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George Herbert, Nicholas Ferrar, and the “Pious Works” of Little Gidding

by Joyce Ransome

George Herbert put his stamp on the life of Little Gidding in a number of significant ways. Some of these contributions to what he described in a letter to Ferrar as its “pious works” are well known and need no detailed discussion here.¹ They include the reconstruction of Herbert’s prebendal church at Leighton Bromswold,² the presentation to him by the ladies of Gidding of a gospel harmony they had made,³ and of course the posthumous publication of *The Temple*. I shall rather concentrate here on two other “pious works” of publication on which Herbert and Ferrar collaborated: Juan de Valdes’s *One Hundred and Ten Considerations* and Luigi Cornaro’s *Treatise on Temperance and Sobriety*. The Cornaro translation was published in 1634 together with Ferrar’s translation of Leonard Lessius’s *Hygiasticon*. The Valdes translation was not published until 1638, when both Ferrar and Herbert were dead, but its message and the reasons Ferrar and Herbert offered to justify its presentation to an English readership shed some interesting light on the theological views and pastoral purposes of the two friends. Moreover, placing that work as well as *Hygiasticon* in the context of developments at Little Gidding will also illuminate the way Ferrar used Herbert’s contributions to strengthen its bonds of community and inspire its hope of becoming for contemporaries a “pattern for an age that needs patterns.”⁴

Whether or when Herbert and Ferrar actually met is a point on which many have speculated with but little evidence on which to draw. The nature of their “epistolary friendship” is also somewhat of a mystery, since their letters have largely vanished. There survives, however, in Francis Turner’s seventeenth-century manuscript materials for a biography of Ferrar, a summary of Herbert’s letters to Ferrar, letters that Turner must have seen. Herbert’s comments, as Turner reported them, demonstrate both his understanding of Ferrar’s aims and his familiarity with the life of Gidding:

M^r Herbert writes to M^r NF letters of great affection, much commendatio[n], free and Xtian Counsell. That they wd

proceed in y^{ei}r well begun devotions & Exercises humbly, Thankfully, Constantly, to inflame their hearts every day more & more with y^e love of God & his holy & sweet word & sacrament. To attend to y^e great Christian duty of Mortification & reall, true, humble contempt of y^e world: not to be frighted wth y^e suspitions, slanders & scornes w^{ch} worldly persons would throw uppo[n] Them. To read often y^e Lives of y^e Sts, and Martyrs in all Ages. To have ever in their Minds y^e 11th to y^e Hebr, y^t cloud of Witnesses & noble Army of Martyrs, Virgins, Sts. Looking unto our sweetest Jesus, y^e Author & Finisher of our Faith & finally to have a very Constant due regard & Circumspectio[n] to y^{ei}r health.⁵

Herbert's poetry testifies to the way his devotions inflamed his own heart, and *The Country Parson* indicates the way he translated that experience into practical exercises. In his counsel to Ferrar, did he suggest particular ways to enhance that flame at Little Gidding? He did indeed when he invited Ferrar, probably in the spring of 1632, to add night vigils to Little Gidding's "well begun devotions and exercises."⁶ His suggestion probably fell on prepared ground, for Turner's notes include numerous comments on the value of such vigils in which Ferrar called "Night-watching or keeping Vigils . . . y^e fairest & loveliest of all bodily exercises & perfections w^tsoever."⁷ Not surprisingly, then, Ferrar took up the suggestion and the vigils, once launched, became a "pious work" that attracted considerable contemporary comment, some of it admiring, some notably hostile.⁸ The vigils project also provided a link to the translation and commentary on Valdes, which I shall consider presently.

The men and women who participated in the Little Gidding vigils on any given night met from nine until one in concurrent but separate groups; the house was large enough to provide an "oratory" for each group on different sides of the quadrangular structure. At these sessions, everyone present recited antiphonally the psalms and sometimes sang them with a soft organ accompaniment. To minimize risks to health, especially among the young, each participant could attend only once in a week. When Ferrar took his own turn at these vigils, he too took care to limit the times when his young nephews

could join him. He clearly shared Herbert's concern that exercises of meditation and mortification should not imperil the health of participants.

These vigils not only expanded the household's devotional exercises but included an element of voluntarism that Ferrar also adopted for other "pious works" introduced during this time. He clearly regarded explicit consent, preferably in writing, as essential to more demanding programs, such as the discussion group the family called its "Little Academy." In presenting the idea of night vigils to the household, he therefore carefully stressed that no stigma should attach to those who chose not to join in, implying his recognition that while only the willing would be effective participants, some might find it hard to say "no." Who actually chose to take part and who to opt out was never revealed, but no doubt his Collet nieces would have found it hard to turn down such an invitation. Nor is it clear how Ferrar would have responded to anyone who had once agreed to participate but subsequently wanted to opt out. His criticisms of Arthur Woodnoth's "double-mindedness" about working for Sir John Danvers or his view of the binding nature of Joshua Mapletoft's promise of temperance, however, suggest that Ferrar would have taken a dim view of such backsliding.¹⁰ At least Ferrar clearly recognized the necessity of such voluntary consent, while at the same time showing some awareness of the subtler forms of coercion that some might feel he exercised. Awareness, however, was one thing while successful handling of the problem in a situation where he enjoyed great honour and authority was another, and one difficult to evaluate in retrospect.

He also maintained his own personal vigils that began when the others retired at one o'clock. What form did these vigils take? He composed no revelatory body of poetry like his "brother" Herbert, but he did keep a spiritual diary in which he set down "Thots or Reflexions upon his Conduct in the Day."¹¹ The volume has alas vanished, leaving us with only fragmentary knowledge of his inner pilgrimage. Miss J.F.M. Carter, his late nineteenth century biographer, correctly characterized his general approach as "mystical and devotional rather than theological."¹² But on what sources did he draw to develop this approach? His brother's retrospective account of Ferrar's experience as a precocious six-year-old must be taken cautiously, but suggests an early "experiential" basis. Stricken by doubt of God's existence and care, he

had prostrated himself in the garden of the family's London home, wrestled with his doubts, and ultimately received an assurance of God's presence that remained with him for the rest of his life.¹³ In his later life the psalms provided him a basis for intensive personal meditation as they did for many before and since, including Herbert:¹⁴ "I will tell you a Mystery not to be understood but by practise . . . [Those who] dive into y^e secrett are amazed at the strange mixture of joy & grief in y^e Psalms."¹⁵

In addition to the Psalms he and the family knew the meditative work of St. Francis de Sales and probably John Cosin's *Devotions*, which comprised scriptural passages along with excerpts from patristic writings and passages from the *Book of Common Prayer*.¹⁶ Lancelot Andrewes's *Manual of Private Devotions* was not published until 1648, eleven years after Ferrar's death, but, interestingly, his brother John was one of its early purchasers.¹⁷ Without Ferrar's library, which has also disappeared, we can have only an imperfect idea of what else he knew of, to use Herbert's words, "the church's mystical repast."¹⁸ Turner, however, in his notes on Ferrar, reported that every day Ferrar wrote a meditation or two on that day's lessons or psalms and that his "Beloved Authors" included Epictetus, Seneca, and Antoninus as well as the Divine Considerations of Valdes. His library included "Many bookes of Instructio[n] and practique Devotio[n] in French, Spanish & Italian."¹⁹

Did he also use that little book of meditative poetry that Edmund Duncon brought to Little Gidding from Bemerton in March 1633? In leaving the decision to publish it to Ferrar, Herbert perhaps knew from their correspondence or at least sensed that Ferrar too could say that he had had "many spiritual conflicts that had passed betwixt God and my soul."²⁰ Beyond the approval implicit in publishing the poems with a laudatory preface, however, Ferrar never indicated what, if any, use he made of them in his own spiritual life. All we can document of his response to *The Temple* is the brief preface and the business problems involved in its publication. On the other hand, the nieces who produced the fair copy obviously had opportunity for careful reading, and it is hard to imagine that they never talked of it within the family circle. Their brother-in-law, Joshua Mapletoft, wrote appreciative comments to Ferrar from Essex and complained of the shortage of available copies.²¹ Ferrar's sister, Susanna Collet, sent copies to her

scapegrace son, Edward, in the East Indies in the hope that he would take its message to heart.²²

There exists, however, in an unlikely place a passage that gives some flavor of Ferrar's inner life that he might have shared with Herbert in that lost correspondence. In his account of the final revival of the Little Academy, he digressed from the main story into an exalted outburst extolling "real [as opposed to sensual and earthly] Wealth, Glorie & Delight":

The streames of them oftimes arise like spring tydes in their Pride, not only filling the banks of the soul & spirit brim-full, but so richly falling on the Lower Faculties of the mind & the very lowest of the Body, as the Enjoyment of the best of that, w^{ch} this world can afford, would be of annoyance, & the vttermost of pleasures, y^t the senses could take of, disgust, whilst these spiritual raptures are in the Flowing-course & Tide. But wee are mounted to a high straine not to be apprehended by any other Arguments then of Experiment.²³

This passage has the ring of personal experience if not of poetic talent, evidence of a heart inflamed.

The concluding note that only "Experiment" can apprehend such spiritual raptures perhaps helps to explain his decision to translate a book by his "beloved author," the sixteenth-century Spaniard Juan de Valdes (d. 1541), "a Marrano, a humanist Illuminist, . . . an Evangelical Spiritualist with a strong sense of the imminent Second Advent."²⁴ Valdes's heterodox views had forced him to flee his native land to escape the Inquisition, bringing him first to Rome and by 1535 to Naples. Friend of Gasparo Contarini and Reginald Pole, Bernardino Ochino and Peter Martyr Vermigli, he belonged to the group of reforming Catholics known as the *spirituali*. As the name would suggest, these reformers laid particular emphasis on that transforming experience of grace by which an individual could know himself called by God and possessed of redemptive faith. It presented a view of justification by faith close to and indeed influenced by contemporary Protestant reformers as well as the *Alumbrados* of his native Spain.²⁵ Valdes's book offered not a method for meditation like Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, but a message on which to meditate and a message, furthermore, that

Ferrar thought not only matched his own inner experience but also provided one his contemporaries needed to hear.

How and when did Ferrar encounter Valdes? If, as Turner noted, Valdes was one of Ferrar's "beloved authors," he presumably had at some point acquired the copy of the Italian version of the *One Hundred Ten Considerations* from which he made his translation. He had spent at least a couple of years in Italy (1614-16) and might have come upon a clandestine copy in Padua or Venice or perhaps in one of the Imperial cities he visited earlier in his travels. Perhaps he already had learned of the book before he set out from Cambridge for the continent, for Augustine Lindsell, Ferrar's tutor and lifelong friend, possessed a copy of the 1563 French translation that Ferrar acquired after Lindsell's death. Lindsell would likely have known that Valdes was one of Ferrar's favorite authors, though there is no evidence that he knew of the translation project.²⁶ Other Gidding friends, notably Edmund and John Duncon, also knew of Valdes, though when and how they encountered him, whether independently or through Ferrar or Lindsell, is unrecorded. Valdes's message thus clearly attracted not only Ferrar but also several of his friends, most of whom were numbered among the Laudians in the Caroline church. The significance of this attraction is a point to which I shall return.

In that same summer of 1632 that Herbert suggested night vigils for Little Gidding, Ferrar sent his translation of Valdes to Herbert for comment and presumably for advice as to the wisdom of publishing it. Did Herbert have prior knowledge of Valdes's book before Ferrar sent him his translation for comment? Had he previously discussed this "beloved author" with Herbert or had Herbert discovered for himself Valdes's book in either its Italian original or its French translation?²⁷ A couple of notes in the margins of Herbert's commentary stating that the notes (on Considerations 37 and 65) are those of the French translator suggest that he had seen the latter at some point, but when is not clear. He could, like Lindsell, have encountered it earlier or Ferrar could have provided one to enable Herbert to crosscheck his translation.

Why did he choose Herbert as the commentator? He presumably anticipated that his friend would give the work a favorable and judicious reading, as of course he did. Indeed if he and Herbert had already discussed Valdes, he would have had at least a general idea of

Herbert's response, as he presumably knew that of Lindsell and Edmund Duncon. If, on the other hand, he knew that Herbert was not already familiar with Valdes's work, he could at once share with his "brother" a work he treasured and get the reaction of someone encountering it for the first time. The latter point might prove especially helpful in anticipating possible problems with official censorship. Ferrar also was a man who preferred anonymity; he published this book as well as *Hygiasticon* without revealing himself as the translator. Nor did he put his name to the preface of *The Temple*. In the *One Hundred and Ten Considerations*, he clearly identified Herbert as the writer of the letter recommending publication that he included in the book. He did not, however, explicitly identify Herbert as the writer of the notes that were inserted immediately after Ferrar's anonymous preface.

These points raise interesting questions about Ferrar's character and the relationship between the two men. Did Ferrar intend to leave the reader to infer that the translator was also the author of the notes? Herbert's letter, which refers to notes he returned along with the translated text, does not appear until some seventeen pages after the notes have ended. A reader could be forgiven for failing to make the connection. Indeed, Thomas Jackson, in his statement licensing publication, apparently attributed authorship of the notes to the "Publisher" who wrote the preface. It seems unlikely that either man would have feared that the other was seeking to upstage him or take credit for work that was not his. Had Ferrar, however, told Herbert that it would be his notes that would furnish the answer to those "dubious and offensive places" that the preface acknowledged were "stumbling blocks"? If he did know, Herbert might have welcomed anonymity if he found those "stumbling blocks" more problematical than Ferrar apparently did and therefore felt more anxious about the adequacy of his critique of the more dangerous passages. He certainly recommended publication, but perhaps harbored more reservations about particular ideas than he admitted to Ferrar or than we can document today. Answers to these questions are speculative at best and complicated by the fact that Herbert was dead only five months after he returned the notes and translation to Ferrar, and no evidence survives of the extent to which Ferrar consulted with Herbert on the manuscript's final form during that brief period. Immediately after his

death, of course, Ferrar had the manuscript of *The Temple* to deal with and did so with a speed that suggests that for the next several months it took precedence over other projects such as Valdes. The question, therefore, remains as to what Ferrar intended by the placement and anonymity of Herbert's notes and how much Herbert knew and approved of those intentions.

Ferrar singled out Valdes's "experimentall and practical divinity" as particularly valuable for its treatment of the doctrines of justification and mortification. These were hardly neglected topics in the Church of England in 1632, although church authorities endeavoured to suppress their predestinarian aspects as too controversial. What was distinctive about Valdes's treatment of them? His message was characterized by a pastoral hopefulness that gave readers positive encouragement to persevere in their pursuit of redemptive faith while recognizing that such faith could only come as God's gift. During Valdes's lifetime, he and other *spirituali* still hoped to find a formulation of the doctrine of justification acceptable to both Protestants and Catholics, one that would reunite the church and spare them the choice between heresy and coerced conformity. Such hopes for unity did not survive the failure of the Colloquy of Regensburg in 1540, the establishment that same year of the Roman Inquisition, and the subsequent pronouncements on justification by the Council of Trent in 1545. Valdes, however, had developed his "experimentall divinity" with its emphasis on justification by faith within a still fluid and hopeful context and could assert that through an "experience" of the Holy Spirit an individual knew that by faith he was incorporated in Christ and justified by His merits alone. Valdes asserted his understanding of justification in a voice at least nominally Catholic but acceptable, as Ferrar pointed out in his preface, to earlier French and Italian Protestants and, Ferrar evidently hoped, now acceptable to those in England who sought to promote Christian unity, or at the very least a less antagonistic view of the Roman church.²⁸

Valdes was careful to point out that while no amount of "natural" mortification or other good works could oblige God to give this gift, actions could nevertheless serve to keep one "wakeful" or prepared to receive when God chose to give. He particularly emphasized what he called "pretending," i.e., claiming, that one had justifying faith and was incorporated in Christ as Christ was incorporated in him. Such

“pretending,” however, must at the same time always claim that it was God who bestowed this faith. With such a stance, Valdes could reconcile divine omnipotence with human agency. He was optimistic that after a period of “pretending,”

in a short time [the Christian] shall finde himselfe much comfortable [conformable?] to the image of God, & unto that of Iesus Christ our Lord.²⁹

Or in the Prayer Book’s words, “very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son.”³⁰ By way of further encouragement, he declared that having difficulty in believing would produce a more authentic faith. He was also at pains to point out that real faith did not have to come in the dramatic form of St Paul’s experience on the Damascus Road but could be a gradual process.³¹ The crucial question underlying this “pretending” was, of course, how one could know that the faith to which one “pretended” was genuine. Valdes discussed this point at length and proposed a very subjective answer, summed up (in Consideration 57, p. 146) by the statement that “the Christian businesse is not *knowledge* but *experience*.” Through an “experience” of the Holy Spirit an individual knew that by faith he was incorporated in Christ and justified by His merits alone:

To all them, who know, and feele themselves incorporated in the death of Christ, and in the resurrection of Christ, it appertaines to fix their eyes upon this so high perfection, to pretend to obtaine it, and in effect to procure it. (Consideration 90, p. 237)

Faced with such a method of authentication, one could understand why Calvin thought Valdes had “an anabaptist spirit.” Herbert’s commentaries make it plain that he too was well aware of this hazard, which he countered chiefly by reiterating that Valdes did not give sufficient weight to Scripture. Herbert plainly described Valdes’s assertion that Scripture, like images, was only a starting point in Christian formation, an “alphabet” for beginners that would eventually give way to direct instruction by the Holy Spirit as a dangerous invitation to “enthusiasm.”³² In contrast, Ferrar did not single out this

or any other specific stumbling block for explicit comment, contenting himself with the simple statement in his anonymous preface that Valdes had lived where Scripture was not valued, so that it was only surprising that he revered it as much as he did. Did Ferrar not perceive the dangers to which Valdes's "experimentall" approach could lead and indeed in the past had led? One can only speculate, for he did not explain how he himself understood Valdes's meaning. But Ferrar's lack of concern for the dangers of "enthusiasm" is hard to credit in someone as careful as Ferrar was to keep himself and his household under control, someone whose preferred method of dealing with conflicts was to ask the parties to put their views in writing even when they were together under one roof.³³ Or did he, along with other of his friends who knew Valdes's work, think that the Laudian church was strong enough to prevent such disastrous interpretations of the Holy Spirit's instruction? He was said toward the end of his life to have premonitions of difficult times to come.³⁴ Fortunately he did not live to see future events fulfill Herbert's warning about the dangers of "enthusiasm."

Valdes's very individualistic and subjective approach, moreover, left little scope not only for Scripture as the ultimate authority but also for the institutional church and its sacraments as channels of grace. While he acknowledged the importance of baptism in removing "natural" (original) sin (Consideration 6), he also pronounced dismissively on "ceremonies to co[n]serve the health of their soules" that sons of God observe only for the sake of outward conformity with the sons of Adam rather than out of any need for them (Consideration 3). Without explicitly abandoning or attacking the larger institutional church, Valdes had in effect quietly shifted his hopes for spiritual renewal to smaller, more intimate groups within it, groups indeed not unlike Little Gidding.³⁵ Ferrar clearly valued community and created voluntary groups of participants for special projects within his godly household, but he also valued the "ceremonies" and sacraments of the established church, as did his Laudian friends. He made clear in a manuscript volume entitled "The Duties Common to Man and Woman" that sacraments together with prayer and patience in affliction were essential parts of the primary duty of loving God, and he included elaborate instruction on the proper preparation for and reception of communion.³⁶ Herbert too, in such poems as "The British Church" and "The Holy Communion" as well as in *The Country Parson*,

expressed the importance he attached to church and sacraments. They were perhaps content to overlook Valdes's dismissive remarks on ceremonies and by implication of the church's role in the work of redemption for the sake of his explication of the workings of the Holy Spirit in the individual Christian. It is hard to imagine that either Ferrar or Herbert was unaware of this significant omission in Valdes's book, even if Herbert in his comments on "enthusiasm" failed to add church and sacraments to Scripture as necessary counters to excesses of enthusiasm.

Ferrar and Herbert evidently felt more confident of their handling of the doctrinal stumbling blocks in Valdes's book than did the Cambridge censors, who refused to publish either it or another of Ferrar's translations, of Ludovico Carbone's much more practical book on catechizing children.³⁷ The grounds of the censors' objections have not survived. Whatever they were, Herbert's notes and Ferrar's preface failed to satisfy them. When the *One Hundred and Ten Considerations* was finally published in the year after Ferrar's death, it was done in Oxford rather than London or Cambridge, and Thomas Jackson, President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, provided the necessary approval and expressed his confidence that the preface and Herbert's comments provided adequate safeguards for any unprejudiced reader.³⁸

What then did Ferrar and Herbert see as the pastoral value of Valdes's "experimental and practical divinity" for the England of 1632? They surely did not consider it as a polemical argument to support one or the other side in the Calvinist/Arminian debate. Ferrar, as Oley pointed out, was "very modest in points of controversy" and in any case Valdes's message was too ambiguous for that. While his individualistic and experiential vision of redemption had much in common with Calvinist conversion, it allowed also an Arminian role for human will. Moreover, Valdes's rather dismissive attitude toward ceremonies and sacraments and the almost antinomian aspects of his "anabaptist spirit" stood in contrast to an Arminian commitment to the sacramental and liturgical "beauty of holiness," a view that Ferrar shared with his friends Lindsell and the Duncons as well as Thomas Jackson.³⁹ Perhaps doctrinal consistency under whatever label is not a helpful measure of the "practical divinity" of either Ferrar or Herbert or indeed many of their contemporaries.

In 1632, in the face of increasing and divisive emphasis on ritual conformity in the Church of England, Valdes's book constituted a

reminder that what really mattered was inward transformation. In Herbert's words, Valdes's work should be published for his expression of "the intent of the gospel in the acceptance of Christs righteousness" and for his "observation of the working of Gods kingdom within us." The great appeal of *The Temple* to people of as different theological views as King Charles I and Richard Baxter suggested the irenic possibilities of such a treatment that emphasized inner experience. By the same token a Christocentric and experiential focus enabled the Catholic (albeit heterodox) Valdes to avoid such divisive issues as predestination and election, ecclesiastical authority, liturgy, and sacraments and could only have reinforced Ferrar's hope that his work would have a similar appeal. Certainly such a hope for Christian unity had earlier animated Arthur Golding when he translated in 1573 a work entitled *Beneficio di Cristo* that had been revised by Marcantonio Flaminio, a member of Valdes's circle in Naples:

In this little book is that benefit, which commeth by Christ crucified, to the Christians, truly and comfortably handled: which benefit if all Christians did truly understand and faithfully embrace, this division would vanish away, and in Christ the Christians should become one. To this end reade this booke, and much good in Christ may it doe to all them which doe reade it.⁴⁰

Ferrar and Herbert could similarly have hoped that Valdes's treatment of justification as the "benefit of Christ" might in their own day bring Christians together and transcend the divisions that beset the Church of England.⁴¹

Was there another irenic hope behind Ferrar's desire to offer Valdes's work to an English readership? As Anthony Milton has so clearly demonstrated, Arminians like Lindsell were seeking during these years not only to portray the Church of Rome as a true though flawed church but also to hold out some hope for reconciliation with the Church of England. In that context, Ferrar might have hoped that older and even heretical Catholic voices such as Valdes and the author of the *Beneficio* might be useful.

What of mortification, that other point that Ferrar recommended in Valdes's divinity? It received practical implementation as well as

theoretical discussion at both Little Gidding and Bemerton. Temperance as an exercise in mortification was a topic that concerned both men. Oley speaks of Herbert's temperance, private fastings, and mortification of the body; Ferrar followed so strict and austere a regime of temperance and vigils that his family and friends feared for his health. He himself, on the contrary, claimed that he owed his health to the austere diet he had long followed, as Herbert attributed his recovery from fever to a special diet. Attention to diet was not only a method of mortification but very much a part of that "Constant due regard & Circumspectio[n] to their health" they discussed in "free and Christian counsell."⁴²

Some in the Gidding household had already experimented, probably early in 1632, with versions of a temperate diet. Herbert had then kindled that initial interest by furnishing them later in that year a prescription for such a diet in his translation of Luigi Cornaro's *A Treatise of Temperance and Sobriety*. To this Ferrar added, at the family's request, his own translation of Lessius. The Collet daughters, with their parents and their uncle John Ferrar, then proceeded in their Little Academy to discuss temperance formally and at length during Advent of 1632. They then solemnly and voluntarily gave their formal agreement to follow Cornaro's very meagre diet during the Christmas season. Some of them at least carried on this diet into the following months and became the family, cited in Ferrar's preface to *Hygiasticon*, who had tried the diet and had found it both easy and beneficial.⁴³ Thus when Ferrar singled out this theme in Valdes, he was anticipating what became a central "pious work" at Little Gidding.⁴⁴ The Holy Spirit, so central to Valdes, was here working not only to illuminate and mortify individuals but also to strengthen a pattern of community life, which could in turn by its example reach out to the world.⁴⁵

Thus, the translations of Valdes, Cornaro, and Lessius were but a part, though a vital one, of that collaboration between Herbert and Ferrar that also gave the world after Herbert's death his poetic record of spiritual conflict and consummation. During Herbert's lifetime, the two "brothers" together shaped and intensified the collective spiritual life of the Little Gidding household. Their efforts contributed to two significant changes in the household's spiritual life, namely the addition of night vigils to the established rounds of daily devotions and of the exercise in mortification that the Ferrars, in company with Herbert,

hoped would furnish a pattern for an “adge that needs patterns.” That pattern of temperance subsequently proved to be less than easy and beneficial for some in the Ferrar household. The reception accorded to *The Temple* by readers across the theological spectrum, however, would have reaffirmed to Ferrar his and Herbert’s hope that Valdes would likewise encourage a pattern of piety transcending doctrinal partisanship. Neither of them lived to see its publication in 1638 or to be disappointed in that irenic hope. By that time events were moving toward confrontation rather than accommodation in both the religious and political spheres. Nevertheless, Valdes’s message evidently enjoyed a reception sufficient to justify for Edmund Duncon in 1646 a new edition in a slightly shortened format. If at the end of the first Civil War he had hoped that a message of practical piety would heal the divisions opened up in that conflict, he would have been disappointed. Indeed, he would have had dramatic evidence of the dangers of that “enthusiasm” that Herbert had warned might come out of Valdes’s reliance on direct instruction by the Holy Spirit. He lived, however, to see the Church of England restored in 1660 and increasingly ready to emphasize a practical piety, though one, like Little Gidding, that was carefully contained within the fold of the church.

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Notes

I am grateful to Elisabeth Gleason for sharing with me her extensive knowledge of the world of the *spirituali* and of Valdes in particular and for her helpful comments and criticisms of this paper. An earlier version of the paper was given at the “George Herbert’s Travels” conference in Greensboro, North Carolina, where it received discerning questions and comments, especially from Richard Strier. As always, my husband David R. Ransome has provided essential information and criticism from his knowledge of the Ferrar Papers as well as readings and rereadings of successive drafts of the paper.

1. George Herbert, *The Works of George Herbert*, ed. F.E. Hutchinson (1941; corr. rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945), p. 379.

2. David R. Ransome, *The Ferrar Papers, 1590-1790*, microform edition (Wakefield, Eng: Microform Academic Publishers, 1992); online edition in *The*

Virginia Company Archives (Marlborough, Wiltshire: Adam Matthew Publications, 2005); <http://viriniacompanyarchives.amdigital.co.uk>. Letters describe the fund-raising as well as the execution of the work: e.g., FP744 (4 Oct 1630), FP832 (16 Jan 1631/2 and FP839 (9 Feb 1631/2 and FP862 (July 1632). Further references to *The Ferrar Papers* are cited as FP, followed by the document number and date.

3. FP815 (13 Oct 1631); Arthur Woodnoth wrote to Ferrar that he had delivered “my cozens book” to Herbert; his thanks are quoted in Lynette R. Muir and John A. White, eds., *Materials for the Life of Nicholas Ferrar*, (Leeds: The Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society Ltd, 1996) p. 76. Mrs. Herbert in her turn forwarded via Woodnoth a twofold request of her own to the Collet ladies that further testified to the closeness of the households at Bemerton and Gidding. She asked for a recipe for one of their “balsams” but also, and more important, for one of their “stories” from each of them, evidence that she knew of the “storying” of the family’s Little Academy that had begun early in 1631. There is no record of earlier gift volumes of harmonies, though the Collet sisters at Gidding in early 1632 presented their married sister Susanna Mapletoft with the first “Story Book” that recorded the early sessions of what the family called their “Little Academy”; see E. Cruwys Sharland, ed., *The Story Books of Little Gidding* (London: Seeley and Co., 1899), pp. liii-iv. Since Herbert’s harmony has failed to survive, it is impossible to know if it was illustrated as all but one of the surviving ones were. On the place of the harmonies at Little Gidding, see my essay, “Monotessaron: The Harmonies of Little Gidding,” *The Seventeenth Century* 20 (spring 2005): 22-52

4. FP722 (Ferrar to Arthur Woodnoth, 10 May 1630).

5. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms.Rawl.D.2, f.44^v.

6. Muir and White, eds., *Materials for the Life of Nicholas Ferrar*, p. 92.

7. Rawl. D.2, f.88^r and f.109^r.

8. Muir and White, eds., *Materials for the Life of Nicholas Ferrar*, pp. 92-93. Edward Lenton mentioned the vigils and the “nuns” of Gidding in his account of his visit, probably in 1633, and recorded Ferrar’s corrections of his views on these points (pp. 129-30). His was the letter later published in distorted and vitriolic form as *The Arminian Nunnery* (1641).

9. Muir and White, eds., *Materials for the Life of Nicholas Ferrar*, p. 92. One who would have had no qualms about saying “no” was John’s wife Bathsheba, who hated her brother-in-law and was desperately unhappy at Little Gidding. Perhaps Ferrar’s remarks were at least in part a conciliatory gesture to her.

10. On Mapletoft, see FP959 (29 Oct 1634); on Woodnoth FP890; the date assigned in Dr. Ransome’s Finding List, c. 18 Mar 1632/3, is a year later, but the close correspondence of this letter to Arthur’s show it to have been a

direct answer to Arthur's letter of 15 Mar 1631/2. It is also highly unlikely that Nicholas would have sent such a stern letter to Arthur within a couple of weeks of Herbert's death; on Ferrar's concept of the binding nature of commitment to a project, see the discussion incorporated in "The Winding Sheet" in Basil Blackstone, *The Ferrar Papers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938) pp. 109-11, and in Ferrar's strictures to Joshua Mapletoft if he failed to keep his promises to follow a temperance diet in FP.959 (29 Oct 1634).

11. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Rawl.lett. 27.c (John Jones to Thomas Hearne, from Abbots Ripton), April 1.1731, f.4^r. When Jones heard about it, the book was in the possession of Edward Ferrar, an attorney in Huntingdon. Many of Turner's notes suggest that he saw this volume.

12. Quoted in E. Mansfield Forbes, "Nicholas Ferrar: America and Little Gidding," *Clare College, 1326-1926* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), II, p. 576.

13. Muir and White, eds., *Materials for the Life of Nicholas Ferrar*, pp. 43-44.

14. Barbara Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 301-04.

15. Rawl.D.2., f.65^r. Turner might well have seen this passage in Ferrar's spiritual diary. Ferrar also recited daily Psalm 71, a practice he began during an illness of his mother (f.70^r).

16. In 1636, Isaac Basire wrote to his wife that he was sending her a copy of de Sales's *Introduction to the Devout Life* that had been bound by the "devout virgins" of Little Gidding; see Hilton Kelliher, "Crashaw at Cambridge," in *New Perspectives on the Life and Art of Richard Crashaw*, ed. John R. Roberts (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990), pp. 186-87.

17. A letter from its translator, Richard Drake, to John Ferrar (FP.1126; 18 Oct 1648) suggests the two had known each other for some time. Drake quoted the price of the book in quires; perhaps John had thoughts of purchasing some for binding, as he later did with *Eikon Basilike*.

18. "Superliminare," in Herbert, *Works*, p. 25, l. 4.

19. Rawl.D.2, f.126^v. The French books presumably included de Sales, though it had been translated into English, but could have included others as well. It is not clear whether the "meditations" were part of his spiritual diary or were written for the instruction of his nephews, as described in Muir and White, eds., *Materials for the Life of Nicholas Ferrar*, p. 91.

20. Herbert to Edmund Duncon, quoted in Walton's *Life of Herbert*, in George Herbert, *The Complete English Works*, Everyman Library (London: David Campbell, 1995), p. 299.

21. Daniel W. Doerksen, "Nicholas Ferrar, Arthur Woodnoth, and the Publication of George Herbert's *The Temple*, 1633," *George Herbert Journal* 3 (fall 1979/spring 1980): 22-44. Mapletoft's letter is FP.913 (10 Oct 1633).

22. Letter 131 of February 1633[4], in Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Top. Hunts.e.1.

23. This introductory passage is printed in Blackstone, *Ferrar Papers*, pp. 101-05.

24. George Hunston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 3rd ed. (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal, 1992), p. 829.

25. Massimo Firpo, "The Italian Reformation and Juan de Valdes," translated by John Tedeschi, *Sixteenth Century Journal* 27, no. 2 (summer 1996): 353-64, and also Elisabeth G. Gleason's review of Carlo Ossola, ed., *Lo Evangelio di San Matteo*, in *Sixteenth Century Journal* 19, no. 3 (autumn 1988): 515-16. Several of Valdes's associates in Naples turned Protestant and spent time in England, most notably Ochino and Peter Martyr.

26. Lindsell's copy, now in the Bodleian library at Oxford, bears an inscription on the flyleaf in Nicholas Ferrar's own hand: "This Booke was the Right Reverend Father in God[']s Austin Lord Bishop of Hereford." In addition, the book bears on its front cover "AVG. LINDSEL" stamped in gold letters. The past tense of the first inscription suggests that Ferrar acquired it along with other books on Lindsell's death (1634). Beneath Ferrar's inscription on the flyleaf is written in another hand, and not that of his brother John, "Given to the Publique Library in Oxford, by Mr. John Farrar of Huntingdonshire, September 8. 1642." J.E.B.Mayor, ed., *Nicholas Ferrar: Two Lives by His Brother John and by Dr. Jebb* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1855), p. 376, noted that the book was in the Bodleian. Why John Ferrar donated the volume to Oxford is unknown. I am indebted to David Ransome for the information about Bodley's copy, as well as the Spanish copy donated by one of the Duncons (personal communication, 19 February 2006).

27. Herbert had not spent any time in Italy, though he was said to know some Italian. He would, however, have likely been more fluent in French. When he translated Cornaro's book on temperance, he used a Latin version rather than the original Italian; see Herbert, *Works*, p. 304.

28. Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), esp. ch. 7.

29. John Valdesso [Juan de Valdes], *The Hundred and Ten considerations of Signior John Valdesso* (Oxford: Leonard Lichfield, 1638), Consideration 18, pp. 41-43. Further quotations from this book are cited internally by page number.

30. The phrase is taken from the prayer of thanksgiving (between the Lord's Prayer and the Gloria) at the conclusion of the Communion service.

31. Williams, *Radical Reformation*, pp. 824-26.

32. Herbert, "To Consideration 11," in "Brief Notes Relating to the Dubious and Offensive places in the following Considerations," in Valdeso, *The Hundred and Ten considerations*, Consideration 11.

33. Ferrar tried to use this epistolary method, for example, in mediating a conflict between his brother John and John's wife Bathsheba; see FP.995 (21 May 1635).

34. Mayor, *Nicholas Ferrar*, pp. 59-63.

35. Barry Collett, "A Long and Troubled Pilgrimage: The Correspondence of Marguerite D'Angouleme and Vittoria Colonna," *Studies in Reformed Theology and History*, New Series, no. 6 (Princeton: Princeton Theological Seminary, 2000), p. 88. This low-profile, avoidance approach to controversy was the essence of Valdes's "Nicodemite" position; see Firpo, "Valdes," 353-64. Williams also refers to Valdes as a "Nicodemite" (*Radical Reformation*, p. 827).

36. The volume, which is in private hands, is bound in white vellum and transcribed in the standard Little Gidding hand used in the "Story Books" published in Sharland and in *Conversations at Little Gidding*, A.M. Williams ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970). It was presumably among the numerous materials Ferrar prepared and his nieces transcribed for the instruction of members of the household.

37. Barnabas Oley, in his prefatory life of Herbert that accompanies *Herbert's Remains Or, Sundry Pieces of that Sweet Singer of the Temple, Mr. George Herbert* (London: Timothy Garthwait, 1652), sig.b^v, explained the rejection of Carbone's book. For further information on Carbone, see also Mayor, *Nicholas Ferrar*, p. 302.

38. Jackson's statement comes between a table of contents that is a list of the 110 Considerations and Herbert's commentary. Oley grouped Jackson with Ferrar and Herbert as three exemplary Church of England churchmen at a time when many of their contemporaries were failing in their duty (see *Herbert's Remains*, sig. [a.9]-b/5).

39. Ferrar's enthusiasm for Valdes seems almost an anomaly in one whom Arthur Woodnoth once accused of putting too much value on set forms of prayer; see FP.908 (22 Aug 1633).

40. Arthur Golding, *The Benefite of Christs Death, or the glorious Riches of Gods free Grace* (London: Lucas Harison and George Bishop, 1573), preface. On Flaminio and the Valdes circle in Reginald Pole's Viterbo, see Williams, *Radical Reformation*, pp. 832-34.

41. A second edition of *The Benefite of Christ's Death* appeared in 1575 and yet another in 1633, this one printed by John Legat, who was probably a cousin by marriage of both Ferrar and Joshua Mapletoft. Interestingly, yet another publication of Golding's translation of the *Beneficio* appeared in 1638,

the same year that the *One Hundred Ten Considerations* was finally published. The publisher of this and the 1633 edition was Andrew Hebb.

42. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms.Rawl.D.2, f.44^v.

43. Leonard Lessius, *Hygiasticon: Or, The Right course of Preserving Life and Health unto Extreame old Age*, translated by Nicholas Ferrar (Cambridge: Roger Daniel, 1634), sig. 4^v.

44. The discussion among family members in their "Little Academy" has been published as "On the Austere Life," in Williams, *Conversations at Little Gidding*, pp. 159-315.

45. For a stimulating discussion of the significance of this concept that the Holy Spirit was able to work not only upon individuals singly but also upon them in groups, see Collett, "Long and Troubled Pilgrimage," pp. 44-88.