

Daniel W. Doerksen. *Picturing Religious Experience: George Herbert, Calvin, and the Scriptures*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011. xiii + 241 pp. \$75.00. Review by ANNA LEWTON-BRAIN, MCGILL UNIVERSITY.

George Herbert's own comment to Nicholas Ferrar—that Ferrar would find in *The Temple*, "a picture of the many spiritual Conflicts that have past betwixt God and my Soul" (6)—holds the key, for Daniel Doerksen, to interpreting Herbert's poetry in the light of Calvin's biblical commentary. Indeed, *Picturing Religious Experience: George Herbert, Calvin, and the Scriptures*, might just as appropriately have been titled, *Picturing Spiritual Conflicts*, for the depiction of the experience of "spiritual conflicts" is the central theme that binds together Doerksen's three subjects: Herbert, Calvin, and Holy Scripture.

A "*schema*" (61) or pattern "of recurrent [spiritual] conflict and resolution" (7) in the Psalms provided a model, for Herbert and Calvin, of a literary depiction of the lived experience of an individual's relationship with God (65) through life's "vicissitudes" (200-9). Afflictions, Doerksen argues, are never accidental, but are "from God" (153-54) and are at the heart of the Reformation Christian's experience of struggling and abiding in faith. Building on Barbara Lewalski's discussion in *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (1979) of "the long slow process of sanctification" (Lewalski 287, Doerksen 61), Doerksen traces a path of "continual" (142) repentance in *The Temple*. For Doerksen, "introspection" is the first movement towards repentance and "leads to a sense of personal need and a desire to call upon God" (68). That process of turning inwards and upwards, although interrupted by afflictions (152-69), eventually leads to mortification: "the actual, though mystical participation in the death of Christ" (137). Afflictions interrupt the relationship between God and man and yet, dynamically, are the means by which God "tempers" and "tunes" the individual soul (201-5). Doerksen finds "resolutions of...conflicts" (198) in *The Temple* that inspire praise and thanksgiving (198-200), but these are always only glimpses of the (as yet unattainable) perfect and final subsuming of the self into the godhead.

Juxtaposing *The Temple* and *Country Parson* with the *Institutes* and *Commentary on the Psalms*, Doerksen draws compelling parallels

between Herbert's and Calvin's use of imagery and vocabulary. The strength of Doerksen's contribution to the argument for a "Calvinist consensus" is evident not only in his skillful selection of quotations from the *Institutes* and *Commentary* to elucidate the correlation between Herbert's and Calvin's writing, but also in the way that he attunes his readers to draw further parallels between the two authors. In Doerksen's discussion of the appropriate response to the weight of sin, for example, the recurrent use of the term "groan" (70, 114, 131), recalls "*Ephes. 4. 30*": "I sinne not to my grief alone, / But to my Gods too; he doth grone" (lines 17-18). The speaker's desire to "grone" with Christ in His passion is further evidence of the inner conflict of "grief" in Herbert's verse (133) and of the desire to imitate the "inimitable Christ" (133-34).

Laying the groundwork for his reading of Herbert's verse within the biblical "*schema*" as described by Calvin (and Athanasius before him) (62-75), Doerksen provides an informative overview of Calvin's influence in the English church of Herbert's day and investigates the reception of Herbert's poetry in the seventeenth century (Chapters 1 and 2). Doerksen focuses his discussion on Calvin's less polemical work and views Herbert as theologically conservative; for Doerksen, Calvin and Herbert are essentially moderates. He notes, for example, that Calvin, "following St. Paul and Augustine among others," taught foreordination "without regarding it as central to the Christian faith" (5), and that, although "Calvin and Herbert both have a high view of doctrine, what matters in their common texts is not formal theology but a focus on personal spiritual experience" (1).

Doerksen's reading of Calvin and Herbert is nuanced and always careful. He critiques the generalizations and reductions that have lead some scholars to use Calvin as a totem for the doctrine of predestination (5), or to read Herbert's poetry solely in the light of Walton's Laudian and hagiographical *Life* (37, similarly 10, 38, and 43). Indeed, Doerksen ends his book with a rousing call to church historians to "get away from preoccupations with predestination or church polity or extremism to attend to what the moderates of the time were saying and writing," and thus, to give "more attention to the 'Calvinist consensus'" (213). Likewise, literary scholars will find in *Picturing Religious Experience* a strong argument to read not only

Herbert within the framework of that “consensus,” but also, to study Donne, Bacon, and other seventeenth-century conformists in this illuminating middle way.

Wendy Beth Hyman, ed. *The Automaton in English Renaissance Literature: Literary and Scientific Cultures of Early Modernity*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2011. x + 210 pp. \$99.95. Review by JESSICA WOLFE, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL.

This collection of nine essays, published by Ashgate’s Literary and Scientific Cultures of Early Modernity series, examines automata, automaticity, and “literary fantasies of animation” in early modern English literature. The essays helpfully contextualize the study of automata in a range of early modern philosophical, aesthetic, and religious discourses and practices: Cartesian metaphysics and Lucretian atomism, botany and hylozoism, the Protestant distrust of liturgical set forms, royal pageantry, and anti-theatrical sentiment. They also speak, in varied and (for the most part) admirably subtle ways, to recent critical trends such as animal studies, “thing theory,” speculative materialism, and posthumanism. Hyman’s marvelous introduction ensures a strong cohesiveness throughout the volume and also provides a useful introduction to automata both real and fictional in early modern English culture, objects she astutely describes as provoking ambivalent, perplexed, and conflicting reactions of “exhilaration and terror.” As Hyman observes, “the animation of material is the *Ur*-narrative of the western imagination.” The volume does an especially nice job of illustrating the bifurcation of that narrative into fantasies of “poetic triumph over the limits of material” and corresponding nightmares of “devolution and disassembly of personhood” (3-4).

The volume is divided into three parts. Part 1, “Creations, Creatures, and Origins” is the least unified of the three, principally because Scott Maisano’s lead essay, “Descartes avec Milton: the Automata in the Garden,” has so little to do with the kinds of automata (speaking statues, mechanical birds, iron grooms) that populate the rest of the book’s chapters. Instead, Maisano makes an ambitious yet deeply flawed argument that Milton’s theodicy in *Paradise Lost* is rooted in