biologique (la Nature-Mère) et émotionnel (un retour à un état d'innocence restaurée): l'utopie écologique dessine en contrepoint, avec ses Arcadies et ses paradis agrestes, le double féminin de l'utopie technologique, urbaine et collectiviste. S'opposant enfin à la fois à la vie heureuse de style bucolique et à la cité heureuse de type collectiviste, il y a aussi l'utopie ironique, tonique, décapante — le rire de Démocrite et de Diogène — qui alimente les textes satiriques, manifestant que la conscience ne saurait se dissoudre dans aucune de ces constructions: c'est le rôle des paradoxes qui manifestent par la négation et l'inversion qu'une place reste toujours libre pour de nouvelles productions. Il est vrai que l'utopie porte aussi cette marque d'être, lorsqu'elle ne se prend pas à son jeu, un regard ironique porté sur le réel.

Cet ouvrage met opportunément à la portée du lecteur de nouvelles nourritures pour mieux comprendre un type de pensée et de discours qui, contrairement à ce qu'on croit généralement, ne s'évapore pas en fumée, dans la substance dont sont formés les rêves, mais s'inscrit aussi en consistance idéologique et en réalisation historique, avec toutes les métamorphoses liées aux aléas et aux effets pervers que suppose le passage de la cité de papier à la cité des hommes.

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Christopher Hodgkins. *Authority, Church, and Society in George Herbert: Return to the Middle Way*. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1993. Pp. xii, 231.

Christopher Hodgkins' informative study of George Herbert's "middle way" offers students of late Renaissance England a thorough, lucid, and subtle analysis of Herbert's place in the complex religious, political, and social world of early seventeenth-century England. The book effectively relates Herbert's thought to the Elizabethan Settlement reconciling Calvinist doctrine with Episcopalian church structure and liturgical practice (the "Old Conformity"), to the absolutist high-church Anglicanism imposed by Archbishop Laud (the "New Conformity"), and to the issues involved in the Civil War between Puritans and the Crown. It ends with an essay on "Herbert and the Church in Society," which deals with Herbert's practical understanding of the role and responsibilities of the parish priest within the church structure. The work as a whole provides important insights for understanding Herbert and his milieu, and background for any informed reading of his well-known lyric poetry.

Drawing on the work of church historians, literary critics, and writers contemporary with Herbert, Hodgkins carefully locates Herbert's stance in the shifting political, religious, and social disputes of his day. Specifically, Hodgkins defines Herbert as a

believer in the true “middle way,” a *via media* characterized by the Elizabethan Settlement rather than (as often mistakenly understood) midway between Geneva and Rome. The Elizabethan Settlement brought peace between the contending parties by combining essential Protestant theology with the structure and liturgical practices of the established church and the monarchy.

As Hodgkins explains, “Old Conformists” of Herbert’s type shared with Puritans the same base in Luther-Calvinist biblicism, but they built (or wished to build) differently in matters of ecclesiastical policy” (p. 3). Hodgkins further elucidates his point: “My fundamental claim is that as the gap widened between Puritan ‘Non-conformists’ and William Laud’s ‘New Conformists,’ Herbert walked the increasingly lonely way of the Elizabethan ‘Old Conformists.’ To be painfully precise: in the conflict between Arminian [free-will] absolutist high-church Episcopalians (New Conformists), Herbert kept to the ‘middle way’ of his boyhood church, as a Calvinist nonabsolutist lower-church Episcopalian (Old Conformist).” Hodgkins goes on to say, “He [Herbert] emphasized God’s loving, unconditional, irresistible grace. . .; he preferred a powerful but constitutionally limited monarchy and episcopacy; he preached and ministered in the authoritative plain and practical style of the moderate Puritans, passing important spiritual responsibility onto laymen; and he advocated simple, scriptural intelligibility in liturgy, church architecture and poetry” (p. 11).

In short, Hodgkins defines Herbert as an Episcopalian Calvinist: one who believed with Calvin and the Puritans in the Fundamentals of Protestant theology, but who also embraced with minor reservation the social, ecclesiastical, and political hierarchy that characterized Stuart England. Moreover, Hodgkins reminds us, the real break from the “Old Conformity” came with the radical reforms of Archbishop William Laud and his Arminian party in the 1620s, and not with the later Puritan rebellion in mid-century. To support his argument, Hodgkins instructively parallels Herbert both with well-known Puritans such as William Perkins, Richard Baxter and John Bunyan and well-known Anglicans like Richard Hooker and John Donne. Hodgkins also opposes Herbert in fundamental ways to the High Anglicanism of Archbishop Laud and Lancelot Andrewes. Had Hodgkins chosen to delve more fully into the ideas of Donne, he might have recognized more clearly that Donne, along with Herbert, was also a believer in the “true middle way.”

Hodgkins’ detailed discussion of Herbert and Herbert’s view of the true “middle way” is followed by an analysis of Herbert’s views on the limits of secular power and authority, the rhetorical strategies used by pastor and poet, the significance of externals in worship, and questions of “plainness and practicality” — particularly as represented in Herbert’s poem on topics such as church liturgy, architecture, vestments, and music.

Finally, Hodgkins discusses Herbert’s practical understanding of the role of the parson in English society, particularly in terms of the parson’s powers and responsibilities, a discussion that nicely reconciles the ambitious young Herbert with the mature Herbert’s tranquil life as parish priest in rural Bemerton. Hodgkins reminds us that Herbert did not in fact withdraw from the world, as scholars have often thought,

but rather believed, correctly or not, that he was engaged in an attempt to fundamentally reform the English church from its roots. The book concludes with a brief epilogue that speculates on Herbert's possible reaction, had he lived, to the forces unleashed by the Civil War between the Puritans and the Crown which broke out following his death. Hodgkins attempts this by drawing a parallel with the thought and experience of Thomas Fuller, Herbert's younger contemporary, who lived through the war — admired and despised equally by both sides — in a precarious obscurity.

Hodgkins purposely does not provide a systematic reading of Herbert's corpus, but rather deals only with those works which elucidate Herbert's theological thinking. These include lyrics from *The Temple*, such as "The British Church," "Lent," and "The Priesthood," as well as prose passages from *The Countrey Parson* and other, lesser known, works. Hodgkins rightly understands that we should not confuse lyric poems with expositions on theology. He also realizes that Herbert uses poetry to "dramatize and realize in lyric form the confusions and resolutions that doctrine often works on the believer" (p. 4). Hodgkins' interesting approach allows him to offer fresh, detailed, and nuanced readings of less-known Herbert poems as well as of many of Herbert's more well-known lyrics from *The Temple*. While Hodgkins' analysis of Herbert's poems is sophisticated and subtle, the reader would have benefitted from a reprinting of each poem at the outset of the chapter devoted to its explication.

Hodgkins does an admirable job drawing out the religious, political, and social subtleties of seventeenth-century England as they affected Herbert and his thought. Moreover, Hodgkins has provided a welcome and important corrective to earlier studies of Herbert's religious views. He correctly presents a Herbert far more in tune with the complexities of his age than traditional scholarship has realized. Hodgkins does not attempt a systematic reading of Herbert's best-known poetry; nevertheless, his work is essential background reading for anyone interested in Herbert. It is an important study of the complex interrelationship between religion and politics in the years preceding the English Civil War.

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