proceed by the understanding, to the affections, and so to the conscience of those that hear him; by such a means of persuadeion, as are most appliable to them, to whom he speaks" (VIII, 6, 160). Like the other faculties, the affections may be either good or evil. One must subdue "brutish affections" (II, 3, 100), But one can hope to enjoy "Religious affections" (VII, 12, 316). But individual affections are morally ambiguous too, since even hatred can be used to good ends: "He that hates nothing in an Heretique, or in a Schismaticque, but the Schisme or the Heresie . . . hath got far in the steps of Christian perfection"
(VI, 16, 320). Every affection can have a religious purpose and direction, and consequently Donne celebrates the fact that certain psalms "command over all affections" (VII, 1, 51).

Perhaps the most certain thing about the affections is that no person can escape them, and therefore no person should try. What people may legitimately attempt is to purify the affections and nurture them to good ends. We must not try to divest our human nature by an "extinguishing of naturall affections," but as Christ enjoined, men should "sleepe not lazily in an over-indulgency to these affections; but, Ambula, walke sincerely in thy Calling, and thou shalt heare thy Saviour say, Non est infirmitas Raec ad mortem. These affections, may, these concupiscencies shall not destroy thee" (V, 17, 351-52). In paradise, the affections held their proper station, and thus at that time, "all affections should have been subjects" (VII, 14, 358). In a fallen world, however, people often err by allowing their affections free rein, and this false path is "a following of affections, and passions, which are the inferior servants of the soule, and not of that, which we understand here by the Minde" (VIII, 14, 327). Nonetheless, Christ revealed the proper use of the passions, when, through his love and sorrow, he wept for men, though in him there was "no declination towards inordinate ness" (IV, 13; 338; 329). But even strong and pressing emotions do not of themselves alienate one from God: "A storme of affections in' nature, and yet a settled calm, and a fast anchorage in grace, a suspicion, and a jealousie, and yet an assurance, and a confidence in God may well consist together . . ." (VII, 15, 383).

So, while it is possible that the natural affections may make men
bestial, to be without affections lowers one further down the chain of being: "indolencie, absence, emptinesse, privation of affections, makes any man at all times, like stones, like dirt" (IV, 13, 330). The affections are, therefore, a necessary and desirable aspect of a Christian's constitution. Religious zeal itself is "that one good affection" which excuses many who would otherwise stand condemned (VI, 11, 229). And in St. Paul's writing, Donne finds a method of drawing nearer to God in contrition:

according to that chaine of Affections which the Apostle makes, That godly sorrow brings a sinner to a care; He is no longer careless, negligent of his ways; and that care to a clearing of himselfe, not to cleare himselfe by way of excuse, or disguise, but to cleare himselfe by way of physick, by humble confession; and then that clearing brings,him to an indignation, to a kind of holy scorne, and wonder, how that tentation could worke so... (VIII, 8, 206)

The important place which Donne accords the affections manifests itself in his attempt to stir them up while preaching. Certainly he is not the only preacher of his century to affirm their significance in devotion. Joseph Hall asserts that "God's school is more affection than understanding" and consequently that "A man is a man by his understanding part, but he is a Christian by his will and affections." Like Hall and others, Donne emphasizes the affections' considerable role, though he also balances their functioning with the other faculties. One of the true purposes of preaching, Donne tells his auditors, is to "usher the true word of life into your understandings, and affections" (X, 6, 147). The minister must execute the commission given to him by Christ (Luke 9.60): "go and preach, work upon their affections, satisfie their reason" (IV, 14, 351). By stimulating the passions, the preacher prevents his auditors
from falling into the dullness and complacency which plagues the ungodly: "The Preacher stirres and moves, and agitates the holy affections of the Congregation, that they slumber not in a senselessness..." (VIII, 1, 43). If the preacher performs his task well, he should be able to touch the auditor using Scripture's power to integrate and restore the soul. When he emulates the poetry of the Bible, as in the Song of Deborah, he too may be able "to Tune us, to Compose and give us a Harmony and Concord of affections, in all perturbations and passions, and discords in the passages of this life" (IV, 7, 180).

The ultimate goal of all the natural faculties is not only to become an integrated and effective mechanism, but to put themselves at the disposal of the divine purpose. Donne declares, concerning the faculties, "For, though they be not naturally instruments of grace; yet naturally they are susceptible of grace, and have so much in their nature, as that by grace they may be made instruments of grace..." (IX, 2, 85). When the faculties, whose own original purpose in bearing the image of God is a good one, are enhanced by the intervention of grace, they become a new creation. This new creation or capacity is what Donne means by the "superedification" upon the natural reason (IX, 17, 382), or else the "new facultie of Reason" (III, 17, 359), which leads to Christian wisdom. For though Donne speaks of the rectified reason or understanding in a narrow sense, meaning the pure operation of the natural faculty, he also speaks of the rectified reason in a more comprehensive manner. For example, Donne distinguishes senses when he contradicts Justin Martyr, who asserted that "rectified reason did the same office in
the Gentiles, as faith did in the Christians” (VI, 5, 118).

Donne insists that Christians have a greater inheritance than the enlightened thinking of the philosophers:

The Atheist, and all his Philosophy, Helper and hee that is Holpen, Horse and Man, Nature and Art, Reason mounted and advanced upon Learning, shall never be able to leap over, or breake thorough this wall, No man, no naturall man can doe any thing towards a supernaturall work. (VI, 5, 118)

Christians, also have benefit of the manifestation and actual presence of Christ amongst them. So the rectified natural understanding is not what Donne means by a "new faculty of Reason."

But Donne uses the term "rectified reason" in a more inclusive sense as well. It may also refer to the whole man who has been restored by grace. When a man uses all his faculties to embody the Gospel, this too may be "rectified reason." In this sense, "rectified Reason is Religion" (II, 14, 293), for religion demands that all the faculties perverted in Adam be renewed by God’s redeeming power. Donne refines this notion of a comprehensive reason when he alludes to the model of the soul as having three souls, the superior of which embraces the inferior within itself. When people achieve their goal in heaven, there will be:

Bodies, able bodies, and lastly, bodies inanimated with one soule: one vegetative soule, head and members must grow together, one sensitive soule, all must be sensible and compassionate of one another’s miserie; and especially one Immortall soule, one supreme soule, one Religion. (IV, 1, 47)

As all the natural souls—vegetable, sensitive, and rational—are included within the rational soul, so the supreme soul, religion, embraces all the regenerate faculties. This supreme soul is the Christian rectified reason. Donne explains this phenomenon in another way when he recites the deformities associated with the
memory, understanding and will. The three rational faculties are lost until the Holy Ghost favours them with the three virtues of Christian religion: "the goodness of God, by these three witnesses on earth [faculties] regenerates, and reestablishes a new Trinity in us, faith, and hope, and charity" (V, 6, 149).

Donne implies this all-inclusive faculty of the regenerate soul when he speaks in such a way as to suggest the cooperative action of many faculties in carrying out the works of grace. When the soul is regenerate, when Christian rectified reason operates, there is a delightful, creative, and incisive procedure under way. Thus, even while Donne dismisses the possibility of God's serious operation in the light and vain musings of the imagination, he suggests that the inclusive reason is imaginative, creative, and susceptible to transformation:

God does not seal in water, in the fluid and transitory imaginations, and opinions of men; we never set the scale of faith to them; But in Waxe, in the rectified reason of man, that reason that is ductile, and flexible, and pliant, to the impressions that are naturally proportioned unto it, God sets his scale of faith. (IV, 14, 351)

The transformed reason is not only a faculty which deduces logically, but a faculty which is moved by the shapes and images of poetry. This is why Donne calls the Holy Ghost "a direct worker upon the soule and conscience of man, but a Metaphoricall, and Figurative expresser of himselfe, to the reason, and understanding of man" (IX, 14, 328). Certainly Donne gives the impression that he is striving to articulate a reasonable capacity in man, which, when influenced by grace, "understands" on many levels, and draws upon many faculties. We note, for example, that in the early stages of faith, the soul is filled with an awe at the works of God: "The
first step to faith, is to wonder, to stand, and consider with a holy admiration, the ways and proceedings of God with man: for, Admiration, wonder, stands as in the midst, between knowledge and faith, and hath an eye towards both" (VI, 13, 265). But this awe is not only limited to the first encounter with God's ways, but may be recovered by remembrance: "it is as great a mercy, as the very doing of those wonderfull works was before" (II, 2, 73).

Thus the soul of man, that supreme soul, when it becomes the Christian and rectified reason, has multiple powers: it is ductile and flexible, it is susceptible to poetry, it is able to stand in wonder both at present experience and by recollection of the past.

Donne often dramatically represents the faculties' integration within one supreme and divinely aided soul. Such a mimetic representation models for the congregation regenerate action in the world. In one instance, Donne's first-person speaker uses his memory to recollect the original Garden of Eden, and his imagination to transport himself there. By relocating himself in this way, the speaker can suggest that Paradise may be reclaimed if one replies to the serpent with a different answer than did Adam:

yet in that darkness I shal see light, and by a present repentance, and effectual application of the merits of my Savior, I shall make the Serpent see, I am a God; thus far a God, that by my adhering to Christ, I am made partaker of the Divine Nature. . . . then I may say to the Serpent, Your meat is dust: and I was dust; but Deposui terram, I have shak'd off my dust, by true repentance, for I have shak'd off my self, and am a new creature, and am not now meat for your Table. . . . I am a branch of that Vine; (Christ is the Vine, and we are the branches) I am a leafe of that Rose of Sharon and of that Lilly of the
valleys; I am a plant in the Orchard of Pomegranats, and that Orchard of Pomegranats is the Church; I am a drop of that dew, that dew that lay upon the head of Christ. And this Vine, and this Rose, and Lilly, and Pomegranats, of Paradise, and this Dew of heaven are not Dust, And dust must thou eate all the dayes of thy life. (X, 8, 186-87)

Here, the speaker relies upon the power of God’s word to enlighten his understanding so that he may argue with the serpent and reverse the original situation. Thus, the speaker transforms the serpent’s alluring proposition, "ye shall be as gods" (Gen. 3.5), into the righteous declaration "I am a God," by his being ingrafted by repentance into Christ’s body. The speaker’s steadfast will is expertly demonstrated in his confident tone and militant attitude in the face of evil. The speaker firmly states that he will no longer be devoured by sin and death because he has been replanted in an immortal garden. He then describes himself in terms of sensuous vegetation images delightful to the affections. But the garden in which the speaker becomes a new creation teems with sanctified life. The vine, rose, lily, and pomegranate from John’s Gospel and from the Song of Solomon grow there and are imbued with the beauty of God’s glory. The speaker’s challenge to the serpent draws upon all the faculties and thereby demonstrates a regenerate soul in action. Because this illumination of Scripture is a dramatic enactment, the auditor realizes that this psychological procedure and personal attitude may be applied in a variety of situations where one encounters evil.

The inclusive rectified reason is characterized by its search for and attainment of Christian wisdom. For man’s responsibility is not simply to use his soul in the gathering of information, but in
order to discover the manifold ways of knowing, praising, and serving God. Yet the way to God is first of all the path of humility. Says Donne, quoting Psalm 119, "the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, but the love of God is the consummation" (I, 5, 243). To love God is to yearn to imitate him, and follow him in his Son's path. Christian wisdom involves not the worldly subtlety of the serpent, but the radical selflessness of the Passion: "Creeping wisedome, that still looks downward, is but craft; Crucified wisedome, that looks upward, is truly wisedome" (X, 8, 189). Christian selflessness is, however, just as certainly radical self-possession. One must use one's wits and one's members to incorporate the truth that is God's. So one must summon all one's talents to "doubt wisely" the concepts of faith and to perform skilfully and effectively the cheerful heart's charitable desires. Donne, in his down-to-earth manner, warns against serpentine waywardness along one's path to wisdom:

A stupid negligence in the practicall things of this World, To do nothing; and an implicite credulity in doctrinall things, To believe all; and so also, a crafty preventing, and circumventing the Practicall part; and a subtle, and perplexing intricacy, in the Doctrinall part; The first on this side, The other beyond, do both transgresse from that Wisdome of God, which is the Sonne, and, in such a respect, are sins, especially against the second Person in the Trinity. (III, 15, 331)

The ultimate goal of Christian rectified reason is achieved when one loses oneself by imitating Christ in all his steps, and consequently finds oneself by using all one's talent, practical and doctrinal, in his name.
Notes

1 N. J. C. Andreasen, "Donne's Devotions and the Psychology of Assent," MP, 62 (1965), 207-16. Contrast this view with Webber, The Eloquent "I": Style and Self in Seventeenth-Century Prose (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1968), p. 28, where she suggests that Donne "has no belief in progress: his whole posture is likely to be contemplative rather than active." Also see p. 34.

2 M. A. C. Johnson, pp. 106-07.


5 See, for example, Donne's comment concerning the Church in I, 3, 188: "she prefers in her recommendations to God, in her prayers, one Christian truly fervent and zealous, before millions of Lukewarmes."

6 Also see IX, 7, 175-76.

7 Also see V, 11, 301.

8 George and George, pp. 68-69, make a similar observation concerning Donne: "Donne is uniquely his own man among the churchmen of England in the period. More than any among them he possesses literary genius, and he exhibits in his theological writings, as elsewhere, much of the capacity of this genius to exalt itself above the limitations of creed and party and to grasp at universals." Unfortunately, the Georges' questionable comments concerning some points of Donne's theology, such as his "very near rejection" of predestination, his affiliation with Christian mysticism, and his virtual assertion of the salvation of all men (pp. 69-70), obscure the central truth of this initial statement. Further, the "universals" which Donne apprehends are not ideal intuitions, but truths disclosed by experience.

Theology and literary method are the inseparable body and soul, the organic unity, of Donne's sermons. Thus, the attempt to arrive at an exact formulation of Donne's theology is difficult precisely because his theology is so intrinsically related to its structural expression. Unsofar as theology partially shapes Donne's mimetic practice, it is a pertinent consideration. Therefore, see Daniel, especially pp. 20-30. Daniel is helpful in discriminating Donne's position on the divine decrees. While other critics have asserted that Donne rejects the decrees of reprobation and election, Daniel suggests Donne rejects only supra-lapsarianism, which affirms that "creation and the fall were consequence of God's decrees of election and reprobation". Daniel allies Donne with the sub-lapsarians who held that "God's decrees of election and reprobation come after his decree of creation and as a result of his foreknowledge of Adam's fall. Thus, God simply left the reprobate to the punishment which they deserved for their sin" (p. 17). Whether or not this position is finally adequate may still be questioned. One notes Donne's use of Augustine to declare that "There is no predestination in God, but to good" (V, 1; 53), and Donne's belief that, "howsoever we paddle it with impertinent questions in disputations, howsoever we foule it with our sinnes, and ill conversation, the fountaine is pure: Baptisme presents, and offers grace, and remission of sinnes to all" (V, 4; 109). One may also question whether or not Daniel's association of Donne's theology with Scotism is appropriate. Donne's use of the Thomist branch of Scholasticism is also extensive, and one is wary of emphasizing a relationship with Scotus after reading Donne's uncompromising reference to "Scotus and his Haard" (X, 2, 82).

See also IV, 13, 332; VII, 18, 448; X, 11, 236.

See Mann, pp. 607-16.

See Mahood, pp. 147-48.

See also IV, 1, 61: "God shall not give me another, a better body at the resurrection, but the same body made better; for Si non haberet caro salvari, neutquam verbum Dei caro factum fulset. If the flesh of man were not to be saved, the Author of salvation would never have taken the flesh of man upon him."

Also see IX, 6, 148.

For Donne on the three souls, see especially: V, 17, 354-55; VII, 17, 426; VIII, 9, 221; IX, 2, 82-83.

Donne's appreciation of the human microcosm can be seen in these places: I, 9, 308; IX, 2, 78; III, 13, 282; IV, 3, 104; IV, 7, 194; VII, 7, 184; VII, 10, 272; VII, 16, 403; IX, 3, 93.
18 Miller, pp. 240-41.
19 Miller, p. 253.
20 See II, 1, 53.
21 Also see IX, 11, 257-58. The weightiest sin is this: "When not onely the members of our bodies, but the faculties of our soul, our will and understanding are bent upon sin; when we doe not only sin strongly, and hungerly, and thirstily, (which appertain to the body) but we sin rationally, we finde reasons, (and those reasons, even in God's long patience) why we should sin: We sin wittily, we invent, new sins, and we thinke it an ignorant, a dull, and an un-sociable thing, not to sin; yea we sin wisely, and make our sin our way to preferment."
22 Also see II, 3, 111, where Donne again speaks of the riddle of this life.
23 For Donne on the "foolishness" of preaching, also see: V, 1, 43; VI, 7, 156; VI, 15, 399; VII, 12, 319; IX, 12, 281; IX, 12, 285; and especially, V, 13, 357: "when ... the wisedome of the Philosophers, and the wisedome of the Scribes, became defective and insufficient, by mans perversenesse, God repayed, and supplied it by a new way, but a strange way, by the foolishnesse of preaching. ..."
24 Also see: VII, 13, 334; IX, 6, 169.
25 For similar supporting comments on the senses, see: I, 2, 178; V, 8, 176; VII, 13, 348.

Sibbes, The Soul's Conflict, p. 182.


Quoted in the Introduction, VI, p. 1; or see Edmund Gosse, The Life and Letters of John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's (London, 1899), II, 191. For another instance of regenerate imagination, note IX, 3, 98: "It hath beené thought an honour to the learnedest of the Fathers, to have beene the Author of a good Poem. . . ."

Sibbes, The Soul's Conflict, p. 185.


Rossky, p. 61.

Also see VIII, 4, 112: "Say unto the Lord, That he hath done it, and the Lbrd will say unto thee, that he will doe it againe, and againe for thee."


Also see Hickey, "Art of Memory," p. 32: "The memory, then, reflecting upon itself and that which is stored in it, both acquired and innate knowledge, can reach conclusions about the future."

Significant evaluations of Donne's approach to memory, understanding, and will have been undertaken by Hickey, "Art of Memory," pp. 29-36; Lowe, pp. 389-397; McGrath, pp. 73-89; J. M. Mueller, pp. 30-35; M. A. C. Johnson, pp. 158-64, 190-99; Shami, "John Donne's Voices," pp. 181ff.; Sherwood, pp. 353-74; and Stookey.

J. M. Mueller, p. 33. It is interesting to note that John Hoskins defended Puritan theology against Rome by saying that only memory is involved in the shaping of a true Christian faith. For him, Catholics were known to compromise the faith by pleasing their
auditors with the colours of the imagination. Preaching, in his view, is "no late device starting upon occasion in the phantasie, but an ancient record long since enrolled in the memory." Quoted in Millar Maclure, pp. 91-92. Donne, of course, practices no rigid exclusivity in making demands upon the memory, but encourages the mutual association and instruction amongst all faculties.


44 See, for example, I, 8, 289 and V, 18, 379.

45 This statement is similar to the following: "The understanding of man (that is as the Father) begetts discourse, ratification, and that is as the Son; and out of these two proceed conclusions, and that is as the Holy Ghost" (III, 12, 264). Also see V, 2, 65.

46 Stookey, pp. 62-64.


49 M. A. C. Johnson, p. 160, indicates Donne's acknowledgement of the memory as fallen. Also see V, 8, 182; VII, 5, 162; VII, 13, 335; VIII, 8, 209; X, 2, 80.


51 J. M. Mueller, p. 31.

52 Stookey pp. 11, 14, 24. The quotation is from p. 11.


54 Also see Merrill, p. 602, and II, 7, 172.

55 See V, 6, 145: "The spirit therefore here is, Spiritus oris, the word of God, the Gospel; and the preaching and ministration thereof. ... It is not therefore the Gospel meerly, but the preaching of the Gospel, that is this spirit."

56 See IX, 2, 85: "all goodnesse is in remembering, all goodnesse, (which is the Image of the holy Ghost) is in bringing our understanding and our assenting into action." Also note McGrath, p. 86.
These views are supported by the following statements: "The difference between the Reason of man, and the Instinct of the beast is this, That the beast does but know, "but the man knows that he knows" (VII, 9, 225); and "Man and Angels have one thing common to them both, which is the best thing that naturally either of them hath, that is, Reason, understanding, knowledge, discourse, consideration" (X, 1, 45).

See VIII, 11, 256: "hell it self is but condensed Ignorance, multiplied Ignorance." Also note IV, 4, 143 and IV, 14, 351: "Implicate believers, ignorant believers, the adversary may swallow; but the understanding believer, he must chaw, and pick bones, before he come to assimilate him, and make him like himself. The implicit believer stands in an open field, and the enemy will ride over him easily; the understanding believer, is in a fenced town, and he hath out-works to lose, before the town be pressed; that is, reasons to be answered before his faith be shaken. . . ."

Sherwood, pp. 355, 356. Also see Lowe, p. 393: "Faith is above reason relatively, in that reason must assent to faith as its supreme motive; but faith and reason are equal absolutely, in that the assent of reason to Revelation is necessary."

Sherwood, p. 357.

See also VI, 5, 117.

Cf. IV, 11, 296: "There was nothing more arbitrary, more voluntary, more spontaneous then all that Christ did for man."

Donne defines conscience as "reason rectified" (III, 16, 342), or as "Syllogismus practicus," having "but these two Elements, Knowledge and Practise" (VI, 12, 256).

See also VIII, 15, 380: "But God forbid that naturall affections, even in an exaltation, and vehement expressing thereof, should be thought to destroy faith. . . ."


For other references to this opinion of Justin Martyr's, see IV, 3, 119; VIII, 10, 247.
CHAPTER IV:

STAGES IN THE SERMON’S

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION

IV.1 The Offer of Reconciliation

The psychological steps which Donne encourages his auditors to take, as we have outlined them, do not occur self-evidently in every sermon, nor do they always appear in the exact order which we propose here. A particular biblical text or event in the liturgical year may demand the emphasis of a certain psychological mode or perception. Often, there is an overlapping in the stages of this psychological process, and sometimes a spiralling gathering of momentum and meaning. Certainly Donne is poet enough to foreshadow later developments and recapitulate earlier stages in the course of the homiletic pilgrimage. But if all the sermons cannot claim to include all these stages of progress expressly, at least these stages are implied, as Donne strives to imitate the historical workings between men and God. By naming these usual stages, we are better able to describe the kind of activity which Donne tries to evoke in the individual soul.

Perhaps most of Donne’s sermons open with some offer of reconciliation between men and God. Reconciliation is proclaimed, and through the vehicle of the sermon, it may be performed by the
Holy Ghost. When the soul is intent upon uniting with God, all its faculties are "redintegrated" and it rejoices by performing his will: "then is flesh and spirit reconciled in Christ, when in all the faculties of the soule, and all the organs of the body we glorifie him in this world" (IV, 11, 301). Donne's belief that the Church's chief means of bringing about reconciliation was by preaching manifests itself at the very outset of his sermons. The minister's purpose is to present God's steadfast overture of friendship to all human-beings:

God therefore having made man, that is Mankinde, in a state of love, and friendship, God having not by any purpose of his done any thing toward the violation of this friendship, in man, in any man, God continueth his everlasting goodness towards man, towards mankind still, in inviting him to accept the means of Reconciliation, and a returne to the same state of friendship, whichhee had at first, by our Ministry. Be ye reconciled unto God. (X, 5, 136)

Whatever else the preacher does, his overriding concern must be to publish the consoling news of the Gospel to his auditory. The preacher must, of course, alert his parishioners to the presence of sin amongst them and denounce it where he finds it, but more importantly, he must provide a way of atonement. Consequently, Donne describes his task as a pleasurable labour:

Who but my selfe can conceive the sweetnesse of that salutation, when the Spirit of God sayes to me in a morning, Go forth to day and preach, and preach consolation, preach peace, preach mercy, And spare my people, spare that people whom I have redeemed with my precious Blood, and be not angry with them for ever; Do not wound them, doe not grinde them, do not astonish them with the bitterness, with the heaviness, with the sharpnesse, with the consternation of my judgements. David proposes to himselfe, that he would Sing of mercy, and of judgement; but it is of mercy first; and not of judgement at all,
otherwise then it will come into a song, as joy and consolation is comperable with it. (VII, 4, 133-34)

Reconciliation remains the preacher’s first work and central focus. Even judgment must be brought upon the auditory so as to imply the esthetic closure of consolation, even as a song does. God’s design, even in anger, is to cause reunification with himself. In one sermon, Donne remarks that the book of Psalms, Christ’s sermon on the Mount, and his commissioning of John the Baptist and the disciples all follow the “Method” of first announcing “Reconciliation to God in his Visible Church” (IX, 11, 255-56). Donne imitates divine practice by making God’s offer of reconciliation evident from the beginning of his sermon.

The initial overture of friendship takes many forms, but usually Donne presents an image of man’s final telos in his enjoyment of God. He presents a glimpse of those moments when the barrier of alienation between man and God is broken. This does not mean that Donne always depicts a view of the kingdom of glory. He may offer a scriptural promise or recollection from history; he may probe the auditor’s own soul for a personal desire or cherished remembrance. But in almost all cases, Donne points to a profound instance where humanity enjoys a reconciled state with God. This depiction of intense communion with God is an earnest of subsequent fulfilment which impels the auditor’s soul into the sermon’s pilgrimage proper. Though the auditor will be afflicted with suffering, hard choices, and an array of probing memories, he knows that the proffered hand of reconciliation remains ready to grasp him at the end of his pilgrimage. The offer of reconciliation usually occurs in what Donne occasionally refers to
as his exordium, or more rarely, the offer may be sketched as he enumerates the sermon's parts in the division. ²

A couple of illustrations from the sermons clarify the function of this first psychological stage. His choice of John 16.8-11 as a text for a Whitsunday sermon initially seems an unlikely scriptural passage with which to proclaim salvation (VI, 16, 311-30). In this passage, Christ says of the Holy Ghost: "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousnesse, and of judgement. Of sin, because ye beleeve not on me. Of righteousnesse, because I goe to my Father, and ye see me no more. Of judgement, because the prince of this world is judged" (VI, 16, 311). The text, at first glance, appears to condemn, rather than to reconcile. But because in Donne's understanding "Christ is the foundation of all those Scriptures" (I, 8, 288), every line of the Bible also speaks of man's redemption through him. Thus, the Holy Ghost, in reprobating the world of sin, does not neglect his office as Comforter. And so, the first words of this sermon offer comfort:

Our Panis quotidians, Our daily bread, is that Iuge sacrificium, That daily sacrifice of meditating upon God; Our Panis hodiernus, This dayes bread, is to meditate upon the holy Ghost. To day if ye will heare his voice, to day ye are with him in Paradise; For, wheresover the holy Ghost is, he creates a Paradise. The day is not past yet; As our Saviour said to Peter, Hodie in nocte hac, Even now, though evening, the day-spring from on high visits you, God carries back the shadow of your Sun-dyall, as to Hezechias; And now God brings you to the beginning of this day, if now you take knowledge, that he is come, who, when he comes, Reproves the world of sin, &. (VI, 16, 311)

Donne's opening appeal comprises a concentration of allusions centring on the dramatic possibilities for the meaning of "today."
The preacher indicates that he is offering sustenance in his words by comparing his meditation to the daily bread of the Lord's Prayer. But the daily bread is also, as the bread in the Eucharist, a sacrifice before God. Donne further develops the ambiguity of sustenance and sacrifice implied by the word "today" by recollecting Christ's words to the thief crucified with him, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 24.43). The sacrifice of Christ, the "bread of life" (John 6.35, 48), on the cross, reconciles God and man and thus makes possible man's entry into a new paradise. But the memory of these words also demands an active and present response from the auditor. Today, the Holy Ghost still offers what the historical Jesus offered the criminal. The Holy Ghost transforms any place into a paradise, and if the auditor yearns for God's presence, and hears God's voice, he too will dwell in this paradise. Yet, Donne's memory is full of other possibilities inherent in the word "today." He suggests today's fleeting passage into night by recalling Christ's words to Peter that he should deny His Lord "this day, even in this night" (Mark 14.30). In so doing, he stresses the importance of making good use of limited time. More importantly, however, Donne delineates for the auditor the immense choice hanging on the immediacy of the present moment: one may hear Christ's voice by means of the Holy Ghost, or one may deny him entirely. Reconciliation, with its vast implications, is offered, yet one's will remains free. One may accept the atoning grace of Christ, which his crucifixion enabled, or one may abet the crucifixion by denial. But Donne also broadens the terms of the choice. Though the light of faith may pass into
the night of denial, God has power still to turn the clock back, as he did with Hezekiah (Isa. 38.8). Whenever one chooses to repent and to hear God, it is the beginning of a new day of possibilities, and no longer the night of spent choices. When one chooses life, one inhabits paradise. This sermon's introduction, thus, is also an invitation to cooperate with God in performing his works through grace.

From the last illustration, one can see that Donne's mimetic technique in his introductory offers of reconciliation lies principally in the speaker's declaratory, almost prophetic tone. This tone models a confidence which is born of a sure reliance in God, and instills a hope in the auditor that he may yet know such confidence. Another example further demonstrates this effect. Donne selects an intimidating text in Matthew 21.44: "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." Yet his first words call upon the auditor's memory to rehearse the restorative ways of God to men:

Almighty God made us for his glory, and his glory is not the glory of a Tyrant, to destroy us, but his glory is in our happiness, He put us in a faire way towards that happiness in nature, in our creation, that way would have brought us to heaven, but then we fell, (and if we consider our selves onely) irrecoverably. He put us into another way, over thorny hedges and ploughed Lands, through the difficulties and encumbrances of all the Ceremoniull Law; there was no way to heaven then, but that; after that, he brought us a crosse way, by the Cross of Jesus Christ, and the application of his Gospell, and that is our way now. (II, 8, 180)

The passage recollects God's historical attempts to reconcile his people to himself. The speaker proclaims these actions as sure
facts already accomplished which therefore may be trusted as reliable
guides to God's future dealings with humankind. The speaker's intro-
ductive attitude assures the auditor that, though the sermon's progress
will be the way of the cross, it is God's way, and thus a way of
"reconciliation," as the last page of the sermon confirms (II, 8,
196). The speaker's words are important because they demonstrate
that Donne's primary method in the sermon is the performance of
psychological renewal rather than argumentative reasoning or
grammatical procedures. Once the auditor gains assurance from the
speaker's own modelling of humble confidence, Donne may subject him
to more complex and difficult trials without fear of losing him
in progress.

IV.2 Recognition of Sin

Once Donne has assured the auditor of God's unshakable intention
to forgive and accept him, he is able to spur the auditor on to
amend his life. Yet, this cannot truly be accomplished until the
auditor recognizes his sinful state: the physician cannot cure unless
the disease is first diagnosed. Donne is intensely aware of the
dangers of spiritual sleep, and thus he hears God saying to him,
"Thy preaching shall awaken them, and so bring them to some sense
of their sins" (II, 7, 167). Preaching, after the desire for and
possibility of atonement is implanted, initiates the psychological
process of humbling oneself before God and depending upon him. By
hearing the preacher, the auditor may undertake contrition, confes-
sion, and repentance. According to Donne, spiritual circumcision
consists of this:

in the purging of the Conscience, to be mov'd upon the
hearing of the Word preached, and the denouncing of his
Judgements in his Ordinance, before those Judgements
surprise thee, to recollect thy imines in thine owne
memory, and pour them out in a true Confession.
(VI, 9, 199)

The preacher, then, makes the auditor aware of his sins, so that
habitual wrongdoing does not gradually inure him to their ugliness,
and thus, so that his soul does not slip from his grasp by stealth.

His therapy is severe, for he works by "shaking the soule, troubling
the conscience, and pinching the bowellis" (IV, 8, 211). In so doing,
the preacher imitates God's surgical method: "even Gods demolitions
are super-edifications, his Anatomies, his dissections are so many
re-compactings, so many resurrections" (IX, 9, 217). By seeing
dramatic representations of the sinful state enacted before him,
the auditor remembers his own sins, and in a manner paralleling
Aristotelian catharsis, purges himself, with the aid of divine grace.

Donne evokes recognition of one's involvement in sin by in-
tensifying the sense of loss and separation from God. Especially
by calling upon the memory, Donne heightens the odious and monstrous
character of evil. He attempts both to implicate the auditor and
to convince him that participation in wickedness is to be despised.

But before evil may be repudiated, Donne must win the auditor's
sympathy. Often Donne accomplishes this task by precisely and real-
istically dramatizing the state of the sinful mind. The preacher
cannot effectively denounce sin unless he knows its very texture
and quality. Helen C. White suggests, "It is from the inside that
he speaks always of the nature and psychology of sin." Indeed,
Donne proves himself an astute psychologist when he enacts the sinful mind's progression of thought. In one sermon Donne records three steps in sinful behaviour. At first:

we think that other Religions are gentler, and that Christ hath dealt hardly with us, and we had rather Christ had not said so, we had rather he had left us to our libertie and discretion, to looke, and shoure, and to give a way to our passions, as we should finde it most conduce to our ease, and to our ends.

In the second stage, a person begins

To debate thus, if I do not this now, I shall never have such a time; if I slip this, I shall never have the like opportunitie; if I will be a fool now, I shall be a beggar all my life: and for the Law of God that is against it, there is but a little evil, for a great deale of good; and there is a great deale of time to recover and repent that little evil.

Finally, we "hide the will of God from our owne Consciences with excuses and extenuations" (II, 8, 191).

The preacher's castigation of sin has a ring of authenticity when he describes temptation, not as a detestable foreign commodity of which he has no knowledge, but as an affliction against which he also struggles. Thus, Donne may reprove sin and gain the auditors' sympathy simultaneously; as in Aristotelian tragedy, he excites both fear and pity:

Let no man set a low value upon any sin; let no man think it a little matter to sin some one sin, and no more; or that one sin but once and no oftner; or that once but a little way in that sin, and no farther; or all this, to do another a pleasure, though he take none in it himself (as though there were charity in the society of sin, and that it were an Alms to help a man to the means of sinning.) (II, 8, 182)
By delineating the familiar excuses which people devise to permit themselves "trivial sins," Donne wins approval for accurate depiction. The disarmed auditor is ready to see himself in the portrayal. The theatrical and realistic representation of human psychology is the "neareness" which pierces the heart. The auditor is persuaded of his own involvement in sin when he may confess that the preacher "speaks to my conscience, as though he had been behinde the hangings when I sinned" (III, 5, 142). Thus, a Donnean persona frequently gives voice to the perverse reasoning which allows his auditors to slide comfortably into sin. In one sermon, Donne meditates on the sin "of the times," by adopting the point of view of the sinner:

That thou shouldst say in thy old age, in excuse of thy covetousnesse, All these things have I observed from my youth, I have lived temperately, continently all my life, and therefore may be allowed one sin for mine ease in mine age. Or that thou shouldst say in thy youth, I will retire my self in mine age, and live contentedly with a little then, but now, how vain were it to goe about to keep out a tide, or to quench the heats, and impetuous violence of youth? (II, 3, 104)

Donne perceives the mind calculating, making allowances, distorting the faculties' proper functions, in order to make sin acceptable to one's judgment. By such faithful likeness, he is able to offer the auditor a mirror by which to see himself, and thus to reprehend sin before it consumes him.

Of course, it is not enough for the auditor to recognize his involvement in sin; he must see it in the full magnitude of its hurtfulness and distastefulness. Consequently, Donne works to evoke horror in the auditor by multiplying the deformity of sin. To enhance the auditor's sense of sin, Donne explains that people strike
against divine creation and distort their own nature through sin:
"God made a body of goodnesse; all good; and he that enters an ill
action, a sin, deforms this body of God, defaces this work of his
making" (II, 3, 100). Sin has debilitating personal results which
sap one's vital powers, and thus cramp and hinder one's ability to
discern and act with perception. Of sin, Donne comments: "It crookens
us, it deprives us of our rectitude; it tires us, extinguishes our
alacrity; It slackens us, enfeebles and intrepidates our zeale; It
occasions our stumbling, opens and submits us, to every emergent
tentation" (II, 3, 97).

Donne's comments about the deformity and burdensome quality
of sin go beyond simple statement: often, he dramatically portrays
it. In one sermon, he stresses the metaphoric link between sin and
disease by recalling events of the past several weeks. Struck by
the plague, much of London had dispersed to the countryside. Donne,
in almost gruesome fashion, heightens the association among sin,
chaos, and death:

Men whose lust carried them into the jaws of infection
in lewd houses, and seeking one sore perished with another;
men whose rapine and covetousness broke into houses,
and seeking Wardrobes of others, found their own winding-
sheet, in the infection of that house where they stole
their own death; men who sought no other way to divert
sadness, but strong drink in riotous houses, and there
drank up Davids cup of Malediction, the cup of Condemned
men, of death, in the infection of that place. For
these men that died in their sins, that sinned in their
dying, that sought and hunted after death so sinfully,
we have little comfort of such men. . . . (VI, 18, 359-
60)

Donne lists these ironies of God's justice in order to impress upon
the auditor what sort of vile and frightful company sin keeps. The
misery that attends a person's rejection of God, Donne delineates in full detail. In this way, he hopes to aggravate the auditor into seeking further answers to the riddle of life. The preacher demonstrates that, until one looks for satisfaction in God, one seeks aimlessly, distractedly, desperately. One beats one's head against the numerous walls of misery and affliction until one finds a way clear to the only true land of the heart's desire:

How many men are anguished with torturing Diseases, racked with the conscience of ill-spent estates, oppressed with inordinate melancholies; and irreligious dejections of spirit, and then repair, and satisfie themselves with wine, with women, with fools, with comedies, with mirth, and musique, and with all Iobs miserable comforters, and all this while have no beames of his satisfaction, it is not Misericordia ejus, his mercy, his satisfaction? (V, 14, 283-84).

Donne's purpose in bringing to light all the dark places in an auditor's soul is so that, once recognized, sins may be offered to God, and thereby divine power might cleanse the individual. Any other attempt to follow God is based upon hypocrisy and distrust. To prod the auditor into an owning of his sins, and then a hatred of them, is a way of letting him fall under the purifying scourge of God's justice. In his depictions of the horrible aspects of sin, Donne tries to help the auditor recognize and affirm a regenerate process similar to that confessed by this exemplary persons: "I must consider my sin in his justice, how powerfull a God I have provoked; but I must passe through his justice to his mercy; his justice is my way, but his mercy is my lodging . . ." (II, 4, 125). Unfortunately, to raise the auditor's consciousness of sin may prompt several unregenerate responses. The auditor may react complacently,
unaffected by the presentation of sin dwelling in all people, or he may react despairingly, terrified of his sinful state, and hopeless of God's mercy. Donne anticipates the reaction of the auditor, and by means of his homiletic method, charts a course between the twin dangers of complacency and desperation. If those dangers may be properly avoided, Donne is able to evoke a genuine, but proportioned sorrow, and thereby is able to free the auditor to participate in a sense of Christian tragedy.

Robert Burton, in his vast *Anatomy of Melancholy*, considers these two troublesome forms of religious disease and their probable causes:

> the greatest harm of all proceeds from those thundering ministers, a most frequent cause they are of this malady; "and do more harm in the Church" (saith Erasmus) "than they that flatter; great danger on both sides, the one lulls them asleep in carnal security, the other drives them to despair." Whereas St. Bernard well adviseth, "We should not meddle with the one without the other, nor speak of judgment without mercy; the one alone brings desperation, the other security." 8

This psychological dilemma is precisely the one which Donne anticipates and guards against in his sermons. That Burton should accuse preachers of instigating these problems shows the degree to which ineffectual preaching was widespread. It also indicates Donne's psychological acumen that he should deliberately draw the auditor from these extremes, either of which could only spell disaster for him. Like Burton, who spoke out against extreme Roman and extreme Protestant positions, Donne relates these perverse emotional states to the polar factions within the Church. The question he implicitly
puts to one side is: can works and ceremonies save? The other side he asks: is private assurance of election enough to attain righteousness? Both states of mind and spirit impede Donne's professed aim of reconciliation through preaching:

I can only tell them, that neither of them is in the right way of reconciliation to God, Nec qui impugnant gratiam, nec qui superbe gratias agunt, neither he who by a diffidence hinders the working of God's grace, nor he that thanks God in such a fashion, as though all that had been received, were not of mere mercy, but between a debt and a benefit, and he that had either merited before, or paid God after, in pious works, for all, and for more then he hath received at God's hand. (X, 5, 122-23)

Donne's charting a course between complacency and despair coincides with his attempt to emphasize the immediate ways in which God works upon us. Men should not consider God as aloof and uncaring about human conduct; neither should they perceive him as sequestered amongst his decrees of election and reprobation. Further, they know him best "not in Disputation, but in Application" (I, 4, 234). This is truly to be humane: to encourage men to seek growth and betterment, but within the realm of the possible, thus turning men away from those two poles which are death to them. Donne realizes that knowledge attained by seeing God in his actions requires an imitative structure to show them forth. Without this method of knowledge, man's soul may fall victim to the Devil's tactics:

So lyes the conscience of man betwenee two operations of the Devil; sometimes he rarifies it, evaporates it, that it apprehends nothing, feeles nothing to be sin, sometimes he condenses it, that every thing falls and sticks upon it, in the nature, and takes the weight of sin, and he mis-interprets the indifferent actions of others, and of his owne, and destroys all use of Christian liberty, all conversation, all recreation, and out of a false feare, of being undutifull to God, is unjust to all the world,
and to his owne soule, and consequently to God himselfe, who, of all notions, would not be received in the notion of a Cruell, or Tyrannicall God. (IX, 13, 305)3

The Devil exploits humanity's recognition of sin either by encouraging the belittlement of sin or by intensifying the fear of God's anger. Both methods are effective in luring people from God's service. Each depends upon a false imagination of God, conceived of as either indifferent or tyrannical.

Donne also recognizes that speculation about God's decrees is a means of avoiding the imitation of God's actions in history, and consequently is one of the Devil's better tools. Thus, Donne warns against "such a manifestation and infallibility in his Decree, as makes us either secure, or desperate; and say, The Decree hath sav'd me, therefore I can take no harm; or The Decree hath damn'd me therefore I can do no good" (I, 4, 226). Such speculation, and its resulting self-righteousness or hopelessness, distracts mankind from the purpose which God has set before us. Donne ironically chastises the person who is anxious to avoid the duty which God deserves. Such a person is not "satisfied with those Quailes which God sends, (the preaching of solid and fundamentall doctrines) but must have birds of Paradise, unrevealed mysteries out of Gods own bosome preached unto him" (IX, 3, 102). The romantic impulse to yearn for what is beyond man's ken frustrates the soul and hinders God's design. In the course of a sermon, Donne lets the sinner dramatize his ungoverned desires. Donne retouches them with hyperbole so that the auditor may hear the tone of presumption and self-importance in them:
This is but homespun Divinity, but Country-learning, but Catechistical doctrine. Let me know (say these high-flying men) what God meant to doe with man, before ever God meant to make man: I care not for that Law that Moses hath written; That every man can read; That he might have received from God, in one day; Let me know the Cabal, that which passed betwene God and him, in all the rest of the forty dayes. I care not for Gods revealed Will, his Acts of Parliament, his publique Proclamations, Let me know his Cabinet Counsailes, his bosome, his pocket dispatches. (III, 15, 330)

The exotic though fruitless search for the essence of God neglects the way appointed for humankind to reach him. As such, it flies in the face of wisdom, and is a perversely phantastic conceit. Donne counsels that God "hath limited our understanding in matters of religion with a starry firmament, too" (II, 11, 241) and thus men ought to observe the bounds accorded to the mind. Beyond them lies neglect of the human predicament and ignorance of God's commands. Donne implores his auditors: "Climbe not up, to the search of unsearchable things, to the finding out of uninvestigable things, as Tertullian speakes; but look to that which is neare thee ..." (VII, 16, 412). The performance of God's commands and the imitation of Christ is what is nearest to humankind. The quest for God, should it become abstruse and erudite, is a sweet self-indulgence and thus a corruption of the earthly pilgrimage intended by God: "To search so farre into the nature, and unrevealed purposes of God, as to forget the nature, and duties of man, this is a shrewd surfet, though o'hony" (IX, 5, 134).

The psychological dilemma which Donne faces in addressing the question of complacent security and despair lies in defining the degree of sorrow and the degree of confidence which may legitimately abide in the Christian heart. It is a complex matter with many
historical precedents. Donne himself refers to Aquinas when he struggles to describe the good promptings that form the basis of even the sin of despair. He suggests a perverted imagination twists and distorts an initial good desire into something wicked:

desperation as well as hope is rooted in the desire of happiness; desperation proceeds out of a fear of God and a horror of sin; desperation may consist with faith thus far, that a man may have a true and faithful opinion in the general, that there is remission of sin to be had in the Church, and yet have a corrupt imagination in the particular, that to him in this sinfull state that he is in, this remission of sinnes shall not be applied; so that the resolution of the Schoole is good, Desperatio potest esse ex solo excessu boni, desperation may proceed from an essence of that which is good in it selfe, from an excessive over fearing of Gods Justice, from an excessive over hating of thine own sinnes. . . . (II, 16, 332)

Donne's Thomistic explanation holds a great insight. The same profound desire and hope for happiness in God can lead to a fearful anxiety if one dwells on the possibility that this gift may be denied. Such a thought may also lead to the belief that all attempts to live a decent and holy life in the earthly realm are vain. Susan Snyder, in her article tracing despair through the medieval and Renaissance tradition, also points to Aquinas' authority on the question and summarizes: "The object of both hope and despair is an arduous good not yet obtained. Seen as attainable, it causes hope; seen as unattainable, it causes despair."10

Snyder further emphasizes the double meaning which sadness holds for the Renaissance mind. Ultimately, this ambiguity rests on St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians 7.10: "For godly sorrow worketh repentence to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." The sorrow according to
God is one which grieves over sins, but is not wholly consumed by
grief because confident of God's forgiveness of sins. The dual
nature of tristitia is a recurrent theme in literature, developed,
among others, by Burton, who saw three kinds of desperation "whereof
some be holy, some unholy." The first is a sort of wholesome despair
of the self, the other two are sinful: the incurable despair of the
reprobate, and the temporal despair of the the elect.\[11\] Donne is well
attuned to the ambiguity inherent in sorrow. Yet, Donne also finds
that ambiguity lies not only in despair, but also in security.
To come, justified, before God inspires the best form of these two
responses. But a wicked imagination deforms these responses:
As there are both impressions in security, vicious and
virtuous, good and bad, so there are both in feare also.
There is a wicked security in the wicked, by which they
shift to put off all Providence in God, and to think God
like themselves, indifferent what becomes of this world;
There is an ill security in the godly, when for the time,
in their prosperity, they grow ill husbands of Gods
graces, and negligent of his mercies; In my prosperity
(sayes David himself, of himself) I said, I shall not be
moved. And there is a security of the faithful, a constant
perswasion, grounded upon those marks, which God, in his
Word, hath set upon that state, That neither height, nor
depth, nor any creature shall separate us from God: But
yet this security is never discharged of that feare,
which he that said that, had in himselfe. . . (III, 13,
278-79)

Donne's intention is that fear of God and sorrow for sins should
be tempered by joy in Christ's victory over death, and the confidence
which such victory inspires. These are the virtuous impressions
in sorrow and security, and so Donne admonishes his auditors,
"Rejoyce with trembling; Conceive no such feare as excludes spirit-
ual joy, conceive no such assurance, as excludes an humble and
reverential feare" (III, 13, 279). Both sorrow and security have
godly uses, but either may become misshapen by sin.

By paying close attention to his psychological state, the auditor may gradually discern a standard for conducting his life. If crippled by fearful anxiety and desperate sorrow, a person is unable to accomplish the works of grace or to find those marks of grace in himself; if oblivious to his crimes, though all his works appear righteous to himself, even those works which have good results are vain because they do not confess a heartfelt love of God and neighbour. But to walk in the way of sanctification, loving God and asking his aid, to be reverent yet confident, is an admirable human possibility:

It is the constancy of a rectified Christian, not to call his indifferent actions sins, for that is to slander God as a cruel God; nor to call sins indifferent actions, for that is to undervalue God, as a negligent God. God doth not keepe the Conscience of man upon the wrack, in a continuall torture and stretching; But God doth not stupifie the conscience with an Opiate, in an insensiblenesse of any sin. The law of God is the balance, and the Criterium; By that try thine actions, and then confesse. (IX, 13, 307)

To keep the balance is neither lukewarmness nor neutrality, but the full-hearted commitment to perform God's works as a sign and example of the transforming power of his forgiveness. It is to aspire to the full potential of the human person in the imitation of God and his servants. To live warily but hopefully between complacency and despair is what Donne invites his auditors to accomplish. Indeed, referring to the path which Paul took, one wise persona broadens the gulf between these dangers:

Now if I go S. Pauls way, to put a dissention between these my Sadduces, and my Pharisees, to put a jealousie between my presumption and my desperation, to make my presumption
see, that my desperation lies in wait for her; and to consider seriously, that my presumption will end in desperation, I may, as S. Paul did in the Text, scape [condemnation] the better for that. (IX, 6, 171)

In the course of his sermons, Donne often encourages the auditor to examine his conscience so that he may distinguish between the corrupt and salutary forms of sorrow and security. We have already suggested that Donne intensifies the sense of alienation from God to provoke regret and fear, especially in the uncaring person. Donne does this, simply, to take away the auditors' hearts of stone and to give them hearts of flesh. He strikes against brash self-confidence and insensitivity. Donne reflects, "This is the evil of the heart, by the mis-use of God's grace, to devest and lose all tenderness and remorse in sin" (I, 2, 179). This hardheartedness appears in many manifestations. Like the Pharisee who thanked God he was not as other men are (Luke 18.11), there are those who feel themselves superior in the purity of their religion. There are those "who in an over-valuation of their own purity, despise others, as men whom nothing can save; and those men, who in an over-valuation of their own merits, think to save themselves and others too" (IX, 4, 119). It would be too simple to say that Donne is levelling a partisan attack upon Puritans and Catholics in these comments, for he is rather criticizing hypocrisy wherever it might be found, especially in his own congregation. Evil security may also be found in those who are like the Cathari of the primitive Church, who "thought the grace which they had received sufficient, and that upon that stock they were safe, and become impeccable" (VII, 5, 159).
Donne's criticisms are usually balanced. He sees a danger in those who "ascribe too much, or too little to Gods' visible Ordnances, and Institutions." The auditor may recognize himself when Donne skeptically voices one self-satisfied church-goer's belief: "If we have a Sacrament, if we have a Sermon all is well, we have enough." Yet Donne also seeks to stir those who would speak in contrary fashion, and yet remain just as complacently inert: "Leave me to my selfe, to my private motions, to my bosome inspirations, and I need no Church-work, no Sermons, no Sacraments, no such assistances" (VII, 10, 267-68). Finally, of course, Donne seeks to encourage a genuine security in the auditor, by inducing him to approach God in love, which as it grows fuller, casts out fear. God yearns to see his adopted sons ultimately come to him with joyful awe, and not with servile fear: "a merry heart, and a cheerful countenance, upon the testimony of a good conscience, is a better way to see God then all the dejections of Spirit, all the sowe contritions, and sad remorsees in the world" (IV, 4, 140-41).

Although the corrupt/ security of the heart is a difficult disease for the preacher to cure, it is not as serious as the sorrow which gives way to unholy despair. Throughout his sermons, Donne tries to unburden his auditors of this troubled grief. Donne laments concerning this condition:

as melancholy in the body is the hardest humour to be purged, so is the melancholy in the soule, the distrust of thy salvation too. Flashes of presumption a calamity will quench, but clouds of desperation calamities thicken upon us; But even in this inordinate dejection thou exaltest thy self above God, and makest thy worst better then his best, thy sins larger then his mercy. (III, 14, 302-03)
The self-confident person may be humbled by a misfortune or by the preacher evoking the memory of God's judgments. The spiritual melancholic presents a more difficult problem. For the judgments of God he perceives not as corrections, but as condemnation and vindictiveness. Paradoxically, in despising his sins, the melancholic inordinately hates himself, and in so doing places greater stress upon his own ability to commit unforgivable sins than upon God's power to save. Even in his humiliation, the melancholic lifts himself above God. 'He who despairs,' says Donne, 'sins with the least reason of any, for he prefers his sin above God's mercy, and he sins with the fewest examples of any, for God hath diffused this light, with an evidence to all, That all sins may be forgiven unto men, that is, unto all men' (V, 3, 86).

Frequently, Donne feels compelled to address those whose desperation inclines towards suicide. Donne understands, though, that even in this death-wish, there may be the seeds of hope. Indeed, it may arise from an intense yearning for perfection beyond the transience and disappointments of temporal life. St. Paul had such a desire "to depart, and to be with Christ" (Phil. 1.23). The longing to know God's essence is a righteous one, but to attempt to gain it in disregard of God's appointed means is a fierce assault upon providence. Thus Donne shows that St. Paul's wish was incomplete: "The Apostle had a Cupio dissolvi, a desire to be dissolved; but yet a love to his brethren corrected that desire, and made him finde that it was far better for him to live" (III, 8, 201). Love transforms the corrupt longing into an acceptance of a pilgrimage.
to God. Consequently the melancholic must learn that during his journey, he is to make use of whatever good this world offers: "there are overtures to as great sinnes, in hating this life, as in loving it" (III, 8, 202). In one instance, Donn's hyperbolic persona, reminiscent of a despairing Macbeth or Hamlet, piles up complaint upon complaint against this life, ending in a cry to be rid of it. The compilation implies the absurdity of the desire, and the final familiar response from St. Paul punctuates the absurdity with a dismissal:

If the world be nothing but a bed of Adders, a quiver of poysioned arrows, from every person, every time, every place, woes by occasion of offenses, and scandals, it had been better God had made no world, better that I had never been born into the world, better; if by any meanes I could get out of the world quickly, shall we say so? God forbid. (III, 6, 169-70).

Whatever temptations and afflictions life holds for us, we are meant to meet them, grapple with them, and overcome them, for it is these which purge and test us in our search for God. We must engage God's temporal plan and not try to overleap it for the eternal order: "yet we must not break out of the world by a retired life, nor break out of the world by a violent death, but take Gods ways, and stay Gods leasure" (III, 7, 171). Even in the most miserable circumstances we must "stay the time" which God appoints. And the hope to be rid of this life or its duties is as sinful as an actual suicide. We dare "not so much as by a deliberate wish, or unconditioned prayer, seeke to be delivered of it" (III, 13, 288).

Donn's approach in dealing with the desperate melancholic is to convince him of the unimaginable richness of God's love through
forgiveness. Donne has a sympathetic awareness of the auditor's fears; yet, he also realizes that a vivid conception of happiness often accompanies those fears, since the auditor's sorrow arises out of his belief that his happiness will be thwarted. The preacher does not deny validity to these two affections, but tries to reorient them; he attempts to transform what appears as an unattainable hope into an attainable one. When this occurs, frantic despair at human accomplishments may become zeal to serve a God who is loved with awe. A passage in a Whitsunday sermon on Matthew 12.31 illustrates Donne's mimetic attempt to reorient the melancholic. After describing the magnitude of sin, Donne asks, in a voice representing the struggling auditor, if God will tell him to be of good cheer since his sins are forgiven him (Matt. 9.2). One of Donne's customary techniques is to personalize the statements of the Bible so that the auditor believes them to be directed, not to an abstract generalized reader, but to himself, unworthy and imperfect though he may be. Donne's persona goes on to question as the melancholic might, but he includes more information in each question than a narrowly focussed melancholy mind would. The extra imagistic prompting stirs the heart and memory so that a hopeful response is engendered:

Does he mean all my sins? He knowes what originall sin is and I doe not; and will he forgive me sin in that roote, and sin in the branches, originall sin, and actuall sin too? He knowes my secret sins, and I doe not; will he forgive my manifest sins, and those sins too? He knowes my relapses into sins repented; and will he forgive my faint repentances, and my rebellious relapses after them? will his mercy dive into my heart, and forgive my sinfull thoughts there, and shed upon my lips, and forgive my blasphemous
words there, and bathe the members of this body, and forgive mine uncleane actions there? will he contract himselfe into himselfe, and meet me there, and forgive my sins against himselfe, And scatter himselfe upon the world, and forgive my sins against my neighbour, and emprison himselfe in me, and forgive my sins against my selfe? (V, 3, 81)

By allowing a character to speak and question in his own voice, Donne persuades the auditor to see the faithless trap he sets for himself by believing in God's might, but not his forgiveness. First, Donne's speaker multiplies the number of sins. Not only does he list them, but he suggests that there are more than even he can count. God sees more: he knows the meaning of original sin and observes secret sins as well. This exasperated cataloguing is typical of the desperate man. But by this means, Donne also is able to suggest God's infinite power by letting his speaker admit God's omniscience. By continuing to enumerate sins—relapses, faint repentances, rebellion—the speaker also hints at the vastness of God's dominion. Then the speaker continues to repeat the question, but this time by expanding the meaning and emotional impact of forgiveness; he asks "will his mercy dive into my heart," and will he "bathe the members of this body"? The extremity and life-saving quality of God's mercy is implied on the one hand, while on the other, his tender and succouring aspect is intimated. Especially with the affective undertone supporting these questions, the auditor unconsciously must choose between affirming God's power, which is the same power which could damn him, and denying that God may forgive any of the sins listed. There are also biblical remembrances buttressing the implied answers to these questions; the auditor knows, for example, that "God's love is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 5:5), that while he has
sinful members, he is also part of "the body of Christ" and individually a "member" of it (1 Cor. 12.27), and that Christ "washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev. 1.5). In this way, the speaker uses dramatic irony as a tool to manipulate Scripture, since the congregation possesses greater biblical knowledge than the speaker does. The melancholy speaker continues questioning. Now he asks if God will contract, scatter, and imprison himself. The images initially imply a kind of polymorphous prowess, which again stresses God's power. But they also carry connotations of sacrifice and recall that God contracted himself in Christ, that he scattered himself upon the world in love for it and was torn by it, and that he was imprisoned before his death and by death itself. While the images formulate questions suggesting God's future action, "will he," they indicate a past accomplishment: he already has. This series of questions is also personalized, for these actions are all done not for the world only, but for "one" and "my sins." Further, they move away from God to a consideration of "neighbour" and "selfe." Here Donne hopes to change focus from a sense of wronging God to a resensitization concerning other persons and the fragile integrity of one's own soul.

Donne's speaker finishes his questioning by reflecting again upon the proximity of complacency to despair. His last comments sum up the point he has been implying throughout. If God is all-powerful, he can forgive the sins that span an individual's life; if God's mercy is eternal, he can forgive all sins committed in time:

Will he forgive that dim sight which I have of sin now, when sins scarce appeare to be sins unto me, and will he
forgive that over-quick sight, when I shall see my sins through Satan's multiplying glasse of desperation, when I shall thinke them greater then his mercy, upon my death-bed? In that he said all, he left out nothing, is the Apostles argument: and, he is not almighty, if he cannot; his mercy endures not for ever, if he does not forgive all. (V, 3, 81)

Donne has represented the sins of a lifetime in his questioning. He has acted the part of Satan's multiplying glass, but has gone on to demonstrate that even Satan is compassed within God's design. The fears of desperate people may be transformed by recollection of God's former mercies and incorporation of them within the individual soul. The recognition of sin demands a thorough awareness of its presence leading to a purging of guilt, and a zealous and practical response to God's forgiveness which courageously resists the temptations of complacent security and debilitating despair.

IV.3 Exercise of the Faculties through Discrimination and Choice

When the self is held captive to either complacency or despair, one is inhibited from the spiritual growth born of making good choices in the midst of temptation. For the complacent, all works performed appear good or, at least, indifferent; for the despairing, no work performed is adequate enough to be called good. In either case choice evaporates. Donne tries to liberate his congregation so that its members may develop a religious maturity capable of discerning the good from its false similitudes. As preacher Donne adopts Christ's method, a method which opens choices and does not limit them. Referring to the man of Matthew 20.16-22, Donne says:
When he enquired of Christ after salvation, Christ doth not say, there is no salvation for thee, thou Viper, thou Hypocrite, thou Pharisee, I have locked an iron doore of predestination between salvation and thee; when he enquired of him, what he should do to be sure of heaven, Christ doth not say, There is no such art, no such way, no such assurance here; but you must look into the eternall decree of Election first, and see whether that stand for you or no: But Christ teaches him the true method of this art: for, when he says to him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but God, he only directs him in the way, which he did indeed, or pretended to seek. (VI, 11, 229)

Here Donne suggests that Christ's method is to point the way, to indicate a path to follow, but not to remove the responsibility for decision-making. Interestingly, the method which Christ uses to propose a righteous life is introduced by a question. It is left up to the rich man of the Gospel story to determine why he has called Christ good, to square his life with the presence which has touched him. Every attentive Christian soul hears the question put by Christ to Peter: "Whom do you say that I am?" Christ does not coerce the mind into an acceptance, but only offers himself as a servant who seeks to save. It is the free individual soul who must recognize Christ at work in the world; and declare, "That thou art Jesus, and that Jesus is the Lord" (VI, 5, 130; cf. Matt. 16.15-16). Neither God nor the Devil has any effect upon one who refuses to concur with their will. Man's glory resides in his ability to develop by choice. It is God's design to have man exercise all his wits and powers in his quest to know him:

'sayes God of himselfe, I stand at the doore and knocke; God will not breake open doores to give thee a blessing, as well as he loves thee, as well as he loves it, but will have thee open to him: much more will he keepe Tentations at the doore; They shall not breake in upon thee, except thou open. (IX, 14, 332)
As we stated earlier, in Donne's view it is not the mere acquisition of knowledge that is man's purpose, but rather, wisdom, or knowledge put to the service of God and the community. This wisdom is knowledge which is tested and proved through choice, choice which has the benefit of God's acceptance or reproof:

Wisdom is not so much in knowing, in understanding, as in electing, in choosing, in assenting. No man needs go out of himselfe, nor beyond his owne legend, and the history of his owne actions for examples of that, that many times we know better, and choose ill wayes. Wisdome is in choosing, in Assenting. (IX, 2, 84)

It is by acting out one's religion, and thus by making difficult and problematic decisions, that one really knows the mettle of one's own heart. Like Sibbes who instructed his auditors to "Keep grace in exercise," and reminded them that "It is not so much the having of grace, as grace in exercise, that preserves the soul," Donne understands profoundly the value of exposing the soul to experience in all its variety. For even in error, the faithful soul will recognize its fault, and seek God's correction.

Donne's antipathy towards the monastic or retired life rests on these precepts. For if one secludes oneself in order to avoid sin, one commits several more sins in the process, and further, displays ingratitude toward God's bountiful creation, which was intended to be put to good use. Christians must take up God's work and use their abilities:

It is not enough to shut our selves in a cloister, in a Monastery, to sleep out the tentations of the world, but since the ladder [Jacob's] is placed, the Church established, since God, and the Angels are awake in this businesse, in advancing the Church, we must also labour, in our severall vocations, and not content our selves with our own spirituall sleep; the peace of conscience in our selves; for we cannot have that long, if we doe not some good to others. (II, 10, 227)
One may not use religious faith as an excuse to avoid trials and difficulties in the world. Instead, one must engage the world in its good and evil aspects: "for matter of action, and Protection, come not home to your selves, stay not in your selves, not in a confidence of your owne power, and wisedome, but It is, goe forth, goe into Aegypt, goe forth into Babylon, and look who delivered your Predecessors ..." (VIII, 4, 122). It is a betrayal of one’s spiritual ancestors if one does not actively attempt to imitate them in their forays into a largely unreceptive world, but a world which still bears the imprint of the divine image.15

The choices which one must make in the world of experience sharpen spiritual perception and strengthen resolwe. For that reason, even the enticements of the Devil may serve a useful function in fostering religious development. Thus, Donne advises his auditors not "to pray utterly against all tentation, as vehemently as against sins." The result in this case would run contrary to God’s purpose: "God should lose by it, and we should lose by it; if we had no tentations: for God is glorified in those victories, which we, by his grace, gaine over the Devil" (V, 18, 374). Keeping grace in exercise employs all the faculties in discerning a proper course of action and then executing it. In Donne’s view, the fear of failure should not deter one from actively confronting experience. Even the occasional success of the Devil should not lead one to shun society. Donne consoles and encourages his auditors by saying that there are "Few wrastlers that never tooke fall; none that may not, since we are all at best, but wrastlers" (IX, 15, 339). The difficult struggle with sin is no artificial contest, and it is bound to inflict
its wounds, but the net effect redounds to God's glory and serves to enlighten men: "Except he be taught in that Schoole, The Schoole of tentations, no man ever comes to know himselfe" (IX, 15, 340).

The conflicting pressures which the world exerts upon people are, in Donne's eyes, "a gift of providence". Donne encourages his auditors to accept the purifying and educational process offered by conflicting desires. In this way, Donne also shares Burton's perspective on life's struggle: "God often works by contrarieties, He first kills and then makes alive, He woundeth first and then healeth, He makes man sow in tears, that he may reap in joy; 'tis God's method."

The trial of contraries is often purgative simply because it is so difficult to distinguish between good and evil. Since evil mimics its adversary, its outward appearance may deceive the unaware. Donne articulates the problem succinctly when he argues: "This is it that undoes us, that vertues and vices are contiguous, and borderers upon one another; and very often, we can hardly tell, to which action the name of vice, and which the name of vertue appertains" (II, 1, 59).17 Donne contrasts the knowledge which people will have in heaven with that on earth; in heaven, "That which I have by Revelation, shall have no suspition, no jealousie; here it hath: sometimes it is hard to distinguish between a respiration from God, and a suggestion from the Devil" (IV, 3, 128). The complication of choice resulting from evil's disguises requires men to be critical and shrewd judges of malign forces. Otherwise they may become the dupes, if not the accomplices, of wickedness.

Donne's use of the mimetic technique described in Chapter II
is especially effective in representing the soul's trial in the world and in stimulating an imaginative trial in the auditor. Throughout the spectrum of techniques, from dialogue to description, the auditor must determine to what extent the events, characters, and beliefs presented are worthy and authentic ones, and to what extent deliberate exaggerations of the preacher designed to sharpen his powers of discrimination.

Often, Donne uses personae not only to stimulate a sympathetic emotional experience, but also to evaluate a speaker's attitude or to discriminate between human responses. While the speaker's words may spark recognition in the auditor, Donne's purpose is also to cause the auditor to assess and criticize that speaker. In one sermon, Donne presents two personae in similar sinful situations. But the speakers' responses to their situations are utterly different. Thus, the auditor is invited, as Donne has it, to gain wisdom "in electing, in choosing, in assenting" (IX, 2, 84). The first persona questions diffidently:

Can I be the adopted son of God, that have rebelled against him, in all my affections, that have troden upon his Commandements, in all my actions, that have divorced my selfe from him, in preferring the love of his creatures before himselfe, that have murmured at his corrections and thought them too much, that have undervalued his benefits, and thought them too little... can I be the adopted son of God that have done this?

This speaker distrusts God and cannot rely upon him because he is overwhelmed by his own sins. A second speaker also knows sin deeply but places himself in a demanding and renewing relationship with God. He therefore displays a humble confidence:

Am not I, who, though I am never without sinne, yet am never without hearty remorse and repentance for my sinnes; though
the weakness of my flesh sometimes betray mee, the strength of his Spirit still recovers me ... though I wound my Saviour with many sinnes, yet all these, bee they never so many, I strive against, I lament, confesse, and forsake as farre as I am able. (VI, 17, 347)

Even Donne's description of characters may be used as a means to exercise the faculties and to sharpen the auditor's ability to discriminate goodness from evil's seductive facades. In his portrayal of the flattering and manipulative gossip, for example, Donne implicitly calls upon the auditor to recognize a depraved reality lying within an attractive exterior:

This whisperer wounds thee, and with a stillette of gold, he strangles thee with scarves of silk, he smothers thee with the down of Phoenixes, he stifles thee with a perfume of Ambar, he destroys thee by praising thee, overthrows thee by exalting thee, and undoes thee by trusting thee; by trusting thee with those secrets which bring thee into a desperate perplexity ... Either to betray another that pretends to have trusted thee, or to perish thy selve, for the saving of another, that plotted to betray thee. (VII, 16, 406-07)

Here Donne causes the images of luxury and delight to be the foul instruments in an act of murder and causes words associated with prestige and friendship to execute treachery. The fierce contrast between the pleasurable and the fearsome crystalizes the difficult situation which arises when one permits ease to supplant exercise and credulity to replace judgment. The description quickly focusses the dangers which beset the soul if one is negligent and alerts one to the need for personal honesty. Clearly, the auditor is impelled to choose between fair and fair-seeming.

A variation on Donne's personae is his use of irony. These shifts in tone also call upon the auditor to test the appearance of words against their underlying meanings, and so to see through falsehood to truth. William Mueller finds this aspect of Donne's sermons
disconcerting: "such tonal qualities as irony or satire or sarcasm
find little proper place in the pulpit, and the reader of Donne's
poetry knows what effective and devastating use he could make of
such weapons." But Donne believes that, unless the sermon represents
the aspects of life which the auditor is likely to meet in the world,
the Church and the world would be seen as disjoint, rather than
as one sanctified kingdom. "His house is Sanctum Sanctorum, The
holiest of holies," Donne protests, "and you make it onely Sanctuar-
fum . . ." (VII, 12, 318). Church is not a refuge from sin and
men's ill opinions; neither is it a place of simplicity. Donne
attempts to reveal the complicated intermixture of good with evil,
and therefore hopes to summon from his auditors a religious shrewd-
ness capable of confronting the subtlety of evil.

Donne's use of irony is legitimized by irony's appearance in
Scripture itself. Used by God and his servants alike, ironic
challenges prod sinners to insight. Donne merely imitates scriptural
method by exploiting this literary technique. Thus, we note that
Donne often points to evil's false exterior by ironically suggesting
that Satan observes all the outward forms of holiness. At the same
time, Donne thus cautions his auditors to be wary of finding Satan
where they least expect him. "The Devill is no Recusant," declares
Donne, "he will come to Church, and he will lay his snares there . . ."
(X, 1, 58). Not only does Satan faithfully attend divine service,
but he also takes joy in being among the children of men. When
Christ, in the person of wisdom declares, "I toile my solace in the
compasse of Earth," Donne adds, "But since Christ's adversary Satan
does so too, (Satan came from compassing the Earth to and fro, and from walking in it;) ... the mercy of Christ is not lesse active, not lesse industrious then the malice of his adversaries ..." (II, 13, 269-70).

Donne is also able to take an ironic perspective on the Church setting. In one sermon, after explaining the homiletic practices of the early Church, Donne brings his congregation up to date with this incisive barb: "No man will think that we have able Preachers then the Primitive Church had; no man will doubt, but that we have learned, and more capable auditories, and congregations then theirs were" (V, 1, 42-43). Initially, the statement can almost be accepted on face value. Donne has just commented on the sermons of such great orators as Augustine, Ambrose, Bérnard and others; further, he has explained that the people of other times had limited capacities. In comparison of this with a former age, the assessment might seem just. But Donne's intent is to make the auditor question his own behaviour. We know that Donne's opinion about current preaching in London is high, and Donne goes on to suggest that the present "learned" capacity of the people is often displayed in critical derision or doctrinal dissection of a sermon which makes a change of heart impossible. 20 Thus, Donne is urging the auditor, through irony, not to excuse poor preaching, but to recognize that for any preaching to be effective, it must receive a charitable and open-hearted hearing. Elsewhere, Donne again attempts to break down the same proud, self-contented conduct of his auditors by this ironic portrayal of them:

you come to God in his House, as though you came to keepe
him company, to sit downe, and talke with him halfe an
houre; or you come as Ambassadors, covered in his presence,
as though ye came from as great a Prince as he. You meet
below, and there make your bargaines, for biting, for
devouring Usury, and then you come up hither to prayers,
and so make God your Broker. (VII, 12, 318)21

In short, this exaggerated description implies the auditor's idolatrous
contempt for God's majesty and compels him to determine to what extent
this attitude--taken here to an extreme--reflects his own.

Donne's confidence in using irony extends even to God. Determined
to demonstrate the extent of God's desire to provoke a prayerful
relationship with men, Donne offers many examples of where "God
admits, even expostulation, from his servants" (III, 5, 145). After
citing case after case of God's toleration of human petitions, he
ironically concludes, "and yet our long-suffering, and our patient
God, (must we say, our humble and obedient God?) endures all this
" (III, 5, 146). The comment is on one hand hyperbole, for the
image of God is almost pathetic: God dutifully attends to every human
request and hears every need. Yet, on the other hand, the comment is
an understatement, for God in Christ is humble and obedient, not
to men (though it is also they whom Christ serves) but to God the
Father. In such a remark, Donne alludes to the breadth of majesty
and compassion combined in the Godhead. The profound compassion and
love which God has for man is again highlighted when Donne playfully
chooses to regard God's actions from an utterly objective standpoint.

When Donne does this, God's actions appear peculiar and unseemly:

As of Christ it is said, Deliciae ejus cum filiis hominum,
His delight is to be with the sons of men, And, (to speak
humanely, a perverse delight, for it was to be with the
worst men, with Publicans and sinners) so, (to speak
humanely) the Holy Ghost had an extraordinary, a perverse
ambition, to goe downewards, to inlarge himselfe, in his working, by falling; He Fell. . . . (V, 1, 36)

The irony arises out of the fact that God so loved the world, that he gave his Son, that his Son humbled himself, and that he became a servant and so "fell." Donne knows that when he represents God as perverse, he is speaking from the perspective of those scandalized by the incarnation and death of Christ, as Paul puts it, "unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:25).

For a sanctified man to speak as a natural man results in ironic perception. Such a juxtaposition exercises the auditor's judgment, causing him to choose which representation reflects his own beliefs: is he a Christian or a natural man?

Another technique which Donne uses to provoke a sense of choice among alternatives is causing different ideas to hold dialogue. These ideas usually are attached to the Fathers or Reformers of the Church, but even Roman and Jewish doctors are called upon to present their views. The consideration of different beliefs usually concerns a question of biblical exegesis, a point of doctrine, or the bearing of either upon human thought and action. He may use various ideas in order to gather a consensus or he may bring different understandings into open conflict. Once again, however, Donne's purpose is to create in the auditor an imaginative viewpoint different from his own so that whatever belief the auditor finally affirms, it is not passive acceptance of received opinion but deliberate declaration of tested principles. He attempts to imitate a process of mind, sifting opinions and choosing amongst them, which the auditor will later reproduce. Therefore he uses commentators not so much to
illustrate the sermon's points or to lend authority to his view, as to represent the difficult but fruitful struggle of the soul to gain understanding. As in his more obviously mimetic use of fictive characters, Donne hopes to depict the conflict and interaction of ideas, and to challenge the auditor to enter the contest.

In a Whitsunday sermon preached on Matthew 12.31, Donne's technique may be seen in practice. Donne tries to explain the meaning of "the sin against the Holy Ghost." He takes solace from Augustine who said there was no harder question in Scripture than to determine this sin. Donne proceeds to consider Ambrose's opinion that, while a sin against one person of the Trinity is a sin against them all, nonetheless, a sin against the Holy Ghost would especially be against his attributes of goodness and love. Donne then returns to Augustine who agrees that this sin is a "totaall falling away from the Gospell of Christ Jesus," and "a verball calumniating, and a reall persecuting of that Gospel" with intent to do it to the end. Yet Donne afterwards deflects consideration to Calvin's opinion and in the process makes it respectfully clear that his own sympathies lie elsewhere. Though Calvin is not mentioned in the body of the sermon by name, Donne suggests that in comparison to his last formulation, Calvin's opinion is "somewhat early, somewhat forwardly pronounced, though by a reverend man." Calvin's assertion is simply, "That it is an infallible assurance, that that man is a Reprobate that blasphemes the holy Ghost." Donne does not dismiss the viewpoint, but questions how we may have "infallible assurance" if we cannot know precisely what this blaspheming is. Donne suggests that Calvin has scriptural warrant for his opinion, and even supplies
a possible passage in Romans 1.28; indeed, God withdraws his Spirit from those who blaspheme that Spirit. Yet, contends Donne, citing Scripture in a more generally considered way, "S. Paul blasphemed, and S. Peter blasphemed, and yet were not divorced from God."

At this point, Donne does not leave the matter completely, but shifts focus. Perhaps following Augustine's good rule is best: to judge a man from his "departing out of the world" rather than on a more specific basis. But Donne is not wholly satisfied with this rule. "Neither . . . dare I be too forward in this judgement," he affirms. For a better rule, he turns to another writer, Trismegistus. And while this author is not a believer, Donne finds his words speak with compelling authority: "The charitable man is the great Philosopher." Thus, determines Donne, "it is charity not to suspect the state of a dead man." So, in this spirit of moderation, which he finds embodied in another Father, Peter Martyr, Donne concludes the matter with this remark: "though by way of definition, we may say, This is that sin, yet by way of demonstration, let us say of no man, This is that sinner: I may say of no man, This sin in thee is irremissible" (V, 3, 87-89). In this process, Donne has gathered the opinions of many thinkers, has refined them against each other, curbed the extremity of two, extended the understanding of others. He has implied the richness of human and Christian thought, but more importantly, has disclosed a method of exercising the mind, of responsible weighing and balancing, of accepting and reformulating. The fine points of argument the auditors will likely forget; the embodied method of discrimination they will retain and emulate.
Donne's attitude towards authorities sheds light on the value he places on choosing. Even the Christian authorities of highest repute are not merely to be mined for answers. All men are likely to err, and therefore the best insurance against error is the judicious checking of one interpretation against another in the light of the Gospel and in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Donne objects to the Roman accusation that his Church undervalues the Fathers; none-theless, he firmly maintains the Christian prerogative of responsible liberty: "for, God knowes, if it be modestly done, and with the reverence, in many respects, due to them, it is no fault to say the Fathers fell into some faults" (IX, 6, 160). To suggest otherwise is blindly to obey authority, or to accept servile conformity in which no virtue can subsist. Donne maintains, "That man devest himselfe of all discretion, who, without examination, captivates his understanding to the Fathers" (IX, 6, 160-61). His affirmation of informed choice in regard to various authoriites is based on a firm psychological and theological insight, that human nature is inevitably imperfect:

The holy Patriarchs in the Old Testament, were holy men, though they straid into some sinfull actions; the holy Fathers in the Primitive Church, were holy men, though they straied into some erronious opinions; But neither are the holiest mens actions alwaies holy, nor the soundest Fathers opinions alwaies sound. (IX, 6, 162)

Donne's attitude towards choice in regard to the Fathers draws into question the belief that he is "a confirmed Augustinian." For, while Donne quotes Augustine more than any other Father, and holds him in high esteem, Donne still criticizes him and deviates from his propositions. Donne realizes that even Augustine's argu-
ments are conditioned by his historical circumstances, and his adamancy against his opponents may have driven him into error. Consequently, it is no small thing for Donne to admit, in a public forum, that Augustine's beliefs may be flawed:

we shall find sometimes occasions to doubt whether S. Augustine were constant in his own opinion, and not transported sometimes with vehemency against his present adversary, whether Pelagian, or Manichean. (VII, 7, 203)

Yet one other technique which suggests differing choices held in tension with each other needs no extensive elaboration here, since it has been described at length by Dennis Quinn. It is, simply, Donne's painstaking comparison of biblical passages in order to arrive at a suitable principle or definition. In one sermon, for example, Donne explains the appearance of the Holy Ghost in Scripture and throughout history. During the space of one paragraph, Donne compares and develops the topic by citing twenty-eight passages from both Testaments (V, 2, 61-62). By positing questions and answering them, by establishing the Holy Ghost's function and then extending it, by showing the continuity and development of the Holy Ghost's actions, Donne grounds the auditor in a knowledge which is comparative, extensive, and progressively refined.

Throughout all the sermons, this sort of careful collation, analysis, and balancing of texts—along with his use of the Fathers and other authorities to determine a correct exegesis—imitates the regenerate soul's method of gradually uncovering truth by a discriminating exercise of his faculties. Further, this method also suggests a process of purgation caused by the sheer complexity of the Bible itself, and the effort required to gain an understanding of it. Quinn perceptively remarks that Donne "has Augustine's poignant sense
of the difficulty of the Bible," and that "Donne keeps us always conscious of the effort, imaginative, intellectual, and spiritual, which is required to see the connections between letter and spirit, image, and thing imaged." 25

Donne's attempt to exercise the mind by choice, and thereby to strengthen it in uncluttered virtue, is a representation of the struggling psychological process which the individual undergoes in the actual world. Techniques such as character depiction and description, irony, the weighing of opinions and authorities, and the comparison of scriptural passages train the soul to engage a sinful yet needy society. Donne's motive is to help the auditor to purge himself of illusion and thus to apprehend the divine presence in ordinary life. While Donne hopes to sharpen people's wits, he also endeavours to soften their hearts: these spiritual exercises are really a process of sensitization. They enable one to discern God's communication with men, to see God's message, to read his hand, and to act upon his wishes:

All comes from God's hand; and from his hand, by way of hand-writing, by way of letter, and instruction to us. And therefore to ascribe things wholly to nature, to fortune, to power, to second causes, this is to mistake the hand, not to know God's hand; But to acknowledge it to be God's hand, and not to read it, to say that it is God's doing, and not to consider, what God intends in it, is as much a slighting of God, as the other. (VIII, 13, 305)

Through exercise of the soul, Donne equips his auditor to determine what meaning events in history and events in Scripture have for him, and what they therefore require of him.
IV.4 Tragic Joy and Catharsis

One of the most critical psychological steps which Donne induces the auditor to take is the personal experience of tragedy and, with it, a spiritual deepening which is at once joyful and sorrowful. The other steps in the sermons all move towards a crisis when Donne evokes a sense of tragic recognition. Donne seeks to stimulate an awareness of the individual's ineluctable involvement in all mankind, and thus his involvement in the common experience of suffering, a result of the universal participation in the Fall. The belief that "No Man is an Island" and, therefore, the belief that each member of the Church must bear the grief of loss and share in its responsibility is a theme of the sermons no less than the Devotions. 26

God hath made all mankind of one blood, and all Christians of one calling, and the sins of every man concern every man, both in that respect, that I, that is, This nature, is in that man that sins that sin; and I, that is This nature, is in that Christ, who is wounded by that sin. (II, 4, 122)

The realization of personal involvement in mankind's fall from grace evokes both a fear of God's wrath and pity for oneself, one's fellows, and Christ, who met the Father's judgment in selfless love. This participation in the suffering of the human beings for whom Christ died may become a means of participation in the crucified body of Christ. It springs first from a sense of common human poverty and distress, a forlorn and humbling need for one another:

for we are debtors to all, because all are our Neighbours. Proximus tuus est antequam Christianus est: A man is thy Neighbor, by his Humanity, not by his Divinity; by his Nature, not by his Religion: a Virginian is thy Neighbor, as well as a Londoner; for all men are in every good man's Diocess, and Parish. (IV, 3, 110)

This all-embracing pity, or sympathy beyond the self, enables an
identification with Christ's incarnation, suffering, and death, which the divine pity permits and encourages. The assumption into the body of Christ is a kind of exchange by which one's sins are transferred to Christ and accepted by the Father in Christ's innocency. Assured Donne, "As long as I sin, for so much as concerns me, me who am incorporated in Christ, me, who by my true repentance have discharged my selfe upon Christ, Christ is the sinner, even in the sight, and justice of his Father, and not I" (VI, 11, 239).27 The deep sorrow arising from the recognition that one inflicts the wound allows the identification with the wounded Christ; yet, by this sorrow, its connection to true joy may be discovered, and thus, the cathartic relief inherent in tragedy may occur. Therefore, Donne's understanding of "a purging of peccant humors," is an understanding based on the Vulgate's terminology ("Expeccabie"), for purging means literally, as Donne says to God, "Thou shalt un-sin me; that is, look upon me as a man that had never sinned, as a man invested in the innocency of thy Sonne, who knew no sin" (V, 15, 308). This unsinning is accompanied by a renewal and improvement of powers lost in the Fall. The release which results from catharsis is experienced in the comforting assurance of the Holy Ghost whose presence is marked by a joy which is comprehended only by those who know sorrow fully.

T. R. Henn comments concerning tragedy, "at its best it can create a moral homogeneity in the audience, and thereby acquire a power equalled only by the Epic at the height of its tradition, and by the greatest preachers of the seventeenth century."28 The power which drives Donne's sermons involves his ability to present and transform the strong and complex emotions which we have described:
fear, pity, sorrow, and joy. To provoke and give articulation to
the feelings which one registers when one recognizes his complicity
in the fall from grace, is the difficult feat which Donne performs
by sweeping his auditors into the tragic movement of scriptural
history. The real treachery of a false imagination, or any of the
literary representations created by a false imagination, is that they
are not adequate to deal with the weight of sorrow which meets us
in human experience. Thus Richard Sibbes complains of those posses-
ing insufficient imagination:

They would conceit ... Christ without his cross, and
a godly life without persecutions. They would pull a
rose without pricks. Which, though it may stand with
their own base ends for a while, yet will not hold out
in times of change, when sickness of body and trouble
of mind shall come. Empty conceits are too weak to
encounter with real griefs. 29

The authenticity of Donne's homiletic art is demonstrated in his
ability to draw forth and contain the sorrow of man for his condi-
tion, a condition shared by Christ. The sermon, in order to be
true to life, and to the Christian account of history, must embody
the tragic dimension of experience. Therefore, the emotional and
psychological function of Donne's sermons has much in common with
the poetical lamentations described by Puttenham:

Lamenting is altogether contrary to rejoicing, every man
saith so, and yet it is a piece of joy to be able to lament
with ease, and freely to pour forth a man's inward sorrows
and the griefs wherewith his mind is surcharged. This
was a very necessary devise of the Poet and a fine, besides
his poerie to play also the Phisitian, and not onely by
applying a medicine to the ordinary sickness of mankind, but
by making the very griefe it selfe (in part) cure of the
disease.

Donne, in his sermons, often works as the followers of Paracelsus,
and cures by "making one dolour to expell another." 30 The effective
sermon meets the grief and sorrow experienced by men and does not deflect them.

In Donne's sermons there appears to be a bias in favour of the experience of suffering. This should not be surprising, since the crucifixion is an event central to the meaning of Christian faith: the moment wherein good does not overcome evil by opposition, but by taking it upon itself. Yef, as we have already stressed, Donne is well aware of at least two forms of tristitia. Wallerstein reminds us of this double potential of sorrow when she says, "Melancholy is at once, to some degree, the inevitable condition of mortal life and the fruit of surrender to the world; at the same time it is the source of religious awakening." 31 Henn could be seen to concur, when he speaks of the parent of sorrow, fear. Fear may be placed under two headings, "the neurotic anxiety of the ego-centric, and the wholesome humility of fear before the unknown." 32 In the seventeenth century, the wholesome sorrow associated with repentance was often confused with the pathological variety, and therefore a popular distaste arose against either species of sorrow. Suggests Wallerstein:

The significance of melancholy, in its deeper meaning as the tragic sense or as a contemplation of the seriousness and transiency of life, never wholly died. But the abuse of melancholy, and the protest against that abuse, were important elements in establishing the dominant trust in cheer and in the social sense, which prevailed in the later seventeenth century. 33

Donne, of course, sought to instill in his auditors the profoundest meaning of sorrow, that tragic sense which evokes both fear and pity. For him, suffering held immense resources for transforming the human
soul and putting it into closer communication with God. Naturally, all sorrow and suffering was not blessed. As Donne understands it, suffering has to be used to bring about regeneration, else it is worthless. He comments in his Devotions, "Tribulation is Treasure in the nature of it, but it is not currant money in the use of it, except we get nearer and nearer our home, heaven, by it." 34 Suffering may become a gift if one's response to it is informed by grace.

So Donne embraces the value of suffering as central to a Christian's conception of the entry of new life into the individual. Affliction can humble the human pretensions of pride and grandeur which have no value before God, for it was he who exalted the suffering servant seen in Christ. Weeping, of itself, holds great power:

so though there be good teares and bad teares, teares that washe away sin, and teares that are sin, yet all teares have this degree of good in them, that they are all some kinde of argument of good nature, of a tender heart; and the Holy Ghost loves to worke in Waxe, and not in Marble. (IV, 13, 340)

A tender heart is something highly to be prized, for it can claim receptivity to divine penetration and correction. Consequently, the desperate calamity which befalls the reprobate is that he has no recourse to tears. Donne cites Horace in pronouncing: "There is the mark of his incorrigibleness, and so of his irrecoverableness, That he cannot wepe" (IX, 12, 290). Tearful sorrow is so worthwhile to the Christian life that Donnecan only ask rhetorically, "when he promises, to wipe all teares from his eyes, what shall God have to doe with that eye that never wept?" (IV, 13, 331). Affliction
softens the obdurate heart, and thereby readies it for repentence and
for hearing God's word. Even natural remorse is of value, for it
is the raw material upon which grace works: "Grace does not ordi-
arily work upon the stifnesse of the soule, upon the silence, upon
the frowardnesse, upon the averseness of the soule, but when the
soule is souyled and mellowed, and feels this reproofe, this remorse
in it self . . . " (VI, 16, 325).

Suffering is the discipline which instructs people to be atten-
tive to God's action in their lives. For when one admits oneself
to be poor, one is ready to acknowledge one's dependence upon divine
help. Donne declares, "Adversity, as well as prosperity, opens the
bounty of God unto us; and oftentimes better" (IX, 2, 70). Indeed,
people may thank God for their joyful blessings; but often it is
the process of humiliation which truly opens their eyes to the
extent of their need for divine succour; "therefore the low way is
the best way; adversity will be the best way to see God by" (IV, 6,
172). Since the Fall, people cannot accurately discern the degree
to which any good they accomplish or any fortune which befalls them is
directed by the hand of Providence. Affliction sensitizes us as to
the consistency of our own nature, and thus the measure of our reliance
upon God; but, as well, affliction prepares us to know the greatness
of our potential and our purpose. It readies us for the abundance of
life:

No study is so necessary as to know our selves; no Schoole-
master is so diligent, so vigilant, so assiduous, as
Adversity; and the end of knowing our selves, is to know
how we are disposed for that which is our end, that is
this Blessednesse . . . (IX, 11, 257)
Donne, following Origen, sees an almost sacramental function in tribulation. For, even as baptism washes away sin, so tribulation burns away deformity as a purgation. Donne contends, "That all our fiery tribulations fall under the nature, and definition of Sacraments, That they are so many visible signes of invisible Grace, that every correction from God's hand, is a Rebaptization to mee . . . " (VIII, 2, 71): 35

While Donne highly values suffering for the good which it may produce, it cannot be said that Donne values suffering in and of itself. Suffering helps to turn the heart to God, but this is not necessarily so. Affliction may produce evil results and confirm the wicked in their ways. Only those afflictions which crucify one to the world of sin bear any semblance to Christ's cross: "The afflictions of the wicked exasperate them, enrage them, stone and pave them, obdurate and petrified them, but they doe not crucifie them. The afflictions of the godly crucifie them" (II, 14, 300). Donne warns his auditors that the occasion which suffering brings must be grasped and put to use, for otherwise it only makes them insensitive to their plight: "suffering it self is but a stubborness, and a rigid and stupid standing under an affliction; it is not a humiliation, a bending under God's hand, if it be not done in charity" (VIII, 7, 187). 36 Mere endurance cannot be praised as a virtue. Only when one grapples with suffering by active and beneficial service in the world does one fully understand the sacrificial character of God's love and dwell in its midst.

Donne's conception of suffering explains his limited use but ultimate rejection of "satirical" preaching. The prophetic element
in preaching, the calling down of God's judgments upon sinful people, is a legitimate part of the sermon. But if dramatization of corruption in the world does not issue from a charitable motive, and if its goal is not gradual reconciliation with God, then satirical preaching loses its authority and produces undesirable effects. To instill sorrow for sins is a worthwhile cause on the preacher's part; wholesale damnation runs counter to God's own method. Lyons points to the use of satire in drama saying, "The world's disease is identified with a corruption of humours, which the satirist, like a surgeon, will cure. . ." 37 Rudolph further stresses that in the early seventeenth century, references are common to the satirist as scourge or doctor of physic, whose object is to purge the patient; later in the century, after contact with the rationalist philosophers, satire "acquires a new and quieter vocabulary." 38 Certainly Donne sees his role paralleling that of the physician who purges, but the satirist's denunciations, he feels, lack the full curative power which only God's word in Scripture can give. Thus his complaint against satire is that it is too easy a mode. Referring to Augustine, Donne suggests, "it is easy to be witty, easy to extend an Epigram to a Satyre, and a Satyre to an Invective, in declaiming against this world . . ." (IV, 13, 341). Consequently, when Donne explains that men of high degree may become a lie (Ps. 62.9) by not performing their duties or by others flattering them or relying upon them more than they should, Donne realizes he need not belabour a point and confesses, "But we are upon a Sermon, not upon a Satyr, therefore we passe from this" (VI, 15, 307). The exegesis of sin is necessary, but only to evoke a loving response. Perhaps the greatest flaw in satire is
that it demands little of the satirist beyond a disgust which en-
meshes him in the same decay which he criticizes:

We make Satyrs; and we looke that the world should call
that wit; when God knowes, that that is in a great part,
self-guiltiness, and we doe but reprehend those things,
which we our selves have done, we cry out upon the ill-
nesse of the times, and we make the times ill: so the
calumniator whispers those things, which are true, no
where, but in himselfe. (VII, 16, 408)

The typical satirist is not able to take himself beyond
denunciation, and is thus too closely allied with corruption itself.

Donne is careful, therefore, to make auditors distinguish between
the words of the preacher and those of the satirist. For the preacher
is satirist and more. The preacher reconciles and makes new: "in
the Bowels and Treasury of his Mercy, let me beseech you, not to
call the denouncing of Gods Indignation, a Satyr of a Poet, or an
Invective of an Orator . . ." (IX, 7, 184). Social critic though
he is; the satirist is trapped in a cycle of degeneration which
does not offer sufficient means of transformation. The preacher, on
the other hand, allows grief to come to fruition:

Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men;
but knowing the comforts too, we importune men to this
consideration, That as God proceedeth with judgement in
this world, to give the issue with the tentation, and
competent strength with the affliction, as the Wiseman
expresses it, That God punishes his enemies with delibera-
tion, and requesting, (as our former translation had
it) and then with how great circumspection will he judge
his children? (VII, 8, 236)

By representing the "terrors" and the "comforts" of the Lord in
his preaching, Donne tries to evoke in his hearers a sense of tragic
joy. He attempts to induce in them a successively greater happiness
which nonetheless does not extinguish or invalidate their sorrow.

Donne's understanding of this experience is a daring insight. For
he perceives the life of the spirit as an intense consciousness of sorrow and joy, whereby the elements of sadness are assimilated into a more comprehensive joy.  39

Donne understands that joy and sorrow in the religious sense are not contrary experiences; rather, the one participates in the other. In his Devotions, Donne articulates the relatedness of these sensations when he says, "Joy includes all; and feare, and joy consist together; nay, constitute one another. . . ."  40 True joy cannot exist without the humbling fear which stands in the face of God's judgment or without the sorrow for wrongs committed. But purgation admits the joy which still remembers its connection to sadness. Thus, religious joy and sorrow merge and become one identity. The "perfect joy" to be experienced in this life, declares Donne,

is not a collaterall joy, that stands by us in the tribulation, and sustaines us, but it is a fundamentall joy, a radicall joy, a viscerall, a gremiall joy, that arises out of the bosome and wombe and bowels of the tribulation it self. It is not that I rejoice, though I am afflicted, but I rejoice because I am afflicted. . . . (III, 46, 343)

The joy and sorrow of which Donne speaks do not merely join one another, but define each other. When one experiences these emotions in the sure presence of God, they have the same meaning: "To conceive true sorrow and true joy, are things not onely contiguous but continuall; they doe not onely touch and follow one another in a certaine succession, Joy assuredly after sorrow, but they consist together, they are all one, Joy and Sorrow". (IV, 13, 343).  41 Of course, it is Christ who acts as model for the godly experience of tragic joy. To Donne's mind, even as Christ hangs upon his cross, he knows the fullness of this tragic joy. In this dark moment of
human history, joy still flares forth. Donne's last sermon proclaims,
"The holy Ghost calls it a Joy (for the Joy which was set before him
hee induced the Crosse) which was not a joy of his reward after his
passion, but a joy that filled him even in the midst of those
torments, and arose from them" (X, 11, 244). This is the gift which
every person may receive by willingly taking up his own cross;
suffering may be the actual cause and substance of joy. As Donne
describes the matter, "the very suffering is the subject of my joy,
I had no joy, I had no occasion of joy, if I did not suffer" (III,
16, 334).

Donne's insight into the identity of sorrow and joy is based
upon his theology of God's dealings with men. For humankind's
experience of sorrow and joy is really the response to God's acts
of judgment and mercy. When a person feels fear or sorrow, that
person is the receiver of God's justice; when a person knows joy,
that person passes into God's mercy. However, in Donne's theology,
these experiences are not different actions, as we have seen, but
they comprehend each other. Donne explains the matter in this way:

as all the Attributes of God, make up but one God (Goodnesse,
and Wisdome, and Power are but one God) so Mercy and
Justice make up but one act; they doe not onely duly
succeed, and second one anther, they are not onely to-
gether, but they are all one. (X, 8, 163)

Justice-mercy is one action, and therefore, to the perceiving
Christian, tragic joy is one experience. Throughout his sermons,
Donne encourages his auditors to discern this unified action of God
in their lives and during the course of history. If one sees rightly,
it is impossible to dissociate God's justice from his mercy; "God
does nothing, God can doe nothing, no not in the way of ruine and
destruction, but there is mercy in it; he cannot open a door in his Armory, but a window into his Treasury opens too, and he must looke into that" (V, 14, 284-85). It is not that God is sometimes slow to show his gentler aspect to people, but that his followers' clouded vision and hardheartedness force them to experience his love as severity. They cannot conceive of the unity of God's purpose, and therefore in their minds they dismember God into various parts. It is a misconception which, Donne warns, borders on heresy. The responsible imagination sees beyond accidents and divisions: "The God of the Law, and the God of the Gospel too; The God of the Brain, and the God of the Belly too; the God of Mercy, and the God of Justice too, is all one God" (IV, 3, 94). In the midst of the congregation, therefore, Donne petitions God to show forth his overall intention and purpose in relation to human suffering and thereby to illuminate men's imagination with true appearances:

make it appeare to us that thine intention is mercy, though thou enwrap it in temporall afflictions, in this darke cloud let us discerne thy Son, and though in an act of displeasure, see that thou art well pleased with us... (V, 14, 285)\[42\]

The Donnean sermon itself moves, at some point, to a heightening of the auditor's sense of tragic joy. Occasionally, however, Donne is more direct, and coaches his auditors as to his technique and purpose. Even as those persons "whom lighter affections carry to Shewes, and Masks, and Comedies" enjoy their entertainment, so the members of the congregation, who by implications have deeper affect-ions, "conceive some contentment, and some kinde of Joy" when they come to church to "heare the Sermon" (V, 14, 294). The progress of
the sermon carries them in this direction. Yet, Donne is eager to point out, the joy which the sermon brings is of a specific quality, for it contains sorrow within it. Authentic joy arises out of affliction, and during the sermon, the preacher must simulate and intensify suffering. Speaking for the company of preachers, Donne counsels,

we must beseech you to suffer, even our words of comfort; for we can propose no true comfort unto you, but such as carries some irkesomenesse, some bitterness with it; we can create no true joy, no true acquiescence in you, without some exercise of, your patience too. We cannot promise you peace with God, without a war in your selves, nor eternall joy in the next world, without a solemn remorse for the sinfull abuses of this. (IX, 16, 353)

The sermon's purpose is to sort out the historical and personal causes for sorrow, thereby clarifying the necessity of offering one's sing up to God and ultimately of translating this sorrow into a more comprehensive spiritual language, the language of tragic joy. Out of the depths of affliction, one knows the comforts of God's presence. When this experience occurs, the auditor may say along with Donne, "this consolation makes a Satyr, and Slander, and Libell against me, a Pahegyrique, and an Elogy in my praise ..." (VI, 16, 316).

The experience of tragic joy coincides with a more expansive sense of reverence for God. The two elements involved in such reverence are fear and love. The initial narrow fear which one encounters when one becomes conscious that he stands before God's judgment gives way, as trust increases, to a kind of fear more closely likened to wonder and awe. Authentic religious fear proceeds to include a pervasive love of God whereby one is able to meet with confidence and joy the return of Christ who judges all. Donne is
especially aware of two concepts, that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. 11.10; Prov. 9.10), and that "perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4.18). He reconciles the two thoughts by seeing that love comprehends a proportionate fear. It is his contention, then, that "If you take away due Fear, you take away true Love" (I, 4, 233). The proper fear of God rests in a humility before the splendour of his works; thus, an affectionate respect and gratitude for his redemptive acts is an indication of one's willingness to accomplish his design. If one counts oneself as an agent of Providence through this reverence, one's other fears diminish substantially: "this is the working of the fear of the Lord, it devours all other fears; God will have no half-affections, God will have no partners; He that fears God fears nothing else" (VI, 4, 111). This respect for God and his commandments infuses confidence. In Donne's view, "without this fear, there is no courage, no confidence, no assurance" (I, 4, 233). Yet when this fear instills confidence, the possibility of enjoying God's presence and of accomplishing his work springs forth. In this sense, there may also be an identity of fear and love: "for, this fear is inchoative love, and this love is consummative fear; The love of God begins in fear, and the fear of God ends in love; and that love can never end, for God is love" (VI, 4, 113).

In order that the auditor may apprehend fearful love and tragic joy, Donne attempts to evoke within him a response to converting grace whereby the servile fear of God is transformed into an outpouring of pity and love for all mankind. When sorrow softens the stoney heart into a heart of flesh, this sorrow for one's own
sinful acts merges into pity for those whom one has afflicted. Because Christ suffers for all human sin, the auditor turns his sorrow and pity upon Christ. In this acknowledged dependence upon Christ, one suffers not only for acts which torment the crucified Christ; one also suffers those acts in Christ, and as Christ, as a member of his mystical body. Henn relates these Christian experiences to traditional concepts of tragedy. For tragedy includes, among others, two important steps. First, there is the "awakening, or recognition of this human predicament [i.e. under God's governance], projected, as it were outwards (as against the normal response to personal suffering, which is egocentric) in compassion in its literal sense: co-suffering, embracing pity and fear." Secondly, suggests Henn:

This compassion lies at the heart of Christianity, since it is through the recognition of, and unity with, the fact of Christ crucified that the ultimate redemption of man's sin is perceived. But the ultimate reconciliation is only made possible by love (itself the last perfection of compassion, and transcending it), and therefore compassion comes to have value in and of itself.

In the moment of co-suffering, the barrier between self and other (as suffering mankind or Christ) is broken. One realizes that, in Christ's cross, the moment of greatest divine judgment is transformed into the moment of greatest divine love. By this co-suffering, the sympathetic imagination in fact imitates and participates in the act of sacrifice out of a willingness to accept the gracious divine initiative. An exchange takes place whereby, through pity, one is assumed into Christ's body; likewise, Christ suffers one's own hurts and releases one from sin.
This conversion or reorientation of the auditor and the transferal that takes place between himself and Christ Donne describes in several ways. In one instance Donne sees both God and man partaking of the same mercy and thereby together restoring their relationship:

So our eyes waite upon God, *till hee have mercy*, that is, while he hath it, and that he may continue his mercy; for it was his mercifull eye that turned ours to him, and it is the same mercy that we waite upon him. And then, when, as a well made Picture doth alwaies looke upon him, that lookes upon it, this Image of God in our soule, is turned to him, by his turning to it, it is impossible we should doe any foule, any uncomely thing in his presence. (IX, 16, 368)

An individual experiences the cathartic relief from sin not only by receiving God's mercy, but also by involving himself in this divine mercy. Of God, Donne explains, "first, his eye turnes us to himselfe; and then turnes us into himselfe" (IX, 16, 368). By having mercy upon our own souls—and thus upon the image of Christ in them—we follow Christ's own example in having mercy upon humankind. One must be willing to admit that one is pitiful and needy. When this happens, the soul is reoriented to become generous to itself, for the soul is but one of many lacking charity. To be able to be merciful means that one has already received mercy, through divine grace. God cries out in the voice of his prophet, "Have mercy upon thine own soule, and I will commiserate it too; Be liberall to thy selfe, and I will beare thee out in it" (VIII, 10, 252). In other words, to break the cycle of egocentrism so that it issues in selfless giving, the soul must find an object of pity or mercy, even if one must divide the self. One may both offer pity and receive pity in order to know
the experience of mercy. The best comfort which springs from the pitying situation is when one suffers not individually, but in Christ's name. Thus, Donne advises his auditors what to do for a downcast soul, and thereby implies his own homiletic method; in this circumstance, one must dramatically re-create the scene of Christ's passion.

One needs

To set Christ Jesus before him, to out-sigh him, out-weep him, out-bleed him, out-dye him. To transferre all the fasts, all the scornes, all the scourges, all the nailes, all the speares of Christ Jesus upon him, and so, making him the Crucified man in the sight of the Father, because all the actions and passions of the Son are appropriated to him, and made his so intirely, as if there were never a soule created but his, To enrich this poore soule, to comfort this sad soule so, as that he shall beleive, and by beleieving finde all Christ to be his. . . . (VIII, 10, 246-47)

The comfort of knowing that our sorrows are borne, not alone, but by Christ, and the joy of realizing that our sins are not ours, if we repent them, but Christ's, is a liberating experience. For beyond individual pain, one realizes that one's sufferings in pursuit of godliness will be bearable in Christ. And one may recognize the marks of God's election and favour when one sees how one's principles and actions have conformed one to Christ, as can be seen in this prophetic declaration:

we shall so appeare before the Father, as that he shall take us for his owne Christ; we shall bear his name and person; and we shall every one be so accepted, as if every one of us were all Mankind; yea, as if we were he himselfe. He shall find in all our bodies his wounds, in all our mindes, his Agonies; in all our hearts, and actions his obedience. (V, 7, 159-60)

Donne presses the auditor to undergo the feeling of liberation which tragic joy, through catharsis, allows. Once one's sins have been transferred to Christ, one may not have them back. If one
harbours a secret mournful attachment for them, one perversely attempts to deny forgiveness, and thereby holds Christ's sacrifice in poor esteem. Consequently Donne encourages his auditors truly to die to their sinful selves and rejoice with new vigour. The purpose of purging, after all, is to regain good health:

sadnesse and sorrow have but one use, and a determined and limited employment, onely for sin, we doe not say, be sorry, and again be sorry, but when you have been truly sorry for your sinnes, when you have taken that spirituall physique, beleeve your selfe to be well, accept the seale of the holy Ghost, for the remission of your sins, in Christ Jesus, and come to that health which that physique promises, peace of conscience. (III, 16, 342)

When one frees oneself from a morbid attachment to sin, one is able to enter into that abundance of joy which is tragic, and therefore one welcomes affliction as a part of his joy. In this cathartic release, one gains a sense of confidence in standing before God. One is sure of his justification and prepared for his further sanctification. The comforting reassurance of the Holy Ghost is lovingly offered to those who willingly are continually purged by tragic joy: "In great buildings, the Turrets are high in the Aire; but the Foundations are deep in the Earth. The Comforts of the Holy Ghost work so, as that only that soule is exalted, which was dejected" (VII, 18, 451).

IV.5 The Reorientation of the Faculties: Incarnation through Outward Action

The last psychological stage under discussion involves the preacher's instigation of the congregation to become the visible body of Christ in the world. As a result of the auditor's experience,
of tragic joy, of his offering of his sins to Christ, and his belief in Christ's acceptance into himself of the repentant sinner, the auditor is enabled, with new confidence, to execute the will of his God. We have already explored how deeply Donne's theology of faith and works is intertwined; we have yet to explain in detail how each of his sermons is structured so as to present the auditor with the new-found responsible freedom proclaimed in the Gospel. In order for the auditor truly to imitate Christ, he must imitate him in his freedom, his voluntary desire to perform the Father's design. Just as the disciples could not know the full meaning of Christ until Jesus had ascended, and they, inspired by the Holy Ghost, had to incarnate Christ in their lives, with whatever difficulty and however imperfectly, so Donne challenges the auditor to perform his part beyond an exact copying of Scripture, or Christ's life. Donne's sermons manifest this open-endedness in order to imply that there is yet something to be performed by the auditor before the sermon may truly claim to be complete. 47

Donne makes many comments suggesting that he intends the sermon to be completed beyond what is said in the pulpit. The preacher certainly has a responsibility to be eloquent in his exemplary actions. 48 But Donne further believes that the auditors, as participants in the sermon, must also extend and complete the sermon in their everyday existence. In reference to 1 Peter 2.9, Donne compares the function of preacher with that of the congregation:

If you be a holy people, you are also a royall preisthood:
If you be all Gods Saints, you are all Gods Preists;
and if you be his preists, it is your office to preach
too; as we by words, you by your holy works; as we by contemplation, you by conversation; as we by our doctrine, so you by your lives, are appointed by God to preach to one another; and therefore every particular Man, must wash his owne feet, looke that he have speciosos pedes, that his example may preach to others, for this is truly Regale Sacerdotium, a regall priesthood, not to work upon others by words, but by actions. (V, 8, 180)

The auditors are responsible for bringing the sermon to a fitting conclusion in their behaviour throughout the week's events. If they are truly incorporated into Christ's body, the auditors may know the heart of the sermon almost as a second nature; says Donne to his congregation, "you are of this quorum [those adopted by Christ], if you preach over the Sermons which you heare, to your owne soules in your meditation, to your families in your relation, to the world in your conversation" (VI, 17, 347-48). Certainly, preaching by means of actions is the most excellent manner of manifesting God, because such preaching not only interprets his word, but understands it fully by embodying it. As a result Donne presses his auditors to go forward with their work of charity.

The sermon, acting as a conduit of grace, enables the auditor, previously constrained by sin, to make use of responsible Christian freedom. The eucharist may be a sign of the individual's assimilation into Christ's body, but the sermon is the effectual means by which that person is readied to perform as a member:

The Son of God, is Λόγος, verbum, The word; God made us with his word, and with our words we make God so farre, as that we make up the mysticall body of Christ Jesus with our prayers, with our whole liturgie, and we make the naturall body of Christ Jesus applicable to our soules, by the words of consecration in the Sacrament, and our soules apprehensive, and capable of that body, by the word Preached. (III, 12, 259-60)
The sermon remains deliberately open-ended so that the auditor may exercise his part. He is spurred on by the sermon's developing design and imagery to complete it in a way fitting to its scripturally based structure. M. A. C. Johnson suggests, "Donne proposes a problem which he hopes his hearers will attempt to solve for themselves."\(^{49}\)

In one instance, Donne makes his intention concerning the auditor's active participation in the sermon very plain. At the same time, he emphasizes that imitation or mimesis, is not a passive copying, but a creative act involving the responsible soul in the use of all its faculties. While there is a sure pattern to be revivified, that action involves reflection, discernment, and faithful imagination. The preacher prompts by means of imitation, but the auditor must also take up the imitative act to ensure that Scripture is embodied. When describing Simeon, Donne advises his auditors:

> We cannot pursue this Anatomy of good old Simeon, this Just, and Devout Priest, so farre, as to shew you all his parts, and the use of them all, in particular. His example, and the characters that are upon him, are our Alphabet. I shall onely have time to name the rest of those characters; you must spell them, and put them into their syllables; you must forme them, and put them into their words; you must compose them, and put them into their Syntaxis, and sentences; that is, you must pursue the imitation, that when I have told you what he was, you may present yourselves to God such as he was. (VII, 11, 289)

Obviously Donne does not merely demand that the auditor remember the headings of the sermon. Rather, Donne induces the auditor to put the sermon's meaning into effect. The preacher equips the auditor for the task, but the auditor himself must perform it. Donne, along with several Puritans in the period, realizes the dynamic
challenge involved in building up the body of Christ: "Thus Christian liberty is not simply a release; rather, it is an active engagement in a struggle like that of organic life to resist dissolution."\(^50\)

In fact, what Donne encourages his auditors to do, as they accept the freedom to live out the meaning of the sermon in their own terms, is to undergo a new incarnation. Donne seems to have found pleasure in the fact that the Church Fathers discovered so many ways of expressing the concept:

\[\text{Therefore have the Fathers delighted themselves, in the variation of that word; as far, as that Hilarius calls it Corporationem, That God assumed my Body; and Damascius calls it Inhumanationem, That God became this man, soule and body; And Irenaeus calls it Adunationem, and Nysen Contemperationem, A mingling, says one, an uniting, sales the other, of two, of God and man, in one person. (VI, 8, 178)}\]

The mystical entry of the divine nature into human flesh occurs not only once, but whenever humble people receive God in their hearts. Certainly, God may unite with an individual when he receives communion (V, 18, 368). Yet Donne strives to give incarnation a more complete meaning beyond what is accomplished in the institutional act. A radical change of heart causes Christ to dwell within, and to be actually and effectually a part of a person; for, "The best determination of the Real presence is to be sure, that thou be really present with him, by an ascending faith: Make sure thine own Real presence, and doubt not of his..." (VII, 4, 139-40).\(^51\) Even this kind of deep trust and commitment does not precisely articulate Donne's idea of incarnation, however. It also has a more practical, visceral aspect. Thus, Donne counsels his auditors, "Be thou Verbum too, A Word, as God was; a Speaking,
and a Doing Word, to his glory, and the edification of others" (VIII, 1, 52).

The conscientious hearing of a sermon opens the individual to the possibility of graceful transformation. The incarnation of which Donne speaks is a remaking and restoration of the body and the soul. And it is no mere analogy or metaphor of the divine becoming flesh but a genuine participation in the Godhead. In one sermon he imagines that he preaches to a congregation made up of such base and bestial natures that they are like the creatures of the Ark:

That if I finde a licentious Goat, a supplanting Fox, an usurious Wolfe, an ambitious Lion, yet to that creature, to every creature I should preach the Gospel of peace and consolation, and offer these creatures a Metamorphosis, a transformation, a new Creation in Christ Jesus, and thereby make my Goat, and my Fox, and my Wolfe, and my Lion, to become Semen Dei, the seed of God, and Filium Dei, the child of God, and Participem Divinæ Naturæ, Partaker of the Divine Nature it selfe... (VII, 4, 135)

Reconciliation between God and men, which Donne takes to be his primary objective in preaching, is, therefore, both a "redintegration" of the human faculties and an integration into God's very being. Yet this union does not occur as an absorption, (or with an inability of his saints to err), but rather takes place as a marriage, where the individual's participation is based upon his free consent:

And so is his divinity in us, by making us partakers of his divine nature, and by making us one spirit with himself... whencesoever the holy Ghost visits us with his effectual grace: for this is an union, in which Christ in his purpose hath married himself to our souls, inseparably, and Sine solutione vinculi, Without any intention of divorce on his part... (IX, 10, 248)
The notion of participating in the divine nature is so much theological speculation unless it issues in beneficial deeds. The psychological process of the Donnean sermon does not simply attempt to establish a harmony among the inward faculties, but cures them by stimulating them to imitate God in outward action. This is illustrated by Donne's belief that one does not know God's mercy fully, does not understand what it means to receive God's mercy, until one incarnates the attribute in oneself and sheds it upon others: "here we consider not mercy as it is radically in God; and an essential attribute of his, but productively in us, as it is an action, a working upon us . . ." (VT, 8, 170). Donne is able to see the mystery of divine interaction in typical human relationships; he tries to evoke the same discernment in his auditors. When, for example, Donne describes the liberality of "raising dejected spirits," he envisages a holy exchange, not unlike that which takes place between the sinner and Christ. As one persona confesses:

For, when I have given that man comfort, that man hath given me a Sacrament, hee hath given me a seale and evidence of Gods favour upon me; I have received from him, in his receiving from me; I leave him comforted in Christ Jesus, and I goe away comforted in my self, that Christ Jesus hath made me an instrument of the dispensation of his mercy . . . . (VIII, 10, 249)

To allow the incarnation of Christ to occur within the individual is a way of recognizing humankind's desperate need of grace. The world needs the healing which individuals who act out of their love of God may provide. The repairing of fallen nature they carry out in Christ's name, as active members of his body, growing up to the full stature of faith. In one dramatic monologue a speaker
asks concerning the importance of taking up a calling and sanctifying creation, "Since it is for thy fault that God hath cursed the Earth, and that therefore it must bring forth Thorns and Thistles, wilt not thou stoop down, nor endanger the pricking of thy hand, to weed them up?" (I, 3, 208). Donne summons his congregation to active virtue, quickened by zeal and illumined by the Church's interpretation of Scripture. Christians perform acts of charity because it is a way of meeting their saviour in the least of their brethren. Donne distinguishes between love in heaven and love on earth in this way; "there we shall, love one another because we shall not need one another, for we shall all be full; Here the exercise of our charity is, because we doe stand in need of one another" (II, 10, 214). For Donne, however, the work which awaits mankind is cause for joy, since it is the means God has provided for people to know him. Thus, Donne assures his auditors that charitable action is the summit of human achievement: "it is, I thinke, the greatest joy that the soule of man is capable of in this life, (especially where a man hath been any occasion of sinne to others) to assist the salvation of others" (V, 19, 384). The actual performance of works, as we can see, is the fullest way in which Christ again becomes incarnate in the world. If one hears the word of God, one must also enact it. In so doing, one is able to perform Mary's part, who consented to the Holy Ghost's impregnation of her; the person who hears God's word and obeys it, again agrees to the conception and birth of Christ. The preacher's sermon initiates the process, but the auditor must consent to complete it, "for, hearing is but the
conception, meditation is but the quickning, purposing is but the birth, but practising is the growth of this blessed child" (I, 8, 294).

Several conclusions may be drawn from our study of Donne's mimesis of the wayfaring Christian soul's relation to God. Donne makes it clear that reality may be known only as it discloses itself gradually through time. By dramatically representing the regenerative process of the soul, Donne demonstrates the manner in which the divine, the real, can be known best through actions which are designed to excite a creative and righteous response in people. The sermons are, therefore, the interpretation, the distilled meaning, of the ordinary soul's encounter with God, as gathered from historical experience and the experience of biblical figures. As such, the sermons are imitations of the soul's actions in relation to God's actions. The meaning of the soul's goal is discovered in the process, not only of becoming through the accumulation of information, but by means of a therapeutic purging of sin which clarifies the soul's—and the sympathetic auditor's—perception. God's revelation of himself takes place in embodied action; Donne's sermons attempt to represent this dynamic incarnation and in so doing engage the auditor in such a way that he may, as a continuation of the sermon's action, embody truth in his own life. The sermon's plot, or imitated pilgrimage of the soul, contains many elements, several of which may be highlighted or shadowed in any one sermon. These elements include the acknowledgement of a divine offer of reconciliation, the personal recognition of sin, the corrective exercise of faculties through choice, the experience
of tragic joy resulting in a feeling of catharsis, and the reorientation of the soul's faculties by means of outward acts of charity. The imitative process itself relies on the belief that each of the human faculties, though fallen, is instrumental in bringing about regeneration. Ignoring Platonist distrust of the body's sense experience and emotions, Donne summons all the faculties of the soul, mental and physical, to take part in the soul's restoration and in the world's reparation. As we shall see, history, being the record of action and experience, offers models of regenerate response worthy of imitation, and readies the soul for creative action in the future.
Notes

1 The central place of reconciliation in Donne's homiletic may be contrasted, for example, with Thomas Playfere's belief that the main duty of preaching was the "mournful castigation of vice." See J. W. Brench, Preaching in England in the Late Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries: A Study of English Sermons 1450-c. 1600 (Oxford Blackwell, 1964), p. 310. According to Daniel, p. 14, "Preaching is the church's chief means of reconciliation" in Donne's understanding. See X, 5, 133-56.

2 Webber, Contrary Music, p. 143, lists Donne's typical sermon headings as exordium, division, explanation of doctrine, confirmation, application, conclusion.


4 See IX, 6, 172: "Bring every single sin, as soon as thou committest it, into the presence of thy God, upon those two legs, Confession, and Detestation. . . ."


6 Aristotle, pp. 25, 34, 36-40, 52.

7 Other examples of Donne's depiction of sinful psychology are: I, 4, 224; II, 3, 103-04; III, 13, 286.


9 Cf. Burton, pt. III, p. 401: "And the devil that then told thee that it was a light sin, or no sin at all, now aggravates on the other side, and telleth thee that it is a most irremissible offense, as he did by Cain and Judas, to bring them to despair. . . ."

The argument draws on Snyder's exploration here, especially pp. 21 and 29. Reference to Burton is from pt. III, pp. 392-95. It should be noted that Donne was familiar with many of the authors to whom Snyder refers.

Donne often anticipates Milton in the matter of choice and exercise. See especially, "Areopagitica," in Hughes, ed., p. 733: "reason is but choosing"; and p. 728: "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue. . . ."

Sibbes, The Soul's Conflict, pp. 89, 199.

See III, 6, 168-69 for a sustained attack upon the monastic life.

See X, 10, 221: "Every man is therefore planted in the world, that hee may grow in the world; and as venomous hearbs delight in the shade, so a sullen retiring argues a murmuring and venomous disposition; To contemn Gods temporall blessings, or to neglect or under-value those instruments, those persons, by whom God sheds such blessings upon us, is to break that branch of this Commandement Gaudete semper, Rejoyce evermore; for he does not rejoice in bonis temporalibus."

Burton, pt. III, p. 428. Also see IX, 15, 340; X, 10, 224.

See IX, 1, 167 for further confirmation of this point. Also note Shami, "John Donne's Voices," p. 46: "The achieving of this balance, a balance of approach which must constantly discriminate between good and evil, and with even more difficulty among degrees of good and evil, is the only true form of religious action, and will be rewarded with knowledge which must be accumulated, cherished, and rightly used, preferably within the institution of a lawful religion."

For an example of a persona recording the difficulty in discerning evil and overcoming it, see X, 1, 56.


See IV, 3, 113: "I may be bold to say, that this City hath the ablest preaching Clergy of any City in Christendom; must I be fain to say, that the Clergy of this City have the poorest entertainments of any City that can come into comparison with it?"

This, among other examples, is counted an exception to W. R. Mueller's censure of Donne's irony and sarcasm. See p. 146. For other examples of Donne's irony, see II, 1, 57; VII, 4, 130; VIII, 1, 48; IX, 1, 59; IX, 14, 327.


24 John S. Chamberlin, draws attention to the art of grammar present in Donne's sermons. See especially pp. 136 and 144. Here is Chamberlin's conclusion, pp. 157-58: "The preacher who conceives of scriptural language in such a way does not unravel his text, but rather complicates it by his reading. He does not reduce the sense from the verbal medium but lets the meaning of the sacred words realize itself. By the grammatical procedures of concordancing, distinguishing, and correlating, the signification of the text spreads out, extends, and ramifies throughout networks of association. The reader's recognition of meaning is thus drawn out and renewed by the elaboration of the word's own revelatory fullness. In reading the text by such procedures, the preacher allows the precious gift of revelation in language its full play in the minds and hearts of his hearers.


27 Also see V, 7, 159-60 and II, 3, 102: "Nothing can make them [sins] none of ours, but the avowing of them, the confessing of them to be ours. Onely in this way, I am a holy lier, and in this the God of truth will reward my lie; for, if I say my sins are mine own, they are none of mine, but by that confessing and appropriating of those sins to my selfe, they are made the sins of him, who hath suffered enough for all, my blessed Lord and Saviour, Christ Jesus."


30 Puttenham, bk. I, ch. 24, pp. 61-63.

31 Wallerstein, p. 459.

32 Henn, p. 288.

33 Wallerstein, p. 460.

34 Donne, Devotions, p. 87.

35 Other significant passages on suffering and affliction are the following: IV, 6, 171; IV, 13, 337; VI, 18, 352-53; VI, 18, 361-62; VII, 6, 183; VII, 13, 339; IX, 11, 256.
Also see X, 9, 204.

Lyons, p. 64.

Mary Claire Randolph, "The Medical Concept in English Renaissance Satiric Theory: Its Possible Relationships and Implications," SP, 38 (1941), 125. Also note p. 148: "Most significant of all the medical figures, however, is that of satire's operating as a purge.

Donne's understanding recalls a moment in The Winter's Tale. When Leontes and Camillo learn that the king's daughter has been preserved, observers describe them thus: "There was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gesture; they look'd as they had heard of a world ransom'd, or one destroy'd. A notable passion of wonder appear'd in them; but the wisiest beholder, that knew no more but seeing, could not say if th' importance were joy or sorrow; but in the extremity of the one, it must needs be." See Shakespeare, The Riverside Shakespeare, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), V.1.13-19.

Donne, Devotions, p. 33.

On the same page also note: "So equall, so indifferent a thing is it, when we come to godly sorrow, whether we call it sorrow or joy, weeping or singing."

Another example of Donne's encouragement of the auditor's imagination to perceive the whole purpose of God may be seen in III, 14, 306-07: "If when thou lookest upon him as the Lord, thou findest frowns and wrinkles in his face, apprehensions of him, as of a Judge, and occasions of feare, doe not run away from him, in that apprehension; look upon him in that angle, in that line awhile, and that feare shall bring thee to love; and as he is Lord, thou shalt see him in the beauty and loveliness of his creatures, in the order and succession of causes, and effects, and in that harmony and musique of the peace between him, and thy soule."

Other significant passages on the fear and love of God may be found in I, 4, 235; I, 6, 264; II, 2, 93; III, 19, 278.

Henn, p. 78. Also note p. 289: "But just as the Christian cycle of sin, repentence, atonement, redemption is completed in its operation by the awakening of pity and the merging of self-hood of man in love, so the tragic cycle may be thought of as operating on the human consciousness in an analogous manner, though at a lower level"; and pp. 290-91: "The awakening of pity seems the first step... to a sense of Christian charity: that of fear, a necessary state of mind to our readiness to consider the idea of the numinous; both together forcing us to confront a series of ethical problems which have their solution only in faith."
Also see IV, 3, 130.

For other examples of Donne's view of the Comforter's cathartic role, see especially VIII, 18, 450; IX, 3, 99; X, 11, 263.

Carrithers, p. 30, suggests, somewhat singlemindedly, that "The sermon may well of all generic forms be the most fundamentally open-ended or inconclusive or contingent."

See IV, 3, 112; V, 16, 263; IX, 6, 156.

M. A. C. Johnson, p. 366. Also see pp. 203 and 304.

John S. Coolidge, The Pauline Renaissance in England: Puritanism and the Bible (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), pp. 39-40. Also see VIII, 11, 269 for an example of the imperative of embodied remembrance: "You see, Preaching it selfe, even the Preaching of Christ himselfe, had beene lost, if the holy Ghost had not brought all those things to their [people in various callings] remembrance."

Cf. VII, 12, 321: "There is the true Transubstantiation, that when I have received it [the sacrament] worthily, it becomes my very soule; that is, My soule growes up into a better state, and habitude by it, and I have the more soule for it, the more sanctified, the more deified soule by that Sacrament."
CHAPTER V

THE HISTORICAL PROCESS IN THE DONNEAN SERMON

V.1 Donne's Commitment to History

We have already described much of Donne's sense of history. Chapter II discussed his respect for the healing effects caused by temporal progression and change, and outlined his endeavour to imitate this dynamism in his sermons. Chapter III sketched the important role memory plays in restoring the other faculties, thereby guiding them to outward acts of charity which imitate God's sacrificial love. In Donne's view, history is therefore the record of outward action which completes the psychological process of incarnating the divine image. History is constituted of that great "cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12.1) whose faithful acts have built up the universal Church throughout time. Donne's mimetic animation of history attempts to cause the auditor to claim this history as his own and in so doing to become a participating member of Christ's body. Donne asserts, "God loves not singularity; The very name of Church implies company ... It is a Congregation, a Meeting, an assembly; It is not any one man; neither can the Church be preserved in any one man" (II, 13, 279). When Donne addresses his congregation, he reminds them that they are members of a much larger community embracing all history; together, drawing on a wealth of experiences, they "preserve"
the living and developing body of Christ. The persuasive quality of Donne's sermons depends largely upon the realistic dramatization of types and their actions. His belief in the constancy of human experience in nature, grace, and glory provides the rationale for this lively representation. Because Donne understands the Church as enduring crucifixion in its temporal development, his portrayal of its heroes reflects a similar imperfect and processive struggle to remain faithful. Opposing one Catholic response to history, the expansion of necessary doctrine, Donne stresses history's value lies in its diverse collection of human examples and stories which explain God's purpose for men. Donne's representation of characters and events encourages the auditor to contribute to God's unfolding providence.

Donne's homiletic presentation of history is a creative and mimetic enactment because it is personal in two ways. First, it is personal because Donne develops literary strategies which cause the auditor to claim history as his own, to see the Christian story of salvation as the history of his own redemption. It is a story for which the auditor must become responsible, by "owning" it and by a concomitant effort to work for the world's reparation. Donne affirms, "the Gospel is the history of the Gospel, the proposing to your understanding all that Christ did, and it is the appropriation of the Gospel, the proposing to your faith, that all that he did, he did for you" (V, 13, 259-60). As Donne sees it, history is not properly represented if it merely describes events in a detached fashion; rather, history must grip the auditor's sense of personal
affirmation and involvement. Of course, this is why Donne relies on Scripture as the one source which is most properly mimetic, since its history addresses the individual and discloses God's design for him as a member of the Church. Proper homiletic presentation does not, as we have already noted, require an abundance of esthetic ornament and refinement in order to achieve this persuasive quality; Donne trusts history to show forth its own meaning. In his Essays, Donne demonstrates this trust when he comments on the Exodus story, "Only to paraphrase the History of this Delivery, without amplifying, were furniture and food enough for a meditation of the best perseverance, and appetite, and digestion. . . ." Nonetheless, Donne later discovers that he is his "own Pharaoh," and his "Own Egypt," as he reflects further on the story.¹ Donne's homiletic representation of history involves both the record of divine action and its human appropriation.

Donne's sense of history is personal in a second way. It is personal because it tells the story of persons, of selves, in interaction. God's gradual revelation of himself cannot be understood apart from the events in which he acts or the personalities who served him or fought him.² In Chapter II, we described Donne's technique of characterization by such methods as dialogue, soliloquy, and dramatic monologue. He uses these methods because he views history as essentially a drama of selves responding to one another. Thus, when Donne recalls the Old Testament formula by which God identifies himself historically, he links this formula to the roles which individuals play in disclosing God's purpose:
When God calls himself so often, The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, God would have the world remember, that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were extraordinary men, memorable men. When God says, Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were here, they should not deliver this people, God would have it known, that Noah, Daniel, and Job were memorable men and able to do much with him. (X, 3, 100)

To remember. God also demands that one remember him in relation to his servants. "God is a declaratory God;" affirms Donne (X, 4, 111).

Yet God declares himself in the actions of those whom he has called. Consequently, Donne urges his auditors to seek God in historical persons: "Love the Legends, the Lives, the Actions, and love the sayings, the Apopthegms of good men" (IV, 3, 99). In the Incarnation, God speaks most definitively, since his nature is enacted fully in a human life. The persuasive quality of history depends upon such personal embodiments of godliness, ultimately expressed most perfectly in Christ. Thus, Donne believes, human particularity illuminates where mere concepts fail: "It is too dim a light to work by; to live by, to have but Rule and Precept alone; Rule and Example together, direct us fully" (IV, 3, 99). The best example or pattern may be found in the historical Christ, who may be reanimated in others at other times.

You believe, because the great Angel Christ Jesus, hath left his history, his action, and passion written for you; and that is a historicalall faith. But yet salvation is nearer to you, in having all this applied to you, by them, who are like you, men, and there, where you know how to fetch it, the Church . . . (X, 1, 49-50)
One may recognize historical faith to be relevant and meaningful when it is presented as formed by persons made of the same stuff and substance as oneself.

We have already established Donne's affirmation of historical process as a means of purging the deformities of the divine image in people. However, in Donne's understanding, the possibility of development through history is no consequence of the Fall. Time was always God's instrument of human growth. In Donne's interpretation of the creation, God's intention is to be present initially and in its further unfolding: "we ascribe first God's manifestation of himself in the creation, and then the continuall manifestation in his providence, to the holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost's attribute in creation is movement, that is, sustenance over time. Thus, God has two purposes in the creation:

That the creature should be, and be still; That it should exist at first, and subsist after; Be made, and made permanent. God did not mean that Paradise should have been of so small use when he made it; he made it for a perpetuall habitation of man. God did not mean that man should be the subject of his wrath when he made him; he made him to take pleasure in, and to shed glory upon him. The holy Ghost moves, he is the first author; the holy Ghost perpetuates, settles, establishes, he is our rest, and acquiescence, and center; Beginning, Way, End, all is in this word, Recap: the Spirit of God moved, and rested. (IX, 3, 99)

As one may see even from the initial deliberately repetitious and choppy phrasing, Donne is intent upon portraying the creation as a planned and ongoing phenomenon. The Holy Ghost's sustaining presence throughout history is projected from the very inception of human experience. Since the Fall, however, God proves his faithfulness by continuing to support his creation. He accomplishes this.
in part by means of his responsive servants:

Alpha and Omega make up the Name of Christ; and, between 
Alpha and Omega, are all the letters of the Alphabet 
included. A Christian is made up of Alpha and Omega, 
and all between. . . . Truth in the beginning, Zeale all 
the way, and Constancie in the end make up a Christian. 
(VII, 17, 424)

In his own individual life, the Christian reflects the same pattern 
of a shaping providence guiding history.

Donne's theory of history therefore affirms that history must 
address and claim the individual. Further, it should describe the 
dramatic response of persons to one another. Confidence in such 
a presentation of history is founded upon Donne's belief that it 
was God's design, from the very fist, that man should grow into the 
proportions of his true self by historical process. When history 
is presented according to these principles, gathered from Scripture's 
own mimesis of history, history gains an extraordinary power to 
evoke a regenerate response:

we looke upon God, in History, in matter of fact, upon 
things done, and set before our eyes; and so that Majesty, 
and that holy amazement, is more to us then ever it was 
to any other Religion, because we have a nearer approximation, 
[and vicinity to God] in Christ, then any others had, in any 
representations of their Gods; and it is a more dazzeling 
thing to looke upon the Sun, in a direct, then in an oblique 
or side line. (VII, 12, 316)

The "holy amazement," "dazzeling" quality, and what Donne a moment 
later calls "reverential feare" all spring from the immediacy 
of what actually occurred in history. The divine participation in 
the definite and concrete aspects of human lives, in areas that are 
abundantly recognizable, inspires an intense emotional response. For 
Donne, the persuasive character of history, especially in the 
Incarnation, depends upon factual occurrences. In his view, the
factual actions of history move men more convincingly than speculation about the divine nature or prophetic anticipation. Christianity's authenticity is declared in "things done, and set before our eyes," in a reality proclaimed by the ordinary way of the senses; its truth lies in God's close and precise accommodation of himself to the dimensions of human experience. Hence, Christians are offered a "nearer approximation and vicinity," a "direct" sight of God, that is denied other religions. Historical religion invites the assent of the whole man because it is grounded in particular events and attached to specific persons within the believing community.

In approaching and dealing with life's difficulties and afflictions, the Christian may consequently turn to the lives of holy men and women and of Christ for recognizable patterns to imitate. Appropriating their experiences, and translating their actions is a therapeutic process which restores the soul. For while Seneca, Plutarch, or Petrarch may offer some words of consolation, histories recorded in Scripture are more fully restorative:

But I proceed in a safer way, and deale upon better Cordials, if I make David, and the other Prophets of God, my Physitians, and see what they prescribe me, in the Scriptures; and looke how my fellow-patient Iob applied that Physicke, by his Patience. And if any thing heavier then that which fell upon Iob, fall upon mee, yet I may propose one, to my selfe, upon whom there fell more, than can fall upon any man; for all mankinde fell upon him, and all the sinnes of all mankinde, and Gods Anger; for all the sinnes of all mankinde fell upon him, and yet he had a glorious elucation, a victory, a triumph over all that. (VIII, 2, 74)

If one uses the histories of the righteous as patterns, then by practicing their efforts to be obedient to God, one renews their actions in changed circumstances. Naturally, the imitated history
may itself become a further pattern for emulation:

when you have made up your profit that way, rectified your self by that course, then as your Sons write by Copies, and your Daughters work by Samplars, be every Father a Copy to his Son, every Mother a Samplar to her Daughter, and every house will be an University. (IV, 3, 100)

The education leading to Christian wisdom teaches the incarnation of holy actions evoked by the multi-faceted personalities recorded in Scripture. It also warns of the consequences of evil actions and points to possibilities of redemption when one finds oneself encompassed by sin.

In sermons, history must have personal application. The events to which the preacher appeals are not external, objective moments, but crucial landmarks in the pilgrimage of an individual and the community. The preacher's use of the auditor's memory is not an exercise in mental recall, but rather a summons to obedience and reverence. It is a focussing of the soul's attention, a call to bring together disparate experiences into one cohesive pattern.

The memory's apprehension of history may become an instrument of "redintegration":

Your way is Recollecting; gather your selves into the Congregation, and Communion of Saints in these places; gather your sins into your memory, and pour them out in humble confessions, to that God, whom they have wounded; Gather the crummes under his Table, lay hold upon the gracious promises, which by our Ministry he lets fall upon the Congregation now; and gather the seales of those promises, whenever, in a rectified conscience, his Spirit beares witnessse with your spirit, that you may be worthy receivers of him in his Sacrament; and this recollecting shall be your resurrection. (VII, 3, 116-17)

In this way, Donne demonstrates the active character of "recollection."

Each remembrance involves an action which complements the initial
reminisce of a past occurrence. One must remember the individuals in the congregation and the saints and thus keep the Sabbath day; one must remember one's sins and thereby repent them; one must remember one's marks of sanctification and consequently believe them to be genuine signs when confirmed by taking the Sacrament. In short, one must remember an individual and collective history and so rise from the sleep of death. To recollect in this fashion permits one to fix the scattered thoughts and actions of one's life upon God's purpose, for God is the immovable centre around which people's endeavours must revolve. Thus, for Donne, to remember literally means to "re-member," to re-integrate the soul's faculties with Christ as their head:

even this first work, to recollect our selves, to recapitulate our selves, to assemble and muster our selves, and to bend our hearts entirely and intensely, directly, earnestly, emphatically, energetically, upon something, is, by reason of the various fluctuation of our corrupt nature, and the infinite multiplicity of Objects, such a Work as man needs to be called upon, and excited to do it. Therefore is there no word in the Scriptures so often added to the heart, as that of intireness; . . . Do this with all thine heart, with a whole heart, with a full heart. . . .

(IX, 7, 175)

Donne believes that this first work of recollection is an important step in grasping the whole heritage of Christian history. For unless that history can speak to a person of his own redemption, its function becomes distorted. Further, the Christian's own record of experience of and relationship with God is itself a part of the history of the Church, and thus a legitimate account to be investigated. Because God is constant, his promises and responses throughout time belong as much to a Seventeenth-century parishioner as they do to Moses, or David, or Paul. Thus, Donne argues, "All Gods Prophecies,
are thy Histories: whatsoever he hath promised others, he hath done in
his purpose for thee; And all Gods Histories are thy Prophecies; all
that he hath done for others, he owes thee" (VII, 14, 356). If all
God's actions may be understood to be directed toward each individual,
then that individual may read in his own life the chronicle of God's
saving endeavours. In an interesting transformation of the Reformers'
motto, "Search the scriptures" (John 5.39), Donne demonstrates that
an earnest study of one's own history may reveal the truth of the
Bible:

Turne over all the folds, and plaits of thine owne heart,
and finde there the infirmities, and waverings of thine
owne faith, and an ability to say, Lord, I beleewe, help
mine unbeleeke, and then, though thou have no Bible in thy
hand, or though thou stand in a dark corner, nay though
thou canst not reade a letter, thou hast searched that
Scripture, thou hast turned to Marke 9. ver. 24...

Turne to thine owne history, thine owne life, and if thou
canst reade there, that thou hast endeavoured to turne
thine ignorance into knowledge, and thy knowledge into
Practice, if thou finde thy selfe to be an example of that
rule of Christ's, If you know these things, blessed are you,
if you do them, then thou hast searched that Scripture,
and turned to Jo. 13. ver. 17.

To discern in one's particular life a history analogous to the Bible's
pattern is a legitimate use of history because it leads one to claim
God's providence as one's own. When this occurs, one aspires to
Christian wisdom, since it is religious knowledge embodies and ap-
propriated. As Donne puts it, 'it is to search the Scriptures "not
as though thou wouldest make a concordance, but an application"
(III, 17, 367).

Donne unreservedly affirms that any man, "In his own memory...
may reade many a history of Gods goodnesse to him" (VIII, 11, 261).
Although Donne is far from counselling neglect of scriptural reading
or hearing of sermons (all his advice is in the opposite direction),
he still assures that the nature of history reveals a universal pattern. Therefore, the review of one's own story delivers a Bible which still declares God's saving activity:

Nay, he that hears no Sermons, he that reads no Scriptures, hath the Bible without book; He hath a Genesis in his memory; he cannot forget his Creation; he hath an Exodus in his memory; he cannot forget that God hath delivered him, from some kind of Egypt, from some oppression; He hath a Leviticus in his memory; hee cannot forget, that God hath proposed to him some Law, some rules to be observed. He hath all in his memory, even to the Revelation; God hath revealed to him, even at midnight alone, what shall be his portion, in the next world; And if he dare but remember that night's communication between God and him, he is well-near learned enough. (II, 2, 74)

One's personal story recapitulates the great events enumerated and celebrated in Scripture. The Bible is such a comprehensive volume that its stories are a treasury of all human conditions and experiences. If one studies one's history and discerns God's active hand, one therefore parallels the reading of Scripture, yet with this supplementary benefit: one had already appropriated the meaning of Scripture. Certainly Donne, in conformity with many preachers of the period, urges his auditors to see God at work in the recent events of the larger world. He exhorts them to rejoice in God's deliverance of England from the Armada and the powder treason and to recognize God's judgment in sending the plague and his mercy in removing it. And he warns them not to attribute the causes to mere natural accidents (VIII, 13, 305; VI, 10, 220; II, 11, 238). Yet nonetheless, the personal story is the minimal but essential starting place for reading God's works. Thus, in one sermon, after referring to those significant events in England's history, Donne again defers to the individual diary, where people stand without excuse if they
remain ignorant of God's works:

If these [events] be too large pictures for thy gallery, for thy memory, yet every man hath a pocket picture about him, a manuall, a bosome book, and if he will turn over but one leaf, and remember what God hath done for him even since yesterday, he shall find even by that little branch a navigable river, to sail into that great and endless Sea of God's mercies towards him, from the beginning of his being. (II, 11, 238)\(^3\)

The immediate discernment of God's actions in one's own life is one method of appropriating the dramatic rhythms of Scripture. Another method is to interpret one's own life in the light of Scripture. Donne urges his auditors, "draw the Scripture to thine own heart, and to thine own actions, and thou shalt find it made for that..." (II, 14, 308). Consequently, scriptural history helps to elucidate and characterize personal history. When one anatomizes the self, one must apply the benefits of Scripture:

Study all the history, and write all the progress of the Holy Ghost in thy selfe. Take not the grace of God, or the mercy of God as a meddall, or a wedge of gold to be layd up, but change thy meddall or thy wedge into currant money, find this grace and this mercy applied to this end this action. (II, 6, 159)

One may, however, read the frequent stories of human betrayal even as one observes the Scriptures played out in one's life. "God raise up a John Baptist in every man; every man findes a testimony in himselfe," declares Donne. But the effects of the Fall often cause a man to reject that light: "he runs into corners from the light," and denies God's help (V, 3, 85). Each man is possessed by a raging devil in himselfe, just as the two Gergesens who tended swine were, since, comments Donne ironically, "We need not put on
spectacles to search Maps for this Land of the Gergesens; God knows we dwell in it" (X, 2, 67). Every man may also discover a Judas in himself because "Every man hath a sop in his mouth" and by his sin becomes "a Murderer of himself" (I, 6, 256–57). Nevertheless, if a contemporary man may participate in these tragic experiences, he may also participate in becoming a new creation in Christ. For although he could not be present at the beginning of the world, he may know its inner meaning if he can perceive the seven days in which Christ became realized within him. In one sermon, Donne declares, "This remembrance of God is our regeneration, by which we are new creatures; and therefore we may consider as many days in it, as in the first creation" (II, 11, 240). Donne then methodically enumerates the days of regeneration from the first day of one's acquaintance with Christ, to the desire for a spiritual Sabbath on the seventh (II, 11, 240–43).

Donne insists upon the personal appropriation of scriptural history, which is the common inheritance of the Christian Church, because without it, religious commitment flags, works of charity lack purpose, and the soul is denied integration. God rejoices in plenitude and diversity especially in his human creation, and Donne's sermons deliberately address the need to touch and move all kinds of personalities. In one implied simile Donne suggests that the Holy Ghost is like a jeweller who must select the appropriate gem to answer to the design or figure he wishes to express. Consequently, "The holy Ghost undertakes every man amongst us, and would make every man fit for Gods service, in some way." An important psych-
ological insight follows these considerations, however. For an individual must know himself, must know what brings him profit, must understand his particular talents and desires. Without such knowledge, God is unable to guide him to his true self: "except a man have this sense, what doth him most good, and a desire to pursue that, the holy Ghost doth not move, nor stir up a zeal in him" (IX, 3, 101-02). In Scripture, God moves men of different inclinations and vocations: "Christ makes heaven all things to all men, that he might gain all: To the mirthful man he presents heaven, as all joy, and to the ambitious man, as all glory; To the Merchant it is a Pearle, and to the husbandman it is a rich field" (II, 14, 305). As a preacher Donne tries to imitate God's method by satisfying the various desires of his auditors: "As God gave his children such Manna as was agreeable to every mans taste, and tasted to every man like that, that that man liked best: so are wee [ministers] to deliver the bread of life agreeable to every taste . . ." (II, 13, 276). The preacher, in Donne's view, must be able to stimulate the auditor's sense of involvement in scriptural history, for it is an imaginatively conceived history which engenders the works of imitation and incarnation.

Donne excites the auditor's awareness of his involvement by stressing that God is concerned to preserve individual abilities in a historical communion. Thus, one's own history is significant not only because it may figure forth God's actions, but because the free working out of one's history is a source of joy to God himself: "God does not onely reade his own works, nor is he onely delighted with that which he hath writ himselfe, with his own eternall
Decrees in heaven, but he loves also to reade our books too, our histories which we compose in our lives and actions . . " (VII, 9, 240). History must be seen as the ongoing response between God's person and human selves, and not as a series of catastrophic divine interventions in an otherwise secular sequence of events. Through Christ, men become adopted sons and heirs of the Father (Gal. 4.4-5); by Christ's command, men are no longer servants who do not know what their lord is about, but friends privy to greater knowledge (John 15.15). Christians are full participants in history's evolving design. Consequently, "of Gods particular purposes upon us, and revealed to us. . . as that we our selves have a fellow-working, and co-operation with God, of those, it becomes us to aske, and to know the reason: (V, 10, 206). ⁵ When one is permitted to feel that a personal history is a significant part of God's shaping providence, and able to believe that the great history of the world impinges mightily on one's own life, then the conditions are right to initiate the psychological steps of regeneration (described in Chapter IV) by means of the sermon's imitation of religious experience. In one comment, Donne sees the direct connection between a knowledge or personal history and one of those steps, the recognition of sin: "But if you study your selves, reade your own History, if you get to the knowledge of your errand hither, 'and the ill discharge of those duties here, the sorrow and compunction which will grow from thence, is a faire degree of Martyrdome. . . ." Donne goes on to explain that "martyr" means "witness," and that competent witnesses must testify "our Reconciliation to God" (IV, 5, 151). In this way, a personal sense
of history leads to salutary wholeness.\footnote{6}

Of course, Donne finds ways to present a personal history by means of dramatic enactment. He convinces his auditors of the importance of taking responsibility for their past by theatrical portrayal. Two examples serve to demonstrate his application of mimetic techniques to personal history. Unfortunately, because these examples illustrate histories, they are long and must be abbreviated here. Consequently, the cumulative effect of gradual progression must be assumed. In the first instance, Donne implies a dramatic monologue and a fictionalized "thou." Throughout, he invites the mute listener to consider how long ago God sought him, and thereby presses the listener's memory further and further into his history, so that he may realize that God sought him early indeed:

Dost thou not feel that he seeks thee now, in offering his love and desiring thine? Canst not thou remember that he sought thee yesterday, that is, that some tentations besieged thee then, and he sought thee out by his Grace, and preserved thee? and hath he not sought thee so, so early, as from the beginning of thy life? nay, dost thou not remember that after thou hadst committed that sin, he sought thee by imprinting some remorse, some apprehension of his judgments . . . by a miraculous and powerful working of his Spirit, he threatened thee, when he comforted thee, he lov'd thee when he chid thee, he sought thee when he drove thee from him?

Here, Donne's speaker makes an appeal to a personal history, probing the memory to recollect instances of God's searching, even after the commission of sin. By stimulating the memory and by rousing the affections, he persuades the fictive listener (and the auditor) that God participated from the very first in the shaping of this individual life. But the speaker then invites the listener to remember even further back in his history, to the heritage of the Church.
The speaker plumbs these depths slowly by the use of affecting biblical metaphors, then sums them up and completes his address with one final, challenging query:

Thus early had he sought thee in the Church amongst hypocrites; out of the Church amongst the Heathen; in his Creatures amongst creatures of an ignoble nature, and in the first vacuity, when thou wast nothing he sought thee so early as in Adam, so early as in the book of life, and when wilt thou think it a fit time to seek him? (I, 5, 249)

After such a lengthy catalogue of God's acts of seeking, we can only imagine that the listener stands empty and humbled before the last question. Yet after such a detailed remembrance, he is surely anxious to reciprocate, for he wants to belong to the dialogue of selves made explicit by a personal history. Interestingly, at no time does the speaker question the listener's election, but assumes it, and relies on the weight of a demonstrated history to manifest it. Only by such an assumption can the auditor's commitment to history and its reorientation become a whole-hearted affair.

Another selection, a soliloquy, uses a hyperbolic first-person persona to reflect upon the impossibility of the eventuality that God, after being so attentive to his soul, should let it ultimately evaporate (V, 13, 266-67). In the persona's mind, even Tophet and brimstone, compared to eternal seclusion from God's sight, appear like Paradise and amber. Yet the passage leading up to this conclusion stresses the landmarks in the history of his relationship with God as evidence against the likelihood of divine desertion. The passage is comprised of one long sentence, the power of which comes from the cumulative building of its subordinate clauses, really ejaculations expressing the persona's incredulity at the prospect
of God's total rejection of him. He cannot believe that the God who called him "out of the womb and depth of darkness," will not look upon him now. Nor can he believe this contingency:

that God, who hath often looked upon me in my foulest uncleanness, and when I had shut out the eye of the day, the Sunne, and the eye of the night, the Taper, and the eyes of all the world, with curtains and windowes and doores, did yet see me, and seeth me in mercy, by making me see that he saw me, and sometimes brought me to a present remorse, and (for that time) to a forbearance of that sinne, should so turne himselfe from me, to his glorious Saints and Angels, as that no Saint nor Angel, nor Christ Jesus himselfe, should ever pray him to looke towards me, never remember him, that such a soule there is.

The speaker also rejects this possibility:

that God, who, when he could not get into me, by standing, and knocking; by his ordinary meanes of entring, by his Word, his mercies; hath applied his judgements, and hath shaked the house, this body, with agues and pallsies, and set this house on fire, with favours and calentures, and frighted the Master of the house, my soule, with horrors, and heavy apprehensions, and so made an entrance into me. That God should loose and frustrate all his owne purposes and practises upon me, and leave me, and cast me away, as though I had cost him nothing.

V, 13, 266-67

Although Donne ultimately affirms that such damnation exists, one effect of the fictive persona's detailed reflection on his history is to evoke in the auditor a sense of gratitude for God's parallel gracious activity toward him. Another effect is to enhance the auditor's awareness of the extremity of God's love and to make him realize the absurdity that God should ever turn from an earnest heart. By means of the persona's investigation of God's acts in his individual history—in birth, sin, and affliction—God's nature is revealed to be steadfast and sure. At the same time, the speech heightens the auditor's own love of God by the fearful thought of
God's absence. The growth in the auditor's perception and the change in his attitude is made possible, however, by the dramatization of a speaker caught in a moment of crisis, a speaker who is simultaneously overwhelmed by God's long-suffering labour on his behalf, and frightened by the thought of losing God. The dramatic enactment convinces the auditor of the value of affirming his past because of that enactment's close approximation to the life he lives.

V.2 History as Continuum

One may only fully understand what Donne means by appropriating history if one grasps his view of history as a series of closely related events which gradually educates people to manifest God in their lives. In the development from Old Testament to New Testament, there is no radical break; in the growth from nature to grace to glory, whether it be perceived in world history or encompassed within the individual, there is an underlying current of significance which remains constant. This feature of Donne's sense of history is important, for it determines his portrayal of historical figures and events. The manner in which he represents persons in dramatic interaction with each other depends upon his recognition of history as a continuum.

Donne conceives the historical record of Scripture to be a process of learning. The movement from Old to New Testament is a gradual creation of the proper conditions in which revelation may take place. The Incarnation of Christ is not a sudden occurrence unrelated to previous events, but the fruition of history in due
season, an event which happened "in the fulness of time" (Gal. 4:4). For Donne, there is a necessary interdependence between Testaments: "All the word of God then conduces to the Gospel; the Old Testament is a preparation and a paedagogie to the New" (I, 8, 291). Indeed, Donne sees God as giving lessons to his servants in order to lead them out of darkness:

God delivered his people at first, in some measure, by the Law; that is, he gave them thereby a way to get out of this ignorance; he put them to Schoole; Lex Paedagogus, says the Apostle, The Law was their School-master. But in the state of the Gospell . . . we are graduats . . . (IX, 10, 233)

Certainly those to whom Christ has been manifested have the greater benefit, though also the greater responsibility, than those who lived under the Law. Christians have proceeded further in their education: "It was their happinesse [the Jews'] to have had the law, but it is ours, not to need it: They had benefit of a guide, to direct them, but we are at our journies end; They had a schoolmaster to lead them to Christ; but we have proceeded so farre, as that we are in possession of Christ" (V, 7, 151). The imitation of Christ's life and actions, made possible by his indwelling presence, allows Christians to fulfill the demands of the moral law without depending solely on its precepts. Nevertheless, Donne stresses the continuity between Testaments and the constancy of human experience, and therefore, "to them who understood that Law aright, the New Law, the Gospel, was enwrapped in the Old . . . " When considered according to these principles, many of the Old Testament figures must be understood as fully of the same order of faith as their later brethren, and thus: "David was not under that old age, but was become a new creature" (VIII, 8, 208). Consequently, the
reverence which Christians bear for the Old Testament is not polite respect for shadowy types, but rather honour for those who fully participated in the manifestation of God’s truth in their acts and beliefs.

In Donne’s view the two Testaments are indispensable. The Old Testament presents the history which defines the need for the New. Further, without the two affections which dominate either Testament, people cannot serve God as they ought. Without these affections supporting and interpreting God’s nature, humankind again becomes lost:

This distinguishes the two Testaments. The Old is a Testament of fear, the New of love; yet in this they grow all one, That we determine the Old Testament, in the New, and that we prove the New Testament by the Old; for, but by the Old, we should not know, that there was to be a New, nor, but for the New, that there was an Old; so the two Testaments grow one Bible. . . . (VI, 4, 112)

This belief in the fundamental unity of experience marks Donne's understanding and representation of history. Not only is this unity true for Jews and Christians, but also for the Gentiles outside the covenant. According to Paul’s conception, the Gentiles are equivalent to the Jews because they possess an interior natural law which is made explicit to God’s chosen people (Rom. 1:18-23; 2:12-16). Donne reflects this perception since he affirms, "there is nothing written there, in those stone Tables, which was not written before in the heart of man" (IV, 13, 247). "God was and is active among the pagans though they are unable to identify him: "So certainly infinite numbers of men, in those unconverted Nations have the Holy Ghost working in them, though they have never so much as heard there is a Holy Ghost" (VII, 8, 222).
As in the close relationship between reason and faith, so in the realms of nature and grace there is a strong attraction and interdependence. Christians and natural men share much in common. For example, in the recognition that God performs, acts of justice, Donne asserts, "the naturall man hath as full a Library in his bosome, as the Christian" (VIII, 14, 315). And while the Christian has made an advance upon the natural man in possessing both nature and God's word, the natural man still has access to the book of the world, in which God has disclosed his purpose "indeed the Scriptures are but a paraphrase, but a comment, but an illustration of that booke of Creatures" (III, 12, 264). One of the greatest arguments in favour of Christianity is that it follows upon the truths of nature in such a logical and ineluctable manner. As examples of this insight, he points to Augustine, who claimed that his conversion began when he read Cicero, and to Justin Martyr, whose Christian belief was instigated by Plato (IX, 11, 253-54). One is able to identify the significance of Christ as revelatory because he sums up previous experience, and does not negate it. The fulness which people confess in Christ is possible because his origin lies in an earlier history. The coherence that exists for Donne, between nature and grace also extends into the realm of glory. Thus, if the new law may be enwrapped in the old, then the blessings of heaven may be realized on earth. For those who have eyes to see, God may be perceived in their lives, and may not be relegated to some otherworldly plane. God is sovereign on earth as well as in heaven, and Donne emphasizes the transforming influence which heaven exerts upon earthly life.
In an emphatic statement, Donne insists that God's works are works of wholeness:

He made but one World; for, this, and the next, are not two Worlds; This is but the Morning, and that the everlasting Noon, of one and the same Day, which shall have no Night: They are not two Houses; This is the Gallery, and that the Bed-chamber of one, and the same Palace, which shall feel no ruine. (IV, 9, 240)

Donne seems to be fascinated by the image of two realms being contained in the adjoining rooms of one house. The image is significant because it implies that one does not escape one domain for the other; rather, the two must coexist together in order to sustain the structure of the house. In another use of the house image, Donne relates this continuity to the Church's mission, and further relates it to the individual's just and deserving experience of joy on earth:

this world and the next world, are not, to the pure in heart, two houses, but two roomes, a Gallery to passe thorough, and a Lodging to rest in, in the same House, which are both under one roofe, Christ Jesus; The Militant and the Triumphant, are not two Churches, but this the Porch, and that the Chancell of the same Church, which are under one Head, Christ Jesus; so the Joy, and the sense of Salvation, which the pure in heart have here, is not a joy severed from the Joy of Heaven, but a Joy that begins in us here, and continues, and accompanies us thither, and there flows on. . . . (VII, 13, 340)

In yet another architectural image, Donne dispells the traumatizing thought of the dead existing in a parallel world which does not intersect with our own. No, Donne assures, the dead and we "are under one roofe," and no man can possibly enter another world, since "that Heaven, which God created, and this world, is all one world" (VII, 15, 384).

Though the image of the house illuminates Donne's belief that the realms of nature and grace are unified and contiguous, at other
points Donne seems to want to stress their intercourse or interpenetration. Thus, Donne assures, "our blessed Saviour thus mingles his Kindgomes, that he makes the Kingdome of Grace, and the Kingdome of Glory, all one; the Church, and Heaven all one . . ." (IV-2, 73). The practical consequences of this belief are significant and bear upon Donne's attempt to incarnate the divine image. For the mimetic representation of the holy life must show traces, not only of purgative and educational progress, and of sacrificial love, but also of actively triumphant joy. The whole scheme of history—nature, grace, glory—must be expressed in the mimesis of historical and religious experience. Certainly this approach leaves no room for a "vale-of-tears" mentality. Donne explains plainly, "thou maist begin thy heaven here, put thy self in the sight of God, put God in thy sight, in every particular action" (VI, 11, 235). As one can see, this is yet another argument in favour of the present incarnation of Christ. Donne warns, "Man passes not from the miseries of this life, to the joyes of Heaven, but by joy in this life too; for he that feeleth no joy here, shall finde none hereafter" (X, 10, 214). Rather than acknowledge such a radical disjunction, the regenerate soul should experience a smooth transition to a greater degree of joy in heaven: "he that hath not this joy here, lacks one of the best pieces of evidence for the joyes of heaven: true joy in this world shall flow into the joy of Heaven, as a River flowes into the Sea . . ." (VII, 1, 70). An individual's history ought to show forth its intentional pilgrimage homewards to God. The correct representation of history, in Donne's view, must manifest the interrelationship between Old and New Testaments.
and among the realms of nature, grace, and glory. The corollary to this view is that the portrayal of persons, from whatever historical period, must demonstrate a constancy and similarity in their religious experience, though actualized in a variety of ways.

The Church, since it consists of all those bound to God in relationship, necessarily displays the same sort of historical contiguity as we have just described. Donne warns, "Certainly he that loves not the Militant Church, hath but a faint faith in his interest in the Triumphant" (III, 17, 368). But although he believes that God gradually reveals himself in history, it is important to point out that Donne understands the Church's development, throughout time, to be a tragic and difficult journey. Even as Christ submitted himself to humiliation and suffering, by his entry into earthly history, so the Church shows itself to be torn and crucified in the course of its evolution. The Church undergoes purgation and restoration and it endures enigmatic searching. To use another biblical metaphor, Christ will not wed the Church until it is without spot or wrinkle; yet in its earthly journey, these blemishes cannot be avoided:

Since as yet the whole Church says, forgive us our Trespasses, the Church as yet is not without spots or wrinkles here in Earth, the Church will always have earthquakes. Oportet haereses esse; storms, and schisms must necessarily be; the Church is in a warfare, the Church is in a pilgrimage, and therefore here is no settling. (V, 5, 125-26)

This perspective on the Church and its development is significant because it means that in his literary portraits of its heroes or its actions Donne attempts to present not ideal forms but recognizable and imperfect patterns. He tries to stimulate the auditor by familiar
and imitable patterns which offset the effects of sin. He more readily accomplishes this task because he acknowledges the Church's faults. 11

To overlook the "spots" of the Church would be to falsify its experience and thereby to deny the value of Christian suffering through division and sin. Yet the recognition of these weaknesses must not be an excuse for one to despair of God's power to act through human instruments. The faulty Church still may be a means of grace for its members. In a letter to Sir Henry Goodyer, Donne points out concerning the Roman and Anglican Churches, "The channels of God's mercies run through both fields; they are sister teats of his graces, yet both diseased and infected, but not both alike." 12 Both Churches, though corrupt, may nevertheless supply nourishment to their children. Thus, the Church members who are able to bear the burdens of the Church's sinfulness with honesty, but without cynicism, are to be applauded: "He is a good Christian that can ride out . . . a storme . . . and does not forsake his ship for it, that is not scandalized with that State, nor that Church, of which he is a member, for those abuses that are in it" (III, 7, 185). Though abuses must be uncovered and corrected, if one is realistic, one will understand that "we doe not call money, base money, till the Allay exceed the pure metall" (X, 7, 162); the Church may serve many good offices as long as its basic substance and meaning is preserved.

Donne's sensitivity to the Church's tribulation throughout history leads him to value the contributions and approaches of the different members of Christ's body. Donne's concern goes beyond
ordinary religious toleration, because he wishes to draw together the various experiences of Christendom so that the understanding of the whole body might be full. While Donne can be a fierce controversialist in his sermons, a thing common in a polemical age, he is just as surely a healer of the Church's wounds. He notes that Christ, as God of concord,

is able to unite, and reconcile (as ... in Abrahams house) a Wife, and a Concubine in one bed, a covetous Father, and a wastfull Sonne in one family, a severe Magistrate, and a licentious people in one City, an absolute Prince, and a jealous People in one Kingdom, Law, and Conscience in one Government, Scripture, and tradition in one Church.

If these reconciliations may be possible, Donne thinks it also may be possible for controversialists to "fit" their controversies to Christ, "and see how neere they would meet in him, that is, how weere we might come to be friends, and yet both sides be good Christians ... " (II, 8, 185). The manner of apprehension of Christ may be different among the various denominations of Christianity and nonetheless remain genuine and orthodox. As far as Donne is concerned, "though Christ be not preached, nor presented in the same manner, for outward Ceremonies, or for problematicall opinions, yet the foundation may remaine one, though it be, in such a sort, varied; and men may come in at any of the twelve gates of one and the same Ierusalem ... " (VI, 7, 163). There are many avenues that lead to salvation, so long as they follow the Christ accepted by the Church throughout time.

One can see Donne striving to hold together the different experiences of the universal Church thereby representing a response worthy of the auditor's imitation. When he reflects upon the dangers posed by separation from the English Church, it is interesting
to notice that he does not merely denounce the separatists, but also acknowledges the loss which the main Church must suffer: "It affects all the body, when any member is cut off; . . . and they cut off themselves, and feel it not; when we lose but a mysticall limb, and they lose a spirittuall life, we feel it and they do not" (X, 7, 175). While Donne remains conscious of the irony that the separatists ultimately will sustain a much greater loss, he nevertheless emphasizes the damage that the national Church endures when diminished by their departure. Another interesting facet of Donne's approach to those who contest what he thinks are orthodox Christian beliefs is his frequent use of commentators likely to appeal to the faction which he criticizes. In doing this, Donne is able to affirm their broad tradition, but challenge particular instances of it. For example, when he admonishes those Protestants contemplating separatism, he cites Calvin: "Of all distempers, Calvin falls oftest upon the reproof of that which he calls Morositatem, a certain peevish frowardnesse. . . ." Calvin's reason for rebuking this "pestilence" in an individual is that it "is always accompanied with a pride, and a singularity, and an ambition to have his opinions preferred before all other men, and to condemn all that differ from him" (X, 7, 175). Donne thus does not castigate everything about the separatist, but points to a reconciling perspective. To those who have sympathies with the Roman faith, Donne responds in a similar manner. When he challenges Cardinal Bellarmine on a point of doctrine, he seeks out a contemporary theologian, Wilhelm Est, of Bellarmine's own faith to refute him.
In so doing, Donne comments:

If from us Bellarmine will not heare it; let him heare a
man of his own profession; not onely of his own Religion,
but so narrowly of his own profession, as to have been
a publique Reader of Divinity in a great University as
well as he. . . . (VII, 7, 194)

Again, Donne is able to dispute the beliefs of other persuasions
by nonetheless affirming the greater movements from which they spring.

By this validation, Donne affirms that different faiths may be found
to be "virtuall beams of one Sun."15 His frequent attempt to collate
commentaries from different religious traditions is but further
evidence of this approach. 16

Donne's struggle to preserve the integrity of the body of
Christ in its tortuous historic pilgrimage may also be discerned in
his use of terminology. Often Donne will deliberately use words
associated with a certain faction in order to reclaim them for the
whole Church. Obviously, he thinks it an intolerable situation
that the particularized use of a word, that is, the abuse of a
word, should disable the Church as a whole from employing it in a
regenerate fashion. When Donne reflects upon the conscious avoidance
by many of the terms, "merit," "penance," "sacrifice," and "altar,
because they suffer abuse at the hands of the Roman Church, he
exclaims, "How should we be disappointed, and disfurnished of many
words in our ordinary conversation, if we should be bound from all
words, which blasphemous men have prophaned, or uncleane men have
defiled with their ill use of those words?" (VII, 17, 429). The
same method manifests itself, as Madelon E. Heatherington shows,
in Donne's frequent use of one of the Puritans' favourite words,
"zeal." Though Donne obviously finds the word profitable in de-
scribing religious experience, he is careful to qualify its meaning, clarifying its good and bad connotations, and thus rehabilitating it for general service. 17 Donne consequently shows his willingness to accept the valid approaches in either major tradition outside of established Anglicanism when he declares, using an exemplary first-person persona:

I am a Papist, that is, I will fast and pray as much as any Papist, and enable my selfe for the service of my God, as seriously, as sedulously, as laboriously as any Papist. So, if when I startle and am affected at a blasphemous oath, as at a wound upon my Saviour, if when I avoyd the conversation of those men, that prophanne the Lords day, any other will say to me, This is Puritanical, Puritans do this, It is a blessed Protestation, and no man is the lesse a Protestant, nor the worse a Protestant for making it, Men and Brethren, I am a Puritan, that is, I wil endeavour to be pure, as my Father in heaven is pure, as far as any Puritan. (IX, 6, 166)

There are beneficial practices and beliefs, worthwhile for the whole Church, that run the risk of becoming associated with particular groups. Donne's homiletic methods attempt to redirect the course of fractious alienation towards integration and acceptance. 18 These methods of valuing traditions are but an example of his effort to redeem the Church in history.

V.3 Embodied History

In Donne's understanding, the conditions which make revelation possible are dependent upon a history perceived as active and embodied. The wisdom acquired from history is imitative knowledge, the knowledge of selves in action, rather than the academic cataloguing of conceptual information about God. This realization lies
behind Donne's rejection of the Roman Church's expansion of the beliefs necessary for salvation. The advance which history obtains for humankind is not the codification of religion, but rather the accumulation of human stories and examples, both good and ill, which dramatically explain the human condition and God's intention. As Donne sees the matter, the Roman Church, as demonstrated at the Council of Trent, misinterprets history by taking the dangerous step of drawing "indifferent things to be necessary" (II, 9, 204). Donne humorously reflects, "Threescore yeares agoe, he [a man] might have beeene saved for beleeving the Apostles Creed; now it will cost him the Trent Creed too" (VI, 12, 249). The value of history does not lie in the progressive definition of areas requiring intellectual assent. Rather, it lies in the power of Scripture and experience to persuade men to trust God, to rely upon him in helping them perform regenerate actions. When one reads history in Scripture, one affirms that "The Gospel was delivered all together, and not by Postscripts." Further, one recognizes that one depends upon the faith inspired by the Scriptures rather than upon the syllogistic proofs that Roman clerics may deduce from them: "The evidence for my salvation is my Credo, not their Probo ..." (III, 9, 209). Again, in this context, Donne implies that the surest means of regeneration is the memory, which has recourse to the pattern of Scripture. He shies away from speculation in favour of historical enactment: "The office of the Holy Ghost himself ... is but to bring those things to remembrance, which Christ taught, and no more" (VIII, 11, 263). 19

If humanity may be said to achieve a more particular knowledge of God over the course of time, it is the knowledge
of the divine person or persons. This is fundamental belief, perceived in God's great acts. Cylateral or secondary beliefs do not pertain to salvation and their importance may be argued within the whole Church. The historical advance from which Christians benefit is one of improved trust in a God made manifest:

To the naturall man, God gives generall notions of himselfe; a God that spreads over all as the heavens; a God that sustaines all as the earth; a God that transports, and communicates all to all as the sea. But to the Christian Church, God applies himselfe in more particular notions; as a Father, as a Son, as a holy Ghost; And to every Christian soule, as a Creator, a Redeemer, a Benefactor. (V, 16, 325)

While faint impressions of the Trinity are available to natural men, history reveals to Christians a more specific and personal deity; and it reveals a deity who applies himself to the individual soul. In a similar manner, the ancient philosophers "could never bring us to the knowledge what this Summum bonum, this Happinesse, this Blessednesse was." While they were able to enjoy some of its benefits, they could not identify Christ Jesus as the source of those benefits (IX, 11, 254-55). Historical revelation, in Donne's terms, is the disclosure of the personhood of God in his acts, rather than the ever-increasing compilation of necessary doctrine.

The proper mimesis of history represents events as occurring in the response of selves to one another. Even God is a self who calls upon people to incarnate a remembered providential pattern in their own lives. God always finds new esthetic patterns in which to embody his works. Thus, he imparted songs to cause his people to remember and therefore to act:

God himselfe made Moses a Song, and expressed his reason why; The children of Israel, sayes God, will forget my
Lay; but this song they will not forget; and whencesoever they sing this song, this song shall testify against them, what I have done for them, how they have forsaken me. (IV, 7, 179-80).

The song of Moses, like that of Deborah and Barak, is the history of God's deliverance embodied. It is embodied in the measure of song and verse, but it is also embodied in its hearers, for it testifies to them and against them. The singing of a song or the preaching of a sermon should aspire to this practical purpose. As Donne phrased it in another context, "to sing, and to sing to an instrument, is to perform that holy duty in action, which we speak of in discourse" (II, 7, 167).

When history is remembered so that it produces beneficial results, it is appropriated in its most genuine sense: "Practise is the Incarnation of Faith, Faith is incorporated and manifested in a body, by works" (VI, 4, 102). By imitating God's saving actions in history, demonstrated by his servants, those actions become reinvigorated: "For, this is truly to glorifie God in his Saints, to sanctifie our selves in their examples; To celebrate them is to imitate them" (X, 8, 190). Indeed, one of Donne's principal means of causing his auditors to respond to history is by his realistic depiction of historical persons and fictive persons having a history. By such depictions in his sermons, Donne follows God's own method of inviting imitation by example:

God illustrates his precepts, comments upon his owne Text much by examples. First, to raise us to the best height, God makes himselfe our example, Sicut Pater, Be holy as your Father in heaven is holy. Then, because we cannot reach to that, he makes men like our selves (at least, such as we should be) our example Sicut Elias, Elias was
a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed that it might not raine, and it rained not, and that it might, and it did. If we be not able to conforme our selves to the singularity of one particular and transcendent man, he sends us to the whole body of good men, his servants, Sicut Prophetae, Take, my brethren, the Prophets, for an example of long patience.

Ultimately, God even sends men to the creatures, such as the industrious ant, for an example of profitable action (IX, 14, 317-18). But, of course, it is primarily men and women to whom Donne turns as examples of historical representation.

In order to discuss Donne's representation of historical figures, we must first raise the complex issue of typology, the method by which earlier events, persons, or things are seen to prefigure Christ and his kingdom. Among the Fathers, allegory and typology were often confused and lacking distinction. Origen was renowned among the Reformers for his excesses in this regard. Donne, of course, stresses the more realistic and historical approach to typology, a comparison of actual occurrences.

Although there are vestiges of the medieval four-fold exegesis of Scripture in his sermons (literal, moral, allegorical, and analogical), Donne generally follows the Protestant English tradition through Tyndale and Whitaker. In their conception, a continuum of meaning inheres in one text, and several shades of meaning may be perceived to be an organic part of the literal sense. Thus, on one hand, Donne is able to reject "the curious refinings of the Allegorical Fathers, which have made the Scriptures, which are strong toyles to catch and destroy the bore and bear which devast our Lords vineyard, fine cobwebs to catch flies..." On the other hand, Donne can affirm that the best interpretation of the Bible "is that sense which arises preg-
nantly, and evidently, liquidly, and manifestly out of the Originall Text it selfe" (III, 2, 74). So while several interpretations which enhance devotion may be admitted, none may be accepted that might "neglect or weaken the literal sense it selfe" (III, 17, 353). Nevertheless, Donne maintains, the ultimate test for a proper reading of the literal sense of Scripture depends upon the Holy Ghost's intention: "And his principall intention in many places, is to expresse things by allegories, by figures; so that in many places of Scripture, a figurative sense is the literal sense . . ." (VI, 2, 62). Although typology had been used to reinforce a multi-levelled allegorical method, Donne's approach to typology is generally much less tightly structured and more in line with Protestant practice. Harris consequently suggests, "Donne used typology as his way of exploring the full symbolic value of the literal sense." 24

Lewalski suggests that Donne's sermons reflect "perhaps the most creative use of typology" in seventeenth-century Protestant circles since, in addition to his use of the four-fold scheme and the Reformers' perception of Christ as the antitype fulfilling the earlier types, Donne also views the individual Christian "as a correlative type or as (through Christ) an antitype." 25 As we have already explained, Donne certainly recognizes that the types which prefigure Christ confront a reality which is fundamentally of the same nature and structure, no matter in which period they find themselves. Because Donne stresses the continuity of history, the type's experience anticipates Christ's not as a mysterious and un-
witting pre-enactment—a dumb show before the real performance—but as an encounter with a divine person, in whatever circumstances, who has covenanted to remain faithful in his dealing with his servants. The type's experience is valid precisely because of the constancy inherent in sacred history. Consequently, David's history is relevant to any man:

His example is so comprehensive, so general... so doth David's history concern and embrace all. For his Person includes all states, between a shepherd and a king, and his sinne includes all sinne, between first Omissions, and complications of Habits of sin upon sin: So that as S. Basil said, hee needed no other Booke, for all spiritual uses, but the Psalms, so wee need no other Example to discover to us the slippery ways into sin, or the penitential ways out of sin, then the Author of that Booke, David. (V. 15, 299)

Even for the Christian, David's example of religious experience is a spiritual treasure since it recapitulates all conditions of the heart, and records the whole process of regeneration from sin.

Obviously then, Donne places himself at odds with those, such as Melito, Origen, and Chrysostom who suggest "that the pattern or model was worthless when it had fulfilled its purpose and was to be discarded." On the contrary, Donne believes that the old accounts continue to illuminate the contemporary Christian's experience, and a knowledge of the direction of providential history reciprocally clarifies the meaning of ancient trials and triumphs.

The direct comparison of types with the individual soul is one of Donne's methods of appropriating history. The earlier types provide a plethora of examples of how to respond religiously to the challenges demanded of one. Thus, "David was not onely a cleare Prophet of Christ himselfe, but a Prophet of every particular Christian;
He foretells what I, what any shall doe, and suffer, and say" (VII, 1, 51). Interestingly enough, even history's record of wickedness may be used, by means of proper discrimination, to demonstrate a regenerate course of action. For, while history's function may be perverted, as when "we have found examples for our sins in History" (I, 4, 226), God intends that the hurtful results of evil may prove to be instructive. Consequently, Donne insists, "It is a true, an usefull Rule, that ill men have been Types of Christ and ill actions figures of good: Much more, may things not ill in themselves, though deflected and detorted to ill, be restored to good againe..." (III, 15, 318). What this means is that Donne does not represent idealized holy figures for imitation, but complex, struggling, divided, believable men and women, whose actions must be evaluated with the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Donne represents his types neither as shadows lacking substance nor as perfect figures having no bearing upon the enigmatic and sinful life people know intimately.

Donne's attempt to preserve the realism and actuality of the persons who make up scriptural history extends even to the recorders of that history. The events of history are not determined by a tyrannical God; and therefore, the formulation of the historical account is achieved by the aid of voluntary and particular human agents. Even in the writing of Scripture, one may discern a dialogue of selves. Thus, "the Prophets, and the other Secretaries of the holy Ghost in penning the books of Scriptures, do for the most part retain, and express in their writings some impressions, and some air of their former professions..." The very style of God's
holy word is consequently marked by the uniqueness of those who wrote it. These "secretaries" made it their practice to insert "into their writings some phrases, some metaphors, some allusions, taken from that profession which they had exercised before . . ." (I, 5, 236). When reading Scripture, Donne is always conscious of the human content of his text: "There are certain forms of speech, certain characters, upon which I would pronounce, That's Moses, and not David, that's Job, and not Solomon, that's Esay and not Jeremy" (VIII, 13, 293). Donne's recognition of the particularity of historical persons makes him reflect upon why one Evangelist would record details that another omits (VII, 5, 141-42). He suggests that the reason why all the Evangelists note that Peter cut off Malchus' ear but only Luke recalls the healing of it again is that Luke was a physician and likely to remember an act of curing (V, 12, 242). Elsewhere, he describes Matthew realistically as a man who kept a public house and was an accountant (VII, 5, 146-68). The writing of biblical history was accomplished by very recognizable human instruments.

In his presentation of historical persons, Donne is also circumspect in maintaining uniqueness. The Bible provides his model:

When the Holy Ghost is so careful to give men their additions, That Iabal was the father of such as dwell in Tents, & keep Cattel, & Iubal the father of Harpers, and Organists, and Tubal-Cain of all Gravers in Brasse and Iron. And when He presents with so many particularities every piece of worke, that Hiram of Tyre wrought in Brasse for the furnishing of Solomon's Temple, God certainly is not afraid that his honour will be diminished, in the honourable mentioning of such men as have benefited the world by publique good works. (K, 3, 100)
God delights in the individuality of his followers, for such an abundant and voluntary service conduces to his glory. Donne's affirmation of human particularity is also underscored by his consideration of people's ultimate destiny. He argues against the Manicheans and Origen in this matter. For while we may become "partakers of the divine nature," it is not true that we "should be swallowed up, and drowned in the very substance of God himself" (I, 1, 164). God seeks communion, not absolute union. 28

The dramatic enactment of history in Donne's sermons takes place partially by a reanimation of historical characters in a variety of ways. Some of these we have described in Chapter II. We may further note that Donne uses description so that biblical characters become real and recognizable. For example, when Donne considers Cornelius, the centurion of Acts 10 and second of the Gentiles to be converted to Christianity, Donne extrapolates from the meager scriptural record in order to flesh out this figure for his auditors. Donne accompanies a few biblical citations with comments and deductions of his own:

He and all his house; A Souldier, yet kept a house, and did not alwayes wander; He kept his house in good order and with good meanes: He gave much almes; Though Armes be an expensive profession for outward splendor, yet he reserved for almes, much almes; And he prayed to God alwayes; Though Armes require much time for the duties thereof, yet he could pray at those times; In his Trenches, at the Assault, or at the defense of a Breach, he could pray. . . . (V, 1, 45)

Out of the spare original account, Donne uses his regenerate imagination to construct a fuller portrayal of the centurion. Donne combines
certain facts and extracts a compelling result. The centurion must have cared for a home; he had to budget his money so that he could give it away; he found time to pray though there was little available and had to be snatched in difficult circumstances. Further, the depiction incorporates the realism of another character's comment. For the centurion is not allowed to become an ideal figure commanding undiscriminating adulation. Rather, he falls under Peter's circum-
pection when he remarks ironically, after the centurion's prostra-
tion before him, "I myself am also a man" (V, 1, 46). The auditor is able to recognize himself in Cornelius once he is portrayed in such realistic and particular terms.

In Chapter II, we already stressed Donne's talent for fabricating dramatic personae out of historical characters. But it is pertinent here to demonstrate that Donne occasionally uses this technique so that the represented character reflects on his own history and experience. Thus, in one instance, Donne imagines for his auditors a situation where David is called before the bar of divine justice. When accused of lusting after Bathsheba, David cries out:

Alas, I have done that, and more; dishonored her, and my selfe, and our God; and more then that, I have continued the act into a habit; and more then that, I have drowned that sinne in bloud, lest it should rise up to my sight; and more then all that, I have caused the Name of God to be blasphemed; and lest his Majesty, and his greatnesse should be a terror to me, I have occasioned the enemy to undervalue him, and speake despightfully of God himselfe. (V, 16, 320)

In this dramatic confession, Donne is able to summarize the great history of David's many sins. A much larger story is implied by the rapidly amplifying admission of guilt, and the auditor is able to
bring it to mind. But because this history is a confession, it is more than a catalogue of wicked actions: it is a petition to God for forgiveness. In theatrical fashion, Donne therefore demonstrates the significance of "owning" one's history, while he simultaneously suggests that despite the magnitude of evil one may commit, recourse to God is always possible. It appears especially possible because it has already been accomplished by David, as this dilation of history records.

Donne's mimetic technique is also evident when he uses the actions of a historical account as a basis to describe a character. One of Donne's aims is to present the figure in a very human and realistic light, paying close attention to the complexities and difficulties which are common to ordinary experience. So it is when Donne gives a lengthy but close consideration to Moses' reaction to God's summons. There are five doubts or excuses which Moses offers God. Donne examines each with sympathy, taking into account on every occasion other similar historical circumstances. The auditor comes away richly schooled in both Moses' humanity and holiness, and is able to see the connections between this historical event and a constellation of others. Moses excuses himself first by asking, "What am I?" That is, he points to his own unworthiness. Yet, Donne is generous in his estimation of this response and inquires, "What man amongst us looks Moses way...first upon himself...first upon his owne sufficiencies..."? Donne considers the statements of humiliation by others summoned by God, Abraham, Jacob, and David, before generalizing, "Be but wormes
and no more, in your owne eyes, and God shall make you men, bee but men and no more in your owne eyes, and God shall make you the men of his Israel." This structure is repeated in each of Moses' other excuses: that he could not name who sent him, that he was not eloquent, that he would not be believed, and finally--the last is more of a petition--that God send the Messiah (VIII, 5, 138-54). By sympathetically analyzing Moses' very imperfect actions (his offering of excuses to God), by relating them to other historical events, and by applying them to the auditor, Donne makes Moses seem very real indeed.

Donne recollects the history of his friend, Lady Danvers, by beginning with a dramatic monologue. With great courtesy and gentleness, Donne eventually goes on to commemorate her by describing her lineage, her honourable course of life, her spiritual development, and her hope, along with all the Church, of heaven. But to begin his celebration of her, his persona addresses her so that she might be reanimated for the congregation:

Arise thou, and bee another Commentary to us; and tell us, what this new Heaven, and new Earth is, in which now, thou dwel'st, with that Righteousnesse. But wee doe not invoke thee, as thou art a Saint in Heaven; Appeare to us, as thou didst appeare to us a moneth agoe; At least, appeare in thy history; Appeare in our memory.

For when she grants this petition, and so appears, she will receive the good testimony of those who took her for the "best example."

She consequently may be content to hear in that testimony an instructive "Text re-applied" to her (VIII, 2, 85-86). With such a personal invocation, the speaker's later recollections of Lady Danvers seem all the more vital. This, of course, is precisely Donne's intent,
for here too, the congregation may experience history appropriated to their own souls. The only condition upon which Donne will permit the congregation to "wake" this lovely soul is if they incarnate her example amongst themselves. For then she will be truly present: "But if you wil wake her, wake her, and keepe her awake with an active imitation, of her Morall, and her Holy vertues" (VIII, 2, 93).

Donne's use of these mimetic techniques in his depiction of these four types--Cornelius, David, Moses, and Lady Danvers--is made possible by Donne's belief in the continuity of history and the essential universality of human experience. Each person described, therefore, has a personal story worthy of investigation because of the light it may shed on the manner in which Donne's auditors live their lives. The types deserve a representation which is personal, multi-dimensional, and realistic for three reasons. First, such a portrayal demonstrates the value of individual human lives. The detail heightens the sense that God rejoices in a diversity of selves joining in a historical communion which shapes history. Secondly, such a portrayal convinces the auditor that personal histories are worthy of remembrance and imitation. The auditor, with an exercised judgment, may chart a regenerate course for his own life by using former examples, whether good or evil. Donne's realistic enactment of types conveys to the auditor a sense of relatedness: that he suffers or exults precisely as others have done before him. Such an awareness produces courage to accept grace and to overcome weakness in following God's erring but loyal servants. Thirdly, in Donne's understanding, the individual human stories are validated.
and sanctified my Christ's recapitulative example. Christ's fulfillment of the types does not empty them of meaning but restores to them, and to all lives, the full dignity of humanity realized:

Hee tooke our nature, that he might know our infirmities experimentally; He brought down a better nature, that he might recover us, restore us powerfully, effectually; and that hee might be sure to accomplish his work, he brought more to our reparation, then to our first building. . . . (X, 1, 48)29

As we have seen, Donne dramatizes, through various techniques, the characters and actions of history. But as a complement to this representation, Donne also reminds the audience of the providential thread running through a series of incidents. Donne frequently warns his auditors against deciding upon an action or belief based upon a single example, for this practice tends towards schismatic individualism.30 Consequently, Donne demonstrates, in his sermons, the method of collating experiences from Scripture and elsewhere as a way of achieving consensus with the whole Church of God, with the living and the dead. He portrays the universal pattern in particular examples. The vivid apprehension of a realistic type's action is important; but a well-exercised memory is also populated with a host of examples on which to meditate and respond.

When Donne considers the heart's tender feelings expressed in tears as a most eloquent and simple prayer, he gathers instances where voiced prayers were ignored by God. The enumerated examples act as a history of God's response to a particular attitude. Donne notes first St. Augustine, who thought that one might always be able to repeat the Lord's prayer innocently until he realized that,
if in the petition to be delivered from evil, one intended escape
from all tribulations and temptations, one would err greatly.

Donne continues selecting examples from history:

The sons of Zebedee prayed, but ambitiously, and were not
heard; S. Paul prayed for the taking away of the provocation
of the flesh, but inconsiderately, and mist; the Apostles
made a request, for fire against the Samaritans, but
uncharitably, and were reproved.

In these four cases, the spoken prayers are rejected. Yet when
Jehosephat merely directs his eyes towards God, he offers an example
of the inarticulate prayer to which God listens. In like manner,
the tears and groans which are unutterable, says Donne "spake aloud
in the eares of God" (VI, 14 48-49). By first compiling instances
of God's negative response to sinful prayer, Donne demonstrates
God's constancy in similar situations. He invites the auditor
to choose a better way of proceeding by means of the authority of
accumulated experience.

Donne uses a similar method when he attempts to inspire confidence
in God's mercy. In one sermon, Donne explains that the Scriptures are
full of examples where God draws the sinner towards himself, but
only once does Scripture record God's own utterance of damnation:
Donne's case is put all the more convincingly because he chronicles
the history of "Gods venites," that is, "invitations to come unto
God." Thus, Donne records the great variety of God's invitations.

Referring to Job, Donne assures that one may approach God though he
has walked in Satan's ways. Isaiah confirms that one may come though
one may have no merits. Even if one's coming is a returning, as
Hosea declares, one must feel free to enter God's presence. Isaiah
also suggests that one may come to receive ease, or to consult or
even to argue and plead with God. Indeed, summarizes Donne, there are "infinite invitations to come," and he has only begun to name the instances where God has so generously entreated his people (VII, 2, 88-89).

In the same sermon, Donne again resorts to the method of manifesting a providential train of events. On this occasion, however, he more explicitly links the auditor with historical figures. By so doing, Donne makes it clear that the auditor participates in the common history of the Church, and that God will respond to him as he has responded to his other servants. Donne makes his meaning colorfully clear by describing God's action in terms of the metaphor of a creditor, and by speaking to the auditor in the intimate "thou" form of address:

God may lend thee out, even to Satan; suffer thee to bee his Bayliffe, and his Instrument to the vexation of others; So hee lent out Saint Paul, to the Scribes and Pharises, to serve them in their Persecutions; So God may lend thee out. God may Let thee out for a time, to them that shall plow and harrow thee, fell and cleave thee, and reserve to himselfe but a little Rent, a little glory, in thy Patience; So hee Let out Job even to Satan himselfe; so God may Let thee out. GOD may Mortgage thee to a sise Months Fever, or to a longer debility; So he Mortgaged Hezekias.

The ultimate thrust of this historical catalogue, in which Donne cites Paul, Job, and Hezekiah, and later others as examples, proves to be assuring, however. Finally, God is not only a lender, but a proprietor of each human soul, and therefore cares conscientiously for it. Donne insists that because God is Lord and owner, he cannot "sell thee so, as not to reserve, a Power, and a Will to Redeeme thee, if thou wouldst be redeem'd" (VII, 2, 93). By using the metaphor of a creditor, Donne is able to show, in several events
of history, that God's manner of dealing with persons manifests a
constant pattern. That God is ready to pay the ultimate cost to
redeem men and women with his Son is everywhere implied. Here
Donne consciously applies history to the individual. Thus, the
auditor may agree with the preacher, that "this is . . . the true
searching of the Scriptures, to finde all the histories to be
examples to me, all the prophecies to induce a Saviour for me . . .
(III, 17, 367).

Donne's homiletic mimesis of history allows us to make several
deductions. Donne demonstrates confidence in the workings of
providence through time. The proper depiction of history, however,
requires that it be shown to be personal both by the auditor's
appropriation of history and by his recognition that history is a
drama of selves. This realization is aided by the preacher, who
shows that the individual may perceive the record of God's saving
work in his own history or may interpret his life in the light of
scriptural history. Donne recognizes the need to move all kinds of
personalities, thus preserving individual talents within a historical
communion. The value of history is emphasized by Donne's belief
that history operates as a continuum, as an educational process which
joins together the realms of nature, grace, and glory. The Church's
development is an example of this process, but manifests a tortuous
pilgrimage through time. Donne demonstrates how the division of the
Church is a crucifictional experience demanding healing and he offers
a restorative example in his validation of various traditions,
members of Christ's body. This kind of embodiment is, in fact, the
aim of Christian wisdom, since the true wisdom acquired from history
is imitative knowledge. Proper imitation demands the auditor's access to realistically imagined types of Christ, provided by the preacher. In his realistic presentation of scriptural writers, his dramatic reanimation of historical characters, and his discernment of a providential thread running through events, Donne persuades the auditor to involve himself in God's historical design and thereby to embody Christ's example.

Having reviewed Donne's theory and representation of history, we need only add a few comments. We have shown that Donne recognized God's revelation of himself to be dependent upon the historical conditions which prepare and educate people for the acceptance of that revelation. Yet Donne's sermons are themselves short histories. 31 They also create the necessary conditions out of which insight may unfold, and thus they imitate God's providential pattern. That is particularly true when we consider Donne's psychological method. For each sermon is a psychological history moving towards "redintegration" by the successive steps which it encourages the auditor to take. Those steps challenge the auditor to accept embodied knowledge by means of the preacher's imaginative mimesis of real selves whose actions perform God's providential movement.
Notes


2. Karl Barth asks rhetorically, "Can one possess it [the truth of revelation] in abstraction from the Person of Him who reveals it and from the revelatory act of that Person—the act in which that Person gives himself to be perceived by another person?" Quoted in Baillie, p. 36.

3. In his emphasis upon the individual's history, Donne may be tapping the Puritan interest in history and biography and redirecting it to his own ends. See Haller, p. 100: "Biography and history appealed, however, with particular force to the Puritan mind and took from Puritanism a special character."

4. Stookey, p. 86, uses these last two examples.

5. Donne frequently promotes the concept of cooperation between God and man. This leads Stookey, pp. 71 and 171, to suggest a synergistic strain in Donne's theology, especially because of Donne's strong statement, "Thou shalt be an Agent in thine own salvation" (IX, 16, 356). Yet even in this context, Donne says in the previous sentence, in God's voice, "The act shall be thine, but yet the power is mine." On other occasions Donne seems deliberate in his attempt to deny the possibility that any regenerate act may occur without the assistance of God's grace. He utterly rejects (in precise theological language) both Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism (VII, 9, 240). Further, he explains that any good human action is subordinate and subsequent to God's aid: "all my co-operation is but a post-operation, a working by the Power of that All-preventing Grace" (VII, 14, 353). In one of his firmest statements, Donne condemns any notion implying that the ability to do good may exist independently of God: "we banish all self-subsistence, all attributing of any power, to any faculty of our own . . . by such a cooperation, as should put God and man in Commission together, or make grace and nature Colleagues in the worke, or that God should do one halfe, and man the other . . ." (VIII, 16, 369). With these clear discriminations in mind, Donne nonetheless understands the homiletic value of inducing imitation through a sense of participation (of course, by means of God's power) in history. For other significant comments on cooperation, see: I, 7, 271; I, 7, 272; I, 8, 292; I, 9, 313; IV, 7, 185; IV, 8, 224; V, 2, 62; V, 18, 377; IX, 18, 410.
Lewalski stresses the development of a personalized history in the Protestant tradition. See "Typological Symbolism," p. 82, where she indicates that reformation theology recognized "the biblical stories and events, not merely as exemplary to us but actually recapitulated in our lives." Also see Protestant Poetics, p. 150: "Donne's sermons urged endlessly that the Christian is to trace salvation history in his own soul." Contemporary theologians also confirm the importance of the personal sense of history. See for example, H. Richard Niebuhr, The Meaning of Revelation (New York: MacMillan, 1962), pp. 72-73. He remarks, p. 73: "One must look with them [the historical persons of Scripture] and not at them to verify their visions, participate in their history rather than regard it if one would apprehend what they apprehended." The history of the inner life can only be confessed by selves who speak of what happened to them in the community of selves."

This tendency in the Reform tradition to see a continuity rather than a disjunction between the Old and New Testaments has been suggested by several authors. Lewalski in Protestant Poetics, pp. 125-26, notes that "the Protestant formulations emphasized the continuities between the two covenants in regard to the spiritual condition of the faithful" and that while the situation of Christians was "notably advantaged by the New Covenant," it was "not different in essence from that of the Old Testament people." In her "Typological Symbolism," p. 83, Lewalski relates this insight directly to Donne. The relationship between Old and New Covenants is based on the belief that persons under either dispensation are members of the covenant with Abraham. Coolidge, pp. 101-07, explains that the covenant with Abraham, according to St. Paul's argument, was understood as the unconditional Covenant of Grace, while the Sinai covenant, related but subordinate to it, was seen as the conditional Covenant of Works. Daniel, p. 24, agrees that Donne uses "the concept of continuity in his covenant theology," for Donne believes that the Abrahamic covenant "remained in effect from Abraham through the church." Also, see M. A. C. Johnson, pp. 70-71, who points to Donne's belief in the universality of human experience in his use of types and figures.

Also see Mann, p. 615

For further illustrations of the continuity between nature and grace, see I, 4, 225; V, 8, 176; VII, 17, 425.

Similar statements on the interpenetration of earthly and heavenly joy may be found in III, 16, 339; II, 16, 342; VII, 1, 69; VII, 7, 212. But contrast G. F. Waller, "John Donne's Changing Attitudes to Time," SEL, 14 (1974), 85 and 87, where Donne is seen "to accept the traditional Christian antithesis of time and eternity," and to believe that time is "a series of radically discontinuous instants... of value only as it can be negated or transformed from without."
11 For other references to such pilgrimage, see III, 13, 289; V, 14, 283; X, 11, 234.

12 Gosse, II, 78.

13 Another instance of this use of Calvin's thought occurs in X, 5, 128, where Donne reminds his opponents that Calvin himself "always spoke with a holy warinesse, and discretion."

14 Donne's "correction" of the Roman position on the Fathers is common practice. See, for example, X, 6, 151, where Tertullian is used in this capacity.


16 See, for example, II, 9, 205-06; III, 3, 100-01.


18 For supporting views on Donne's understanding of the churches, see Grierson, p. 309, and Warren, p. 269.

19 Donne frequently speaks of the Roman error in declaring collateral doctrines to be necessary. For other passages that particularly support the argument expressed here, see II, 14, 299; III, 9, 209; V, 14, 276; V, 14, 295; VI, 12, 258; VII, 3, 97; VII, 4, 119; VIII, 13, 309; X, 4, 109. The approaches of Niebuhr, p. 143 and Baillie, pp. 47, 49-50, 100, were suggestive in the formulation of this argument.


23 Donne, Essays, p. 40.


26 Galdon, p. 43. Also see pp. 20-21.

27 Note William F. Lynch's explanation of typology in Christ and Apollo: The Dimensions of the Literary Imagination (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960), p. 189: "And the deeper one goes into the whole historical concretion of the earlier reality, the more insight there is into that which is to come. . . . But the reverse is also true. If one brings the Resurrection back over against the liberation of this ancient people from the waters, that first act of liberation is illuminated as never before. There is a mutuality of forces for insight operating between the two events."

28 We may contrast in this regard C. A. Patrides, though his reading of Herbert is probably correct. Of Herbert he says, "His interior monologue ends, as history is to do, with the individual's absorption into the Eternal." See The Grand Design of God: The Literary Form of the Christian View of History (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 83.

29 Also see VI, 13, 268 and 275.

30 See, for example, IV, 14, 349; VI, 10, 208; IX, 8, 212.

CHAPTER VI:

CONCLUSION: DONNE'S SERMON ON THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

A sermon which considers that sudden assault from heaven, blinding and converting the great persecutor of Christ, may seem an unlikely selection to illustrate and summarize Donne's homiletic imitation of God's gradually revelatory ways. In fact, Donne's ability to make such a supernatural event convincing and relevant to the auditor's ordinary life offers testimony to his mimetic skill. Interestingly, the sermon articulates or demonstrates, at important junctures, its theoretical mimetic principles. In Chapter II, we noted Donne's Aristotelian bias, an attempt to imitate not idealized conceptions but historical precedents. This sermon affirms its belief in processive action when it declares, "beloved, we are to consider God, not as he is in himselfe, but as he works upon us" (VI, 10, 216). The value of the present life is emphasized since Paul's experience, rightly used, is a way of purifying God's image, or as the sermon has it, of having "a new soule breathed into him from Christ" (VI, 10, 206). Donne's mimesis is inclusive of life's variety, since it imitates the great psychological stages moving towards integration, as we shall see. In Paul, the Bible's exemplary method is reproduced; the imitation is convincing because it is near and familiar. Thus Paul in his depravity is realistically described as without "some faint colour of excuse," since he himself "set actions, on foote," and thereby used the "Power of the State, so
as that he need not feare men" and used "the inflexibility of the State, so as that he need not pity women" (VI, 10, 207). Yet Donne summons the testimony of Chrysostom to describe his love for the man, and himself confesses that, when he reads Paul's letters, he meets not words, but "universal thunder" (VI, 10, 210-11). Paul, who once breathed "threatnings and slaughter" becomes one who "made Prisons Churches" (VI, 10, 206; 211). The auditor is informed that the same man who "thought himselfe a competent judge" in believing in one religion and "that all others were to be persecuted, even to death, that were not of his way" is he who comes to have an intense fellow-feeling for others, saying "who is weake, and I am not weake? who is offended, and I burne not?" (VI, 10, 214-15; 220). These comments, along with the gradually recounted tale of Paul's falling, blind, to the ground, in trembling and astonishment, give a realistic sense of Paul's individuality. And while this sermon's description is not as elaborate as others in its collection of minute detail, we are nonetheless provided with a portrait of a complex, vital, and struggling man.

This realistic depiction is made possible; since, as Chapter V related, the experiences of God's servants describe a process continuous with that of the incarnate Christ himself, and are not merely pale reflections. Consequently, Paul's trials and insights have a direct bearing upon the life of the contemporary auditor. Indeed, Paul acts the part of "So universall a Priest ... as that ... He prepared the whole world, as a sacrifice to God" (VI, 10, 210). Donne invites the auditor to claim history, particularly Paul's story, as
his own. Consequently, when Donne adjusts the story so that the
auditor may participate in Paul's blindness, the auditor realizes
that "it is not a lazy affectation of ignorance; not darknesse, but
a greater light, must make us blind" (VI, 10, 215). The auditor
perceives in the factual record of Paul's history a pattern analogous
to his own. In fact Donne finds a better term than "appropriation"
to describe the entry of Christ into the auditor in a manner paralleling
the Pauline event, and calls the experience an "impropriation"
to finde all that God sayes is spoken to me, and all that Christ
suffered was suffered for me" (VI, 10, 219). Because God's servants,
whether they exist in the realm of nature, grace, or glory, encounter
God's faithfulness throughout time, they manifest a similarity of
religious experience: They express a universal pattern in their
individual example. Donne confidently affirms, "Postdate the whole
Bible, and whatsoever thou hearest spoken of such, as thou art,
before, beleev all that to be spoken but now, and spoken to thee"
(VI, 10, 220). The historical knowledge which one gathers from
encounters with God, such as Paul's, is the application of history
to oneself, for by this method, one may more accurately appraise
one's best response to God. In this sermon, Donne fabricates an
interrogating persona who performs a dramatic monologue in order
to demonstrate the auditor's involvement in history:

Is not thy name Simon Magus, if thou buy and sell spirit-
all things thy selfe? and is not thy servants name Gehazi,
if he exact after? Is not thy name Cain, if thou rise up
against thy brother? And is not thy name Zacheus, if thou
multiply thy wealth by oppression? Is not thy name Dinah,
if thou gad abroad, to see who will solicite thee? And is
not the name Putiphars Wife upon thee, if thou stay at home
and solicite thy servants? (VI, 10, 219-20)
History, composed of such individual selves in action, populates the auditor's mind as he adopts their stories as his own. In this passage, the speaker invites him to recognize himself in their sin. Paul's example shows a method of rising from that sin.

The sermon demonstrates that the use of history is helpful only if it is not selective, and if its whole tenor and purpose are considered. Donne warns that "It is not safe concluding out of single Instances" (VI, 10, 208), and therefore, his own examination of Paul's tumbling to the ground begins with his linking that event to other cases in which God arrested rage in the height of its fury. Three instances are cited: Christ rebuked the wind when the tempestuous sea threatened the disciples' ship and troubled their faith; Joshua, by God's power, commanded the sun to stand still when it raced furiously; Christ banished the unclean spirit from possessed persons (VI, 10, 206). A providential thread must be discerned in the scope of biblical history if one is to read events accurately. Donne uses the same method when he asks if God pardons the wanton sinner and when he considers God's response to those who oppose him (VI, 10, 208; 221). This collation of historical events discloses the action of the mind in determining the direction of history and the significance of the individual experience.

The sermon recalls several other mimetic principles which we described in Chapter II. Donne manifests his attention to God's harmonization of the discordant elements within the historical symphony as he discloses how Saul's rage is resolved into a divine order. Donne indicates his homiletic procedure by pointing to God's developing and harmonious structures; at the same time, he makes it
clear that the Christian exists in conflict as a condition of growth:

> God hath not made a week without a Sabbath; no temptation without an issue; God inflicts no calamity, no cloud, no eclipse, without light, to see ease in it, if the patient will look upon that which God hath done to him, in other cases, or to that which God hath done to others, at other times. (VI, 10, 214)

Here Donne assures that time is God's instrument. Through it, God's anger is shown to be catechistical, and the repentant man's sin may become the source of spiritual growth. Donne's purpose is to instill confidence in the developing structures of God, and thereby to induce a patience which can "attend his leisure" (VI, 10, 221).

Thus, Donne discloses his perception of God's orchestration, since "Princes are Gods Trumpet, and the Church is Gods Organ, but Christ Jesus is his voyce" (VI, 10, 217). But he is equally aware of his responsibility to cause Christ's voice to be heard; and to make his body incarnate through preaching's inducement to action: "there was not onely a word; the Word, Christ himselfe, a Son of God in heaven, but a Voyce, the word uttered, and preached; Christ manifested in his'Ordinance" (VI, 10, 217). The auditor must hear the preacher's voice, even as Paul heard a divine voice as he fell from his horse. When Donne repeatedly invokes Christ's words, "why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9.4), the auditor hears Christ inanimated and present before him. As we earlier indicated, the preacher, in imitation of God, must both awaken with terror and sustain by singing God's mercies. This sermon follows these principles since God, as he did to Paul, "does not so much cast you downe . . . as bring you home" (VI, 10, 213). Donne understands that, although Paul was awakened by
a "Trumpet," it is blown by "The Angel of the great Counsell, Christ Jesus," the redeemer (VI, 10, 216). The preacher's frightening trump, like God's, must resolve itself by spurring the auditor to seek reconciliation with God in his own acts and thoughts.

The preacher's most effective method of encouraging a regenerate response in the auditor presents itself when the preacher's words imitate action. In Chapters II and IV, we identified Donne's mimetic practice in two major areas, his use of the techniques of drama, and the processive psychological structure of the sermon itself. By dealing with these two areas together, we may identify Donne's mimetic methods in the sermon and explain the manner of his reorientation of the auditor's faculties.

The sermon opens, as most do, with an offer of reconciliation, a glimpse of man's communion with God. Donne links the praise and commemoration of famous men, enjoined by Ecclesiasticus, with "our second generation, our spirituall Regeneration." To celebrate our spiritual fathers is to celebrate God's glory, because to his credit, God transforms and converts men "by the ministery of Men" (VI, 10, 205). While man's destiny in the kingdom of glory offers a fulfilling reward, there is "honor," and there are "commemorations and celebrations of them" in this life. And thus Donne indicates his sermon is a foretaste of that more complete celebration hereafter. As the division explains, the sermon makes a progression which first examines the nature of the person who Paul (as Saul) once was; secondly, it records his humiliation; but finally it comes to terms with Paul's "rising againe by the power of a new inanimation" (VI, 10, 206), and thereby suggests that the sermon will confirm in Paul's rebirth,
the "second generation," which the auditor shares with the whole Church. Once the auditor is upheld by this initial intimation of forgiveness, Donne proceeds to expose him, in this imitated pilgrimage, to the more difficult trials which life offers.

Another psychological state is the recognition of sin, which intensifies the auditor's sense of loss and separation. In part, Donne accomplishes this awareness by associating Paul's persecution of Christians with other rages in biblical history (as we have already mentioned), and especially, by associating it with illness. Of Christ's action upon Paul, Donne says, "in the midst of his fit, he gave him physick, in the midst of his madnese, he reclaims him" (VI, 10, 206). A constellation of puns and images relates falling sick, the universal "falling sicknesse," the state of sin called "The fall of Adam, The fall of Angels" together with Paul's fall. More importantly, however, Donne proposes that the purpose of this sickness is to allow the Holy Ghost "to fall upon us": "but it is a medicinall falling, a falling under Gods hand, but such a falling under his hand, as that he takes not off his hand from him that is falne, but throwes him downe" therefore that he may raise him" (VI, 10, 211-12).

Donne also enhances the auditor's sense of participation in Paul's sin when he effectively manipulates Scripture so that its words read like a court record, for "the Holy Ghost gives evidence enough against him, and he gives enough against himselfe." Since Donne uses Paul's own words, the biblical citations act both as confession and accusation:
I persecuted this way unto the death; I bound and delivered into prison, both men and women; And after, more then this, I punished them, and that oft, and, in every Synagogue, and, compelled them to blaspheme, and, was exceedingly mad against them, and persecuted them even unto strange Cities. (VI, 10, 207)

Donne then coaches the auditor as to how to react to Paul's self-incrimination. Lest the auditor take too much comfort in the thought that such a vicious sinner may be pardoned, Donne adopts a Pauline persona in a dramatic monologue so that he may redirect any misconceptions. The persona posits a fictionalized "thou" to whom he directs his questions, and he employs Paul's familiar style of rhetorical questioning culminating in his characteristic protestation:

Beloved, wilt thou make this perverse use of this proceeding, God is rich in Mercy, Therefore I cannot misse Mercy? . . . Wilt thou be so ill a Logician to thy selfe, and to thine own damnation, as to conclude so, God is alwayes the same in himselfe, therefore he must be alwayes the same to me? So ill a Musician as to say, God is all Concord, therefore He and I can never disagree? So ill a Historian as to say, God hath called Saul a Persecutor, then when he breathed threatnings and slaughter, then when he sued to the State for a Commission to persecute Christ, God hath called a thief, then when he was at the last gaspe; And therefore if he have a minde to me, he will deale so with me too, and, if he have no such minde, no man can imprint, or infuse a new minde in God? God forbid. (VI, 10, 208)

While Donne uses the Pauline persona to induce the auditor to admit his sin, he also indicates the manner in which regeneration takes place. As Chapter III explained, one must be something of a logician, musician, and historian in order to respond properly to God's actions: one must use a variety of faculties in understanding, sensing, and remembering if the soul is to become reintegrated.

Further, the persona anticipates and arrests the auditor's inclination to resign himself to complacency or despair, a procedure which Donne continues to perform later in the sermon, when he warns against
" presuming of mercy by example" (VI, 10, 209), when he assures that it is not God's "hand, that strikes us into hell, by way of desperation" (VI, 10, 214), and when he indicates a regenerate connotation in security: "Our Principall, and Radicall, and Fundamentall security, is his [God's] Essentiall Word" (VI, 10, 216). The dramatic monologue implies the point of view of the mute sinner, and thus its "nearnesse" convinces the auditor to recognize himself.

Donne has already launched the auditor into the next phase of psychological pilgrimage, the exercise of the faculties through discrimination and choice. He continues by challenging the auditor to take a second look at the examples of history where sinners were saved late in life. He wonders out loud if there is even one authentic instance. The thief on the cross was actually an early convert since "As soone as God afforded him any Call, he came" (VI, 10, 208). Later, Donne pursues this same method and invites discernment by allowing a corporate persona to confess on behalf of the congregation their own lack of discernment in their experiences: "we do not feele them to be mercies, not to be judgements uttered from God, but naturall accidents . . . which as an Atheist might think, would fall out though there were not God, or no commerce, no dealing, no speaking between God and Man" (VI, 10, 217). Donne's belief that wisdom is acquired in choosing rather than in knowing, and by the conflict of contraries fought out in the world, is manifested in his disdain for an unproductive retirement: like the light which blinded Paul, "this holy simplicitie of the soule, is not a darknesse, a dimnesse, a stupidity in the understanding, contracted by living in a corner, it is not an idle retiring into a Monastery, or into
a Village, or a Country solitude, it is not a lazy affectation of ignorance" (VI, 10, 215). Donne continually prods the auditor to sharpen his faculties in the worldly combat where good and evil are distinguished. Another dramatic monologue using Donne's ironic skill compels the auditor to choose between alternatives; even as Donne draws him into another psychological stage, the tragedy leading to cathartic joy:

You heap earth upon your soules, and encumber them with more and more flesh, by a superfluous and luxurious diet; You adde earth to earth in new purchases, and measure not by Acres, but by Manors, nor by Manors, but by Shires; And there is a little Quillet, a little Close, worth all these, A quiet Grave. And therefore, when thou readest, That God makes thy bed in thy sicknesse, rejoice in this, not onely that he makes that bed, where thou dost lie, but that bed where thou shalt lie. . . . (VI, 10, 213)

Here the auditor must decipher the persona's irony and discriminate between earth and earth: the earth of self-aggrandizement, and the earth of a quiet grave. Donne turns the tables on the sinner. It is the greedy amassing of earth which is obscene, not that holy bed of earth which God tends, even in death, until the resurrection. Neither earth nor death are to be feared if they are considered as part of God's province. When Donne a moment later declares confidently, "Saul falls to the earth; So farre; But he falls no lower," the auditor realizes that there may be friendship with earth, there need be no war between matter and spirit, but only between the holy and unholy use of earth. The proud sinner fears the fall to earth because it reminds him of his mortality, but the fall of the religious man to earth, even in death, "is a visitation of your kindred that lie in the earth" (VI, 10, 213). When Paul falls to earth it is a reconciliation with earth, for it begins the
humble process whereby earth forfeits its claim upon him. By this ironic persona, Donne impels the auditor to discriminate between the different beliefs associated with "earth."

Donne's purpose in heightening the auditor's sense of tragedy is to stimulate an awareness of his involvement in all mankind through his participation in the Fall. When one experiences pity beyond the self, an identification with Christ's incarnation, suffering, and death may occur. A kind of exchange may then take place when Christ bears one's sins as one repents them, when one is thereby assumed into his body. This process is foreshadowed in the sermon since the words of the text evoke a moment of pity which transforms radically:

Here was a true Transubstantiation, and a new Sacrament. These few words, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me, are words of Consecration; After these words, Saul was no longer Saul, but he was Christ: Vivit in me Christus, says he, it is not I that live, not I that do any thing, but Christ in me.

In this exchange or transformation, "A bramble is made a vine" and "A pirat becomes a safe Pilot" (VI, 10, 209-10). Donne, however, dramatically represents this moment of pity, and the beginning of catharsis after humiliation, when he dilates Scripture so as to give God a more affective part. Thus, Donne presents God as a persona who questions not only Saul, but the auditor:

Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? We are unequall enemies, Thou seest I am too hard for thee, Cur tu me? why wilt thou, thou in this weaknesse oppose me? And then, we might be good friends, Thou seest I offer parly, I offer treaty, Cur tu me? Why wilt thou oppose me, me that declare such a disposition to be reconciled unto thee? In this so great a disadvantage on thy part, why wilt thou stirre at all? In this so great a peaceablenesse on my part, why wilt thou stirre against me? (VI, 10, 216)
In God's voice, Donne amplifies Christ as the injured party, since he repeatedly offers reconciliation, though Paul continues his warlike attitude. Donne also makes it clear that while Christ is the victim, he shall be the ultimate victor, since Paul is in a "weaknesse" and at a "disadvantage" in his contest with the Prince of peace. Thus, the pity evoked is not for a pathetic, but a tragic, figure who retains his dignity. Yet the voice which Paul hears evokes not only pity but fear; together, they constitute the means of regeneration: "But it is a blessed disease The feare of God, and the true way to true health" (VI, 10, 218). Therefore, to acknowledge one's sinfulness, to see oneself (since one knows one's soul better than any other) as the greatest of sinners, is a humbling experience which allows one to accept enabling assistance from God and thereby to recognize his action in one's life: "And as Saul found this voyce at first, to be directed to him, so after he bends his eye the same way, and observes the working of God especially upon himselfe" (VI, 10, 219).

In Donne's understanding of tragedy, the auditor's identification with the passion of Christ takes place through an awareness of Christ's participation in the auditor's own suffering. Further, the barrier between self and other is broken, as one recognizes the fellow-suffering within the whole Church as body of Christ:

[Christ] hath a daily passion in his Saints still. This language which the Apostle learnt of Christ here, himselfe practised, and spake after, Who is weake, and I am not weake? who is offended, and I burne not? Since Christ does suffer in our sufferings, be this our consolation, Till he be weary, we should not be weary, nor faint, nor murmur under our burdens; and this too, That when he is weary, he will deliver us even for his owne sake. . . . (VI, 10, 220-21)
The knowledge that one suffers in Christ's name, grateful for his redeeming love, eases one's burden and provides an impetus to perform further works which incarnate his image in the world.

Earlier in the sermon, in the course of another dramatic monologue, a questioning persona rehearsed the seemingly aimless sufferings of desperate sinners, including the fact that God "left you Orphanes," that he "crossed you in all your labours," that he "opened you to dishonours," and that he "suffered you to fall into sins"; the persona finally asks rhetorically if God has no "good purpose" in these actions, if God would act impiously as mere men would (VI, 10, 214). However, a fundamental principle of Donne's tragic sense is that he allows griefs to come to fruition: "There are fruits that ripen not, but by frost..." (VI, 10, 212). Elements of sadness are assimilated into a more comprehensive joy. Consequently, God's anger is an argument in favour of his continuing love. His repeated question taken from the text offers hope that God speaks "in a mixt voyce, of Correction, and Consolation too," that he "is so loath to lose thee," and that he "makes thy soule more precious then his own life" (VI, 10, 222). In this experience of tragic joy, the auditor is helped to rejoice in his afflictions, and undergoes cathartic relief.

The last stage in the psychological pilgrimage is the achievement of the reorientation of the faculties which allows the incarnation of Christ through outward action. We have already suggested that various faculties are exercised and sharpened in the course of the sermon. Certainly Saul is guilty of a misimagination of God, as every sinner is; only God's call is able "To wake Saul out of this dreame, (for, to thinke to oppose Christ and his cause, is
... but a vertiginous dream, and giddily vapour..." (VI, 10, 220). The preacher, imitating this call in the sermon's process, sanctifies the imagination so that it fulfills its proper role as a part of the rectified reason. The end of the sermon implies harmonious closure, but demands that the auditor, as an integrated human being, achieve this conclusion by incarnating his faith in action. The repeated question, "why persecutest thou me?" finally receives a regenerate response: "Answer this question with Saul's answer to this question, by another question... Lord what wilt thou have me do?" (VI, 10, 222).

In this willingness to perform God's will, the original declaration of reconciliation is accepted and its active embodiment begun. Until then, the auditor, like Saul, remains blind. Without the willingness to fulfill the promise of the sermon's verbal action, the scales will not fall from the auditor's eyes. Donne summarizes what the sermon has accomplished and continues to accomplish (when the auditor imitates its action in the world) as he explains that the preacher possesses Ananias' gift, the gift of restoring sight:

God shall deliver thee over, as he did Saul to Ananias; provide thee by his Ministry in his Ordinance, means to rectifie thee, in all dejection of spirit, light to cleare thee in all perplexities of conscience, in the wayes of thy pilgrimage, and more and more effectuall seals thereof, at the hour of thy transmigration into his joy, and thine eternal rest. (VI, 10, 222)

By means of the dramatic representation of action and the imitation of a psychological journey, Donne helps reintegrate the faculties of the soul and impels the auditor to aid in the world's reparation through charitable action.

Thus, in Paul's example, Donne depicts the rhythm of historical
human response. A type of Antichrist is transformed into a type of Christ. But because the change takes place by way of realistic presentation, and because the experience is adapted to present circumstances, the auditor may participate sympathetically in Paul's regeneration. At the same time, Donne makes history vitally present since he reorients current extreme understandings of Paul. On one hand, the tendency to view Paul as a mystic visionary is balanced, since Donne asserts, "God deales not upon him by visions" (VI, 10, 216); on the other hand, the attempt to adopt Paul as champion of the separatist cause is offset since Donne does not emphasize Paul's righteousness but his process of humiliation: "calamities were his daily Sermons" (VI, 10, 213). In this way, Donne tries to harmonize the fractious strains within the Church and to claim Paul for the whole body. His representation of Paul, like his depictions of David, Moses, or Job, allows the auditor to see himself reflected in a man immensely limited, blind and stumbling, but ultimately capable of manifesting Christ. If the auditor can fall with Paul, he may also rise with him, since Donne's purpose is ever "to arme you with consolation" (VI, 10, 213). When Paul's experience, or any of history's examples, are appropriated and embodied in the course of the sermon's development, the auditor is more fully enabled to forward God's providence by joyfully performing the works of grace.
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