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# The Position of John Donne's Sermons in Early Seventeenth Century Prose

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THE POSITION OF JOHN DONNE'S SERMONS IN  
EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY PROSE

BY

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
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### Vita Auctoris

Raymond L. Zeitz was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on December 18, 1916. He attended St. Jerome's Parochial School and Cathedral Latin High School there, graduating from the latter in 1934.

In 1937 he entered John Carroll University and the following year entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Milford, Ohio. He was enrolled in the Arts course at Xavier University while there, and in 1942 received the degree of Bachelor of Literature.

While pursuing philosophy from 1942 to 1945 at West Baden College in West Baden Springs, Indiana, he entered the graduate school of Loyola University. In August 1945 he took up residence at Loyola Academy in Chicago where he is at present engaged in teaching.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTORY

Inevitably the sermons of John Donne are coming into their own. The two hundred years that have passed since they were acclaimed by the common folk and royalty of Jacobean England have not been kind to them, but brighter days have come. Lone voices have spoken of the merits of Donne's prose, the voices of Coleridge and De Quincey among them, but now, as it were, these lone voices all speak at once and the weight of their testimony is irresistibly great. Popularity has finally been accorded the sermons

It was not until their great literary importance was pointed out by Professor Grierson in his edition of the Poems<sup>1</sup> in 1912 that the sermons emerged from obscurity and began to demand consideration. Though they have been valued since that time as shedding light and understanding first upon the poetry of Donne, and then upon his life and rather enigmatical character, their value as good prose has become paramount.

Professor Grierson's comment was,

There are moments when he [Donne] comes  
as close to that beatific vision as per-

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<sup>1</sup> Grierson, J.C., Donne's Poetical Works, Oxford University Press London, 1912, reprinted photostatically in Great Britain in 1929 and 1938 by Lowe and Brydone, Printers, Ltd., London II.

haps a self-tormenting mind involved in the web of seventeenth century theology ever could,--at moments love and ecstasy gain the upper hand of fear and penitence. But it is in the sermons that he reaches these highest levels. There is nothing in the florid eloquence of Jeremy Taylor that can equal the splendor of occasional passages in Donne's sermons, when the lava-like flow of his heated reasoning seems suddenly to burst and flower in such a splendid incandescence of mystical rapture.<sup>2</sup>

And Logan Pearsall Smith speaks of "pages and passages of surprising beauty...lost in the crabbed, unread, unreadable folios of his sermons."<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Simpson pays this tribute: "None of the greatest of our prose writers--not Browne, nor Bacon, nor Taylor, nor Lambe, nor De Quincey--has ever surpassed him at his best moments,"<sup>4</sup> but only after she has spoken of the ever-present "tedious discursus that we would wish away, or some frigid and tasteless conceit which repels our sympathy."<sup>5</sup> Most recently, Donne's prose style, as it rises to a climax, has been compared to "the swell of an organ, or the gathering of water into the ninth and great wave."<sup>6</sup>

It was this unreserved praise mingled with nettled, fret-

2 Ibid., II, liii.

3 Smith, L.P., Donne's Sermons, Selected Passages, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1942, xxi.

4 Simpson, Mrs. E.M., A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1924, 3.

5 Ibid., 3.

6 Hayward, J., John Donne, Nonesuch Press, London, 1945, 554.

ful criticism which first interested the present writer in the sermons of Donne, and that interest led to the choice of the sermons as the subject-matter of this thesis. Research and modern criticism have shown why Donne's sermons have lain dormant for nearly two centuries and today merit criticism, as well as why their appeal to lovers of good prose has been so great. It has not yet, however, placed the prose style in the background of contemporary prose expression in England nor mentioned even in passing Donne's great popularity among his contemporaries in terms of his prose style.

It is the purpose of this paper, then, to attempt to place Donne's prose as found in his sermons in the pattern of English prose development in the seventeenth century. As we shall see there were many elements of change, some of them very disturbing elements, in the field of English prose during Donne's lifetime (1572/3-1631), and it is not unlikely that some of his popularity came to him because he had departed somewhat from the traditional habits of prose expression and adopted a style more in keeping with the demands of the times.

In bulk Donne's sermons number 154, all edited by his son and published in three folios, LXXX Sermons, 1640, Fifty Sermons, 1649, and XXVI Sermons, 1660/1.<sup>7</sup> A collection of

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<sup>7</sup> Two of the sermons were published twice over, hence the apparent discrepancy as to the number.



Donne's Works published by Dean Alford in 1839<sup>8</sup> was very unsatisfactory and is now difficult to secure. Aside from Donne's last sermon, entitled 'Death's Duel' which has been published several times since 1940, and a hitherto unpublished sermon included in an appendix to Mrs. Simpson's volume on Donne's prose works, no other entire sermons were readily available except the ten published by Geoffrey Keynes in 1923.<sup>9</sup> However much expedience may be odious in determining a course of action, it has had a hand in the selection of material for this paper. Happily it has dealt with us kindly. These ten sermons, "chosen from the whole body of Donne's sermons," are singularly suited to the purpose of this paper, for the selection judiciously made by the editor offers the reader a pleasing cross section of the sermons of John Donne.

So many of Donne's sermons possess special attractions from a literary point of view that a choice of only ten is not easily to be made. This collection seems, however, to compass fairly well the field covered by Donne's preaching, and it contains besides enough of his magnificent imagery to satisfy the literary sense.<sup>10</sup>

The proposed treatment of the subject lends itself to the following division. In chapter two, a brief history of

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8 Alford, H., The Works of John Donne, John W. Parker, London, 1839, VI.

9 Donne, J., X Sermons, Geoffrey Keynes, Editor, Nonesuch Press London, 1923.

10 Ibid., 162.

English prose will be traced from its beginnings up to the first quarter of the seventeenth century, special emphasis being placed upon the elements of change that began to appear and develop during the century preceding Donne's death. Chapter three will be devoted to an analysis of the structure of Donne's sermons in broad outline, in an attempt to determine whether the sermon structure is traditional or according to a different pattern. An analysis of the prose style itself will comprise chapter four, and chapter five will be devoted to a summing up of the conclusions reached and an attempt to place Donne in the picture of seventeenth century prose.

CHAPTER II  
THE BACKGROUND AND CURRENTS OF  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY  
ENGLISH PROSE

Only the briefest of outlines can be allowed here for a conspectus of English prose development to the seventeenth century. R.W. Chambers in his Preface to Harpsfield's Life of More<sup>1</sup> has traced the continuity of English prose to More's time and to this work the reader may refer for a fuller treatment than he shall find here. For obvious reasons, however, we will speak more at length of the currents in English prose in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries before we treat of Donne's sermons.

The beginnings of English prose are found in the works of Alfred, Aelfric and Wulfstan before the reign of Edward the Confessor - (1041-66). Under the reign of this king, with the conversion of Canute the Danish king, English was used in laws, wills, and rules. Under the Norman kings, however, the use of French prevailed over English and the prose form was abandoned in favor of the French preference for verse. Legal matters were again written in French, and English prose died a lingering death. Because of the needs of women recluses not sufficiently

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<sup>1</sup> Harpsfield, N., Life of More, Oxford University Press, London, 1932.

familiar with Latin, however, there was a survival of religious prose in such works as the Ancren Riwle, 1135, the devotional works of Richard Rolle and Walter Hilton's Scale of Perfection and Cloud of Unknowing.<sup>2</sup>

Briefly, then, from 1150 until 1350, the religious works were in prose and all else was in verse after French fashion. By 1375, however, English was back in the schools and found some usage in London a few years later. A noteworthy milestone of prose style is Wyclif's Bible which was published in 1383/4. By 1400 laws and civil documents were written in English, and by the half-century it was used by all. Paralleling this growth of popularity there was an increase in the variety of religious prose and a development of secular prose augmented by French words. Three authors of this period deserve mentioning: Pecoock, who tried using English for philosophical works; Fortescue, who wrote in a simple prose style on political subjects; and Malory, whose influence was great in spite of the incongruity of Lancelot's chivalry at the time of the reign of Henry VIII.

Thomas More (1478-1535) is looked upon, however, as the great restorer of English prose, for his models were the works

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., ci ff.

of Rolle, Hilton and the preachers of his day. His prose has a grace, simplicity and ease that is remarkable at this date.<sup>3</sup>

But even then the sixteenth century was beginning to grow restless and to show the first stirrings of a spirit which would flower in the following century into a drastic though quiet revolution in prose writing. To understand the situation, one must know the then traditional and accepted prose standards and something of the spirit that demanded a new style of prose writing. He must also realize the relation at this date between Latin and the vernacular. The latter will be treated first.

Roughly speaking, the outside years for the change-over from Latin to the vernacular tongue in Europe were 1550 and 1650.

Between the two termini that have just been mentioned there was a most interesting period in which the two languages, the ancient and the vernacular, were present in the minds of the most well-educated people in relations of almost exact balance and equality, and there were no real differences whatever between the uses of the one and the other. This period, which extended over about two generations, one before the turn of the century, one after, was the hinge on which the great change turned, a quiet revolution, effected unconsciously in the main...<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., clv-clvi.

<sup>4</sup> Croll, M., 'Attic Prose: Lipsius, Montaigne, Bacon', in Schelling Anniversary Papers, former pupils of Felix E. Schelling, Century Co., New York, 1923, 131.

But the literary claims and pretensions of Latin and the modern language were most evenly balanced during the last quarter of the sixteenth century.

Before that time there had been a fairly clear, though by no means a deliberate, differentiation of their uses. The chief artistic use of the vernacular in the sixteenth century had been to express the surviving medievalism of the culture of that age. It was the language, for instance, of what had been perhaps the most general medium of medieval literary expression, the sermon; it was the language of a multitude of romantically-retold tales of both antiquities, in which the fading of ideals and customs of chivalry were adapted to an age of courtiers; it was the language of courtly ceremonial and show; it was the medium in which the medieval book of etiquette and universal instruction enjoyed a brief revival. It reflected, in brief, the customs of a courtly life which had not been modified in its essential features by the intellectual efforts of the Renaissance. On the other hand, whatever was really new and forward-looking in the Renaissance found its prose-expression in the ancient tongue. Some humanists, it is true, foresaw the modern uses of their mother languages; Bembo, Du Bellay, Ascham, for instance. Yet their writings are not representative of the usual vernacular prose of their time; and there is little distortion in the statement that in 1550 all serious, modern thought was expressed in Latin, all that was traditional, or merely popular, in its character tended to find its way into vernacular prose.

One hundred years after that date the progress of modernism had reversed these relations in most respects. The usual language of serious criticism, or even of philosophy had become English, French, or Italian; and what is more important, the

subject of literary criticism had become chiefly the vernacular languages and their usages; Latin was already the language of a dead literature, whose chief value was to enrich the native styles with romantic allusion, heroic images, and far-echoing rhythms.<sup>5</sup>

The prevalence of Latin in the literary make-up of the times and the place rhetoric had had in medieval life make it quite understandable that Cicero was the model of all prose style. The schemata verborum identified the Ciceronian style. It consisted of "similarities or repetition of sounds used as purely sensuous devices to give pleasure and to aid attention."<sup>6</sup>

Now it was of the nature of things that this style, termed Ciceronianism, became intimately connected in the common mind with the established order of things, and represented in the general movement of the Renaissance the aims and common interests of the conservative orthodoxies. To be sure, the emphasis was on form, for besides the spirit of skeptical inquiry in sixteenth century thought there was a tendency to study the forms of knowledge rather than the facts of nature and history. This was surely an intellectual habit carried over from the middle ages.<sup>7</sup> Even the 'sciences' of the period, then, were concern-

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5 Ibid., 131

6 Croll, M., "Attic Prose in the Seventeenth Century," Studies in Philology, Chapel Hill, (1921), 18, 82.

7 Croll, M., "Marc-Antoine Muret and Attic Prose," PMLA, George Banta Publishing Co., Wisconsin, (1924), 39, 266.

ed with form. Indeed the opponents of the Ciceronians never tired of accusing them of busying themselves with words rather than with things. And there was justice in the accusation, too, for there came with the influx of fresh ideas the desire to express the thoughts and have done with the over-niceties of expression. "Fie upon that eloquence," Montaigne says, when speaking of Cicero, "that makes us in love with itself, and not with the things."<sup>8</sup>

Besides, then, being identified with the conservative order in the common mind, Ciceronianism found a bulwark in

the love of authority and a single standard of reference which still flourished in the medieval mind of the sixteenth century. All the orthodoxies, it is true, drew their profit from this inherited habit of mind; but none in the same degree as the Ciceronian cult, because it alone could claim the full sanction of the Renaissance.<sup>9</sup>

There was Aristotle in philosophy and Rome in religion, though in various ways the Papacy was beginning to lose ground. "Ciceronianism alone could offer the freshness and charm of modernity combined with unity and simplicity of doctrine."<sup>10</sup>

But there was another current in prose taste beginning to make itself felt at the turn of the sixteenth century. It was in line with parallel tendencies of the time in other arts,

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8 Croll, Attic Prose; Lipsius, 127-8.

9 Croll, Marc-Antoine Muret, 267.

10 Ibid., 267.



for example, architecture, poetry, and painting. The spirit of change was now to bring prose style into connection with the intellectual movement of the Renaissance. Francis Bacon's comment upon this new style is compendious and worth quoting.

Somewhat sounder is another form of style,-- yet neither is it innocent of some vain show,-- which is likely to follow in time upon this copious and luxuriant oratorical manner. It consists wholly in this: that the words be sharp and pointed; sentences concise; a style in short that may be called 'turned' rather than fused. Whence it happens that everything dealt with by this kind of art seems rather ingenious than lofty. Such a style is found in Seneca very freely used, in Tacitus and the younger Pliny more moderately; and it is beginning to suit the ears of our age as never before. And indeed it is pleasant to subtle and low-ranging minds (for by means of it they conciliate the honor due to letters): however better-trained judgements disapprove it; and it may be looked upon as a distemper of learning; in as far as it is accompanied by a taste for mere words and their concinnity.<sup>11</sup>

The style itself then had these characteristics: the words were sharper and more pointed, sentences were shorter and concise, and the style depended not so much upon the interlacing of clauses in periodic structure as upon the use of the proper word or phrase. It was condensed, rationalistic expression without showiness or luxuriance. Metaphor, antithesis, paradox and other figures of speech all found place in it.

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<sup>11</sup> Groll, Attic Prose: Lipsius, 131.

The choice of Seneca as the model was a happy one, for his works had come down through the middle ages unimpaired. They had been taught and studied for nearly two hundred years for the purpose of moral instruction and therefore needed little interpretation by the Renaissance humanists. But there was opposition to this new anti-Ciceronic style, for Seneca's "long popularity had given him an air of medieval vulgarity; and his moral usefulness made the supposed defects of his Latinity peculiarly dangerous. It was a literary prejudice, therefore, that he had to overcome in order to take his place as the model and mentor of the new generation."<sup>12</sup>

The style, however, did fit the new spirit and, when not carried to extreme, fit in well with seventeenth century thought and taste. Wit and ingenuity were a part of the age, certainly, but a courtly past, accentuated no doubt by a consciousness of the deep moral experience the age was undergoing, demanded a certain dignity or gravity of demeanor. The following conclusion is drawn:

A prose style that should adequately express this age must contrive, therefore, to mingle elements that in any other period would appear oddly contrasted. It must be at once ingenuous and lofty, intense yet also profound, acute, realistic, revealing, but at the same time grave and mysterious.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Croll, Marc-Antoine Muret, 294.

<sup>13</sup> Croll, Attic Prose, Seventeenth Century, 142.

The new style was not all that, of course, no more than was Seneca's own. Seneca was a Stoic and a Stoic's manner of expression was calculated to hide the truth he had to utter. In the seventeenth century there is a situation similar to the Stoic's in the Silver Age at Rome, for there are scientists whose theorist was Aristotle, chosen because he represented the dialectic approach. Their opposition to the writers of the sixteenth century whose style was invariably Ciceronic follows the pattern of the opposition of the Silver Age to the Augustan. Often too the truths they wished to utter had best be told in an occult manner, and so they preferred the Stoic style of Seneca. "At its best an excellent literary form for the insinuation of subtle shades of thought, at its worst it is indeed no more than 'mere words and their concinnity'."<sup>14</sup> In interpreting these words of Bacon, Croll goes on to say:

It must be added that Bacon has in mind the imitators of Seneca more than Seneca himself: almost certainly Lipsius' Latinity; probably the English style of Bishop Hall's Epistles and other moral writings; perhaps also the Senecan manner of a number of English essayists who had written since his own first volume of 1597. All these writers had shown how easily the imitation of Seneca could descend to verbal ingenuity or mere pun on occasions when the idea was not worthy of the artifice bestowed upon it.<sup>15</sup>

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14 Croll, Attic Prose, Lipsius, 140

15 Croll, Ibid.

As has been indicated, the Renaissance humanists based their study of style upon Aristotle's Rhetoric in an effort to give weight to their position. They ignored the inconsistencies of the treatise and were content for the most part to appeal to it as an authority on a par with Cicero. Actually, in the Rhetoric Aristotle's hierarchy for prose qualities is clearness, brevity and appropriateness to subject and listener in that order. The anti-Ciceronian hierarchy, on the other hand, often put brevity first, thus allowing for a certain amount of obscurity. Clearness came second with only lip service at times, and aptness or appropriateness third.

Such then is the picture of the background of English prose writing until the sixteenth century and its branching out into two distinct prose styles in the generations that followed. Those two branches, or currents in prose writing, as we have called them, were both trying to incorporate the new progress. The one, the traditional style which loved the sonorous periodic structure of Cicero, was characterized by the schemata verborum, or the arrangement of words into a closely knit, fused style. This style came to represent conservatism. Ascham and Car in England, Sturm, Melanchthon and Camerarius in Germany, to name a few of the leading humanists, adhered to the Ciceronian style.

The other style was modeled on Seneca and was termed anti-Ciceronian. Introduced after the advent of the Renaissance,

this style was resolved or turned rather than fused and was characterized by the figurae sententiae, metaphor, antithesis, paradox and other figures, pointed words, concise sentences. It prized the Senecan brevity and precision. Because it was espoused by such men as Erasmus, whose Ciceronius was almost the Bible of the later anti-Ciceronian movement,<sup>16</sup> Lipsius, the founder of neo-Stoicism, and Montaigne, this anti-Ciceronian style became associated with almost every radical and rationalistic tendency of the age. This shift from the traditional Ciceronian style to a style modelled upon Seneca roughly parallels the change in the first century from the Golden to the Silver age of Latin Literature.

Our task in the following chapter will be to analyze in the large the structure of Donne's sermons. It will be preliminary to a careful study of selections from his sermons in our effort to place him, if possible, within either of the currents of English prose we have discussed.

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16 Croll, Marc-Antoine Muret, 269.

### CHAPTER III

#### DONNE'S SERMON-STRUCTURE IN BROAD OUTLINE

It is the procedure of an artist first to sketch the scene boldly and quickly with a few sweeps of his pencil so as to provide the framework in which the details of the picture may later be placed in right perspective. So indeed is it fitting in the discussion of a prose style, such as is undertaken in this paper, to begin with a limning of the broad lines of the work in order to provide a place for the treatment of the details of style in the next chapter.

To assist us here in the discussion of the structure of Donne's sermons we will contrast the structure he uses with the traditional structure of the classical oration. Besides giving a somewhat stable term of comparison, valuable in the discussion of any sermon style for high-lighting its salient points, this procedure is particularly helpful in the present instance where we are to determine whether Donne's style is Ciceronic. The classical oration, then, has traditionally fallen into six well defined parts.

- I. INTRODUCTION (exordium), designed to win the favorable attention of the audience; often considered of two kinds:--
  - a. The Opening (principium), preliminary remarks.
  - b. The Ingratiating (insinuatio), intended by a skillful use of language to remove prejudices and put the audience into a receptive mood.

- II. STATEMENT OF THE CASE (narratio), a summary of the facts leading up to the point at issue.
- III. DIVISION (partitio, or divisio), indicating the treatment of the theme proposed, or the point to be proved.
- IV. PROOF, or affirmative argument (confirmatio), setting forth the arguments on the speakers side of the case.
- V. REBUTTAL (refutatio, or reprehensio), refuting the arguments of the opposite side.
- VI. PERORATION, or CONCLUSION (peroratio, or conclusio), bringing the address to an impressive close; frequently divided into three parts:--
  - a. Summary (enumeratio), a brief recapitulation of the speaker's points.
  - b. Outburst (indignatio), a burst of anger, designed to excite the indignation of the audience against the opposite side.
  - c. Appeal (conquestio), an appeal to the sympathies of the audience.

According to modern ideas of literary analysis, these six divisions may generally be more conveniently grouped in three, thus:--

- I. INTRODUCTION:--
  - Exordium.
  - Narratio.
  - Partitio.
- II. DISCUSSION:--
  - Confirmatio.
  - Refutatio.
- III. CONCLUSION:--
  - Peroratio or conclusio.

...We are not to suppose that orators held rigidly to the outline given; yet it was regarded as the norm, or type, from which wide deviation was exceptional.<sup>1</sup>

This discussion of Donne's sermons will be divided into three parts: 1) a treatment of his introductions; 2) of the discussion or body of his sermons; 3) of his conclusion. As in the brief outline above, the introduction will include the Exordium, Narratio, and Partitio of the classical model. The discussion or body will correspond to the Confirmatio and Refutatio, while the conclusion will be the peroratio.

At first reading Donne's sermons strike one as being somewhat more informal than the Ciceronic model, and in general, lacking something of the coldly deliberate approach of Cicero. In the introduction to the "Oration in Favor of the Manlian Law" Cicero lists his reasons why he has not come forward previously as a public speaker. Then he says it is his listeners' favor, his own practice in speaking, the happy nature of the theme and the singular merit of Gnaeus Pompey that have forced him to this delightful task of speaking.

In none of the sermons of Donne do we find an example of this kind of introduction. It is of the nature of a sermon, per-

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1. F.W. Kelsey, Select Orations and Letter of Cicero, Allyn and Bacon, Boston and Chicago, 1905, 15-16.



haps, that a preacher need not begin with an exordium in the nature of an insinuatio. His presence and the reasons for his speaking need not be put forth, for they are understood as belonging to the clerical profession. Some similar introduction, however, may be demanded by the occasion, or by the text, or some other extrinsic circumstance. In the Virginia Plantation Sermon<sup>2</sup>, for instance, the second paragraph begins with an allusion to the apparent inappropriateness of the sermon for some.

As I speake now principally to them who are concerned in this Plantation of Virginia, yet there may be divers in this Congregation, who, though they have no interest in this Plantation, yet they may have benefit and edification, by that which they hear me say, so Christ spoke the words of this Text, principally to the Apostles, who were present and questioned him at his Ascention but they are in their just extention, and due accomodation, applicable to our present occation of meeting heere:....<sup>3</sup>

The mention of the inappropriateness merely gives Donne the opportunity to point out the real value of the sermon for all.

No, the introduction of Donne's sermons is not the insinuatio but the principium. There is no reason to explain any-

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2 The Virginia Plantation Sermon will identify "A Sermon Preached to the Honorable Company of the Virginia Plantation on the 13 November 1622". It is the fourth of the X Sermons edited by Geoffrey Keynes, and is included in the LXXX folio.

3 Keynes, 47.

thing; the text has been given and the sermon must begin. The first paragraph is consistently introductory to the division of the text. It begins with some remarks either upon Scripture or from one of the Fathers or even with some analogy that will allow an easy transition into the division of the text, which sometimes is included in the first paragraph. The opening paragraph of the Christmas Sermon<sup>3</sup>, for instance, remarks upon St. Bernard's treatment of the text 'Therefore the Lord shall give you a sign, behold a virgin shall conceive and beare a son and shall call his name Immanuel,'

Saint Bernard spent his consideration upon three remarkable conjunctions, this Day. First, a Conjunction of God, and Man in one person, Christ Jesus; Then a conjunction of the incompatible Titles, Maid and Mother, in one blessed woman, the blessed Virgin Mary; And thirdly a conjunction of Faith, and the Reason of man, that so beleaves, and comprehends those two conjunctions. Let us accompany these three with...<sup>4</sup>

Death's Duel<sup>5</sup> begins with a paragraph fifty-two printed lines in length, the beginning of which is also typical of

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- 3 The Christmas Sermon will identify the sermon "Preached at Paul's upon Christmas Day in the evening, 1624." It belongs to the LXXX folio and is fifth in the Keynes edition.
- 4 Keynes, 79.
- 5 The full title of this sermon is: "Death's Duell, or a consolation to the soul against the dying life and living death of the Body delivered in a sermon at White-Hall before the King's Majestie in the Beginning of Lent 1630." It belongs to the LXXX Sermons folio and is the last sermon of the Keynes edition.

Donne's introduction.

Buildings stand by the benefit of their foundations that sustain them, support them; and of their buttresses that comprehend them, embrace them; and of their contignations that knit and unite them. The foundation suffers them not to sink; the buttresses suffer them not to swerve; the contignations and knitting, suffer them not to cleave. The body of our building<sub>6</sub> is in the former part of this verse...

No sooner has a beginning been made than Donne gets down to the work at hand. The classical oration usually called for a statement of the facts, a narratio, but Donne has no need for such a division. What closely approximates it however may be found in the White-Hall Sermon<sup>7</sup> between the opening paragraph and the division of the text. The text is: 'Take heed what you heare.'

These words were spoken by Christ, to his Apostles upon this occasion. He had told them before, That since there was a candle lighted in the world, it must not be put under a bushell, nor under a bed, verse 21. That all that is hid, should be made manifest; that all that is kept secret, should come abroad, verse 22. That if any man had ears to heare, he might heare, verse 23. That is, that the Mystery of salvation, which had been hid from the

6 Keynes, 145.

7 The sermon "Preached to the King at White-Hall the first of April 1627" will be referred to throughout this paper as the White-Hall Sermon. It is ninth in the Keynes edition and belongs to the Fifty Sermons folio.

8 Keynes, 129-130.

world till now, was now to be published to the world, by their Preaching, their Ministry, their Apostleship...<sup>8</sup>

Usually, however, the preacher gets right down to dividing his text; this is in line with the classical model. After the exordium and narratio in the "Oration in Favor of the Manlian Law" Cicero divides his matter for further treatment in brief fashion. "Causa quae sit, videtis; nunc quid agendum sit, considerate. Primum mihi videtur de genere belli, deinde de magnitudine, tum de imperatore deligendo esse dicendum."<sup>9</sup> This is Donne's procedure as well, though he does find it difficult to be as brief.

An instance of Donne's division of his text may be summarized thus: After establishing in the first two sentences in Death's Duel the analogy of the house, its foundations, buttresses and contignations, he spends the rest of that long paragraph dividing the text: 'Unto this God the Lord belong the issues of death (from death).' If this text is considered as meaning that it is within God's power to give an issue or deliverance from death, then the word issue, says Donne, could be called a liberatio a morte, and a discussion of this phrase comprises part one. If the text is considered to mean that Christ will have a care for us at the hour of death, then the issue can mean a liberatio

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8 Keynes, 129-130.

9 Kelsey, 117-118.

in morte, part the second. Finally the issue can refer to the death of Christ our Savior and so be for us a liberatio per mortem, which is part three of the division.

Not always is the division long, however. Witness the brevity of this passage in the Christmas Sermon:

This Therefore, shall therefore be a first part of this Exercise, That God takes any occasion to show his mercy; And a second shall be, The particular way of his mercy, declared here, The Lord shall give you a sign; And then a third and last, what this sign was, Behold, a Virgin, Etc....<sup>10</sup>

These divisions are subdivided in the first part of the following paragraph, however, so the listeners can have a conspectus of the entire sermon.

The division of the Easter Sermon<sup>11</sup> is more typical of Donne's manner of dividing a text; for while it is the divisio of the classical outline, the method of presentation, particularly the varied repetition of the divisions, is peculiarly Donne's. The sermon is on the text: 'What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?'

In these words, we shall first, for our generall humiliation, consider the unanswerableness of this question, There is

<sup>10</sup> Keynes, 79.

<sup>11</sup> The Easter Sermon refers to the sermon "Preached at the Lords upon Easter-day at the Communion, The King being then dangerously sick at New-Market." It is first in the Keynes edition and belongs to the LXXX Sermons folio.

no man that lives, and shall not see death. Secondly, we shall see, how that modification of Eve may stand, forte moriemur, how there may be a probable answer made to this question, that it is like enough that there are some men that live, & shall not see death; And thirdly, we shall finde that truly spoken, which the Devill spake deceitfully then, we shall finde the Nequaquam verified, we shall finde a direct, and full answer to this question; we shall finde a man that lives, and shall not see death, our Lord, and Saviour Christ Jesus, of whom both S. Augustine, and S. Hierome, doe take this question to be principally asked, and this Text to be principally intended. Aske me this question then, of all the sons of men, generally guilty of originall sin, Quis homo, and I am speechlesse, I can make no answer; Aske me this question of those men, which shall be alive upon earth at the last day, when Christ comes to judgement, Quis homo, and I can make a probable answer; forte moriemur, perchance they shall die; It is a problematical matter and we shall say nothing too peremptorily. Aske me this question without relation to originall sin, Quis homo, and then I will answer directly, fully, confidently, Ecce homo, there was a man that lived, and was not subject to death by the law, neither did he actually die so, but that he fulfilled the rest of the verse: Eruit animam de inferno, by his owne power, he delivered his soule from the hand of the grave. From the first this lesson arises, Generall doctrines must be generally delivered, All men must die: From the second, this lesson, Collaterall, an unrevealed doctrines must be soberly delivered, How we shall be changed at the last day, we know not so clearly: From the third, this lesson arises, Conditionall Doctrines must be conditionally delivered, If we be dead with him, we shall be raised with him.<sup>12</sup>

Certainly there is here an admixture of rhetorical appeal to the emotions. The divisions of a text would seem to give place only to cold logic and common sense, but Donne makes a beginning even in his division of his text of the sentiments the sermon will arouse as it develops. What Professor Grierson has called "the lave-like flow of his heated reasoning"<sup>13</sup> has its beginnings as early in the sermons as the opening paragraph. We shall remark on this quality of the sermons again in a later chapter.

In summary of what we have seen thus far as regards the structure of Donne's sermons, we may say that in general the introductions of Donne's sermons show little resemblance to the classical model. The exordium is simply a few remarks upon Scripture, or from one of the Fathers or on some other matter which will allow for an easy transition into the division of the text. This follows immediately, no narratio being used. The division, moreover, does not feature the brevity of the classical model, but admits of elements that appeal to the feelings and which indicate the emotional trend the sermon will endeavor to provoke.

We turn now to the consideration of the body of the sermons, the discussion in our outline which includes the con-

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13 Grierson, Donne's Poetical Works, liii.

firmatio and refutatio. In general the body of the sermons may be said to be structurally logical and well defined. Not only do they follow closely the divisions marked out in the division of the text, but Donne marks the passing from point to point for his listeners. The transitions of the body of the Christmas Sermon are characteristic not only of Donne's transition, but of all seventeenth century preaching as well, when it was considered a genteel accomplishment to be able to repeat a sermon in all its divisions after but one hearing.<sup>14</sup>

We begin with that which is older then our beginning and shall over-live our end, The mercy of God...Our second part consists of a Rule, and an Example too: The Rule, That God goes forward in his owne wayes, proceeds, as he begun, in mercy; The example, what his proceeding, what his subsequent mercy to Achez was.... We are come to our third part, which is more peculiar to this Day: It is, first, what the signe is in generall, And then, some more particular circumstances, Behold a Virgin shall conceive Etc....<sup>15</sup>

The divisions of the body of the sermon are usually three, though a text such as that of the Sermon at Sion<sup>16</sup>, 'He that believeth not shall be damned,' may allow but two. In such a case, the text is not labored for a third division; two suffice

14 Richardson, C.F., English Preachers and Preaching, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1928, 75.

15 Keynes, 80ff.

16 The Sermon at Sion signifies the sermon "Preached to the Earle of Carlile and his company at Sion." It is fifth in the Keynes edition and belongs to the LXXX Sermons folio.



but sub-divisions make up for the third.

In the first of these parts, we shall first consider some circumstantiall, and then the substantiall parts of the Commission; (for though they be essentiall things, yet because they are not of the body of the Commission, we call them branches circumstantiall) First, An sit, whether there be such a Commission or no; secondly, the Ubi, where this Commission is; and then the Unde, from whence this Commission proceeds; And lastly the Quo, how farre it extends, and reaches; And having passed thorow these, wee must looke back for the substance of the Commission; for in the Text, He that beleeveth not, is implied this particle, this, this word this, Hee that beleeveth not this, that is, that which Christ hath said to his Apostles immediately before the Text, which is indeed the substance of the Commission, consisting of three parts, Ite praedicate, goe and preach the Gospel, Ite Baptizate, goe and baptize them, Ite docete, goe and teach them to doe, and to practise all that I have commanded; and after all these which do but make up the first part, we shall descend to the second, which is the penalty;...<sup>17</sup>

Usually the division of a part is placed in some ascending order. In the first division of the body of the Death's Duel sermon, for example, the progression follows our passage from death to death. "Our very birth and entrance into this life, is exitus a morte, an issue from death."<sup>18</sup> Birth but brings us into a life of deaths, and deliverance from the manifold deaths of

17 Keynes, 61-62.

18 Ibid., 146.

this world brings us to the entrance of the deaths of the grave, corruption, incineration and vermiculation.

In the White-Hall Sermon the third part of the body includes a triple division with a double treatment of each. Though it sounds complicated, it is not so at all. The text has been divided so that the third part is 'Take heed what you heare of yourselves,' and Donne begins

Men speake to you, and God speakes to you, and the Devill does speake to you too; Take heed what you hear of all three. In all three the words look two ways; for, in them, there is both a Videte, and a Cavete, first see that you doe heare them, and then teke heed what you heare from them.<sup>19</sup>

The two-fold treatment then of these topics occupies the three paragraphs that conclude the sermon. They cover nearly three pages.

A glance at the structure of the Christmas Sermon will reveal a different pattern of treatment that Donne sometimes uses. The treatment here consists of: 1) a general statement; 2) the particular application of this statement in the text; 3) an example in illustration. An outline of the body of the sermon would be as follows:

- Part I God's mercy is always in season (general)
- a) particular occasions of God's mercy here.
  - b) Example: how Achaz merited the anger of God and then mercy.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 142.

Part II God goes forward with his purposes (general)

a) what His purpose was here.

b) Example: He would give Achaz a sign.

Part III What this sign was in general, a Redeemer.

a) in particular:

a virgin shall conceive and yet be a virgin.

a virgin shall bring forth and yet be a virgin.

she shall bring forth a son.

she shall call him Immanuel (God With Us).

A word may be said here about the paragraphing in the sermons. As has been indicated in passing, some of the paragraphs are quite long. In the edition of Donne's poetry and selected prose edited by John Hayward, a book of ordinary proportions,<sup>20</sup> the opening paragraph of Death's Duel covers two entire pages. Such paragraphs are the rule. In the Keynes edition, which serves as our text for the sermons, the editor seems to have altered the paragraphing, in the interest of readableness, no doubt, so no definite conclusion can be reached. It would seem that Donne ended a paragraph and began another only when passing from one part of the sermon to another.

Passing now to a consideration of the refutatio, we find that it does not appear in the sermons. To be sure the falsity of the Roman Catholic position, belief, or practice, is often pointed out either directly or by implication, but such mention of adversaries is in passing, and has bearing upon the

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<sup>20</sup> Hayward, J., John Donne, The Nonesuch Press, London, 1945. The Keynes edition is printed on a page roughly 8 by 11 inches.

point then being expounded. The White-Hall Sermon contains the closest approximation to a refutation, yet Donne calls it a 'comparison' in mentioning it in the division of the text.

And when we have considered these words in this their first acceptation, as they were spoken literally, and personally to the Apostles, we shall see also, that by reflexion they are spoken to us, the Ministers of the Gospell; and not onely to us, of the Reformation, but to our Adversaries of the Romane perswasion too; and therefore in that part, we shall institute a short comparison, whether they or we do best observe this commandment, Take heed what you heare; Preach all that, preach nothing but that, which you have received from me.<sup>21</sup>

Indeed two of the sixteen pages of this sermon are devoted to a discussion of the adversaries, "for we all pretend to be successors of the Apostles; though not we, as they, in the Apostolicall, yet they as well as we in the Evangellicall and Ministeriall function...."<sup>22</sup> Not for nothing does Donne devote his time explicitly in this place to the adversaries. A student of the Fathers and the philosophers himself, he proceeds to handle the foe roughly.

But they do not onely stray on that hand, in not giving all that the Scripture gives; (They do not give the liberty of meates, nor the liberty of mariage, which the Scripture gives; Nay, they do not give the liberty of trying, whether the Scripture give it or no; for they do not give

<sup>21</sup> Keynes, 130

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 134.

the liberty of reading the Scriptures) But on the other hand, they stray too, and further, That they deliver more than the Scriptures doe, and make other Rules and Canons equall to Scriptures... But they make their decretall Epistles of their Popes and of their extravagants, (as they call them) and their occasionall Bulls, nay their Bull-baitings, their Bulls fighting, and crossing and contra-dicting one another, equall to Canonical Scripture.<sup>23</sup>

In the Sermon at Sion Donne has a somewhat lengthy passage upon that bone of contention between Anglicans and Catholics, indulgences. It is a reductio ad absurdum.<sup>24</sup> The Jesuits and devotion to Our Lady are handled in a belittling way in the Prebend Sermon.<sup>25</sup>

And with this lower Name, to be called Christians from Christ, was the Church of God contended; whereas a later race of men in the Romane Church, will needs take their Denomination from Jesus himselfe; But I know not whether they meane our Jesus or no. Josephus remembers two (at least) of that name, Jesus, that were infamous malefactors and men of blood; and they may deduce themselves from such a Jesus. And a Jesuit teaches us, that it is the common opinion that Barrabas the murderer, was by his proper name called Jesus; that his name was Jesus Barrabas; and that therefore Pilate made that difference upon our Savior Jesus Nazarenus, This is Jesus of Nazareth, and not Jesus Barrabas; and from that Jesus, Jesus

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>25</sup> "The fourth of my Prebend Sermons upon my five Psalms at S. Paul's 28 January 1626." Seventh in the Keynes edition, it belongs to the LXXX Sermons folio.

Barrabas they may deduce themselves. And we know also, that that mischievous sorcerer, was called by that name, Barjesu, the Sonne of Jesus. From which Jesus amongst these, they will make their extraction, let them chuse. As amongst the Jesuits, the bloodiest of them all (even to the drawing of the sacred blood of Kings) is, by his name, Mariana; So all the rest of them, both in that respect of sucking blood, and occasioning massacres, and other respects too, are rather Marianits then Jesuits, Idolaters of the blessed Virgin Mary, then worshippers of Jesus.<sup>26</sup>

Such passages do not fill the sermons but occur occasionally as the development of the text and the sermon allow. Often, however, Donne does no more than point out the adversaries in passing with a finger of shame and derision. In the Sermon at Sion, after drawing an analogy between the church and a hill, he warns his congregation "trouble not thyselfe to know the formes and fashions of forraine particular Churches; neither of a Church in a lake, nor a Church upon seven hills."<sup>27</sup> And the Funeral Sermon<sup>28</sup> contains this passing reference to the prayer of Catholics;

We have not the leisure to speake of the abuse of prayer in the Roman Church; where they will antidate and postdate their prayers; Say tomorrow's prayers to day, and to dayes prayers to morrow, if they will have other uses and employments of the due time betweene; where

26 Keynes, 99.

27 Ibid., 65.

28 The Sermon "Preached at the funerals of Sir William Cokayne Knight Alderman of London December 12, 1626." Seventh in the Keynes edition, it belongs to the LXXX Sermons folio.

they will trade, and make merchandise of prayers by way of exchange, My man shall fast for me, and I will pray for my man; or my Attorney, and Proxy shall pray for both of us, at my charge; nay, where they will play for prayers, and the loser must pray for both; To this belongs but a holy scorn, and I would faine passe it over quickly.<sup>29</sup>

There is included, then, in the body of the sermons of Donne, frequent treatment of adversaries, but with this difference from the classical Ciceronian model. The difference is twofold; first, it does not occur as consistently as in the classical oration. Sometimes there is no refutation, and this is not surprising in the preaching of the Word of God where some discourses are of such nature as to preclude refutation. And secondly, when the rebuttal of the adversaries does occur, it does not belong to any set part of the discourse, but is mingled with the development of the text in the body of the sermon. This telescoping of the parts of his discourse can be counted among the first of the structural characteristics of Donne's sermons. Within the delineation of the various points, not only does he include brief and sometimes lengthy treatment of the tenets and practices of adversaries, but exhortations and brief appeals to the feelings of his hearers as well. This is another reason, of course, for the length of his paragraphs.

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29. Keynes, 118.

Let us turn now to a consideration of the conclusion of Donne's sermons. In the traditional classical oration the perorations ends the piece, its purpose being to bring to bear upon the listeners the full force of the various points already developed with the intention of enflaming the emotions of the listeners to act. It is hortatory in nature and usually allows the speaker to use all the eloquence at his command. It would seem to be very desirable for sacred oratory, but Donne does not use a peroration. Instead he prefers to leaven his discourses with emotional appeal and exhortation. The smooth blending of thought and feeling is altogether too consistent throughout to be ascribed to any device of rhetoric or composition, but must be attributed to John Donne himself. The style is indeed the man for Donne was a learned man who had a "knowledge of Scripture, the Fathers, the Schoolmen, the Roman and Protestant controversialists, as well as an interest in law, medicine and science,"<sup>30</sup> and he was an intensely self-conscious person whose emotions were strong. Hardly could he think without feeling.

It was this union of thought and feeling that made Donne's style peculiarly his own. His appeal to the emotions starts where the thought begins. The peroration, indeed, may be said to begin with the opening paragraph and steadily grow until

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<sup>30</sup> Simpson, Prose Works, 234.



it drowns the reasoning at the end of the discourse. As early in the Lincoln's Inn Sermon<sup>31</sup> as the division of the text we find this appeal to mind and heart.

Corruption upon our skin, says the text, (our outward beauty;) corruption upon our body, (our whole strength, and constitution.) And, this corruption, not a green palenesse, not a yellow jaundise, not a blue lividnesse, not a black morpheu upon our skin, not a bony leannesse, not a sweaty faintnesse, not an ungratious decrepitnessse upon our body, but a destruction to both, After my skin my body shall be destroyed. Though not destroyed by being resolved to ashes in the fire, (perchance I shall not be burnt) not destroyed by being washed to slime, in the sea, (perchance I shall not be drowned) but destroyed contemptibly, by those whom I breed, and feed, by wormes;...<sup>32</sup>

And the following passage which sounds the keynote of the entire discourse is part of the opening paragraph of the Easter Sermon:

Wee are all conceived in close Prison; in our Mother's wombes, we are close Prisoners all; when we are borne, we are borne but to the liberty of the house; Prisoners still, though within larger walls; and then all our life is but a going out to the place of Execution, to death. Now was there ever any man seen to sleep in the Cart, between New-gate, and Tyborne? between the Prison, and the place of Execution, does any man sleep? And we sleep all the way; from the womb to

31 "Preached at Lincoln's Inn." Third in the Keynes edition, this sermon belongs to the Fifty Sermons folio.

32 Keynes, 29.

the grave we are never thoroughly awake; but passe on with such dreames and imaginations as these, I may live as well, as another, and why should I dye, rather then another? but awake, and tell me, sayes this Text, Quis homo? who is that other that thou talkest of?<sup>33</sup>

But it is in the body of the sermon that appeal to feeling is most common. An example of thought wedded to feeling can be seen in this passage taken from the body of the Sermon at Sion:

And presently follows Remissio Peccatorum, The remission of sins, the purifying of my conscience, in that water, which is his blood, Baptisme, and in that wine, which is his blood, the other Sacrament; and presently follows Carnis resurrectio, A resurrection of my body; My body becomes no burthen to me; my body is better now, then my soule was before; and even here I have Goshen in my Egypt, incorruption in the midst of my dunghill, spirit in the midst of my flesh, heaven upon earth; and presently followes Vita aeterna, Life everlasting; this life of my body shall not last ever, nay the life of my soule in heaven is not such as it is at the first. For that soule there, even in heaven, shall receive in addition, and accesse of Joy, and Glory in the resurrection of our bodies in the consumation.<sup>34</sup>

The cumulative effect of such passages throughout is at times overpowering as the sermon draws to a close. Since however the appeal to the emotions near the end of the sermon is part of

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33 Ibid., 1

34 Ibid., 64-65.

the development of the text, it cannot be called a genuine peroration. Usually the treatment of the third or last section of the text completes the sermon, and that 'lava-like flow of heated reasoning' reaches the boiling point. After it passes, there is a gentle tapering off into a peaceful ending. In certain of the sermons, the Penitential Psalms Sermon<sup>35</sup> and the White-Hall Sermon, for example, the boiling point depends in great measure upon cumulative effect. In others, such as Death's Duel and the Sermon at Sion, the emotional passage near the end would have eloquent power even were it an isolated text. Though the passage in the Sermon at Sion is rather long, it will be most profitable to quote it, for besides illustrating the point of emotional appeal, it exemplifies a difficult sentence structure that is excusable here only in light of the emotional burden it carries. Such involved sentence structure occurs frequently in the sermons and is seldom as excusable as it is here.

That God should let my soule fall out  
of his hand, into a bottomless pit, and  
roll an unremoveable stone upon it, and  
leave it to that which it finds there,  
(and it shall finde that there, which it  
never imagined, till it came thither) and  
never thinke more of that soule, never  
have more to doe with it. That of that  
providence of God, that studies the life  
of every weed, and worme, and ant, and spider,  
and toad, and viper, there should never,  
never any beame flow out upon me; that that

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35 "Preached upon the Penitential Psalms." Second in the Keynes edition, it belongs to the LXXX Sermons folio.

God, who looked upon me when I was nothing, and called me when I was not as though I had been, out of the womb and depth of darknesse, will not looke upon me now, when, though a miserable, and a banished, and a damned creature, yet I am his creature still, and contribute something to his glory, even in my damnation; that that God, who hath often looked upon me in my foulest uncleannesse, 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 curtaines and windowes and doores, did yet see me, and see 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 forbearing of that sinne, should so turne himself from me, to his glorious Saints and Angels, as that no Saint nor Angel, not Christ Jesus himselfe, should ever pray him to looke towards me, never remember him, that such a soule there is; that that God, who hath so often said to my soule, Quare morieris? Why wilt thou die? and so often sworne to my soule, Vivit Dominus, As the Lord liveth, I would not have thee dye, but live, will neither let me dye, nor let me live, but dye an everlasting life, and live an everlasting death; that 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 shaken the house, this body, with agues and palsies, and set this house on fire, with fevers and calentures, and frighted the Master of the house, my soule, with horrors, and heavy apprehensions, and so made an entrance into me; That that God should frustrate all his owne purposes and practices upon me, and leave me, and cast me away, as though I had cost him nothing, that this God at last, should let this soule goe away, as a smoake, as a vapour, as a bubble, and must lie in darknesse, as long as the Lord of light is light itselfe, and never sparke of that light reach to my soule; What Tophet is not Paradise, what Brimstone is not Amber, what gnashing is not a comfort, what gnawing of the worme is not a tickling, what torment is not a marriage bed to this damnation, to be seclued eternally, eternally, e-

ternally from the sight of God?<sup>36</sup>

Such an appeal, as we have said, is not usually found divorced from the development of the sermon text. Lyric and intellectual element are, as it were, coextensive and contemporaneous with the development of Donne's thought. Cicero desired immediate action, the appointment of Pompey as military commander and trusted his appeal to a peroration. John Donne looked to the long-range victory of good over evil in his listeners and made every sermon a great crescendo of appeal for goodness and truth.

In summarizing this chapter, we may list our conclusions upon the structure of Donne's sermons as follows:

1. Donne uses the classical principium, beginning his sermons with a remark upon Scripture, or from one of the Fathers or some other matter which allows an easy transition into the division of the text. No narratio is used.
2. The division of the text follows the classical model but is not as brief and often sounds the keynote of the emotional appeal of the entire sermon.
3. The body of the sermon has well-defined partitions and the development of each follows a logical order. Refutatio when it occurs is not confined to any one part of the sermon.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 77.

4. There is no peroration in the classical sense of the word, but there is a blending of thought and feeling throughout the sermons which has a cumulative effect of producing the strongest appeal to feeling near the end of the sermon. The ending is quiet and peaceful.
5. Donne, therefore, in the light of these facts cannot be said to follow the classical model in his sermon-structure. Hence he is not Ciceronic in this regard.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PROSE STYLE OF JOHN DONNE

Enough has been quoted from the sermons in the preceding chapter to familiarize the reader to an extent with the prose style of John Donne. Further quotations would hardly be necessary to substantiate his "subtle, self-analytic mind, ...quickest senses forced conceits and passionate sincerity."<sup>1</sup> It seems clear from what we have already seen that his style is crabbed, obtuse, and at times almost unreadable, that his reasoning is heated and lava-like in its flow, and that at times there is a sublimity of thought and language that resembles the swell of an organ.<sup>2</sup> Passages could be cited, too, to prove Donne was erudite, frigid, abstract and fanciful in his thought and bizarre in his interpretations.<sup>3</sup>

It is not the purpose of this chapter, however, to analyze the sermons in order to evaluate their style or to substantiate the claims critics have made for it. The objective here is to determine to which of the two currents in contemporary English prose expression Donne belonged.

As we have seen in the early part of this paper, there

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, xxxii.

<sup>2</sup> Hayward, 554.

<sup>3</sup> Grierson, H.J.C., "John Donne," Cambridge History of English Literature, A. W. Ward and A.R. Waller, editors, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1909, iv, 225ff.

were two prose styles in the early seventeenth century, the traditional Ciceronian style and the new anti-Ciceronian style. The former was characterized by a closely knit, fused style that thrived on sonorous periodic sentences and an amplitude of expression that was patterned on Cicero, the latter was a resolved, turned style that used figures of speech freely and featured pointed words, concise sentences and, in general, brevity of expression. We shall analyze the sermons, then, for these qualities.

Hugh I'Anson Fausset, writing in 1924, has drawn a picture of Donne the preacher which gives an overall view of the sermon style which is to our purpose.

Whether in the homelier atmosphere of St. Dunstan's or in the royal arena of St. Paul's, it was now as a man 'possessed' that he mounted the pulpit, as an evangelist that he expounded the mysteries of God, or peered awfully into the abyss of mortality, as a rhetorician of the old school that he piled up his inexorable periods, and above all as a poet that he delivered himself of his message, swaying to every tide and eddy of emotion, his voice now rolling onward in some stately period, now stressing some word or some phrase again and again, like the thud of recurrent waves on the shore, now crooning softly in persuasive suggestion, now winding skilfully through the mazes of argument and analogy, now strident in denunciation, now mellifluous in benediction, haling on his audience to transports of felicity, or melting and moulding them into 'a companionable sadness.'...Here was no shallow bombastic eloquence, no attempt to drown sense in sound or deck inanity in vulgar ornament.



To quote De Quincey's words: 'It laid the principal stress upon the management of the thoughts, and only a secondary one upon the ornaments of style.'<sup>4</sup>

It would seem that De Quincey and more recently Mr. Fausset would agree that the style is something other than Ciceronian, or at least that there is a large admixture of elements not Ciceronian in Donne's Ciceronian style. Indeed no profound study is necessary to discover that the sermons lean decidedly to the anti-Ciceronian style. A single reading leaves that impression, and a second and a third substantiates it. This general impression is not produced by any one quality, but by the presence in varying degrees of all the characteristics of anti-Ciceronian style.

Of these characteristics, then, let us consider first Donne's use of picked, pointed words, and we may note as well here the strength of language he achieves by his use of monosyllables and words of a forceful, virile character. Two passages taken from the Christmas Sermon illustrate these points.

A man wakes at midnight full of unclean thoughts, and he heares a passing bell; this is an occasionall mercy, if he call that his own knell, and consider how unfit he was to be called out of the world then, how unready to receive that voice, Foole, this night they shall fetch away

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4 Fausset, H. I'A., John Donne, Harcourt, Brace & Company, New York, 1924, 278-279.

thy soule.<sup>5</sup>

If I can fix myselfe, with the strength of faith, upon that which God hath done for man, I cannot doubt of his mercy, in any distresse; If I lacke a signe, I seeke no other but this, That God was made man for me; which the Church and Church-writers, have well expressed by the word Incarnation, for that acknowledges, and denotes, that God was made my flesh: It were not so strange, that he who is spirit, should be made my spirit, my soule, but he was made my flesh:...<sup>6</sup>

The words wakes, full, passing, call, knell, unfit, unready, voice, and fetch in the first passage are certainly well-chosen, and none of them are of direct Latin derivation. In the second selection the choice of the word fixe is as happy and apt as the coupling of strength with faith, and seventy-nine of the ninety-one words are monosyllables of no Latin origin. Note also in the passage that follows how the whole point of the selection turns on a few words, and mark as well the telling use of well chosen words. It is the opening sentence of the Prebend Sermon.

God makes nothing of nothing now; God eased himselfe of that incomprehensible worke, and ended it in the first Sabbath. But 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, and by the word, in the mouth of a weake man, he enfeebles the power of sinne, and Satan in the world, and by but so much breath as

5 Keynes, 81.

6 Ibid., 86.

blows out an houre-glasse, gathers three thousand soules at a Sermon, and five thousand soules at a Sermon, as upon Pe-ter's preaching, in the second, and in the fourth of the Acts.<sup>7</sup>

Further instances of a striking choice and use of words may be found scattered throughout the text of the sermons, instances like the following from the Funeral Sermon.

I throw my selfe downe in my Chamber, and I call in, and invite God, and his Angels thither, and when they are there, I neglect God and his Angels, for the noise of a Flie, for the ratling of a Coach, for the whining of a doore; I talke on, in the same posture of praying; Eyes lifted up, knees bowed downe; as though I prayed to God; and, if God, or his Angels should aske me, when I thought last of God in that prayer, I cannot tell: Sometimes I finde that I had forgot what I was about, when I began to forget it, I cannot tell. A memory 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 anything, a nothing, a fancy, a Chimera in my braine, troubles me in my prayer. So certainly is there nothing, nothing in spirituall things, perfect in this world.<sup>8</sup>

And a similiar passage just as apropos can be found in the Sermon at Sion.

I locke my doore to my selfe, and I throw my selfe downe in the presence of my God, I devest my selfe of all worldly thoughts, and I bend all my powers, and faculties upon God, as I think, and suddenly I finde my selfe scattered, melted, fallen into

7 Ibid., 93.

8 Ibid., 118.

vaine thoughts, into no thoughts; I am upon my knees, and I talke, and think nothing; I deprehend my selfe in it, and I goe about to mend it, I gather new forces, new purposes to try againe, and doe better, and I doe the same thing againe.<sup>9</sup>

No, in such passages there is no fused style, no Latin-like ordering of words into periodic structure. We find nothing florid or wordy in such simple, economical expression. Even the words disclaim classical lineage. "When Donne erred," remarks Mr. Fausset, "it was not in being too sumptuous, but in being too bare."<sup>10</sup>

Donne's use of metaphor, however, strikes one as being more characteristic of him than his choice and use of words, for his metaphors are often striking and memorable either for their aptness or their tastelessness. Sometimes they come so fast in the sermons they seem to tumble over each other. In Death's Duel we find that

This whole world is but an universal Church-yard, but a common grave...<sup>11</sup> [and] That which we call life, is but Hebdomade mortium, a week of deaths, seaven daies...<sup>12</sup> [and again] He hath the keyes of death, and he can let me out at that dore, that is, deliver me from the manifold deaths of this world...<sup>13</sup> [and lastly,] But whether the gate of my

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>10</sup> Fausset, 280.

<sup>11</sup> Keynes, 148.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 149.

prison be opened with an oyl'd key (by a gentle and preparing sickness) or the gate be hewed down, by a violent death, or the gate be burnt down by a raging and frantick feaver; a gate into Heaven I shall have...<sup>14</sup>

This pleasing metaphor can be found in the Penitential Psalms Sermon.

Mundi moles liber est, This whole world is one Booke; And is it not a barbarous thing, when all the whole booke besides remains intire, to deface that leafe in which the Authors picture, the Image of God is expressed; as it is in man?<sup>15</sup>

And from the Funeral Sermon:

Young men mend not their sight by using old mens Spectacles; and yet we looke upon Nature, but with Aristotles, and upon the body of man, but with Galens, and upon the frame of the world, but with Ptolomies Spectacles.<sup>16</sup>

Scholar that he was, Donne loved to use the metaphor of a book. We find it in various forms here and there in the sermons. In the Funeral Sermon, for example;

The world is a great Volume, and man the Index of that booke; Even in the body of man, you may turne to the whole world; This body is an Illustration of all Nature; Gods recapitulation of all that he had said before, in his Fiat lux, and Fiat firmamentum, and in all the rest, said or done, in all the six dayes.<sup>17</sup>

14 Ibid., 154.

15 Ibid., 14.

16 Ibid., 115.

17 Ibid., 124.

And the Lincoln's Inn Sermon has the metaphor again;

Corruption in the skin, says Job; In the outward beauty. These be the Records of velim, these be the parchmins, the endictments, and the evidences that shall condemn many of us, at the last day, our own skins; We have the booke of God, the Law, written in our own hearts; we have the image of God imprinted in our own souls; wee have the character, and seal of God stamped in us, in our baptism; and, all this is bound up in this velim, in this parchmin, in this skin of ours, and we neglect book, and image, and character, and seal, and all for the covering.<sup>18</sup>

Many of the metaphors that are tedious become so because they are drawn out too far. As pleasing as they may be in the beginning, they become labored when carried beyond reasonable limit. The following becomes just such a passage though the multiplication of metaphors in the beginning is not distasteful.

The heart of man is hortus, it is a garden, a Paradise, where all that is delightful grows, but it is hortus conclusus, a garden that we our selves have walled in; It is fons, a fountaine, where all knowledge springs, but fons signatus, a fountaine that our corruption hath sealed up. The heart is a booke, legible enough, and intelligible in it selfe; but we have so interlined that booke with impertinent knowledge, and so up clasped that booke, for fear of reading our owne history, our owne sins, as that we are the greatest strangers, and the least conversant with the examination of our owne hearts.<sup>19</sup>

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18 Ibid., 38.

19 Ibid., 63.

In fact, Donne goes on to say, there are three fasciculi Myrrhae or bundles of Myrrhe in the garden, the fasciculus agendorum, petendorum, and credendorum, which are the things we must do, pray for, and believe, respectively. But let us go no further into that. Suffice it to say that Donne used metaphor frequently with varying success.

Another favorite device of the anti-Ciceronians which Donne uses with both good and ill results, is antithesis. Opposite terms or ideas are so placed as to set off each other. In its narrowest sense, this antithesis is but a pointed balance of word and structure, but it often extends to contrasted ideas and thought, so that it makes up in the main an entire sermon. Death's Duel is built up largely upon the contrast between life and death, mortality and immortality.

The womb which should be the house of life, becomes death it selfe if God leave us there.<sup>20</sup> How much worse a death, then death is this life, which so good men would so often change for death?<sup>21</sup>

If we had not sinn'd in Adam, mortality had not put on immortality, (as the Apostle speaks) nor corruption had not put on incorruption...<sup>22</sup> God does not say Live well, and thou shalt die well; well, that is, an easy, a quiet death; but live well here, and thou

20 Ibid., 147.

21 Ibid., 149.

22 Ibid., 149.

shalt live well for ever...<sup>23</sup>

Donne begins the Funeral Sermon with this striking use of antithesis: "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."<sup>24</sup> And later in the same sermon we find, "I doe the lesse feare, or abhorre Death, because I finde it in his mouth; for there is a blessing wrapped up in it; a mercy in every correction, a Resurrection upon every Death."<sup>25</sup> The White-Hall Sermon has this use of antithesis that is almost epigrammatic:

"Where one man libels with the tongue, or hand, a hundred libel with the ear; One man speaks, or writes, but a hundred applaud and countenance a calumny."<sup>26</sup>

But Donne is no master of the figure, for often it is strained and it were better he had not overused it. Note the following passages from the Funeral Sermon; similar ones can be found in each of the sermons, each demanding a second, some a third reading before the sense is clear.

They that are not fain yet by an actual  
sinne, (children newly baptized) are  
risen already in him; And they that are  
not dead yet, nay, not alive yet, not

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23 Ibid., 153  
24 Ibid., 113.  
25 Ibid., 125.  
26 Ibid., 138.



yet born, have a Resurrection in him, who was not onely the Lambe slaine from the beginning, but from before all beginnings was risen too;...<sup>27</sup>

And if there were anything permanent and durable in this world, yet we got nothing by it; If our goods were not amongst Moveables, yet we ourselves are; if they could stay with us, yet we cannot stay with them; which is another Consideration of this part.<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps the most distinctive anti-Ciceronianism in Donne's sermons is his use of short, concise sentences. At their best they heighten the style, for it is as if the desire to express an idea has shorn the thought of the impediment of words. At their worst they are an uninspired series of starts and stops. Such passages are not the rule, however, and the short sentences cannot be said to be a pitfall for Donne. There is the touch of genius in sentences like: "About midnight he was taken and bound with a kiss,"<sup>29</sup> and, "Since I have bound my senses, why should my mind be at liberty to sinne?"<sup>30</sup> or, "The Church is the spouse of Christ; Noble husbands do not easily admit defamations of their wives."<sup>31</sup>

Short sentences, furthermore, are often fitted aptly together and joined by semi-colons though some of them could very

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27 Ibid., 114.

28 Ibid., 124.

29 Ibid., 157.

30 Ibid., 21.

31 Ibid., 141.

well stand by themselves and be accounted among the best. Some of the sentences in the following selections are such.

Beloved, use godly means, and give God his liesure. You cannot beget a Sonne, and tell the Mother, I will have this Sonne borne within five Moneths; nor, when he is borne, say, you will have him past daunger of Wardship within five yeares. You cannot sowe your Corne to day, and say it shall bee above ground to morrow, and in my Barne next weeke.<sup>32</sup>

Thou canst not have so good a Title, to a subsequent blessing, as a former blessing; where thou are an ancient tenant, thou wilt look to be preferred before a stranger; and that is thy title to Gods future mercies, if thou have been formerly accustomed to them. The sun is not weary with sixe thousand yeares shining; God cannot be weary of doing good; And therefore never say God hath given me these and these temporall things, and I have scattered them wastfully, surely he will give me no more; These and these spiritual graces, and I have neglected them, abused them, surely he will give me no more.<sup>33</sup>

Some of the passages quoted in the earlier part of this chapter, particularly those upon the subject of prayer, are instances of this same masterly brevity. Let us examine a few more selections.

The whole weekes conversation, is a good paraphrase upon the Sundayes Sermon; It

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32 Ibid., 51.

33 Ibid., 83.

is too soone to aske when the clocke  
stroke eleven, Is it a good Preacher?  
For I have but halfe his sermon then,  
his owne life is the other half...<sup>34</sup>

If I should inquire upon what occasion  
God elected me and writ my name in the  
book of Life, I should sooner be afraid  
it were not so, then finde a reason why  
it should be so.<sup>35</sup>

God makes nothing of nothing now; God  
eased himselfe of that incomprehensible  
worke, and ended it in the first Sab-  
bath. But God makes great things of  
little still...<sup>36</sup>

The tree lies as it falls; 'Tis true;  
but yet it is not the last stroke that  
fells the Tree, nor the last word, nor  
the last gaspe that qualifies the Soule.<sup>37</sup>

These and many more passages like them can be found in  
the sermons. It would seem unfair, perhaps, to judge the style  
of John Donne by picked passages only were it not for the fact  
that large blocks of the sermons are cast in this same mold. But  
one passage from the White-Hall Sermon will suffice to show the  
anti-Ciceronian tone of an uninspired passage.

Men speake to you, and God speakes to  
you, and the Devill does speake to you  
too; Take heed what you hear of all  
three. In all three the words look  
two ways; for, in them, there is both  
a Videte, and a Cavete, first see that  
you doe hear them, and then take heed

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34 Ibid., 75.

35 Ibid., 81.

36 Ibid., 93

37 Ibid., 153

what you heere from them. Men will speake; and they will speake of you; Men will discourse, and you must be their subject; Men will declame, and you must be their Theme. And truely you should desire to be so: As onely man can speake, so onely man can desire to be spoken of. If gold could speake, if gold could wish, gold would not be content to lie in the darke, in the mine, but would desire to come abroad, to entertain Armies, or to erect, or to endow Civill or Ecclesiasticall buildings, He that desires to print a book, should much more desire to be a book; to do some such exemplar things, as men might read, and relate, and profit by. He that hath done nothing worth the speaking of, hath not kept the world in reparations, for his Tenement and his Terme.<sup>38</sup>

The anti-Ciceronian style in the preceding passage is unmistakeable, but common as it is in the sermons, it is not pure. There is more than a trace of Ciceronian expression also to be found. It were perhaps as foolish to expect an English style of the early seventeenth century to have no Ciceronian features as to find it without the taint of Latinism. That there are in the sermons evidences of the change-over from Latin to the vernacular can be seen in many of the passages quoted, particularly in the previous chapter. The Ciceronian elements are not hard to find either. Passages like the following are fitted in on almost every page of the sermons.

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38 Ibid., 142.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, sayes Solomon, in another sense; and in this sense too, if my tongue, suggested by my heart, and by my heart, rooted in faith, can say Non moriar, non moriar; If I can say (and my conscience doe not tell me, that I belye mine owne state) if I can say, That the blood of my Savior runs in my veines, That the breath of his Spirit quickens all my purposes, that all my deaths have their Resurrection, all my sins their remorse, all my rebellions their reconciliations, I will harken no more after this question, as it is intended de morte naturali, of a naturall death, I know I must die that death, what care I?<sup>39</sup>

Happily, however, not all passages of Ciceronic ancestry are as commonplace, for they are sometimes laden with emotion. The passage beginning "That God should let my soule fall out of his hand, into a bottomlesse pit...", quoted near the end of the third chapter, is perhaps Donne's Ciceronian style at its best. De Quincey might well have had that long passage in mind when he wrote the following in his Essay on Style:

Those who are accustomed to watch the effects of composition upon the feelings, or have had little experience in voluminous reading pursued for weeks, would scarcely imagine how much of downright physical exhaustion is produced by what is technically called the periodic style of writing: it is not the length, the ἀπεραντολογία, the paralytic flux of words: it is not even the cumbrous involution of parts within parts, separately considered, that bears so heavily

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39 Ibid., ll.

upon the attention. It is the suspense, the holding-on, of the mind until what is called the ἀπόδοσις or coming round of the sentence commences; this it is which wears out the faculty of attention. A sentence, for example, begins with a series of ifs; [in our case with a series of thats] perhaps a dozen lines are occupied with expanding the conditions under which something is affirmed or denied: here you cannot dismiss and have done with the ideas as you go along; all is hypothetic; all is suspended in air. The conditions are not fully to be understood until you are acquainted with the dependency; you must give a separate attention to each clause of this complex hypothesis, and yet having done that by a painful effort, you have done nothing at all; for you must exercise a reaction attention through the corresponding latter section, in order to follow out its relations to all parts of the hypothesis which sustained it.<sup>40</sup>

Now, we may safely say Donne was accustomed to watch the effects of composition upon feelings and he did have experience of voluminous reading pursued for weeks. His popularity as a preacher could hardly have been so great had he not held the interest of his listeners, had he, in other words, indulged more than he did in Ciceronic structure and amplitude of expression.

As a successful preacher John Donne must consciously have prepared his sermons with an eye to retaining easily the attention of his congregation. The snatches of Ciceronian style

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40 De Quincey, T., "Essay on Style," Works, iv, 204, quoted by Genung, J.F. in The Working Principles of Rhetoric, Ginn and Company, New York, 1900, 284.

that can readily be found in the sermons seem to be in him of the nature of something learned in youth and now impossible of being set aside, though he knew the power of the periodic and so probably did not want to have done with it entirely. We are told by Izaak Walton, that Donne preached

...so as showed his own heart was possessed with those very thoughts and joys that he laboured to distil into others: a preacher in earnest: weeping sometimes for his auditory, sometimes with them; always preaching to himself, like an angel from a cloud, but in none...<sup>41</sup>

It was this sincerity in Donne, this seriousness and deep conviction, this ability to be possessed of a truth and of the desire to give it to others that won him popularity. It was this same culture of character, we may call it, which developed his style into a strong, virile expression that burst the levees of tradition and sought new, straighter channels of communication in anti-Ciceronianism.

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<sup>41</sup> Walton, I., Lives, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1888, 28.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

We have concluded our study of the sermons and can now summarize our findings. In broad outline, as we have seen, the sermons are not, in their structure, imitations of Cicero. An introduction and a division of the text, of course, are preliminary to the body of the sermon, which in form is determined by the division of the text and rarely departs from it.

Donne's divergence from the classical model is most apparent and significant, however, in the absence of the Ciceronic peroration. This omission hinges directly upon Donne's distinctive prose style, which in turn must ultimately find its only adequate explanation in the character of John Donne himself. As has been observed, the emotional element in his expression can be said to be coextensive with the intellectual though these elements are seldom found evenly balanced. The keynote of the appeal to the emotions, moreover, is often sounded before the division of the text or in the division itself. In the body of the sermon there is always an emotional turn of thought, a blending of mind and heart which, as the sermon progresses, has a cumulative effect upon the emotions. In brief passages, more rarely in long ones, the emotional element often outweighs the intellectual, but the effect of Donne's fervent reasoning throughout



the sermon usually causes the development of the third or last part of the body of the sermon to be the most impassioned part of the discourse.

In general, then, we may say that Donne's thought and his emotion, his reasoning and his feeling, were so wedded as to generate a style of expression that would not brook classical dictation. The structure of the sermons is not Ciceronic, but is in line, as we have seen, with anti-Ciceronic tenets which allowed in general for "the greatest possible scope to the expression of differences of individual character, or, in other words, the greatest possible naturalness of style that is consistent with the artificial limits necessarily imposed upon literary composition."<sup>1</sup>

As for the prose style itself, we have seen that many of its features are anti-Ciceronic. Though there are passages ample in expression, closely knit in style and evidently Ciceronic, there are more perhaps which have no kinship with the traditional style. Donne's expression in these passages is simple and economical; his use of words of Anglo-Saxon origin is apt and effective and a preference for monosyllables lends the sermons a strength and directness of expression that is almost modern. Figures of speech, especially metaphor, and antithesis, are freely employed, sometimes most tastefully; at other times he uses fig-

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<sup>1</sup> Croll, Attic Prose: Lipsius, 129.

ures of speech with a seeming disregard of the killing effect of length and undue proportion. But it is Donne's brevity, his use of short, concise sentences, which marks his style as being in imitation of Seneca rather than of Cicero.

In light, then, of what we have seen in this paper, we can conclude that the prose style of Donne's sermons, in spite of lapses into the traditional Ciceronian mode of expression, is within the anti-Ciceronian current of early seventeenth century prose. We would venture to say, too, that if one knew nothing of the sermons he could get a fairly accurate a priori knowledge of their style from a study of the character of their author. In John Donne's prose both thought and feeling were uniquely conjoined. "It was ideas, not forms or colors or sounds that excited Donne's imagination and fired his fancy."<sup>2</sup> To temper his thought with roundness of expression or to deck it out for effect was not in Donne's makeup.

The flesh, so to say, of his speech was strictly conditioned by the anatomy of his thought, and his description of the style of the Holy Ghost is typically enough, a true account of his own; 'The Holy Ghost is an eloquent Author, but yet not luxuriant; he is far from penurious, but as far from a superfluous style too.'<sup>3</sup>

There is an undeniable inspiration in the sermons. Is

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2 Simpson, 8

3 Fausset, 280.

it to be wondered at that if the Holy Ghost inspire a man with a truth, he give him too the words to express it? Surely it is not surprising; nor is it strange that the truth when uttered be in the style of the Holy Ghost as that man conceived it.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Raymond L. Zeitz, S.J. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

June 27, 1948  
Date

John B. Courath, S.J.  
Signature of Adviser