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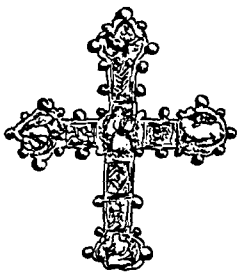
Private Devotion in England on the Eve of the Reformation

J. Rhodes



Thesis submitted to the University of Durham for the degree of PhD

Advent 1974

PRIVATE DEVOTION IN ENGLAND ON THE EVE OF THE REFORMATION

illustrated from works printed or reprinted

in the period 1530-40

J. RHODES

vol.I.

Ph.D. Thesis

Advent 1974

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ABSTRACT

This is the first attempt to provide a detailed description of the different types of devotional literature (excluding all liturgical books, biblical translations, doctrinal and polemic works, saints' lives and sermons) available in print to English readers in the years immediately preceding England's break with Rome. It shows that there were far more Catholic works of devotion, many of them written or printed for the first time 1520 - 35, than has previously been recognized. It is also clear that this flourishing literature came to a sudden and decisive end in 1535, although the tradition lived on unofficially to be taken up by the English Recusants. The leading themes of this traditional literature are indicated in chapters on treatises about confession and prayer, the mass, the life and Passion of Christ, on tribulation, death and the Last Things, while more general teaching about the Christian life addressed to religious, contemplatives and lay people, and the humanist and Protestant contribution to this literature is also discussed. The treatises are doctrinally sound and on the whole advocate moderation and common-sense; they avoid many of the weaknesses of popular non-literary devotion, including the Mariolatry and excessive morbidity for which the late middle ages are often condemned. Some of the weaknesses of the Catholic tradition are suggested by comparison with the more rational and secular attitudes of Christian humanist authors, notably Erasmus, available during the 1530s. The Protestants, whose treatises become increasingly common, despite official censorship, during the decade until they dominate its second half, carry the humanists' reform much further, and break with the Catholic Church. Traditional devotional topics and audiences are displaced by doctrinal and biblical teaching addressed to lay people. The Bible replaces the Church's authority and there is more emphasis on the spiritual and social dimensions of religion.

CONTENTS

Volume I

PREFACE p.i

INTRODUCTION p.1

PART I De Vita Christiana p.10

(Lyfe of prestes p.12; Mirk's Instructions p.15; Cura clericalis p.16; Exornatorium curatorum p.16)

Treatises for religious p.20
(Myrroure of oure lady p.23; Whitford's Pype or Tonne p.27; The summe of the holy scripture p.27; Bush's Extripacion p.34; Dyetary of ghostly helthe p.39; Tree & xii. frutes p.42; Alcock's Mons perfectionis p.46; Abbaye of the holy Ghost p.47; Bonde's Pilgrymage p.52; Doctrynall of Mekenesse p.61)

Treatises concerning the contemplative life p.73
(Methley's Pystyl p.75; Ancrene Riwle p.75; Aelred's De institutione inclusarum p.76; Rolle's Form of living p.78; Rolle's Contemplacyons p.80; Hilton's Scala perfectionis p.82; Stimulus amoris p.100; Julian of Norwich's Revelations p.106; Dionysius' Mirroure of golde p.112; Austin's Myrrour of the chyrche p.113; Bernard's Golden epistle p.114; A Kempis' Imitatio Christi p.120)

Confession and prayer p.130
(Erasmus' Forme of confession p.132; Hilton on scrupulosity p.135; Bonde's Deuoute treatyse p.137; Boke of ghoostly fader p.144; Serche of confession p.146; Gararde's Interpretacyon... of the masse bk.III p.147; Pomander of prayer p.155; Dyurnall p.162)

Treatises for lay people p.165
(Legrand's Good manners p.167; Shepherd's Kalendar p.168; Hilton's Vita mixta p.173; Whitford's Werke p.176; Hawes' Conuercyon of swerers p.182; Churche of yuell men p.183; Whitford's Holy instructyons p.185; St. Isidore's Counsailes p.189; Maydens crosse rewe p.191; Of euyll tonges p.192)

Treatises by humanist authors p.197
(Aristotle's Secreta secretorum p.201; Dictes and sayings p.203; Erasmus' Adagia p.204; Hawes' Pastyme p.209; Hawes' Exemple of vertu p.210; Cebes p.210; Cicero's De Officiis p.215; Seneca's Forme and rule, Martin's Rule p.217; More's Boke of the fayre gentylwoman p.220; Seneca and Petrarch, De Remediis p.221; Seneca and Plutarch's Quyete of mynde p.222; Boethius' De consolatione p.224; Vives' Introduction to wisedome p.227; Colet's Monycion p.229; Vives' Instruction p.230; Lupset's Of Charitie p.232; Lupset's Exhortation p.235; Erasmus' Enchiridion p.243; Erasmus' Paraclesis etc. p.251)

Protestant treatises p.257
(Rykes' Ymage of loue p.257; J. G.'s Myrrour...of lyfe p.262; Frith's Mirroure to know thyself p.265; The summe of the holye scripture p.266; A proclamacyon of the hygh emperour p.273; Heauenly acte p.273; Pylbarough's Commemoration p.276; Prayer and complaynt of the ploweman p.281; Lanterne of lyght p.281; Compendious olde treatyse p.282; Byddell-Marshall primer p.285; Hamilton's Dyuers frutful gatherynges p.286; Joye's Compendyouse somme p.287; Declaracyon and power of the chrysten fayth p.288; Johnson's Confortable exhortation p.289; Treatise of faith, hope and charite p.289; Fountayne...of lyfe p.294; Epitome of the psalmes p. 294; Boke of prayers p.295; Storys and prophesis p.297; Summary of Becon's works p.300.)

PART II Et verbum caro factum est p.305

Treatises on the mass p.310
(The doctrinal approach and preparation for communion p.312; Schort tretyse p.312; More's treatises on the sacrament and the passion p.313; Erasmus' Epistle...concernynge the veryte of the sacrament p.314; Nausea's Sermon p.317; Mirk's Instructions, Stimulus amoris p.319; A Kempis' Imitatio p.320; Gararde's Interpretacyon p.323; Whitford's Preparacion p.328. Interpretations of the mass and devotions to accompany it p.337; Bonde's Medytatyons p.337; Gararde's Interpretacyon bk.II. p.341; Lay folks' mass book p.344; A Kempis' Imitatio bk.IV p.347.)

The life of Christ and some associated devotions p.353
(Bonaventura's Speculum vitae Christi p.356; Simon's Fruyte of redempcyon p.364.
Rosary books etc. p.369; Rosary of our sauyour Iesu p.371; Rosarye of our lady p.373; (Life of Jesus) p.374; Mystic sweet rosary p.375; Golden letany p.381; Jesus psalter p.384)

The Passion of Christ p.390
(Fewterer's Myrrour or glasse p.391; Generall free pardon p.396; (Dialogue...betwene...Chryste and a synner) p.409; In honour of ye passion of our lorde p.414; Lamentacyon of our lady p.418; Complaynt of Mary Magdaleyne p.419)

Prayers and devotions associated with Christ's passion p.421
(A gloryous medytacyon p.427)

Devotions associated with the blood and wounds of Christ p.432
(Contemplacyon...of the shedynge of the blood of our lorde... seuen tymes p.432; Tauerne of goostly helthe p.437)

The resurrection faith of the reformers p.447
("A frutefull...remembraunce of the passion" in Certeine prayers p.448; Catherine Parr's Lamentacion p.451; Wyse's Consolacyon p.453)

PART III Per multas tribulationes oportet intrare in regnum dei p.460
(Assaute and conquest of heuen p.462; XII profytes/The Rote p.468; More's Dyalogue of comforte p.475; Persons' Christian directory p.479; Frith's Preparacion to the Crosse p.481)

The contemplation of death p.488
(Memento mori p.489; Whitford's Dayly exercyse p.494.
The image of death p.499.
The "ubi sunt" and "quid profuit" themes p.504; Becon's Prayse of death p.510.
De contemptu mundi p.513; Erasmus' De contemptu mundi p.519; Cyprian's Sermon...of mortalitie p.527)

The business of dying p.533
(Lindsay's Complaynt...of a popinjay p.533; (Fantasy of the passyon of ye fox) p.534; Wyll of the deuyll p.535; Erasmus' Preparation to deathe p.537; Erasmus' Funus p.540; Comfortable exhortacion against the chance of death p.545)

The ars moriendi p.548
(Lytyll treatyse...ars moriendi p.548; Doctrynall of dethe p.549; Frith's Preparacion to deeth p.559; To teche a man to dye p.560; Myrrour or glasse for them that be syke p.562; Lupset's Treatise teachynge the waye of dyenge well p.569)

The four last things p.576
(Death p.577; Complaynte that ye soule maketh p.579; Fisher's Spirituall consolation p.584; Deyenge creature p.586.
Judgement p.593; Jerome's IV tokens p.594; Cordiale p.597; Crafte to lyue well p.598.
Purgatory p.602; A lytell boke...of purgatorye p.603.
Hell p.607; Exemples howe mortall synne p.611
Heaven p.618)

CONCLUSION p.626

Volume II

ABBREVIATIONS p.i

NOTES
Preface p.1
Introduction p.4
Part I p.12
Part II p.177
Part III p.265
Conclusion p.369

BIBLIOGRAPHY
I p.372
II p.457

ILLUSTRATIONS

PLEASE NOTE

Roman numerals in the right-hand margin refer to the illustrations at the end of volume II.
Quotations follow the original, except for the expansion of contracted forms.

PREFACE

The prose literature of the first half of the sixteenth century has been unduly neglected by scholars, falling as it does between 1500, when the Middle English period is usually deemed to have ended, and the age of Elizabeth. Little of the material used in this study has been edited or reprinted over the last hundred years, and despite references to a number of items by bibliographers including H.S.Bennett and F.A.Gasquet[1] or by historians, such as A.G.Dickens, P.Heath, P.Janelle, J.K.McConica and W.A.Pantin,[2] there are few critical studies or articles on specific works.[3] Because so little work has been done on the literature of the period it seemed better to begin with a detailed study of a limited period than with a more general survey of thirty or fifty years. I have chosen to make a detailed study of the decade 1530 - 40, which covers some of the most decisive legislation of the Reformation, including the abolition of "the usurped power of the Pope" and the dissolution of the monasteries which marks the official end of one tradition of English spirituality. During these ten years the traditional catholic devotional literature, including Latin service-books and Horae, continued to be written and printed, but the new Protestant writings also began to circulate more widely, supported towards the end of the decade by translations of the Bible, numerous biblical expositions and official Primers in English. In the discussion that follows the word Catholic is used to denote the traditional religious views and practices of the English Church before the Reformation, and later maintained by the English Recusants - Roman Catholic would have suggested a degree of centralized control which did not really exist until after the Council of Trent. The words Protestant and Reformed are used interchangeably

without any attempt to distinguish between the shades of theological opinion among the various English and continental supporters of reform.

Devotion, with which this study is concerned, is difficult to define. It can include prayer, meditation, study or religious instruction. It may denote a particular act of worship, or relate more generally to the feelings which accompany or grow from worship, and it can be extended to include virtuous resolutions and good deeds.[4] Its setting may vary from church to family home or cloister, from the layman's place of work to the recluse's cell. It can be an entirely private and solitary undertaking, or it may be guided by a spiritual counsellor, or it may be pursued within an intimate group of family, friends or fellow religious. Even though it may make use of official primers or parts of the liturgy, observe set hours, or pursue a regular course of meditation or bible reading, it is to be distinguished from public worship and the official obligations of religion by the element of personal choice. Private devotion is not an obligatory part of religion, even though it is a necessary condition for growth in the Christian life. It cannot be directly controlled by official legislation. Although the availability of suitable books and changes in public worship are likely to influence it in time, it does not depend ultimately on books, the liturgy or the advice of spiritual counsellors. Much of it is made up of silent thoughts and prayers, undefined attitudes and habitual practices. The full content of private devotion and its more subtle changes of emphasis are not recorded, or at least not until the habit of spiritual autobiography developed among the Puritans.[5] Nevertheless, a study of the extant devotional literature from 1530 to 1540 should

offer some insights into the interests, beliefs and practices which helped to inform the spirituality of the early sixteenth century.

In order to distinguish devotional writings from other kinds of religious literature certain principles of selection have been followed. I have based my study on books printed in English between 1530 and 1540, irrespective of their original date of composition or where they were printed. Certain categories of religious literature are not included in my discussion. Some, such as liturgical works and primers, expositions of parts of the Bible, especially the psalms, postils and sermons, and saints' lives, represent large, separable, groups of material, which demand, and in some cases have already received,[6] separate treatment. Other works have been excluded because it seemed to me that their primary interest was controversial, doctrinal, political or social rather than devotional. Thus few of the better-known works of the period, such as those by More, Tyndale, Rastell, Starkey or Simon Fish, are discussed in the following pages. However, I have not always felt bound to adhere rigidly to these principles; on occasion I have made use of material which is earlier or later in date as well as some drawn from "excluded" categories, and there are a few references to manuscript sources. In my iconographical illustrations and architectural examples, I have tried to use only material that was to be found in England, either as a native product or imported.[7]

The organisation of material has been difficult. While it is obviously necessary to break down such a large mass of material into smaller groups for discussion, there is always the danger that these arbitrary categories will assume too much importance. I have therefore tried to keep such categorization to a minimum and I have chosen to emphasize

topics and illustrations which are common to different types of devotional literature. Also, there are other reasons why these categories cannot be too rigidly defined. Not all books fit neatly into one category. A sermon originally delivered during a church service or to a large public audience at St. Paul's cross can become a treatise of private devotion when subsequently published. A large number of books were of mixed contents, with several treatises of different kinds placed between the covers of one volume, or instructional and meditative material may occur in the same treatise. I have tried to group works together in such a way as to suggest the main devotional interests of the period, the different contexts into which they might be introduced and the ways in which various writers handled them; such "cross-referencing" inevitably involves repetition. Because of the unfamiliarity and inaccessibility of many of the treatises discussed I have provided a narrative summary of their contents, and this too involves repetition. Yet, in some ways such repetition reflects the character of the works discussed, with their broad uniformity of approach tempered by the variety of their presentation.

It is not easy to pursue this kind of study away from the libraries of London, Oxford and Cambridge, with their immediate and constant access to original sixteenth century material, to the University Microfilm series of most STC items and to their wide range of secondary works. Away from those centres the area of reference is very much more restricted, and unpredictable delays, often lengthy, in obtaining material make it impossible to pursue every promising lead.

I am grateful to the librarians of Corpus Christi, Exeter and Merton colleges, Oxford; Pembroke College, Cambridge; Blairs College, Aberdeen; St. Chad's and Ushaw colleges, Durham, for permission to consult books in

their care. The staff of Durham University library and the Bodleian have been particularly helpful. Among individuals in Durham who have provided useful assistance at various stages are Miss J.Annable, Mr. G. Bonner and Mr. N.Palmer; Dr. D.M. Rogers has given much help and encouragement on my visits to Oxford. I should also like to thank the Revd. R.P. McDermott who supervised the earlier stages of my work; Mr. D.E.L.Crane who has patiently read and commented on its later stages; and Mrs J.McGough who has done the typing. I am particularly indebted to Dr.A.I.Doyle for his help: his wide knowledge of late medieval religious literature is an invaluable source of information and a challenge to the "yonge begynner". Finally, it is a pleasure to acknowledge a more personal debt of gratitude, to my parents for their constant support and encouragement and to my husband for his patience, understanding, and helpful advice: those who have lived with a thesis will know what he has had to endure.

INTRODUCTION

The years 1530 - 40 saw two decisive events of the English Reformation: the break with Rome and the abolition of the religious orders. The Submission of the Clergy 1532, followed by the Restraint of Annates and of Appeals[1] and, in 1534, the final abolition of "the usurped power of the Pope"[2] effected by the transfer of clerical jurisdiction from Rome to the King. Although individual religious houses had been sequestrated and suppressed before 1536,[3] systematic dissolution of all houses whose annual income was less than £200[4] did not begin until after the compilation of the Valor Ecclesiasticus 1535 - 6.[5] Opposition to the closure of the religious houses was one of the grievances of the Northern Rising[6] which, according to Dickens, "formed the major crisis of the dynasty".[7] A number of houses implicated in the Rising surrendered 1536 - 7.[8] Two years later the Act for the Dissolution of the Greater Monasteries was passed and March 1540 saw the surrender of the last religious houses in England.[9]

The first official pronouncement of the English Church's doctrine was contained in the Ten Articles of 1536.[10] By the ambiguity of their wording and their omissions these went some way towards accommodating the Lollard and Lutheran views of some clergy, but their very vagueness made them unsatisfactory.[11] The Bishops' Book of 1537 was a shade more conservative in its exposition, but was still capable of being claimed by both parties as "the fulfilment of their programme".[12] However, the Six Articles[13] of 1539 reverted to an unambiguous statement of traditional Catholic beliefs. The minority of higher clergy who favoured reform saw this as a defeat; bishops Latimer and Shaxton resigned their sees in protest. Yet it is probably true that "this Statute reflected the religion of the vast majority of people in this country at the time".[14] Such official legislation on doctrinal matters would have had little immediate effect at parish level beyond producing

perhaps a vague feeling of uncertainty regarding future changes. Doctrinal matters had previously been debated exclusively in Latin and knowledge of the Church's teachings among parishioners was, for the most-part, very rudimentary and not the subject of popular discussion.

Some of the items in the Royal Injunctions, drawn up by Cromwell and issued in 1536 and 1538,[15] had a more immediate impact on the general public. Veneration of images and pilgrimages were both criticized. The public exposure of popular objects of pilgrimage such as the Boxley Rood, the holy blood of Hailes and the Welsh image Darvell Gadarn was the practical implementation of such criticism.[16] Such examples encouraged individuals to take the law into their own hands, but the destructive zeal of some[17] was probably balanced by those who lamented the damage done to the traditional fabric and decoration of their churches.[18] Dislike of images and pilgrimages together with criticism of the traditional doctrine of the mass, attacks on the prerogatives of the clerical hierarchy and demands for the Scriptures in English, were of course characteristic of Lollard views.[19] Although by the early sixteenth century the movement was scattered and mainly confined to tradesmen and labourers, it continued to trouble the authorities.[20] Actual contact between Lollards and early Protestants, whose background tended to be more academic,[21] was probably not so important as the broad similarity of their views on ceremonies, superstitions and the Eucharist, their tendency towards anti-clericalism and their desire for a biblical religion.[22] In several instances Lollard works anticipated the arguments of the Reformers and a few were printed during the 1530's. It has been argued[23] that Lollard books and teaching helped to give the Reformation cause the authority of historical support and a disctinctively English ancestry; almost certainly there would have been support for practical measures of reform in areas of previous Lollard activity.

One of the most significant items of the 1538 injunctions concerned the provision of the Bible in English:

> You shall provide...one book of the whole Bible of the largest volume, in English, and the same set up in some convenient place within the said church.... where as your parishioners may most commodiously resort to the same and read it....24

Since Arundel's legislation of 1407, possession of the English Bible, except in special cases, had been regarded as virtual proof of Lollard sympathies.[25] The publication of Tyndale's translation of the New Testament in 1526 was followed by several others between 1535 and the appearance of the officially sanctioned Great Bible of 1539.[26] Although 1543 saw some limitation of public access to the Scriptures, the English Bible could not be banished by legislation and it exerted an increasingly powerful influence on religious literature.[27] The establishment of the English Bible was in a large measure due to the efforts of Thomas Cromwell.[28] An apparent supporter of moderate reform,[29] he was responsible for much official legislation on religious matters, and he seems to have encouraged a number of authors whose writings were sympathetic to his policies.[30] But Cromwell was not alone in realizing the importance of the press and in attempting to use it to influence public opinion and further policies.

The 1530s were the first time the English press was widely used by opposing sides to disseminate their own propaganda in the vernacular and to refute the views of their opponents. But even in non-controversial literature there are signs of an increased awareness of the advantages of the printed text, as well as its dangers. Richard Whitford notes the most obvious advantage of printed over hand-written books, when he says that "wrytunge vnto me is very tedyuouse"[31] and rather than "wryte it agayne & agayne" he decided to have <u>A dayly exercyse and experyence of dethe</u> printed. Printed books not

only produced a multiplicity of copies,[32] but they were much easier to read. On another occasion a new edition is justified by telling the reader: "you haue them here in a more perfecte lettre than you had before. And also more truely prynted. .For...the tother letter was moche vicyous and faulty".[33] Faults in the text could be the result of a "copie somewhat combrouse, What for the enterlining and yll writing"[34] but generally the standard of English press-work, especially when compared with Parisian or Venetian work, was not high.[35] However, with the exception of The Pype or Tonne of the lyfe of perfection, all Whitford's works were small, easily "portable" and frequently of similar format so that they might be bound together.[36] Like other printed books they were also comparatively cheap and so available to more people.[37]

In an age when copyright laws were unknown, and particularly in a period of controversy such as the 1530s, the problems of piracy were very real. Works circulated in manuscript and inaccurate copies could easily be produced by hasty copying or by deliberate design. Thus the translator of the Meditacyons of saynt Bernarde explains how:

> hastely after the translacyon herof: before it was duely correcte & ordred: it was by deuoute persones transumpte & copied I wote not how ofte/ayenst my wyll: Therfore haue I now....for to auoyde & eschewe the jeopardy & hurte yt maye come by that yt was not duely corrected:put it more‖ dylygently corrected & ordred to the In pryntes: in lettynge & distruccyon of all other copied after ye forsayd vncorrected translacyon. And I counsell & exhorte all yt haue those same/ to leue them as doubtfull & jeopardous. 38.

Thus print could help to establish a correct copy. George Joye's translation of Osiander's The coniectures of the ende of the worlde refers to the control of various manuscript copies which the author recalled, corrected, and then had printed.[39] But although print offered some protection against unauthorized interpolation and alteration of the text, it could not entirely check such activities. Whitford, for instance, found one of his own works omitted

from a volume and a "heretycall weke" bound in its place and passed off as his. He warns his audience "rede not those bokes that go forth without named auctours. For (doubtles) many of them that seme very deuout and good werkes ben full of heresyes".[40] Nicholas Wyse also draws his readers' attention to the potential dangers of anonymous works, which are often regarded with suspicion and attributed to the wrong authors.[41] The proportion of authors who did put their name to their works perhaps rose a little during the 1530s and 1540s, while polemic pieces occasionally appeared under pseudonyms, but during the 1530s probably about half the devotional works were still published anonymously.[42]

During the decade both Church and Crown sought to exercise some form of control over the press in England and over the importation of English books printed abroad. Hirsch suggests that as early as the 1520s authority over post-publication censorship was vested in town mayors[43] and that by 1529 nearly all legislation concerning the control of the press was issued by or for the Crown.[44] One of the earliest lists of heretical books, possession of which would bring a person under suspicion of heresy, was issued in 1527 and included Tyndale's New Testament and his Obedience of a Christian Man and Parable of the Wicked Mammon as well as Simon Fish's Supplicacyon of the Beggers.[45] The following year Sir Thomas More was licensed to read the heretical books that were circulating in England in order to refute their errors.[46] A much longer list of proscribed books was issued in 1530.[47] In addition to Tyndale the names of the continental reformers Luther, Oecolampedius, Zwingli, Melanchthon and Francis Lambert figured prominently as well as English authors like Fish and William Roy. It was made an offence to print, publish, buy, sell, handle, translate or edit any of the books named, unless licensed to do so by the bishop. That same year

a list of errors and heresies contained in Tyndale's Obedience and Wicked Mammon and in other English books including the Primer[48] was published by Archbishop Warham and Cuthbert Tunstal.[49] It seems to have been on the King's initiative that the prelates were called together to discuss these books. Certainly the next list of heretical books was published by the King's authority.[50] As well as the spiritual dangers of heresy, the civil repercussions of sedition and the threat to England's peace are mentioned, and mayors, bailiffs and constables are to join the clergy in enforcing the King's will. But the Crown was as incapable as the Church of exercising any efficient control over the ever increasing number of books printed in England and abroad.[51] The circulation of proscribed books was probably somewhat restricted but they remained available to those who had suitable contacts and who were prepared to take the risk of being found in possession of them.

English printers of the 1530s do not, on the whole, seem to have restricted their religious publications to one particular shade of religious opinion. Thomas Godfray, for instance, printed the Imitatio Christi, St. Bernard's Golden Epistle and extracts from St. Bridget's Revelations, all highly traditional works; Erasmus' Epystell...concernyng the forbedynge of eatynge of flesshe; the collection of biblical extracts called The fountayne or well of lyfe and Tyndale's Pathway into Scripture which are both reformed works. Robert Redman, whose main business seems to have been printing law books, also ranged from the traditional devotional works of Simon, Anker of London Wall, the Carthusian author of The Pomander of Prayer, works by Whitford and John Fewterer of Syon Abbey, to works by Erasmus,[52] an old Lollard book The lanterne of lyght[53] and reformed works such as Prayers of the Byble[54] and The summe of the holy scripture.[55] However, a few printers seem to have shown a preference for particular types of devotional literature.

Thus Thomas Berthelet, royal printer from 1530 to 1547, seems during the 1530s [56] to have concentrated particularly on humanist authors including Erasmus, Elyot, Lupset and Vives, whose work was congenial to the type of reform being encouraged by the government.[57] Wynkyn de Worde, whose activities span the period 1493 - 1535, and whose output of devotional books 1530 -34 was substantial, shows an exclusive preference for traditional works.[58] A number of these, such as Hilton's Scala perfectionis, the Speculum Vitae Christi attributed to St. Bonaventura, Mirk's Festial, The abbaye of the holy Ghost and The.xii.profytes of tribulacyon, circulated widely in manuscript during the fifteenth century and all were printed by de Worde before 1500. They were re-printed by de Worde, often for the last time (before the 19th century), during the 1530s. Indeed, few of the devotional works - or for that matter the school books by Whittinton and Stanbridge - printed by him reappeared let alone sustained any popularity after 1534: Erasmus' De Civilitate Morum Puerilium and his Enchiridion[59] are the only obvious exceptions. Do De Worde's publications then distort the balance between traditional and reformed devotion during the 1530s, by giving undue weight to the former? I think not. De Worde was an experienced business man, and it is unlikely that he would have printed so many of the books he obviously preferred,[60] if he could not have sold them. Several of them went through a number of editions between 1500 and the 1530s, which argues a fairly steady market.[61] Robert Copland, who was closely associated with De Worde,[62] also produced exclusively traditional devotional works under his own imprint.[63] De Worde's publications seem to high-light a general change which occured about the middle of the decade, with more traditional works tending to be produced in greater quantities before about 1535 and reformed literature becoming more frequent in the last few years of the decade. The increasing popularity of biblical-reformed devotion also helps to justify the movement towards political conservatism in the last few years of the decade which Lacey Baldwin Smith

sees as the government's reaction to the probable consequences of its encouragement of religious reformation.[63A].

On an individual level too, the distinction between the traditional Catholic and the person who supported the reformed position was not at all clear-cut, except in the more extreme cases. There was a considerable area of overlap, for example, between Reformers and the Catholics who accepted the need for reform within the Church, notably Christian humanists such as John Colet, Erasmus and Richard Whitford, monk of Syon, who advocated the need "to gyue studie and diligence...rather to refourme and amende" what was amiss than to indulge in the destructive and blasphemous polemic of the Reformers.[64] It is worth remembering that the Reformers of the 1530s and for some years after had all grown to maturity in the traditional Catholic faith,[65] and the extent to which men were prepared to adapt their traditional beliefs to accommodate changing political or personal circumstances varied considerably. The personal history of numerous Tudor prelates from the reign of Henry VIII until the accession of Elizabeth I, with their unpredictable changes of opinion and their recantations, who were nevertheless prepared on other occasions to suffer deprivation, imprisonment and even death for their beliefs, warns against making any rigid distinction between conservatives and reformers.[66] Those who did not hold public positions doubtless found it easier to alter their views and, if they saw reason to do so, change sides.[67] A number, like some of the participants in the Pilgrimage of Grace, may have thrown in their lot with one side rather than another for reasons which had little to do with religion.[68] There is a similar ambiguity about a number of devotional works printed during the 1530s which lack the distinguishing features of traditional catholicism, such as devotion to the sacrament of the altar, affective descriptions of Christ crucified or the

treatment of catechetical material according to the familiar sevenfold lists of sins, virtues and so on, but which show no signs of the polemic outbursts and hostile criticism of traditional customs which disfigure so many of the more outspoken reformed writers. There were many shades and degrees of reformed opinion and in the England of the 1530s there was no unified party of reformers, nor any coherent and systematic set of doctrines. Treatises such as Frith's Preparation to the Crosse, and to Deathe and A goodly treatise of faith, hope, and charite are salutary reminders of the existence of a moderate Protestantism, which is all too often obscured by the controversial writings of better known reformers such as Tyndale and Latimer. In the field of devotion the distinction between traditional catholic literature and the intense biblicism and new doctrines of the reformers is less clearly drawn than in the controversial writings of the two sides, or even than in public life.

I

"De Vita Christiana".

(Treatises for religious; on the contemplative life; on confession and prayer; for lay people; by classical and humanist authors; Protestant treatises).

Devotional literature, which included lives of Christ and of the saints, sets of meditations and prayers, was a comparatively small section of what might broadly be called religious literature. Liturgical books, polemical pieces and works of general instruction, edification and exhortation accounted for a much larger proportion of the religious press than the strictly devotional.[1] Private prayer and meditation was only one part of the Christian life: another part involved the more active duties of church-going , alms-giving and good works. The Christian also needed instruction in the beliefs and practices of his faith, and the teaching he received would help to shape the pattern of his life and to determine the form and content of his private devotions. Many of the instructional treatises were of a composite character and their contents sometimes included actual prayers or meditations, or else provided material which could be used as the basis for meditation. Instruction was rarely divorced entirely from some devotional application. On occasion it seems as though compilers, translators and publishers tried to cram as much as possible, in both quantity and variety, between the covers of one volume[2], and books of mixed contents seem to have been very popular.[3] For those who were literate such volumes offered teaching wider in scope, more varied and lasting than the

verbal instruction to be derived from sermons or the conscientious priest in confession, or from the very elementary instruction supplied by the church decorations - murals, stained glass and carvings - and in some places from performances of morality, creed and paternoster plays[4]. Books of general instruction and spiritual guidance are important, not only for what they have to say about prayer, beliefs, sins and virtues, but also for the attitudes they reveal towards various aspects of the Christian life. They help to illuminate the wider spiritual background against which particular devotions developed.

The type of instruction given and its extent was governed by the training and intellectual capacity of the teacher and his audience. Those who gave instruction on religious matters from the pulpit and in confession were either in holy orders or professed religious, and the majority of catholic treatises printed during the 1530s whose authors are known seem to have been religious[5]. Although it is much less obvious because of the greater range of their teaching and their interest in academic matters, it is worth noting that most of the humanist authors were ordained or had taken religious vows[6] and most of the earlier Protestant authors too seem to have been ordained.[7] Thus, for those who taught and wrote about specifically religious topics, Christianity was likely to have been their principal means of support and full-time occupation. Their profession set them apart from the life of lay-people. The authors of devout treatises were separated from the occupations and worries of daily life by the walls of their cloister and the Catholic parish

priest was also distinguished from his parishioners by his celibacy and by the possession of a special mysterious power, seen especially in relation to the sacraments.[8] Until the 1530s most works of spiritual guidance were intended for religious readers - a particular nun[9] or convent[10] or more generally for those who lived under vows[11] - although many seem to have circulated among lay-people connected with religious houses.[12] Even where a work was addressed to an audience outside the cloister, such as The abbaye of the holy Ghost, the superiority of the religious life was generally assumed and the religious virtues extolled. But the events of the Reformation altered this religious dominance. The last religious houses were dissolved in 1540 and two years earlier the public had officially been given access to the Scriptures in their own language - an end for which the Lollards had long campaigned.[13] This availability of the Bible opened to all much of the secret knowledge hitherto held by the clergy and the power and privilege of the priest was further weakened by Protestant "memorialist" doctrines of the Eucharist.[14] The literature of general religious instruction available in print during the 1530s was largely traditional in outlook but a substantial number of works were printed which gave clear warning of the changes to come.

A detailed exposition of the dignity and office of the priest, as well as a consideration of some clerical vices, was included in The Orcherd of Syon V:4, but the fullest treatment of the priest's duties and failings is given in The lyfe of prestes attributed to Dionysius Carthusiensis and printed during the 1530s by Robert Redman.

Most of the book is devoted to a minute analysis of the behaviour, dress, duties and other occupations of priests but a few chapters consider the origin and institution of the priesthood and matters concerning the possession and use of property and the dangers of pluralism. Like Whitford, the author is critical of contemporary church life, especially the break-down of effective discipline:

> howe greatly ought we to bewayle the abhominacion of the worlde that nowis. Howe much is this miserable & deformyd estate of the church to be lamentyd: in whome other no ponyshement at all: or els the ponyshement of the purse is extendyd vpon wanton prestes, clerkes and regulars: whyche daylye are permytted to walowe in theyr myscheuous liuynge to the vicious occasion and euyll example of the lay people. The regular visitacion of clerkes is to none effecte/for many of them do so reioyce that they be so exempityd/ that they may not be correctyd nother of the deane/nor yet of the byshoppe. 15

He warns against having confidence in unreasonable dispensations and forbids exemptions and liberties based on accustomed usage.[16] He is critical of the way in which men "runne helonge in to holy orders without any reuerence or consideratyon". Men are made priests in whom avarice, ambition, desire for an easy life and especially lechery are the dominant motives[17]. The author accordingly devotes considerable attention to the virtue of chastity[18] and to the regulation of contact and conduct between clerks or regulars and women.[19] He has also much to say about the evils of priestly avarice[20] and the need to live within the allotted stipend, reminding his readers that "the ecclesyastical goodes be the patrymonye and heritage of the poore people":

> That thou witholdyst/is the fode & bred of them
> that be hungry. Thyne apparayle that thou
> putyst vp is the clothyng of them that be nakid.
> Thy money which thou hydest in the erthe/and
> dyst enclose in thy cofer is the veray redemption
> of men beynge in calamyte mysery & captyuyte. 21

The Protestant reformers were not alone in their criticism of clergy and regulars. Again, the reformers' criticisms about the church service are echoed in this author's condemnation of vain, warbling descants[22] and he comments on the rash, careless singing of their services by many religious who would show even a worldly king or prelate far more reverence than they offer to God.

It is matters of behaviour and dress, however, which the author considers in most detail and the criticisms suggest that the clergy all too often followed the morality, amusements and fashions of the world rather than setting an example of virtue. There are numerous warnings against keeping any women, the only exception reluctantly admitted being an elderly kinswoman. Among the pas - times forbidden are the entertainment of minstrels; jesters and "dissards". They "may vse no playes toyes/nor gamynges in the churche", nor go to plays, and visits to the tavern and games of dice are strongly discouraged. More generally clerks are warned against all manner of superfluity, of food, of drink and of dress: "The more vertuous yt the mynystres of the church are bound to be in respecte of ye lay people/ the more symple meke & ful of good example they ought to be in theyr apparayle". The love of worldly fashions was not a vice confined to religious sisters, but clerks were to see that their heads were suitably shaven and not set or trimmed. Their

outer garments were to be neither too close fitting, too long nor too short: "They ought also in no wyse to were any rede clothe/ or grene weltyd sleuys/or shewys/brydles/or sadels gylt no laces/ nor lachettes garnyshed with syluer or golde/nor yet any rynges/ except it be such as be allowed by dignite of theyr offyce."[23] The picture presented in The lyfe of prestes is of a worldly clergy and a slack Church, priests who inclined towards the ambitions and interests of those around them and who were fitted by neither inclination nor training to set an example of virtuous and godly living, nor to feed the flock committed to their charge.

In view of the inadequacy of the majority of the parochial clergy's learning on the eve of the reformation[24] it is not surprising to find that a number of handbooks were printed during the early sixteenth-century offering them instruction on their duties and assistance with their teaching:

> How thow schalte thy paresche preche.
> And what þe nedeth hem to teche,
> And whyche þou moste by self be. 25

Mirk intended that his Instructions for Parish Priests should be shown to those desirous for instruction " Þat haue no bokes of here owne". and it may have been used by devout lay-people as well as priests. The Instructions, after an introductory section dealing with the priest's behaviour and dress, is concerned to give brief explanations of the sacraments and the nature of vows, the duties of tithes, and how to recite the Pater, Ave and Creed together with the Ten Commandments in a form suitable for reading to a congregation. The latter part of the book is more concerned to instruct the priest about the performance of

his duties, what to do if various difficulties arise during the celebration of mass, and how to conduct a confession and impose penance. The Cura Clericalis, printed twice during the 1530s[26], was a brief Latin work providing very rudimentary instruction on the four duties of a priest, about the seven sacraments and four ways of making satisfaction. Like Mirk's Instructions it devotes a comparatively large space to distinguishing various types of sin and it then goes on to list the cardinal and theological virtues, the seven spiritual and bodily works of mercy, the eight beatitudes and the seven spiritual gifts, before giving the three creeds: the Apostles', the Nicene and the Athanasian. As if to emphasize the practical nature of the book it concludes with instructions on how to calculate the cycles of the days and the moon. The Exornatorium Curatorum, of which there were three editions in 1530 and 1532,[27] was intended to enable the parish priest to fulfil the duties laid on him by Archbishop Peckham's Constitutions of 1281:[28] to "declare vnto his parysshens. Four tymes in ye yere/the .xiiii.Artycles of the faythe. The .x.commaundmentes of our lorde god.The .vii.werkes of mercy.The.vii.deedly synnes with braunches therof.The.vii.pryncypall vertues.And the.vii.sacramentes of holy chyrche/with other thynges necessary".[29] Again the analysis of the seven deadly sins takes up considerable space and the work concludes with a brief ars moriendi.

The basic contents of these handbooks would seem to be fairly standard, although they varied considerably in length according to the amount of extra detail or exposition included. For the most

part they do little more than detail the factual content of the faith and set out other useful knowledge such as the lists of seven - sacraments, sins, works of mercy bodily and ghostly, virtues and gifts of the Spririt. Some give the priest a brief instruction on how to perform his duties: the celebration of mass, hearing confession, imposing penance and granting absolution. The apparent emphasis given to the seven deadly sins is because they seem to have provided a touchstone against which man's behaviour could be measured and his Christian merits assessed. They were a particularly useful tool to layman and priest in confession, the sacrament which offered the priest the greatest opportunity for personal instruction of his parishioners. The trouble with the information purveyed by this kind of handbook was that it was impersonal, exclusively factual and tended to remain external, unrelated to a man's feelings or the conduct of his daily life. The innumerable lists of facts - mostly grouped in sevens - together with the Pater, Ave and Creed which were intended to be learned by heart and to constitute the basic deposit of faith, required some interpretation and personal application if they were to become meaningful to the individual Christian. To the uneducated layman most of these facts must have seemed remote from his own experience, and unrelated to the image of the suffering Christ he saw on the Rood in his parish church or to the mass he assisted at there Sunday by Sunday.

On the whole religious seem to have been better served, although the picture is distorted by the prominence of Syon Abbey, whose standards of spirituality and learning were much above the average[30].

Bonde, Fewterer and Whitford for instance were all at some time fellows of Pembroke or Queens' Colleges, Cambridge[31]. In addition Richard Whitford was chaplain to William Blount, Lord Mountjoy and accompanied him to Paris, and was later a chaplain to Richard Foxe, bishop of Winchester; two posts which brought him into contact with the greatest scholars of the day, including Erasmus and Sir Thomas More.[32] It is appropriate that the three most learned and substantial devotional books to be printed during the 1530s should have been written by bretheren of Syon: Bonde's Pilgrymage of Perfeccyon, Fewterer's Myrrour or Glasse of Christes Passion, and Whitford's Pype or Tonne of the lyfe of perfection. Whitford's work was addressed particularly to a nun of Syon and her religious sisters, and it suggests that in Syon at least there were women of sufficient intellectual capacity to persevere with a work as lengthy and demanding as this.[33] Syon is known to have possessed a library for the sisters and to have laid unusual stress on the importance of devotional reading,[34] but individual nuns of other convents seem not infrequently to have possessed books[35]. However, by the early sixteenth century, few if any religious sisters or anchorites, and possibly only a minority of literate lay people, were able to read Latin with any degree of fluency:[36] the great need was for translations and original works in the vernacular.

Many of the devout treatises are expressly addressed to "symple soulles" and to the "vnlerned". These terms imply a lack of formal education, not a lack of general intelligence, and they mean particularly

those "that vnderstande no latyn" and, according to the author of the Pomander of prayer, "persones as lacke lernyng and knowlege of holy scripture". It is to instruct the "vnlerned" "in the odre of prayer" that this Carthusian chose to write not

> in latine style/for than it myght haue bene vnderstande of many persones: as well of alyens as of this lande/but in englysshe/ the whiche but fewe/that is to say onely englysshe men/or suche as haue ben conuersaunt in englande do vnderstande. 37

Those authors, especially those who were themselves fluent in Latin, (who chose to write in English) faced the problem of translation, and especially the lack of suitable theological terminology in the vernacular: "þese teermes han oþer sentence in latyn þanne I can shewe in ynglisshe".[38] Bonde declares that "The mater is spirytuall/ & requyreth moche declaracion in englysshe,"[39] while the author of The Myrroure of Oure Lady points out the difficulty of translation from Latin into English and the lack of cognate terminology.[40] Most translators chose to translate according to the sense of the original, not verbatim.[41] Whitford illustrates the practical difficulty of translation by translating one sentence twenty ways, and states that in the interest of clarity and ready comprehension "I haue chosen here a playne style/without ynkehorne termes".[42] But clearly the demand for translations was such that a great many people - religious like Whitford and Paynell,[43] courtiers like Sir Thomas Elyot[44] and Sir Thomas More, and printers like Caxton[45] and Robert Copland[46] - turned their hand to it, and a large proportion of the devotional works discussed in the course of this thesis are translations from

Latin, or sometimes French.[47]

Treatises for religious

During the early sixteenth century considerable effort was made to provide religious with the sort of literature that would assist them in their profession and deepen their spiritual life. At least three rules were printed in English, probably about 1510: the Franciscan Rule of the lyuynge of the bretherne and systers of the order of penytentes[48] and the Rule of our holy fader.s.Austen[49]: the rule of St. Benedict had been included in Caxton's Boke of diuerse maters. The second may have been the translation described by Whitford as "olde/scabrouse/rough/& not of the englysshe comynly vsed in these partyes".[50] The Franciscan rule is prefaced by an official proclamation of Pope Nicholas V dated 1449 (the second year of his reign), and after the official conclusion it is noted: "This bull and Rule is vnder lede in the grayfreers in London besyde Newgate". The twenty-four chapters of the rule are brief orders detailing the duties and conduct required of the bretheren and sisters. Beyond the general obligation to hold "the ryght & true fayth" maintained by the Church of Rome there is no reference to belief; the rule is concerned with matters such as the clothing, abstinence and fasting required, the obligation to "say euery daye there seruyce" or some acceptable substitute, and to give alms, and the need to avoid swearing and debate and to keep

the peace.

The Augustinian rule is less peremptory in tone and shows more interest in the bretheren's inward disposition. It begins with the reasons for entering religion and warns the poor against entering religion "to haue ease & lyuynge" which they could not have found in the world. Equally the rich are not to be high minded, to despise the poor, nor proud "yt the place fareth better for them", but all things are to be held in common. During divine service they are to "se yt it be in your herte yt you vttre wt your mouthe" - the conduct of services is considered in more detail in The Myrroure of Oure Lady. Rules governing food, abstinence, clothing and care of the sick warn particularly against envy of those who, becasue of ill-health or a delicate upbringing, receive extra provisions. Reversing the values of the world "Let eu(ry) man thynke hym moost happy yt is moost stringe & able to suffre payne & pouerte". The bretheren are warned against wantonness and concupiscence, and told how a wrongdoer is to be admonished with tact, firmness and love. Over the question of clothing the bretheren are not to complain if they receive a worse habit than their previous one: "let hym not thynke skorne tho he be not se wele cladde as another...but rather proue what you lacke in the inwarde habyte of your soule"[51] All manifestations of anger are to be checked, and advice is given on how to make amends, especially how a superior may do so without losing his authority. The final topic, obedience, is made more meaningful by showing something of the difficulty

and responsibility faced by superiors: "And therfore of pyte by ye more obedyent vnto hym/for the more rule & superyoryte yt he hath ouer you ye more peryll he is in".[52] This rule, unlike the Franciscan one, attempts to explain the various precepts in such a way as to make them meaningful and provide practical guidance for the individual religious. It is not content simply to detail the rules, but it seeks to encourage a right attitude of mind towards the various obligations, and it is particularly careful to explain the reason for apparent injustices and inequalities in the treatment of some bretheren so as to prevent envy, covetousness and discontent, vices which could so easily poison the life of the convent.

Yet despite the existence of these translations Whitford in his introduction to the English version of Saynt Augustyns Rule[53] says he has "herde of som parsones yt haue ben yeres professed/& neuer knewe theyr rule/neuer sawe or herde/ony rule redde/but onely dyd folowe ye custome of ye place",[54] and in the course of his expositions on the Latin-English version of the Rule he blames the Superiors for neglect of the rule.[55] The earliest works of Whitford to appear in print were all translations designed to remedy the ignorance of religious, particularly the nuns of Syon.[56] On the title page of the Latin-English Rule he indulges in a characteristic piece of advertising,[57] recommending "all ye disciples of this rule to bere alway one of these bokes vpon them syth they ben so portatyue/& may be had for so small a pryce": the rule is to be referred to constantly. By means of the exposition of Hugh of St.Victor and his own comments on the Rule Whitford is able to draw out the implications of the Rule still further,

so that the individual may the better understand it and govern not only his behaviour but his whole attitude of mind accordingly. He frequently dwells upon the meaning of some important word in the Latin of the rule and attempts to explain the significance to the reader[58]. Or he may use some homely, physical example - like the man who for fear of "cuttynge" kept secret a sore in his body; his friend should show this, just as he should show any known spiritual offences, and Whitford emphasizes that correction or punishment of an offence is an act of mercy not of malice. Again small details of the rule, like the washing of clothes and bathing, are related to the principal rules, in this case obedience, and finally, like Sir Thomas More, Whitford makes use of sayings with a proverbial ring to them in order to emphasize or sum up a point.[59]

Among the other topics dealt with by the Rule was the problem of the straying mind in church.[60] Since much of the day was occupied by the choir offices the behaviour and devotion of the nuns in church[61] was a matter of considerable importance, and the nuns of Syon were provided with a substantial guide to the conduct and content of their services in The Myrroure of Oure Lady printed by by Richard Fawkes in 1530.[62] The bulk of the book, nearly all part II and part III, is concerned to give a rationale of the services for each day of the week and the masses. But it is far more than a guide to the content of the services, what the priest does and what all the hymns, anthems, lessons, prayers, offices and sequences mean. In addition to translating them the author interprets and

comments. For instance, on the Magnificat he gives four reasons why it is said daily at evensong, and he places it in its biblical context. He then takes it sentence by sentence, following the translation with detailed explanatory comment, as when he concludes his remarks on "Esurientes implevit bonis: et divites dimisit inanes" with the promise that those who are "wylfully poure from worldely welthes and comfortes. and honger and desyre goddes grace. and heuenly comfortes" will be satisfied, whereas those who at present enjoy riches and worldly prosperity "shall be lefte voyde"[63] - an obvious example of the characteristic religious bias found in so many devout treatises. In his interpretation of Psalm XCII the author provides a fairly detailed summary of contemporary cosmography,[64] while he again reflects contemporary traditions in his explication of the Friday service as he describes the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin[65] and Christ's sufferings during the Passion. Although there is much legendary material and the author shows a fondness for allegorical interpretation, he does attempt an explanation of a number of theological concepts, for instance in his exposition of the creed[66]. Without ever losing sight of his primary task, to explain the services, the author provides a variety of information and instruction which must have made the services more comprehensible and more interesting to any nun who followed the service with The Myrroure.

The first part of The Myrroure and the opening of part II contain general teaching about the services, their origin and composition; five reasons are given why the services are to be said in church,[67] and seven advantages of sung rather than said services

are listed.[68] The problems of distractions and hindrances in service-time are dealt with much more fully than in the Rule, and particular attention is given to the way in which the services are to be said.[69] The importance of clear and correct saying and singing of the services was stressed by other writers too.[70]

Although private prayers and devotions are not to be substituted for or mingled with divine service,[71] the author is emphatic about the importance of "inwarde gostly study" and sets a high value on "Deuoute redyng of holy Bokes".[71A] Books must always be selected for edification, not for idle pleasure, for private interest or in order to seem wise, and they are to be read receptively and attentively. Particular attention must be given to understanding what is read, and if necessary a passage should be read over several times. Those who read aloud to the convent should go through the piece beforehand to see they understand it. Those who read on their own must avoid reading too much at once and over-skipping passages. This author encourages the nuns to ask advice if they do not understand anything. William Bonde[72] allows advice to be sought in matters of understanding "of them onely whome ye suppose to be perfyte & goostly", but he forbids any idle or curious speculation or any such questioning, "specyally of seculers".[73] The author of The Myrroure goes on to analyse the difference between two main types of devotional literature, its purpose and the way each should be approached. The distinction is between works of instruction and spiritual counsel, and works of affective piety. Under the first he classes books which "enforme the vnderstondynge.& tel how spiritual

persones oughte to be gouerned in all theyr lyuynge that they may knowe what they shall leue.& what they shall do.how they shulde laboure in clensyng of theyr conscyence.& in gettyng of vertewes how they shulde withstonde temptacyons & suffer trybulacyons.& how they shall pray.& occupy them in gostly exercyse".[74] In studying these the reader is to measure her life against the standards set by the book, to give thanks if she feels she conforms to them, and to sorrow for any shortcomings and endeavour to amend them. The other class of books are those which "ar made to quyken.& to sturre vp the affeccyons of the soule". Under this heading are included those "that tel of the sorowes & dredes of deth.& of dome. & of paynes", and "of the foulnes & wretchednesse of syn", as well as those which tell of the benefits wrought by Christ and of the joys of heaven, which stimulate emotions of love, hope and joy. Descriptions of the life and Passion of Christ and of the joys of heaven seek to arouse in the reader feelings of love, compassion and hope, and similarly descriptions of the agonies of death, the fearful Judgement and the pains of hell frequently seem to arouse feelings of fear and dread, but books about death usually have a very large practical and instructional content as well. The majority of books in this second class are in fact of mixed content, "that treate bothe of maters to enforme the vnderstondyng.and also of matters to sturre vp the affeccions."[75] The nuns of Syon had their own library and were able to select works appropriate to their mood, but many other religious and lay people did not have so much choice, hence the popularity of miscellaneous compilations which allowed the reader some variety of choice.

Richard Whitford's Pype/or Tonne/of the lyfe of perfection,[76] addressed to a "Good devout religious daughter" and the other sisters, presumably of Syon, falls into the first class of devotional literature distinguished by the author of The Myrroure. It requires understanding and considerable application, and it is both a defence and a detailed exposition of the religious life. The reason for the work was the attack of "these newe fangle persones", heretics who advocated the view of Luther; they denounced the religious life and even challenged "the newe testament of Christe". Criticism of monastic life, not unknown before 1530,[77] certainly gathered momentum during that decade.[78] The foundacyon and the summe of the holy scripture[79] contains considerable criticism of contemporary monasticism, especially when its present state is measured against the past. The author shows that "the lyfe of monkes as it is nowe vsed in the worlde is none other thing but a secte", and that the householder may live as godly a life as the monk.[80] Men enter religion for the wrong reasons, to have an easy life where all their wants are supplied[81] and to be reputed holy. Parents too are guilty of making their children enter religion in order to remove the charge of their upkeep or to have the honour of a priest or prelate for a son.[82] In the past there had been none holier than monks,[83] but their holiness, virtues and good works attracted noble patronage, and their possessions and wealth increased: "then their good discipline and lyf is by lytel and littel brought to nought & corrupted by rychesse".[84] Monasticism has been corrupted by riches and by involvement in the world.[85] The rule is kept outwardly, not in spirit, and holiness

is thought to consist of wearing a habit, kneeling, becking, singing, reading, fasting, and saying mass: "For what is nowe the lyfe of religyous but a supersticious subiection vnto certayn ceremonyes"[86]. About half a century earlier Savonarola too had condemned ceremonies and outward worship.[87] In theory the author of The foundacyon and the summe of the holy scripture sees no objection to some form of monasticism,[88] but he has nothing good to say of its contemporary exponents.

Whitford himself was not blind to the decay of contemporary monasticism,[89] but rather than banishing it as worthless he sought to revive and purify it. The first part of The Pype or Tonne of the lyfe of perfection, which is concerned to refute Lutheran criticisms of the practice and theory of the religious life, admits that all is not well, but Whitford refuses to condemn all because some go astray[90] or to relinquish his belief in the superiority of the religious life.[91] Like the author of The foundacyon and the summe of the holy scripture Whitford is aware of the corruption of riches, particularly the opportunity given to individuals to receive or earn money which contradicts their vow of poverty:

> Fewe monasteries shall ye fynde....in Englande: yt ben clene voyde/& done precisely lyue without propriete. For other the professed persones bretherne or systers/haue...stipende celary or wages...delyuered vnto theyr owne handes... therwt to prouide for themselfe aray & to bye al necessaries/& vse al at theyr owne wyl/& pleasure/sel agayne or chaunge ye thynges boght after theyr mynde/& do therwt what they wyl/as lende & borowe/play for money at al maner of games/decyng/cardyng bouling.& c. & somtyme at worse or more|| inconuenient thyng. And in some monasteries the bretherne done wryt/lumyne/paynt/make

> clauicordes/ and suche other laboures/and take all the gaynes vnto them selfe. And the systers in other places done sowe/ brawdre/weue/and make sylkewerkes/teache chyldren/take sogiournauntes to borde as ale wyues done in the contre/and done inioy the gaynes therof/and vse the money as they wyll. 92

In many places the infirmary is given over to the reception of guests, their dining and entertainment, in which the religious take part "and be as mery as lay people". Many excuse themselves by saying that their superior has given them licence to receive and use money for their own ends,[93] but Whitford explains that no superior, not even the Pope, can dispense a religious from his solemn vow of poverty.

Another target of Whitford's criticism is the diversity of fashions and colours in the religious habit. The convent should be dressed in a uniform manner, in a dark colour "that can not be to sad" - black is recommended. All forms of personal adornment are to be eschewed "as in rynges/brouches/gyrdels/bedes/knyues/purses/pyncases/gloues/ with all suche other".[94] The desire to assert individuality, whether in dress and personal adornment or in the following particular customs, was a manifestation of that singularity, condemned by many religious writers, which was a denial of the obedience, meekness and total renunciation of personal will which should mark the religious profession. It is clear that in some convents the world had invaded the cloisters in the following of fashion. " I haue sene some religious women were rolles/and pastes/as worldly people/some other frounted/or flyrted vp so hyghe yt theyr heere maye be sene".[95] Others wear their "brest clothes so lawe/and the wymples so narowe" that they expose their skin in a manner unbecoming to a religious, or in Whitford's

opinion to any Christian.[96] He warns his readers against "all superfluite in araye" and against envy of what others may have.[97] In dress, as in many other aspects of life, from diet to devotional and ascetical practices, the author maintains "A meane is euer beste accordyng vnto good honeste and profytte".[98]

One of the principal reasons for the decay in religion is that people enter for the wrong reasons, as the author of The foundacyon and the summe of the holy scripture had noted. Whitford says[99] that people enter without having felt any calling to the life and without examining their reasons for entering. Some are provoked by the Devil to become religious out of pride, believing that their life will be so holy that their monastery will be reformed, but the failure of their enterprise makes them discontented and unstable. Others are ambitious to enjoy riches and plenty and to hold important offices, or simply to escape the hardships of the world and to be assured of "theyr bodely lyuynge", and these people will infect the monastery either by ill-rule, by discontent or because they are remiss and dull in their duties. Whitford also discusses the case of child oblates, for which he finds biblical precedent, and since "the best bryngynge vp is in the monasteries amonge religious persones it semeth vnto me that chyldren may conuientely be receyued into religion".[100] He only insists that no child be bound to make his profession before reaching the required age. He lists numbers of other wrong or unspiritual reasons why children are put to religion[101] or why adults enter,[102] and endeavvours to show how once bound as religious even these unhappy souls may profit from their bondage. They should apply their reasonable soul to be sorry for their sin, and to labour and

fight for victory over their carnal will. Even those who are bound to religion against their will can sometimes be converted to the religious life simply by being obliged to follow its rule:

> For the custome and vse dothe alter and chaunge nature/and dothe make in a persone...a newe...nature/ and so that thinge that was vnto theyr disposicion greuouse/and paynfull shall (by vse) be vnto them comforte/pleasure/and ioy in conscience for it shal ministre vnto the soule: vertue/and good maners. 103

Part I of The Pype or Tonne is concerned to answer the criticism of Lutheran heretics against the religious life. Whitford frequently chooses to answer specific questions about the customs of this life by posing another question about the purpose of parallel ceremonies observed in secular society.[104] He refutes the heretics' claim "that religious persones done put theyr confidence and truste all in ceremonies/as thoughe by kepynge of them onely: they shulde be saued",[105] declaring that by reverent observance of customs God is honoured and the religious obtains more grace, enabling him to keep his Rule and consequently the law of the Gospel. Ceremonies honour God, express inward devotion, are a necessary duty of religious, and may edify by their example,[106] but above all they are founded upon the authority of Christ's actions recorded in the New Testament.[107] The question of ceremonies raised the fundamental problem of the source of authority, and according to the heretics religious have "forsaken the gospell of god" and "haue bounde themselfe and that by solempne vowe/ vnto the rules and lawes of....men".[108] The heretics will only acknowledge the authority of Scripture, and by declaring that the laws of men are contrary to the law of God they destroy the laws of the Church and of all temporal princes.[109]

The third and main part of The Pype or Tonne is devoted to an exposition of the three essential vows of religion—obedience, poverty and chastity—with a translation of De precepto et dispensatione attributed to St.Bernard[110] following the section on obedience. According to Whitford's definition obedience "is an applicacion/or graunt of herte/minde/and wyll/vnto the due and the lawfull preceptes/ or commaundementes of the ryght and ordinarie superiours/accordynge vnto the ordinaunce of god and of his churche catholike/after the rules of holy scripture."[111] For the religious the definition is more demanding, and involves " a wylful and vtter abnegacion and forsakyng of proper wyll" and total obedience to their religious superior and their Rule. Whitford then outlines four motives which may govern obedience: self pleasure or profit, necessity, fear, and finally love and good will. He goes on to place the virtue of obedience immediatley below the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, esteeming it "of more perfection than is her mother mekenes". It is the perfection and proof of humility and meekness. William Bonde also sets a high value on it: "obedyence pleaseth god more than ony other thynge",[112] but he places it after meekness, which he sees as the foundation of all perfection.[113] The author of The Orcherd of Syon celebrates the virtue of obedience at some length[114] and seems to set it above meekness, who nurses and nourishes it, but it is perhaps less a question of priorities than of mutual dependence: "For a man is so myche obedient as he is meke, & so myche he is meke as he is obedient".[115]

Having defined and placed the virtue of obedience Whitford goes on to consider the obedience due from a religious to his Superior and other officers, and problems which may arise when the superior's commands run counter to the Rule or Scripture. He goes into some detail on

the behaviour which will follow from willing obedience and the qualities of love, strength, cheerfulness, speed, reverence and perseverence which should accompany it. The latter part of the "fyrste membre" is concerned with the profits and benefits of obedience and the dangers and incommodities of disobedience, and it concludes with a long chapter[116] of scriptural examples of the miserable fate of the disobedient. The first profit of obedience is in worldly goods, and Whitford accepts the Deuteronomic connection between obedience to the will of God and material rewards:[117] "For as the monasteries: where the obedience is kepte: done prospere with pleintie in all maner of commodities that done apperteyne vnto theyr worldly goodes & substance: so in lyke maner vnto the contrarie parte/where is inobedience or disobedience: the monasteries done dekay/fall vnto ruine & pouerty/as dyd ye chyldren of Israel for theyr disobedience".[118] The second profit is long life, a promise supported by various Old Testament quotations.[119] The third profit is that obedience deserves honour, fame and respect, and finally it profits the soul by delivering it from damnation and keeping it in a state of grace. It helps to repel temptations, and brings tranquility of mind and offers the hope of eternal glory. He has clearly tried to stress the spiritual aspect of these rewards, but worldly goods, a long and well-provided life and a good name were difficult not to interpret as material benefits. As in the case of the rewards promised for devout attendance at mass or meditation on the Passion,[120] these seem to be encouraging religious to pursue the virtue of obedience for material as much as for spiritual ends.

In the course of this section Whitford, still mindful of the heretical opinions he sought to overthrow in the first part of his work, takes issue with the heretics, particularly Tyndale, who argue that "all maner of persones as well spirituall as temporall shulde be obedient vnto the prophane and seculer princes/and yt none obedience is due vnto any persones of the spiritualte or clergie".[121] He goes on to refute Tyndale's claim "in his Englysshe boke of obedience:that there is no spirituall parte in Christes churche".[122] Whitford's defence against the evidence of the heretics that St.Paul and Jesus Himself were subject to the secular rulers is based on the distinction between heathen and Christian powers. He argues that where rulers became Christian they resigned their powers to the clergy and became subject to them: "that euermore the spirituall parte of the people of god: had the gouernaunce and rule of the temporall parte/and the temporall parte in all thynges obedient vnto the spirituall".[123] The more discerning reader may well have found Whitford's conclusions more convincing than his arguments.

A work which may antedate Tyndale's Obedience of a Christian Man, but which allows the princes rule of both Church and State, is Paul Bush's Extripacion of ignorancy.[124] The author excuses his bald verse:

> And though I lacke dropes/of yelycour laureate
> Which sprang of Chaucer/ye fountayne of oratours, 125

although he begins his study of the fear of God and the honour due to the king in a manner which seems to echo numerous earlier poets:

> In an orcharde as I walked/desolate of company
> In a pathe/from tre to tre/as my vsage was
> Vnbrede with bowes pendaunt/in order plesauntly...

The two principal parts of his poem, separated by a brief section on the love of God, use as a refrain the respective parts of a verse from I Peter II, "Deum timete et regem honorificare". He begins the section on the honour due to the king by tracing the growth of kingship from the rule of patriarchs, prophets and judges. He particularly praises the rule of peace and equity imposed by the king, and mentions that simony is checked by his rule. He goes on to cite biblical authority[126] for the obligation to obey princes, even if they are unworthy. There are

> ...some rigorous & vicyous/enuolued in errour
> Yet natwithstandyng/your purpose & chefe entension
> Must be to obey/for your dewe correction
> Such vnworthy rulers/sent for your myslyueng, 127

and he seems to suggest that the Prince's rule is not confined to the secular realm:

> ....thynke that it is nat/the regall power onely
> Whiche princes haue in gouernage/to speke in substance
> That to suche obedience/byndeth the thus straitly
> But it is certayne/as se thou maist playne
> The state legall/of the churches first ordring. 128

But this issue is not dwelt upon. The author's main concern is his fear of the destruction wrought by rebellion and "wylfull conspiracy". Rebellion has not only destroyed "monasteries rightworthy", but subverted whole towns, slain governors, deflowered wives and daughters. He concludes with a plea for England to learn from such examples,[129] to remain true to her king as she has, according to the Chronicles, in the past, and to treasure peace at its true value.

Tyndale is, of course, even more emphatic about the Christian duty of obedience. Not only is the individual Christian bound to obey the prince, even if he is wicked, a Turk or a tyrant,[130] but the

the principle of obedience upholds the whole structure of society. Thus children are bound to obey their elders, wives their husbands, and servants their masters, as well as subjects their rulers.[131] Those who hold offices must rule firmly but justly, as Fathers over their families, husbands over their wives, masters over servants, landlords over tenants, and Kings, judges and officers over their people;[132] and it is the duty of the prince and his officers to see that the Church and clergy do not claim any special exemptions from this general obligation of obedience to the secular powers.[133] Tyndale objects strongly to the Church's involvement in secular government and the way in which the Pope has usurped the power of an emperor[134] and bishops and cardinals have become servants of the state.[135] Of obedience within the church, the exclusive concern of Whitford,[136] Tyndale has nothing to say. His concern is to apply the biblical precepts of obedience to the secular world and to English Society. The contemporary popularity of authors like Tyndale and Thomas Becon undoubtedly owed something to their determination to expound the Christian faith and to make it relevant to ordinary people in their particular occupations and stations in life. They ignored the ideal and other-worldly life of the cloister, which hitherto had dominated religious thought, and applied Christianity to the world in which most Christians found themselves living, working and raising their families.

The second of the religious vows discussed by Whitford in <u>The Pype or Tonne of the lyfe of perfection</u> is wilful poverty. Not the wretched poverty of common beggars, nor the scarcity which encourages wholesome labour, but poverty and forsaking of the world which is

undertaken voluntarily to the service of God and which is pursued not in solitude or mendicancy but within the cloister. The words and life of Christ, the life of the Apostles and the traditions of the early church[137] are adduced in support of the vow, but apart from the basic premise that poverty frees the soul from worldly cares and affections - a point which, rather surprisingly, he does not particularly emphasize - he makes no attempt to list the merits and rewards enjoyed by those who fulfil the vow. He is more concerned to warn sovereigns against weakness, ambition or partiality, which encourage subjects to keep private property, and to criticize not only the general contemporary laxness with regard to property[138] but also the abuse of the stipend system.[139] The only personal possessions he will allow are those necessary for health, those which encourage education, and "tokens/ymages/paynted papers"[140] of private devotion-provided they do not encourage affections of vanity. The easy, "all-found" life of contemporary monasticism and the great wealth of many foundations devalued the primitive concept of poverty and not unnaturally attracted the criticisms of reformers.[141]

In his treatment of the third essential vow, chastity, Whitford again adopts a practical approach, showing the readers in some detail how to avoid and conquer temptations to the contrary vice, and encouraging them to pursue and cherish the virtue. As in previous sections the example of Christ's life and those of the Apostles[142] are cited as authority for the vow. Most of the section is concerned to show how chastity, which he understands principally as bodily cleanness or purity, is to be preserved, and the fourteen main

headings are conveniently summarized at the end.[143] One of the more obvious threats to chastity comes through the five wits, for the five senses are easily roused and stimulate lustful thoughts and feelings. The five wits were widely recognized as vulnerable to deadly sin,[144] and Whitford was by no means the only author[145] who warned that sight, touch, hearing, speaking and even the sense of smell must be warily defended against worldly and fleshly sins and temptations.[146] Among other physical defences of chastity[147] were sobre dress[148]; refraining from pampering the body;[149] seemly outward behaviour and avoidance of any familiar talk, behaviour, correspondence with or the company of men;[150] and private meetings between individuals of opposite sexes were entirely forbidden.[151] Apart from these physical precautions there were more general defences against sensuality, such as prayer, the avoidance of idleness by mental and physical labour, temperance and abstinence; all of them were familiar topics in works addressed to religious and anchorites. But in addition to these rather negative defences - which are reinforced in the concluding chapters[152] by contrasting the clean life and heavenly rewards of the chaste with the fleeting reward and subsequent physical decay[153] and loss of goods, crowned by eternal death, which face the lecherous[154] - Whitford also stresses the importance of a good will and positive desire to conquer sin and pursue chastity, whose virtues he had praised at the beginning of the section.[155]

Many of the topics discussed by Whitford in The Pype or Tonne are, not surprisingly, to be found in the works of other authors, particularly those who wrote for religious or for those who wished

to emulate the religious way of life. The Dyetary of Ghostly Helthe,[156] dating from the previous decade, and A deuoute treatyse called the tree &.xii.frutes of the holy goost[157] are two shorter, more general treatises written for religious sisters. Compared to the restricted subject matter, the detailed and rather technical nature of the discussion and the overt didactic intention of Whitford's work, these two books of spiritual counsel cover a much wider range of topics, but they go into little detail and do not demand the intellectual application or perseverance of The Pype or Tonne. They are also marked by a far more personal approach.

The prologue of The Dyetary reveals that it is offered by the author to the sisters as a new year gift,[158] in the hopes that it will encourage them to pursue virtue more eagerly.[159] There is no apparent organization of topics within the twenty-four chapters, which are said to offer considerations appropriate to each hour of the day. The topics covered seem to range in a random way from elementary practical advice about table manners or how to say the service, to more general topics such as the need for moderation or restraint in eating, speech and dress. The sisters are encouraged to "vse deuoute medytacyon of chrystes passyon in your masse herynge",[160] which should be daily, and they are also provided with a brief examination of conscience, not unlike those of the Dyurnall or Werke for housholders, to be said daily at the day's end.[161] Traditional themes such as the dangers of the world and the view of life as a pilgrimage are briefly summarized,[162] and a number of chapters offer brief discussions or commendations of various virtues such as patience, meekness, obedience and chastity.

The chapter on patience is really a statement of the profit of tribulation, and meekness is described simply as the foundation of all virtues. Obedience is extolled as "yt vertue yt graffeth all other vertues in ye soule",[163] but the author's greatest praise is reserved for the virtue of chastity, which virtue "made ye kynge of all kynges to haue suche a celestyall concupyscence & loue vnto ye moost meke vyrgyne mary yt he descended from heuen to erthe for to be maryed vnto our nature".[164] However, like the author of The tre &.xii.frutes, he emphasizes that the virtue is not crowned until it is proved,[165] and that it is neither won nor kept "without grete laboure and payne". It would be wrong to look for originality or subtlety in this kind of brief and elementary work of instruction, and the author rarely attempts to make more than one main point about the topic under discussion in each chapter.

There is a rudimentary instruction on "Howe to ouercome temptacyon", which again reminds the reader of the "ghostly consolacyon" which will follow great tribulation, and the author goes on to advocate "Howe study or medytacyon in holy wrytynge profyteth moche agaynst temptacyon" - the same point is made by Whitford in The Pype or Tonne.[166] In an allegorical figure of some beauty[167] the author recommends the study of Scripture, or "holy redynge" of a more general nature, as a way to calm lust, to put away evil thoughts and to prevent a troubled night's rest. Whitford recommends first the contemplation of God and also the life, passion and death of Jesus, and then the study of holy Scripture, for "such persons as ben entred in gramer", that is, who can read Latin. He goes on to recommend[168] that those under about forty-four or forty-six years of age, men and women, provided they can spare the

time, should learn Latin. He thinks it will take them two or three years and that "verely they can nat spende ye tyme better/ specially vnto that ende and purpose/...to exclude vayne thoughtes and to put the lyfe of our lorde in theyr rowmes".[169] For those unable to learn Latin Whitford suggests books and prayers in English rather than Latin. He concludes:

> Some occupacion of mynde must they nedely haue of custome: that shal exclude vayne and vnclene thoughtes: For ydlenes and welfare: done ingendre and brede yuel cogitacions:as caren in eyre/doth brede wormes. 170

Time in which to do penance for sins committed and in which to labour for salvation[171] was short and precious. "There is none so greate a losse, as is the losse of tyme. Another thynge yf it be loste, may be founden agayne/but tyme whan it is lost, may neuer be founde agayne".[172] Awareness of the transcience and mutability of all earthly things, the retrospective regret expressed in the ubi sunt and quid profuit themes, and the harder lesson of the inevitability of death,[173] were all comments on man's awareness of the passing of time. Time was to be used profitably, and idleness was to be avoided:[174]

> For ydlenesse is the moder of all euyll/stepdame of vertue/forger of vnclennesse/the waye to vnstablenesse/nouryssher of vyces/increacer of slouthfulnesse/kynd̃eler of malyce & enuye. It soweth euyll thoughtes. It gendreth euyll desyres/and bryngeth forth many euyll workes. It maketh vs wery of ghoostly lyuynge. It putteth vs in fere of ghoostly batayle/and dryueth vs frome the way of penaunce. 175.

It is indeed a branch of the deadly sin of sloth or acedia.[176] The author of the Dyetary recommends as antidotes to idleness bodily labour, prayer, study and reading, and, for those who are able, contemplation.[177] The author of The tre &.xii.frutes, who describes idleness as "the moost

hyndrynge that thou mayst haue to thy soule", suggests that when the soul becomes wearied by one occupation it may be refreshed by turning to another.[178] Idleness was particularly liable to affect religious, whose physical needs were provided for, and whose choir offices and other duties still left them with considerable spare time during the day. Most convents probably had a number of nuns who were unable to read, and far more who found study and meditation difficult and tedious. The temptation to pass the time more easily in gossip and other congenial but more worldly occupations must have been great.[179] It was not, of course, a vice liable to afflict those who had to work to earn a living, among whom sloth was more likely to take other forms.[180]

The tre &.xii.frutes is a rather more detailed work concerning the growth and nourishment of the life of perfection within the cloister. Again, as in The Pype or Tonne and The Dyetary, the author concentrates upon the virtues to be sought in that life and makes no reference to matters of faith:

> as for þe articles of þi beleue I wille not in
> þis tretice write noþing to þe.for I wrote wel
> þou belevist wel I now.but of þe workis of bileve
> þat is.of trew living it is my purpose for to
> declare:þat þi living mow a corde to þi feyth. 181

The treatise is in two parts. The first concentrates upon the tree, the fundamental growth in religion, which is rooted in meekness, watered by compunction and spreads forth in charity. The second part is connected with an exposition of the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost,[182] the fruits of "goostly lyuyng". The tree that is to flourish "in the gardyng of holy relygyon"[183] must be rooted in meekness,[184] the contrary of pride, which grows from self knowledge[185] and contempt of

self, and which is nourished by the many examples of meekness shown by Christ.[186] A little later, in discussing the vow of poverty, the author again refers to the example of Christ, "þe pore crybbe and few clothes" at His nativity, and His nakedness and thirst upon the cross.[187] Obedience is related to the virtue of meekness.[188] The second quality of the tree is compunction, which may be stimulated by the familiar three-fold recollection of man's estate[189] and thoughts of death and judgement. Tears[190] are the sign of contrition, and they may also be the proof of inward devotion to Christ.[191] The virtue of holy tears was, of course, highly regarded in late medieval devotion, and the gift of tears is often mentioned,[192] sometimes in considerable detail.[193] Charity is the third quality needed to enable the tree to grow, but discussion of this virtues is postponed until the second part, where it stands as the first fruit of the Holy Ghost. The remainder of the first part is mainly concerned with matters of religious conduct and devotion. In addition to the vows of obedience and poverty(chastity is discussed at the end of Part II), silence is commended. The nun must learn to despise the world, to avoid frivolity and "alle dishonest playes", and to eschew the often-mentioned monastic vices of slander and singularity. To prevent her attention wandering during services the sister is to contemplate Christ crucified, to see His wounds and the instruments of the Passion, and if possible to enter His heart by the wounds of His side.[194] Special devotion to the Blessed Virgin is also encouraged. Finally, the author devotes considerable space to defining the character and purpose of various kinds of vocal and mental prayer and meditation. He gives no actual examples, but on occasion he does suggest various topics.[195]

The second part of the treatise, although concerned exclusively with the life of the religious sister, is more theoretical than practical. Each of the twelve chapters seems intended to provide various definitions of the virtue, some examples of its exercise or application, and to conclude with four virtues of the fruit for the religious. Numbered lists of virtues, or the lengthier twenty causes of joy, or nine reasons why God may not hear our prayers,[196] give a greater illusion of clarity and precision than the chapters possess. Unlike The gathered counsailes of saincte Isidorie the twelve fruits are not designed as a handy directory or summary of virtues. Each chapter is rather a meditation about a virtue, with various aspects of the topic being considered in loosely related groups. There are two main problems, which are accentuated by the lack of reasoned structure. The first is the way in which all the virtues are interrelated and dependent upon one another, which inevitably means considerable repetition and variation.[197] The second is that the number of definitions given for a virtue, charity for example,[198] or its application or virtues, even when presented as a numbered list, makes no attempt to emphasize priorities and subordinate less important definitions or qualities. These defects are not so serious if the book is intended purely as material for meditation—there is plenty of food for reflection—but they do seem to limit its practical value as a book of instruction about the virtues to be cultivated by "gostly liveris".

The first chapter on charity, for instance, gives the reader a number of definitions of the virtue. It couples the soul to God, it bends the will to serve God, it is love, and it encourages the soul to turn from earthly things. Thus it inspired the numerous martyrs who

longed for death, but equally it encourages man to endure the exile of this life. Various signs of charity are suggested: meekness, patient suffering, obedience, willing poverty, chastity (the three vows again), and joyful prayer. A little later, having warned the reader that no-one can tell certainly whether he is in charity or not, seven indications of the virtues are given.[199] An allegorical exposition of four degrees of charity precedes the four virtues of charity for the religious with which the chapter concludes.[200] The emphasis here, and in subsequent chapters, is primarily upon the value of the virtue to the religious sister, and the way in which it will help in her religious life. What matters, as the chapters on faith and good living make clear, is that the life of perfection be fulfilled in the religious life:

> O now is þis frute of good trew feythful liuing. for with oute þis frute
> a fayre frute.good sister ete specialy of þis frute.
> is þer no frute sauoury. It is so sauourly a frute.
> þat it smellith and sauourith in to þe blisse of
> heuen.where al trew faythful soules þorow etyng
> of þat frute whiles þei liued in þis lif:ben now
> herbored. 201

The themes which recur most frequently are characteristic of the religious interpretation of the life of perfection: the need to despise the world, sobriety, abstinence and chastity (which is praised in the last chapter), meekness, patience and obedience.

The implication of the author of <u>The tre &.xii.frutes</u> is that the virtues he discusses, although some like charity, "longeth to all folke", are essentially the fruits of the religious life. Most of the virtues could be pursued by lay people, but they are only seen in their fulness among "relygious which shold be more parfyte than the comyn people". Whitford too declares that "ye religion of Christe...is better & more

perfectly & precisely kepte in religion monastical: than in any of the other states".[202] One of the finest celebrations of the religious life is to be found in John Alcock's sermon, Mons perfectionis.[203] Taking as his text "In monte salvum te fac",[204] Alcock shows how the man entering religion enjoys the three gifts Adam enjoyed in Paradise before the Fall: grace; immortality from the tree of life, which for the religious is the Scripture; and lordship of all earthly things, which for the religious means to despise the world. But whereas Adam fell from grace, the religious, if he has humility, can overcome all temptations. A substantial part of the sermon is devoted to the exposition of the three vows.[205] Obedience, the first daughter of humility or meekness,[206] is shown to be the best virtue:[207]

> Obedyence kepeth vs in our Iourneys/it puchaceth to vs grace/it peasith all ye worlde/ it openeth heuen/& bryngeth man therto/& offreth theym to the dyuyne mageste. And also setteth hym among angels there to be perrycypall of the eternall beauty‖tude. 208

Poverty is described as the spouse of Christ, who was born, lived and died in poverty, and the unpleasant fate of monks who kept property is held up as a warning. Again, Christ is the perfect example of chastity, and the monk who by grace keeps his chastity is "in this checkroll with angels", and he can enjoy "a peculyer rewarde & be and rest with Cryste Ihesu" and look forward to being a witness "of the maryage of the spouse of heuen" and to being crowned with the angels, saints and martyrs. To sum up, Alcock described a monastery thus:

> a place of religyon may be wel callid (mons pinguis) for in it regneth al

> perfeccyon yt sholde fede mannes soule....
> And also Relygyon is a place yt my frendes
> & oostes shall fyght in & haue the vyctory of
> myn aduersary & theyrs the deuyll. There ben
> fayre & delycate roses of charyte/the bewteuous
> lelyes of chastyte in body & soule/ye odoryferous
> & swete vyoletti of all obedyence & hummylyte... 209

The religious life was seen as the life of perfection. The convent was a piece of heaven on earth,[210] where all were dedicated to God's Service and obedient to His will, and where the Devil, the world and the flesh had no place. The religious who dies in perfect obedience passes from his cell straight to heaven,[211] having already in the course of his religious life endured purgatory and purged his sin "in the fornays of temptacyon".

The religious life was generally acknowledged even by those outside the convent walls as the best expression of the Christian life. The values of the monastic ideal coloured much late medieval devotional literature, and many people sought to emulate the religious way of life and to cultivate its virtues:

> Many men there be yt wolde be in relygyon/but they
> may not for dyuerse causes. Therfore they yt may not
> be in bodyly relygyon/they may be in ‖ ghostly relygyon
> yf they woll/yt is founded in a place yt is called
> conscyence. 212

<u>The abbaye of the holy Ghost</u>[213] is an example of the way in which the religious life dominated a work which was expressly intended for those who were not religious. It begins with the foundation charter and establishment of an abbey, which is peopled by such familiar monastic virtues as meekness, patience, temperance, sobriety, poverty and chastity and even a form of obedience. The abbey is attacked by the Devil and his four daughters, Pride, Envy, False Judgement and Lust, and the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve, to whom the abbey was originally

granted, is recounted. The abbey is thus lost to man until, after the supplications of numerous patriarchs and prophets, God calls a council of heaven and, following the debate between His four daughters, Justice, Truth, Peace and Mercy, the son of God is sent to earth to become man and to gather together the scattered members of the convent and re-establish it. Thus under the figures of the charter and the abbey the story of man's redemption is recounted and applied to the life and conscience of the individual.

The charter, based on the standard legal forms and terminology[214], grants to Adam and Eve "a lytel precyous place that is called conscyence", which is "clenly dyght without ony wemme. In the whiche god made a noble house of religyon yt is called the abbaye of ye holy ghost". Again, as in Alcock's Mons perfectionis, the perfection of paradise is taken up into the monastic ideal, and the figure of the abbey is used to describe the spiritual history of mankind. Like the young religious of The tre &.xii.frutes, the abbey is founded on meekness, to which is added poverty, not the absolute poverty of the monastic vow but the relative poverty of not setting the heart upon worldly goods. As the young religious must be watered by compunction, so is the abbey "set vpon a ryuer...of teeres", the sign of sorrow for sin, but tears of devout joy as well as of sorrow are mentioned a number of times.[215] At the door stands the porter, dread, to close the gates of the cloister, the five wits, against evil. Several of the ladies of the convent have their counterpart in the xii.frutes of the holy goost; temperance and sobriety are related to continence, bounty and largesse to benignity, and joy is common to both. Over all is set the abbess, charity, to whom all owe obedience, and she has wisdom as her

prioress. "Oryson", who is chanter; and her fellow, "Iublyacyon"; the cellarer, Devotion; and Meditation, the "Garnetour"[216] — all important elements of private devotion-are among the virtues given a more detailed treatment than most. Devotion is primarily seen as thankful remembrance of God's goodness, especially in the death and Passion of Christ, and in the promise of God's angel to comfort the dying soul against the temptations of Satan at his death. Meditation again emphasizes inward remembrance of the cross and of Christ who died thereon, but it also includes "the welle of teeres of bytternes" followed by tears of sweetness. ("for to wepe well is good devocyon"), and the comfort and mercy of the light of God's love, "his heuenly preuytees", which are hidden from those whose wisdom and wealth is of this world. Finally, the joy which accompanies love, almsgiving and prayer suggests a mystical fervour:

> where soo they ben theyr hertes synge mornynge
> songes of loue/whan they longe inwardly with armes
> of loue to clyppe wt ghostly mouth to kysse/they
> loue somtyme so hertly yt they lacke wordes so theyr
> loue rauyssheth theyr hertes yt they wote not somtyme
> what they doo. . . 217

The story of the Fall is a fairly detailed paraphrase of the biblical account, except for the added details of Adam's and Eve's fruitless search for the abbey. The search was continued by patriarchs and prophets, and effective use is made of Old Testament quotations. The parliament of heaven,[218] where the four daughters[219] of God discuss whether man should be redeemed, was widely known, not only from devotional works such as <u>The abbaye</u> or <u>Speculum Vitae Christi</u>[220] or <u>Piers Plowman</u> (Passus I B.18), but in drama such as the morality <u>Castle of Perseverance</u> or the mystery play <u>Ludus Coventriae</u>; it appeared also in verse,[221] and in sermons,[222] and was illustrated in a variety of

art forms.[223] Here, as in the Speculum, the parliament's decision that the Son of God should save man is the prologue to a recital of the life of Christ. The details of Christ's life as told in The abbaye are, as we shall see in Part II, characteristic of the late medieval lives. However, since in terms of the allegory the purpose of the Incarnation is to find the scattered virtues of the convent, each detail of the life is related to a virtue, so that Christ's life is, as so often, seen as the examplar of all virtues. Thus:

> he was borne of his moder in an olde broken house at Bethlehem townes ende/& layed on an asses mangeer on a lytel heye. And there he founde an other lady of ye abbaye & yt was Pouerte For his blessid moder had none other shetes for to wynde hym in/but toke a keuerchyf of her heed/&kytte an old kertyl & made of it cloutes/& wounde our blessyd lord therin for colde. And layed hym on a wyspe of heye before an oxe & an asse.[224]

Wisdom and righteousness are found by the twelve-year old Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem. Temperance, sobriety, penance and strength he found in His temptations and fasting, and others during the course of His preaching and healing ministry. The greatest space is, as usual, devoted to the Passion. Dread, Orison, Contemplation and even Jubilation He finds in the garden of Gethsemane. Patience is found at His arrest; simpleness at His trial; and meekness as He is scourged, crowned with thorns, mocked, then stripped of the silken coat, which "drewe awaye therwith moche of the skynne and flesshe also". The description of His crucifixion contains practically every detail of the physical torments described in late medieval tradition as being inflicted on Jesus.[225] At last on the cross He finds the Abbess, Charity, and after His death descends to hell in His godhead, taking with Him the abbess and sisters of the convent. Thus the abbey is re-established, with the addition of Mercy, Truth, Righteousness and

Peace. The work ends with an exhortation to the reader to keep the abbey well in his conscience, to keep Charity in his heart and good virtues in thought, word and deed, and to always be ready to defend it against bodily or spiritual enemies.

The story of salvation is relevant to all Christians. The bulk of The Abbaye recounts the loss of paradise and the deliberations which eventually lead to the redemption of mankind by the Son of God. There is no obvious religious bias in this telling of salvation history, but the choice of a convent as the dominant figure of the whole work seems to imply more than just a convenient figure. The life of the world and its particular difficulties and temptations does not impinge, but equally there is no reference to the minutiae of religious life, which are often found in works written for religious sisters. The virtues which people the convent are not exclusively religious; many of them would apply to lay-people as well. But taken together poverty, chastity, cleaness, temperance, sobriety, patience and meekness might suggest a religious background, and a number of the virtues are discussed in The tre &.xii.frutes, which was written for a religious sister. In its actual statement of salvation history The abbaye of the holy Ghost is neutral, addressing itself neither to an obviously religious nor to an exclusively lay audience. The choice of the convent, however, as the chief allegorical figure, the kind of virtue advocated, and the implied reflection of the conditions of the earthly paradise in the abbey's foundation, all suggest the dominance of the religious ideal of perfection, even in a work written for those outside the cloister.

By far the most substantial and comprehensive work on the religious

life is William Bonde's Pilgrymage of perfeccyon.[226] Although the title declares it to be "very profytable for all chrysten people", the book, conceived originally for his own profit, is intended primarily for "all maner of religyous persones", and especially for prelates and sovereigns, who have the direction of "yonge pilgrymes" in the "iourney of perfeccyon". In common with other works discussed in this section, such as The Pype or Tonne,[227] The Tre &.xii.frutes and even The Dyetary, the structure, especially of the third book, has an allegorical framework,[228] but the whole book is dominated by the theme of the pilgrimage.[229] In its subject matter it ranges far more widely than The Pype or Tonne or elementary books such as The tree &.xii.frutes or The Dyetary. It covers the whole of the Christian life from its first stages to the advanced spirituality of the contemplative life. According to the author, those who study The Pilgrymage will be better able to understand "all moral matter" and "all goostly bokes of perfeccion/yt they shall rede in englysshe", and "they shall knowe not onely the lyfe of holy religyon/what it is/or what it ought to be/but also they shall haue plenty of all maner of goostly matter/ concernynge the perfeccyon of graces and vertues to commune or gyue exhortacyon to other in perfeccyon and goostlynes".[230] The Pilgrymage of perfeccyon derives its material from a long tradition of theological summa,[231] catechetical and instructional manuals, and the works of the English mystics.[232] It stands as the last substantial exposition of the Christian life to be written in the English medieval tradition.

The first of the three books is a general introduction: its first five chapters outline the reasons for and conditions of the journey, and the remaining seven chapters trace the start of the journey

from baptism to the parting of the ways at the age of discretion. Those who choose to stay in the world travel by a dangerous way, and like the children of Israel are likely to rebel against God and deny Him:

> I wryte not this for the discomforte of the worldly people/for I doute not but that many of them lyue ryght well and vertuously/and shall come ryght well to theyr iourneyes ende and be saued:but yet/not so well ne so surely/ as they that lyueth the holy lyfe of religyon... and I doute not/but many mo in religyon attayneth to theyr iourneys ende/in more holynesse/surety/and perfeccyon/than they do or may do that lyueth in the worlde. Yet/we all religyous & other be pilgrymes/ and go all one pilgrymage". 233

The reason for the journey is found in man's desire to escape from the cage of this world and to seek eternal life and happiness. The Christian can make use of the insights of pagan philosophers and Jews in his quest, but in baptism God gives him all the virtues and grace he will need to pursue his journey and bring it to completion. The seven ages of man are each associated with a gift of the spirit, and Christ, who has travelled the way before us, does not leave man comfortless. In the sacrament of the altar, for instance, there is comfort and encouragement and a remedy for problems like spiritual dryness. The goal the pilgrim strives for is not worldly riches, honour, knowledge or pleasure - these indeed must be left behind with all worldly sins - but [redacted] a crown of glory and the blessed company of heaven.[234] The conditions for those who would undertake the pilgrimage are that man should not be obstinate and trust in the law and ceremonies like the Jews, nor in the power of his own knowledge like the philosophers. Those who are obstinate and will not be taught, the singular and the curious,[235] are to be forbidden from studying the

treatise. The pilgrim must subdue reason to faith and trust only in the grace and mercy of God.

The second book considers the life of religion in more detail, and the opening chapters present various similitudes, including a star and a tree, before focusing on the figure of the religious life as a following or a journey. Three types of pilgrim to Jerusalem are introduced - the contemporary pilgrim traveller, the Jews who journeyed from Egypt, and the three Wise Men - which show how the religious pilgrim should prepare himself, how he should exercise himself on the journey, and how he should follow the star of grace. The earthly pilgrim's preparation,[236] for instance, the negotiations with his banker to arrange for a supply of local currency in each country, the provision of the pilgrim's habit with the sign of the cross, and the preparation of a will and suitable provision for his wife and family before he leaves on his journey, stand in the religious life for the abandonment of all earthly wealth in exchange for trust in the blood of Christ, for the donning of the religious habit and for the removal of all carnal affection for kindred and friends. In this chapter[237] the author allows himself an uncharacteristic digression in praise of the Bridgettine order, founded "now in the last ende of the worlde"[238] in honour of the Blessed Virgin, and according to Bonde "No religyon is founded hytherto/yt so nere representeth ye primityue Chirche of Chryst".[239]

In the course of this book reference is made to a number of problems. One which he raises here and in book III[240] is that of distinguishing good spirits and relevations from the illusions and visions of the Devil - a problem which had previously engaged the attention of

fourteenth-century English mystical writers.[241] Among the problems which seem to have been endemic among members of a closed religious community are slander or back-biting and singularity, a temptation which also assailed the solitary contemplative. According to Bonde[242] no individual may defend himself against any kind of slander, and the author of The tre &.xii.frutes repeatedly warns his readers against back-biting[243] and against slander, by which he seems to mean harming the convent's good name.[244] The question of singularity is more serious, for it betokens a presumptuous self will and the vain desire to be noticed. "Eschewe singulerte in alle þin outeward obseruaunces" warns the author of The tre &.xii.frutes,[245] and more particularly Hilton and the author of Speculum Vitae Christi[246] warn their readers against abandoning set prayers such as the Pater and the canonical hours in favour of "synguler deuocioun" and private meditation before they are sufficiently advanced in the spiritual life. Such presumption leads to a kind of hypocrisy, of which the Speculum is highly critical.[247] Bonde too notes that "many wyll kepe the outwarde cerimonyes of religyon precysely and to the vttermost/but the inwarde exercyse of vertue/as mekenes/obedyence/and charite/with suche other/they care not how lytell they fulfyll",[248] but he warns against presuming to judge a man's inward state by his outward behaviour, for that is to usurp the power of God.

Inserted into the book is Bonde's translation of Bonaventura's Memorials, twenty-five points which are to be observed by the religious in search of perfection. They provide a convenient summary of the exercises which should occupy his life. The first ten points[249] maintain the need for the religious to separate himself entirely from all worldly interests and ties, to despise the world and to repute

himself vile. He is to suffer tribulation gladly and not to grudge at anything. God is to be feared. It is a hard, uncompromising path he must tread. The second part of the group of nine points concerns the service of God and the way in which spiritual vices are to be uprooted and the heart occupied by spiritual exercises: particular devotion to the Blessed Virgin is recommended. The next two memorials require that all men are to be loved and reverenced because they too are made in God's image, and the religious is warned to keep his spiritual life and progress private, he is not to vaunt his virtues. The twenty-third memorial provides a form of meditation to be used before a crucifix or image of pity. As might be expected, it concentrates on the life and Passion of Jesus and His goodness towards men. The following chapter warns against the temptations of the enemy and the dangers of complacency, and a form of self-examination and confession to be used daily is provided.[251] Lastly, the religious is reminded that when he has done all, he is still a sinful wretch. The piece concludes with a description of the sumptuous temple of the soul,[252] garnished with all virtues, in which the Lord will dwell during man's exile here in earth until he is translated"with great ioye and glory to the heuenly countre and cite of the hye Ierusalem" - the perfect monk passes, as Alcock said, from his cell straight to heaven. In the midst of a widely scattered and largely theoretical treatment of various aspects of the religious life this practical, summary review of the whole monastic life seems briefly to draw everything together, and to remind the reader of the exercises he should be using and the qualities he ought to cultivate in his own pilgrimage of perfection.

The main concern of Book II, however, is a detailed exposition of

the life and gifts of grace. The introductory declaration is based on the star of grace figure;[253] the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are listed,[254] and the nine prerogative graces[255] given in more detail; but the most important, the one essential to the pilgrimage, is the grace of life. While the prerogative graces are given freely, usually unsought, to the bad as well as the good, the grace of life is granted only to the good who keep God's commandments. Among the signs of God's grace, "now in the last age of ye worlde", Bonde mentions indulgences[256] drawn on the accumulated merits of the Church; but he makes it clear that a good life aided by the sacraments is able to wipe away sins completely, whereas those who rely on pardons must bear the full pain of purgatory. The dominant figure of this book, however, is not the star but the tree of grace.[257] A substantial proportion of chapters 13 - 16 is devoted to the listing, classification and definition of the tree. Rooted in grace, the three theological virtues are respectively the trunk, bark and sap, while the four cardinal virtues are branches, and their leaves, subsidiary moral virtues. The flowers are the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost—to which are linked the Beatitudes,[258] and the petitions of the Pater, and finally the twelve fruits, met already in The tre &.xii.frutes, are the reward "of labour and exercyse in goostlynes." The declaration of the opposing tree of vice is given in the first day's journey of Book III. Its root is pride and its seven principal branches the seven deadly sins,[259] while its other branches and leaves are subsidiary sins and vices.

The tree image, which was of course used in various contexts in both the Old and New Testaments,[260] was used as early as the fifth century in connection with the cardinal sins;[261] but the pseudo-Hugonian De fructibus carnis et spiritus[262] seems to have been one of the

earliest to portray developed trees of vices and virtues. The iconographic development of the tree of Jesse[263] - and perhaps the idea of the living cross[264] - may well have contributed to the elaboration of the tree image. The Isaianic prophecy concerning Jesse was also the authority for the identification of the seven gifts of the Spirit, and they were portrayed in connection with the tree of Jesse from an early date.[265] The tree of Jesse was itself used as an instructional figure for novices in the Speculum Virginum and the Hortus Deliciarum,[266] where selections from the Beatitudes, the Pater and Psalm XXVIII are included with the seven gifts of the Spirit. The tree image could of course be adapted to a variety of uses, to show the seven fruits of the tree of penance or the seven branches of contemplation,[267] for example; or a number of symbolic trees might be gathered together in "gastely foreste groves" as in The Desert of Religion.[268]

One of the most elaborate treatments of the trees of vices and virtues, which must have been quite widely known in England for over a century before Bonde's Pilgrymage, was that in Somme le Roi. The root and branch motif is used, together with the seven heads of the Beast of the Apocalypse,[269] to support a very detailed exposition of the seven sins and their branches; but the tree image is principally structural, here and in the tree of virtue. The latter is introduced by an allegory of a garden, with God as the gardener and the virtues of the Holy Ghost as the grafts.[270] In the midst grows the tree of life, as it did in the earthly Paradise; the root is God's charity,[271] and the parts of the tree are interpreted as the body, words and thoughts of the Son of God. In one interpretation the seven branches

are the Beatitudes, in whose words "is enclosed al highenesse and al perfeccion of grace, of vertue, and of verreye blessednesse". There follows an exposition[272] of the Paternoster, whose seven petitions ask God for the seven gifts of the Spirit, deliver man from the seven deadly sins and sow in their place the seven virtues, and lead man to fulfil the seven Beatitudes. The tree of virtue is explained in terms of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, which allow the growth of the seven virtues and their branches. Bonde was probably familiar with another work, The Orcherd of Syon, which, in addition to the orchard figure, made use of the image of rotten trees, rooted in pride, nourished by sensual self-love, subsisting on impatience, shaped by indiscretion and gnawed by the worm of conscience.[273] One other presentation of the tree of vices and the tree of virtues was that in The Kalendar of Shepherds, printed both before and after The Pilgrymage.[274] These are no more than a list of the seven deadly sins and the seven virtues, subdivided into large numbers of subsiduary branches and small sprays.[275] In the consistency of their declaration and the complexity of their associations[276] Bonde's treatment of the two trees is similar to that in Somme le Roi, but since his main interest is the religious pilgrimage not morality, his exposition of the vices and virtues is much briefer. The two trees are convenient pictorial summaries, which can be related generally to the scheme of salvation or more particularly to the religious life, and from which he can select various topics for more detailed examination.[277]

The tree of virtues is likened by Bonde to a vine,[278] which must be pruned and cultivated by the careful gardener, for if it is neglected the grapes will be sour.[279] Carnal people neglect to exercise them-

selves in the freely given grace of God, and He will not compel them, for "he hath lefte mannes wyll in his owne liberte/to do what he pleaseth/eyther by grace to meryte his saluacyon/or els by his neglygence & foly to deserue & procure his own dampnacyon".[280] Even the secular or worldly person who does not neglect to cultivate his spiritual vineyard will produce no more than light wines; only holy religious people " bryngeth forth the myghty swete wynes of contemplacyon/ whiche doth so inebriate & replenysshe the soule/that it is rauysshed with ioye vnspekably".[281] The religious must not only labour to uproot all vices, but he must not allow his virtues to become weakened by excess[282] and he must defend his vine against:

> the wylde & rauenous beestes: that is to saye/the lyon of pryde/the bere of glotony/the dogge & wolfe of Ire & enuy/the sowe of slouth/& the horse of lechery. [283]

Most of these themes are elaborated in Book III, and Book II concludes with chapters on the seven beatitudes: considered as degrees by which men ascend to heaven; also as qualities required of an earthly prince, and much more of the inheritors of heaven, and with the comparison of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost to various things, including the seven days of creation, which are used as the basis for Book III's structure.

The first five days of Book III are concerned with the labours, gifts and fruits of the active life,[284] with the fifth day[285] acting as a summary of the four preceding days, and offering a foretaste of days six and seven on the contemplative life, which occupy half the total length of <u>The Pilgrymage</u>. The first day deals with the gift of ghostly fear and the virtues of temperance. Adam fell from grace through pride, which led in turn to disobedience, gluttony, lechery and excuses by which he attempted to evade responsibility for his sins.

Apart from warning the religious against the dangers of singularity, curiosity, vain speech and evil company, and encouraging him to renounce the world - a recurrent exercise of these five days - Bonde concentrates on the exposition of those virtues which will counter the sins of Adam: meekness, obedience, abstinence, chastity and simplicity - a familiar set of monastic virtues. Meekness,[286] for instance, is described as the foundation of the spiritual temple on a number of occasions; and the picture of the meek soul as one who is never grieved, never shows any trace of pride, who accounts himself and the world as vile and nothing worth, all for the love of Jesus, is supplemented by illustrations from Vitae Patrum. Among many others who exhort their readers to live meekly[287] Hilton, in his explanation of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem,[288] sees meekness and love as the two essential companions for the journey. Meekness is derived not only from the soul's awareness of his own frailties and wretchedness, but also the "meekness that the soul feeleth through grace, in sight and beholding of the endless being and the wonderful goodness of Jhesu."[289]

The doctrynall of mekenesse, printed by Robert Copland in 1529, offers the reader a multiple definition and commendation of the virtue. Those who hope to attain perfect ghostly meekness must first possess the bodily meekness. Much of the brief treatise is devoted to listing behaviour and attitudes characteristic of meekness. "We haue mekenesse yf...."we put others above self, reverence our elders, allow others to say what they like of us, willingly forgive those who wrong us and accuse ourselves rather than others, "who so thus doth doth more good than they fasted breed & water everi day in a yere". The failure of religious to keep their vow of poverty is noted: "mani religious lacke this mekenesse for they loue no pouerte in them selfe...they

forget theyr othe/& that god sayth a pore man is heuen/they will say if I aske mercy I shall haue it & so all shal be well", but they forget the fate of Judas, who could not ask for mercy, and the burden of a guilty conscience burdened by possessions. Prelates and sovereigns are advised to exercise themselves in meekness by periodic public confession of their failures and sins to their charges. But meekness is more than patience and poverty. It is acknowledgement of oneself as the worst of all sinners. This contrition, weeping over one's sins, confession, penance, and devout exercises like fasting, prayer, going on pilgrimage and alms deeds, are all signs of meekness. The highest forms of bodily meekness include forsaking all love of self and of the world, having compassion for Christ, and being stirred by the thought of heavenly joys and by the beauty of the angels. But perfection of ghostly meekness lies in "parfite loue to god his selfe". It is won by grace, by trust and by long labour and especially by holy desire:

> Seke it in the.v.woundes of Ihesu cryst yf thou be in ony parte of this blyssed passyon thou arte in the hole passyon entre the wounde in the glorious hert of Iesu cryst & behold if thou may finde thy soule rested therin frome all steringe of synne by holy desyre wt teeres of thyn eyen/thy soule so by in that holy desyre to the bitter paynes in his herte and passyon that thou forgetest the state in yt tyme bothe of synne and vertue oneli behold ynge Ihesu to do it as in thy pore soule by hys grace and grete mercy/this holde I parfite mekenes for in that tyme it feleth nothinge but the swete wekynge o Ihesu in the myghtes of the soule/thys is mekenesse in a holly desyre parfyte. 289A.

There is more than a hint of contemplative teaching here. The emphasis on the wounds of Christ is reminiscent of the Stimulus Amoris, while the holy desire for Jesus, which eventually transcends all stirrings of sin, echoes Hilton, who also insists on the importance of meekness and love.

Bonde does not neglect the dangers of the journey caused by man's three principal enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil: "And that they may the sooner brynge about theyr purpose/they ley engyns/trappes & snares in our waye/to let vs in our iourney/& fyghteth myghtely against vs".[290] Under these three captains fight the seven deadly sins and their subsidiary vices. On two occasions Bonde looks back to the battles of the children of Israel after they passed over Jordan, "whiche fygureth and signifyeth to vs the spirituall batayles of vertues/that we shall haue after our entrynge to religyon/ longe tyme or we can come to the entent of our iourney/whiche is holynesse and perfeccyon of lyuynge".[291] But as Joshua and the children of Israel overcame Jericho, Ai and Gibeon,[292] so are the three cities held by the deadly sins[293] in the soul of man overcome in the battle of patience by grace and the appropriate virtues, and three new cities established.[294] In the course of the first day, however, he presents a full scale "batayle of vyce and vertue/pytched in the feelde of the cognitacyon or mynde of man or woman".[295] The general image of the Christian warfare was widely used in the New Testament and among the Fathers,[296] but the confrontation of the vices and the virtues is generally traced back to the late fourth century and the Psychomachia of Prudentius.[297] In Bonde it is less a battle than a debate, where each sin states its views and ambitions and is answered by its opposing virtue, who frequently cites the words of Jesus. There is no trace of dramatic action nor even of martial imagery apart from the word battle, nor could it be described as a dialogue. It offers a formal summary of the main sins and the opposing active virtues,[298] dealt with in the first few days, adapted from the traditional lists to follow Bonde's own teaching. In addition

to the open battle between vices and virtues, Bonde recognizes that the enemy will often attack the more advanced soul by more subtle means,[299] trying to subvert his will and draw his diligent exercise into the snares of hypocrisy, vain glory or malicious zeal "vnder a cloke of good entent & vertue". The soul is encouraged to labour the harder to overcome these temptations by the promise of increased grace "to the meryte of ye hye crowne of glory".

While the first two days of Book III are mainly concerned with the exposition of virtues and the vices they oppose, the third day - the gift of ghostly knowledge and the virtue of prudence - devotes a substantial number of chapters. (3 - 9) to the discerning of spirits and means of testing whether revelations are true or are merely an illusion of the Devil. The fourth day - ghostly strength and fortitude - is largely occupied by the value of adversity (the doctrine of tribulation[300]) and by the virtue of patience. The fifth day, unlike those which precede it, has no particular labour. Its gift of ghostly counsel, which is of particular value to prelates, rulers and teachers, directs the other virtues, illuminates the soul, and tunes the spiritual ear to hear the counsels of Jesus.[301] A number of images are used, especially of cities,[302] buildings[303] and the mason,[304] who as his skill and knowledge increases does less physical work in the same way that labour ceases at the fifth day, the completion of the active life. The soul, its labour and battles over, becomes like a bird, free to fly to the mount of contemplation.

Days six and seven then concern themselves with the exercises, contents and fruits of the contemplative life. Bonde devotes the first half-dozen chapters of the sixth day to an investigation of

the qualities and differences between the active and the contemplative life. He does not recognize the mixed life but divides all Christians into two categories: those who follow the active life and are concerned with the works of mercy, alms deeds and running a household, and those who take religious vows and live a solitary or cloistered life; in other words, the active life is usually that of secular persons, the contemplative life characteristic of religious.[305] Although one is concerned to do good and to serve men in the world, exercise in the active, moral virtues of this life is a necessary preparation for the pursuit of the other contemplative life, where the soul cuts itself off from all worldly concerns and concentrates exclusively on God. Both Bonde and the author of the Speculum Vitae Christi makes use of the biblical figure of the two wives of Jacob as symbols of the two lives.[306] The Speculum's interpretation, much abridged from his original, is based on the well-known contrast between the lives of Martha and Mary.[307] He divides the active life into two parts, the amendment of self in uprooting vices and cultivating virtues, and secondly the governance of others: the two being separated by withdrawal from the world, thinking only of God and resting in contemplation. He particularly emphasizes that a person can only progress to the contemplative life through the active life, and he warns against attempting to live a contemplative life without sufficient preparation.[308] He recommends to those who would know more the treatise of Walter Hilton.[309] The opening chapters of the Scala Perfectionis define the active life as pertaining to those who have property to administer or rule over men, and it is mainly the life of secular men.[310] The contemplative life Hilton divides into three parts. The first is knowledge of ghostly things, gained by study and thus available to good and bad people, without charity and

unaccompanied by any ghostly sweetness. The second degree, most common among simple, unlettered men, consists entirely of feeling, delight, ghostly sweetness, fervent love, from which springs sweet tears, burning desires and still mournings—which purge the heart of sin "and maketh it melt into wonderful sweetness of Jhesu Christ". Those in active life can know this feeling occasionally and briefly, but only contemplatives well exercised in the spiritual life can retain it. The third degree of contemplation combines spiritual knowledge and feeling;although it begins in this life the full fruition of this union between God and the soul can only be known in heaven. Although the distinction between the active and the contemplative life and the superiority of the latter were generally accepted, the author's particular interests, his own temperament and the audience he was writing for seem to have governed his application of the two lives to particular classes or types of people. The Speculum seems to place prelates and rulers on the highest level, thus emphasizing the spiritual authority of the Church's rulers, while Hilton is concerned with spiritual states, not with position nor explicitly with the religious life. Bonde's division simply maintains the distinction observed throughout The Pilgrymage between the secular and the religious life, the latter always being regarded as superior.

The topics dealt with in the seventy chapters of the sixth day are nominally divided according to three parts of contemplation: prayer, reading and meditation,[311] the exercises which occupy the soul who has perfected the exercises of the active life. In fact, there is little about reading, apart from the extended simile of

the bee[312] which gathers pollen from every flower; so the religious person should seek out books of perfection and feed on them. The author of Oure Ladyes Myroure, Whitford and others had more to say about the selection and reading of devout books.[313] A large proportion of this day is devoted to detailed expositions of "ye prayer of all prayers/ye holy Pater noster",[314] the Ave Maria,[315] Creed[316] and Ten Commandments.[317] Versions of some or all of these - especially the Pater noster[318] and Creed which were considered as the basic knowledge required of all Christians - were to be found, with or without accompanying expositions, in a large number of handbooks for clergy[319] and in devotional treatises for religious or lay people.[320] The statement and exposition of these works was continued on into the 1530s and beyond in Primers,[321] sermons[322] and treatises.[323] In a number of cases the Pater noster[324] or Decalogue[325] provides the structural basis for an entire work. Although there were precedents for including lists and expositions of articles of belief and prayers in devotional treatises, in The myrroure of the chyrche for example, Bonde's expositions are far longer and more detailed than usual. A vast amount of religious teaching, and even criticism of Wycliffe and Lutheran heresies,[326] is included in the course of the fifteen chapters devoted to the creed;[327] and the twelve articles allow various general topics to be loosely grouped together. The first article, for instance, considers the propriety of worshipping images and grapples with the problem of representing the mystery of the Trinity,[328] while the fourth (Passus sub Poncio Pilato/crucifixus/mortuus et sepultus) for once attempts to explain the significance of Christ's death rather than dwelling upon descriptive detail.[329] Yet despite the amount of

detail the explanations remain simple enough to be followed by those without theological training and by beginners in religion. Wherever possible Bonde seeks to relate and apply his exposition to the experience and life of his audience.[330]

Prayers and meditation, about which Bonde has quite a lot to say, were common enough topics of discussion in Catholic devotional treatises, but it was unusual to find much about faith beyond the necessity of having it.[331] The Christian's obligation to believe and not to question the teachings of the Church was frequently stressed:[332] "Wherefore let vs neuer dispute or reason the mysteryes of our fayth: but let it be sufficyent to vs/yt it is ye werke & worde of god".[333] Following Hebrews XI and Aquinas, Bonde defines faith as the beginning, the door or foundation of eternal life. It enables the Christian to accept what is above reason and not apparent to the senses, and to believe the articles of his faith. As material must be dry before the fire will catch, or as the painter prepares the bare board with "grosse colours" before painting on his fine colours, so the soul cannot receive the light of grace until disposed thereto by faith.[334] In his Holy Instrucyons Whitford too had said that the only sure knowledge available to man in this life was by faith alone as interpreted by Holy Church.[335] Bonde declares "ye soule cannot be iustifyed before god wtout fayth", but against the Lutheran heretics he argues that faith alone is not sufficient to salvation:

> euery man sholde knowe that we haue no outward knowlege ne surety of fayth or scripture/but onely of god & his holy chirche. She is our mother that brought vs forth in to the lyfe of grace. And of her autorite we knowe what scriptures we sholde receyue & byleue/& whiche we shold refuse. Wherfore/they be not to be herde/ that precheth otherwyse than ye catholicall or generall fayth of ye chirche techeth. 336

The controversy between reformers such as Luther, Tyndale, Bucer and others, and those who supported the traditional Catholic orthodoxy, came back again and again to the question of the authority and doctrine of the Church. Bonde, like other traditional thinkers, sees the Church as the essential interpreter of faith and Scripture, and dispenser of the sacraments:[337] "extra ecclesia non salus est".

As far as meditation is concerned, Bonde seems more willing to provide his readers with meditations than to define what it is and describe how to do it. There is a lengthy meditation on the Passion,[338] divided, as was frequently done,[339] according to the canonical hours; a meditation in time of mass, which was copied separately in at least two manuscripts,[340] provided another account of the Passion narrative; and contemplation of the pains of Jesus provided remedies against loss of devotion.[341] The Passion meditations are supplemented by thanksgiving and a meditation on the Four Last Things.[342] Meditation is divided into two kinds, that of the thought, reason and understanding, and the other of the will, love and affection. Two causes should move man to meditation, recognition of the instability and frailty of his life, which runs inevitably to death, and awareness of the wound of original sin. The meditation should be applied as a physician administers his medicines, so that when the conscience is afraid the meditation should move the soul to hope in God and the proud heart should be moved to meekness by it. Finally the author warns that the contemplative state cannot be attained by man's own imagination but only by due preparation and through the light of God's grace, and he describes the dangers of excessive elevation of spirit and ecstasy. The brevity of Bonde's treatment is probably a result of

his attempt to reserve treatment of the higher state of mediatation[343] until the final day.

He has more to say on the subject of prayer, although he deals exclusively with public prayer, the services every religious was bound to say in church. Having distinguished between public and private, vocal and mental prayer, he devotes considerable attention to the problem of various kinds of distraction and how the religious may best apply himself to the service. He should concentrate on the letter, pronouncing and singing each word correctly and distinctly,[344] consider the meaning of the words, and remember the object of each prayer: God and the hope of eternal life. Meditations which stimulate devotion and praise of God may be allowed during the service.[345] The unlearned, who of course cannot understand the Latin service or derive any spiritual food from its repetition, are recommended to think of the articles of Christ's Passion, and although they do not understand the words they are to be reverenced as holy. It was for just this kind of religious that Oure Ladyes myroure was prepared for the nuns of Syon. Before reverting to a brief discussion of the four conditions which enable prayer to be made with a clean heart - meekness of heart; simplicity, or the coupling of heart and outward behaviour, which is the opposite of hypocrisy; purity, particularly freedom from carnal or worldly affections; and formality, which is rooted in faith, hope and charity - and then, beginning his exposition of the Pater, Bonde details under the figure of Mary Magdalene his ideal picture of the religious at prayer. Like her:

> they render theyr duty to our lorde/wt theyr hertes hoolly fixed in his loue/&theyr myndes hooly occupyed in gyuyng thankes & praysynges to god for his benefytes & all his mercyes and goodnes. And theyr eyes so shut & closed/that not onely they wyll not admyt ony occasyon/what thyng so euer be done bysyde them/but also they wyll not se ony thynge wylfully or gladly/but theyr boke and other dutyes perteynynge to theyr charge. Theyr eares also...wyll heare nothynge/|| but the verse of them with whome they saye or synge. The fantasy/the imaginacyon/& the other inwarde senses/hath lykewyse in maner promysed obedyence to the wyll...they wyll not let theyr myndes from contemplacyon/nor wauer or wander abrode/ne yet prouoke the mynde to any distraccyon... The mouth also/wt the tonge & the lyppes applyeth themselfe to saye or synge theyr duty distinctly & deuoutly. The handes closed & lyfted yp to heuen/ not onely redy to turne theyr boke/whan necessite requyreth/...but also/after theyr maner they shewe them selfe penitent...And not onely these membres but also all the body/countenaunce/gesture/ conuersacyon/& behauour/be ordred moost holyly & demurely/more lyke an heuenly creature/than a mortall man or woman. 346

It is an excellent summary of what Bonde has to say about the public prayer of the religious, and it is interesting to note that the medieval tendency to emphasize the importance of correct external behaviour is to be detected in the description.

With the seventh day the pilgrim reaches the fulfilment of that perfection for which he has been labouring. The means by which the soul ascends from sin to grace and the ascending degrees of love and of mortification within the state of grace are briefly reviewed and traced. The bitter tears of battle then give place to sweet tears "and ledyn þe daunce of loue".[347] For the gift of sapience or heavenly wisdom which accompanies this day is love and the taste of love, enabling the pilgrim to hear the voice of God, to see His spiritual presence in his own soul and to taste of His sweetness. It is both spiritual illumination or understanding, and feeling. The joy and sweetness of this gift can be felt, but they cannot be described in

words,[347A] and the author declares his own unworthiness to "touche the mount of contemplacyon".[348] Yet he gives an adequate description, relying particularly on Bonaventura, Bernard, Aquinas and Henry of of Herp, of the way in which souls can attain to the highest degree of mortification, the complete abnegation of self, until not only are they willing to suffer or die for Christ, but their whole heart is so fixed in God that they will nothing but his will; thus "Loue knytteth the louynge soule to god/whome it moost loueth/and maketh it one with hym". From children they become spouses of God, and they receive the spiritual kissing of the Son of God in varying degrees, with the Blessed Virgin as the supreme example. If they die the inexpressible joy of this union will be retained by them and they will be received into heaven, to see the clear vision of the Holy Trinity and to be fed with the fruits of glory. Although Bonde would not claim any mystical insights of his own, his exposition of the various degrees of perfection within the contemplative life is based on good authority, and in his use of traditional mystical terminology - the sweetness of the gifts of this day, the wine of love and the spiritual drunkenness[349] it produces, and the final expectation of the heavenly marriage with Christ - he captures something of the contemplative's vision and crowns a lengthy pilgrimage with a foretaste of heaven.

Treatises concerning the contemplative life

A great deal has been written about mysticism in general,[350] and more particularly the English mystics of the fourteenth century have been the subject of a number of studies.[350A] But although Rolle,[351] Hilton,[352] the author of The Cloude of Unknowing and Margery Kempe flourished in the fourteenth century, their works continued to be copied during the following centuries[353] and in some cases to be printed.[354] Hilton's work was recommended by Love in the Speculum Vitae Christi[355] and by Sir Thomas More, who thought it better for:

> the people vnlearned to occupye themself beside their other busines in praier good meditacion, and reading of suche englisshe bookes as moste may noryshe and encreace deuocion. Of which kind is Bonauenture of the lyfe of Christe, Gerson of the folowing of Christ & the deuoute contemplactive booke of Scala perfectionis wyth suche other lyke... [356]

rather than they should spend their time reading polemic and controversial tracts. The author of Oure Ladyes myroure[357] and Bonde both refer to Richard Rolle[358] while the Stimulus Amoris was recommended by the author of The tre & .xii. frutes[359] to his readers, and Margery Kempe had it read to her and quoted from it.[360] But the interest was not merely retrospective. Bonde devoted over half the total length of The Pilgrymage of perfeccyon to a study of the contemplative life, using both well known authorities like St. Bernard, Bonaventura and Aquinas and the fifteenth century Dutch writer Henry of Herp. Later, in the middle of the century, the Yorkshire priest Robert Parkyn not only copied works by Richard Rolle, but like Bonde he wrote a number of brief instructions about the contemplative life.[361] The English

mystical tradition, with its combination of elements from the religious - handbook tradition[362] and teaching about the contemplative life, was at least as much instructional as autobiographical. Rolle and Dame Julian of Norwich communicate something of their own mystical experience to the reader, but Hilton and the author of The Cloud make no direct reference to their own experience. Their concern is to instruct the reader in various aspects of the contemplative life, and Bonde and Parkyn follow in their footsteps.

Hilton's Scala perfectionis or The ladder of perfeccyon,[363] addressed not to a "ghostly sister" within the convent community, but to an enclosed ancress,[364] sets out like Bonde's Pilgrymage[365] to lead the reader by gradual degrees[366] to the life of perfection or the contemplative life. The pursuit of the solitary life, like entry into religion, "and the stricter that the religion is, the more excellent is the deed in the doom of Holy Kirk", was widely accepted as being the most meritorious form of life.[367] But as well as providing the best setting for the pursuit of perfection and the contemplative life, the solitary life of the ancress, recluse or hermit was fraught with dangers.[368] But before discussing Hilton's treatise it will be useful to look briefly at some other works written for recluses.

Just as the regular religious was bound by vows and the rule of his order, so the solitary hermit or enclosed ancress usually took vows.[369] Some undertook to follow a particular rule[370], while others received more informal, personal instruction about their manner of life. One such instruction was the Carthusian Richard de Methley's

Pystyl of Solitary Life.[371] Its twelve chapters, all except the first repeating the thematic refrain "Eripe me de inimicis meis, domine: ad re confugi:doce me facere voluntatem tuam quia deus meus estu", briefly outline the three basic temptations of the world, the flesh and the Enemy. The first temptation is overcome by the flight from the world to the wilderness of the enclosed life,[372] and the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience help the recluse to conquer the three enemies. In addition the eyes must be kept from vanities and focused on God; he must keep to his cell except for hearing mass, and eschew speech. The epistle concludes with a few notes on the hermit's daily occupation, which is summarized thus: "good prayer, meditation, that is called holy thinking; reading of holy English books; contemplation, that thou mayst come to by grace and great devotion, that is for to say, to forget all manner of things but God and for great love of Him be rapt into contemplation; and good deeds with thy hand". Contemplation is only one of the occupations listed, and if it follows after prayer, meditation and holy reading, there is no suggestion that it should supersede them nor indeed that it is a state to be preferred before the others.

The Ancrene Riwle is probably the best known and most widely quoted work of instruction on the enclosed life.[373] It is, of course, much lengthier and more detailed than Richard de Methley's Pystyl, but it too deals with the prayers, devotions and daily occupations of the ancresses.[374] It gives more detailed consideration, however, to the pursuit of virtue and the avoidance and conquest of sin and temptations to sin. Much of the material from these sections,

II - IV, is recapitulated in the two following parts on Confession and penance - suffering and mortification rather than the sacrament. From the suffering the author turns to consider love, especially the redemptive and sacrificial love of Christ which seeks a responsive love in the loved ones. Although the work nowhere explicitly mentions contemplation, and seems neither to describe nor to advocate it, I think that Dom Gerard Sitwell's argument,[375] that "the author did expect the sisters to achieve what is evidently contemplation", is convincing. Since they were clearly beginners in this life it is entirely appropriate that author should dwell on the ascetic virtues of the active life and the battle against sin rather than on meditation or contemplation which require greater spiritual experience, but that does not mean that all expectation of the contemplative life was precluded.

Another influential work[376] was Aelred of Rievaulx' De Institutione Inclusarum. Although it was addressed to his sister allowance is made for readers who may be less experienced in the enclosed life. Here again over half of the work is devoted to the life of the recluse and to the discussion of various virtues. Following a comparison between the ideal of the enclosed life and the shortcomings of contemporary recluses the author goes on to outline suitable occupations, which include prayer, reading and work, and to provide regulations for the keeping of silence, for the provision and quantities of food and drink and for suitable apparel. Among the virtues he discusses are chastity; humility, the foundation of all virtues; and charity, which unites all the other virtues. He also devotes considerable attention to the need for discretion or moderation. The second half of the work is

given over to spiritual exercises, a systematic three-fold meditation[377] on the past benefits of Christ, revealed in the story of His life and Passion; experience of His present grace, told in an autobiographical account of Aelred's earlier life and how, like St. Augustine, he was converted from his rebellious course; and consideration of the future Judgement, the fate of the damned and the bliss of heaven which awaits the blessed. Yet again there is no obvious reference to the contemplative state. Even the chapter[378] which contrasts the life of Martha and that of Mary is more concerned to discuss the expression of charity appropriate to two states of life, the active religious, clerk or prelate, who retains some contact with the world, and the enclosed solitary. The conditions to be observed by the enclosed imply the separation from worldly affairs and the concentration on spiritual things characteristic of the contemplative: "Itaque totum mundum uno dilectionis sinu complectere, ibi simul omnes qui boni sunt considera et congratulare, ibi malos intuere et luge...Omnibus pectus tuae dilectionis aperias, his tuas impende lacrymas, pro his tuas preces effundas. Haec eleemosyna Deo gratior, Christo acceptior, tuae professioni aptior, his quibus impenditur fructuosior"... but no more is said about the content of that vocation. As in the Ancrene Riwle, however, a few statements in the course of meditation on the Passion seem to suggest a more intimate, mystical association with Christ than is usually derived from the practice of the devotional present.[379] That part of devotion distinguished by the fourteenth century authors as contemplation. seems in these earlier works to be assumed to be an integral part of the solitary's life, even though it is not singled out for special discussion.[380]

With Rolle's Form of Living,[381] written for a recluse, probably Margaret Kirkeby,[382] at the beginning of her solitary life, we move closer in time to Hilton. The dangers against which he warns his reader were widely recognized and discussed. There is the hypocritical holiness which Nicholas Love also condemns;[383] the problem of various delusions, visions and dreams which may be prompted by the Devil,[384] and the more subtle dangers of "þat thyng þat þai wend war for þam, es lettyng till þam", when what seems good turns out to be harmful to the soul, and virtues become vices by excess.[385] Fasting and temperate habits were widely praised virtues, but not fasting so severe as to debilitate the body "þat we may nouther wyrk ne pray als we suld do," nor penance so excessive as to hinder the loue of Jesus. Like Aelred before him and Hilton and others after him, Rolle recommends the need for discretion. In common with most other works for religious and recluses, the reader is told to forsake and despise the world, and in the beginning of her solitary life she should reflect on the shortness of life, the uncertainty of the time or manner in which death will come, the horror of the Judgement, the bliss of heaven and the pain of hell. The work concludes with a conventional listing of the qualities of the active and the contemplative lives.

The teaching of the treatise begins with a fairly basic listing of what defiles a man, grouped under the headings, sins of heart, mouth and deed, with a note on sins of omission. These sins are matched by sorrow of the heart, shrift of mouth, and satisfaction, which cleanse man's soul, a state which he can retain by good intention, protection of the five wits, by speaking little and by honest profitable occupation.

From this very basic survey of the vices and virtues - which does not however include any detailed reference to external matters such as the daily occupations, forms of prayer or dress of the ancress - Rolle moves on to give "some special poynt of þe luf of Ihesu Criste, & of contemplatyf lyfe". Since the especial grace of this life is to love Christ, he proceeds to detail three degrees of love: from a strong and constant love, through inseparable dwelling on Christ, to an indescribable, burning, joyful rapture. This is gathered up into a short lyric of love - longing and followed by a celebration of the virtues of meditation on the Holy Name of Jesus - a devotion which was also dear to Hilton. He continues his exposition of love with a lengthy list of qualities and attributes which show what love is. He goes on to explain that love is in the heart and will of man, and to describe the virtues, such as meekness love of poverty, sorrow for sins and devotion, which encourage true love. Although no-one can know surely whether he is in charity Rolle lists seven signs which offer some indication,[386] and he concludes by noting that the conditions of the contemplative life, "rest in body & saule", enable men best to love God. The solitary life "es maste abyll of all othyr til reuelacion of þe holy gaste", and the recluse can experience great joy and comfort, sweetness and love in her solitude.[387] Although Rolle is clearly drawing on his own experience, especially in his exposition of the three degrees of love, he includes no autobiographical references to his experience like those found in the Melum contemplativorum or the Incendium Amoris. Whatever the status of his own mystical experience,[388] his exposition of the various degrees of the contemplative life is sound, and although the contemplative life undoubtedly dominates

the work, he does not forget the more basic stages of the journey. He warns that "Na man till swylk reuelacion & grace on þe fist day may kom:bot thurgh lang travell & bysines to loue Ihesu Criste;"[389] only fools attempt to begin at the highest degree.[390] The wise will move from stage to stage, gradually acquiring the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost;[391] and the work concludes with a description of the gradual growth of the contemplative life:

> A man or woman þat es ordayned til contemplatife lyfe, first god enspires þam to forsake þis worlde.... Sythen he ledes þam by þar ane, & spekes til yar hert... and þan he settes þam in will to gyf þam haly to prayers & meditacions & teres. Sithen, when þai haue sufferd many temptacions, & [þe] foule moyes of thoghtes þat er ydel, & of vanitees þe whilk wil comber þam þat can noght destroy þam, er passand a-way: he gars þam geder til þam þair hert & fest anely in hym: and opens til þe egh of þair sawls þe gates of heuen: swa þat þe ilk egh lokes in til heuen; and þan þe fire of lufe verraly ligges in þair hert, & byrnes þarin, & makes [it] clene of al erthly filth: & sithen forward þai er contemplatife men, & rauyst in lufe. 392

The later Contemplacyons of the drede and loue of god,[393] wrongly attributed to Rolle by de Worde, repeats a number of his warnings - the danger of illusions and dreams, and of excesses making virtues vices, the need for discretion and to "begynne at the lowest degree yf they wyll come to an hyghe parfeccyon"[394] - and seems to echo his characteristic concentration on love. The bulk of the treatise is contained under four main headings: ordinate love, which advocates moderation in food and drink and neighbourly love; clean love, which insists on the need to recognize and remove all sins however trivial they seem; steadfast love, which encourages constancy and the need for godly fear;[395] and finally perfect love, which can be gained by

perfect living although charity may not be fulfilled in this world. The author then goes on to discuss virtues which help towards perfect love, including patience, perseverance, a good will, the ability to conquer temptation and prayer, especially when accompanied by compunction and tears. The treatise is concerned, then, not with contemplation, but with the virtues of a good life. Only the chapters describing the degree of love (B) and the qualities of the love of God[396] echo anything of Rolle's understanding of the contemplative's experience of burning love and passionate desire for Jesus. Love in this later work is considered as a virtue to be attained through a good life. Significantly the reader here is not required to forsake and despise the world, the need for solitude and the rest of body and soul necessary to the pursuit of contemplation are not mentioned, and although it expresses the conventional view that the religious way - it does not mention the solitary recluse - is the safest, the author recognizes that "all may not be men or women of relygyon":

> I saye not that yu shalt flee bodely from ye world or fro [thy] worldely goodes for they be pryncypall occasyons/but I counseyll the in herte and in wyll that thou flee all suche vanytees. 397

The book is recommended as "full spedefull to knowe" for all manner of men and women "whether they be relygyous or seculer". Apart from the use of some mystical terminology and a brief reference to the degrees of contemplation, the work takes its place among the fairly elementary books of moral instruction intended for a general audience.

Hilton's Scala Perfectionis has been the subject of a number of articles[398] and brief chapters[399] and of one full length study.[400] Milosh's study raises two questions: one concerns only mystical writings, the other applies more generally to most late medieval English devotional treatises. The first is the tendency to view the works of the fourteenth century English mystics in the light of the vast amount that has been written about the theory of mysticism, and to apply concepts like the three ways - purgative, illuminative and unitive - to earlier works which rarely define states and words rigidly or systematically. The second, more general, problem concerns structure, and the tendency of modern critics to look for logical connections between topics and a reasoned structure sustaining the whole work.[401] However, the "structure" of these late medieval devotional works is much more likely to depend on an allegorical framework (the tun of Whitford's Pype or Tonne, or the complex allegorical interpretation of the children born to Lia and Rachel, the two wives of Jacob, in Benjamin Minor) or on simple numerical division (Fyue notable chaptyres;[402] The seuen poyntes of trewe wisdom or The.xii.profytes of tribulacyon - sometimes the numbers may suggest a symbolic meaning) than on logical argument. The author will move on from one topic to the next when he has exhausted the subject or when some phrase suggests the subject of the next one, and topics are frequently repeated with variations.

In his final chapter Milosh[403] suggests that there is an overall unity in The Scale, derived from its unity of teaching, tone and structure. As far as unity of teaching is concerned the extent

to which attention is focused "on contemplation proper and especially the mystical experience" seems to me to be exaggerated by Milosh. There are large areas, particularly in book I, where contemplation is no more obviously present than in Ancrene Riwle. Again, his argument for the eclecticism of Hilton's teaching and the subordination of disparate elements to the over-riding purpose does not seem to be sufficiently proven - especially if one does not grant such a dominant role to contemplation. The idea of tone seems too vague to be very useful, and the majority of the devotional works discussed possess this unity of approach, for instance Bonde's Pilgrymage adopts, like Hilton, an "intellectual" tone. The work certainly has a structure and in general terms it can be described as that of the progress of the soul; there is certainly "flowing and overlapping" between the parts. The fact that Milosh is able to justify the position of individual chapters — I. 61 - 2 — by recourse to the useful principle of alternation[404] suggests that his constant progess is fairly accommodating, and perhaps not so constant as he maintains.

As a teacher Hilton is concerned to instruct his reader about the contemplative life. He does not make any reference to his own experience, as Rolle did not in his Form of Living, nor does he write in the style of affective first person devotion adopted in A talking of the love of God or in parts of Stimulus Amoris. His restrained, third person address - the "intellectual tone" and "tendency to rationalize" noted by Milosh - are appropriate to and characteristic of works of instruction from the Ancrene Riwle

to Richard Whitford. Although Hilton's primary concern is to explain various aspects of the contemplative life - only towards the end of book II does he attempt to deal with contemplation itself and to describe the opening of the ghostly eyes - much of what he had to say was appreciated by a far wider range of readers than solitary contemplatives.[405] Indeed, one of the reasons for The Scale's widespread popularity was probably Hilton's comparative lack of insistence on the physical conditions of solitude and seclusion, compared to Rolle, for example, who glorifies the solitary life, and also his refusal to denigrate the active life. Although solitude and quiet were necessary to cultivate the higher degrees of contemplation, Hilton saw that the inward spirit was more important than the outward estate:

> For he that most loueth God in charity here in this life, what degree he be in, be he lewd or learned, secular or religious, he shall haue most meed in the bliss of heauen, for he shall most loue God and know Him, and that is the sovereign meed. And as for this meed, it shall fall that some worldly man or woman, as a lord or a lady, knight or squire, merchant or plowman, or what degree he be in, man or woman, shall haue more need than some priest, or friar, monk or canon or anker enclosed. 406

He also denounces the hypocritical dissociation of outward life from the inward spiritual state.[407]

Given the general progress from the preparations for and conditions of the contemplative life to a consideration of the content of the act of contemplation itself, the first part of the work seems to be more general, more physical and active; the second part, added sometime later, is more inward, more intellectual, and it leads the soul much further in the way of perfection. It seems to me that

in common with the Ancrene Riwle, or Rolle's Form of perfect living, Hilton disposes his material into subject groups, which are often announced in advance. Topics are somtimes interrupted, other contrasting ones may be introduced, and nearly every important theme, from the need to obey Holy Church to the limitations of physical feelings of devotion, from the need for love and meekness to desire for Jesus, is introduced a number of times, perhaps with variations. Also, where a book was read a little at a time, repetition of topics and some consistency of vocabulary would help to preserve continuity.

Part I begins with a description of the active and contemplative lives and the three degrees of contemplation. The subject thus introduced, the soul is set to acquire the necessary "fullhead of virtues" and in time to delight in them. The basis of future progress are the familiar virtues of meekness, the first and last of all virtues;[408] faith, or belief in the articles of faith, and submission to Holy Church; and a constant intention, or will and desire to please only God, which is charity "without which all were nought that thou dost". Every thought, activity and desire, be it good or bad, must be brought "within the trowth and the rules of Holy Kirk and cast all in the mortar of meekness and break it small with the pestle of dread of God, and throw the powder of all this in the fire of desire, and offer it so to God". Prayer helps the soul to obtain cleanness of heart, to destroy sin and receive virtues. Hilton recommends vocal prayer and devout recitation of set prayers and hymns - the hours to which this recluse seems to be

bound ~~like a religious~~ and the Pater noster. These prayers "ordained of God and of Holy Kirk"are like a staff for the beginner to lean on, and the author warns against leaving them too soon to pursue his own meditation and risk falling into fantasies and errors. Subsequently the reader may move on to brief ejaculatory prayers arising from his own feelings. Such affective prayer produces the inebriation often described by mystics: "by great violence and mastery (it) breaketh down all lusts and likings of any earthly thing, and it woundeth the soul with the blissful sword of love". But, just as Hilton places physical feelings of devotion well below the level of true contemplation, so the highest degree of prayer is silent and characterized "by great rest and quietness". To the description of these different types of prayer Hilton adds practical advice on the common problem of distractions. The usual remedies offered to religious advocate concentration on the saying of the service, perhaps its meaning too, and sometimes silent meditation on Christ's Passion. Hilton's advice is both more general and psychologically more effective. Provided the intention is good the reader is not to be too impatient against God nor too angry with himself if he fails to find the expected savour of devotion. His failure should encourage meekness and trust in God. However, he is not to dwell upon his failure, nor to strive too long for mastery over his thoughts, but "Leave off and go to some other good deed, bodily or ghostly; and think for to do better another time". In his analysis of such common problems and the remedies he suggests, Hilton's advice remains general; he provides the reader with principles to apply to particular personal cases

and he concentrates far more on motives and inward causes than the more limited, external remedies usually given. Rather than providing a specific, often rather superficial or mechanical, remedy, Hilton seeks to help the reader understand the problem.

In addition to prayer, meditation, by showing the reader his sins and the virtues he needs, (I:15) helps him towards contemplation. Again, Hilton, unlike many spiritual guides, refuses to provide a set rule. At the outset sorrow for sins "with great compunction and sorrow of heart, great weepings and many tears of the eye" are as appropriate to the solitary as to the new religious of The tre &.xii.frutes. This sorrow and biting of conscience, which helps to scour and cleanse the soul of sin, may be lightened by God-given meditation on the manhood of Christ, His Birth, His Passion or the compassion of the Blessed Virgin. There is no detailed or emotive narration of the events of the Passion, such as in A Talkyng of the Love of God or the opening chapters of Stimulus Amoris, but the characteristic practice of the devotional present,[410] found in most devotional Passion narratives, including the Speculum Vitae Christi, is clearly assumed in Hilton's summary, which refers to the more emotive moments of the narrative:

> ...thinketh as thou saw in thy soul thy Lord Jhesu in a bodily likeness, as He was in earth, and how He was taken of the Jews and bound as a thief, beaten and despised, scourged and deemed to death, how lowly He bare the cross upon His back, and how cruelly He was nailed thereupon; also of the crown of thorns upon His head, and of the sharp spear that stang Him to the heart, and thou in this ghostly sight feelest thine heart stirred to so great compassion and pity of thy Lord Jhesu that thou mournest, and weepest, and cryest with all the might of thy body and of thy soul, wondering the goodness and love, the patience

> and the meekness of thy Lord Jhesu, that He would for so sinful a caitiff as thou art suffer so mickle pain. And nevertheless thou feelest so mickle goodness and mercy in our Lord that thine heart riseth up into a love and a gladness of Him with many sweet tears, having a great trust of forgiveness of thy sins, and of salvation of thy soul by the virtue of this precious passion. 411

Not only is the reader to have compassion on Christ's sufferings, but he is to see Him as the exemplar of the primary virtues of charity, meekness and patience. By comparison with Christ's goodness his sinfulness appears the more grevious, and yet paradoxically His death is the ground for hope of forgiveness and salvation and a cause for thanksgiving. The meditation on the Passion provided at the end of the Contemplacyons of the drede and loue of god applies the devotion roused by the sight of Christ's sufferings to a personal confession of sins and dedication to Christ, but suggests little reason for joy or thankfulness on the part of the sinner. Many Passion narratives received no application, and when they did the expression of sorrow and joy, compassion and thankfulness was rarely well balanced. For most later authors—Love's Speculum Vitae Christi, Fewterer's Myrroure or Glasse of Christes Passion - meditation on the Passion was best of all meditations,[412] but for Hilton such fleshly love of God should ideally progress to ghostly delight in the contemplation of Christ's Godhead.

This survey of the basic virtues required, and means - prayer and meditation - to be used in the soul's progress towards contemplation, concludes with a consideration of why the Lord sometimes withdraws His gift of meditation on the Passion and all other devotion. With its comfort withdrawn the soul is left naked and

open to the attack of the Devil's temptations. The experience of being abandoned by God and the consequent desolation has always been familiar to those who seek to follow Him.[413] Job and the Psalmist[414] had felt themselves forsaken of God; The Protestant Timothy comforts the dying Lazarus with the reminder that Christ too was tempted and felt Himself abandoned by God on the cross.[415] The dying soul laments that he is "so barayne so drye frome all deuocyon" that he is ready for the fire, and he pleads "cutte me not downe by deth to suche tyme that my tree maye haue moysture thrugh thy grace";[416] and over three and a half centuries later Hopkins echoes the appeal "Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain".[417] One of the fullest descriptions of this state of spiritual abandonment is found in the Orologium,[418] where the soul becomes "seke & vnlistye; & þenne foloweþ werynes of þe bodye & hardnesse of herte, & sorowe of þe spiryte....and þanne mislykene all þinges"; the call becomes hateful, the bretheren are despised and the soul begins to slumber for heaviness"so þat sumtyme for þe pusillanimite and febelnesse of spiryte he wote neyþer wheþene hit comeþ or wheder hit goþ". It is not surprising that in such a state the soul is prone to vices, weak to withstand temptation, and reluctant to undertake spiritual exercises.

According to Hilton,(I:36) the gift of devotion may be withdrawn to prevent a man growing proud of the gift, because of some sin which hinders the grace or in order to wean the soul from dependence on fleshly love to more spiritual perception. Later[419] he adds what was probably the most widely stated reason for this sense of abandonment, that it is one of the ghostly tribulations by which the rust of sin

is burnt out of the soul. In other words, it is a form of temptation by which God proves His children;[420] but the author of The Ladder of Paradise comforts his reader "feare not O spouse, despair not, neither thinke thyself to be contemned, though for a while ye bridegrome hide his face from thee, all these things woork togither for thy profit".[421] The remedy suggested by Hilton and the author of The Book of Privy Counselling is to wait and suffer patiently and to trust God, who, although He may withdraw His presence, does not move away nor withdraw His grace. The problem of aridity and desolation is dealt with very briefly in these contemplative works but it is the subject of more lengthy treatment in two works written for religious sisters, The Chastising of God's Children and Bonde's Deuoute Epystle.[422] Like Hilton (I:37), Bonde lists some of the guises in which the Devil may afflict the conscience or imagination of man. The purpose of such temptation is to strengthen faith, and to encourage hope in God's mercy. Bonde's main purpose is to comfort the troubled, and especially the fearful and scrupulous soul, and to this end he declares that whoever cleaves to God and calls for mercy will not be overcome;[423] no matter what his thoughts, reason or actions may do, the person who resists motions to sin in the depth of his heart will be safe. He sums up the idea of God's continuing and sustaining care in the image of a mother's care as she teaches her child to walk unaided.[424] The author of The Chastising[425] lists six profitable reasons why God may withdraw His presence, including the danger of pride, and some self-caused reasons, such as negligence. Like Hilton he sees the gifts of ghostly comfort and sweet feelings as characteristic of an early stage of spiritual

development, and warns against over-valuing them and loving the gift rather than the giver.[426] He likens the withdrawal of these gifts to the declining sun of late autumn, and describes the heaviness, wretchedness, infirmities and perplexities of the soul's winter state, apparently cut off from Christ, the sun.[427] His advice on what to do begins, " I counceile euery man to sette it to his owne defaute þat grace is wiþdrawe", and concludes with an application of that principle in a recommendation of meekness that sounds not unlike Hilton's "I am nought".[428] He says that a man thus troubled should "sette himself at nought, and þenk in his hert þat nought he haþ, ne nought he hadde, ne nought he may haue, but oonli of god".[429] Also reminiscent of Hilton is the advice to persevere in prayer, but to temper this by other occupations[430] and the sane counsel "in al suche tyme to take bodili sustenaunce and other nedeful reste in resonable maner".[431] Meekness, patience, perseverence and trust are the main remedies advocated by spiritual guides to overcome, or at least endure, loss of devotion and the apparent absence of God. Not surprisingly this desolation or withdrawal was often seen as a temptation which, if withstood, could profit the soul.

In The Scale the specific problem of desolation acts as a bridge, or introduction, to the discussion of temptation and sin which occupies the greater part of the first book. The often quoted verses from Job V:17 - 18; James I:12 and Hebrews XII: 5 - 11, which were used to justify the endurance of tribulation and temptation and to assure the sufferer that his pains were profitable, seem to be echoed in Hilton's assurance that temptation "is no reproving, nor no forsaking,

but assaying for their betterment; either for cleansing of their sins before done, or for great increasing of their meed". The author of The Chastising thought "goode men and wymmen þat trauelen to be parfite bien more tempted than oþer", and the large number of fairly general works written about tribulation and temptation,[432] for both lay and religious readers, suggests that the problem was considered an important one. Hilton, however, neither takes over nor simply adapts these popular treatises. He adapts a quite different approach, choosing to ignore the more external, physical problems of tribulation and to dwell upon the inward spiritual reasons for temptation. Although the importance of self-knowledge in combatting tribulation was acknowledged,[433] Hilton was much more demanding: man must enter into himself and by inward beholding see the present wretchedness and lost dignity of his soul.[434] Such introversion is not to be found in more general tribulation treatises, nor do they relate the problems of temptation to the effects of the Fall as Hilton does in I:43, and he goes on to show how Jesus conquered sin through His redemptive Passion and death. By meekness and trust in the virtue of that death, and by submission to the sacraments of the Church, he declares all Christians, not only recluses, shall be saved from their sin, original and actual. In contrast to the popular treatises which attempted to justify tribulation by reference to a heavenly reward, and to list the profits or consolations to be derived from patient endurance of suffering in this life, Hilton explains temptation in terms of salvation history. He does not distinguish between different types of tribulation and temptation, since all temptation and sin

draws the soul away from the love of God. The author of the Ancrene Riwle suggested invocation of the name of Jesus and that the anchress should seek the help of His Passion and torments and flee to His wounds; His cross and Passion should be her main defence. According to Hilton the answer lies in love and desire for Jesus, who still "sleepeth in thine heart ghostly" although hidden by love of sin, worldly lust and vanities. He returns, at the end of part I,[435] to this desire for Jesus, showing how, by concentrating on Christ rather than the sin, He will help to destroy the sin and the soul will be shaped again to the image of Jesus. It was generally accepted that tribulation and temptation would accompany the lay person or religious throughout his life,[436] but Hilton implies that the love which the contemplative person experiences slays all stirrings of sin,[437] enables him to find rest and, at least temporarily, to transcend temptation. There is no place left for temptation and sin when the inner eye of the soul is opened to see Jesus.

From temptation, Hilton goes on to consider some aspects of sin. Although he makes use of features common in the treatment of the seven deadly sins - listing subsidiary branches of these sins[438] or likening them to various animals [439] - he again concentrates not on the external manifestations of sins, so much as on their inner workings. In fact he devotes considerable attention to practical examination by which the recluse may discern to what extent she is guilty of the principal sins,[440] especially with regard to her feelings and inner thoughts. For instance, physically the recluse has left the world for her enclosed anchorage, but if she finds herself loving any physical possession, yearning for something she has not got or troubled

because something lent has not been returned, then even if she does not openly show her feelings is guilty of loving worldly goods, and more guilty than a worldly man who has not vowed to renounce them. The questions are searching and reveal a shrewd knowledge of the workings of the human heart. But, as the memorable image of the fouled well[441] which corrupts the flowers of the soul's garden suggests, Hilton is more concerned to expose and destroy the ground of sin. Again, the reader is to enter into himself, where he will find "soothly right nought but a murk image and a painful of thine own soul", an image "all belapped with black stinking clothes of sin".[442] Sin is defined, not in terms of a bodily thing, a wrong act or word, but as a "lacking of love", "a wanting of God",[443] and a love of self.[444] Because it can find no rest or comfort within itself the unreformed soul stays outside itself, where it succumbs to worldly vanities and temptations. Who would find Jesus must be prepared to endure this dark conscience and to "swink and sweat" there awhile, to uproot the seven deadly sins, especially the spiritual ones, of which pride is considered in most detail. The remedy, besides specific remedies for particular sins, is to labour to supplant the image of the first Adam by the image of Jesus, and to bear down and overcome the "nought" and "murkness" of sin by fervent desire for Jesus; the importance of meekness and charity for this work is stressed repeatedly.[445]

The more general works of spiritual direction were mainly concerned with the classification of vices and the minute regulation of conduct. Hilton, although he did not ignore the distinction between mortal and venial sins and offered principles for practical guidance, was more concerned with the inner aspects of sin. At the opening of the second

book - whose teaching concentrates even more on inward and spiritual things, tends to be more detailed and theological, and leads the soul far higher up the ladder of contemplation - he explains how the Imago Dei was destroyed by the Fall and restored by the Atonement effected through the Incarnation and Death of the Son of God. The purpose of this book is to show how the soul can be reformed to the likeness of God, and it is broadly divided into the preliminary stage described as reformation of faith, which is necessary to salvation, and the higher degrees of reformation of feeling, the substance of the contemplative life, which is concerned with the knowledge, presence and love of God. Much of what was said in the first book reappears, sometimes with variations or in a different context, in the second book; there is overlap and continuity but no sense of dull repetition.

The intention to battle against sin and to leave all worldly affections and fleshly loves, even if stirrings of sin still remain, is necessary to reformation of faith. Refusal to leave worldly loves, inability to acknowledge sin because of pride or refusal to believe God, all blind the soul to spiritual things and make reformation impossible. The desire to forsake sin is confirmed and given effect by submission to Holy Church. By the sacrament of baptism the Imago Dei is restored, and subsequent lapses are covered by the sacrament of penance, but the sacraments do not work automatically against man's will, which is free to choose good or evil. The person who will not forsake his sin, nor receive the sacrament "sooth fastly for love of God", will not be saved. Hilton was no universalist, and his views are a healthy corrective to the later tendency to regard the merits of

Christ's Passion or the virtues of the sacraments as automatically available to the faithful.[446] Although sin is forgiven by contrition of soul, confession is necessary before the pain is remitted and whole satisfaction done. Confession[447] is like a charter made between the individual and the Church, which stands as proof of his forgiveness; it may even encourage full contrition and bring the grace of compunction, and it is in any case a regulation of Holy Church to be obeyed - an insistence which may reflect contemporary Lollard attacks on this sacrament.[448] Sacramental confession also offered reassurance to fleshly men who, unable to feel their forgiveness, find it hard to believe they are forgiven unless they have "some bodily token".[449]

The problem of bodily feelings and the physical interpretation of spiritual things recurs throughout The Scale.[450] Although the problem was more acute for mystical writers, the difficulty of how to describe and relate the physical representation (iconographical or verbal) to its spiritual reality was widely recognized, particularly with regard to images.[451] In addition to the need to distinguish between true and false visions - according to Hilton they are to be judged by the degree to which they further desire for God[452] - there was the danger of misinterpreting mystical language, and a tendency to over-value the physical feelings often associated with mysticism. Rolle's autobiographical writings and his emphasis on the more physical aspects of contemplation - his canor, calor, dulcor - was undoubtedly responsible for a number of misunderstandings which both Hilton and the author of The Cloud[453] sought to correct. Hilton, for instance, denies that

the fire of love is to be understood in a physical sense;[454] nor are sounds, tastes, smells, sensible heat, nor "anything that may be felt by bodily wit, though it be never so comfortable and liking" true contemplation.[455] Not only are souls who experience these bodily stirrings not reformed in feeling, but it is a sign of their spiritual immaturity, their lack of love and the weakness of their souls.[456]

Hilton, like the author of The Cloud, is more interested in the higher stages of the contemplative life than the turbulence and exuberant emotionalism of Margery Kemp or Richard Rolle. In the first book he had described the "nought", the "murkness", the darkened conscience in which the soul must labour to reform the image of sin. He who would be reformed in feeling, which is necessary before the contemplative can know the light and love of God, must first endure the night. In this darkness he must labour to separate himself from fleshly affections and earthly things, but gradually - for it cannot be achieved roughly by his own force - the pain lessens and the night hides worldly imaginations and becomes more restful. In this state he is free to think and pray to Jesus. This experience of "murkness"[457] is a feeling of self "and a rising above themselves through burning desire to the sight of Jesus...this feeling is a ghostly sight of Jhesu". The dying to the world which is achieved in the "murkness" is the gate to contemplation and to reforming of feeling. The inner eyes of the soul are gradually opened to know God, for the highest part of contemplation consists in cognition and affection.[458] The knowledge is caused by God Himself, or love

unformed, but it generates formed love, "the affection of the soul, made by the Holy Ghost of the sight and the knowing of soothfastness, that is God only, stirred and set in him".[459] Together with this knowledge and love of Jesus comes perfect meekness[460] or the total abnegation of self, the gift of ghostly prayer,[461] than which none is better than the Pater noster, used now very differently from the vocal prayer of common men, and ghostly understanding of Scripture.[462] Further, the soul is able to see something of the degrees of the Church on earth, to discern the fallen and the blessed angels, to see the manhood of Christ and something of His Godhead and the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, and to enjoy "lovely dalliances of privy speech atwixt Jhesu and a soul". The soul which has climbed so high up the ladder of perfection can be assured that it will enjoy full sight and knowledge of the spouse Jesus in heaven.

The Scala perfectionis does not offer a rule of life nor a set pattern of achievement to be followed in the ascent to contemplation. It provides the reader with general principles based on an understanding of his own inner state, not with detailed models of behaviour.[463] Rules of life or wilful customs are useful at the start of the spiritual life, but slavish obedience to them must not be allowed to hinder development.[464] While insisting on obedience to the Church, the author encourages a responsible independence in his reader to develop at his own pace. But he must not go to extremes in his pursuit of perfection—"it is good to keep discretion, for the mean is the best"—nor must he attempt to coerce God:

> For there are some lovers of God that make themselves for to love God as it were by their own might; for they strain themselves through great violence, and pant so strongly that they burst into bodily fervours as they would draw down God from heaven to them. 465

He must wait always upon God. This God-ward focus, more obvious in the second book than the first, is the direction to which the whole work draws. The battle against sin, love of the world and self. simply drops away to be lost in the restful "murkness" which precedes the opening of the inner eyes of the soul. Similarly, the popularly accepted signs of mysticism (burning, ravishing of spirit or spiritual drunkenness) are left behind as the physical feeling and imagination gives way to more ghostly apprehension. Neither Hilton nor the author of The Cloud, with whom he has so much in common, makes any attempt to describe the contemplative experience itself, but Hilton at least is able to suggest a little of the quality of the experience in his "rich nought", with its ghostly rest, inward stillness, burning love and shining light.[466] The soul weaned from worldly affections can concentrate all its love on Christ, and feel "great homeliness of the blessed presence of our Lord Jhesu". Although not yet perfected, the contemplative soul enjoys an intimate relationship with Jesus, and having achieved reformation of faith and feeling the soul has recovered its true nature, the image of God. In its humanity, reasonableness, moderation and restraint, in its continuity with earlier teaching and its concern for orthodoxy, and in the deep faith and strong love for Jesus which sustains the whole, the Scala Perfectionis is characteristic of the best devotion of the ecclesia anglicana. None of the other Catholic treatises printed during the first thirty-five years of the

sixteenth century manage to retain the balanced wholeness nor the freshness of Hilton's vision.

The Stimulus Amoris, which according to Miss Kirchberger[467] may have been translated by Hilton before the completion of the Scala Perfectionis, remained influential among some religious as late as the 1530's,[468] but there seems to have been no English edition printed. It falls into three parts. The first nine chapters offer devotional meditations on the Passion, and the last five chapters are also meditative, with devout expositions of the "Pater", "Ave" and "Salve Regina", a complaint of the Flesh to God with the Father's answer, and concluding with an evocation of the restful place of high Jerusalem and the clear sight of the Blessed Trinity. The central section, about half the work's total length, is derived from a treatise by James of Milan.[469] It is a miscellaneous collection of teaching about various aspects of the spiritual life, mainly related to the love of God, and not surprisingly it has many points of contact with the Scala Perfectionis[470] and more generally with other works of spiritual instruction such as the Ancrene Riwle,[471] The Chastising of God's Children[472] and William Flete's De Remediis contra temptaciones.[473].

There are two obvious differences between the Stimulus Amoris and the Scala Perfectionis. Firstly the Stimulus is not specifically addressed to an enclosed anchorite dedicated to the perfection of the contemplative life; and secondly the content is predominantly devotional, and even the instructional part of the work contains numerous meditations

and devotional outpourings. In tone it is closer to the affective piety of A talking of the love of God, to some of Rolle's writings, or to The seuen poyntes of trewe wisdom than to the Scala Perfectionis or works by the author of The Cloud of Unknowing; and the language, with its talk of burning love, spiritual inebriation and the heavenly marriage, is more obviously mystical than in those guides to the higher stages of the contemplative life.

The change of audience has a clear effect on the teaching: the introspection required is far less deep and rigorous, and there is correspondingly greater emphasis given to the reader's relationship with other Christians[474] and to the performance of the works of mercy.[475] The audience is not clearly defined, but most of the Stimulus seems intended "to tell how a man may with active life have contemplation of Jesus Christ".[476] At some points the writer seems to think particularly of a priest — "We...that have power and authority of speaking and of preaching"[477] — but the chapter on the importance of obedience, "that is the ground of Religion", is clearly addressed to a conventual religious;[478] and at another point he compares the religious with the recluse: "if thou be solitary and seest thy brother liue in congregation..."[479] Like Nicholas Love, Richard Whitford and many other religious authors, the writer laments the present state of religion, particularly the want of obedience:

> Ah who shall giue to mine head water of weepings and to mine eyes a stream of tears, that I may sorrow and weep, how that state of Religion is near hand brought to nought... 480

and he seems to have a low opinion of many contemplatives who repeatedly return to their sins and vanities instead of maintaining a steady

progress up the hill of contemplation; "And that is the cause of why so few that are in the state of contemplation come, these days, < to perfection > ". Again like Love and William Bonde[481], he denounces spiritual hypcrisy in words which echo Christ's:[482] "we are like to graves painted without with colours of hypocrisy, and within are full of rotten bones, seeming outward as dead to the world and inward we are blown with boils of pride <and of covetousness> ".

The fact of sickness, both physical and spiritual, and the need for healing, runs throughout the work. The man with a sore eye cannot bear the brightness of the sun of righteousness, and he who knows his heart to be sick will be well advised to "seek a leech, that is Jesus Christ and say thus to him: 'Lord thou art my light and my hele, I pray thee heal me' ".[483] This is very similar to the interpolated section on the Holy Name in The Scale, I: 44, where the name Jesus means healer or health, and where the problem of man's ghostly sickness is discussed in some detail.[484] As worldliness and sin "cast out of thee medicine of Christ's blood", so is tribulation and disease bodily or ghostly valuable because it "driveth thee inward for to seek help and comfort at God only".[485] The purgation effected by patient endurance of tribulation is not merely negative,[486] but it encourages the soul to seek refuge in God and enables it to feel compassion for the sufferings of others,[487] for Christ in His Passion and for his fellow Christians. The exercise of compassion can be extended until Christ is loved and worshipped in all things and the sick man is served as Christ; "Go to the infirmary and find Christ there, how he is pained and over travailed with disease, help him, ease him and have compassion of him".[488] In kissing the leper or

sick man's mouth the lover of Christ kisses his Lord, and "thus may we Christ serve and have contemplation of him in active works". The Stimulus does not reprove those "that give themselves only to (at)tend to Him in contemplation and to nothing else, for that is good", but it seems to value the combination of contemplation with active life even more: "if a man that is bound with works of active life may as perfectly < see Christ > and love him as he that woneth solitary, that it is more praiseable to do and more thankworthy."[489] This type of contemplative life is characterized by continual labour of the spirit, and together with the character of the devotional passages, it would seem to correspond to the lower degree of the second part of contemplation in Hilton's scheme, which was available to men in active life.[490] The higher degrees were reserved to those who had "great rest of body and of soul" and who had laboured long in the spiritual life, and were characterized by a deeper, more restful state and profound knowledge of and love for Jesus.

The importance of meekness and love, for a man to "nought" himself, despairing of his own strength, knowledge and virtue,[491] and instead "only covet to love God in his heart and to behold him and to be stirred in him and about nought else",[492] is emphasized in the Stimulus and in the Scala Perfectionis, but they take rather different forms. The virtue of meekness is frequently recommended in the Stimulus, but it tends to take a stronger, more physical form. Hilton can describe how "thou shalt deem and hold thyself more vile and more wretched than is any creature that beareth life, that hardly

shall thou be able to suffer thyself, for micklehead of sin and filth that thou shalt feel in thee",[493] but this author tends to describe man's "vilety" in terms of disease:

> Ah Jesu! Mine heart is full of venom, blown full of pride and poisoned with malice and bitterness of the fiend, and with fleshly lust all overcast and that seemeth well, for it breedeth all full of wicked thoughts and of fleshly yearnings as a striking carrion breedeth full of worms and of maggots. Ah Jesu! I may not hide me with them but they fret in me and gnaw in me, as worms in a stomach, and let me from the sweet feeling of thy holy grace, that I wot not wherefor to turn me. Ah Jesu! send me some trickle of thy precious blood for to heal my venomous heart. And some to cast out the poison that I have long drunk through the fiend's suggestions. 494

The general impression of corruption is similar to that of the "vile body "motif of some <u>contemptus mundi</u> pieces,[495] and there is even a trace of the familiar threefold meditation often used in such pieces.[496] This impression is tempered by the warning that man is to hate his sinfulness but not his human nature, in much the same way that he is to hate the sin of others but to love the man.[497] But the sinfulness of man is more than balanced by all that God has done for him, and the virtue of Christ's love and the soul's desire to love Him could be described as the main subject of the book.

The outpourings of love are expressed in language which is characteristic of the kind of affective devotion associated with Richard Rolle:

> Ah Jesu! love and desire of our heart, softness and sweetness of soul, burning and kindling of breast, light and brightness of the inner eye, < mirth > and melody of our ghostly ear. Ah sweet-smelling offering to the Father of Heaven, an honey-flowing tasting of thy precious blood. Ah! my soul, my life thou art,

> my wit and mine understanding,<my feeling
> and my liking, the gladness of my heart>
> I pray thee that thou be. Ah! why am I
> not all turned into thy love?...498

Unlike the Scala Perfectionis, the Stimulus makes no attempt to explain or limit the idea of burning or melting love, or fire, or sweetness, all ideas which recur frequently.[499] Another idea which expresses something of the way in which "the passion of love" works in the soul is that of spiritual drunkenness. Again, it is a common enough figure,[500] but having distinguished the joy which comes, suddenly or after long fervent desire, from the inward contemplation of Christ and His Passion and the more general feeling of sweetness which suffuses the soul, a note of warning is sounded. The sweetness can be deceptive, the fiend can use it to encourage man to pride and presumption and so to lose God. Thus, while enjoying the sweetness, he is not to trust it too far, but to take it meekly. Such sweetness can only be sure when the soul is ravished from all bodily senses and reasonable thought, and "only turned into Christ". The idea of ravishing is itself related to another group of images frequently used in contemplative works, of the relationship between lovers and the heavenly marriage. Both the Stimulus and the Scala Perfectionis refer to the spouse Jesu on a number of occasions,[501] but neither of them use the image of the "goostly weddynge" with the consistency of The VII poyntes of trewe loue in the last chapter.[502] This type of imagery, although it was open to mis-interpretation and probably encouraged a tendency to overvalue feelings and physical manifestations of devotion, like Margery Kempe's tears, doubtless caught the imagination of many readers and encouraged them in devotion. The aim of the Stimulus

was to rouse the reader to love Jesus and to desire Him, not the world. Its appeal was almost exclusively to the affections and the imagination of the reader, and references to the heart are numerous, while there is little attempt made to reform the understanding. The time for explanations and the reformation of feeling, for ghostly feeling and understanding, will perhaps come later if the reader decides to leave the active life and to follow the way of perfection in the higher degrees of the contemplative life.

The kind of affective devotion which characterizes A Talking of the Love of God and the Stimulus occurs in later works with particular reference to Christ's Passion. Meditation on Christ's Passion took different forms even during the fourteenth century. The monk of Farne's meditation on Christ crucified contains comparatively little description of Christ on the cross,[503] although there are many general references to the crucified Christ, who remains the physical focus of a contemplation which appeals principally to the reason, with its extensive use of allegorical interpretation and its exposition of the degrees of love. It contrives to be at once more academic than the Scala Perfectionis in its method of exposition, and yet its imagery, the embrace and kiss of the spouse Christ, is often more physical. The Revelations of Julian of Norwich take as their point of departure Julian's desire to extend her experience of Christ's Passion, to be there with Mary Magdalene, and to see with her own eyes the physical sufferings of Jesus and to know more of His Mother's compassion. At the opening of the first, second, fourth and eighth revelations there are detailed descriptions of Christ's bleeding head, the discolouration of

His face, the bleeding of His body, and the drying of His body in death. Although the last description (chapters 16 - 17) gives a more detailed physical picture of the crucified body of Christ than any to be found in the Passion writings printed in the 1530s, it is also more detached and objective than most later descriptions. Julian describes what she sees and how the sight leads on to other reflections. Even where she mentions the feelings of comfort and assurance she experienced from a revelation (chapter 7) or the incomparable pain she endured at seeing the Christ she loved suffer so much (chapter 17), her feelings are not dwelt upon, and unlike the later treatises there is no attempt made to make the reader share the sufferings of Christ. Proportionately these descriptions are a very small part of the whole, which is principally devoted to meditation on the various aspects of God's redemptive love, evoked most memorably perhaps in the concept of the motherhood of God (chapters 58 - 63).[504] Julian also deals with the problem of sin in the scheme of creation and redemption, and her advice that the individual is to view his sins positively, not despairingly, and not go to great lengths in self-accusation, not feel too wretched about himself, is reminiscent of Hilton's teaching.[505] Again, like Hilton, she insists on her conformity to the faith of the Holy Church, and in common with many other writers the Trinitarian basis of her faith is apparent.[506] Although her writing is not so academic as the monk of Farne's, and many of her images appeal to the imagination, the mood is reflective and she is concerned to understand ~~about~~ the modes of God's love rather than stir the reader to feel it. Despite its structural importance and the vividness of the description the

Passion of Christ is not the principal subject of these meditations, nor is it seen by Hilton as the most important subject of meditation; he sees meditation on Christ's manhood as an important preparation for "ghostly delight in contemplation of Christ's Godhead".[507]

There seems, however, to be a tendency for treatises of affective devotion, particularly those printed in the earlier decades of the sixteenth century, to concentrate more exclusively on the life and Passion of Christ. A number of authors declared meditation on Christ's Passion to be the highest form of devotion.[508] Like many other authors the monk of Farne describes how the arms of Jesus are extended on the cross ready to embrace man, His head is bowed to kiss him and He seeks to draw man into His wounded side;[509] the author links this image with a description of a mother's love for her child. The two images are moving, but they are handled with more restraint than in A talking of the love of God,[510] where an ejaculatory style, frequent rhetorical questions, and a vocabulary which emphasizes the feelings of affection, combine to produce a characteristic piece of affective devotion. The same piece includes some reference to the poverty of Christ's birth,[511] details which were elaborated by later authors,[512] and a lengthier section of His Passion[513] that dwells on the physical shame He endured and the pains inflicted on Him[514] in very much the same way as later narratives. The first nine chapters of the Stimulus also focus on Christ's Passion. They are written in the style of affective devotion, but their emotional appeal does not depend on description of His physical sufferings, which are mentioned only in brief summary lists or very generally.[515] However, such references are very frequent and the reader is left in

no doubt as to the "unmeasurable pains" He suffered, both bodily and mentally.[516]

Some of the emotion is derived from the contrast between the immense, selfless, redemptive love of Christ and man's hard heart and persistent sinfulness: "what am I but a vile worm and vlatsome stink".[517] It is to Christ's Passion, or more particularly to His blood and wounds, that the sinner turns for healing and refuge. In the Passion the soul can find cleansing, learn compassion and grow to inward devotion, until "though melting it receiveth a ghostly conformation and through rest, it is oned in love of perfect contemplation".[518] Desire for the crucified Saviour recurs throughout the meditations, as well as in the central section of the work. It is the emotional focus of the Stimulus:

> Ah my lord Jesu Christ soften thou my heart with thy holy wounds and with thy precious blood. Make my soul drunk that whither so I turn me, aye must I see thee crucified, with mine inner eye, and what that I look on, all red that it seem with liquor of thy blood. [519]

Spiritual drunkedness can be an effect of "inly beholding of Christ's passion",[520] but it also encourages the desire to do His will.[521] This desire for Christ is particularized in the virtues of His blood and wounds. Recognition of the healing properties of His blood seems to have been widespread in the fourteenth century,[522] and by the end of the century devotion to the five wounds was well established.[523] The monk of Farne seeks refuge in the wound of Christ's side[524] and Julian enters into His breast by the same wound.[525] The author of the meditations in the Stimulus dwells upon the wounds with unusual persistence and fervour. He sees them as the way to incorporation

with Christ and as the source of all mercy, pity, grace, love and sweetness.[526] So much does the author want "to haue part of his wounds" that he declares: "I will not live without thy < ghostly> wounding, since I see thee so for-wounded".[527] The common idea of Christ's wounds as a place of refuge hardly occurs in the meditations,[528] although it is used in the familiar context of temptation in the central section of the treatise.[529]

At first sight it seems easier to understand why the Stimulus remained in circulation during the 1530s than to account for the popularity of the Scala Perfectionis in the early sixteenth century.[530] The latter was specifically intended for a person in a particular state of life and it assumed a basic grounding in Christian faith and practice. It demanded considerable mental and spiritual application from the reader, the contemplative life was not an easy one, and there are no meditations to refresh the labouring soul. Yet, although it demanded much, its teaching was so clear, so deceptively simple, that even a beginner could profit from it. It provided not only simple, basic definitions of different types of sin and temptation, but an insight into the nature of sin and temptation, and it showed what practical steps could be taken to encourage growth in faith and love as well as in understanding and knowledge. It did not bind the soul to a particular rule but encouraged the individual to develop at his own pace. Although originally written for a contemplative its teaching seems to penetrate the marrow of Christian life and spirituality, and almost from the beginning its audience probably included conventual religious, secular clergy and devout lay people. Only a tiny proportion of the early sixteenth century audience are likely

to have been recluses dedicated to the pursuit of the contemplative life.[531] In its combination of simplicity and depth and in its range of teaching, from broad first principles to the highest reaches of contemplation, lies something of the reason for Hilton's enduring popularity.

The Stimulus did not limit its audience. The author of The tre &.xii.frutes probably saw it as an excellent book to inspire and instruct a beginner in religion, and yet much of the instruction was just as valid for a layman in active life as for a religious. Its teaching was in part practical, concerning relations with fellow Christians, and in part theoretical, with chapters on, for example, the coupling of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost with the ascent to contemplation through the Passion, or the way in which Christ exemplified the seven beatitudes in His Passion - both topics reminiscent of Bonde's Pilgrymage. But it also offered devout expositions of some familiar prayers such as the Pater and Ave, and meditations of considerable appeal on Christ's Passion. The work is predominantly devotional, and in a sense all the teaching is subordinated to the worship of Christ crucified. The Scala Perfectionis, the monk of Farne and Julian's Revelations all accord considerable importance to meditation on Christ's Passion, but it is only one part of the contemplative life. In the Stimulus the crucified Christ dominates the work. The kind of affective devotion exemplified by the Stimulus, although as high as a person in active life could aspire in the contemplative life, was still only the lower degree of the second part of contemplation. The Stimulus does not suggest any higher form of devotion. Many of Rolle's more popular

works, with their vivid and easily imitated imagery, seem similarly to regard the ravishing of the feelings as the climax of contemplation. The word contemplative seems in these works to denote a particular type of affective devotion which was available to those in active life as well as to solitary contemplatives. Later Passion narratives seem to be a development of this affective side of contemplation, and their lack of theological and instructional content may be related to the distinction drawn between the affective and cognitive sides of contemplation. By the early sixteenth century, however, the affective devotion of the Stimulus, and its focus on Christ crucified, was parallelled by a large number of other devotional works on the Passion, and its instructional content was probably not sufficiently developed to distinguish it. But while numerous Passion devotions were available in print there were very few substantial guides to the spiritual life, and most of those were overtly intended for religious. Few works offered anything like the depth and range of Hilton's Scala Perfectionis.

Apart from a few exceptions like Hilton's Vita Mixta or The Kalender of Shepardes the majority of devotional works available in print before 1530 were probably religious in origin. The myrrour of the churche[532] and The myrroure of golde for the synfull soule[533] were both printed a number of times during the 1520s. One is addressed "to all maner of people" as "necessary & confortable to the edyfycacion of the soule & body to the loue & grace of god", and the other is intended for any "pore synfull soule". The myrrour of golde is written in the contemptus mundi tradition,[534] and dwells upon the filthiness and misery of man, the need to hate, despise and flee the

world and the importance of constant recollection of death. Although not in itself overtly religious, the world-denying emphasis of this kind of teaching made the cloister the only effective refuge against sinful flesh and the world. It was hardly practical or encouraging advice to anyone who had to earn his living in the world. Apart from hatred of all sin and worldly vanities man's only hope lies in penance - which must not be deferred - accompanied by prayer, fasting and almsgiving. The widely known Myrrour of the churche[535] is a more comprehensive, much less oppressive work. The contemptus mundi outlook is still to be found in the description of man's sinful body, but it is balanced by descriptions of the benefits and gifts of God. Practical advice is given on "How a man sholde spende his tyme", and there are brief instructional passages on the usual seven deadly sins, the seven beatitudes, seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, the ten commandments, the creed, the seven sacraments, the seven works of mercy and the "Pater". There is also an extensive meditation on Christ's Passion linked with other notable events of His life and divided according to the canonical hours. Such a division was, as we shall see,[536] frequently used, but here the meditation is firmly set in a religious - contemplative context. Despite the general address of the title and the addition of Copland's versas, the version printed was originally intended for religious use — "you that lyue in relygyon or in congregacyon folowe the way of perfeccyon",[537] and it contains a simple exposition of three manners of contemplation. The contemplation of God in his creation, in learning of God's will from hearing the Scriptures expounded, and finally the contemplation of God Himself. The seven-fold meditation on Christ's life and Passion represents the contemplation of His manhood, while the means of knowing His Godhead is briefly explained and followed

by an exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity - accompanied by the popular diagramatic illustration.[538] The following chapter explains three degrees of contemplation which echo Hilton's insistence on self-knowledge and the gathering together of the soul within herself.[539] But, like Bonde later, this author disclaims any personal knowledge of contemplation:

> Yf ye wyll knowe this by techynge/go to hym yt hath proued it by experience or vse. And for bycause that I wretche haue not done all this. I am the more lewd to counte and tell with my mouthe whiche with myn herte I may not thynke. For it is so hye and so secrete that it surmounteth and passeth all maner thynkynge. 540

The book provided simple instruction, some practical advice on the way to live, and some examples of private prayer, as well as the more extensive meditation on the Passion. The religious origins of the work did not restrict its usefulness, especially since most devout lay people probably accepted that the religious life was better than any secular occupation, and shared with many religious an interest in contemplative works.[541]

Another work that enjoyed a wide circulation, but which even in its adapted form gave clear evidence of its religious interest, was The golden epistle[542] attributed to St. Bernard.[543] At least three translations were printed. The earliest was in a collection compiled by Thomas Betson,[544] called A ryght profytable treatyse,[545] which was described as "medefull to religyous people as to the laye people", where the piece was entitled simply: "St. Bernarde to a newe begynner in relygyon". Another version was printed by Thomas Godfray as "an Epistle of saynt Bernarde called the Golden epistle/whiche he sent to a young religious man whom he moche loued". This version was found,

often with four extracts from the Revelations[545] of St. Bridget and a chapter of Hilton's Scala Perfectionis,[546] as a separable appendix to his editions of the Imitatio Christi.[547] The other version,[548] generally described as "a notable lesson", "profytable vnto all chrystianes" and "edificatyue vnto all them haue a zele/ and cure vnto soule helthe and desyre of saluacyon", is a re-working by Richard Whitford "of an olde translacyon/rughe/and rude" - probably that of his confrère, Thomas Betson. Even contemporary printers like Redman and Wayland seem on occasion to have confused Whitford's version with the anonymous Godfray translation.[549] Separate editions of the work, in both versions, suggest that it was popular in its own right and not simply as an appendage to A Kempis or among other pieces by Whitford.

Of the three versions Betson's is closest to the Latin, but there is just one hint that he was aware of a wider lay audience, when to "ony relygyous persone" ~~he adds "or of ony other good persones"~~. he adds "or of ony other good persones". The Godfray version is less literal and stylistically a more accomplished piece of English. There are a few small alterations and additions to the text, one of the most notable being, "Seke solitarinesse as moche as thou can/so that thou mayste dyligently take hede of thyne owne gostely helthe".[550] But the tone of the work is set by the addition of a prefatory paragraph which encourages conformity to the example of Christ, "the veray trewe lambe...which was ledde to be offred in sacrifyce for the vpon the auter of the crosse", within the religious life: "That the wylderness of thy religion maye wexe swete & pleasaunt vnto the...I counsaile the that now thou hast taken it vpon the, thou caste it nat lyghtly away/lest happely an other more acceptable to god than thou take & occupye thy

place/and that thou be cast out as a stynkyng careyon". It sounds as though Godfray took over a version that had been adapted for a religious, or perhaps for a solitary contemplative,[551] and rather surprisingly he made no attempt to alter it for the wider audience likely to read the printed version. Even at a later date, probably after the dissolution of the monasteries, Paynell does not seem to have found it necessary to adapt A compendius & a moche fruytfull treatyse of well liuynge for a different audience.[532] Perhaps the authority of St. Bernard's name was sufficient to guarantee an audience, or perhaps it was rather that tastes in religious literature changed more slowly than the official legislation which dissolved the monastries. There are too many signs of the continuation of medieval traditions into the mid-sixteenth century to be able to dismiss Paynell's translation as a book born out of time; presumably the publisher at least believed it would find an audience.[553]

Whitford's version of The Golden Epistle includes the whole of the Latin piece, and consequently the whole of Betson's treatise. There is considerable correspondence between the two translations, but rarely as obvious as in the opening sentence which Whitford quotes verbatim. However, Whitford's characteristic fondness for doublets,[554] the addition of a number of comments, and the insertion of one substantial extra passage which provides a form of prayer according to the six grammatical cases, makes it about twice as long as Betson's version. Although there are signs that Whitford has tried to make the treatise more generally useful, especially in his added section on prayer, he has not attempted to expunge the religious element. Indeed, he expands the section on the times of monastic silence, going into much more

detail than either the original or the other two English translations. He does, however, present it as an objective statement—"The tymes of scylence in religyon ben these..."—and not as a command to his readers, and he gives no indication of his own status with regard to such a rule. The detailed instruction he supplies on prayer[555] is a good example of his ability to cast his teaching into an easily remembered form. The grammatical cases - nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, vocative and ablative - serve to remind the reader of the different estates of people for whom he is to pray and the sort of prayer which is appropriate to them. To the primary list, which concerns this present life, is added a second application of the cases to cover prayer for the souls departed, kindred, benefactors, the souls in purgatory, for all souls in general, and for those whom you harmed or who harmed you in this life. As an example of the main sequence: the nominative case is prayer for yourself and seeks ghostly strength against sin, knowledge of God based on knowledge of your own estate and condition and reverend fear and love of God. Prayer for kindred, benefactors and enemies, including those who have slandered you or hurt you in any other way, is followed by prayer for all those who "ben out of the state of grace", including Turks, Saracens and heretics,[556] "that they may come vnto the ryghtwaye of their saluacyon". It offers a useful summary of the different people who should be remembered in prayer, and gives some suggestion as to the content of prayer, which could be expanded as desired.

Leaving aside Whitford's individual contribution, the Golden Epistle presents the reader with an apparently random selection of

common place teaching. Many of the topics discussed in the first half of the treatise, such as discretion of speech; the dangers of exposure to or indulgence in worldly talk, the advisability of saying little and that sadly, prudently, and of God, the value of silence, and the related group of issues concerning slander, vain glory and false judgement, are characteristic of many works for religious or contemplatives.[557] In the advice to "esteme and acompte your selfe moste vyle and moste symple/and as very naught in respecte & regarde of vertue" the virtue of meekness is implied. The other theme which is introduced at the beginning is the need to "withdrawe your mynde from all worldly and transytory thynges/ in suche maner as though you cared not wheder any such thynges were in this worlde or no", a statement of the contemptus mundi attitude. The need for detachment from worldly things, whether they be troubles or blessings, runs throughout the treatise and is, of course, a condition not only of the religious or contemplative life but of successful meditation.[558] The second part of the treatise begins with the familiar three-fold meditation of what man was, is and shall be[559] - interestingly Whitford elaborates the physical detail.[560] Warnings against sloth and the dangers of idleness and lost time are given, and the practice of bedtime recollection of the day's activities and sins is recommended and speedy confession advocated where the conscience is troubled. The remainder of the work shows various aspects of the contrast between the pains of hell which await those who indulge in worldly pleasures and the joys of heaven which will reward those who deny themselves and choose the brief suffering of this world.

The Golden Epistle may be regarded as a distillation of two common types of late medieval teaching: instruction on the religious life, and the literature of the contemptus mundi genre and Four Last Things.[561] More particularly it summarizes the teaching of two longer treatises attributed to St. Bernard, his Meditacyons and A compendius & a moche fruytefull treatise.[562] The latter offers a comprehensive rule to live well, addressed particularly to the life of a religious sister. Chapters on "conuenyent garmentes", on obedience, virginity, continence, poverty and silence are obviously religious matters, while the virtues of humility and patience, to which is added concord or unity, are made particularly relevant to the religious life. Among the sins to be discussed, which range from pride and envy to drunkenness and fornication, are the problems of detraction and "murmuracy on", which are mentioned in the Epistle. Other topics mentioned in the Epistle and discussed in more detail in the Treatise are the examples of saints, confession and penance, and contempt of the world, shortness of life, death and judgement. This last group of topics receives fuller treatment again in the Meditacyons. There the discussion of more general subjects, such as the daily examination of conscience, holy reading, prayer, confession and various aspects of temptation including instability and distractions, seems to be dominated by the contemptus mundi attitude and the contrast between those whose life will condemn them to the pains of hell and those whose reward will be the bliss of heaven. These two longer treatises stand in the main stream of late medieval religious teaching, and underlying the topics they discuss is the requirement that the religious or

contemplative should not only cut himself off from the world, but should despise it. The soul must choose between the easy way of worldly pleasure, which is but transitory and leads to hell's eternal pains, and the comparatively brief pain of suffering and self-denial in this world, which will be rewarded by the everlasting bliss of heaven. In its almost aphoristic statement of so many characteristic topics of late medieval devotion the Golden Epistle summarizes and reflects the attitudes elaborated in the longer treatises attributed to St. Bernard and by other writers.

The Imitatio Christi, with which the Godfray version of The Golden Epistle usually appeared,[563] though much longer, is itself a rather repetitive summary of many characteristic themes of late medieval devotion. Leaving aside Book IV on the Blessed Sacrament,[564] the first three books, which circulated independently under the title Musica Ecclesiastica,[565] seem first to have been translated into English in the mid-fifteenth century, and one copy was made in 1502 by William Darker of Sheen for Elizabeth Gibbs, abbess of Syon, for whom Whitford wrote his Dayly exercyse and experyence of dethe.[566] However, until the translation by William Atkynson was printed in 1503[567] the circulation of the work seems to have been restricted to the Carthusian order, Syon, and a few other individuals and houses mainly in the London area.[568] Although Atkynson made a few minimal alterations for the more general readership of the printed book[569] he did nothing to soften the uncompromising world-denying outlook of the work which was characteristic of the monastic-contemplative philosophy.

It is easier to experience the effect of the Imitatio Christi than

to analyse how it works and explain its growth in popularity during the early sixteenth century. Its short chapters are well suited for regular or occasional mediatation, and in Atkynson's translation the summary chapter headings serve as the announcement of a chapter's theme, although its content is likely in fact to be wider and more general in scope. There is rarely an argument to sustain a chapter, still less a whole book, and the connection between chapters tends to be rather casual. The chapters are perhaps best defined as collections of thoughts or sayings about topics of general spiritual importance, to which may be added more practical comments on devotion or behaviour. The main themes are stated and restated, and the repetitive element is strengthened by numerous variations. Such repetition provides continuity within, and even between, the three books, which is particularly important where a work is used for meditation rather than read continuously as a narrative. The common factor underlying the treatment of familiar themes of late medieval devotional literature - the contemptus mundi genre, the remembrance of the Four Last Things, the doctrine of tribulation and the need to follow Christ's example - and of more specific topics, such as the danger of human judgements, the value of virtues like silence and solitude as well as obedience, patience, meekness and love, is the concept of life as a battle:[570] a battle between opposites like grace and nature;[571] the flesh and senses and the inner spirit of man; the will of the self and the will of God; the rewards and pleasures of this world and the hope of eternal life in heaven. The choice to be made is obvious, in view of the eternal destiny of the alternatives; the problem is to implement the decision. The self, the flesh and the world must be overcome and the soul freed

to will only God and to follow Christ in the way of the Cross.

Although the Imitatio Christi originated in a monastic setting, there are few references to the specifically religious life.[572] Where they occur they are nearly always sufficiently general to be widely applicable, and at no point is it stated or implied that the religious life is the better life.[573] In this respect A Kempis' approach is more like that adopted by authors such as Hilton who wrote for anchorites and solitary contemplatives, and some of A Kempis' teaching is very similar to Hilton's. In addition to their insistence on the need to be separated from all earthly interests and affections,[574] both comment on the importance of the gift of God's grace, "to contemplacion is great grace requyred/for by grace a man must in the dede of contemplacion be lyft aboue hymselfe....& be holy vnyte to god almyghtye", and the need for the soul to desire God above all things.[575] Like Hilton, A Kempis warns of the danger of judging others.[576] He notes that many never advance beyond the external elements of religion but "bere theyr deuocyon all in bokes/some in Images and some in outwarde tokens & fygures/some there be that bere me in mouthe, ofte namynge me in worde, but lytell in herte";[577] and that some overreach themselves "by indiscrete desyre of grace of deuocion"; and beginners in the way of virtue are especially liable to be led astray by "suche persones as lene to theyr owne wytte".[578] But it is perhaps in his emphasis on the need for meekness or humility,[579] and for man to acknowledge that, without God, "I knowe myselfe to be nought and full of infyrmyte";[580] that A Kempis seems most obviously to echo Hilton's teaching. The Lord demands of the disciple that "thou shalt euery houre, & in euery thynge great & small, forsake and make thy selfe naked...forsake thy

proper wyll", "& with nakydnes of all ambicion & possessyon folowe naked iesu cryste thy sauyour/and that thou dye to thy selfe & the world & lyue to me eternally."[581] Unlike Hilton, whose main concern is for those who have advanced a considerable way from the basic reformation of feeling which "puts out the liking and the feeling of fleshly stirrings and worldly desires",[582] A Kempis is writing for less advanced readers who are still in the thick of the battle. They must be repeatedly warned not to trust themselves, to acknowledge their own iniquity, to despise and condemn themselves.[583]

The dominant themes of the Imatatio Christi includes various aspects of the contemptus mundi genre, remembrance of the Four Last Things and the sustaining expectation of a heavenly reward, especially to those who endure tribulation and suffering patiently in this life. The meditation on Death, I:xxiii, gathers together many common themes of late medieval literature on death. The reader is warned to be always prepared for death, which will surely come and often when least expected. A long life is more likely to produce more sin than amendment, and no time should be lost in casting off sin and studying to live well, the soul ever regarding himself as a pilgrim on earth. The following chapter, I:xxiv, on the last judgement and the pains of hell, again seeks to turn the reader from his sinful ways by showing him the punishments which await those who persist in sin. Or, in less physical terms, to love outward things is to reject the grace of Jesus, and "it is in maner a peyne of hell to be seperate fro iesu/& it is a plesaunt paradyse to be vnyte and knitte with hym by grace".[584] Remembrance of the Last Things is designed to encourage amendment of life, and to make the

soul realize the importance of spiritual virtues to win heaven and to overcome the fearful threat of death, judgement and hell. The contemptus mundi teaching, which assumes a direct connection between the world and the flesh and sin, reinforces this emphasis on spiritual values as the only true and lasting ones. Worldly values, wealth, honours, position, power, are all unstable and transitory; the body is ashes, earth and slime, and subject to many infirmities. The Christian must separate himself from the world and conquer every desire for worldly success, possession or recognition, and similarly he must overcome the fleshly and selfish desires of his own body. Inevitably the process of freeing himself from these sinful lusts and following the will of God not self will involves a bitter conflict.[585] One aspect of this is tribulation, the need to endure patiently whatever pains the world can inflict on man, from loss of goods to loss of a good reputation, from unjust loss of preferment to physical sickness or other pain; and another aspect of the conflict is temptation, the need to recognize and to withstand the natural inclination to sin. It is a hard, uncompromising way which the Christian must tread, and A Kempis does not attempt to hide the fact, but he does show that the reader will be by no means the first to follow it, that he will not have to fight alone, and that the reward is infinitely worth striving after.

No saint has ever "come to heuen without this crosse of tribulacion",[586] not even the Son of God, "the whiche from his firste comynge into this worlde vnto his departynge, was not the space of one houre alyenate from the peyne of the crosse and trybulacion". Not only

is the devout soul to have "the remembrance of Iesu crucifyed" always in mind and remember that he is called to "the Imitacion of iesu criste or seruice",[587] but he must follow in the way that Jesus led;[588] "therefore take the crosse of penaunce, & folowe Iesu thy leder".[589] Of the many who hope to enter Christ's heavenly kingdom, to enjoy the heavenly banquet and receive His consolation, there are very few who will take up their cross and follow Christ through tribulation, abstinence, penance and pain.[590] The faithful, however, receive various consolations of God on their way. Christ speaks inwardly to the soul,[591] helps him to understand God's commandments and promises, teaches him to offer God "all seruice/ all honour/& eternall laude & praysinge",[592] and is above all "made apte/ and able to loue the". It is love which sustains the soul on its pilgrimage, through all tribulation; it "maketh euery greuouse & harde thynge light/swete/importyble thinge easye to bere/and bitter thynges swete & sauorable".[593] By God's help the ghostly lover overpasses pain and tribulation, and he cries out to God:

> Thou, good lorde, arte my loue/thou art all my desyre/and I am thy creature/delate my herte in thy loue, that I may lerne to taste by the inwarde mouthe of my soule howe swete thou arte in loue/and what is to man to be lyquyfyed and molten in loue, or to swymme therein. I am holden/ and bounde in loue, so that I go aboue my selfe for great marueyle & feruoure of loue. I beseche the, good lorde, that I may synge the songe of loue/& folowe the, my louer, by vertuous lyuynge euer to ascende to the in perfitnes of lyuynge... 594

Such fervent desire, expressed in terms which are reminiscent of the more affective strand of contemplative devotion, finds its fulfilment in the eternal day and everlasting bliss of heaven;[595] "but thou mayst nat haue it yet...Thou must be proued & exercysed here in erth

afore thou come to me".[596] Hard though the way be, it is lightened by the occasional consolation of God, by the knowledge that Christ has travelled the same way before and "shall stande with me in my defence",[597] and by God's promises and the expectation of a heavenly reward.

The Imitatio Christi is a remarkably balanced book. Although most of the chapters are best described as meditation, they vary considerably from brief prayers[598] to the more practical, didactic, approach of the first book, and the dialogue between Christ and His disciple, who is usually addressed as Son, which makes the third book slightly reminiscent of a work like the Orologium Sapientiae. There is practical teaching on such matters as the reading of Holy Scripture,[599] evening devotions and the celebration of the feasts of the Church,[600] and the advantages of varying spiritual labours according to personal mood and the season.[601] On a more spiritual level the soul is warned that it "may nat rest ouermoch by confidence or trust of soul" in heavenly consolations,[602] and that it must learn to accept their withdrawal and even the apparent withdrawal of God's presence.[603] Like other authors, A Kempis warns against those who are "led by pryde & curyosyte to serche & knowe my secretys & the hye thynges of my godhead",[604] but while Hilton allows a limited value to human teaching and study of Scripture,[605] A Kempis, like Rolle, seems almost to despise human learning.[606] Although an anti-intellectual tendency might have dangerous consequences and lead eventually to some form of pietism, it must have been encouraging to the "unlearned" English reader to find Christianity liberated at once from its monastic shell and from the schoolmen and theologians. The follower of Christ,

as portrayed by A Kempis, requires neither learning nor necessarily to follow the religious or contemplative life, although solitude, silence and obedience are all commended. The main requirements are separation, interpreted spiritually and not just in the physical sense; the will to amend life, to overcome man's natural proclivity to sin; and the desire to follow Christ. The main virtues advocated are humility or meekness, patience, quietness, faith, a "symple and true entent", a pure mind and a clean conscience.[607] The soul who pursues these virtues, who accepts the penitential way of the cross, may in this life know peace and liberty of soul even in the midst of his tribulation,[608] he may learn something of the sweetness of God's love, and he can look forward to the reward of heaven hereafter, which will more than compensate for the brief sufferings he must endure on earth. Unlike so many late medieval books of devotion the Imitatio Christi does not lay down a rule of life, and it has comparatively little to say about external behaviour. Like more contemplative authors, whose thought and language he often echoes, A Kempis concentrates on the inward life of the soul; like them he addresses individual Christians rather than a particular class of reader - such as seculars, religious or solitaries - but he does not demand the sustained application required of those who would ascend to the top of the ladder of perfection. A Kempis, as Erasmus was to do in his popular Enchiridion Militis Christiani, published about a century later, speaks simply and directly to every embattled Christian soul - the universal position of the Christian soul in this life no matter how spiritually advanced - and shows him the way to fight so that at the last he may achieve victory.

The works discussed so far in this part were nearly all originally written for conventual religious or anchorites. Not surprisingly the former category is dominated by the demands of the religious life: observance of the three principal vows, the obligations of the daily office and matters of general morality and external behaviour which were likely to assume an increased importance with the demands made on the individual from living in a small, enclosed community. Works intended for anchorites and contemplatives tended to give rather less attention to matters of general morality, external behaviour and the obligations of the rule. They were more concerned to teach the individual how to understand and where necessary to regulate his senses and inward feelings, how to combat temptation, and the virtues needed for growth in the life of the spirit. The reason for the continuing appeal of works like Hilton's Scala Perfectionis or A Kempis' De Imitatione Christi (which may be more conveniently classified as a contemplative rather than a religious work) lies, partly at least, in their address to the individual soul engaged in the pursuit of perfection or caught up in the struggle against the flesh and self-will; in other words they are concerned with the aspirations and experiences of every Christian. Works intended for religious are only relevant to an audience who followed a particular way of life, and because they deal with external matters such as behaviour and dress they date more obviously. Yet during the early sixteenth century books intended for religious were printed in much greater numbers than works for contemplatives. There were, of course, far more religious than contemplatives, and there was some attempt to restrict the circulation of contemplative works to a small, select group.[609] Also, the

preoccupation of many religious authors with vices and virtues of particular relevance to life in community were equally applicable to life in the household of some secular lord, a prelate, or even a guild merchant or tradesman. Thus the social structure of the early sixteenth century gave works originally intended for conventual religious a wider application than they would probably have enjoyed had the break-up of the feudal structure of society preceded the dissolution of the monasteries. As long as the monastic life was generally accepted as the best expression of the Christian ideal people would attempt to follow that life as closely as their circumstances allowed; and so, with suitable adaptations, secular readers would be willing to follow monastic standards of virtuous living. Finally, it is worth noting that works for religious tended to cover a wider range of topics more simply and briefly than contemplative authors, who generally assumed a knowledge of the basic tenets of the faith; thus they would be likely to appeal to the wider audience.

CONFESSION AND PRAYER

The different forms of the Christian life - conventual religious, anchorite, hermit, friar, secular clerk - were pursued according to personal desire, opportunity or necessity, in much the same way as lay people followed various secular occupations. But although some forms of the Christian life were undoubtedly regarded as more meritorious and more sure of salvation than others, there were some things that were common to all Christians, and still more among devout and conscientious Christians. Common to all Christians was a basic deposit of belief, membership of the Church of Christ and participation in at least some of the seven sacraments. The more devout Christian would try to obey God's commandments, use public and private prayer, especially the Lord's Prayer, and endeavour to live "a godly, righteous and sober life".

The seven sacraments were probably a familiar list to most church-goers of the early sixteenth century. They were to be found illustrated on numerous fonts, especially in Norfolk[610] and Suffolk,[611] and depicted in mural paintings[612] and stained glass,[613] where they were usually portrayed in connection with the suffering or crucified Christ, whose wounds are often linked to the smaller sacrament scenes by thin red lines.[614] Illustrations of the sacraments were also to be found in manuscripts[615] and in printed books.[616] From the thirteenth century onwards a number of English bishops had attempted to implement the decisions of the Fourth Lateran Council. Archbishop Pecham's Lambeth Constitutions of 1281[617] are among the best known in England; in them he listed the topics on which priests were to instruct

their parishioners - under the title Exornatorium Curatorum this summary remained in print until the 1530s.[618] In treatment the seven sacraments, like most of the other topics detailed by Pecham, varied from a brief list,[619] through varying degrees of explanation,[620] to substantial theological commentary.[621] The sacraments of penance and of the altar were often treated separately; the subject of marriage too was given detailed separate treatment in William Harrington's Commendacions of matrimony[622], while the Last Rites were frequently illustrated and mentioned in ars moriendi books.[623] Protestant authors of course recognized only the two so-called biblical or Dominical sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper[624].

The sacrament of penance or confession came into prominence with the decision of the Lateran Council in 1216 to make annual confession obligatory: "Confessyon euery crysten man and woman after they come to yeres of dyscrecyon is bounde to make at ye lest ones in ye yere/ them to make knowledge of al theyr synnes to theyr owne ordynary curate/ and to none other".[625] Confession and penance, public rather than private, had been practised by the Church from the earliest times,[626] and the penitential system and its accompanying literature was particularly well developed in the Celtic churches.[627] The need to classify sins for confessional purposes and to provide handbooks for confessors generated a considerable literature and influenced, for instance, the treatment and development of concepts like the seven deadly sins.[628] Discussions of confession and penance may be conveniently divided between those which are concerned with their theoretical aspects, their history, nature and significance, and those which are intended as more practical guides to priests or laymen on

how to conduct confession or impose penance.

The most detailed exposition of the more theoretical aspects of confession to be printed during the 1530s was Erasmus' Lytle treatise of the maner and forme of confession.[629] It was intended to be of use to priests as well as lay people, and although, as might be expected of Erasmus, he is critical of some contemporary practices, he defends the customary manner and form of confession on personal grounds, not by citing proof texts from authorities. The treatise falls into three parts: the first lists nine "utilities" of confession; the second begins with nine human failings which lessen the value of confession or even make it harmful, and goes on to discuss related matters such as scrupulosity or the mis-use of the confessional to work off personal grievances, to tell tales, for business transactions or simply as an opportunity to wallow in sin. The third part, on the manner of confession, is particularly addressed to lay people. By comparison with the advice offered in the majority of books on confession Erasmus' treatise, especially the third part, shows an unusual interest in the motives and principles of priest and penitent. The author notes that the ceremonies and commandments of men are regarded as more important than God's law, so that an offence against human regulations is considered more heinous than to contravene the letter and spirit of God's law.[630] There is no list of the seven deadly sins, which forms the staple of A boke of Ghoostly fader/that confesseth his Ghoostly chylde, the treatise on confession printed by Copland in 1529[631] or the tract by Gerson Examen de conscience selon les péchés capitaux.[632] The reader is offered no reference list or rule by which he may recognize and enumerate his sins and judge their seriousness. Instead,

Erasmus goes behind even the formal summaries of the creed and ten commandments and insists that faith and charity are the rules by which a man's life is to be examined. The roots of sin, whatever goes against faith and charity, are normally neglected, since the branches and leaves are more obvious, external and easier to regulate. Every type of sin, those committed in mind or by the five wits - the tongue is especially mentioned - and the circumstances surrounding it - not only the time and place, but the disposition of mind at the time, the severity of the temptation and the number of people harmed and the severity of their suffering - are all judged according to these two principles. Erasmus does not avoid giving practical, concrete examples, especially in his discussion of compositions and satisfaction; but unlike the majority of those who describe various sins so that the penitent can recognize and confess them, he goes beneath the surface of customary sins to expose their roots.

If Erasmus is, by implication, critical of the rather facile manner of confession and superficial judgement of sins by lay people, his criticisms of the weakness, ignorance and corruption of priests is more outspoken. Among their vices some are greedy, voluptuous and more interested in receiving money than in the spiritual profit of the penitent. Others appeared bold and are in danger of losing their innocence and of being corrupted by what they hear; they may become partners in vice or carry report of it and break the seal of confession. Some are condemned as filthy, covetous, drunken and lewd, while others are merely young and unlearned. Erasmus places the responsibility for such a state of affairs with the bishops and

provincials of the friars and urges them to choose their confessors more carefully. However, the penitent too must "chose an able ghostly father" and prepare himself seriously before confession, as though it were to be his last. From his brief summary of the history of confession,[633] Erasmus seems to suggest that confession is undertaken too lightly, perhaps too often. He recommends a little delay before confession so that the negative fear of hell engendered by sin may through more weeping, sorrow and prayer grow into a more positive determination to amend life and avoid sin. But although confession may seem personally difficult and fraught with danger from an evil priest or bad counsel, it remains necessary. To set it aside opens the way to "paynymry and hethen maner of lyuynge/whervnto we do se many men nowe a dayes to fall agayne/vnder the false title & name of euagelical libertie".[634]

The evil disease of sin - a figure which recurs a number of times in the first part of this treatise[635] - must be bared to the "leche of the soule" in confession:

> Yf any parte of thy body haue a boyle or a botche/thou submittest thy selfe vnto the surgean beinge a man/thou vncouerest and makest bare vnto hym euyn the moste secrete and priuie partes of thy body. And whan thy mynde is wounded with so many and sondry woundes/doth it greue the for so lytle whyle to submit thy selfe vnto the phisician of ye soule? 636

Thus the priest in confession can bring healing and can even help the soul to avoid spiritual sins. But not every soul can believe it is healed and the preparation for and the act of confession can precipitate another problem about which spiritual writers had much to say - scrupulosity or pusillanimity.[637] Although scrupulosity can develop

in relation to various things,[638] it is most commonly associated, as Erasmus suggests, with confession. He mentions various manifestations of scrupulosity - inability to believe in the absolution granted, doubting the scriptures, serious confession of trifles or of fleeting thoughts as though they were ingrained habits, worries about correct pronunciation of the service to the neglect of its meaning and content.[639] Further on[640] he declares "that aūxite and precise diligence in rehersing and declaryng all maner circumstaunces, I do not greatly alowe", and he disallows the fear which makes every sin a deadly one and blames the constitutions of men for often engendering fears and scruples - he particularly blames Gerson[641] - so that some fear greatly to break a human rule but are reckless in their disregard for God's laws.

In an epistle attributed to Walter Hilton,[642] the author sets out to answer five difficulties which are tormenting his correspondent's mind. The main problem is that he is unable to believe that he is forgiven, but he is also distressed at his inability to describe his sins, unsure what to do about sins done in the past which he cannot remember, and worried because his conscience bites him as sorely after as though he had never known contrition or confession, and finally he is more upset about his inability to confess than about the sins themselves. Hilton's answers are designed to reassure his correspondent and to give him hope. The difficulties are taken seriously, but he helps the reader to understand them, to set them in perspective and by accepting them to overcome them. Like Erasmus, Hilton goes behind specific sins to show how they all grow from one

root, love of self and contempt for God. Sin is removed by turning from self-will and love of created things to God. This reversal is achieved by grace, betokened by compunction of heart, hatred of sin and perhaps tears. To overcome his reader's doubts about shrift Hilton distinguishes between the substances and the outward tokens of the sacrament. He who repents of his sins and turns to God will be forgiven - this is the main element of confession and may well be granted before formal confession is made - but the outward token of formal confession is necessary so that the penitent may be reconciled to the Church and loosed from the bands of purgatory.[643] Again it is the intention of the heart, the desire to confess and sorrow for sins which matters, rather than a clearly articulated declaration of every sin. An inarticulate general confession offered with faith and feeling is more acceptable than a lengthy or competent rehearsal of sins made simply by custom with a cold heart. The reader is reassured on his third doubt by the assertion that God never half-forgives, but forgives completely all sins known and unknown. The reason for the continuing pain of conscience even after confession is shown to be that although the sin is forgiven a debt of pain remains to be paid. It has to be paid either by labour of penance or through patient endurance of a biting conscience, tribulation or sickness in this life, or by the more intense and lengthy pain of purgatory hereafter. The reversal of priorities which marks the fifth difficulty is explained by Hilton as symptomatic of the soul which has long been lost in "mirkness" of sin. He points out that ignorance of all his sins prevents a soul falling into heaviness. The darkness of sin will

will seem greater the more the light of grace is sought. But the reader is reassured that as the soul is cleansed by contrition and sorrow, so the hope and trust of forgiveness will grow, and although the sin will be hated it will no longer cause despair. He must avoid wallowing in his sins[644] and remember rather the mercies and benefits of God:

> Walk warily between hope and dread and look that full hope raise up thy heart against despair and look on that other side. Keep thee low from presumption and vain sikerness. [645]

To help keep this mean between hope and despair he recommends devout prayer and frequent remembrance of the pains of Christ's Passion: "What is so virtuous a plaster to heal all the wounds of thy heart, and to cleanse the eye of thy soul, as that gracious Passion and heartily thinking of these wounds? Full heal of soul is that Passion..." As Erasmus answers criticisms of confession by going behind the human conduct and rules of the institution to its underlying spiritual value, and also looks beyond particular manifestations of sins to their root causes, so does the author of this letter teach his correspondent to understand the causes for his scrupulosity. The advice is offered sympathetically; it is simple without being in any way superficial, profound but neither obscure nor impracticable, and it reflects the same kind of understanding and concern for moderation which is characteristic of the teaching of the Scala Perfectionis.

William Bonde's Deuote treatyse for them that ben tymorouse and fearefull in conscience[646] was a much longer work, apparently written for "a deuote Relygiouse woman of Denney",[647] and it was intended to

to comfort the scrupulous and fearful conscience. The epistle attributed to Hilton seems to have been written from the author's own store of spiritual knowledge and experience in answer to a personal request for guidance. By comparison, Bonde's Deuoute treatyse seems more impersonal, more academic, and it relies heavily on authorities such as St. Thomas Aquinas, Gerson and Nider. It covers a rather wider range of topics than the earlier epistle. It begins by insisting on the need for holy fear, which is contrasted with a more detailed definition and discussion of servile fear. This can give rise to scrupulosity, which is also defined in some detail; some of its symptoms are described and its causes discussed before Bonde goes on to look at the dangers incurred by scrupulosity and to suggest some remedies against it. From scrupulosity the author goes on to consider various aspects of spiritual temptations and to offer remedies against some of these and against desperation. Included in this latter part of the treatise is "A lamentable complaynt of the dulle soule", which with the answers to the three main subjects of the complaint—feelings of dullness, of lack of merits and of being forsaken by God—echoes with variations some of the topics discussed in the rest of the treatise. But although Bonde has much to say about scrupulosity and related problems of the spiritual life, especially as they affect religious, he only explains what it is, its dangers and its remedies, whereas Hilton by concentrating on its causes suggests how the problem can be dealt with and overcome.

According to Bonde the symptoms of a spirit troubled by scrupulosity are inability to perform God's service, to do His duty or to profit in grace.[648] The underlying inversion - precise keeping of "Ye smale thynges of relygion" and neglect of the great perfections such as

obedience and meekness - causes religious to repeat their service over again and raises the characteristic difficulties, described by Hilton's correspondent, with regard to confession:

> For they wyll forme & make a greate conscience of those thynges that ben but tryfels/in comparison/ & lyghte offences/and suche veniall synnes/wythout the whiche/yt is not possyble this lyfe to be contynuyd. In suche they wyll make suche precyse serche and dyscusse of conscience/that they wyll leue nothyng vnconfessed/ but make conscience of all theyr lyfe/ and vnwysely more wepyng theyr offences in the balance of the iustice of god/then in the balance of his marcy. Such yf they folow not counseyle/& put away this scrupul they shall come to this incouenience/that they shall make conscience of that/that is no syn/and confesse that/that is no vyce/nor matter of confession...649

God's grace cannot abide or grow in a soul which is troubled, doubtful and inconstant. In the manner of so many late medieval devotional writers, Bonde offers the reader a selection of particular definitions of scrupulosity rather than attempting one single, general definition. Called variously pusillanimity, fear of conscience or erroneous conscience, it shows itself as "a dulle tediousnes and vndyscrete deieccion or trouble of the mynde", as fear rising from "an anguysshe of spryte & straytenes in conscience", or else, paraphrasing Gerson, as "a wauerynge vnstablenes of the fantasy. A doubtfull vndyscussyd and vncerteyne weake coniecture of reason/& troubelous feare of the conscience". A proof case is added to show that a man may, indeed should, on occasion act against his scruples because the erroneous conscience is not binding. Of the many causes of scrupulosity Bonde chooses to dwell on one, "the naturall complexion of man", his sinful disposition and his tendency to fear, which may be encouraged, especially in women, by a melancholy humour. This fearful melancholy is nourished by indiscreet meditation on:

> the iustice of god.his fynal sentence of iugement and reprobacion. his mostrayte examynacion of all synnes.ye teryble paynes of hell and dampnacion. that be ordenyd for synners.& the acountes that man must then gyue of euery ydell worde and of venyall synnes/be they neuer so smalle.and the horryble company of diuels & suche other. 650

If unwise meditation on God's judgement and the pains of hell encourages the sensitive soul inclined to melancholy and depression in scrupulosity, scrupulosity is often maintained by singularity, the presumptuous assertion of private opinion and self will. Sir Thomas More in his Dyalogue of comforte[651] also notes that pusillanimity causes cowardice, which prevents the soul doing good things, but in other cases it can cause impatience which grows into stubbornness and anger against God, which is a stronger expression of singularity.

In dealing with the dangers of scrupulosity Bonde again confines his attention to one particular danger, the darkening of reason which may lead "to mocions of infidelyte.to anguysshe of spyrit/& tediousnes of lyfe.thynkeyng all that they do to be noughte.And that they be forsaken of almyghty god"...Such sentiments cause the faithful soul "the greatest payne that may be in this worlde", but Bonde encourages the sufferer to bear it patiently in expectation of the promised crown of glory to be enjoyed hereafter. He stresses the positive aspects of scrupulosity, the way in which it can prick the dull soul, free the soul from servile fear and, above all, prove the faithful soul "know ye for certayne yt all payne sensyble is wroughte of god"[652] which indicates that scrupulosity is to be endured like any other tribulation.[653] More positive remedies against scrupulosity include the removal of the erroneous conscience, the pursuit of meekness, and confession.[654] Fears, such as those generated by meditation on the Judgement, may be countered by contemplation of God's love, His mercy and His benefits to mankind. Meekness is to

be used against singularity and presumption. Meek acceptance of the counsel of a ghostly father will help to banish both singularity and errors of conscience. Like Hilton, Bonde advises his readers to avoid both too large a conscience, such as that displayed by the wolf in More's fable,[655] and too straight a conscience, like that of the ass; "But all our laboure shulde be to haue the quiet & meane conscience".[656] Bonde also echoes Erasmus in advising his audience not to be over precise in confession and not to resort to it too readily, and he reminds them that the intention matters more than the actual performance of the service. More's advice against scrupulosity is very similar,[657] he advises a mean to be kept between extremes of conscience; recommends submission to the rule of some good spiritual physician, and suggests remembrance of God's mercy rather than His justice, to which he adds perseverence in prayer and trust in God.

In contrast to Hilton, whose concern is to answer five specific difficulties on which his correspondent has asked advice, and Whitford,[658] who deals with the problem in relation to the question of obedience and answers it satisfactorily in his distinction between the will to amend and the sinner's trust in his ability to amend, More and Bonde approach the topic more generally. In view of its place within the framework of his Dyalogue of comforte, More's treatment is both effective and simple. The fable of the ass and the wolf who make their Lenten confession to the fox is a good story and demonstrates more clearly than lengthy discussion the dangers of an over-straight conscience and too wide a conscience, and concludes with a brief summary which makes a few basic, practical suggestions. Bonde attempts a far more elaborate analysis and his impersonal, academic approach is much less

appealing than Hilton's personal advice or More's fables. On an intellectual level his Deuote treatyse suffers from the familiar late medieval lack of structure and reluctance to select priorities, so that the definitions, causes and remedies tend to be blurred by too much detail. A more serious criticism of Bonde's approach is that scrupulosity is not overcome by argument and intellectual discussion, even if it can be recognized by such explanations. Hilton and More in their different ways both contrive to suggest that scrupulosity is the result of an irrational exaggeration of some fear or doubt, and by sympathetically exposing the underlying causes or gently suggesting how ridiculous some of these exaggerations can become, they help the reader to control or disregard various scruples. Bonde sees scrupulosity as a problem symptomatic of the human condition and perhaps exaggerates its importance. But he also handles it less sympathetically. He considers it to be a weakness, "a greate folysshenes" and he compares the scrupulous religious "to a man that walkyth in a way that is most playne.plesante/and sure/and yet he wyll stumble at a pease/or at a whete corne/or a cherystone".[659] He seems to think that knowledge of what scrupulosity is, how it is caused and maintained, will be sufficient to enable a person to overcome it, but Hilton and More recognize that it cannot be banished by reason alone; the scrupulous soul must be persuaded to overcome it by more sympathetic and subtle means.

Detailed definitions and distinctions were not the way to attempt to cure a spiritual problem like scrupulosity, nor was that kind of analytical treatment always the most useful way to approach the problem of sin. Yet the books that were available to help people - religious

and lay alike - make their confession, invariably concentrated on the analysis and enumeration of sins. Erasmus considered such books dangerous when used indiscriminately by ordinary people.[660] They could well encourage scrupulosity in the sensitive soul, who could find himself guilty of every sin mentioned and regard them all as deadly, rather than accepting that it is impossible to live without some sin in this mortal life;[661] or they allowed a purely mechanical recitation of sins to stand in place of true contrition and sorrow. This kind of approach inevitably focused on the external manifestations of different sins, and it was matched by the obvious concern of perhaps the majority of authors who wrote about confession, to instruct the penitent in the method of making his confession. A similar emphasis on behaviour, observance of due forms, method, enumeration and classification was widespread in late medieval devotion, for instance, with regard to the sacrament of the altar, the Opus Dei of the religious, or even in the handling of some Passion narratives or attempts to enumerate the pains of hell.

The majority of treatises make little attempt to explain what confession is, beyond the fact that it is made up of three parts, contrition, confession and satisfaction or penance,[662] and that every Christian having reached years of discretion is obliged to confess annually to his parish priest. The author of the Ancrene Riwle however, prefaced his discussion of the sixteen elements which are desirable to make a good confession with some consideration of what confession is and does. Under various figures, including the deeds of Judith, the author shows how contrition, confession and penance confound the Devil, cut off his head and put him to rout, and then how

they wash away the soul's impurities, restore all the good which had been lost by mortal sin, and make the sinner a child of God. William Bonde also has something to say about confession and the sacrament of penance in his exposition of the eleventh article of the creed, "Remissionem peccatorum".[663] Were it not for this sacrament the promise of eternal life proclaimed at baptism would be forever lost by any subsequent sin. To prevent this Christ gave to his Apostles, and to ordained clergy after them, the power to remit sin. Christ also ordained that confession be made by man to man in secret, to make the burden less painful than public confession, or confession to God Himself. But the obligation of confession remains, "for otherwyse...no wounde can be cured excepte it be knowen & shewed to the surgyon".

This familiar image of healing is taken up in the introduction to A boke of a Ghoostly fader/that confesseth his Ghoostly chylde:[664]

> For yf a surgean haue an hurte man in cure
> He must knowe the wounde iuste and sure
> Wherewith it was hurte/and in what place it is
> And than maye he helpe hym by good practys
> Therfore sone spare thou nought
> If ony synne thou haue wrought
> And I wyll mynstre medysens sure and sole
> That shall make the parfytely hole. 665

After a brief introduction the book proceeds to question the penitent about each of the seven deadly sins, to discover whether he is guilty of any of them. This, the most lengthy section of the book, is followed by a general discussion on the circumstances of sin, who committed it, his status, what it was, where done, how often, why, and so on, and the work concludes with notes of remedies against the principal sins and a brief personal note; a brief inquiry on the venial

sins according to the five senses is added at the very end. Apart from the introduction and the personal note at the end[666] the contents are taken with a little alteration and occasional adaptation from Mirk's Instructions for Parish Priests.[667] Although the questions go into more precise detail they are very similar to those included under the headings of the seven sins in the Exornatorium curatorum.[668] Like Mirk's Instructions the Exornatorium was written primarily for the use of priests but it is not so obviously addressed to the confessor and was probably quite widely used by lay people. Indeed, the advice concerning six points which should be remembered by the soul in "secrete counsayle" before he comes to his ghostly father seems particularly directed to lay people,[669] and the questions regarding the sins are so phrased as to form part of this private self-examination rather than the questions of priest to penitent.[670] Following a brief explanation of how sin is forgiven and the pains of hell and purgatory remitted is a short section which reassures the reader that, while sacramental confession remains the best remedy for sin, contrition, desire to amend and to confess, is sufficient to bring the soul out of danger of damnation into a state of grace - both these pieces seem intended to settle doubts which were likely to afflict penitents not priests. But whether the examination of the penitent were conducted by a priest or by the penitent himself, the questions, which cover mental and spiritual states as well as physical acts, general intentions as well as specific deeds, would be likely to convict nearly every soul of some of the seven deadly sins. Whereas to be thus convicted of guilt would be a salutory lesson to the hardened sinner, it would surely be likely to make the sensitive soul scrupulous or fearful, or even bring it to desperation. Used indiscriminately by priest[671] or laymen, such manuals could, as

Erasmus suggested, have a harmful effect.

The form in which the contents of the faith were normally taught to the "unlearned" - lay people, religious and even clerks - during the later middle ages was in lists and tables. The Lay Folks' Catechism, for instance, included the seven petitions of the Pater noster, the Ave Maria, the twelve articles of the creed, and six things: fourteen points of faith, the ten commandments, the seven sacraments, the seven works of mercy, the seven virtues and the seven deadly sins. A selection of such summaries, often with little or no explanation, was included in a large number of devotional works from St. Edmund's Myrrour of the chyrche to The Shepherds' Calendar or Bonde's Pilgrymage of perfeccyon. It is not surprising that this kind of catechetical summary should therefore have been made the basis of probably the majority of late medieval treatises on confession. The sixteen conditions for confession listed by the author of the Ancrene Riwle seem to reflect an individual approach , but even there the circumstances of the sins are required, as they were by Mirk and the Boke of a Ghoostly fader.[672] In place of the questions about the seven deadly sins which dominated the books intended primarily for the use of confessors, the seven deadly sins and other items of catechetical teaching provide the framework for confessions of guilt or pleas for mercy. With such admissions of guilt put into the penitent's mouth the tendency must have been for the sensitive soul to accuse himself of practically every sin mentioned.

In the form of confession edited by Horstmann from the Vernon manuscript[673] the penitent acknowledges his guilt according to the seven deadly sins, the ten commandments, the seven deeds of mercy and the five senses. The form of confession printed by Copland in 1529[674] begins with general expressions of guilt before going on to acknowledge particular sins under each of the seven deadly sins, by breaking the ten commandments, by

abusing the five senses and not using, failing to do or abusing the seven works of mercy bodily or spiritual, the three theological and four cardinal virtues, the seven sacraments, the seven gifts of the holy Ghost and the eight beatitudes. Most sections open with a confession of guilt such as "I haue offended in..." or "I haue not..." and conclude with an appeal for mercy such as "wherfore I aske god mercy" or " I aske god mercy & grace to amende from hens forwarde". The last fifth of the treatise is devoted to "a lytell addycyon for more perfyte serche of confessyon", which supplements the examination according to the seven sins, the ten commandments etc. In it general admissions such as advising people to do wrong, following evil not good, being ready to do ill and slow to do good, having thought evil and having broken God's commandments, are mingled with references to particular vices like usury, simony or sins against the five wits. Considerable attention is given to sins which seem particularly relevant to a religious audience; these range from failure to honour superiors, back biting, grudging, negligence in God's service, to forgetfulness of holy meditation, lack of sadness in church, talking during service or failing to say it clearly, even omitting some words, coming late and staying briefly. Although brief this "addycyon" lacks any obvious structure, and it seems to be a collection of points which the author wished to include but which were omitted from the main examination, perhaps because they did not fit readily in to the categories available.

The third book of Garande's Interpretacyon and sygnyfycacyon of the Masse, on preparation to receive the Sacrament - confession was obligatory before communion - is more detailed than the Copland treatise. Before confession the penitent is to examine his conscience, presumably

under the numerous headings given in subsequent chapters. He is to pray God for knowledge of forgotten sins, learn what deadly sin is from reading Scripture and asking his confessor about doubtful points and finally, try to keep clear of deadly sins. Though no man may know for sure whether he is in a state of grace some signs follow a good confession,[675] and the soul prepared by good confession may be assured that it receives five important virtues in the sacrament of the altar.[676] The bulk of the book, chapters vii - xxv, is devoted to a detailed examination of conscience in which the soul confesses its guilt according to various categories. To the ten headings used in the Copland tract Gararde adds another six,[677] some of which are not usually included in the summaries of faith expected to be known by the unlearned, and whose titles might suggest categories formulated with particular reference to confession rather than being taken over from general catechetical summaries. Inevitably there is a certain amount of repetition between sections and not all the groups, particularly the less common categories like the sins against the faith of the Trinity or the four sins which cry to God for vengeance, hold together well or deal with the same kind of sin. As so often the disposition of material under distinctive headings suggests more organization and structure than is to be found in the sum of these parts. While some of the chapters are little more than lists[678] others go into more detail. For instance, in the chapter on the ten commandments[679] according to the first the soul must consider whether he has given any credence to necromancy, witchcrafts or heretics; against the second, whether he has sworn unncessarily or by God's members and His Passion or by the saints or the Blessed Virgin; the third demands among other things whether he has prevented servants hearing mass; the sixth condemns secret plighting of troth or carnal knowledge before marriage; and the seventh censures failure or

delay in fulfilling the last will of friends. Not only is Gararde's the most exhaustive examination of conscience to be found in print during the 1530's but the questions posed are among the most precise. Even when confession was made only once a year it was surely asking a very great deal of the penitent to examine his conscience in such extensive and minute detail as this.

But although Gararde's treatise may seem too detailed to be a practical guide, practical advice is included. The penitent is warned to choose a good confessor, to remain with the same confessor and not to leave his confession until the last moment, like the wolf in More's fable.[680]

> Whan thou shall come to thy confessyon/knele downe of both thy knees a fore thy confessoure/ makynge a crosse a fore the and saye/In the name of the father/of the sone/and of the holy ghost, Amen.or In nomine patris & c. And then say Confiteor yf thou can saye it vnto Ideo precor.And yf thou can not say it/saye Benedicite and then saye/Syr I confesse me afore god and you of all my synnes that I haue done/ syth the fyrste tyme that I could synne vnto this houre...681

Substantially the same advice is given by Richard Whitford in his Werke for housholders,[682] although he gives the full Latin text followed by an English translation "for the vnlerned". This practical information is introduced by warnings to "gyue no credence vnto these false heretikes/ that done depraue and set nought by confession",[683] and by the insistence that confession was ordained of God from the beginning and that no-one who has committed deadly sin can regain the state of salvation unless he believes and desires confession. The actual confession, made according to the seven sins, is both shorter and simpler than Gararde's or Copland's or than various lengthy and exhaustive verse confessions.[684] Whitford does

seem to have made some effort to provide a form which was of practical use both for the private examination of conscience which ought to precede confession and ~~which could perhaps be~~ for used in the actual confession.

However, while some forms of confession were probably intended for practical use others seem to have been intended as summaries of Christian knowledge. Although cast in the form of a confession the catechetical list is rarely far below the surface. The inclusion of categories such as the beatitudes, the seven virtues, the seven works of mercy and the seven sacraments, which are not strictly precepts that may be trangressed, still less sins or causes of sin, is probably best explained by reference to the didactic intention of these treatises. This didactic intention might also help to explain why no element from the standard numbered summaries is ever omitted or obviously subordinated, even where it has little direct relevance to the confession of sins. The form of confession found in a 1538 primer[685] makes it very clear that confession was regarded as an excellent opportunity, both to examine the penitent in his knowledge of the faith[686] and to instruct him further.[687] The confession, made according to the usual categories, introduces each section with "I haue synned" and ends it with the refrain "Wherof I cry God mercy" and the whole concludes, like Whitford's, with a general plea for mercy and forgiveness. However, this is preceded by an instruction in the standard catechetical question and answer form.[688] The majority of answers,[689] especially in the latter half, tend to be given in the form of lists which are both brief and easy to memorize. But the need for simplicity and brevity forces the answers to questions like "what is pentitence?", "What is confessyon?" or "What is synne?" to sound inadequate and superficial. Such popular instruction dealt almost exclusively with categories,

definitions and distinctions. The longer, more detailed treatises and verses on confession are, on the whole, more satisfactory when seen as summaries of this type of instruction than as practical guides to confession.

There was little opportunity for the expression of any personal feeling in these formal recitals of sin, nor, as Erasmus' Lytle treatise of the maner and forme of confession implies, did they encourage the penitent to look within himself to discover the causes of his sin. Feelings of sorrow for sin, fear of its consequences[690] and desire to amend[691] are more often and usually more effectively expressed in verse. For instance, the verse dialogue between God and Man, The remors of conscyence,[619A] succeeds in conveying to man his need of contrition as a response to God's threats of judgement, His reproaches for man's unthankfulness for all the benefits of creation, redemption by Christ's death and continued preservation he enjoys. The problems which hinder man's amendment, customary sins, fleshly lusts and worldly interests, are well expressed and there is a real sense of the sinner's remorse in Man's words. Although many of the standard teachings on the need for contrition, will to amend, satisfaction by means of alms-giving are touched on, the approach to both sins and remedies is much freer than in the formal confession treatises. The most certain medicine against sin is seen in the refuge offered "In the great wounde of thy ryght syde" - in prevention rather than just a formal cure. The formal structure imposed on prose (and verse) confessions of sin undoubtedly inhibits feeling. It is more liable to find expression outside formal categories, for example in the general self-accusatory confession included in St. Bernard's Meditacyons,[692] in Bonde's Pilgrymage

of perfeccyon[692A] or in the complaints of a dying soul.[693] In many ways the briefer, more general prayers of confession are more satisfactory than the detailed treatises because they encourage confession only of such sins "as hys conscience is most grewyde with"[694] rather than an impersonal recital of each type of sin. Private confession of sins at the end of each day was widely advocated for both religious[695] and lay people.[696] Not only would such recollection help the soul remember his sins and try to avoid and amend them in future, but he could then face the "perils and dangers" of the night secure in the knowledge that he was in a state of grace.

Although prayers of general confession were to be found in late medieval - early sixteenth century Horae,[697] they assumed a new importance in the Protestant primers which began to appear in the later 1530s.[698] The traditional obligations of auricular confession maintained by the English recusants[699] had been under attack for over two centuries, first by the lollards[700] and then by the Reformers.[701] Erasmus, in addition to his more detailed criticisms of the contemporary theory and practice of confession, concluded by listing nine main evils of confession and some remedies against them for the particular benefit of the simple reader.[702] But although he condemns the shortcomings of man-made regulations and other human failings he still insists on the need for confession. Thomas Becon, in an early work, A Potation for Lent,[703] most of which is devoted to an exposition of the three parts of penance (contrition, confession and satisfaction) shows that on occasion[704] even a Protestant author can declare the "utilities" of auricular confession[705] and defend its institution even while acknowledging its abuses.[706] Tyndale, as might be expected, is

more outspoken: "Shrift in the ear is verily a work of Satan",[707] and he denies that penance is a sacrament. He sees it as a man-made institution, subject to human limitations - for no man, even a priest, can discern another's heart to know whether he truly repents - and tainted by the doctrine of works and merits. Also he could not accept that the right of granting forgiveness and absolution was vested in priest or pope, for that was to usurp God's power. Criticism of the power and prerogatives of the clergy had previously been voiced by the lollards,[708] and the subsequent abolition of auricular confession not only removed abuses and helped to reduce the power of the priesthood, but with it went an opportunity for the priest to give personal advice and instruction and to encourage the observance of religious and moral standards by his parishioners.[709]

In place of annual Lenten confession to a priest according to the prescribed forms, most Protestants followed Tyndale in defining confession as the individual's acknowledgement of his sins to God,[710] in seeing repentance[711] and contrition as continual mourning and sorrow for sins and Christ as the only God-ward satisfaction.[712] Lent was also observed as a period of abstinence according to regulations laid down by the Church and supported by the state.[713] The value of fasting and abstinence was widely recognized by early devotional writers as a means to subdue the lusts of the flesh and to overcome temptation.[714] But it was to be used moderately, lest excessive abstinence should weaken the body for God's service.[715] Advice on fasting was normally given in the course of other devotional or ascetic teaching; the only Catholic work devoted entirely to the subject to be reprinted during the 1530s was Wednesdayes faste.[716] It provides some thirty exempla illustrating how those who abstained from meat on Wednesdays did good or were saved in contrast to those who did not fast.

Not only does such fasting "Haloweth mennes soules/and maketh them chaste", but it carries with it the promise that "Thou shalt not lacke/at thyne ende to haue a preest", and the hope of a place in heaven. The kind of customary and partial fast - to abstain only from meat - commended by this book would seem to deserve the kind of criticisms levelled against "The popish and superstitious fast" by Becon.[717] But, stripped of its superstitious and ceremonial elements, Becon and later Puritans[718] commended the godly fast, that is one accompanied by prayer and edifying reading or preaching, and encouraged a total abstinence where possible. It is, however, very doubtful whether the manner of imposing Puritan fast days can escape many of the criticisms levelled by Becon against ~~their~~ his Catholic predecessors.

Like confession, prayer was to some extent obligatory on all Christians, religious and lay, learned and unlearned, during the 1530s. Weekly assistance at the Sacrament was required of the lay man, and in addition the religious was bound to attend the daily round of choir services. Even the most simple soul was supposed to know the Pater noster, and expositions of it were offered in varying degrees of detail by traditional Catholics,[719] humanists[720] and Protestants[721] alike. Private prayer, especially night and morning, was encouraged by devotional authors for religious[722] and eventually for lay people,[723] although it does not seen to have been widely expected of them before Whitford's <u>Werke for housholders</u>.[724] However, the provision of prayers to be said in the morning and evening as well as at other times was greatly increased during the following two decades.[725] In the earlier works prayer is usually discussed in the course of longer general treatises. Sometimes brief definitions of different types of prayer would be given,[726] or problems especially of distraction during

church services discussed,[727] or its profits suggested;[728] but beyond recommending the practice of morning and evening prayer specific advice as to its content was rarely given.[729] There are, however, two works dating from the 1530s devoted entirely to the subject of prayer. The pomander of prayer,[730] written by a Carthusian of Shene but with a preface by a brother of Syon,[731] seems to sum up traditional teaching on the nature and practice of prayer, and the practical teaching can be supplemented by A dyurnall for deuoute soules.[732]

With four extant editions between 1528 and 1532 The pomander of prayer[733] was clearly a popular book, and it seems to have been successful in its attempts to instruct "the vnlerned" in "the ordre of prayer". But despite the author's care to direct his teaching to the "good deuoute people of the worlde/for whome I specially wryte this treatise/the whiche haue a good mynde to serue god", what he has to say on the theory and practice of prayer is derived with little adaptation from the familiar religious - contemplative tradition. The treatise concerns itself with what might be termed the theory of prayer, with the conditions of prayer, with some of its problems and with its profits. Although much of what he says has practical implications these are not worked out in specific detail: the advice is general and by comparison with Protestant works of the following decade[734] it seems more theoretical than practical.

Prayer is defined as "an ascencion of the soule from erthly thynges to heuenly thynges that be aboue/and a desyre of thynges inuysible",[735] and thus allows the author considerable opportunity to warn against undue love of and involvement with the things of this world. The treatise reflects the other-worldly orientation characteristic of religious works and it gives

expression to the "vile body"[736] outlook often associated with the contemptus mundi writings: the body is "mortall/dust/asshes/and erth: and to them tourne agayne we shall" and in addition the soul must acknowledge himself "the most vyle stynkyng & vnkynde synner that lyueth".[737] The contemptus mundi theme is expressed indirectly in the author's lament for the daily decay of virtue and increase of sin and vice in the world - a very common motif.[738] Among the worldly vices he condemns "inuencions of pryde and vanities", "desceites and frauds" and sins of the flesh in general, and he concentrates more particularly on the vices of swearing and blasphemy, apparently endemic amongst lay people, who swear "by the precions (sic) woundes & body of our sauiour Iesu Christe and by the masse/and by the glorious sacrament of the auter",[739] and the dangers of coming to church "in gay apparell of clothynge" - another familiar vice.[740] Like Dionysius' Lyfe of prestes, Whitford's Pype or Tonne or The foundacyon and the summe of the holy scripture, this treatise is also critical of simony and avarice among the secular clergy and of the regulars it laments: "who sawe euer religion more remisshly kepte: who sawe euer so many apostates that haue forsaken theyr religion and be nowe in seculer habyte".[741]

The distinction made between vocal and mental prayer is common enough,[742] although this author defines the parts of vocal prayer in more detail than some and emphasizes the importance of a good intention which covers subsequent lapses of concentration.[743] Mixed vocal prayer "which is spoken with the mouth/and proce|| deth fro the herte with ardaunt deuocion and feruent affection of the mynde"[744] is that most recommended for the devout layman. Mental prayer, which the author considers best,

is only to be used "sobrely and discretely. For els it is so laborous and so vyolente/that within shorte space it wyll bryng a man ‖ vnto suche debilitacion and weykenes of brayne that it wyll cast hym in great danger of seckenes/or some other grete inconuenyence".[745] It demands total concentration and "perteyneth moste specially to contemplatyfe persones: and other deuoute seculer persones that haue suffycient knowlege of scripture and spirituall thynges".[746] The author asks the prayers of his readers that he too may be able to taste something of the wine of such devotion, and he refers to the spiritual inebriation enjoyed by Anna, who "was dronken with spirituall wyne of deuocion the whiche came fro the wyne seller of heuen/wherof the holy ghoste/the thyrde persone in trinite is the tauerner/or vyntener".[747] The language is, of course, characteristic of various contemplative treatises,[748] and although the author obviously considers contemplative, mental prayer to be the best and most rewarding, he is clear that it is not usually the best kind of prayer for lay people.

The greater part of The Pomander deals with the conditions for prayer. It is to be made often, but since man cannot pray continuously good deeds can count as prayer.[749] It is to be persistent, for God will not always answer immediately, and it must be made devoutly. It should fly upwards on the two wings of fasting and almsdeeds[749A] - or, in St. Bernard's terminology, affliction of the flesh and contempt of the world. Where through age, ill-health or poverty these cannot be undertaken physically they may be taken spiritually by abstention from customary vices and by forgiveness, instruction of the ignorant and desire to do the works of mercy. Before embarking on prayer consideration is to be given to see that what is asked for is not against God's will and the soul is to remember God's omnipotence and his own wretchedness. The end of prayer,

for which man was created, is the praise of God, but provided he is aware of their possible abuses he may pray for the needs of his body and soul and desire eternal life. Devotion may be stimulated by remembrance of God's benefits, His creation, redemption, preservation and the promised glorification of man - the kind of thankfulness expressed, for example, in the opening chapters of Simon's Fruyte of redempcyon-and it is balanced by the meekness and sorrow which comes from the soul's awareness of his unthankfulness, sins, and failure to do good. He is also encouraged to pray by remembering the terrible pains endured by the souls in purgatory and their need for compassion. Indeed the souls in purgatory are one of the classes of people to be prayed for - the others are the spirituality and the temporality, especially the king but including kindred, benefactors, all Christians, and even heretics and infidels.[750] While refusing to be drawn into controversial debate, the author feels it necessary to warn his readers against the opinion of heretics on purgatory. He advises them not to engage in debate lest their reason be beguiled, but rather to avoid their company and "mekely and stedfastly beleue as the churche of Christe doth instructe you".[751]

Problems of distraction afflict every Christian who attempts to pray. Treatises for religious tended to view the problem in relation to the divine office and to suggest remedies; Hilton suggested more general remedies, emphasizing the importance of a good intention.[752] The author of The Pomander pays more attention to the causes and suggests appropriate remedies. The first main cause of distraction are worldly preoccupations. Against these he recommends particular concentration on what is said in prayer, and if possible that worldly business should

be done to God's honour and glory so that it is taken up into the prayer. Against other distractions, particularly those in church, he suggests a programme of ordered physical and mental exercise, which is as near as he ever comes to providing a scheme of prayer.[753] He goes on to consider the case of the "unlettered", recommending that they fix their attention on a picture of Christ's Passion or a statue of the saint to whom they pray, "And for that consyderacion ymages of saintes be set vp in the churches as bokes of laymen" to stir them to devotion. Similarly small books containing "pyctures of the articles of the lyfe and passion of our lorde Iesu" may be used, with a Pater, Ave and Creed said for each. Those who lack books must remember the events of Christ's life and of His Mother Mary's, by the feasts of the Church year.

Remedies against distractions caused by sin include a number of fairly specific recommendations such as never to leave prayer, use of the sign of the cross, remembrance of heaven and hell, and continual calling on Christ's Passion; "Lorde thy bytter passyon be betwene me and this temptacion".[754] The principal remedy for the soul sick and wounded with sin is to "Go to the lauatory of helth/and with contrite herte make clene and holye confessyon".[755] The formal act of confession is hardly mentioned, what matters is "huge contricion and repentaunte sorowe", and as so often the language of physical medicine is used:

> For lyke it is a noble playster or medicyne that
> heleth not onely the wounde/but also taketh away
> the skarre:whiche comenly is lefte in the flesshe/
> so contricion is a noble medycyne for the soule. [756]

But sometimes, despite contrition, the scar remains, sometimes in the form of scruples, or various fantasies or unclean thoughts. Like

tribulation such torments must be patiently endured and fantasies resisted. Against the deadly sins which cause distractions - sloth alone is not included - the best remedy, beside resistance, and contrition, is careful preparation for prayer, which will stimulate devotion. Venial sins too cause distraction and "suffocate the spirite"; they must be put away. The reader is also warned against assuming that because his conscience is quiet he is without sin; while for those whose spirit is dull the remedy is frequent recollection of some article of Christ's Passion to move them to devotion. But the successful remedying of distractions such as these threatens another problem, that temptations to pride and vain glory will follow prayer. To overcome these the reader must meekly acknowledge that devout prayer is only possible by God's grace, and his resistance can be helped by using the sign of the cross, by remembering Christ's wounds, or, if the temptations persist, by regarding them as punishment for past sins and looking forward to the promised crown of glory for the soul who will not consent to sin.

The Passion and wounds of Christ, which are recommended against various kinds of distraction, receive more detailed attention in chapter X, which from its heading, "Howe a man may odre hymselfe in tyme of prayer", might be expected to be the central chapter of the treatise. It does not, however, offer an order of prayer, it recommends as a remedy against vain unprofitable thoughts in time of prayer, the strong armour of remembrance of Christ's Passion against which neither the world, the flesh not the devil can prevail:

> consider the vnspeakable payne whiche the sone
> of god dyd suffre for our synnes vpon the crosse/
> where neyther standyng vpon carpytes/nor syttyng vpon
> cusshyns/but hangyng with all the weyght of his blessed

> body vpon boystous nayles of yren/whiche
> dyd teare and rente his handes and fete
> wherin were most synewes/ vaynes/and bones || to
> his importable payne. 757

He particularly recommends meditation of Christ's wounds, both for the learned and the unlearned. Thus warned of the dangers, and armed with remedies against the most common problems of prayer, the soul is, in theory at least, in a position to enjoy the virtues of prayer. The profits of prayer were set forth by numerous devotional writers[757A] and there is nothing particularly notable about the list in chapter iii of The Pomander.

In the topics it chooses to discuss and in the imagery used The Pomander seems to be in the mainstream of traditional Catholic teaching on prayer. The emphasis on the Passion and wounds of Christ as a focus of devotion, and concern for the souls in purgatory is characteristic of late medieval devotion. The problem of distractions was widely recognized and the vices of the world frequently condemned and lamented, while by the later 1520s a number of Catholic authors were to be found not only warning their readers against heretical teachings but also criticizing the sins of the Church and spirituality. Again, this author is not alone in choosing to write in English, although he defends his choice more strongly than Bonde[757B] and praises prayers made "in the mother tongue".[757C] Also, like Whitford,[758] he recognizes that many lay people will object that prayer is for contemplatives or religious who have nothing else to do, not for those occupied by business in the world.[759] But he does make some attempt to distinguish between those of royal or noble blood, who have much opportunity for private devotion, and those who must work and for whom short, silent or "iaculatory" prayers

which can be used anywhere are more appropriate.[760] The Pomander's author seems to have considered the layman's capabilities and circumstances rather more sympathetically than Whitford, while at the same time providing him with a treatise which would bear frequent reading.[761] The author owes more to the contemplative tradition - as one would perhaps expect of a Carthusian - than Whitford and other authors of treatises for religious seem to do. He does not provide orders of prayer, lists of sins or methods to overcome problems; the superficial, external type of summary list has no place and he offers no magical - mechanical solution to the problems of prayer. His concern is with causes, principles and inward intentions — "Remoue the cause and ye shall fynde remedy"—and he helps the reader to understand the cause rather than simply supplying the remedy. The Pomander is probably best described as an adaption and simplification of the kind of work traditionally written for contemplatives to meet the particular needs of intelligent, devout, but "unlearned" lay people.

The Dyurnall: for deuoute soules[762] in a sense complements the theoretical approach of The Pomander by providing a practical order of prayers, meditations and devotional readings for each day. If used without any abbreviation it would be too demanding for any except a religious, a recluse, or the leisured devout nobleman or woman who has "lyberte to frequentate the churche and other secrete places at his pleasure for his deuocion".[763] The key to the daily exercise, which the author considers essential to the pursuit of perfection, is frequent recollection, by which every waking deed, thought and inclination is recalled and judged according to the rule of perfection. Despite advice to "beware that ye be not moche anxious or pensyfe/nor longe abydynge in any heuynesse"[764] awareness of faults and lack of progress in amending them, and minute

self-analysis coupled with the remembrance of death,[765] must often have encouraged heaviness and depression. However the author does encourage the reader to "synge alwaye in your herte. O beata et gloriosa trinitas", and to give thanks for everything he enjoys, material things like food and clothing as well as the ease and leisure of his position; and he adds "it is moche better in all thynges to consydre the goodnes of god:and to prayse hym therfore/than to consydre your owne euyll/and to mourne for it".

No moment of the day is allowed to pass without some reference to God. Not only are prayers, accompanied by suitable thoughts or notes on when to use them, provided, but the activities of the day, getting dressed or eating a meal, are accompanied by devout thoughts. The prayers to be said first thing in the morning before an image of Christ include the confession and remembrance of particular sins, acknowledgement of soul's insufficiency and the determination to obey the Holy Ghost and to rest content with his estate in life. In church nothing is to be done unthinkingly of habit, but he must be always conscious of God's presence and thankful for the leisure to attend God's service. Before the meal compunction of heart, stimulated by selected daily readings from Speculum Vitae Christi, is to be encouraged as a good way to check sensual appetites. The method of reading is prescribed in detail,[766] and so is behaviour and meditation at the meal, which is to be approached "with heuynes of herte that ye be compelled for the nede of your body (the which is your contynuall enemye) to leue the seruyce of youre moste beloued spouse".[767] The suppertime meal is to be ordered in the same way, just as the evening devotions follow the pattern of the morning ones, and the intervening time, morning and afternoon is to be given to profitable

occupations, not to idleness.[768] Amid all these prescribed rules which govern the prayers, thoughts, activities and even manners of the devout soul throughout the day, there is just one hint of the closer personal relationship between God and man which is vital to sustain a programme such as this. If anything occupies the mind after an occasion of recollection:

> anone retourne in herte vnto our Lorde Ihesu/
> and tell hym all the mater/what soeuer it be.
> Yf ye be dyscontentyd make your playnt vnto hym.
> Yf ye haue done amysse/confesse forthwith to hym.
> Yf ye be in any doubte or perplexyte aske counceyll
> of hym. Yf ye be sycke or dyseased let hym be your
> Physycyon. And generally at all tymes haue hym
> syttynge on the myddyst of your herte/as your Iuge/
> your preest/your mayster and leche. 769

Unless sustained by strong faith and personal communication with God, this kind of rule - which seems to be the privileged layman's equivalent of the religious rule - would be little more than a set of external regulations, which even if they controlled the mind would not touch the heart. In a sense it is as much a definition as the lists of sins presented to the penitent or the catechist's summary of the articles of faith - a definition of how the devout soul is to order his day. Practical regulations of this kind met an obvious need, but the limitations of their scope needed to be recognized.

TREATISES FOR LAY PEOPLE

The laity's interest in religious matters and desire for instruction was recognized long before printed books were available. The lollards, for instance, sought to provide them with the Scriptures in English[770] and to offer them instructions by means of vernacular treatises, some of which like The lanterne of lyght and Wycklyffes Wycket[771] were printed during the 1530s and 1540s. From the orthodox side came compilations like Pore Caitif originally intended for a lay audience, but also popular among some of known lollard connections and among religious.[772] It contained expositions of the Creed, the "Pater" and Ten Commandments as well as a number of other pieces, some of which were subsequently printed.[773] Expositions of the Creed, "Pater", Decalogue and the numerous groups of seven were included in a large number of vernacular treatises, often as the main substance of the work or as part of its structure.[774] Books based upon these summaries of Christian belief and moral teaching I have described as belonging to the catechetical - confessional class of literature, and it was an important source of devout instruction for lay people. Another source of information and instruction was the type of book which treated of "vertues and good maners", although here secular instruction was often more important than religious teaching. But the most obvious source of devout instruction available to lay people consisted of treatises originally intended for religious or contemplatives. Even while in manuscript a number of such works succeeded in reaching a wider audience - both numerically and with regard to the type of reader - than originally intended,[775] although a number were probably written to a particular audience with the possibility of a more general one in mind.[776]

The multiple copies of printed editions speeded and extended this process of dissemination, and the insertion of brief general prefaces or the addition to the title of phrases like "very profytable for all chrysten people to rede", or "moche vtyle and profytable vnto all people", suggest the printer's awareness of the wider audience, although they made no attempt to adapt the contents for secular readers.

Many of the English works written in the catechetical - confessional tradition were intended to instruct parish priests in their duties or for the instruction of the religious, especially nuns. The floure of the commaundementes of god,[777] with its substantial collection of exempla and careful indexing, would probably have appealed more to preachers than to lay people. However, the substantial and often detailed teaching of Dives and Pauper,[778] which was also divided according to the ten commandments with ten introductory paragraphs in praise of wilful poverty, offered a storehouse of information, especially in answer to the kind of questions the intelligent layman was likely to ask. It is interesting that the author devotes a number of chapters to what seem to have been among the characteristic vices of the age: trust in witchcraft, necromancy and prognostications;[779] swearing, blasphemy and oaths; and sins of the flesh, especially lechery and adultery.[780] Among other topics which arise naturally from the Commandments he deals with Sabbath observance, with obedience in the family and in secular society, and with the general sins of lying, theft and murder, which is shown to be done not only by killing someone physically but by flattery, concealment, fraud, or failure to pay wages. Definitions and divisions of material characteristic of catechetical - confessional works are common, but the author never relapses into bare numbered lists and the whole work is enlivened by numerous illustrations and exempla drawn from

Biblical and legendary sources.[781] Under the general headings suggested by the ten commandments[782] the author covers a vast range of topics, providing much practical information, trying to show the reason for various duties, and exposing the types and degrees of numerous different sins. It is a work set very much amid the cares, pastimes and occupations of the early fifteenth century, and its main concern is the regulation of the Christian's life in this world. Although riches are condemned, it does not attempt to draw men out of the world into the cloister or the recluse's cell.

Books of good manners often included a certain amount of moral-devotional matter although their main substance was more concerned with the government of state and church. They sought to add conventional Christian teaching to the kind of moral - political treatises produced by such classical authors as Xenophon, Cicero and Plutarch, or they can be seen as in some ways the forerunners of humanist treatises like Sir Thomas Elyot's Boke named the gouernour,[783] Castiglione's The Courtier or Machiavelli's The Prince. As the titles suggest these conduct books were primarily directed to the ruling classes. Thus Christine Du Castel's The body of polycy[784] is divided into three parts: "The fyrst party is adressed to prynces. The seconde to knyghtes and nobles: and the thyrde to the vnyuersal people". Similarly the central sections of Legrand's Boke of good maners[785] deal respectively with the duties of prelates and clerks, with the responsibilities of princes and secular rulers and with "the state of the commonaltye". The first and last books of Legrand's work contain traditional moral-devotional matter. The first discusses the virtues of humility, abstinence, charity, benevolence, diligence and liberality, and some of the opposing sins: pride, envy,

lechery, negligence and avarice; the last contains representative selections from the contemptus mundi tradition and literature about death. Books IV and V were printed separately by Robert Wyer during the 1530s as A lytell necessarye Treatyse/the whiche speketh of the estate of the Comonalte and of the people.[786] The fourth book details the duties of representative "estates": rich and poor, young and old, married people with a family to govern and those vowed to celibacy. It concludes with chapters addressed to merchants on the subjects of usury,[787] and it goes on to reflect that this earthly life is a pilgrimage, a temporary exile in a strange country, traditional ideas which lead naturally into the topics of the final book. If Wyer's selection represents a reasoned choice,[788] it looks as though he felt that the contents of book IV were better suited to the type of audience likely to buy his books: that his audience was more likely to be drawn from the "vnyersal people" than the nobles and knights who had patronized Caxton.[789] Whereas earlier authors were generally content to recognize that there were various degrees and estates in society, to place them in an ordered hierarchy and to encourage everyone to rest content with his lot, Protestant authors like Thomas Becon[790] and his Puritan successors,[791] without disturbing the hierarchy, tended to focus their attention on a wider range of callings, especially the duties of the middle and lower classes.

However, the conduct books of the late fifteenth - early sixteenth century were not exclusively directed at the noble and ruling classes. The Shepherds' Calendar[792] offered a mixture of practical, secular information and elementary religious instruction to "them that be no clerks" to enable them to live long, whole and joyously in both body and soul. The

latter part of the Calendar offered practical teaching on the body and health of man, astrology and the natural world; the first part presents an amalgam of various elements of popular religious literature. The calendar, preceded by a moralization of the twelve ages of man, had an obvious practical use and was also a standard item in most Horae. Trees of vices and of virtues[793] were to be found in a number of moral treatises, and they offered a convenient form in which to list definitions and examples of virtues and sins, although the detail of the branches of the tree of vices seems a little excessive for a simple audience.[794] The brief practical remedies offered for venial and deadly sins summarize the Church's standard teaching on confession, while the material in Chapter VI — expositions of the Lord's prayer and Ave, the declaration of the Apostle's Creed, the Decalogue (in verse) and the five commandments of the Church - where man-made regulations are elevated to the level of divine precepts - is characteristic of the contents of confessional - catechetical books. The teaching of chapter VIII does not fit so readily into any one category. It is concerned to impart the knowledge necessary for salvation, that shepherds and simple people may learn to know themselves and to know God. Apart from the articles of belief etc. given in chapter VI, a man should know his vocation, how to do his job, and he should be able to judge as far as man can, whether or not he is in a state of grace.[795] Three ways are recommended by which the lay man may learn to know God:[796] by contemplating His nature - His riches, power, worthiness, nobility and especially His "sovereign joy"; by considering His works in the glory of creation; and thirdly in thanking God for all the benefits He has given man, especially in his creation as a reasonable being made in God's

image,[797] in his redemption by the Passion of Christ, and for his Christian calling with its promise of Paradise to those who are faithful. The note of praise and thanksgiving sounded in this section reflects man's due response to His Creator. Finally man must know himself, and interestingly this section is cast in the form of a dialogue between a master shepherd and a simple shepherd whose questions and answers make up a kind of catechism. By this means the contrast between man's vile, physical body and his divine soul is made clear, as is his obligation to make the body serve the soul:

> My body is come of abominable slime, and is a sack full of dirt and filth, and meat for worms, and [my] beginning was vile, my life is pain, labour, fear, and subjection of death, and mine end shall be woeful [perilous and in tears]. But my soul is created of God nobly and worthily to His image and semblance, after the angels the most fair and perfect of all creatures; and by baptism and by faith is made His daughter, His spouse, His heir of His realm that is Paradise, and for her noblesse and dignity ought to be lady and my body as servant ought to obey her. For reason hath ordained and will that it be so. 798.

It would be hard to find a clearer statement of a view so generally assumed in late medieval devotional literature. To this view of man is added the concept of the baptized Christian man, who must follow Christ in six things: with a clean conscience, initially in baptism and subsequently by contrition; in the virtues of humility, compassion and patience in adversity and Judgement of Christ and finally in the desire to eschew sin, in awareness of the transitoriness of this world's goods and in the hope that he will merit the joys of Paradise. Although there is nothing particularly original in this chapter, its clarity and brevity of exposition are notable.

To this instruction on the faith and on the knowledge of God and man necessary to a Christian is added a technically difficult and complex chapter (xxxvii) on the essential and accidental merits of prayers and masses for the satisfaction of sin, for those still alive and for souls in purgatory. The second half of the chapter, which recommends four "keys" - prayer, the intercession of saints, almsdeeds and fasting - by which souls in purgatory are delivered, is not quite so technical but its Latinate vocabulary and scriptural proofs still have a scholastic flavour. Remembrance of the souls in purgatory was encouraged by many devout treatise writers,[799] but such a technical discussion is incongruous in a popular work. More appropriate are the imaginative poems on death, judgement and hell found in chapters ix, x, xxxvi, and xxxviii, or the allegorical exposition of man's life in terms of the risks faced by a ship at sea in chapter vii, which is later supplemented by another verse:

> O mortal creatures sailing in the waves of misery
> Avail the sail of your conscience impure,
> Flee from the perils of this unsteadfast wherry;
> Drive to the haven of charity most sure,
> And cast the anchor of true confession,
> Fastened with the great cable of contrition clean.
> Wind up the merchandise of whole satisfaction,
> Which of true customers shall be overseen
> And brought to the warehouse of perfection..... 800

A detailed description of the pains of hell,[801] accompanied by illustrations which are an important element of the earlier editions of The Shepherds' Calendar, offers a chance to describe the seven deadly sins as well as warning the reader of the punishments they will receive. Just as the pains of hell were often described or referred to in devotional treatises, so it is appropriate that the one devotional exercise recommended should take the form of a meditation on Christ's

Passion, divided according to the canonical hours.[802] Many of the most common moral (trees of vices and virtues), catechetical (chapter vi) and devotional (meditation on the Passion and the pains of hell) topics of late medieval devout treatises are included in the patchwork compendium of The Shepherds' Calendar, but because they are confined within brief separate chapters they are treated more concisely than usual with a considerable gain in clarity. The mixed contents of the book also allows greater variety of expression and approach than is usually found; verse and prose are used, imaginative description and the statement of practical facts complement one another. ~~The religious content of the Calendar presents a representative selection of the most common topics of late medieval devotion.~~

It is notable that in a period when the superiority of the religious life was widely assumed, works written in the catechetical-confessional tradition were for the most part neutral in this respect. This is at least partly the result of their determination to give comprehensive instruction on all of the ten commandments, the seven deadly sins and as many other topics as possible. It is their very generality which makes them neutral; as soon as they become more particular, focusing on particular sins or difficulties, such as Bonde's Deuoute Epystle on scrupulosity, the state of life of the person addressed becomes important and the division between religious and laymen appears. The conduct book, concerned with the duties of various estates and degrees, with matters of general morality and perhaps some brief religious instruction, was essentially a secular work unless it was adapted for a particular audience, such as a group of religious

sisters. Many of the elementary general treatises written for religious in fact contained a high proportion of general moral and religious instruction which could be used by lay people, provided they disregarded the particular precepts which applied only to religious. It was not so much general instruction on the articles of belief, various types of sin, God's commandments or other aspects of morality that the layman stood in need of, as the particular principles made relevant to those who followed secular occupations. The first authors to pay attention to the specific needs and difficulties of lay people seem to have been religious: Walter Hilton, the Carthusian author of The Pomander of Prayer, and Richard Whitford of Syon. All of them wrote in the contemplative - religious tradition, but they made some attempt to adapt traditional teaching to a secular audience.

Hilton's Deuout boke...to a deuout man in temporall estate how he sholde rule hym was the earliest. It was circulated in several manuscript versions, usually in association with the Scala Perfectionis, to which it was added as a separable book in most of the printed editions from 1494 onwards;[804] it does not seem to have become as independent as The Golden Epistle.[805] The work falls into two parts: the first provides an exposition of the three lives, active, contemplative and the "meddled" life which is the main subject of the work; the second part offers more practical advice, giving various topics of meditation and outlining some common dangers of devotion. Since the author accepts the superiority of the contemplative life for those who have no social responsibilities,[806] it is not surprising to find many echoes of the contemplative tradition in this book. For instance, the

familiar figures of Martha and Mary, Lia and Rachel the wives of Jacob, are used to illustrate the characteristics of the active and the contemplative life.[807] The warnings given towards the end—against trying to stir up or keep feelings of devotion roused by contemplation of Christ's manhood;[808] against presumptuous curiosity about ghostly matters[809] or the expectation of a sudden growth in grace—[810] echo those of other contemplative authors. More fundamental to the religious-contemplative tradition is the other-worldly direction in which the motivating desire draws the soul. Here the desire is described as "noþing but a loþing of þis worldly blisse & of al fleschli lyking in þin herte, & [a] quemeful longyng wiþ a tristi yerngyng to heuenly ioye & endeles blis".[811] The same direction is taken by the religious who would follow the way of perfection and by the contemplative. The desire which the reader is encouraged to nourish - in a characteristically vivid but simple image Hilton talks of the fire of his love for God being fed by small sticks of good works and acts of devotion[812] - is the same as the yearning felt by the contemplative[813] but is limited by the circumstances of the meddled life. What is novel about this work is not its exposition of the three lives, nor its advice on suitable topics of meditation,[814] but its refusal to allow this particular man to follow the contemplative life because to do so would be to abandon his social responsibilities.

Hilton is writing to a man whose social position is clearly defined.[815] In recommending to him the meddled life he raises its status by reference to the example of Christ's life.[816] He dwells on the responsibility of those who govern - households, estates, nation or church - for their even-Christian. In contrast to the solitary way of the contemplative, this man must balance his spiritual and

devotional activities with his social responsibilities and necessary worldly business. Hilton develops the Pauline figure of the body of Christ[817] into a vivid physical image - the limbs of the body, which are all the Christian men who are part of holy Church, are not to be left naked and uncared for while the head which is Christ receives all the worship and attention; "þou makest þe to cus his mouþe be deuocion of gostly preyere, but þou tredest vpon his feet & defoulest hem, in as muche as þou wolt not tende to hem for necclygence of þi-self of whuche þou hast take cure".[818] In Hilton the figure of the body remains metaphorical, whereas the author of the Stimulus Amoris, to convey how a man in active life may yet have contemplation of Jesus, particularizes the image, showing how Christ is served in helping poor men, or those in prison.[819] Indeed, far from being a hindrance to devotion these outward, active works can nourish the flame of desire for God, as small sticks feed a fire. Against the tendency to emphasize the vertical dimension of devotion and to focus on spiritual works and the contemplation of God and Christ without relating these themes to the deeds of mercy and other good works which express the horizontal dimension, man's involvement with his even-Christian in society, Hilton shows his reader how to relate the two and how, by adopting a common-sense, flexible approach, they can be balanced.[820] As far as the practical expression of this principle of the meddled life is concerned, Hilton will only advise and suggest; he refuses to provide a daily rule like the Dyurnall:for deuoute soules:

> a luitel I schal telle þe, nought þat þou schalt vse þe same forme al-wei as I say, but þat þou schalt haue þerbi, ȝif ned be, sum wissyng for to rule þe in þin ocupacion. For I may not, ne I can not, telle þe fulli what is best euer to þe for to vse. 821.

The 1530s saw a considerable increase in books specifically addressed to or likely to appeal to lay people[822] and, especially in the latter half of the decade, a corresponding decrease in the number of works addressed to religious or recluses.[823] Yet it was a religious, Richard Whitford of Syon, who seems to have been the most popular devotional author of the 1530s.[824] His reputation was established by A Werke for Householders, the earliest of his works to be printed.[825] Like Hilton's book "to a deuoute man in temporall estate", and like many conduct books, "The mater is directed principally vnto householders/ or vnto them that haue guydyng and gouernaunce of any company/for an ordre to be kepte/bothe in them selfe/and in them that they hane (sic) in rule and charge".[826] A substantial proportion of the contents is made up of familiar devotional or catechetical material. The opening sounds a note of warning as it reminds the reader of the inevitability of death,[827] the uncertainty of its manner or time of coming,[828] of the Judgement which the naked soul must face,[829] and of the eternal joy or everlasting pain and sorrow which will follow. Remembrance of such themes was widely accepted as profitable to the soul, as a deterrent to sin and an encouragement to live well, which is the purpose of such a "customable course of good and profytable exercise" as Whitford proceeds to give.

He begins with a form of private devotion to be used by the individual morning and evening. Having made sure that his reader knows how to make the sign of the cross "with your thombe", "from your head vnto your fete/and from the lefte shulder vnto the ryght", the morning devotion is basically an act of dedication, which ratifies the promise

~~the promise~~ made in baptism[830] and seeks to do God's will. The evening devotion is mainly confessional, reckoning up the "qualytes and quantytes of the synne" committed that day. Objections to the length or the conspicuousness of such devotions are brushed aside.[831] To these devotions he adds a recollection of the life of Christ - probably the most common topic of late medieval devotion although it is rarely given in such a brief, practical form.[832]

The greater part of the work, however, is concerned with public teaching rather than private devotion and Whitford suggests:

> it shulde also be a good pastyme & moche meritorious: for you that can rede/to gather your neyghbours aboute you on the holy day/specially the yong sorte and rede to them this poore lesson. For therin bene suche thynges as they ben bounde to knowe....[833]

His teaching is based on the familiar contents of the catechetical tradition - Pater, Ave, Creed, ten commandments and very briefly the seven sins, the five wits and the seven deeds of mercy - and it is followed by a justification of the practice of auricular confession and instruction on how to confess.[834] It is the householder's responsibility to see that his children and servants can say at least the Pater, Ave and Creed. Whitford suggests that they be read in the form he provides once a day at meal times and that once a week the householder should hear each individual recite them to him in private. The idea of edifying readings at meal-times is presumably derived from monastic practice, and it is hard to tell whether the custom was followed with any success in a secular household, but his comments on the advantage of private instruction and examination, especially for older people who would either never learn it or quickly

forget it, show a shrewd awareness of human nature.

The ten commandments form the basis of his more general moral teaching, which concentrates particularly on contemporary abuses and the responsibilities of the householder. The first commandment allows the author to warn against resort to "wysemen or wysewomen" and against charms, especially those which include unlawful use of the sign of the cross.[835] The second attacks the habit of swearing, which Whitford sees as "one of the greate causes of all these sodeyne plages amonge men and beastes/as pestilence/pockes/swetynges/and moryns/ with suche other",[836] the implication being that blasphemy like unworthy reception of the Sacrament of the Altar is of more than personal significance.[837] The only lawful oath is that sworn in a due place before lawful authority such as a judge, and three short narrations,[838] each personally documented to emphasize their veracity,[839] illustrate the fate of swearers. He then goes on to discuss the dangers of lying. His advice on Sunday observances - some of which was supported by official legislation[840] - is detailed, practical and very demanding, especially for the householder who is expected to set a good example, to see that his household behaves well at church; "And charge them also to kepe theyr syght in the churche close vpon theyr bokes or bedes".[841] Directions are also given about the points in the mass when people are expected to stand - another instance of the importance attached to correct external behaviour.[842] In the afternoon he must see that his charges do not indulge in such pastimes as bear-baiting, cards, "whiche more properly may be called lose tymes than pastymes", nor resort to the tavern, nor keep wanton company. Rather

the sexes must be kept apart, they must only go where they can be easily recalled and as many as possible should attend the sermon if there is one. Whitford also recommends the reading of "good englysshe bokes" including his own to as many people as can be gathered together, and works of mercy to relieve the poor and needy.[843]

The second table of the commandments emphasizes the Christian's duty to his neighbour. The emphasis in this section falls on what is undoubtedly Whitford's main contribution to the development of devotional treatises for lay people, the expression of the Christian faith within the family. Parents, even when aged, are to be served and cared for, not despised; "For as the yce in the frost doth melte by the clere sonne beames/so shal your synnes by your duety done vnto your parentes be washed and clene losed and forgyuen".[844] Children must be taught to honour their parents, and Whitford gives a form of blessing which they should use to their parents every evening, being compelled to do so by force or being punished by having to dine alone on bread and water if they refuse. Earlier there is some very sound advice about how to punish a child, which must always be done in charity with the intention of reforming the child, never in anger for vengeance. Particular care must be taken in bringing up children, and because they imitate what they hear and see the company they keep is of great importance. Sins like theft must be dealt with while they are still young and a rhyme is provided for their edification:

> If I lye/backbyte or stele.
> If I curse/scorne/mocke or swere.
> If I chyde/fyght/stryue/or threte
> Than I am worthy to be bete
> Good mother:or maistres myne
> If any of these nyne:

I trespas to your knowynge
With a new rodde and a fyne
Erly naked/before I dyne:
Amende me with a scourgynge. 845

Rather more positive teaching is given to them in a paraphrase of the precepts of Ecclesiasticus III and in the general counsel that they should do their duty meekly, the higher their estate the meeker should their service be, and "as sone as they can speke" they should be taught the Pater and other articles of belief. Like Erasmus,[846] Whitford clearly believes that the inculcation of good Christian attitudes cannot begin too early. Although it is not an original work, at least as far as the content of its teaching is concerned, the Werke for housholders is very significant in that it makes the secular home rather than the cloister or recluse's cell the setting for its devotional teaching.

As if to emphasize this domestic orientation, A short monycyon, or counsayle of the cure & gouernaunce of a housholde by Bernard Sylvester was included at the end of the Werke, as well as being published separately.[847] It is a collection of maxims,[848] some of them proverbial,[849] on various domestic matters such as the relationship between the householder and his wife,[850] his neighbours and his servants, the importance of living within one's income, of temperate habits of food, drink and dress and not wasting money on expensive weddings, wars or prodigals nor having recourse to usury. Unlike Whitford's Werke, which sets the householder's responsibility towards his family and servants in the context of his duty towards God, this treatise is primarily secular in orientation. Despite several biblical echoes,[851] and advice familiar from ars moriendi treatises, such as the importance of making a will[852] and that "the moste sure waye, to dye well/is will to lyue",[853] there is little reference to spiritual things and God is

hardly mentioned. This same piece by Bernard Silvester also occurs at the end of A glasse for housholders,[854] which, like Whitford's Werke for housholders, deals with the attitudes and duties of the housholder (towards riches, in buying and selling, regarding his relationship with his elders, wife and servants and the bringing up of children, to which considerable space is devoted) in the context of his obligations to God. Matters of general moral-religious importance were also included at the end of Fitzherbert's practical Boke of Husbandry,[855] while the virtues of good husbandry were extolled at some length in Xenophons treatise of householde,[856] a philosophical dialogue which ranged over matters such as the nature of various goods and the purpose of marriage as well as more practical aspects of household management. Whether they were philosophical, neutral or emphatically Christian in their general approach, these treatises were intended to help the householder to order his life. Up to about 1530 conduct books offering advice on how to live well had for the most part been directed to the nobility or to religious. The great popularity of Whitford's Werke for Housholders, and the appearance of other treatises specifically addressed to householders at about the same time, suggests the emergence of a new class of reader, at least so far as devotional writers were concerned. In subsequent decades, of course, the domestic household displaced the cloister and recluse's cell as the setting generally assumed by devotional authors.

Two vices which seem to have been widespread among lay people were swearing and gaming. Warnings against blasphemy occur in many sermons[857] and devout treatises.[858] It was a direct contradiction

of the second commandment, "yt no person shulde take ye name of god in vayne"[859] and it was particularly regarded as "dismembrynge þe blissed bodie of Crist".[860] All sins, because they are against the will of God and a denial of Christ's redeeming work, are regarded as a re-crucifying of Christ:

> The wounde of synne to me is more passyon
> Than the wounde of my syde for the redempcyon,

laments Christ in Hawes' Conuersyon of swerers, and He continues:

> With my blody woundes I dyde your charte seale
> Why do you tere it/why do ye breke it so
> Syth it to you is the eternall heale
> And the releace of euerlastynge wo
> Beholde this lettre with the prynte also
> Of myn owne seale by perfyte portrayture
> Prynte it in mynde and yer shall helthe recure. 861

There is a particularly close connection between this idea and the sin of blasphemy, which commonly used oaths invoking parts of Christ's body or His wounds. For example, "mayster Baryngton" of Stondon, cited by Whitford, uses "By goddes blode....goddes passyon/goddes woundes/goddes flesshe goddes nayles", and another "dyd vse to swere for his commune othe/by the bones of god or by goddes bones";[862] and both were openly punished by a death which reflected their oaths, the one bleeding to death in a horrible manner, and the flesh of the other splitting open to expose his bones.[863] Thus Christ in Hawes' Conuersyon of swerers, addresses the princes of the world:

> Beholde your seruauntes how they do tere me
> By cruell othes now pvon (sic) euery syde....
>
> ....Beholde my body with blody proppes endewed
> Within your realmes nowe torne so pyteously
> Towsed and tugged with othes cruelly
> Some my heed some myn armes and face
> Some my herte do all to rente and race
>
> They newe agayne do hange me on the rode
> They tere my sydes and are nothynge dysmayde
> My woundes they open and deuoure my blode...864

It is characteristic of the later middle ages that blasphemous oaths should have been translated into physical terms and related to the dominant focus of devotion, the Passion of Christ.[865] Yet, although Thomas Becon's Inuectyue agenst the moost wicked & detestable vyce of swearing[866] dwells on the legal aspects of swearing, the divine and human precepts against it, the question of perjury and of lawful oaths, he does not neglect to give contemporary, generalized examples of God's punishment of blasphemers and to threaten similar plagues as a result of God's wrath if swearing does not cease.[867] Also, his language echoes the idea of oaths doing physical injury to Christ's Person:

> howe is God rent and torne by blasphemous othes not only among men in bargayngynge, byeng and sellyng, choppyng and chaungyng.&c.but also in playeng & ydle matters?...Howe wyll the carder teare God on peces, rather than he wyll loose the profyt of one carde? [868]

The association between blasphemy and gaming was widely recognized. For instance, in The churche of yuell men & women,[869] among the fifteen spears that Lucifer gives to players of cards and dice with which to make war on Christ, the fifth is that gaming "is the fountayne of all blasphemies & of all forsweringes".[870] The whole work is an elaborate attack on various aspects of gaming under the figure of an anti-Church, whose head is Lucifer. The first part deals with the form of this diabolical church, its foundation, history and services - whose satirical inversion of the masses of the Catholic Church seems to foreshadow the polemics of Protestant authors.[871] The second part depicts the evils which proceed from gaming gathered under fifteen headings - the social consequences of these evils are noted as well as their moral and spiritual significance. The third part considers the different types of people -

the player's kinsmen, wife and children, those who allow their premises to be used for gaming, those who help to supply or make cards or dice and those who watch such games - all of whom will merit damnation for their contact with gamesters. At the end is added an example of some laws made against gaming and the opinions of several doctors of the Church on the subject. While blasphemy was an obvious contradiction of the law of God there was no specific condemnation of gaming to be found in the Bible. However, the implications of the dividing of Christ's robe by casting lots were not neglected.[872] The author of this treatise also associates gaming with denial of the first two commandments, for gamesters accept the judgement of dice or cards, "whiche seeth nat/hereth nat/nor speketh nat"[873] and gives them more honour "than he dothe to the humanyte of our lorde/for often at the play he is vsurped and blasphemed".[874] Although blasphemy is primarily a sin against God it was associated with a group of social vices - such as gaming, drinking, frequenting taverns or even following the extremes of fashion - which if not intrinsically evil, were certain to lead to sin. They receive comparatively little attention in the devout treatises circulating before 1530, since most of these were intended for religious audiences, but in some treatises like The churche of yuell men & women or The .ix. Drunkardes[875] particular vices received separate treatment, and all were condemned in parish sermons.[876]

The Werke for housholders was the only one of Whitford's treatises to be specifically addressed to a secular audience, but, apart from The Pype or Tonne, his other works were sufficiently neutral to have been used by lay people as well as the religious for whom the Dayly

exercyse and experyence of dethe[877] and the Dyuers holy instrucyons[878] were originally written. Also, the success of the Werke for housholders probably encouraged secular readers to try his other books. Dyuers holy instrucyons, printed in 1541, was the last of his works to appear. It consists of four different pieces, three of them being translations, which between them cover many aspects of the Christian life. The first item, on patience, is also the longest and the only one which seems to be an original composition. It begins by contrasting wilful and natural patience in a manner similar to the more philosophical approach adopted by the humanist author Thomas Lupset, and although much of what Whitford says has an obvious practical application, it is not primarily a practical treatise. The humanistic character of the piece is emphasized by an unusually varied selection of authorities from Prudentius' Psychomachia and St. John Climacus De triginta gradibus scale celestis[879] to such classical authors as Solon, Cato, Seneca, Quintilian, Macrobius and Valerius Maximus and a number of English proverbs.[880]

Having defined the subject by contrasting natural patience with that which is attained by doctrine and labour, Whitford goes on to define meritorious patience as

> "a myght.power.strength and vertue of the soule, wherby we may (with grace, and good wyl) represse, restreyne, rebate, and withdrawe, all inordinate passions & mouynges whervnto we be stered, prouoked and moued, by any of our enimies, the dyule, the worlde, or the flesh. And wherby we do gladly with euen mynde and good wyll:suffre continually, and bere.For ye loue of God, and saluacion of our soules: all aduersites troubles, paynes, and yuels....'

These various definitions are then gathered together in a chapter on "the ymage and byhauour of pacience", which makes use of Prudentius' picture of Patience doing battle with Ire. The next seven chapters

(vi - xii) discuss the necessity and value of patience with relation to the getting and keeping of worldly goods, of a healthy body and of a good name. Patience is also seen as valuable to the soul, for by its virtues are won, retained and perfected. Whitford goes on to consider occasions on which God, the Devil, another man or a man's own sensuality may try his patience; various biblical examples are given and the different aspects of patience in particular circumstances are noted: thus patience may appear as reverence to a superior or as severity in the correction of an inferior.[881] In order to show patience, it must first be acquired by knowing what it is and why it is considered valuable - the contents of the first thirteen chapters - and by exercising it:

> The vertue of pacience....is neuer proued in prosperite, but in the contrarie yt is aduersite. For as golde & syluer be tried & fyned in the fyre, so be the disciples of pacience tried & taught in trouble, and aduersite. Aduersite than trouble & noyance is the mater wherin pacience is lerned & gotyne. 882

With this quotation from St.Gregory's Moralia and with the examples of patience among worldly men, among spiritual people - especially Job, - and the example of Christ's life and teaching given in the following chapters, Whitford's work may be compared with various tribulation treatises.[883] But he goes further than most tribulation treatises by relating man's patient endurance of adversity to the sinful state of man[884] and to the atoning work of Christ,[885] and not merely to the expectation of a heavenly reward.[886]

In its sense of structure and its comprehensive view of the subject this treatise on patience marks a considerable advance on the usual late medieval treatment of tribulation or the virtues. With the possible exception of chapter xix, which recapitulates the "commodites

of patience", the material is disposed into reasonable groups rather than arbitrarily numbered divisions, and there is some sense of progression (from definition to reward, to circumstances, to exercise and examples, to a theological conclusion) which reduces and helps to control repetition. Thus, although there is no logically progressive argument, the structure is closer to the work of a humanist like Lupset than to The.xii.profytes of tribulacyon. The author also achieves a varied but well balanced approach to his subject: the philosophical discussion of the nature of patience is balanced by an unusually clear theological explanation of works and merits and the doctrine of the Atonement. The physical origins and benefits of patience are balanced by spiritual examples and rewards; proverbial and classical authorities are complemented by numerous biblical references and stories from Vitae Patrum, and amid philosophical and theological exposition there is still room to answer practical questions,[887] and to provide a little descriptive colour.[888]

The three remaining works which make up the Dyuers holy instrucyons are all translations. The first deals with seven impediments which hinder the soul's advancement in the way of perfection, to which are added four things which are better forgotten. It seems to have been originally written for religious,[889] and although Whitford has made some alterations to cater for a more general audience[890] this bias remains.[891] Most of the impediments listed here are noted in many works addressed to contemplatives or religious. For instance, Hilton and Rolle[892] both condemn the lack of discretion (the subject of the third impediment), which leads people to "take vpon them greater labours then theyr disposicion, and nature may bere. And so do many persons fall

into the dekey of bodyly strength, and into great sekenes, and diseases... & want of wytte, and wexe fantasticall melancholy, & some starke madde, or folyshe. And so nother do they profete vnto god, nor yet vnto them selfe, ne theyr neyghbour".[893] Too much talk, the fourth impediment, is more obviously a religious impediment than a secular one,[894] and inordinate love of one's own body, which can lead to pusillanimity and sloth, the opposite of the ascetic ideal of perfection, is condemned in many religious - contemplative works.[895] More basic than this reluctance to hurt the body is a general lack of desire to labour in the way of perfection, the lack of single purpose to follow Christ, or a wavering will.[896] These weaknesses encourage pride and presumption, as a person assumes he is already perfect, worldly vanities draw the soul away from God and leave him unable to withstand temptation. The four "virtues" better forgotten, which are added to the impediments, continue in the same vein, warning men against the kind of things which, if they do not cause actual sin, are likely to lead to loss of virtue. Thus, except to counter scrupulosity or despair, a man should not think of his virtues lest he fall into pride or vain glory, nor should he derive any pleasure from the remembrance of his past sins. He is both to forgive and to forget any wrong done to him, and finally, while recollections of God's goodness and His benefits to mankind are good, it is perilous to seek to penetrate the hidden mysteries of God:

> For hit is not necessarie for the, to se with thyne eyes or outwarde syght nor to perceyue by thy reason those thynges that be hydde from the. Hyt is not good therfore:that man shuld rol and tumble in hys thought, and mynde the hygh mysteries of fayth, as (by example) to ymagyne, or study:howe good [sic] is .iii.and one. Howe a virgyn myght conceyue, and bere a chylde, and yet euer remayne a virgyn. Howe Christe a very naturall man: maye be conteyned in so small a rowme as ye hoste is... 897.

Whitford, like A Kempis[898] and other authors,[899] declares that the Christian's duty is not to question nor to understand but to believe what God teaches through the Church and Holy Scripture. Although the negative form in which these pieces are cast is somewhat unusual, the content is familiar enough, and there are many parallels - explicit and implicit - to be found, especially in more contemplative works such as Hilton's Scala Perfectionis or A Kempis' De Imitatione Christi.

A number of these topics recur in "An instrucyon to auoyde and eschewe vices and folowe good maners", Whitford's translation of the Counsels attributed to St. Isidore. Headings such as: Of constancy of mind, Of patience in adversity, Of custody or keeping of the mouth, Of curiosity, suggests the overlap between this and the preceding piece. This collection of maxims on various moral and religious topics had already circulated widely[900] before they were printed. In addition to Whitford's version, which by his own admission was a free one,[901] there was another printed version, perhaps by Thomas Lupset, since it appears among his collected works,[902] as well as in two separate editions.[903] Not only does Whitford alter many of the headings,[904] augumenting some sections[905] and omitting others, but on the basis of a hint given in the final section on "Despite of the World" he adds a whole new and lengthy section "Of almes dede". The general effect of his alterations is to produce a more connected treatise. He lengthens the short, gnomic sentences, and wherever possible unifies a section by limiting its range of reference[906] or the diversity of its imagery,[907] and he sometimes links sections together.[908] Occasionally he converts a general topic into a more specific one, so that on Curiosity, for instance, he gives a general warning against seeking to know what is hidden and

then develops a specific attack on the obscurity of meaning resulting from bad style.[909]

Not unrelated to the general moral-religious teaching of the Counsels were two alphabets attributed to St. Bonaventura which Whitford translated.[910] Although claimed as "moche necessarie & profytable vnto all christians specyally vnto relygous persons" the religious interest in some articles such as "Diligence" or in the insistence on the virtue of poverty, does not limit the general appeal of the whole alphabet. Whereas Isidore's Counsels provided wise-sounding maxims about various topics the longer alphabet offered a set of definitions. Articles such as Amity, Benignity, Custody; Humility, Intention, Knowledge, Labour are briefly explained and where appropriate recommended to the reader. The three most difficult letters of the alphabet, given as Xpe, Ymnes and Zachye require more ingenuity, and etymological and allegorical interpretation is introduced so that edification may be drawn from these subjects. Between them the maxims of the Counsels and the definitions of the longer alphabet probably appealed most to general audiences of limited education, because they offered what seemed to be comprehensive and authoritative summaries of the Christian life. But even so the claims made for the longer alphabet seem far greater than its contents merit.[911] The shorter alphabet, a series of rhyming couplets of general moral/religious exhortation, was not only intended to be edifying, but it also served a more utilitarian purpose, for once learned by heart "you may the [the] better spell and do togyther/and so more redyly red". Another example of the moral application of the alphabet - there were also ABC poems on the Passion,[912] both ideas being ultimately derived, it seems, from the

form of horn books[913] - was to be found in The Maydens Crosserewe.[914] Following the poet's acknowledgement of his debt to Lydgate[915] and a conventional dream setting,[916] the dreamer finds himself before a maid who laments that "My flowrynge age I spent in vanyte", that she did not heed Dame Reason but allowed herself to be ruled by three enemies, the world, the flesh and the Devil. After this introduction the alphabet[917] is formed by the first letter of each stanza, with the opening word repeated at the beginning of each subsequent line. Among the vices detailed, the seven deadly sins, especially sins of the flesh, idleness, trust in riches, heedlessness of the future and all types of worldly vanity, are condemned more than once; and the virtues of prudence, reason, patience in adversity and obedience to "thy prynce" are commended. Above all man should love and serve God and remember His goodness and "...in tyme nowe take the gyfte of grace". The verses are competently handled,[918] and the lament form is more interesting than the simple rhymed form of the shorter alphabet. In the four concluding stanzas the maid again bewails the time lost in thraldom to the world, the flesh and the Devil:

> These thre me fettered in a deadly place
> Tyll I was helpt out by good dame grace
> ¶ Whiche me hath set in his garden grene
> Vnder this olyue tre to ȝ synge ryght swetely
> Amyddes this arber so ryght fayre and shene
> Gyuynge great lawdes vnto God almyghty...919

With this the poet is awakened by a cock-crow, and reflecting upon his vision he begins to write it down. The piece is a pleasing summary of a number of commonplace moral-religious maxims, and within the conventions of this type of verse the happy ending is acceptable, although no account is given of the maid's conversion from her sinful life.

The final piece included in the Dyuers holy instrucyons is Whitford's translation of a sermon attributed to St. John Chrysostom against what seems to have been a widespread vice, especially amongst religious, backbiting or slander.[920] It had been used in a sermon "that I spake vnto ye people yeres ago" and "one of my brether" had suggested its inclusion among the Instrucyons "bycause hyt doth agre with some artycles therin conteyned". It is a straightforward account of the different forms of backbiting, the evil it does, the way in which backbiters should be treated and if possible reformed. Thus it defines the problem and offers positive practical advice for its solution. The verse piece Of euyll tonges[921] although indifferent as verse is a strong warning against "yll tonges", a warning that is hammered out by the repetition of the last line of each group of five stanzas.[922] The piece can be regarded as an elaboration of the statement in the Epistle of James that "the tongue...is a restless evil, it is full of deadly poison",[923] as one verse puts it:

> Speke of salpeter arsnek or ony poyson mortal
> The fyre of hel the blod of serpentes venymous
> ye fynde none so peryllous amonge them al
> As is the euyll tonge to them that be vertuous.

The verse dwells on the destructive powers of slander in every sphere of life, but particularly its ability to destroy the virtuous or their good reputation, "that thynge whiche yt deuel can not brynge aboute/An yll tonge wyl parforme". But with the exception of the final stanza which commends the person "that can kepe his tonge", Of euyll tonges is content to list the evils of slander; it offers no practical advice on how to behave towards a slanderer or how to reform him.

Although several of Whitford's works were written "many yeres ago"[924] and two works specifically for religious were published before 1530,[925]

the period of his greatest popularity was between 1530 and 1541. Of his books printed during that decade one, The Pype or Tonne, addressed to a "Good deuout religious daughter", was of primarily religious interest and two others, of more general application, A dayly exercyse and Dyuers holy instrucyons, seem to have been written "at the request of the reuerende Mother Dame Elizabeth Gybs", Abbess of Syon.[926] In writing such works for, or at least at the request of, the nuns of Syon, Whitford, himself a religious, was continuing the traditions of his medieval predecessors, most of whom were also in orders or religious, and who wrote devotional treatises in English very often for religious sisters. But Whitford was no out-dated reactionary: it is clear from the work of other authors - from Syon Abbey[927] and elsewhere[928] - that medieval traditions were still very much alive in the early 1530s, new books were written on traditional topics and old ones reprinted.[929] His most successful book, A werke for housholders, was, like Erasmus' Enchiridion, originally sent to "a priuate persone and speciall frende", and subsequently came ~~back~~ to the notice "of certeine deuout persones" who, finding it "edicatyue and profitable", wished to make it public. This may be no more than Whitford's version of the familiar medieval humility formula,[930] or it may record the fulfilment of an actual request from someone who had "the guidyng or gouernaunce " of a household - requests of this nature from lay people were common enough. His time at Cambridge, in attendance on William Blount, Lord Mountjoy, and in Bishop Richard Foxe's household at Winchester, would have given him experience of many different types of household. The genesis, subject-matter and original audience of the majority of his books are not sufficiently distinctive to explain his popularity.

It seems to me that the popularity of his other books[931] during the 1530s was largely dependent on the success of A werke for housholders, which was reprinted ten times between 1530 and 1537. Although a number of historians have noted Whitford's popularity,[932] there seems to have been little attempt made to discover the reasons for his success or his possible influence.[933] The fullest discussion that the Werke for housholders has received seems to be that by Helen C. White in her Tudor Books of Private Devotion;[934] she particularly emphasizes his practicality and his sympathy "with the problems of the average man in family life". Whitford was certainly among the first to attempt to adapt traditional, monastic-based devotion to the needs of the secular man, whose main occupation was worldly business and whose natural setting was the family household not the cloister. It is significant that another work which gives serious consideration to the differing conditions of secular life - from the leisured nobleman to the hard-working merchant, yeoman or craftsman[935] - The Pomander of prayer, also by a religious, of Sheen Charterhouse, should have been printed as often as four times 1528 - 1532. This suggests that an increasingly large proportion of the audience for devout books printed in English were lay people, hitherto almost entirely neglected as a separate category, who had had to adapt monastic - contemplative literature as best they could and who had received no instruction on the specific demands and problems of their situation. Whitford's serious attempt to provide this class of reader with appropriate instruction, even if, as Helen White suggests, he asked too much of them,[936] was probably the major reason for his success. But there were other contributory factors. The character of the Werke for housholders - comprehensive in its coverage yet brief, easily followed and practical in its recommendations - would undoubtedly have appealed to this audience,

especially when contrasted with the more theoretical and discursive approach, the impractical generalities or detailed analysis of topics of specifically monastic-contemplative interest, characteristic of so much late medieval devotional literature. Another attraction, at a time when the traditional beliefs of the Church were being increasingly challenged by the Reformers, and the constitution of the English Church was being changed, was the unimpeachable orthodoxy of Syon,[937] which together with Whitford's criticism of these new heretics[938] probably helped to reassure the devout. Whitford's own businesslike approach to the printing of his works - for instance, seeing that they are produced in the same format so that they can be bound together[939] - may have encouraged printers to accept his work or to reprint it and thus accelerated his popularity. To judge from the number of books printed by authors[940] from Syon or for the Abbey,[941] the house seems to have had established contacts with various London printers[942] - that might explain why it was a monk of Syon who wrote the preface and "dyd cause" The Pomander of prayer "to be imprynted".

A number of reasons may also be adduced for Whitford's eclipse after 1541 when he had been so popular in the preceding decade. It is likely that he died at about this time - but the death of the author does not necessarily prevent new editions being printed. The Dissolution of the monasteries cut the roots of the traditional monastic - contemplative devotion and accelerated unnaturally the transference of its setting from the cloister to the home. During the 1540s other authors, especially those of Reformed views whose devotional teaching was not hampered by the traditional monastic- other worldly ideals of perfection, went far beyond Whitford in teaching the householder how to follow Christ and

providing him with suitable prayers and devotions. The very traditionalism and orthodoxy which probably helped to make Whitford popular during the 1530s contributed to his speedy eclipse in the following decade, when the works of Becon first began to appear,[943] and books by Bale, Bullinger, Calvin, Joye, Melanchthon, Tyndale and Zwingli[944] indicate the increasing influence of Reformed teaching. The brevity of this section suggests that within the Catholic devotional tradition, at least up to 1540, devotional treatises were not usually addressed to lay people. The Carthusian author of The Pomander of Prayer and Whitford departed from that tradition in addressing themselves to a new audience of working lay people and families, who were soon to become the main audience of devotional authors. But lay people were not unprovided for, even though they had nothing of their own which corresponded to the monastic-contemplative works characteristic of medieval devotional writing. There were numerous general moral treatises and edifying tales as well as the more precise instruction offered in sermons and conduct books. Also during the later 1520s and the 1530s there were available various translations of classical works and some humanist writings as well as the first Protestant treatises.

TREATISES BY HUMANIST AUTHORS

Humanism - Renaissance, Christian or English - is such a vague concept that it is possible to include a large number of early sixteenth century politicians, courtiers, clerics and writers within its scope. J.McConica makes the cognate term Erasmianism equally accommodating.[945] Indications of humanist attitudes or influence may be suggested by an author's admiration for, knowledge or imitation of classical works, by a critical approach to questions of authorship and the correct text, by his use of rational, progressive argument or by his interest in and concern for education. According to such criteria translators as diverse as John Tiptoft,[946] John Skelton,[947] Robert Whittinton,[948] Gentian Hervet[949] and Richard Taverner[950] all have some humanistic characteristics; Richard Whitford, a friend of More and Erasmus, makes a few critical comments on matters of authorship;[951] John Colet,[952] and John Fisher, whom Surtz places "squarely in the movement called Christian humanism",[953] show the humanists' concern for education in their foundation statutes for St. Paul's school and for Christ's and St. John's colleges, Cambridge; men such as Reginald Pole[954] and members of his household,[955] including Thomas Lupset,[956] who studied in Italy, courtiers such as Sir Thomas More,[957] Sir Thomas Wyatt[958] and Sir Thomas Elyot[959] and distinguished visitors to England such as Erasmus[960] and Vives[961] may all be considered as humanists.

The main concern of this section is not with the origin, character or influence of humanism in general, nor even with English humanism,[962] but with the way in which early sixteenth-century English devotional literature reflected and was affected by humanist interests and ideals. At the outset it seems useful to make some distinction between specifically Christian humanism and the more general and secular

humanist tradition. These more secular authors were interested in subjects such as the government of nations - or households, education, literature, the pursuit of eloquence, and matters of general morality. They provided a good deal of practical instruction and their debt to the works of classical authors, whom they frequently translated, was usually obvious. The Christian humanist may be distinguished by his concentration - throughout his works or in one particular piece - on religious and theological matters. Like the more secular authors Christian humanists also did much translation, especially of the Greek fathers, and they produced many practical treatises on the Christian life and on the need for reforms within the Church. Yet, on the whole, they used the tools of humanist scholarship, and where appropriate the wisdom of the ancients, less directly than their secular counterparts; they were not regarded as an end in themselves but as a means by which to reform the Church and purify the faith. But although Christian humanists were more likely to concern themselves directly with Christian life and devotion, the contribution of the secular tradition was probably the more significant for the development of devotional literature. Sound moral teaching and practical instruction on various aspects of the good life became available apart from either the specifically religious overtones of the medieval catechetical tradition or the noble-chivalrous orientation of most medieval conduct books. This growing body of edifying, but religiously and socially neutral literature, and the displacement during the later 1530s of many traditional religious - devotional subjects such as the Passion of Christ, the endless lists of seven-sins, virtues, works of mercy etc-and the conduct of the liturgy and sacraments, tended to alter the balance or emphasis of the spectrum

of devotional writing.

In England humanism does not seem to have become a separate, self-conscious movement. With the possible exception of Thomas Lupset, those Englishmen most often described as humanists are primarily remembered as courtiers, statesmen, government servants or ecclesiastical reformers. Out of the vast literature on the origins, character and influence of humanism, two points seem particularly relevant to the English situation: the first is that some kind of continuity between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance is now generally accepted,[963] and the second is that the humanist movement is no longer regarded as essentially pagan or anti-Christian.[964] The traditionalism and orthodoxy of the English humanists, particularly the Christian humanists such as Colet and More, has been duly noted.[965] Like their medieval predecessors, the works of Christian humanists written in or translated into English were rooted in the faith of the Catholic Church. Indeed the existence of the Catholic Church was essential to the Christian humanists' hope for the universal revival and reform of the Christian faith.[966] England's separation from Rome meant that this universal dimension could not be maintained by the Protestant heirs of Erasmian humanism, instead their attention focused on the national church. Otherwise, it was the Protestants who not only inherited but developed many of the educational, scholarly and religious ideals of the humanists. The Erasmian concern for the Bible and the Fathers was to become the hallmark of the best Anglican scholarship;[967] the practical instruction which characterized the more secular humanist tradition was reflected in numerous Protestant treatises on household Christianity, and Protestants continued to edit and translate classical and patristic texts.[968] The belated attempts of the Catholic Church to provide devotional treatises

specifically for lay people in the works of Whitford and The Pomander of prayer were supplemented by the publication during the 1530s of works by humanist authors such as Erasmus, Sir Thomas Elyot and Thomas Lupset, and translations of, for example, Cicero and Xenophon. Far from being eclipsed after the death of More,[969] the educational and cultural ideas of the early sixteenth century humanists were advanced by the Protestants during the following decades.[970]

The secular humanist tradition, which was mainly concerned with the rediscovery, translation and scholarly appraisal of classical texts, with various branches of classical knowledge and with the imitation of classical models of life and government, had, of course, some medieval antecedents. Between the twelfth-century Renaissance represented by the schools of Chartres and Orleans, by the increasing importance of Paris as an intellectual centre[971] and by such individuals as the Englishmen William of Malmsbury and John of Salisbury,[972] and the rise of Italian humanism during the fourteenth century, classical scholarship seems to have been mainly dormant.[973] But although knowledge of the classics was not actively pursued during this period, at least manuscripts were preserved in numerous monastic and cathedral libraries, such as Monte Cassino, Pomposa, Verona, Chartres, Cluny and St. Gall, to be discovered by men like Lovato, Petrach, Coluccio and above all Poggio,[974] and later printed - the Aldine press at Venice being the most famous.[975] Knowledge of classical Latin authors survived in various ways through the middle ages. Authors who remained popular, so popular that spurious works were sometimes attributed to them,[976] included Cicero and Seneca, Virgil and, with suitable interpretation, Ovid;[976A] they were appreciated mainly for their moral teaching and only a small portion of each author's work was at all well known. Other authors found a regular place in the

curriculum of schools and universities,[977] among which Cato's Disticha seems to have been one of the most influential.[978] Particular works by slightly less common authors were sometimes translated.[979] Names and quotations attributed to a wide number of classical authors were kept alive in various encylcopaedic compilations such as the influential Speculum historiale by Vincent of Beauvais or the Mirrour of the world,[980] in florilegia and other collections including Walter de Burleigh's De Vita et moribus philosophorum, the Liber Philosophorum Moralium Antiquorum,[981] the Secreta secretorum[982] attributed to Aristotle and The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers.[983] Finally, a large number of tales from classical mythology - including the Troy and Alexander legends[984] - lived on, variously transformed in the medieval romance tradition.[985]

Thus the wisdom of the ancient world was at least partially preserved during the Middle Ages and put to diverse practical and edifying uses. One of the most obvious survivals was in the form of collected sayings. A popular example of this type of compilation was the Secreta Secretorum, which was printed as late as 1528.[986] This purports to be a series of letters written by Aristotle to Alexander the Great in answer to the latter's question on how best to subdue the rebellious Persians he had recently conquered. Since the work is addressed to the greatest ruler the world has known it is not surprising to find that the first part of the work is mainly concerned with the qualities of a king or ruler, how he should behave himself towards his people, how he should select his counsellors, and what his manner of dress and form of recreation should be. The noble/princely orientation of the work is emphasized in the preface to James Yonge's expanded translation, where he declares "that

Chyuary is not only kepete, Sauyd, and mayntenyed by dedys of armes, but by wysdome and helpe of lawes, and of witte, and wysdome of vnderstondynge....whan with Streynth and Powere, hym [the ruler] compaynyth witte and connynge, and witte dressith Powere, in goodnys may the Prynce Play, and with good men surly walke". A wider usefulness is claimed for the work in the colophon to the Copland edition, which claims it to be "very profyytable for euery man/and also veray good to teche chyldren to lerne to rede Englysshe". In addition to the teaching directed to rulers, which links the work to the tradition of instruction for the nobility that blossomed during the Renaissance in such works as Machiavelli's The Prince, Castiglione's The Courtier and Sir Thomas Elyot's The Gouernour, some consideration of other estates is included: notaries, messangers, subjects and barons. A substantial portion of the work is devoted to practical instruction on physiognomy, astronomy, the complexions of the body and some elementary rules to preserve health - a comparable instruction was to be found in the fourth and fifth parts of The Shepherd's Kalender. The longer version of the work translated by James Yonge[987] adds a section on the four cardinal virtues which makes considerable use of examples drawn from ancient history and mythology, includes a topical digression on the conquest of Ireland and England's claim to sovereignty over Ireland, and a few more obviously devotional chapters which recommend prayer as a "souerayn remedy in euery trybulacion", discuss the virtues of prayer - the authority of Seneca is added to that of the Bible and SS. Isidore, Augustine and Bernard - and add "that god hath not in despite the orisones of Pagans, yt thay hym with good herte Pray", a sentiment which would not have been unanimously approved during the fifteenth century. The blending of different periods of history and the blurring of the distinction between reality and legend is characteristic of medieval

historiography. Similarly medieval translators felt free to rearrange or to omit parts of their original, to add things to it and to interpret it. That Aristotle should have declared his secrets "figuratifly & derkly, and by derke ensamples"[988] lest they should fall into evil hands, or that Plato "shewid his science bi alegorie to the entent that it shuld not be vndirstanded bot bi subtile witted peple"[989] gave medieval commentators sufficient authority to interpret ancient wisdom in accordance with Christian teaching.

Another collection, The dyctes and notable wyse sayenges of the phylosophers,[990] provides a much wider range of authorities and topics. A brief biography of the main philosophers - all of them claiming Greek origins or contacts - is followed by their collected sayings, presented in no particular order and invariably repetitious; the last part of the work is a more miscellaneous collection of wise sayings by named and anonymous authorities.[991] Again considerable attention is given by the various authorities to the qualities required of kings and rulers - the section on Aristotle, for instance, is mainly concerned with his instruction of Alexander and considerable space is also devoted to Alexander's correspondence. Again there are signs of adaptation to bring pagan morality more obviously into line with Christian teaching, and there are many parallels with devotional literature. For instance Plato gives repeated warnings against covetousness, he warns against trusting in riches and advises his pupils to think of their end, reminding them in true memento mori terms of the physical dissolution caused by death and the equality of the grave;[992] while to Aristotle is attributed the phrase "a man is preued by his dedis, lyke as the golde is tryed by force of the fyre",[993] a commonplace of tribulation treatises. Occasionally

lengthier pieces of advice are given which accord with devotional teaching, such as the "x.maners" in which men should serve God.[994] But on the whole specifically Christian teaching does not obtrude itself and there is no attempt to provide systematic allegorical interpretation such as that found in Christine de Pisan's Epistle of Othea.[995]

The purpose of these collections of sayings, exempla and narratives culled from ancient history and mythology was generally to add to the store of knowledge and to provide practical instruction on matters such as government, the science of physiognomy or the preservation of health. The moral maxims were regarded as supplementary to the Church's teaching, so that the wisdom of Plato, Aristotle, Alexander and all the others was absorbed into the pattern of Christian truth. From the later fifteenth century another more secular systematic and objective - even if frequently wanting in historical accuracy - source of information about the places, persons, history and myths of the ancient world became increasingly accessible, in the form of general dictionaries such as Balbus' Catholicon, Calepine's Dictionarium, Stephanus' Thesaurus Linguae Latinae and Sir Thomas Elyot's Dictionary.[996] Standing somewhere between the medieval collections of sayings and the general dictionaries are the progressively expanded editions of Erasmus' Adagia,[997] many of which were made available to English readers from 1539 onwards in translations by Richard Taverner.[998] Like the medieval collections of sayings they are not arranged systematically but apparently haphazardly, and Erasmus' prediliction for legend rather than history (partly the result of his sources) and his lack of interest in the verification of his authors' statements on natural history, elementary

science or medicine, show that he has not cut himself off entirely from the Middle Ages. On the other hand, unlike his predecessors, he refuses to allow classical authors to be absorbed into Christianity. Pagan authors are regarded as the forerunners of Christianity; the correspondence between the two worlds is noted but the distinction between them is not blurred. In some cases at least the contrast between pagan and Christian morality was exploited for polemic purposes, and not always to the advantage of the Christians. But even the earliest editions of the Adagia were not exclusively secular, and Biblical and patristic quotations and references increased in the editions of 1508, 1515 etc. "From 1515 onwards, Erasmus was writing freely in the Adages of those subjects nearest to his heart, and they are principally three: the reform of current distortions in the practical Christian life, the prevention of misuse of power by rulers and through money, the way to avoid war."[999] Although not primarily a religious, still less a devotional collection,[1000] many comments have some religious significance. Among the adages to include such comments are "A mortuo tributum exigere", "Ignaves semper feriae sunt", "Dulce bellum inexpertis", "Ut fici oculis incumbunt" and "Sileni Alcibiadis"[1001] which notes the reversal of Christian and worldly values, comments on various aspects of religious hypocrisy,[1002] refers to the characteristically Erasmian idea of the philosophy of Christ, and concludes:

> I should not have too many regrets for having strayed if what did not pertain to relating proverbs turned out to pertain to amendment of life, and what made no contribution to learning did conduce to piety; and if what seemed subordinate or unrelated to the plan of this work, could be adapted to a plan for living. 1003

A more restricted and sober selection of aphorisms - over half of them drawn from the Bible and the Fathers[1004] - was compiled by Sir Thomas Elyot and arranged under subject headings; this Bankette of Sapience

was printed in 1539.[1005]

Of the classical works known to have been translated between about 1520 and the end of the 1590s,[1006] some can be separated into distinctive categories. There was a small group of historical works by Sallust, Caesar and Livy, to which their translators sometimes added moral comments.[1007] Another group of practical treatises included medical works by Galen and Plutarch,[1008] to which may be added translations of a few more recent works[1009] and Sir Thomas Elyot's Castel of helth.[1010] Xenophon's Οἰκονομικός, which was recommended in Cicero's De Senectute and by Lupset, was one of the first English translations to be made directly from the Greek.[1011] It offered practical advice on estate and household management: in addition to discussing the relationship between masters and servants, husbands and wives - the place of women was also discussed in More's Utopia and in greater detail by Vives - the master is encouraged to take an active personal interest in the cultivation of his estates. The picture of the landowner presented by this treatise was closely related to the ideal to which the English gentleman was encouraged to conform. A small number of works, such as Cato, Vulgaria Terentii and the Flores of Ouide, were used for teaching purposes, but these were far outnumbered by the grammar books, of which Stanbridge's and Whittington's were the most popular;[1012] the humanist productions of William Lily and William Hornman[1013] had comparatively little success. Knowledge of the languages of antiquity - the colloquial Latin of the Middle Ages was far from classical - and of classical texts [1014] was only restored very gradually during the sixteenth century. Educational theory was mainly developed by Erasmus and Vives, but translations of a few classical works such as Plutarch's De Educatione Puerorum[1015] supplemented more

recent works. In teaching, as in other fields of knowledge, selection of examples and texts from classical authors was determined as much by their moral content as for their usefulness in teaching Latin or Greek grammar and idioms. There is no clear-cut distinction between educational, practical, or even historical, works and the moral or generally edifying treatises which constitute the bulk of classical - humanist literature available in English during the early sixteenth century.

These moral treatises, whether translations of works written in antiquity or more recent products of humanist authors, although they tend to concentrate on secular virtues - that is they rarely discuss matters of faith or specifically religious duties - have many points of contact with Christian teaching, and cannot always be distinguished from it. Before going on to consider the moral treatises of classical authors and their later imitators, it will be useful to note a few of the classical survivals and traces of humanist influence to be found in the famous English poets of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Chaucer's acquaintance with and debt to Ovid and the Roman poets has been extensively noted,[1016] and the extent of his indebtedness to the contemporary Italian humanist Boccaccio has also been debated.[1017] Of course, his use of classical or humanistic sources was not confined to quotation and direct allusion. The goddesses Natura and Fortuna are of mixed and shifting classical - Christian significance;[1018] many names and situations are reminiscent of classical mythology, and figures like Venus and Mars, Pluto and Prosperine often carry the same kind of significance as other personified abstractions such as Fortune and Fame, Patience and Peace,[1019] more obviously familiar in medieval poetry. Even allegory itself, which so often dominated medieval habits of thought and literary expression, was the continuation of a technique which had been in course of development since

VIth century B.C.[1020] The classical debt of Gower, with the exception of his use of classical tales, is at least partially masked by his strong moral-didactic emphasis. But he seems to have made independent translations of a number of classical tales used also by Chaucer,[1021] and like Chaucer to have known and made use of Ovid.[1022] He also drew on the Secreta Secretorum,[1023] and in his discussion of the education of Achilles and of Alexander by Aristotle[1024] he puts forward his views on the correct education for a prince, a topic which greatly interested humanist authors. John Lydgate,[1025] the third of the English poets to whom later writers paid homage,[1026] enjoyed the patronage of one of England's earliest humanists - Humphrey of Gloucester - and shows considerable evidence of classical and humanistic learning, especially in the Troy Book, the Siege of Thebes, and most notably in the Fall of Princes, which maintained its popularity into the mid sixteenth century.[1027] As well as allowing scope for the display of humanist learning, the introduction of moral tales, which frequently echo devotional teaching (for example in the ubi sunt motif and in warnings against trust in Fortune),[1028] and even veiled comment on contemporary politics, these three works were all intended to be mirrors for princes,[1029] although this theme did not dominate the works as it did the Regement of princes[1030] by Thomas Hoccleve, a near contemporary of Lydgate's, who also shows signs of humanist interests.[1031] But although these poets were to varying degrees familiar with tales of classical history and mythology, they did not view them critically or historically. Thus Lydgate, whose classical-humanistic knowledge seems to have been extensive, was nevertheless a religious, much of whose output was devoted to religious verse and saints' lives,[1032] and whose attitudes and values were characteristic of late medieval Christianity. Christian poets and teachers simply made use of

classical wisdom, history and literature, using it in allegorical interpretations or as an excellent source of illustrative material.

One author who acknowledged a debt to Chaucer, Gower and particularly to Lydgate[1033] was Stephen Hawes, whose works, first printed in 1509 - 10, were reprinted later in the century, either about 1530 or 1554 - 5. Although his poems were probably written not much before the beginning of the sixteenth century, his work looks back to the world and methods of Lydgate;[1034] indeed his Pastime of Pleasure has been described as "in some sense an epitome of the Middle Ages" with its varied interest in "scholastic and classical learning, philosophy, religion, mythology, chivalry, romantic love, fantastic adventures".[1035] Taking his two most substantial works, the Pastime and The Exemple of vertu, their most obvious features - their allegorical structure, personified abstractions and strong moral-didactic tone - are characteristic of numerous other medieval authors. Although classical names and characters[1036] are introduced into the Pastime, the extensive programme of moral and intellectual education undertaken by Graunde Amoure and his romantic quest for La Bell Pucell are entirely medieval. The conclusions of Time and Eternity place the intellectual, moral and romantic achievement of Graunde Amoure in a Christian perspective. Time asserts his dominance over all earthly lives and events, and sums up the process of salvation history from the Fall of Adam, to the redemptive death of Christ and the coming Day of Judgement, which will be followed by the reign of Eternity, whose figure seems to merge with that of the Blessed Virgin.[1037] In her summing up Eternity promises eternal joy to those who love God above all else, obey His commandments and spend their time in virtuous living eschewing idleness, and she warns her readers of the

transcience of worldly wealth. The exemple of vertu although it lacks the scheme of formal education and does not develop the romance element as fully as the Pastime, again charts the narrator's growth in virtue according to the wise examples and moral doctrine supplied by the personified abstractions who people its island and castle setting. The Christian emphasis dominates the whole poem more obviously than the Pastime. For instance the debate between Nature, Fortune, Hardiness and Wisdom is somewhat reminscent of the debate between the Four Daughters of God;[1038] there are many parallels to the arming of the narrator[1039] against the three-headed dragon - the world, the flesh and the Devil - which confronts every Christian, and warnings against trust in the world and Fortune are frequent.[1040] The narrator ends his journey in a chapel filled with Saints, Apostles and obviously Christian virtues,[1041] he is fed with the Body of Christ by St. Peter, and he witnesses the various pains of hell before describing the joys of heaven. The poem concludes with a eulogy of King Henry VII.

Hawes' poems, with their allegorical structure, their chivalrous ideals, their strongly didactic emphasis and their Christian overtones, look like a belated attempt to preserve the medieval world of Gower and Lydgate. At first sight they seem far removed from the virtues and morality of classical authors and their humanistic imitators. But when Hawes' Pastime and Exemple of vertu are compared with a short Latin piece of the first century A.D., The Table of Cebes the Philosopher,[1041A] which was probably translated into English between 1523 and 1527 and perhaps first printed towards the end of the 1530s[1042], a number of similarities appear. Like Hawes, Cebes uses an allegorical framework - in this case a votive picture hung in the temple of Saturn - through which to explain his vision of

human life. The picture depicts two concentric circles: the outer one representing the lower life of the senses, the inner circle being reserved for those who attain true knowledge and follow virtue. The man in pursuit of Felicity, who sits crowned at the centre of the circle, must like the Christian pilgrim fight many battles and overcome numerous temptations if he is to complete his journey from the outermost circle to the inner centre. On entering life - the outward edge of the circle - man is briefed by Genius, but quickly tempted from his way by fair women representing deceit, self-opinion and lust, who promise him a happy and profitable life. There is a memorable description of Fortune[1043] and her followers, and more women waiting to beguile those who receive gifts of Fortune - Incontinence, Riot, Covetousness and Flattery. His fortune consumed, the traveller becomes these women's slaves and is compelled to commit crimes like perjury, forswearing and robbery before being handed over to the torments of Punishment. Unlike hell this state is not final, for Repentance can set a man once more on the way to true learning. This lies up a steep, difficult and dangerous path by way of Continence and Suffering - particularly the patient endurance of adversity - to Learning, who is supported by Truth and Persuasion. At her hands he is purged of Ignorance, Error, Pride, Concupiscence, Intemperance, Fury and Covetousness, the vices of the outer circle:

> In lykewyse as yf a man, the whiche is verye sicke, commeth to a phisicion, the phisicion doth first by purgacion expell all those thinges, that caused the sicknes: And so after restoreth the pacient to his recouery and helth again. 1044

Similar medicinal figures are used in many devotional treatises with reference to Christ and to tribulation of various kinds.[1045] He is then instructed by Knowledge's sisters: Strength of Mind, Goodness, Temperance, Soberness, Liberality, Continence and Meekness, and if they are followed

these virtues will lead him to their mother, Felicity, the object of his journey. His goal attained, he revisits those undergoing punishment and now understands the significance of their failure -at the end of Hawes' Exemple too the narrator is shown others undergoing the pains of hell. The teaching of the piece is summarized by Genius, who warns against trusting in Fortune, against untrue knowledge and against the belief that either riches or mere academic knowledge can help a man to live well. He concludes that it is better "to die well and nobully" than "to liue euill".

Clearly there is a large area of agreement between Christian writers like Hawes and the pagan author of Cebes regarding the vices to be avoided and the virtues to be cultivated in pursuit of a good life. In Cebes five of the seven deadly sins - pride, lust, anger, covetousness and sloth - are named among the vices of the outer circle, while three of the four cardinal virtues - Boldness, Justice and Temperance - are included among the virtues of the inner circle, together with qualities such as meekness, sobriety, continence and patient endurance, which were also widely advocated in devotional treatises. Warnings against trusting in fortune or riches occurred in both pagan and Christian literature. The narrator's return to witness the punishment of those who had failed to pursue the virtue in Cebes is reminiscent of Christian visions of the other world.[1046] Cebes' warning against the deception of academic learning as opposed to true knowledge of virtue, which condemns many poets, logicians, arithmeticians, geometers, astronomers and philosophers to the house of evil, although it would not have been acceptable to the author of the Pastime, has a parallel in Thomas A Kempis.[1047] Leaving aside the specifically Christian virtues - faith, hope and charity - and religious duties such as public worship and private prayer, pagan and Christian authors were in general agreement on the virtues and behaviour

required to live well. This pagan - Christian correspondence was made easier by the failure of many popular devotional authors to relate their teaching on virtue, morality and good behaviour to any theological understanding of man's nature and his relationship to God. If the morality of devotional treatises is freed from the religious overtones of its conventional framework, usually the ten commandments or the seven sins, it will be seen to be mainly secular in orientation. As far as this life was concerned the good pagan offered as sound a guide to its conduct as the Christian. It was only with regard to the origin or ultimate purpose of man's life that disagreement was likely, and the thoughtful Christian would probably not have accepted the self-sufficiency of Cebes' man of virtue: "For he that is ~~concerned~~ crowned with this power and vertue, is made therby happy and welfull, and hath not the truste nor hope of his felicitie in other thynges, than in hymselfe".[1048]

The three classical authors in whom English translators of the 1530s and 1540s seem to have taken the greatest interest were Cicero, Seneca - even though a number of the works attributed to him were in fact by the sixth-century writer Martin of Braga[1049] - and Plutarch. Of course, few sixteenth-century authors, in whom knowledge of Latin may generally be assumed, were limited to works available in translation,[1050] and thus English readers acquired indirect knowledge of a wider range of classical works than were actually translated. Moral soundness and practical utility seem to have been the main factors to have influenced translators and publishers in selecting works to put before impressionable school boys - many translations were issued in parallel English and Latin texts[1051] - and the general public. Thus classical authors were pressed into Christian service to edify and instruct their readers, just as medieval Christian writers had sought to do.

The most obvious debt of Christian teachers to pagan philosophers is in the area of virtue as it relates to conduct, and from Plato onwards[1052] their practical virtues were usually summed up under the heads of prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude, and in popular medieval teaching these were added to the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity to make another group of seven, often in opposition to the seven deadly sins.[1053] But there were also many points of contact between Stoic philosophy, to which in varying degrees both Cicero and Seneca were indebted, and which even Plutarch, although he formally rejected their doctrines, occasionally echoed,[1054] and popular Christian teaching. For instance, the Stoic views that man should cooperate with the Deity,[1055] that moral theory should be validated by practical application,[1056] that a life of sensual pleasure was to be rejected in favour of a useful life of moderate asceticism,[1057] that death, disease, disgrace, poverty, fortune, riches and such things were indifferent as far as the good life was concerned,[1058] would all have been acceptable to Christian writers. The dialogues on friendship and old age,[1059] both topics of enduring human interest, while using well known Stoics, respectively C. Laelius and M Porcius Cato, as the principal interlocutors to present Cicero's analysis of the true nature, the advantages and dangers of each state, have in them nothing overtly inimical to Christianity and a number of incidental points may be paralleled in devotional treatises. A number of ars moriendi pieces stress the importance of a trusty, well-tried friend to support the dying man,[1060] and Cicero's advice on the care needed to select and try virtuous friend is echoed in a short piece on "The maner to choose and cherish a freende".[1061] On the whole, however, the virtues of friendship, while they are frequently recognized by romance authors, are usually neglected in devotional treatises. In contrast to Cicero's view of the nobility

and special virtues of old age, medieval authors tend to take a pessimistic view,[1062] but they echo his assertion that death is not to be feared,[1063] that no-one can be sure of life, and that youth is more vulnerable than is generally recognized,[1064] and although death may be painful the pain will not last long;[1065] Cato, like Sir Thomas More, looks forward to the liberation of his soul from the body's prison[1066] and to being reunited with his departed friends.[1067] Christian teaching on death made considerable use of classical wisdom on the subject.[1068]

Cicero's De Officiis[1069] was a much more substantial work than the two dialogues. Philosophically there was nothing original about it;[1070] what was significant was the way in which philosophy was applied to human conduct and the pursuit of a steady and virtuous way of living.[1071] The third book, for instance, is mainly concerned with the connection between honesty and profit in public and private life, and it condemned desire for power, riches and other forms of self-seeking as well as warning against hypocrisy: Christian moralists also warned against such vices. The second book discusses other topics of common pagan - Christian interest including attitudes to fortune, the nature of glory, the right use of riches and, in some detail, the qualities and duties required of rulers and magistrates. But it was the first book which was characteristic of the sort of pagan - humanist literature which, more than any other, seems to have appealed to the English translators and publishers of the first half of the sixteenth century. Taking as his point of departure the contention that man is distinguished from the beasts by his powers of reasoning, his capacity for love and his desire

to pursue truth, Cicero devotes this first book to an analysis of each of the cardinal virtues and to the duties arising from them. His treatment of the virtues is dominated by his emphasis on the importance of public duty and the necessity of maintaining and if possible of improving human society. Thus he places justice, ordering good to human society, above prudence or knowledge of truth. This idea of public duty was almost totally neglected by devotional authors - exhortations to almsgiving, to performance of the seven works of mercy and the necessity of obedience to superiors in Church and state were the only kinds of public duty recognized in their treatises. Medieval England, with its feudal hierarchy of Church and state, did not encourage the kind of impersonal and general view of the state of human society which Cicero assumed. More's Utopia, which owes much to pagan philosophers and moralists,[1071] was one of the few works written by an Englishman before 1540 to present a view of the state rather than to encourage the reader's allegiance to his nation. The Utopian state too places considerable emphasis on public duty and the need for men to work together for the benefit of society, and in its social structures and the private virtues of its members it presents a way of life which is perhaps more truly Christian than anything to be found among the Christian nations of early sixteenth Europe.[1072]

Other English translations which took as their main subject the exposition of the cardinal virtues - Seneca's Forme and Rule of Honest lyuynge,[1073] Mancinus' Foure cardynale vertues[1074] and Martin of Braga's Rule of an honest lyfe[1075] - did not emphasize the equality of men in the same way as More's Utopia, nor did they stress the importance of public duty and service to the state to the same extent as Cicero in his De Officiis. The virtues are given

a personal rather than a social or political application, but, even so, these treatises retain an air of impersonality which is very different from the strong personal interest reflected in most medieval devotional works. Seneca's Forme and Rule of Honest lyuynge, and the first part of Martin's Rule of an honest lyfe, which is no more than another translation of the same piece, are substantial collections of practical moral maxims disposed under the headings of Prudence, Magnanimity, Temperence and Justice. The fact that there is rarely more than the most casual connection, if any, between the maxims; that the author addresses himself to no particular individual or type of person, and that he gives no clear indication of the final goal of his teaching - the type of individual man or his role in society - all contribute to this sense of impersonality. Yet the very lack of any detailed delineation of the final product of such teaching made these collections of practical moral advice a useful handmaid of Christian teaching and doctrine. As Whittinton noted, this "trade of morall wysedome" concerned that aspect of philosophy which "standeth more in exercyse than in speculation" and showed "what maner of actes shulde issue out of vertue".[1076]

Reason and self-control are the hallmarks of this moral wisdom. The man who wishes to acquire and practise prudence must follow reason. He must learn to value things according to their nature and quality, not after popular opinion. He must recognize that things which seem true are not necessarily so. He must avoid hasty judgements and consider the cause and effect of everything: "Yf thy wyt be prudent let it be ordred by thre tymes, set in ordre || Thinges present, remembre Thynges

paste, prouyde for thynges to come..."[1077] - another application of the familar three-fold meditation of devotional literature.[1078] Magnanimity comprehends at least two qualities valued by devotional authors,- perseverance and stability, and it sees true valiance as the ability to despise all worldly things. Temperance requires the cutting away of all superfluity, and the bridling of tongue, belly and bodily lust. Thus eating is to be without surfeit, and excessive and luxurious living are not to be indulged. Because man is made after the divine similtude he must forsake the flesh and cleave to spiritual things. Poverty, frugality and simplicity are not to be despised; humility, gravity and sadness should be cultivated, and presumptuous, proud and disdainful attitudes banished. A certain degree of flexibility in attitude and ability to adapt to circumstances is encouraged, but not wavering or lightness. Patience to endure reproaches or pain is regarded as valuable by pagan authors as well as in Christian tribulation treatises. The way to acquire justice, which is seen as a law of the human mind and of God and the bond of human society, is to dread God and to love Him by being willing to help all men. It is not sufficient to abstain from evil, but wrong must be resisted and where necessary punished. The social implications of this virtue are obvious, even though they are not related to any particular social or political theory. Both the Forme and Rule of Honest lyuynge and Martin's Rule of an honest lyfe conclude with a piece on "The moderation of ye.iii.vertues", which proves - as devotional and contemplative authors stated repeatedly - that with these four virtues a mean must be kept and excesses controlled. Thus if prudence passes bounds it can make a man a crafty, suspicious busybody; magnanimity must steer a course between cowardice and hasty,

troublesome foolhardiness; temperance must avoid niggardliness, and justice must be neither too lenient nor over rigorous. The practicality, reasonableness, simplicity and moderation of this kind of teaching is likely to have appealed particularly to lay people, for unlike most of the devotional treatises written by and for religious, these four cardinal virtues applied directly to the duties and pitfalls of secular life.

The books by Cicero, Seneca, Martin of Braga and Mancinus on the cardinal virtues, to which may be added the summary teaching of The Myrrour or Glasse of Maners[1079] and the far lengthier Boke of wysdome,[1079A] even though the four virtues are not specifically listed, exhibit a remarkable uniformity of teaching. They cover similar topics such as fortune, friendship, riches, the relationship between outward appearances and inward virtues and the nature of honesty. Similar illustrations are often used; thus Cicero, De Officiis I:39, warns that while a man's house may enhance his reputation he should not seek to base his reputation on a fine house; Seneca states that a house should be known by its owner and not the owner by his house,[1080] and Mancinus warns against an over-large or over-gay house. Mancinus, however, gives a more obviously Christian cast to his teaching, making more frequent reference to the life of the world to come, suggesting a more thorough going contempt for this world, and referring not only to God, but to Christ and the Blessed Virgin. Martin of Braga also adds a conventional piece of devotional teaching, entitled "The encherydion of a spirytuall lyfe, teachyng the waye vnto perfeccyon. Wherin be opened and brought to lyght.ix.impedimentes whiche do interrupte and let those that cometh to walke in the waye of god",[1081] to his Rule of an honest lyfe. Yet although these authors

demand considerable powers of self-control, a high standard of behaviour and integrity and some measure of detachment from popular worldly opinions and aspirations, their requirements are not stated so uncompromisingly as in most devotional treatises and they do not demand that total separation from all worldly interests which is fundamental to the religious - contemplative tradition. Martin says of the Rule of an honest lyfe:

> it doth not intrete of the hygh and perfecte thynges, that a fewe contemplatyue & heuenly persons doth kepe, but rather it doth teache those thynges, that may without the knowlege of diuine scryptures, by the naturall lawe of mans intellygens, ye of the lay people & craftesmen, so that they lyue well & honestly, be playnly vnderstand & kept. 1082.

The secular orientation of this teaching, its appeal to natural reason, its practicality and its deceptive simplicity find an echo in the devotional writings of Lupset and Erasmus.

Another group of classical-humanist treatises focused on various aspects of fortune, particularly the problem of how to bear ill-fortune. Roman thought seems to have regarded fortune as events outside the control of the individual, not subject to reason, tyrannical, merciless, mocking, and without principles or policy.[1083] A detailed analysis of the character of Lady Fortune was given in The Boke of the fayre Gentlywoman.[1084] The words of Fortune - and the warning against submission to her or trust in her which occupies the greater part of the work-all confirm that she is "Inconstaunte, slypper, froyle, and full of treason". She claims that everything man desires, "Is all at my deueyse, and ordynaunce", and that "Without my fauoure, there is nothynge donne". It is her fickleness and unpredictable variability which is particularly stressed; she gives and takes continually, and at her behest men rise and fall. No matter

how great her gifts, man is never satisfied; "she kepeth euer in store | Frome euery man some parcell of his wyll". The folly of serving her and the bondage to which it leads is stated directly and illustrated by many examples. Her attendants, "wery laboure", "pale fere", sorrow, disdain, hatred, danger, envy, flattery, deceit, mischief and tyranny are not a group to inspire confidence in their lady. For those who "wylt nedes medle with her tresure" the narrator warns "Trust not therin... Remembre nature sent the hyther bare | The gyft is of fortune, compt them, as borrowed ware"; they are to be content "With such rewarde, as fortune hath you sent". But it is better to "Receyue nothynge that commeth from her hande". The only way to stand secure is to "Take pouerties parte, and let proude fortune go", and to love "maner and vertue" which fortune cannot sieze. This portrait of fortune, and the remedy suggested against her injuries, were both conventional and commonplace.[1085]

Two related works, Seneca's De Remediis Fortuitorum,[1086] and Petrarch's De Remediis Utriusque Fortunae,[1087] which may be considered as a greatly elaborated version of Seneca's dialogue,[1088] show the triumph of "Resoun" over, respectively, "Sensualyte" and "Adversite". Faced with every kind of calamity which can afflict mankind, from various manners of death to loss of money or goods, children, friends or wife; from the harmful effects of enemies, theft, exile, a ruined reputation to sorrow, sickness, blindness or poverty, Reason counters, not with rational argument, but by producing clever truisms, pious maxims and moral sentences. Thus to Sensualyte's threat "Thou shalt dye" Reason answers "This is the nature of man", "Upon the condicion I entred that I shuld depart", "This lyfe is but a pylgrymage"; having gone one way you must then return and "I came for the end that I go about, euery daye ledeth me therto:

nature set me when I was borne that ende of my ryse and course".[1089] Many of these ideas are to be found in Christian literature on death.[1090] In Petrarch's dialogue Reason answers at greater length and makes considerable use of biblical figures as well as referring to Christ. Again there are numerous parallels to be found between these dialogues, especially those on sickness, poverty and loss of riches, and devotional literature,[1091] particularly the tribulation treatises, which are also related to the "consolatio" genre.[1092] Yet, despite the Christian references, Petrarch's "remedy" is closer to the Stoic answer of Seneca than to Christian thought. Both authors show how the man who knows himself and who has his feelings and desires under the control of reason can be indifferent to accidents of birth, the threat of death and every external calamity. Such self-possession suggests a kind of self-sufficiency which is not encouraged by devotional authors. Rather than calling on man to separate himself from this world and to devote himself to the pursuit of a heavenly reward in the religious - contemplative tradition, these dialogues strengthen man to face the world in which he must live, by accepting it rather than by condemning it. Their appeal to the layman, especially to courtiers and merchants, is obvious.

Two other treatises, Seneca's De Tranquillitate Animae,[1093] and Plutarch's essay of the same title, translated by Sir Thomas Wyat as Quyete of mynde,[1094] offered rather more constructive advice on how to preserve tranquillity: "how the mind may always pursue a steady and favourable course, may be well-disposed towards itself, and may view its condition with joy, and suffer no interruption of this joy, but may abide in a peaceful state, being never uplifted nor ever cast down".[1095] In contrast to the agitation of the Senecan and Petrarchan dialogues, both

these works seem to reflect something of the tranquillity they seek to teach.[1096] Seneca's essay is perhaps the more obviously practical. While both authors advocate purposeful activity, preferably some form of public service, and emphasize the importance of self-knowledge, so that man pursues a calling for which he is naturally suited and does not overreach himself, Seneca also sets out a detailed code of behaviour:[1097] "let us learn to increase our self-control, to restrain luxury, to moderate ambition, to soften anger, to view poverty with unprejudiced eyes, to cultivate frugality...to keep unruly hopes and a mind that is intent upon the future, as it were, in chains, and to determine to seek our riches from ourselves rather than from Fortune". These principles are applied to domestic life, to learning, to the pursuit of wealth and position, to amusements and relaxations. Man must learn to accept, helped by the good examples of brave and noble men and warned by the fate of the rich and great, that the goods of Fortune and of Nature are only lent to him, and that he must be willing to return riches, position, and even his life when called to do so. Seneca believes that every man is chained to Fortune[1098] and must learn to accept its servitude, to grasp whatever good he can find, and by reason to mitigate his difficulties. Plutarch's tranquillity suggests a rather more positive sense of joy.[1099] When attacked by ill-fortune he recommends recollection of all the good things which have been enjoyed in the past, and of present causes of thankfulness such as, life, health, sight, peace, arable land to cultivate, seas to sail, liberty to speak or be silent, to be busy or idle. The torments of ambition, which are never satisfied no matter how high a person climbs, are well described; "For truly vehement appetit of any thing/hath alway

fere his felow of lesing it".[1100] While he reiterates most of Seneca's views, for example on the need for indifference to the chances of fortune and for the ability to despise death, he does not seem to see man as being so subject to Fortune. If circumstances are unpleasant and hurtful, it is the result of "noughti loue of our-self" and "a naughty conscience in the soule" (which may be compared to the Christian remorse of conscience) which makes us unable to profit by them. As the abundance and providence of nature proves, man's life should "be full of surety and of ouerspred gladsonnesse", not stimulated by riotous sensual pleasures nor weighed down by anxiety, troubled by affections, sad, sour and frowning. If we were to listen to exhortations like the preceding treatise, "we shulde", he concludes, "vse thunges present as they come without any blame/and shulde rest with the plesaunt remembraunce of thynges past/and at the last we shulde drawe towarde thynges to come/ vnferefully and assuredly/with sure and gladsome shyning hope". A translator or reader pre-disposed to find Christian truth in classical writings would probably have found greater encouragement in Plutarch's than in Seneca's essay.

The most important medieval treatment of Fortune and the related problems of the chief good, evil, providence, fate, divine foreknowledge and free will, whose influence extended well into the sixteenth century,[1101] was Boethius' De Consolatione Philosophiae. Its teachings are derived from many sources, chiefly in the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic traditions,[1102] but it is possible to find similarities between the Consolation and a very wide range of literature.[1103] For instance, while repudiating the Stoic metaphysic, much of what book II of the Consolation has to say about

fortune bears a general resemblance to Cynic-Stoic consolations,[1104] and the author clearly found much to admire in the Stoic characters.[1105] Boethius himself, however, as he is first found, wallowing in self pity, unable to appreciate the good fortune he enjoyed in the past or what remains to him even in the present,[1106] represents the opposite to the Stoic ideal. He is confused and grieved at fortune because he has forgotten himself, he has forgotten by what means the world is governed and what is the end of all things.[1107] The successive stages of Philosophy's argument expose the uncertainty, mutability and essential worthlessness of the gifts of fortune, and she goes on to show how all the happiness is found in God, is God.[1108] The remainder of the Consolation, books IV - V, endeavours to relate this truth to the problems of evil, of apparent injustice, fate, chance and free will - the fundamental problems to confront the thoughtful man who attempts to make sense of the world in which he finds himself. Unlike Milton, who chooses to justify the ways of God to man in terms of salvation history, particularly the Genesis creation myth, Boethius bases his Consolation on reason and logic, not on faith or Scripture: "Boèce adapte son christianisme à ses études profanes"[1109]. Yet there is nothing to prove that Boethius himself was not a Christian,[1110] and although specific doctrines were condemned by Christian commentators,[1111] his solutions - that fate and chance are ultimately subordinate to God's providence and that man does have free will - were acceptable to such influential figures in the formulation of Christian doctrine as Albertus Magnus and St. Thomas Aquinas. Thus the logical and philosophical solution to the ultimate problems of human existence offered by the Consolation is taken up into the Christian tradition, together with

many other classical-pagan ideas which helped to influence Christian concepts of and attitudes to such subjects as fortune and her gifts.

The impact of classical and humanistic texts on educational and social theory, and thus indirectly on religious attitudes, which gathered momentum in England during the 1530s, was considerable. There were few translations of classical works specifically about education - Plutarch's De educatione puerorum, translated by Sir Thomas Elyot in the first few years of the 1530s, seems to stand alone - but classical and humanistic theories and precepts were widely disseminated through the works of humanist authors and teachers such as Guarino da Verona, Rudolph Agricola, Budé and Erasmus.[1112] It was during the 1530s that the works of classical authors began to be freely available to English readers, and no-one did more to popularize the results of humanistic scholarship in the vernacular than Sir Thomas Elyot.[1113] The Boke named the Gouernour,[1114] his most substantial and influential work, was not an original work in the same way as Castiglione's Courtier; rather it provided a digest of classical and humanistic thought on political theory and education.[1115] Quintilian and Plutarch formed the basis of his ideas on the education suitable for a gentleman, much of Book II was indebted to the writings of Petrarch and Erasmus, while Book III, with its discussion of the four cardinal virtues,[1116] owes much to Cicero's De Officiis. In contrast to A Kempis and several other medieval devotional authors, who seem to condemn learning, or at least find it irrelevant to the following of Christ,[1117] Elyot like most humanists saw a vital link between knowledge and virtue.[1118] But the virtues and moral philosophy derived from Plato, Aristotle and Cicero were not Christian, although they did not usually contradict Christian beliefs.[1119] A nominal Christian foundation was assumed for a gentleman's life, but rarely discussed,[1120] and it was

not seen as the mainspring of action, nor was the imitation of Christ the ideal set before the would-be gentleman. Christianity was overshadowed by the pagan virtues, and pious actions lost any distinctive Christian motivation. The practical and secular orientation of Elyot's Gouernour and the various pagan moral treatises which became available during the 1530s, a decade of great religious change and uncertainty, may well have contributed to the breakdown of the unity of the traditional Christian-religious ideal of the life of perfection. Not even the increasing Protestant emphasis on the importance of biblical studies later in the century and their attempts to provide prayers to cover every aspect of human life[1121] succeeded in restoring that unity. In the devotional treatises of Protestant authors from the 1530s onwards the importance of the secular world, its social activities and obligations, is fully recognized and accorded an independent significance, albeit under the general providence of God.

Christianity seems to have left a stronger imprint in the works of Juan Luis Vives, who came to England in 1523 and lectured in Rhetoric at Oxford until banished in 1528 for his support of his compatriot, Queen Catherine of Aragon.[1122] Whereas Elyot's treatment of the nature of knowledge, Of the knowledge whiche maketh a wise man,[1123] is cast in the form of five dialogues between Aristippus and Plato, where God appears as an abstract diety and the whole tone of the discussion is classical, Vives' Introduction to Wisedome[1124] defines the virtues as "a reuerent loue towardes god and man, a ryght seruice and worshippyng of god, a right loue toward man". The work is dominated by Christian ideas and forms of expression familiar from medieval devotional literature. Thus life

is seen as "a certayne peregrination", there are reminders of the vile body genre;—"The fayrest body is nothyng els but a dounghyll couered in white and pourpre"—and of the medieval preoccupation with mutability, "beautie, strengthe, agilytie, & other giftes of the bodye, shortly vanishe away, euen as floures". The body is to be regarded as the servant of the soul; things are to be recognized as "al vncertayn, short, chaungeable, and vyle", so that fortune, power and wealth are not to be sought after. The chances of this world "must be pacientely taken...as commynge of god the author". The need to test friends, to reverence superiors, to regulate speech, to control the passions, and advice for meditation morning and evening, again echo many devotional treatises, as does the recommendation of the Lord's prayer as the best prayer. The treatise centres on the section "Of Christe"; He is "The attonement and reconciler of Mankynde with God, and the author of our saluation". Christ's life is the ideal example to be followed - the exemplary aspect is further stressed in the following section on the most characteristically Christian virtue, Charity:-

> Christes life witnesseth his perfecte humanitie, his myracles declare the infinite power of his deytie, his lawe sheweth his heauenly wysedome: so yt of his perfect goodnesse of lyuynge, we haue example to folowe hym: of his power and authorite, strength to obey hym, of his wysedome, faythe to beleue hym. 1125

Vives joins with A Kempis[1126] against the humanist tendency to see learning and knowledge of the pagan virtues as sufficient equipment for a virtuous life, declaring: "All humayne wysedome, compared with Christis religion, is but durte, and very foolyshnes". Although the emphasis of the treatise is emphatically Christian and traditional, there are a few hints of classical influence; Christian virtue achieves its fulfilment not in the conquest of vice or in mystical union with God, but "in

continuall quietnes, and tranquillitie of mynde", and the clear exposition of the distinction between the parts of the soul and the idea of God as the prudent governor of the household of the world seem to owe more to classical thought than to Christianity.

Another highly traditional treatise was John Colet's Ryght frutefull monycion.[1128] In common with many other medieval devotional treatises there is no structural argument and no obvious development. After an opening declaration recommending to the reader "yt it is hygh wysdome and grete perfeccyon thy self to know/& than thy self to dispyse," the greater part of the treatise is devoted to "sentences" and pious maxims, a mixture of practical advice and moral precepts which are, for the most part, familiar from numerous medieval devotional and moral treatises. The threat of eternal damnation is held over him that "lyest out of ordre", and "the meruaylous & horrible punysshement of the abominable great pockes, dayly apperynge to our sightes" is seen as the consequence of "the inordinate mysuse of the flesshe". The reader must "thynke thy self a wretche of all wretches, excepte the mercy of god"; such threats and self-abnegation seem the antithesis of the dignity and independence of the humanist's image of man. Again, Christ is the perfect examplar of virtue and the wise man will fear God, keep measure in all things - from the exercise of judgement to the amount of food he eats - trust neither himself nor the world and avoid feigned virtue.[1129] The work has much in common with The Golden Epistle, but shows even less sign than Vives' Introduction to Wisedome of classical influence. Yet both authors were reckoned as humanists, and both wielded the greatest influence in the field of education. These treatises

serve as a warning against assuming that all humanists allowed pagan literature and ideals to dominate their thought to the same extent as Sir Thomas Elyot, or that they were consistently classical at the expense of their traditional religion, which Colet, Vives[1130] and Erasmus were so eager to purify and build up.

Vives' interest in education is reflected in a number of works: the plans of study drawn up for the Princess Mary and for Charles Blount, son of William Blount, Lord Mountjoy;[1131] the Satellitium,[1132] a collection of over two hundred moral maxims and aphorisims with comments; and above all the Instruction of a christen woman,[1133] which has been described as "the leading theoretical manual on women's education of the sixteenth century".[1134] A large number of medieval devotional treatises were, of course, addressed to women and these, although the women were usually conventual religious or recluses, frequently contained practical instruction on manners, diet and health.[1135] Given the fact that Vives chooses to address himself to the woman in secular life, the future wife, mother, and perhaps in time widow,[1136] the practical advice on rearing children, the especial vigilance needed to combat the feminine tendency to instability of thought and the need to protect a young girl's innocency is not unexpected. Indeed, the persistent emphasis on sobriety of dress, behaviour and pastimes, on continence, modesty, silence, the avoidance of all wantonness and idleness and the need for moderation in all things, can be parallelled in many earlier devotional treatises. Like the religious sisters, the young lay woman should seek to follow the examples set by Mary the Mother of Jesus, by Christian saints and also by virtuous pagan women.[1137] The pagan virtues and classical literature are

recognized as capable of edification, but they are not allowed to dominate the woman's education or life. However, the emphasis on the desirability of the wife's involvement in the practical side of household management, spinning, weaving and cooking, may be parallelled by classical treatises such as Xenophon's Treatise of householde, which advocate the landlord's personal participation in the management of his estates.

Vives' debt to classical authors underlies much of his practical advice in the Instruction, from Quintilian and Plutarch, on the importance of the earliest influences on a child before it is weaned, to numerous sayings by authors as diverse as Plato and Juvenal which are used to support his arguments. But the more obvious instance of classical and humanistic learning and influence lies in what Vives had to say about the intellectual education of women. In the Introduction to Wisedome true wisdom was seen as the knowledge and following of Christ. For women he advocates "the study of wisdom, which doth instruct their manners, and inform their living, and teacheth them the way of good and holy life".[1138] The girl is not to be brought up on chivalric tales of romantic love and war, but on the scriptures, on patristic authors such as SS.Augustine, Cyprian, Jerome and Gregory, and on "moral" classical writers including Plato, Cicero and Seneca. She is not to pursue knowledge in order to be able to teach, to bear rule, or to take part in public life, but as an aid to virtue - her own and that of her children. In addition to the listing of virtuous pagan women and holy Christian women,[1139] Vives cites the contemporary examples of Catherine of Aragon[1140] and ~~of~~ the daughters of Sir Thomas More, "whom their father not content onely to haue them good and very chaste, would also they should be well learned, supposing that by that mean they should be more truly and surely chaste". Learning,

classical as well as Christian, practical manual skills as well as more academic pursuits, was valuable to lay women, and even to religious,[1141] as a useful occupation which would prevent idleness and would increase their knowledge and understanding of virtue and so help them to lead a "good and holy life."

Sir Thomas Elyot's thorough-going devotion to classical models and ideals was unusual in early sixteenth-century England:[1142] the combination of classical learning with a deep and essentially traditional Christian piety, found in Vives, Erasmus, John Colet and Sir Thomas More, was more usual, and seems to have been characteristic of the Christian humanists. Thomas Lupset,[1143] who spent some time as a member of Colet's household, worked with Erasmus on the Greek New Testament, knew More, was lecturer in Rhetoric at Fox's newly founded Corpus Christi College, studied in Paris and Padua, where he was intimate with Reginald Pole and Richard Pace, and who was described as "the flowre of lerned men of his tyme",[1144] reveals a similar mixture of new ideas derived from his classical studies and the familiar topics of medieval devotion in his three treatises: Of Charitie,[1145] An Exhortation to yonge men and The waye of Dyenge well.[1146]

Much of what Lupset has to say in his Treatise of Charitie and the Exhortation—about the need to be able to "dispise the vanite, that folishe men take, in the deceyteful pompe of this shorte & wretched life;"[1147] about the importance of controlling the passions and avoiding every kind of excess;[1148] about the patient bearing of tribulation;[1149] on the works of mercy[1150] and the virtues of the body and soul—

> The vertues of the body be, as to faste, to watche, to goo on pylgremage, to traueylle with hande and fote for to helpe their neyghboures, to distribute youre goodes in almes dedes, to buylde vp churches, wherin the people may here the word of god, and com to gether to prayer, to punysshe the fleshe with rough heer, to slepe vppon the harde grounde, to socour the nedy, to ayde the miserable, and other such actes bodilye as men doo for the loue and honour of god. The vertues of the

> soule be of an other sorte, as mekenes, pacience, abstinence, hope, faithe, charitie, pitie, mercye, and other lyke 1151

-the former exemplified in the lives of Lupset's contemporaries John Colet and Sir Thomas More,[1152] the latter familiar variants of the fruits of the spirit - would have been familiar to earlier writers. The language he uses to express the meaning of charity - the perfect lover of God is "wedded to god", he has "his mynde inwardly ameled, baken, & through fyred with the loue of god" and knows "the hotte feruente burnynge hartes affect towarde god" - echoes the terminology of the mystics. Yet for all these superficial similarities, the context in which these ideas are set and the application they are given differs significantly from earlier usage. Contempt of the world is not absolute, but rather an ability to judge things aright, according to their usefulness and utility, which comes from the "redynge of these olde substanciall workes": Aristotle's Ethics, Plato's De re publica, the moral philosophy of Cicero and Seneca, and the New Testament with the commentaries of SS. Chrystostom and Jerome.[1153] Lupset does not require that "we shulde forsake all the commodities of this worlde", but that riches, honour and worldly power should be used aright as "instrumentes and toles" to the benefit of ourselves and our neighbours.[1154] The patient endurance of tribulation is seen not as a means to an end - a heavenly reward - but as proof of true faith and hope in God and a guarantee of the integrity of man's "secrete mynde" and his "owne free wyl". The passions - emotions such as anger, envy, grudging, slander, coveting honour, preferment or riches, bodily pleasures and sensual lusts[1155] - are to be controlled because they reduce men to the level of wild beasts; they are symptoms of self love, which separates man from God. Earlier writers would probably have agreed with Lupset's diagnosis,[1156] but they would have tended to obscure the root cause of the passions by describing them according to such

categories as the seven sins or the five wits, or by treating them externally as matters of behaviour. Lupset does not ignore practical advice, but he is not content with practical advice alone nor with formal categories; he wants the reader to understand the causes and reasons on which his practical teaching is based.

Despite the use of language reminiscent of the mystics, Lupset's treatises are devoid of the emotional fervour characteristic of much contemplative writing and the affective piety related to it. He even avoids all reference to Christ's Passion, the emotional focus of most medieval devotion, and regards Jesus primarily as a teacher. His own skill as a teacher is demonstrated in the Treatise of charitie, addressed to his sister.[1157] It opens in an engaging conversational manner, with an amusing inversion of the usual apology for any shortcomings in the work to follow and with an outline of the subject to be discussed. He then breaks off to introduce a more formal opening, declaring "you shall with the more ease gather the fruite of this lesson, and I shal the better se what is taught, if the sentences be layd in their due ordre". In contrast to earlier treatises which tended to rely on numbered categories or divisions - the numerous groups of seven, The.xii.profytes of tribulacyon, The tre &.xii.frutes - and to develop a point by variation and repetition, Lupset leads his reader on from one point to the next in a logical sequence. Repetition is controlled, the number of variations or examples given on one point limited so as not to obscure the structure; and explanations, whether the detailed consideration of charity which draws on etymological evidence[1158] or brief descriptions such as the nature of the passions,[1159] do not take refuge in stock catechetical answers but seek to help the reader understand their meaning. To make

sure that the main points of his teaching have been properly understood and remembered, Lupset follows the summary conclusion and brief rule of charity[1160] by a dialogue which reduces the treatise's contents to three easy lessons. The form in which this further summary is presented avoids any sense of dull repetition; the sister's evident boredom and slow wittedness are quietly amusing and provide a natural opportunity for further clarification of the teaching.

Although the rational and civilized tone of the treatises is clearly intended to appeal to the intellect rather than to the emotions, they are not devoid of feeling. The majority of medieval devotional treatises ~~were impersonal giving~~ gave nothing more than the most general indication about the author or audience, such as whether the work was intended for religious. Rarely was teaching given so personal an application as in Hilton's epistle about scrupulosity.[1161] The letters of Erasmus and More are tangible evidence of the value they placed on human relationships. Vives refers to his own parents;[1162] he even contemplated writing a biography of his mother, and mentions several of his contemporaries including the wife of Budé and the family of Sir Thomas More in his Instruction of a christen woman. Lupset does not feel it irrelevant to begin his Exhortacion with a brief sketch of his own situation at the time of writing,[1163] and on other occasions he refers to contemporary people and events.[1164] Personal and contemporary references of this nature do not occur in earlier treatises, presumably because they were mostly written for religious and recluses, who were not expected to value human relationships or to take an interest in worldly affairs. The Exhortacion is an expression of the deep affection Lupset feels for his former pupil Edmund Withypoll - he also mentions another pupil, Christopher Smith, who "I euer toke for my sonne" - and its lesson is intended to profit the boy as he enters his adult life. As well as

describing friendship as more profitable than any worldly goods and recommending Cicero's De Amicitia as a full treatment of the subject,[1165] Lupset suggests something of the strength of true friendship in his obvious affection for the fathers of his pupils.[1166] While a number of medieval authors admitted the importance of a true friend, especially to a dying man,[1167] there is no sense of the joy to be derived from such friendship nor were religious encouraged to have close friends. Since Lupset's treatises are addressed to men and women who have not cut themselves off from the world, it is natural to find more attention given to friendship, to the ways in which the Christian should love his neighbour,[1168] and how he must regard all men with equal affection whatever their moral or social status.[1169]

The lesson of Exhortacion is based upon the hierarchy of the soul, which comes first:

> seynge hit is a thynge immortal, that is created and made after the fygure & shape of almyghtye god. The nexte and seconde rome hath the bodye, as the caas and sepulture of the soule, and nereste seruaunt to the secretis of the spirite. The.iii.rome occupieth the riches & goodis of this world, as necessarie instrumentes or toles for the bodye...[1170]

If this order of priorities is maintained in every activity and decision of life, then "you shall surely content god, nexte please your selfe, & thyrdly satisfye the worlde"; but if the order is upset, and the common opinion of the world followed which places worldly riches and bodily pleasures above the soul then "you shal runne into the vengeance of god, into the hate of your selfe, and into the indignation of al men".[1171] Within this general scheme Lupset covers a wide range of subjects, from warnings against meddling in other people's business and lying[1172] to the importance of obedience to the Church in all matters of faith, a point made by contemporaries such as Sir Thomas More and Richard Whitford, as

well as by earlier authors.[1173] Like Sir Thomas Elyot, he gives advice on the care of the body based on Galen, an edition of whose works he had seen through the press, and he emphasizes the importance of maintaining honesty in all business dealings and the need to beware of specious arguments or the evil example of influential people, "popis, cardinalles, and priestes", "princes, lordes, knightes, gentilmen, and marchantes", and even monks and friars: "You may by your self know, what is the right path: folowe you coragiously the same, & forsake the common hie way of siners". Finally Lupset offers advice on what books Withypole should read. Apart from the New Testament, which is to be read meekly, "with a dewe reuerence", most of the books recommended on general moral topics are classical. There is nothing very novel about most of the list: Aristotle, Plato, Seneca, and Cicero's De Officiis, De senectute, De fato, De finibus, De Academicis and Questiones Tusculanae.[1174] To these he adds Epictetus' Enchiridion with commentary; Cicero's De Amicitia; Aristotle's Politics books VII-VIII on the bringing up of children, and Xenophon's Oeconomicus, which Lupset says he has translated out of Greek,[1175] on household management. To these he adds Galen's De bona valetudine tuenda and Erasmus' Enchiridion, "that in fewe leaues conteynethe sn infynite knowledge of goodness". What is more unusual is the author's warning against reading too many books superficially and without profit.[1176]

In The Tre &.xii.frutes of the holy goost charity is the first of the twelve fruits. The reader is presented first with a definition, "Charite is a copleng of þe soule with god", which is subsequently expanded—"She is modir of al vertues"—and elaborated in ten other definitions.[1177] The effects of charity are seen in strengthening martyrs to face death and others to endure the present exile of this life. It must abide in words, works and the will, and can tolerate no anger or other passion. Seven tokens

are listed which may help a soul to judge whether it is in charity and four degrees of charity are listed and defined, and the chapter concludes with the four virtues of charity for a religious soul. Lupset's Treatise of charitie does not rely on a numbered structure, nor is it addressed to religious, but much of what he has to say about charity, what it is and what it is not, may be parallelled in the earlier work. For Lupset the word charity "sygnifieth the hole perfection of a cristen man". It causes man to forsake sin and to embrace virtue, it renders the rehearsal of sin and virtues superfluous, and ideally it contains "al the law of god" and yet transcends all the laws and commandements which God has given to men, "for charitie hath no bonde". True charity, or perfect love of God, does not exist where any passions trouble the mind, where worldly cares and ambitions remain, and bodily pleasures and sensual lusts are not restrained. The antithesis of charity is self-love, which must be uprooted, and all the soul's love and affection given to God alone. Charity is then shown to comprise various virtues which work together in order to draw the soul from worldly affections:

> who so ever beleueth our master, he fereth his punysshment, and he that feareth to be punisshed of Christe, refreyneth hym selfe from sensual lustes, the whiche be the cuases of punysshment: he that kepeth of suche causes, abydeth wel and suffreth tribulation: he that pacientlly suffrith tribulation, hath a blessed hope and trust in god, the whiche drawethe and pluckethe the mynde from worldly affections: and the mynde ones frely discharged of all loue to this worlde, streight taketh the pure burnyng charite toward god, and that maketh quietnes rest and peace in our consciences. 1178

Lupset's ability to relate these virtues to one another, to relate his definitions of true charity to the contrasting descriptions of those states of mind which preclude charity, to relate specific remedies to general truths, gives to his treatise a sense of unity and proportion not to be

found in earlier works and makes the teaching easier to follow.

Although there are many incidental similarities between the teaching of Lupset's treatise and earlier works, the differences between them seem to be more significant. Throughout the Treatise of charitie the harmful effect of the passions and everything which may trouble the mind is stressed. The ability to banish such distractions is a prerequisite of charity, and it is to be achieved by concentrating entirely on the love of God so that other affections have no place in the soul. At the heart of Lupset's conception of charity lies, not the dynamic union with God envisaged by the author of The tre &.xii.frutes, but rather the Stoic concept of tranquillity:[1179]

> The perfyte loue of god hath in it a meruaylous quietnes & reste, it is neuer moued, styred, nor caried away by no storme of worldly troubles, but sytteth faste and sure in a continual calmnes, ayenst al wedders, al blastes, al stormes. No rocke is more stylle, then is the mynde of a charitable man when the worlde tumbleth, rolleth, & tosseth it with the fomy wawes of temptations...[1180]

This rest is the state enjoyed by the angels in heaven,[1181] and the maintenance of "the myndes quietnes" is one of the chief effects of charity. Perhaps because Lupset discusses and defines charity in purely human terms it tends to sound rather negative by comparison with the restful quiet of the mystic absorbed in the loving contemplation of God. The man-ward focus of his thought is seen again in the Exhortacyon, where Withypoll is assured that no external agency, secular ruler, Fortune or even the Devil can harm him: "For surely you can not be hurted but of one, in whom is power to do hurte: this is your owne free wyl. This wyl of yours, & nothing els, hath power to hurt you.."[1182] There is little sense here of human dependence on God; rather man appears to be arbiter of his own fate. The enhanced status enjoyed by man in Lupset's treatises, especially in comparison to medieval works, seems to be based

on a fundamental optimism in the perfectability of man. Commenting on the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, "Adueniat regnum tuum" and "Fiat voluntas tua sicut in coelo et in terra", he declares that where God reigns, there is heaven "So that of this world, there might be made an heuen":

> Now then is as moche as I beleue, that Christ biddeth vs aske nothynge, but the same maye be: I thinke it possible to make of this worlde the kyngdome of god, and to make men the kepers of goddis wyll: The whiche two thynges, to lyue in the kyngdome of god, and to obserue and kepe goddes wyll, I recken to be a perfection of aungels lyfe in heuen. 1183

Such perfection cannot be won by man's unaided efforts, but, with the assistance of prayer and by determining to give matters of spirit and the soul priority over inclination and affections of the body and the world, Lupset clearly believes that man is capable of attaining a place among the angels of heaven.

Lupset's appreciation of classical learning and morality, his optimistic view of mankind, and his stress on the importance of the soul and spirit and the inward integrity of man, are also to be found in the writings of the most influential and representative of the early sixteenth-century Christian humanists, Erasmus, described as the dominant figure of his age.[1184] His contribution to the spread of classical culture, in editions of classical authors[1185] and perhaps even more in his own collections like the Adagia, his colloquies, satires and educational works, is well known.[1186] He also did much to raise the intellectual and critical standards of Christian scholarship, notably in his edition of the Greek New Testament and in his editions and translations of the Greek and Latin fathers.[1187] At different times in the centuries following his death he was acclaimed for his rationalism and for his religious and political toleration, and he continued to be used by both Protestants and Catholics for propaganda purposes.[1188]

Erasmus made three visits to England, 1499 - 1500, 1505 - 6, 1509 - 14, and three more 1515 - 7,[1189] and he seems to have made the acquaintance of many who held influential positions in Church or court,[1190] and of nearly all the English humanists of the time: Grocyn, Linacre, William Lily, Lupset, Colet and More, the last two becoming his close friends. It was a group capable of appreciating the wit and learning of Erasmus, and the Latin style in which he always chose to express himself, but it was by no means representative of English taste and education of the time. With the exception of two schoolbooks[1191] none of Erasmus's works seem to have been printed in England before c.1525.[1192] From that date until the middle of the century the works published in England were all printed in translation.[1193] From the selection made available to him the English reader of the 1530s and 1540s had a very unbalanced view of Erasmus' work. His editorial activities on the Bible, the Fathers and the classics remained unknown, except for the collections translated by Richard Taverner.[1194] A few colloquies,[1195] Julius Exclusus and The praise of folie,[1196] represented his more satirical output; De Civilitate morum puerilium seems to have been the only educational work to have been translated.[1197] It was as the author of sermons,[1198] paraphrases of Scripture,[1199] expositions of the creed and Lord's prayer and devout treatises on such traditional topics as contempt of the world and preparation for death, that Erasmus was presented to the English reading public. Over half of the treatises translated in the 1530s were first published 1521 - 36, a period when he was in conflict with both reformers and humanists, during which he seems to have moderated some of his views, and been more concerned to stress the orthodoxy of his beliefs.[1199A] Many of these treatises went through two editions, but rarely more, and they are concentrated in the 1530s although reprints occurred during the following decade and on

into Edward VI's reign.[1200] However, the emphasis seems gradually to shift from the devotional treatises to the more classical-educational works. The number of translations to appear during the 1530s and their concentration on the content and practice of devotion does seem to support the view that such works were agreeable to and probably encouraged by the government - the fact that the king's printer, Berthelet, was responsible for nearly twice as many editions[1201] as any other printer seems to bear this out.

In view of Erasmus' resolute refusal to become involved in the doctrinal controversies of the reformation, it is ironical that the Enchiridion and Paraclesis were probably trnaslated into English by radical reformers whose works were proscribed in England,[1202] and another reformer, Miles Coverdale, subsequently produced a shortened version of the Enchiridion.[1203] Three themes which occur throughout Erasmus' work had an obvious appeal for the reformers: his criticism of contemporary clerical life and learning, particularly the monastic life and scholasticism; his condemnation of the undue importance attached to outward observations and ceremonies at the expense of the inward, spiritual qualities of religion; and his emphasis on Scripture as the only foundation for Christian life and doctrine. They are the familiar ammunition of reformers from Wyclif and the Lollards to Savonarola, Luther, Tyndale and Zwingli. Tyndale, for instance echoes many of Erasmus' views in his Wicked Mammon and Obedience of a Christian Man. He attacked scholastic philosophers for leading men astray and failing to understand the simple truth of Scripture;[1204] he condemned superstitious customs including the worship of saints;[1205] ceremonies were dismissed as meaningless,[1206] they were understood by neither priest nor people and were used by the clergy to keep the people in darkness "and be theyr captiue to honor theyr cere-

monies".[1207] He was also critical of clerical ignorance, of the Church's materialism,[1208] her secular powers which made the king no more than the Pope's hangman,[1209] and her involvement in international politics. Both authors were deeply concerned to teach high standards of practical morality, for they saw a good life as the necessary expression of true faith. Like Erasmus, Tyndale sought to restore the simplicity and purity of biblical Christianity, to make Scripture the foundation of life and doctrine, and to bring the individual to a true, spiritual understanding of God. But other catholic authors, whose orthodoxy, unlike Erasmus', was not challenged, were also critical of contemporary abuses: Dionysius Carthusianus on the secular clergy;[1210] Whitford on the monastic life;[1211] A Kempis and Gerson on scholasticism and the folly of trusting in academic learning.[1212] It was not just his criticisms of contemporary religion which made Erasmus distrusted by the Catholic Church he sought to purify.[1213]

The Enchiridion and Paraclesis offer a representative and serious view of Erasmus' religious thought, and both were of importance in the development of English devotion. The Enchiridion, although it enjoyed considerable success in its English translation, was not perhaps so outstandingly popular as has sometimes been suggested.[1214] Its greatest success was among the educated, who could appreciate the refinement of its Latin style,[1215] its classical allusions,[1216] and its use of paradoxes and contrasts[1217] which posed questions rather than answering them. Thomas Lupset's recommendation of the work as one "that in fewe leaues conteynethe an infynite knowlege of goodnes"[1218] was probably characteristic of the reputation it enjoyed among the largely court-based circle of well educated humanists.[1219] Erasmus described the origin of the work over

twenty years after it was written,[1220] and he also comments on its failure to effect the desired reform in its recipient.[1221] He summarizes its purpose thus: "Conatus autem sum velut artificium quoddam pietatis tradere, more eorum qui de disciplinis certas rationes conscripsere".[1222] There was nothing new in the idea of a manual setting forth " ye way to good lyuynge",[1223] or in Erasmus' words: "a certeyn craft of vertuous lyuing/by whose helpe thou myghtest attayne a vertuous mynde/accordyng to a true chrysten man". Superficially at least, the Enchiridion has many links with medieval devout treatises - but behind the traditional façade there are significant changes.

The structure reflects the arbitrary division, the repetition and variations characteristic of medieval treatises rather than the rationally developed argument of Lupset's carefully constructed pieces. There is no detailed setting, little sense of any personal relationship between the author and his reader, and none of the humour which enlivens More's Dyalogue of comforte or Lupset's works. The figure of the Christian knight [1224] and his armour, and the warfare of Christ,[1225] which dominate the opening chapters of the Enchiridion, were derived from biblical and patristic sources and were frequently found in late medieval tribulation treatises. The endurance of tribulation and the need to combat temptation are endemic problems of the Christian life. Much of Erasmus' teaching recalls the earlier tribulation treatises, and his advice on ways to overcome temptation - by defiance, by prayer or concentrating on some holy occupation, by uprooting vices as soon as they are recognized and refusing to overlook any sin, by fighting to win and preventing despair by trusting in Christ's strength or uprooting pride by ascribing the victory to Him - all these have their counterparts in earlier treatises addressed to nuns and contemplatives.[1226] Suffering,

the common condition of life in this world, becomes meritorious when accepted for Christ's sake as a proof of His love.[1227] Virtue too must be proved by adversity,[1228] and although it should be pursued for its own, or rather for Christ's sake, there is the expectation that suffering in this life will be recompensed a hundred-fold to good men.[1229] However, the reward - usually undefined in earlier treatises - is described in characteristically humanist terminology as tranquillity of mind,[1230] and it is contrasted with the punishment of a gnawing conscience which Erasmus considered to be one of the pains of hell.[1231] The promise of reward and the threat of punishment do not dominate the Enchiridion's teaching to the same extent as they did the earlier tribulation treatises, nor is their dispensation so mechanical; the fact that rewards and punishments are experienced, at least in part, in this life helps to break down the rigid scheme of post-mortem reversal.[1232]

In common with many earlier treatises the Enchiridion seems to regard the world as transitory and corrupt, and the Christian is warned not to trust its perverted values,[1233] its false learning[1234] and its hypocritical holiness.[1235] However, it is not to be hated for itself alone, but in contrast to the love of the true and eternal; "As moche as thou shalt prfyte in ye loue of Chryst so moche shalt thou hate the worlde".[1236] Erasmus tempers the thorough-going contemptus mundi attitudes of earlier authors[1237] by introducing the concept of neutrality, things which in themselves are indifferent, neither good nor bad,[1238] but which like wealth or knowledge may be put to good use, or abused. Similarly the traditional opposition between body and soul, which seems to be reflected in the Enchiridion, owes as much to Plato as to St.Paul.[1239] The affections and fleshly lusts - avarice, ambition, pride, wrath and vengeance[1240] - are condemned because they obscure the reason and reduce man to the level of a beast rather than because they are

innately sinful. In common with other humanists, he sees man as essentially noble:

> In our myndes veryly we be so celestial and of godly capacite that we may surmount aboue the nature of aungels/and by vnyt/knyt & made one with god. yf thy body had not ben added||to the/thou haddest ben a celestial or godly thyng. yf this mynde had not ben graffed in ye/playnly thou haddest ben a brute beest. 1241

and he who accepts the rule of "kyng Reason"[1242] will be able to overcome nature and all that is visible, external and sensual, and mount up to celestial things, to the eternal, the good and the true. Again, Erasmus introduces a third category into his analysis of man, and between the flesh which couples him with the Devil and the Spirit by which he reflects and is knit to God lies the soul "a meane & indifferent thynge/ neyther good nor bad".[1243] The soul in fact seems to become the arbiter of man's fate according to whether it chooses to ally itself with the flesh or the spirit.

Over half the length of the Enchiridion ~~then~~ is devoted to rules for Christian living, which are intended to banish "thre euyl thynges remaynyng of original synne" namely ignorance, the flesh and weakness or lack of constancy. Thus the soul is to be weaned from attachment to the flesh and transitory things, and taught to contemplate celestial things, the invisible and eternal things of the spirit.[1244] The "craft of vertuous lyuing" outlined in the various rules of the Enchiridion is a practical product of a process of Christian education. This covers the formal elements of education, such as the importance of the child's early environment and the responsibilities of those who hold public office, described by other classical-humanist authors.[1245] Erasmus considers that classical authors can help to prepare the Christian for the study of the Bible, and he encourages moderate "exercyse & sporte...in werkes of poets and philosophers whichewere gentyles/as in his Abc. or

introductory to a more perfyte thynge".[1246] With the proviso that all learning was to be referred to Christ and loved for His sake, the confident reader was at liberty to study any classical work, so long as he found it "profytable to good lyuyng":[1247] the use of allegory and determination to profit from what was read made even "poetes which wryte vnclenly"[1248] acceptable. Although theoretically subordinate to Christian writings, Erasmus in fact allows the best pagan authors such as Plato almost equal authority, and in some of his works such as De contemptu mundi the enjoyment of classical literature is in danger of becoming an end in itself.[1249] In common with other humanist authors, Christ is regarded primarily as a teacher and as the only true exemplar of good living.[1250] Unlike Lupset, who avoids all reference to Christ's Passion, Erasmus encourages his reader to follow Christ's cross,[1251] but he does not provide the practical assistance given by later authors.[1252] Although he avoids, and indeed criticizes, the prominence given to Christ's Passion in so many late medieval devotional treatises - for instance mechanical repetition of the Passion narrative and superstitious trust in symbols and relics of the Passion[1253] - he penetrates more deeply into the meaning of the Christian faith in his discussion of the meaning of love[1254] and in his sermon on God's mercy[1255] than most writers of medieval handbooks outside the mystical tradition.

The basis of Erasmus' criticisms of contemporary religious regulations, ceremonies and institutions, is that they obscure the invisible and eternal things of the spirit; "God is a mynde/and veryly mynde most pure/ most subtyle and perfyte/therfore ought he to be honoured most chefely with a pure mynde".[1256] The bondage of ceremonies is a denial of the spirit of God, "whiche is the auhtor of charite & lybertye".[1257] Other authors had appealed for a more spiritual understanding of religion,[1258] but the

Enchiridion stresses the inward and spiritual interpretation repeatedly, rising to a climax in the longest chapter of the book, the thirteenth. Erasmus' criticisms are substantiated by the evidence of many late medieval devotional treatises. Superstitious customs and prayers associated with the veneration of saints[1259] and relics (often the object of pilgrimage),[1260] with the sacraments, especially mass,[1261] and with occasions of human significance, especially death,[1262] are reflected if not encouraged in many works. He also challenges the general assumption of the superiority of the monastic life.[1263] Not only does he criticize the contemporary standards of regular religious,[1264] but he implies that it is neither the only, nor even the best, expression of Christian living. He makes use of a historical argument to show how monasticism has grown away from its original ideals to become corrupt and parasitic,[1265] until now he regards obedience to the baptismal vows, the willing service and chaste marriage of the secular man as a better reflection of "the religyon of the gospell" than "the relygyon of blacke monkes or grey freeres" with their man-made vows and enforced submission to so many regulations and ceremonies. Just as ceremonies and vows obscure the simplicity of Christ's gospel and hedge it about with regulations, so does contemporary scholasticism, with its barbaric language and irrelevant subtleties, because it does not "instructe vs to lyue well and after a christen maner".[1266]

Unlike the reformers, however, Erasmus did not regard these abuses as totally corrupt. He was prepared to allow a limited usefulness to monasticism,[1267] and he recognized that ceremonies and outward forms were useful to beginners,[1268] but, like Hilton, he would not have men bound to their obervance.[1269] He again echoes the mystics in exposing the danger of trusting in human knowledge or strength.[1270] Erasmus' insistence

on the importance of the individual being able to recognize his own spiritual sickness and reflects the commonly advocated virtue of self-knowledge,[1271] but he does not require the same depth of introspection demanded by the Scala Perfectionis. It is possible that Erasmus' emphasis on the imitation of Christ, on practical morality and on the basic simplicity of the Gospel may owe something to his early contacts with the brethren of the Common Life,[1272] but he encourages the individual Christian to achieve a degree of independence that orthodox mystical authors, for all their individuality, would not have allowed. The Enchiridion makes hardly any reference to the Church - as opposed to its institutions and ceremonies - and nowhere enjoins obedience to the beliefs of Holy Church.[1273] Even in the introductory epistle,[1274] where he presents the apparently hierarchical image of the three concentric circles, clergy, princes and common people, around Christ, he emphasizes the mutual responsibility of each to other in Christ rather than the supremecy of the clergy over the rest.[1275] Every man, no matter what manner of life he follows, is able to aim at the one mark, "whiche is Christe and his moste pure lernynge". The clergy and the schoolmen have betrayed their trust, and rather than communicating the faith to their neighbours they are like Philistines, intent on stopping up "the fountayne of the gospell".[1276] It is for the individual to believe the promises of the Gospel, to learn the wisdom of God from the Scriptures and through self knowledge,[1277] and thus learn to know right from wrong,[1278] to love what is good and true and to cleave to it, no matter what great men, philosophers, divines, popes or kings or the majority of people may do.[1279] The inability of the majority to pursue such an independent course, and the possible dangers to Church and State from those who were confident that they were a part

of that small but blessed flock who alone agree "with ye fyrst ensample of Christ", were a far more serious threat to the established order than Erasmus' criticisms of superstitious ceremonies or monasticism.

Although the Enchiridion claims to be a manual setting forth "rules of true chrysten lyuynge" - in fact much practical advice of a general nature is included - the practical teaching is an incidental though necessary product of Erasmus' theory of the Christian life. His precise views on particular issues are often ambiguous. His personal tolerance and moderation,[1280] his desire for unity in the Church[1281] and for peace between men and nations,[1282] and his preference for indirect criticism and satire rather than dogmatic statements, make him seem weak, vacillating and adaptable to the point of contradiction - he was capable of writing In laude and prayse of matrymony and, with every appearance of sincerity, he could also praise the religious vocation of virginity in the highly traditional Comaparation of a Vyrgin and a Martyr.[1283] Erasmus does not reveal the strong personal conviction and zeal for reform of Luther or Tyndale; his faith was more intellectual, less personal than theirs, he appealed to the mind and reason rather than to the heart and emotions; but his sincere concern to elucidate the philosophy of Christ is not to be doubted. This distillation of the wisdom of Christ was to be sought primarily in Scripture, especially in the Gospels and Epistles and in the life of Christ: "What other thynge is all the lyfe/ ye death/& the resurrection of Christ than a moste pure and clere myrrour or glasse of the euangelical philosophy".[1284] He declared that "all the trewe fountayne and vayne of Christes philosophy is hydde in the gospell and the epystels of the apostels",[1285] but he recognized that Scripture was obscure and difficult and needed interpretation:

> Therfore in myne oppinyon the best were that some bothe well lerned men and good of lyuing shuld...make a collectyon and...gather the somme of Christes phylosophy out of the pure fountayne of the gospell and the epystles and most approued

> interpretours/and so playnly that yet it myght be clerkly & erudyte/and so breuely that it myght also be playne. 1286

The Enchiridion was perhaps Erasmus' earliest attempt to provide such a summary.[1287] Having described the Christian's full armour, "set onely out of the armory of holy scripture"[1288] although supported by classical works, he offers, as a handy substitute for the unwieldy "hole and complete armure and harneys of holy scripture", "this lytell treatyse called Enchiridion/that is to saye/a certayn lytell dagger". This summary teaching, coupled with faith, will enable its user "to withstande the fyerse & ragyng assawte of thyne ennemy".

Whereas the Enchiridion concentrated on the manner of life which should grow from the philosophia Christi, the Exhortacyon to the dylygent study of scripture (the Paraclesis) and the Exhortacyon to the study of the Gospell[1289] (Preface to the Paraphrase on Matthew) represent an appeal to "entyse all mortall men vnto the moste holy & holsome studye of Chrystan wysdome/and pure phylosophy". This "very pure & naturall phylosophye of Christe",[1290] "this vnlerned Phylysophy",[1291] "this doctryne of Christe",[1292] "this Phylosophy of the Gospelles"[1293] was the means whereby Erasmus sought to recover the simplicity, liberty and purity of the apostolic faith. But he was so concerned to free the Gospel of Christ, "Ye quycke & lyuyng ymage of his most holy mynde/ ye and Chryste hymselfe spekynge, healynge, deyenge, rysynge agayne... In so moche that thou couldest not so playne and frutefullye se hym. Although he were present before thy bodely iyes",[1294] from the accretions of human tradition, external ceremonies and scholastic subtleties, that he fails to give any positive personal or theological content to the Christianity on which his ethics are based. Having neither an object of faith - the suffering Jesus of medieval devotion or the Risen Lord of the Reformers - not a satisfactory intellectual framework, the

the philsophia Christi is an essentially negative concept.[1295]

But although its content was ambiguous, the philosophia Christi was positive in its requirements that the Bible should be made freely available to everyone so that all might profit from it: "there is nothynge pertaynynge vnto mannes felycyte/other elles vnto any operacyon expedyent vnto this presente lyfe. But it is declared, dyscussed, and absolutely touched".[1296] In his edition of the Greek New Testament Erasmus addressed himself to scholars, but in its preface and in his paraphrases he sought "plus propres à émouvir le sentiment religieux, exposer cette philosophie du Christ que son exégèse érudite et critique dégageait de la lettre sacrée".[1297] He renewed his attack on the scholastics and theologians for obscuring the truth, for their ignorance of Scripture and because they prevented access to it.[1298] Other sects - Platonists, Aristotelians, Stoics - know the teachings and traditions of their masters, and indeed much of what the pagan philosophers taught corresponded to Christian teaching,[1299] but Erasmus is emphatic that Christ is the only perfect teacher.[1300] The clergy too are ignorant and have failed to provide a living example of Christ's philosophy or to teach it.[1301] They mislead the people with human vows and ceremonies,[1302] entice them by plays[1303] and provide entertainment rather than instruction in their sermons.[1304] The true divine is one who lives according to Christ's teaching, "thoughe he be a weuer/yea thoughe he dygge & delue" and who, being inspired by the Holy Ghost, teaches accordingly and draws other to follow Christ.[1305] But when the official clergy are lax or ignorant, then every Christian is entitled to "fede & norysshe his owne mynde wt priuate redynge of the Gospell".[1306] But for the Bible to be freely available to every baptized Christian[1307] it must be first translated.[1308] Christ's empire has been diminished and His Church is torn by strife because His word is not known;[1309] He desired "that his counceylles and mysteries

shuld be spred abrode, as moche as is possyble",[1310] and rather than mumbling their psalms and Pater in a language they do not understand[1311] Erasmus would rejoice to have the Bible

> so comenly spoken of, of all maner men in all maner languages/that ye ploughman holdynge ye plough/dyd synge somwhat of the mystycall Psalmes||in his owne mother tonge/yea and yf the weuer, syttynge at his worke, did synge somwhat of ye gospell, for his solace & conforte in his labours/& more ouer yf ye mayster of the shyppe, syttynge faste at the sterne, do synge also somwhat of the same/and for to make an ende yf ye wedded wyfe, when she sytteth at her dystaffe, haue some companyon, or kynneswoman vnto her, whiche dothe reade and reherse somwhat herof vnto her. 1312

According to Erasmus "The fyrst poynte of christyanyte is to knowe what Christe hathe taught",[1313] and he devotes considerable attention to the way in which the Bible is to be read. To derive profit from this reading, learning, in the sense of academic knowledge or intellectual prowess, is not necessary;[1314] no-one is so unlearned that he cannot learn "this vnlerned Phylysophy";[1315] what is needed is a simple and pure mind or faith and a desire to learn,[1316] and perhaps a brief prayer for the illuminiation of the Holy Spirit.[1317] The right attitude of mind is all-important, and Erasmus warns against the common dangers of presumption (of the ignorant as well as of the learned), credulity, or rigidity of opinion, curiosity or idle speculation, and the temptation of forcing scripture to fit private opinions, from which springs stiffness, brawling, debate, heresey and discord in the Church.[1318] In view of Erasmus' consistent emphasis on the importance of the inward and spiritual element, it is not surprising to find that he advocated and used allegorical interpretation of Scripture, although by 1516 he has begun to moderate the excessive emphasis on the allegorical sense found in the <u>Enchiridion</u> ca.ij.[1319] He also recommends the Gospels and

Epistles as the best source of Christ's teaching rather than the more obscure, sometimes offensive or foolish, histories and prophecies of the Old Testament - but he does not forbid the latter to any man.[1320]

Characteristically Erasmus goes on to insist that the knowledge derived from the diligent study of Scripture must bear fruit in life,[1321] and he makes some specific recommendations in the Exhortacyon to the study of the Gospell on how Christ's philosophy should be taught publicly. In addition to small books summarizing His teaching, which could be carried about, he recommends similar books for preachers.[1322] His most novel suggestion is the imposition of a catechetical discipline upon children, who should attend these sermons, learn the meaning of their baptismal vows, be examined in them, and then personally make public affirmation of their vows:[1323]

> what a goodly and a royall syghte wolde it be, to here ye voyces of so many yonge men, dedycatynge and gyvyng themselfe wholly to Iesu Chryst: of so many yonge souldyars, swerynge to do and fulfyll his commaundementes, forsakyng and renounsynge this worlde....[1324]

In these Exhortacyons Erasmus reflects something of the humanist optimism, that the effects of the Fall can be repaired through a Christian upbringing and education;[1325] he echoes the Brethren of the Common Life in his call for simplicity and inwardness of belief, and he foreshadows the Reformers in his appeal for a return to Scripture as the source and standard of Christian life and doctrine.

As noted above,[1326] the selection of Erasmus' works made available to English readers was unrepresentative of his total output, since it ignored most of his scholarly editorial work, his satires and his educational treatises. With the exception of the Enchiridion none of his works

was conspicuously popular during the 1530s, but the large number (nineteen) of different devotional treatises made available in translation during the decade suggests that his influence was extensive. Common to all his expository - devotional treatises was a reaction against external forms and traditions, and a stress on the importance of the individual's inner apprehension of the truth of Christ's teaching which should find expression in his manner of life. The simplicity of his view of Christ's philosophy and his preference for a few practical principles of life rather than a multiplicity of detailed regulations would have appealed to the unlearned, while those with more intellectual training probably appreciated his use of classical allusion, his historical arguments and the significance of the contrast between Erasmus' teaching and that of the schoolmen and religious. His treatises contrived to combine the secular viewpoint of the humanists with the older topics of traditional devotion, to present for the first time in English a truly lay devotion.[1327] Because he never in so many words condemned the institutions and customs he criticized, and because, superficially at least, he retained many of the categories of traditional devotional instruction,[1328] most of his work was probably acceptable to more conservative readers as well as to those who desired reform. His exposure of human and ecclesiastical shortcomings was made indirectly, often by means of contrast or satire, and the attractiveness of his writing may have helped to disarm some of his critics. He avoided dogmatic statements which would provoke violent reactions or inflame the passions of either side, and he appealed rather to the mind and reason of his readers. The philosophia Christi, his appeal for purity, simplicity and liberty in Christian faith and life, was a conspicuously neutral idea amid the warring Catholic - Protestant factions of the early sixteenth century, and it drew supporters

from both sides. In England this rather ambiguous neutrality matched the mood of the government to a remarkable extent. While tolerating, and in certain specific areas actually furthering reform, Cromwell, and even more Henry VIII, were unwilling to abandon most of the doctrines and customs of traditional Catholicism. Erasmus' treatises favoured the same kind of reform as seems to have been envisaged by Cromwell: a reformation of superstitions and abuses (monasticism and images and relics, especially those which were the object of pilgrimage were uprooted during the 1530s) and the introduction of a more simple, biblical religion (vernacular translations of the Bible were officially ordered in 1538). Erasmus' popularity may well have been official rather than truly popular, his influence greater among those of some learning rather than the entirely unlearned, and he probably appealed to laymen rather than religious. This suggests that he would probably have appealed most to the middle classes, a hitherto neglected but rapidly increasing audience, who were to become the main supporters of that reform which Erasmus in so many ways foreshadows.

PROTESTANT TREATISES

The differences between the late medieval devotional literature and the Protestant treatises of the 1530s and 1540s are substantial and obvious. The affective devotion of the later middle ages is almost entirely superseded by doctrinal and ethical instruction and polemic. The visual stimulus and imaginative appeal of meditations on Christ's Passion or the Last Things, the lives of Christ and the Saints, gives way to solid biblicism and substantial doctrinal content - a change reflected even in the format of the books.[1329] Descriptions of people and events tend to be replaced by historical surveys, biblical exposition and discussion of the fundamental tenets of Protestant theology: faith and works, justification, the law and grace. The work of pure devotion is replaced by the edifying treatise. The secular government rather than the Catholic Church becomes the final arbiter of doctrine, the King displaces the Pope, and authors assume a secular audience, subjects of the King, rather than an audience of religious vowed to obey their superiors. Religion becomes more obviously a national and political concern, and the civil and social duties of the Christian are regarded as more important than the traditional religious obligations. Yet despite all the changes it is possible to discern some continuity of form and subject matter between the traditional Catholic treatises and the new Protestant writings.[1330]

The ymage of loue[1331] was one of the first English books printed that was openly critical of some of the traditional Catholic customs and institutions which were to be the chief targets of the Reformers, and several of which had been already condemned by the Lollards.[1332]

Expensive images, vestments and plate, over-elaborate services and too much trust placed in outward ceremonies were criticized, and the author suggests that there are better ways to serve God than in the monastic life, which has become corrupted over the centuries; but like Erasmus he usually avoids outright condemnation. The work seems to have been addressed to nuns, and sixty copies were sent to each of the nuns of Syon Abbey.[1333] This might suggest attempted subversion of an influential and conservative community, or exploitation of de Worde's known contacts with Syon,[1334] but de Worde and John Gough were reprimanded by the ecclesiastical authorities for printing it.[1335] The work describes the author's quest - a spiritual one rather than the moral-intellectual quest of Hawes's Pastime of pleasure or Exemple of vertu - for the image of true love.[1336] It is sought first in natural love, in the bond of kin or friendship or the love between man and wife; but discord mars these relationships, and the body and its senses (the five wits) desire transitory, worldly pleasures that can be enjoyed in this life but merit no heavenly reward. The image of the world, so alluring from a distance, is unpleasantly destrctive when scrutinized more closely;[1337] once ensnared by its false promise man will soon forget God, and at last will receive not reward but punishment in proportion to his pleasure; "so moche sorowe & turment shall ye deuyll gyue hym therfore agayn". The image of a beautiful woman is also dangerous: from the long train of her dress "appered out ye tale of a stryngynge serpent" and "a lytell from her was deth & hell mouth gapynge to receyue her & all that were wt her". Again he is warned, mainly by examples from Scripture,[1338] to flee her. He is tempted then to turn to some man-made substitute for the true image, but he is told that rather than purchase some image or statue to serve as "the bokes of lay people symple & vnlerned/that be vnperfyte in goostly lyfe" it is better to set a good example of living; "se thy conuersacion be holy & meke

and thy doctryne holsome yt shall stere people to deuocyon". Rykes then voices one of the most characteristic pleas of the reformers, that money should be spent on "ye lyuynge temple", on the people of Christ, not on the glorification of inanimate church buildings: "That that is not necessary neyther to ye necessary sustenaunce of the body/nor be the honest & reasonable maynteynyng of the degre & state of a person : can not well be ordred but to anyll ende/excepte it be bestowed vpon poore people", although he does allow that provision should be made for the Church's necessary maintenance. The quest having so far proved fruitless, the author is instructed to abandon his search for a physical image and to seek a spiritual one - just as the Enchiridion encouraged its readers not to be content with the physical and external ceremonies and regulations but to seek spiritual truth. The spiritual sight, made dim "wt dust & humour of vanite & carnalite" is to be cleansed, not by entering religion which encourages self love, but by following the Protestant ideal of active service of Christ's body:

> charite sayth saynt Paule/is to edifye our neyghbour/to thynke ourselfe membres of one body/& so to use one another/as ye membres naturally do in ye body/& so to vse ourselfe one to another/ consyderynge our selfe as one body in Chryst/to be as glad of our neyghbours profyte as our owne/to helpe them in theyr distresse/as they wolde be holpen in theyr owne/louyngly to reforme & correcte them yt do amysse/to helpe & releue them yt be fallen in dekay bodyly or goostly/to comforte ye heuy/to helpe ye syke/to socour the nedy....to referre al our rychesse/labour/study and care to this ende/that we might profyte & do good to many in our sauyour Chryst... the more we profyte to many/the more is our auayle and meryte. 1339

Earlier authors had, of course, made use of the Pauline image of the body of Christ and had reminded their readers - the minority who were not contemplatives or religious - of their social responsibilities.[1340] But as long as the monastic idea of perfection was dominant and the

Church's emphasis on the need of the individual to accumulate merit by the prescribed means was accepted, the active and social dimensions of the faith received comparatively little attention. The Reformers did not acknowledge the superiority of the religious life nor did they accept the divine authority of the visible Church; their ecclesiology was more dynamic and personal and carried a far stronger social emphasis.[1341]

The author of The ymage of loue seeks to separate the true image of charity from its conventional form, "these gay outwarde thynges & obseruaunces...all the gay syngynge & playinge/or multipyinge of orysons". Charity is a reflection of the living and invisible God made visible in Christ, who "take a glasse/that is our nature/whiche wel may be compared vnto a bryttell glasse/wherin he shewed vs this ymage of loue/that is hymself". But as "a glas can represent nothyng but yf somwhat be present vnto it. So in man can be no charite but yf god be present vnto his soule". Ryke devotes the remainder of his work to the practical implications of this image of love. He describes five different types of love, for kindred, for all people, for enemies and for God, and places them thus in ascending order according to the five wits: the lowest being fleshly touch or feeling and the highest and most spiritual sense being sight. The image is reflected not in "paynted clothes & carued ymages", in external and physical things, but by inward virtues: "contynuall perseueraunce in loue & pacience/yt is true golde surely proued in ye fyre of trouble & aduersite". The other virtues which clothe "the spouses of Christ" are for the most part conventional enough: ~~"the spouses of Christ" are for the most part conventional enough.~~ diligence and obedience, meekness and chastity,

patience and poverty, skill and humility, mercy and justice, benignity and gravity, and discretion in all things. Godly wisdom, however, consists not only in despising all earthly things, in compunction of heart, contrition for sins, charitable works and contemplation, but in "study of holy scriptur & in the lawe of god". Belief in the articales of the faith and the gifts of grace, a pure heart, a good conscience and a sure hope "wt dewe of grace from aboue" complete the clothing of the image of love. For the most part the virtues are those of countless medieval treatises written for religious, but the reading of the Bible hints at a new order. So too do the criticisms of "the supersticyous obseruaunces & vayne customes "which burden contemporary monasticism and hinder the true following of Christ.[1342] He also includes a comprehensive indictment of the dangers of hypcrisy in the monastic life,[1343] and seems to value personal contrition more than confession to a priest. Such criticisms, with his general warning against placing too much faith in outward ceremonies, point towards reform, as does his advice "gete you lerynge bothe by doctryne & grace/wherby ye may worke/teche & shewe examples of lyght". The author goes on to encourage his readers to love God above all, showing them how they should learn to give themselves freely to God and how to judge when they act against that love. He paints a fearsome picture of the Devil - perhaps the most vivid and detailed description to be found in the literature of the period[1344] - and the work concludes with an ecstatic celebration of charity, based on Hugh of St. Victor, and a prayer "besechyng ye to comme in to my soule for to kyndle it in loue/to lyghten it wt grace/to dilate my hert/to stretche out my desyre/to open the bosome of my mynde/to enlarge & stablysshe thy dwellyng place in my soule".[1345] For the most part the

author is content to use conventional authorities and to praise the conventional virtues of the medieval religious tradition, but in his desire for a more spiritual and active faith Rykes foreshadows the Reformers.

The Lytell treatyse called/or named the (Myrrour or lokynge glasse of life),[1346] whose author John G. it is tempting to identify with the printer John Gough who was involved in the publication of many reformed works,[1347] balances ideas which suggest reformed views with traditional material.[1348] Frequent contemplation of the "Myrrour of lyfe", which is explicitly identified as the New Testament, has brought this author, like John Rykes,[1349] to see "my selfe what I was/& what danger/& case I lyued in many yeres/moste lyke to lodge my poore soule in helle".[1350] Seeing himself "farre out of the trewe ryght waye", he felt bound by that sense of Christian responsibility so characteristic of the Reformers not only "to enlumyne myselfe: but also to enduce my brethren & neyghbours/ and charytably to socour and counceyll them perceyuyng that they were so farre from the trewth by ygnoraunsy". The remedy for this ignorance and the means to cleanse "theyr deformytes and abhomynable fowle spottes of stynkyng fylthnesse" were to be sought in the same mirror that exposed them.

A good deal of the extant teaching[1351] - for it is a work that seeks to instruct rather than to provide topics for devout meditation - echoes the form and content of earlier works. He arranges his topics according to the traditional catechetical lists of sins, virtues, works of mercy, five wits, etc., and even includes lists of the names of the devils and the pains of hell. Usually, however, he does not merely list the sins

or wits, but he attempts to use them as an opportunity for instruction. For instance, on the seven corporal works of mercy he urges his readers to give only to those whose need is genuine and who deserve support - teaching spelt out in more detail in the chapter "{xiiii}" of almysse dede", which reflects the Elizabethan horror of the "lusty & sturdy vacabondes" and laments the fate of others:

> in euery parysshe in London specyally in alyes & lanes innumerable: the whiche hunger and thirste/and suffre nede and penury importunat/ye and doth perysshe dayly for lacke of comforte the experyence therof causeth my herte to blede for pyte/to se the pore ymage of god perysshe/and so many ryche & wel‖thy persones so nere. 1352

Such sympathy for human suffering, rarely expressed in medieval works, was common in the writings of the Reformers,[1353] and made many of them critical of social conditions[1354] and ecclesiastical administration.[1355] It is not unusual in works of the 1530s that incline towards reform to find a characteristic concern of the reformers pushing out through a traditional form of topic. Chapters on the dangers of drunkedness or lechery, the fate of the covetous and echoes of the memento mori, vile body and quid profuit motifs,[1356] were all solidly traditional, and the authorities cited - SS. Augustine, Ambrose, Bernard, Gregory, Hugh of St. Victor, Richard of St. Victor, Pope Leo and Nicholas of Lyra - might have come from any medieval treatise. But there are signs of change, new ideas breaking through the old forms. Humanist influence is to be seen in the inclusion of a chapter (viii) providing "A good rule for a man to brynge vp youth" - although threats of "the moste horryble paynes of hell" to enforce obedience would not have been welcomed by Erasmus - and in Colet's translations of the Pater and creed (ca. iii); perhaps also in the collection of maxims that comprise "An ordre of Crysten lyuynge" (ca.ix),[1357] although this seems to represent the traditional religious view of life.

The author is still prepared to allow pilgrimages as "profytable to the soule/so that it be done accordynge to the lawe and wyll or pleasur of god", but like the Lollards and Reformers he also exposes the superstition, idolatry and hypocrisy which often surround the pilgrim, and he would seem to prefer that the time and money were devoted to "the lyuely ymage of cryste/which was bought wt so precyouse a pryse... whiche peryssheth dayly vnder oure noses".

There are more positive signs of reformed teaching to be noted in the frequent use of biblical quotations, to which references are given, and in the recommendation "that scryture is very vytle and profytable to rede" (ca. vi). Like Erasmus, the author reminds his readers of what was promised at their baptism and rehearses the vows - a full explanation of all the ceremonies of the baptismal rite was provided in A declaration of the Seremonies a nexid, to the sacrament of the Baptyme, what they sygnyffie and how we ought to vnderstande them.[1358] By means of the familiar three-fold recollection,[1359] the readers are reminded of man's natural state "Fyrste we were borne in orygynall synne and naked in to this worlde/moste pore of our selfes of all creatures that beryth lyfe";[1360] this is contrasted with the new birth and regeneration of baptism and the infinite mercy of God. The author, in common with others who inclined towards reform, is clearly concerned to give not only the rather impersonal moral - ecclesiastical instruction characteristic of the catechetical tradition, but to provide more personal teaching of the meaning of the Christian faith. The opening chapter of The Myrrour "contayneth the dyffynycyon of fayth, and of good workes" - two of the most common topics of reformed treatises. He bases his definition of faith on Hebrews XI:1 - as does William Bonde in The Pilgrymage of perfeccyon[1361] - and argues that

it knits the soul spiritually to God, enabling it to believe in the goodness of God as revealed in salvation history (again Protestants wherever possible include a summary of man's redemption from the creation and Fall to the Incarnation and death of Christ, which is here described in familiar medieval terms[1362]) and to trust in His word. The author goes on to show that, although good works are necessary, they are not the chief cause unless the soul is in a state of grace; good works cannot be meritorious.[1363] Works done out of fear or in over-confident trust of salvation are not acceptable; they must be done out of love for God and a desire to serve Him. The doctrinal teaching of The Myrrour is not sufficiently developed[1364] to make the gulf between this kind of work and that of an orthordox Catholic like Bonde absolute, but taken in conjunction with the author's concern to give the Christian faith and life a personal and social emphasis rather than the impersonal, formal and ecclesiastical quality of traditional teaching, the signs of reform are unmistakeable.

John Frith's Mirroure to know thyselfe[1365] again echoes a number of views familiar in medieval devotional treatises, but it is a more obviously Protestant work than The ymage or The Myrrour of lokynge glasse of lyfe. Like many earlier treatises Frith's was written at the request of a friend who wished to "be sumwhat enstructed to knowe himselfe/& so geue God thankes for the benefytes which he hath so abyndantlye poured vpon hym". The preface echoes earlier contemptus mundi pieces in its exposure of the vain and transitory objects - riches, honours, position, beauty, strength - but rather than condemn man's vanity in negative terms, by use of the vile body genre for example, Frith is concerned to make the more positive point that every outward gift, such as long life, riches or honour; every gift of the mind, such as wisdom and eloquence; and above all the gifts of the soul, predestination, election, vocation and justification-

all come from God and are gifts of His grace and mercy. All gifts are to be used to the mutual benefit of the Body of Christ[1366] - again the Reformed concern that faith should find active expression in love and service of the community. This service is not limited to physical assistance, but every Christian "which hath the lyght of Goddes worde reuelated vnto hym" is under obligation to share his spiritual knowledge, to preach God's word and to save his neighbour. The ministry of the Word is not confined to the ordained ministry of the Church, who, Frith believes, have betrayed their trust; "And therfore I afferme that all oure holy hypocrites & ydle belyed Monkes/Chanons & Prestes whether they be regulare or seculare/yf they laboure not to preache Goddes worde are theues & also murtherars".[1367] He condemns clergy, monks and friars both for their failure to preach the pure word of God and also because they spend money on idle pleasures such as hawking, rich clothes and large palaces rather than giving to the poor. Alms are better spent helping men set up or maintain a trade rather than on those who live off society and contribute nothing to it. Frith includes a story of Abbot Silvan from Vitae Patrum, a highly traditional source of illustrative material, to show that even pure contemplatives must work to live. Faith demands works that are socially and spiritually useful, not pilgrimages to Walsingham or Canterbury. Frith's Open criticism of Roman customs and clergy, and of their chief apologist Sir Thomas More, whose "paynted poetrye" obscures the truth of God's word, and his extensive use of biblical paraphrase and quotation, his concern that God's word should be widely preached and faith expressed in useful social activity, leave the reader in no doubt of his reformed position.

The Summe of the holye scripture[1368] contains rather more anti-

catholic polemic directed against the monks,[1369] and makes still clearer the characteristic concerns of those who sought to spread reformed teaching: "that euery man may knowe what ys the foundacyon of all scriptures/and what thinge they do teach vs....to thintent that euery man may knowe/what he shall beleue".[1370] Accordingly there are chapters dealing with faith and justification, with the meaning of baptism and the content of Christian belief, with salvation, grace and works. There is the usual Protestant emphasis on the need for personal faith in Christ's promises, and the importance of trusting in His grace and mercy and not relying on works and merits is made clear. The following confession illustrates the alternation of self-abasement and hopeful confidence frequently found in Protestant prayers:[1371]

> O dere lorde God almyghty/I pore synnar confesse byfore thy dyuine puyssaunce/that by my synnes I haue deserued the euerlastynge deth of helle by thy greate iustice. But alwayes I take hope and comfort in thy godly promesse wherby thou saydeste in thy gospel. He that beleueth in the sonne of God shal haue euer lastynge lyfe/for this cause I pore synnar come to warde the dere lorde Iesu Christe whyche art the onely fontayne of mercy not trustinge in my good workes (whiche be but stynkyng before the) nor in any worldly thyng but onely in the alone, for thou alone art the way the trouth & the lyfe. And I pray the that vnto me poore synner thou wilt do thy grace & mercy. Amen. 1372

Chapter xv raises the familiar devotional topic of the Christian's attitude to death. The author ranges himself clearly with other Reformers[1373] in emphasizing that faith in Christ removes all horror of death and that a willing death is a sign of faith and triumph over sin; "they that die with suche a courage and suche a trust in God it is a certayne signe that they be saued". To sorrow over death, or to make provision for an elaborate funeral or an expensive tomb, "is more institute for the profit & aduauntage of the lyuyng/then to helpe the deed" - Legrand, Vives and the outspoken Protestant Gnapheus all condemn

expensive monuments.[1374] Equally familiar was his advice that "the best preparacyon vnto deth is to loue nothing in this worlde" and to live a godly life[1375] - that same point was made by the humanist Lupset and in more traditional ars moriendi books.[1376]

The last section of The Summe, from chapter xxii onwards, is the most practical and probably the most significant. It seems to be one of the earliest contributions to the substantial Protestant and Puritan literature on the domestic and civil duties of the Christian. In his Obedience of a Christian man Tyndale outlines the offices of fathers, husbands and masters according to biblical precepts and reminds them of their responsibility for teaching their charges to know and obey the Lord's commandments. The Christian landlord was to be as a father to his tenants, and keep peace and justice tempered with mercy among them. The same qualities together with absolute integrity were required of all secular officers from kings and judges to sheriffs, bailiffs and constables. Spiritual rulers, however, were not expected to exercise their powers in secular affairs - as so many of them did.[1377] The civil aspects of Christian responsibility were subsequently elaborated in books like A ciuile nosgay,[1378] which dealt with the nature of justice, the authority of magistrates, the balance between equity and rigour in enforcing the law and voluntary or involuntary offences; but the attention given to the domestic and social duties was more influential for the development of devotion.[1379] The Summe considers the contrast between spiritual and secular government. The Christian's duty to obey the temporal laws is stressed; subjects, for example, must pay their taxes but rulers should not oppress then. In addition to the qualities of justice and mercy required of rulers and officials, the author seeks practical action to stop begging; the able-bodied should be made to learn a trade, while pleasant hospitals should

be provided at the charges of the parish where the elderly might find relief and edification in a daily sermon. Again, the Protestant sense of concern for fellow Christians suggests particular social reforms. The rich are to use their wealth to give practical assistance to the needy, not to pay for masses and obits, offerings to saints and wax candles, or to endow chantries, chapels or altars; as another author put it: "as touchynge to the spyryte it is nothing nedefull to bielde chirches".[1380]

The author's main interest in this last section, however, focuses on the life of ordinary citizens and householders. The relationship between married couples - a topic discussed in many Protestant treatises[1380A] - is to be grounded in Christ, not based on lust or possessions. The widow is to model herself on the precepts of I Timothy V - the pastoral epistles were a popular and obvious source for this kind of teaching. There is a summary instruction, based on humanist ideas, on how parents should bring up their children;[1381] it emphasizes that it is the parents' responsibility to see that their children learn and are brought up in the true faith. The duty of church-going, particularly to hear the sermon, remains, but Christian life and instruction centres on the home, not the Church. The occupations, social ethics and devotion of the householder are dealt with in greater detail than in anything previously available in English. He must endeavour to act as he would wish to be treated (Matthew VII:12). He must help, or procure aid for his neighbour in need, but never strive against him. The wrongdoer must not be provoked, but efforts should be made to reform him gently. Money earned is to be used in God's service and to help the poor, not to beautify the house or buy costly clothes.[1382] The servant is to remain content with his position,[1383] and to remember

that he can serve God as well by willing service to his master as by going to mass or praying in church. Instruction on the relationship between masters and servants, the choice, character and training of servants was elaborated a few years later in Cousin's Of the office of seruauntes.[1384] Although addressed principally to the master it reflects the widely held Protestant concern that every order of society should be taught their duty - social and religious. Not only the servant but every artisan is to work joyfully in the knowledge that he is serving God, and while at work he should from time to time lift up his heart to God in a short prayer - a practice also recommended in The Pomander of prayer.[1385] It is significant that of the five classes of society distinguished by the author[1386] it is the common Christian, who earns his own living and helps to maintain the lives of others, that is seen as the most worthy. The monastic ideal and the monastic-based devotion of a leisured nobility that had dominated the later fifteenth - early sixteenth century was replaced during the 1530s and 1540s by the ideal of the sanctified life and labour of the ordinary householder.

The Reformers' determination to see that everyone was taught the true biblical faith of Christ was complemented by their desire to expose the errors of traditional Catholic doctrine and customs. Catholic authors had tended to adopt a devotional approach to vernacular instruction and had relied heavily on particular settings - confession, expositions of the religious or contemplative life or narratives of Christ's life and Passion - to provide the context for spiritual, general moral and rudimentary doctrinal instruction. The polemic and didactic zeal of the Reformers and their distrust of the emotional and superstitious piety

encouraged by traditional authors led them to abandon the devotional approach to instruction, and in any case they condemned the doctrinal errors and superstitious abuses of precisely those institutions - confession, the mass, monasticism - which had in the past been the usual occasion for instruction. It is possible to distinguish three elements in the Protestant literature of the 1530s: a polemic tendency, a preference for a didactic - doctrinal approach to the Christian faith, and constant reference to the Scriptures, which were the basis of all their teaching. The three elements do not occur in isolation - polemic invariably has some doctrinal implication; the didactic treatise may well launch into polemic and certainly relies upon Scripture; and the Bible itself, whether translated, summarized or used as the basis of devotion, is made to reflect reformed doctrine in its glosses and the arrangement and choice of its selections. The polemic intention, the Bible and didactic material do, however, suggest sufficiently distinctive emphases by which to group the material. There was an enormous quantity of Protestant literature - polemics, doctrinal treatises, biblical expositions, sermons and devotional treatises - produced during the 1530s and 1540s, which, despite a number of studies on the period,[1387] still awaits adequate theological, historical and literary analysis.

The best known Protestant polemics from Redeme and be nott wrothe onwards[1388] tend to focus on the mass, and most of those extant date from the 1540s and 1550s. But during the 1530s the polemic tended to be less specific, and on the whole less scurrilous and more political and doctrinal. The most obvious characteristic was the depth and extent of the division the Reformers saw between themselves and the traditional

doctrines, beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church. The opposition between God's laws and man's inventions, between the authority of Scripture and that of the Church, between those who follow God and those who submit to the Pope, and between those who believe in justification by faith alone and those who hope to secure salvation by works and merits, was as absolute as the gulf fixed between right and wrong, truth and error, Christ and Antichrist. Regius' Comparison betwene the Olde lernynge & the Newe[1389] presents a systematic contrast between the traditions of the Catholic Church, "the new learnynge", and the old or biblical teaching, which proves that while the Protestants follow God's word on the sacraments, faith and works, the worship of saints, fasting, vows, prayer, ceremonies and matrimony, the Catholics are guilty of innovation and departure from Christ's teachings. Joachim von Watt's Of ye olde god & the newe/of the old fayth & the newe, of the olde doctryne and ye newe/or orygynall begynnynge of Idolatrye,[1390] however, adopts a historical approach, showing the way in which the Church gradually abandoned its primitive purity and the rule of the Bible and became involved in secular power and increasingly hampered by regulations, riches and ceremonies. During the early stages of the reformation in England it is not surprising to find that the powers and prerogatives of the papacy and the clergy were frequent targets of treatise-writers,[1391] some of whom may well have enjoyed tacit official approval, for a number of their works were published by the King's printer Thomas Berthelet.[1392]

The Reformers made the fullest possible use of the printing press and used a wide variety of techniques in their attempt to reach people. Their approach varied from the clear parallels of Regius' Comparison

to the publication of useful historical documents such as John Le Maire's Abbreuyacyon of all generall counceylls.[1393] Dialogues in verse like Rede me and be nott wrothe or in prose like Occam's Dialogue betwene a knyght and a clerke - the dialogue form was later to be used extensively in the devotional treatises of Thomas Becon - offered some variety and helped to sharpen the debate, although they seem stilted by comparison to Erasmus' Colloquies or More's Dyalogue of comforte. Protestants were also willing to make use of the kind of legal forms and terminology which had been popular during the previous century in the medieval charters of Christ and in various literary wills and testaments.[1394] The wyll of the Deuyll and William Hayward's The general pardon,[1395] the one a vehicle for Protestant polemic, the other teaching reformed doctrine, were not only ingenious applications of legal forms; but the familiarity of the form, especially in the latter case, may have deceived the reader into expecting something more orthodox. But the principal appeal seems to have been the legal form itself, rather than its deceptive uses. A proclamacyon of the hygh emperour Iesu Christe[1396] provides a legal framework for the teaching, which is expressed entirely in biblical quotations and paraphrases, the references duly noted in the margin in the approved Protestant manner. Despite the emphatic contrast drawn between the few who follow God's word and the majority who accept "ye doctrines of men, with their lawes, customes and constitucions" and "kepe their Ceremonyes", there are echoes of medieval treatises and Erasmus' Enchiridion in the martial imagery of the Christian's call to arms[1397] and Christ's appeal to His people to return to Him is reminiscent of earlier laments.[1398] A heauenly Act concernynge how man shal lyue[1399] begins, after a brief legal preamble,

with a summary of man's redemption from the Creation and Fall to Christ's coming; Protestant authors took every opportunity to recount the history of man's salvation. To those who will keep God's covenant " and liue in our lawes and statutes that we haue set forth by our high court of parliament" is held out the promise of eternal rest. The laws are based on the Decalogue supplemented by the words of Christ and of "the lord secretary Ihon the euangelist" and "Paule, the lorde chauncellor". Other precepts are added to encourage wider knowledge and daily reading of the laws: "it is our wil & godly pleasure to haue our moste sacred worde go forth whiche in the comforte for man to guyde hys whole lyfe with all"—but it must be received spiritually. While those who rebel and refuse to repent are threatened with eternal punishment, those who willingly obey God's laws and faithfully endure temptation can look forward to a material as well as to a heavenly reward. Similar teaching appeared in a more novel form in A spirituall Almanacke,[1400] which offered a summary of God's laws to be followed by the Christian through various seasonal situations. A faythfull and true pronostication[1401] exploits the usual format of the prognostication even more effectively, to criticize contemporary, including Catholic, abuses and to recommend the true faith to its readers. Catholic authors, however, seem to have been content to leave their defence in the hands of their official apologist, Sir Thomas More, and perhaps to trust to the superiority of their numbers and the ecclesiastical hierarchy to contain the spread of reformed teaching - but neither Church nor government was effective in preventing the circulation of prohibited books.[1402]

Lamentations on the present state of the world were a common feature of Catholic devotion,[1403] and as we have seen Catholic authors of the

1530s were not uncritical of the contemporary state of life and devotion among religious, secular clergy or lay people.[1404] It is interesting to find that Protestants, as well as being highly critical of Catholic ceremonies and institutions, could be critical of their own party and deplore the slow progress of the truth. The translator of A goodly treatise of faith, hope and charite[1405] regrets that "ther are many now a dayes that vse greate disputacions and reasonynge of fayth", thinking that if they can argue about justification by faith they will have faith. He laments:

> what small fayth is founde in the world now a dayes
> and how lyttell declaracyon of the same: specialy
> of those that can and do moost reason, & dispute of it.
> Thys I saye, and that in verbo domini that I wolde of
> god they vttered lesse wordes of fayth, hope and charyte:
> but declared them more by outward dedes of ye same.
> To speak diuinite maketh not a diuine, but to lyue diuinite.[1406]

"Ye true fayth can better be felt inwardly, than it can be expressed with wordes". The early Reformers, like many contemporary humanists, seem to have thought that they could convert people by teaching them what they should believe, and consequently, especially in contrast to the late medieval devotion, they neglected to engage their readers' feelings and imaginations as well as their minds. Like Sir Thomas More,[1407] this translator feels that the real meaning of the faith has been obscured by the contemporary debate. In urging his readers to throw off the traditional customs[1408] and false teaching of Rome, and to test them against the Scriptures now made available in English, Nicholas Wyse praises Henry VIII for allowing the Lord's temple - the figure has national as well as individual implications[1409] - to be rebuilt on the foundation of Scripture despite opposition. The king is likened to the Old Testament reformers, Hezekiah and Josiah, and Wyse believes that the English never had greater cause to honour, obey and pray for their king,

who has given them the English Bible and eradicated idolatry; "And yet it is a straunge rekenyng to here the vnwyse sayenges of many of the people, say they not, why shulde we not lyue as our fathers haue done before vs..."[1410] In the past, without the Bible to guide them, men followed the dead ceremonies of the Bishop of Rome out of ignorance, but those who are so unthankful and obstinate as to refuse the light of the Gospel can expect no heavenly reward:

> also for pytye, the greate punyshmentes where with God doth and wyll punysh vs comme vpon vs because ther is no faithfulnesse, ther is no mercye, ther is no knowlege of god in the londe... 1411

The most elaborate celebration of Henry VIII's part in restoring God's Word and overthrowing the Antichrist of Rome was in John Pylsbarough's exposition of the Benedictus, A commemoration of the inestimable graces and benefites of god...[1412] Although the King's own attitude to reform remained ambiguous, or rather seems to have fluctuated according to his personal and political circumstances, it was to him that the Reformers turned for help in their struggle against the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome, and between 1536 and 1539[1413] there seemed to be considerable official support. The Ten Articles of 1536 were sufficiently ambiguous in their formulation to admit of Lutheran interpretation, while the First Royal Injunctions attacked superstitious worship of saints and pilgrimages, and ordered curates to see that children and servants were taught the Pater, Creed and Commandments in English. Accordingly a number of small booklets were printed,[1414] setting forth not only the Pater with a number of expositions, the Creed and the Commandments, but also including the familiar catechetical lists of the five ghostly and bodily wits, the seven ghostly and bodily deeds of mercy, the four cardinal virtues and the seven sacraments of the Church. Transgressions against the Commandments were spelt out in detail, including a condemnation of witchcraft and prognostications under the first commandment,[1415] while traditional warnings

to remember the Last Things helped to enforce obedience.[1416] At the beginning three basic principles "necessary to be knowen to obteyne eternall lyfe" suggest reformed teaching, in their emphasis on man's inability to do what should be done or avoid what should not be done and his dependence on God. The collection ends with summaries of the official acts on "Thabolysshynge of the bysshop of Romes pretensed & vsurped power & iurisdiction within this Realme" and "thacte made for thabrogacion of certayne holydayes" as well as "An ordre and forme of byddynge of the bedes."[1417] This mixture of the traditional contents of confessional-catechetical manuals with moderate reformed views and official legislation was carried further in the first of the official primers, Bishop Hilsey's Manual of prayers,[1418] which in fact owed much to the earlier Byddell-Marshall primer and to others printed in 1538. The Protestants were quick to seize on "the possibilities of the traditional layman's prayer book as an instrument for the inculcation of approved opinions in the public mind".[1419] The Reformers' main debt to the Crown, however, was in the provision of the English Scriptures, which were authorized for public use in 1538.

In addition to the Crown's support for reform, reflected directly in its articles and injunctions and indirectly in the books containing the Pater, Creed and Commandments in English and in the idea of an official primer, the need for reform was recognized by many within the Church. Treatises such as Whitford's Pype or Tonne and Dionysius Carthusianus' The lyfe of prestes[1420] had called for the reformation of religious and clerical life; and John Colet, preaching on Romans XII:2 in his convocation sermon of 1511,[1421] declared that the Church was more harmed by "the facion of seculer and worldly lyuynge in clerkes and prestes" than by any persecution or heresy. Hugh Latimer in his first

convocation sermon, 1537,[1422] accuses prelates and clergy of adulterating the Word of God, teaching the dreams of men and garnishing images while Christ's lively images go hungry and untaught. Like Colet he sees the clergy as children of the world, fathered by the Devil; and in his sermon he calls on them to reform Roman customs and ceremonies, the worship of saints and pilgrimages which hide much money-grubbing and superstition, the abuses of the ecclesiastical courts and the doctrines of purgatory and works and merits. But in addition to such pulpit polemics[1423] the official representatives of the clergy in convocation were attempting to find a formulation of doctrine that would admit of some declaration of reformed views without completely alienating the more conservative clergy. The Ten Articles were taken up into a much lengthier work, The institution of a Christen man,[1424] which seemed to leave many traditional doctrines apparently untouched but makes extensive use of Lutheran material. For three years, however, it was regarded as the official catechetical summary of doctrine and its ambiguities enabled both parties to claim it as the fulfilment of their programme.

The English Reformers received far more radical and vigorous support from the writings of and contact with continental reformers. In 1530 the works of such well-known continental authors as Luther, Oecolampedius, Zwingli, Melanchthon and Francis Lambert were prohibited in England.[1425] Richard Bayfield, a Benedictine of Bury St.Edmunds, was burnt in 1531 for bringing in to England books by such authors as Luther, Oecolampadius, Pomeranus (Bugenhagen), Francis Lambert, Melanchthon, Brunfels and Zwingli, and for possessing prohibited English books by Tyndale and Frith, A proper dyaloge/betwene a Gentillman and a husbandman,[1426]

a Primer and a Psalter in English.[1427] The previous year Thomas Patmore, parson of Hadham, had been accused of going to Wittenberg, meeting Luther, and reading reformed books, apparently in the company of other Englishmen.[1428] Merchants such as Humphrey Monmouth[1429] helped to maintain contact between England and Reformers, English and foreign, abroad, but although he gave Tyndale money and shelter he also made gifts to orthodox divines and institutions. A surprisingly large number of books by continental Reformers were available, and a number of them were printed in England during the later 1530s. The names of Bugenhagen, Francis Lambert, Luther and Erasmus Sarcerius, also the Augsburg Confession with Melanchthon's Apologie,[1430] were announced openly on title pages. In addition Bucer, Brunfels, Calvin, Johannes Campensis, Wolfgang Capito, Gnapheus, Pederson, Urbanus Regius, the Strassburg preachers and Joachim von Watt either had their works translated or made substantial contributions to a number of English treatises, which did not always acknowledge the source of their material.[1431] Contributions by Luther, for example, appeared without any indication of their provenance in several English primers of the 1530s and in Prayers of the Byble and its derivatives.[1432] Finally there were a number of translations whose origins, though not declared, are known or may be surmised to have been among the continental and exiled English reformers. These varied from the polemic of Roy and Barlow's Rede me and be nott wroth, based on Manuel's Krankheit der Messe, to a collection of biblical extracts like The fountayne or well of lyfe; from works where instruction veers towards polemic, as in The Summe of the holye scripture, to instructional treatises of a more devotional nature, such as A goodly treatise of faith, hope and charite or A Treatyse to teche a man to dye/and not to feare deathe.

Yet although use was made of writings by continental Reformers, the English reformation pursued a separate, though at times parallel, course. Initially it was set in motion by political rather than doctrinal motives, and the acts and writings directed against the power of the papacy - and the clergy, institutions and ceremonies associated with it - helped to foster a growing sense of national identity.[1432A] One of the most constant criticisms the Reformers had to face was that their teaching was new and lacked the authority of continuous tradition possessed by the Catholic Church.[1433] They countered this not only by appealing to the past, just as the humanists appealed to the authority and customs of antiquity - pagan and Christian - to support their views, but more particularly to the English past. Despite the fact that the Lollards continued to be persecuted during the early sixteenth century, and on into the 1530s,[1434] the Protestants in fact made use of Lollard treatises. Even though their Lollard origins were not advertised many in authority must have known their source and some were in fact prohibited,[1435] but the publishers must have reckoned that the teaching and criticism they contained would find considerable popular support. They claimed that a number of the works were written one or two hundred years earlier,[1436] well before the time of the new heresies of Luther, and they pointed to the fact that the true followers of God's Word had always suffered the kind of persecution inflicted on the Lollards and on those who now favoured the kind of reform advocated by Luther:

> Euen as the olde pharysees with the bysshoppes and prestes/prisoned and persecuted Christ & his Apostles/ that all the rightuouse blode may fall on their hedes that hath ben sheed from the blode of Steuen the fyrst martyr/to the blode of that innocent man of god/Thomas Hytton/whom Wyllyam Werham...& Iohan Fyssher...murthered at Maydeston in Kente. Anno.M.dl.xxx. for the same trouth. 1437

Some thirty years later John Foxe undertook to demonstrate in extensive detail that the true followers of Christ have always been persecuted.[1438]

A number of Lollard-Protestant treatises were published during the 1530s. They included The examinacion of master W.Thorpe,preste..., which particularly attacked the sacrament of penance; The dore of holy scripture, Purvey's prologue to his revised version of Wycliffe's Bible; The prayer and complaynt of the Ploweman vnto Christ,[1439] which draws a contrast between the "lewde men" for whom the ploughman prays, who believe in Christ and endeavour to keep the seven commandments of the Gospels[1440], and "Christes vyker in erthe","that maketh men worshippen him as god on erthe", and his followers who blindly follow "his lawe and his hertes". The particular points of criticism are common-place enough, and include auricular confession, tithes, simony, the exclusive power of the keys, lustful chastity, the ease of the monastic life, the failure of the clergy to teach their flocks,and the widespread perversions of all the virtues Christ taught. The Lanterne of lyght[1441] again criticises contemporary abuses,including monasticism and the building of expensive churches,and its appeals to the reader to follow the small band of the true followers of Christ's Gospel,not the adherents of Anti-Christ, who accept the traditional teaching and customs of the Roman Church. As well as helping the Reformers to establish historical roots in England, these treatises also suggested that since persecution was a sign of truth in the past the same could be true with regards to the Reformers of the 1530s.

The causes for which Wycliffe and his followers had campaigned,[1442] as Miss Deanesly has said, "also led logically to the demand for a translated

Bible".[1443] Eight years before the English Bible was officially permitted, Lollard arguments were revived in A compendious olde treatyse/shewynge/howe that we ought to haue ye scripture in Englysshe.[1444] Again, Antichrist, the king of the clergy, and his prelates, who since the time of archbishop Arundel have forbidden translation of the Scriptures and delighted to keep people in ignorance, are condemned.[1445] But the work is more concerned to present an accumulation of historical evidence in support of the vernacular Scriptures than to indulge in the usual kind of anti-clerical polemic. It argues that God's law was given to Moses in the vernacular, and that people present in Jerusalem at Pentecost heard the Gospel preached each in his own language. The compilers of the Septuagint and Church Fathers, including Origen and Jerome, had translated Scripture; and in England Bede and King Alfred, and later Archbishop Thoresby and Richard Rolle[1446] in his glossed psalter are cited as examples of a native tradition of translation. The examples of the holy virgins, SS. Katherine, Cecilia, Lucy, Agnes and Margaret, who knew and preached the Gospels, are used to show that women too should be allowed access to the Bible. In the deuteronomic style the present plagues, wars and famines are blamed on the absence of God's word from England, although it is available in other vernaculars including French, Spanish, Italian and Flemish.[1447] Characteristically, it is to the king that the author appeals for the restoration of God's word. He is asked to disregard the counsel of antichristian prelates, and to act for himself to give the people the Scriptures in English and thus secure rest and peace in his realm. A similar plea is made in "A prayer for the modifying and suppling of our hard hearts", in the Byddell-Marshall primer.[1448]

The English Reformers believed that pure faith and the true doctrine of Christ were to be found in Scripture, and the very title of Alesius' Of the authorite of the word of god[1449] indicates their exclusive source of authority, as opposed to the late medieval view which tended to regard the tradition of the Church as being of equal if not superior authority.[1450] Although the Bible was not officially made available to English readers until 1538 various partial translations and extracts,[1451] even a concordance,[1452] were printed before that. Illegal translations had been produced about a century and a half earlier by Wycliffe and his followers[1453] but there were other translations and paraphrases produced during the late fourteenth - fifteenth centuries.[1454] However, the lack of complete or any extended literal translations did not prevent popular knowledge of many biblical events and characters. Characters such as the prophets and the evangelists took their places alongside non-biblical saints in church decorations, carving and stained glass.[1455] The mystery play cycles were, of course, ultimately based on Scripture, so too were the various lives of Christ available in prose and verse, and sermon collections such as Mirk's Festial and the Legenda Aurea also contained biblical material beneath extravagant allegorical interpretation and blended with more legendary material.[1456] Devotional authors long before Erasmus had woven biblical paraphrases and allusions into their treatises, although they did not draw attention to the fact by citing their references.[1457] A Kempis' De Imitatione Christi, for instance, paraphrases and quotes Scripture extensively,[1458] and even in the English versions includes a chapter "Of the redynge of holy scripture", which encourages the reader to approach the Bible with

"great fervour of spryte", in "mekenes and confidence", diligently seeking charity and "profitable fedyng for owre soule", not for elegant speech or out of "desire of curiosite or name of excellence".[1459] In fact, he uses Scripture in much the same way as some earlier Protestant authors such as Frith, blending its words with his own; but, unlike the Protestants, A Kempis does not seem to make the precepts of the Bible the starting point of his teaching. Catholica authors tended to use Scripture as a quarry for illustrative material, and to consider it as one source among many rather than as the exclusive source of all doctrine and devotion.[1460] Whereas they concentrated on the New Testament, particularly the life and Passion of Christ, and usually interpreted the Old Testament typologically or allegorically, the Reformers, theoretically at least, demanded a literal interpretation[1461] and gave much more weight to the Old Testament. The Reformers' use of Scripture tended to be doctrinal, to be authoritative rather than illustrative, and to move away from narratives and personalities towards theology.

A large number, probably the majority, of Protestant treatises printed in English during the 1530s were in some sense biblical compilations. Apart from various translations there were a substantial number of commentaries and expositions of individual books and Psalms.[1462] A number of these were explanatory-doctrinal introductions, which served the same kind of purpose as Erasmus' Paraphrases[1463] but tended to link reformed doctrine more closely to the text. The most popular during this decade was Savonarola's Exposition after the maner of a contemplacyon vpon ye.li.psalme, published in association with various editions of the primer,[1464] whose cumulative effect is a powerful, strongly personal, appeal to God for mercy. Here, rather than in the prayers or the more

general devout treatises of the Reformers, one finds the kind of emotive impact which previously had been particularly associated with meditations on Christ's Passion. The first English edition of Savonarola's Exposition appeared in connection with the publication of the first Byddell-Marshall primer[1465] - a work which illustrates a number of the changes reflected more generally in Protestant devotion. Firstly, the entire primer is in English, whereas previously printed Horae, although they had contained rubrics and occasional prayers in English since 1494, and during the 1520s forms of confession and "The maner to lyue well" were sometimes added,[1466] were basically in Latin.[1467] Secondly the calendar and hours, which had been the main content of the medieval Horae, were reduced in the Byddell-Marshall primer to about a quarter of the volume's total length; and although the devotional content was increased by the Savonarola exposition, by a Gospel harmony on the Passion of Christ, and by "A deuoute frutfull & godly remembraunce of the passion" (based on a sermon by Luther)[1468] and a number of prayers, there is still a far larger instructional-didactic element than in the traditional Horae. Most of the material preceding the actual hours and the traditional groups of pslams was drawn in part from Luther's Betbüchlein and partly from Joye's Hortulus Animae.[1469] Nevertheless, although interpreted according to the doctrines of the Reformers and relying less on stereotyped lists, the topics (expositions of the ten commandments, the creed, the Lord's prayer and Ave as well as the provision of a general confession based in part on the decalogue and seven works of mercy) are those of the traditional confessional-catechetical books. There is also "An instruction how we ought to praye", which characteristically insists on the necessity of knowing and believing God's promises, warning that doubt makes prayer ineffectual and dishonours God; it also warns against prescribing "any terme, time, place, or forme, and maner" for the fulfilment of prayer, and repeatedly stresses that prayer

is in no way dependent on the worthiness of the petitioner. In addition, echoing the later Protestant-humanist concern for the correct upbringing of children and the popularity of the question-and-answer catechism,[1470] there is "A fruetfull and a very Christen instruction for Chyldren", followed by a dialogue between Father and Son, which had previously been printed in Joye's Hortulus.[1471]

A considerable number of the items found in the Byddell-Marshall primer were subsequently reprinted in later editions of the Primer, in Redman's Prayers of the Byble, and in Certeine prayers and godly meditacyons.[1472] However, a considerable amount of the material derived from Lutheran sources had been printed the previous year in John Gau's The richt vay to the Kingdome of heuine.[1473] Another indication of the way in which texts passed from one author or printer to another is shown in Gau's "Schort disputacione apone the pater noster betuix god and ye saul",[1474] a piece of Lutheran origin, which is reprinted at the end of Gough's 1536 Primer[1475] and appeared separately printed by Godfray as The pater noster spoken of ye sinner: God answerynge him at euery peticyon.[1476] Gough's primer[1479] also included, again without acknowledgement, part of Patrick Hamilton's Dyuers frutful gatherynges of scripture.[1478] Under four main headings, the Law, the Gospel, Faith (including hope and charity) and Works - contrasted pairs which occur frequently in Protestant treatises - Hamilton sets out various propositions, proofs, arguments, answers, disputations and comparisons in sentences drawn for the most part directly from Scripture. He provides a brief and clear summary of Reformed doctrine, emphasizing the fundamental importance of personal belief in Christ's mercy and His power to save contrasted with the condemnation of the Law and showing how man is justified by faith alone, not by good works. A

longer and more regularly systematic work, which again uses Scripture to prove and illustrate reformed doctrines, was Erasmus Sarcerius' Common places for scripture.[1479] But although it discusses a number of topics relevant to devotion, such as prayer, confession, faith, hope and charity, the work is doctrinal, not devotional. A number of other works, such as Francis Lambert's The summe of christianitie gatheryd out almoste of al places of scripture, or Joye's letters to John Ashwell, Prior of Newnhan Abbey on justification, or the more doctrinally neutral Answere to a letter, which describes the course of the reformation in England regarding the abolition of papal power and questions such as the worship of saints, the mass, pardons and the declaration of Scripture, to an exile thinking of returning home[1480] - these are likewise primarily concerned with matters of doctrine, which they discuss in a rather impersonal, intellectual manner or else with polemic fervour.

Although there are no objective criteria by which to judge, some authors, although their instruction may be solidly doctrinal, adopt a more personal address, and their selection of topics or perhaps the practical application given to their teaching suggests a more pastoral concern, an interest in the life and soul of the individual Christian, which sometimes has devotional overtones. George Joye's Compendyouse somme of the very Christen relygyon,[1481] for instance, partly by its use of the first person, partly by its unobtrusive organization and great simplicity, presents the truths of the Christian faith in such a way as to encourage the reader to follow Christ confidently, trusting to obtain His mercy. The facts—the one all-sufficient God, the Fall whereby man was bound to the Devil and sin, the law given in the Old Testament whereby sin is known and the promise of redemption fulfilled

in the New Testament—are presented as so reasonable and certain that they seem to encourage belief. The second part of the treatise goes on to show what it means to be a child of God, how faith banishes fear of hell, how those who believe Christ will wish to follow His example and serve Him in works of love, and how those who have been faithful and lived well in this life can look forward to a heavenly reward at the Judgement. Joye reminds the reader that he is justified by faith alone, not by works or ceremonies, but he does not blur the appealing simplicity of his work by theological elaboration of these articles of belief. It seems to persuade the reader that faith in Christ is both reasonable and desirable.

A few treatises touched on topics familiar from earlier works, suggesting that some continuity of interest remained. The declaracyon and power of the Chrysten fayth[1482] was very obviously reformed in its stress on the need for individual repentance and faith in God's mercy to obtain remission of sins and on the need for rebirth, and there is the familiar warning against putting works before faith, although faith must be proved by good works. But other concerns which find expression—including a longing for the life to come, the need for the Christian to battle against the world, the Devil against whom he must be armed with God's armour, and the necessity of subduing the flesh—were all to be found in earlier as well as later treatises, for they are the common concerns of the Christian profession in all ages. The author uses medieval-sounding symbols, the heart, heaven and a scourge, in his elucidation of the character and meaning of faith, hope and patience - topics frequently discussed by earlier authors. Love too was frequently regarded by them as one of the fruits of faith, although righteousness and perhaps peace, the other two qualities of faith noted in The declaracyon, were not

characteristic categories of medieval authors. Nor would they have relied so heavily on biblical quotation for their definitions, or encouraged the individual Christian to approach God so directly and confidently: "Let vs therfore go boldely to ye seate of grace for fayth perteyneth to god onely, & charyte to her neyghbour, yt we all may fynde grace & mercy of ye lord our god".[1483] John Johnson uses similar headings in his Confortable exhortation of oure mooste holy Christen faith,[1484] where he discusses faith and unfaithfulness, peace, love and patience, and adds a section on the highly traditional subject of "the mortification of the fleshe". Again the work is a tissue of biblical quotation and paraphrase, and the reformed teaching on faith and justification is clear. But the section on Patience stresses the inevitability of tribulation and cites biblical examples familiar from medieval treatises, as well as reminding the reader of the trouble and pain endured by Christ, concluding: "Wherby I suppose that he is: moost happy that suffre moost". Working from rather different premises - the Christian's freedom from the bondage of the law - the section on mortification still echoes medieval authors in warning against excessive mortification and recommending that due measure be kept. But these echoes and similarities are rare and superficial. The Bible dominates the thought and governs the expression of Protestant authors. Imaginative description and narrative writing are replaced by doctrinal exposition, and there are few emotive appeals or attempts to frighten the reader into obedience.

A goodly treatise of faith hope and charite[1485] illustrates a number of the characteristics of the Protestant treatise which, while containing a good deal of doctrine, relates subjects to the needs and

experience of the individual in a way that suggests some devotional concern. The three subjects around which the treatise is built -faith, hope and charity - frequently occur together in Protestant treatises[1486] and sum up three fundamental elements of the reformed faith: the importance of a strong and knowledgeable personal belief, a confident expectation of mercy and salvation, and love of God proved in active service of mankind. While medieval authors rarely discussed the nature of faith, but simply demanded assent and obedience to the teachings of the Church, reformed authors regarded faith as the foundation of religion: "It is not sufficient to saye: I beleue that the holy church beleueth, or as myne elders haue beleued, but a man muste searche and proue how he beleueth. For by his wyne fayth shall a man be acceptable to God".[1487] Accordingly the author not only quotes Scripture, including Hebrews XI:1, to define what faith is, but emphasizes that the individual must grasp this faith for himself. As the author of A very declaracyon of the bond and free wyll of man reminds his readers, God will compel no man against his will, but He seeks to persuade man to turn to Him.[1488] The sinner must submit himself to God, repent of his sins, and pray for mercy and for faith, which requires knowledge and brings assurance:

> Whan man fyndeth rest, and quietness in his conscience by fayth beleuynge that all that is in God, is to mans behafe, that is a sure token that such a man is come to the faith whiche geueth healthe. For fayth certifyeth hym that CHRISTE hath ouercome death, hell, synne, and the deuyll for hym. 1489

The keynote of the reformed faith is assurance or confidence:

> suche fayth, and confydence, wherebye we are assured that the goodnesse, and mercye of God is oures, and that all is oures that is in God: that he is mercyfull vnto vs: that we can reioice in him, and walke confydently in hym, all thys is the operacyon of faythe.[1490]

Such faith is an intensely personal experience, and it involves a sense

of hope, security and deep joy which, while it is rarely stated nor expressed in the emotional language of medieval writers, underlines the best Protestant devotional writing.[1491]

If faith is to be real and strong it must be grounded in knowledge - not extensive academic knowledge, but knowledge of God and of the Gospel. The Christian must know what God has promised, and must know the story of salvation history from the creation and Fall to Christ's incarnation, death and resurrection in which His promises are fulfilled. Thus Protestant authors repeatedly summarize the history of man's salvation. But, more than that, the Christian is expected to understand the difference between the law and the Gospel, between justification by faith and trust in works and merits, to know in what the bondage or the freedom of the will consists. The reformed faith places the responsibility for his salvation in the hands of the individual rather than in submission to holy Church. Men must know what faith is about and wherein their salvation consists if they are to be able to choose whether to follow Christ or the teaching of men and if they are to be strengthened to persevere in the right way once chosen. According to the author of the Goodly treatise of faith, hope and charite, lack of knowledge encourages unbelief and all the evil consequences of sin.[1492] Those who persist in following their own will and desires cannot come to the saving knowledge of Christ. But in the preceding chapters the author stresses God's mercy and His desire to help the sinner; "God wyll of pure mercye forgeue the synnes, requyrynge but onely stedfaste fayth of vs". But he recognizes that man will frequently be depressed and his conscience grieved by his sins, and although he can find no comfort in himself the reader is reminded of the profit of Christ's Passion and of the immense mercy of God.[1493]

But faith cannot stand alone, despite the apparently popular tendency to think that faith or knowledge of faith will secure salvation with no further effort:

> there be in these days many that haue a hurtfull seduceable opynion, that is to say, they do affyrme, that so soone as they haue perceyued, byleued, and knowledged godes worde, yt then by & by they thynke to be the chyldren of god all hole, and freee in all thynges/ and that they can synne no more vntyll death/& also that shamfulnes, synne, and iniquyte muste serue them to the best. 1494.

"For the lybertie of a Christen man/is nat a lycence to do what soeuer he lyste".[1495] Inward conversion must be proved by a Christian manner of living, which means obedience to God's commandments, fulfilment of the seven works of mercy and active service of the Body of Christ:

> It is not sufficiente that we can bable muche of the worde, and haue many treatyses and bokes therof: but we muste also be chaunged and renewed in the spirite through faith of the worde in oure lyuyng....1496

Good works are as necessary to the Protestant as to the Catholic, but the Reformers emphasize that works are a consequence of, are dependent on, faith; whereas the Catholics often seemed, as they were accused of doing, to make works all-sufficient because they did not stress the priority of faith,[1497] which they saw more in terms of assent and submission than as an experience of conversion or knowledge of God. The second part of the Goodly treatise on love and charity again reminds the reader that God's promises, His love and mercy, and Christ's redeeming work comfort the soul and give him every reason to rejoice. In return the soul should long for God;[1498] and "so must ye same loue worke in vs also toward God & our neyghboure, wherby loue is vttered what she is". But love is too dependent on faith and knowledge of God:

> No man can vse due loue in God, without he be sure fyrst by fayth inwardly how wel God doth loue vs, reioycyng in the same loue, and puttynge al his saluacyon therin. Thus doynge he shall passe by all creatures, estymynge then as donge, countynge CHRIST onely his ioye, glorye, & hertes desyre. He

> now that vttereth ye loue, (for true loue can not be ydle) he vttereth it, ye which God the louer of loue wyl haue ye louyng man to do. 1499

But such love, though it is as world-denying as the medieval contemptus mundi - this the chapter on "howe hurtefull the loue of the worlde is, and howe we maye despyse it" makes abundantly clear[1500] - and demands mortification of the flesh like earlier ascetic treatises and centres as intensely upon Christ as any contemplative author, is somehow less emotional and more dynamic than the medieval concept of the love of God. Compared to the exclusively God-ward love manifested in the physical love of the soul's compassion for the sufferings of the Son of Man or in the higher degrees of the contemplative's union with God, which tended to dominate medieval devotion, Protestant authors suggest a more spiritual love grounded in faith and knowledge of God as Creator and Redeemer, which naturally requires active expression in love of and care for others, especially those within the Body of Christ.

Protestant treatises in which doctrine was interpreted in such a devotional, personal and persuasive manner as that Of faith, hope and charite were not common during the 1530s. However, the Reformers were aware of the importance of providing edifying and doctrinally sound works of devotion, if only to counter the errors of popular Catholic prayers and devotions such as the Garden of the Soul, the Paradise of the Soul and the XV Oes of St. Bridget named in the Preface to the Byddell-Marshall primer.[1501] Interestingly the former two titles were taken over by Reformers to introduce Protestant material,[1502] by no means the only occasion when Reformers took over titles or the beginnings of traditional Catholic works and applied them to very different contents.[1503] The same preface also condemns the legendary

and imaginative accretions in books of the Passion and Saints' lives such as those in the Legenda Aurea, and the lengthier version that appeared the following year denounced the blasphemous and vain promises offered by indulgenced prayers and objected violently to the honour paid to the Blessed Virgin and associated idolatry excused under the distinctions of Latria, dulia and hyperdulia.[1504] Not surprisingly the Reformers looked to Scripture as their source of devotion, just as it was the exclusive authority for their doctrine.

The fountayne or well of lyfe[1505] was a collection of brief biblical quotations which offered the reader "compendiously gathered togyther/the thynges that parauenture thou mightest seke after in the Bible a gret while". In fact the collection was not very clearly set out. The headings were too general[1506] and the sections too lengthy to enable the reader to use it to meet specific needs in the same way that he could use Frith's collection of Scriptural quotations against the different temptations of the Devil.[1507] But in recommending the Bible as the answer to every human need and in its emphasis on the love and mercy of God it clearly reflected Reformed teaching. The quotations are given (unusually for a Protestant treatise) without comment, and they are not structured into prayers or meditations so that the collection could serve equally as a source - book for doctrine or devotion. The following year Coverdale's translation of Campanus' Paraphrasis vpon all the Psalmes of David[1508] was published, and four years later Taverner translated another work by a German author, Wolfgang Capito, An Epitome of the Psalmes or briefe meditacions vpon the same.[1509] In the latter all the psalms are included in order, adapted to the form of a prayer and provided with a descriptive title summarizing the prayer's intention. There was no

attempt made to reproduce the whole of a psalm, and the prayer is usually based on the suggestion of one or two verses. For example, Psalm C is headed "For the true seruys of God":

> Lorde God take thou yet mercy on vs, graunt vs thy grace, so as we maye be glad, and fresh in spirite to serue the purely, syncerely, & hertely, but not to the boastyng and settynge forth of our owne selues in mens eyes. Declare thy selfe to be a frende to vs thy propre people sore oppressed, and the forsaken shepe of thy folde, stablysh thy goodnes and trouth on vs o lorde for euer. Amen.

But the volume also contained the Lord's prayer, creed and decalogue, a number of graces, a general confession of sins, and several prayers including a lengthy one for the peace of the Church by Erasmus.[1509A] There was also a substantial collection of prayers entitled "The principal prayers of the byble moste necessary for christen men", which belong to the Prayers of the Byble type, a few of which were also included at the end of The fountayne or well of lyfe. The Epitome of the Psalmes might also be a Protestant substitute for the devotional elements of the traditional Horae, but without the didactic or contentious matter of Joye's Ortulus or the Byddell-Marshall primer.

A work which seems to look backwards rather than forwards in time was A boke of prayers called ye ordynary fasshyon of good lyuynge,[1510] which dates from the early years of the 1540s, when the King tried to enforce more conservative doctrine and limit the use of Scripture. Like the Pomander of prayer and many earlier treatises in English it was compiled for the "erudicion of the simple", but it is also recommended as useful to idle clerics who habitually neglect God. The exhortation to the reader reminds him of God's judgements on sinners and tells him to avoid blasphemy and swearing and to follow virtue. He is to thank God for creation, fear the Lord's judgements, know and love Him for His redeeming work, and to follow the examples of Old Testament figures like

David and Daniel, and Christ Himself, and pray to God. With the exception of the prayer of Solomon, a paraphrase of the usual version, there are no other biblical prayers, and brief biblical quotations are provided only on repentance and, as Erasmus had counselled,[1511] for a sick man at the point of death. Otherwise the morning prayers and lengthy evening confession, the prayers provided for mass (at the beginning, in kissing the pax, in taking the holy bread and holy water) and for a sick man at the point of death are the forms and occasions most often provided for by medieval authors. The last section of the work is taken up by twenty brief rules of wisdom and virtue. They offer the same kind of summary teaching as "An ordre of Chrysten lyuynge" in "The Myrrour or lokynge glasse of lyfe, Bonaventura's Crosrowe or A.B.C.[1512] or Pico della Mirandola's "Rules of a Christian lyfe"[1513]; only, whereas the Bonaventuran alphabets are dominated by the religious ideal and Pico's are concerned mainly with the problems of temptation, these range more widely to cover secular and domestic duties and how to answer serious questions and rebuke swearers as well as the more familiar injunctions of medieval treatises to avoid idleness, to beware of pride in prosperity, to be patient in adversity and to remember your last end. The work as a whole suggests that, although Protestant authors preferred a far more biblical type of devotion, the older forms and occasions of devotion were not entirely forgotten and might well have remained popular with the type of reader who, a few years earlier, had bought Whitford's Werke for housholders or his Werke of preparacion....vnto communion.

But it was the Bible that dominated the devotion of the closing years of the 1530s and which was to be the dominant factor in the prayers and devotional treatises of later Protestant authors such as Thomas Becon. Another work which seems intended as a Protestant answer to such Catholic devotional books as illustrated Passion narratives and rosary books was

Storys and prophesis out of the holy scriptur/garnyschede with faire ymages/and with deuoute praiers/and thanck geuings vnto God.[1514] In contrast to the medieval devotional works which focused on the life and Passion of Jesus this, like many Protestant works, concentrated on the Old Testament. It provides a selection of incidents, each illustrated by a woodcut, with a brief narrative drawn directly from the Bible and followed by a lengthy prayer largely made up of biblical quotation and paraphrase, which summarize Old Testament history from the Creation to the conquest of Jerusalem by the Maccabees. Unlike the rosary books, for instance, the illustrations have no devotional purpose; they are not intended to stimulate or to complement devotion. Also, although the work mentions characters including Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel and Jonah and touches on incidents such as the sacrifice of Isaac, David and Bathsheba, Balaam and his ass, many of which were likely to have been familiar to the reader from the Legenda Aurea or in dramatic or iconographic representation,[1515] the compiler, in direct contrast to someone like Jacobus de Voragine, shows no interest in either the dramatic possibilities of the incidents or the characters concerned. Towards the end of Storys and prophesis there are sections on St. John the Baptist, each of the four Evangelists and St. Paul, followed by a Song of David (Psalm CXVII), "A veritable confession", and "An instruction & confortacion/of a good sheepherde vnto his sheepe/in the confession". In the section on St. Mark nothing is said about his person—he is described in terms of his traditional symbol and the narrative is occupied by prophecies relating to that symbol, such as the lion of Judah—while St. Luke is described only in terms of his writings, which are praised as the virtuous medicines of the soul. On the other hand, the Legenda Aurea concentrates on St. Mark's life, his ministry at Alexandria, his martyrdom, and miracles associated with his name and tomb; but the chapter on St. Luke concentrates

mainly on the interpretation of his symbol, the ox, and on the qualities of his Gospel, including its medicinal virtues as well as its authority and truth. Among all the saints' lives and legendary material there is a considerable amount of biblical material and edification to be found in the Legenda Aurea. But it is not directed so earnestly and exclusively to the "vtilite and profit" of the reader as the Storys and prophesis, of which the prologue says "some geues knowledge/how fibel yt man is/and how lytell he may of himselfe/and som shoeth/that ther is nothingh heuy/but that man shall wel fulfill it/ as fare as he be holpen of God"...[1516]

Up to the middle of the 1530s the few prayers to have been printed in English were mainly translations from Latin, and the majority were addressed to Jesus and usually referred to some aspect of His Passion, although there were death-bed prayers, prayers to the Blessed Virgin and to the proper angel. Most of them appeared in the collection of miscellaneous prayers with which the Latin Horae often ended, but some of these, such as the "Two deuout prayers in English to Jesu", and "The xv Oes and other prayers", from a 1494 Horae by de Worde, seem to have been published separately.[1517] In 1529 Robert Copland printed another edition of The.xv.oos and other prayers in English,[1518] and these were probably the most widely known collection of English prayers available before the publication of Deuoute prayers in englysshe of thactes of our redemption, a translation of Jordanus of Quedlinburg's Meditationes.[1519] It is significant that the only two collections of prayers known to have been published separately before 1535 should have been Passion prayers,[1520] and both series contain many references to the physical sufferings of Jesus. Despite Hilsey's justification of the XV.Oes as "a goodly and

godly meditation of Christ's passion", once the prefatory indulgences were removed [1521] traditional devotion to Christ's Passion was, in the Reformer's view, inseparably bound up with doctrines like the sacrifice of the mass, the release of souls from purgatory, and other superstitions. But in choosing to base their prayers on Scripture the Reformers were not being entirely original. As early as 1502 a de Worde Horae contained nineteen Latin prayers drawn from the Old Testament and introduced by explanatory English rubrics such as: "This prayer following is the prayer of the sinful King Manasses, that shed the blood of Innocents and of Prophets, and did many other sins, as Scripture witnesseth, more than any other that was afore him or after following, reigning. And yet after all this, he be sought God of mercy entirely, and did penance, and had mercy...."[1522] Most of the English biblical prayers - but not those of Storys and prophesis - were translated from a Latin collection compiled by Otto Brunfels, Precationes Biblicae. The earliest to appear in English were the four included in Joye's Ortulus animae, 1530,[1523] and the most extensive collection was that to appear first in Redman's Prayers of the Byble (1535) and subsequently with various alterations in An Epitome of the Psalmes, and Praiers of Holi Fathers.[1524] The prayers tended to be rather lengthy and shapeless, they were not modelled on any liturgical structure, and the majority of them were petitionary,[1525] often seeking protection and deliverance from sin and tribulation or praying for increase of faith; they contain no emotional description, and Christ's Passion is not mentioned. They look forward to the kind of prayers that Becon helped to make so popular in his Flower of godly prayers and his Pomander of prayers.

Of the religious literature available in England before the 1530s by far the largest proportion may be described as devotional - saints' lives, Passion narratives, works of general instruction and purely contemplative pieces can all be included under this heading. Not only was this balance

overturned by Protestant authors who, unlike their predecessors, were eager that every type of religious literature - theology, doctrinal discussion and polemic as well as biblical exposition and prayers - should be available in the vernacular, but devotion in the sense of prayer, worship and contemplation is overshadowed by the concern for edification, doctrinal instruction and social responsibility. Elements of the traditional devotion survived in the Protestant treatises - the need to turn away from the world to God, and instruction on the art of dying, for instance - but the contemplative attitude is replaced by the desire for edification, which pervades treatises and prayers alike, and frequently makes the devout treatise indistinguishable from the doctrinal treatise. This change in the relative importance and the altered content of devotion may be conveniently illustrated by a summary survey of the output of one of the most prolific English Protestant authors of the next generation, from the middle decades of the sixteenth century: Thomas Becon.[1526] The majority of his works are devotional - that is, edifying treatises intended to explain doctrinal and spiritual truths, which encourage the reader to give practical expression to what he has been taught by his manner of life and general conduct. Becon's theology is reformed, cautiously expressed in the earlier treatises such as The Potation for Lent,[1527] more openly, emphatically, even violently hammered out in his later polemics. As with the earlier Reformers, his chief authority is the Bible, but he also quotes a number of patristic authors, of whom St. Augustine is cited most frequently. The excellency, authority, utility and power of the Bible is clearly stated in The glorious triumphe of gods most blessed Word. Becon is also concerned to make his readers familiar with the Bible and help them to use it effectively: he therefore provides a Summarie of the Newe Testament, and a harmony of the Gospels, Christes Chronicle, which avoids the imaginative detail and Catholic teaching of a traditional life of Jesus.

He again reflects the earlier Reformers in coupling the teaching of reformed doctrine with biblical exposition and "Probacions out of the holy Scripture". A simple catechetical question-and-answer form is employed in The demaundes of holy Scripture, while The common places of the holy Scriptures and The Principles of Christes Religion use biblical quotations to prove points of doctrine, the former dealing with theological issues such as the nature of God, Christ, election, Holy Scripture, the Church, Men's traditions, free will, justification, faith and works, the latter being more concerned with the commandments and practical issues such as the duties of all estates in society.

But Becon was not just a literal-minded teacher of God's Word. In common with others of his age and experience (Bale, Barlow, Coverdale, Grindal, Poynet, Turner and Whittingham)[1528] he was determined to fight for reform. He was capable of producing sustained, scurrilous and extremely bigoted invectives against Catholic doctrines and customs, such as The displayeng of the Popish Masse, A comparison betwene ye Lordes Supper & the poppish Masse, The Monstrous marchandise of the Romish Bishops and The Reliques of Rome - many of which provided a detailed description of the customs they condemned. A number of these polemics, such as The Diuersitie betweene God's worde and Mannes inuentions and The Actes of Christe & Antichrist, relied on the same kind of contrast as the earlier Lollard tracts, that between the small but true band of God's followers and the great mass of the people who follow the doctrines and traditions of men, more particularly the customs of Rome. Although to modern readers many of the Protestant polemics seem bitter and destructive, their authors clearly regarded them as a positive contribution to the establishment of reformed religion in England. In the preface to The Reliques of Rome Becon asserts: "My desire is to do good to all men, to hurte no person", and he expresses the hope that the work will enable its readers "to

discerne good from euill, swete from soure, lyght from darkenesse, truth from falshode, Religion from superstition, Christ from Antichrist, God from Baall, &c, and from hence forth serue the Lord our God not as blind reason fantasieth, and filthy fleshe imagineth, but as Gods word precribeth..."[1529] The more positive aspect of Becon's desire to teach his children and other readers Christian doctrine according to reformed principles is to be seen in his lengthy New Catechism, which is divided into sections on repentance, faith, law, prayer, sacraments and the offices of all degrees. The social and educational concerns which were hinted at in the earlier reformed treatises received more extended treatment from Becon, not only in his New Catechism but in the fourth part of his Boke on Matrimony - itself a characteristic topic of reformed authors - and incidentally in a number of his other treatises.[1530] He also produced a number of Latin anthologies, presumably intended for school use.[1531]

However, it was as a devotional writer that Becon was most successful during the middle decades of the sixteenth century. His two collections of prayers, The floure of godlye prayers and his Pomander of prayer, some of whose briefer prayers appeared in a number of Primers and other collections,[1532] not only contain basic Christian doctrine, but moral instruction and spiritual and social virtues are set forth in the form of prayers: edification has entirely displaced the more contemplative mood of most medieval devotions. However in the prayers, as in the treatises, the traditional topics and occasions of devotion are not entirely abandoned. Thus prayers for use morning and evening and before and after communion provided in The floure mark occasions when devotion was traditionally encouraged, although actual prayers were

language; "O Lord Jesu, most louyng spouse, who shall geue me winges of perfect loue, that I may flie vp from these worldely miseries, and rest in the".[719]

The author who attempts to describe heaven as a place or to enumerate its qualities and virtues may be competent and informative but he is unlikely on those grounds alone to inspire a reader to seek the kingdom of heaven. The social heaven, where the soul is re-united with friends and kindred and enjoys the company of apostles, prophets, saints and martyrs, is more attractive. But the desire for heaven is most surely based in the soul's relationship to God, his love for God and his desire to see God face to face. Because the contemplative has penetrated deep into the heart of God's love he is in a better position than other more objective authors, however good and devout, to convey something of his experience of God's love. What the mystic has experienced rarely, briefly and incompletely on earth is a foretaste of heaven. It is usually described in highly wrought, poetical language which also helps to stimulate the reader's imagination and inspire in him longing for heaven. Richard Rolle, one of the greatest of the English mystics, sums up the way in which love of heavenly things can wean a soul from all earthly cares and affections:

> Als sone als þi hert es towched with þe swetnes of heven, þe wil lytel lyst þe myrth of þis worlde; and when þou feles joy in Criste lufe, þe wil lathe with þe joy and þe comforth of þis worlde and erthly gamen. For al melody and al riches and delites, þat al men in þis world kan ordayne or thynk, sownes bot noy and anger til a mans hert þat verraly es byrn and in þe lufe of God; for he hase myrth and joy and melody in aungels sang, als þou may wele wyt. If þou leve al thyng þat þi fleschly lufe

rarely provided. The occasion of death had also, of course, been a traditional focus for devotion, and Becon's most popular work, The Sycke Mans Salue, which went through at least twelve editions by the end of the century, represents an extension of the familiar ars moriendi treatise. A much briefer treatise, which seems to be intended for use as a Protestant ars moriendi book, was The Solace of the soule. The topics of many of Becon's treatises were traditional enough: The prayse of Death, which draws together many of the themes traditionally associated with death;[1533] prayer, abstinence and penance, and fasting were discussed in A newe patheway vnto praier, A potation...for...Lent and A fruitfull treatise of fasting; while A pleasaunt newe Nosegaye included such familiar virtues as humility, obedience and charity. But the exhortatory tone of their address, and the reformed doctrine which is insisted upon, make the devout treatise of the Protestants very different from the medieval devotional treatises. Becon's treatises also reflect humanist influences, not only in their concern for education, but in their dialogue form, in their personal interest - derived from the dedicatory prefaces and relating to Becon's own life and to his patrons - and in their setting. They are usually constructed on a rational plan, and his method of teaching seems to have been popular among his contemporaries. Becon's output indicates the three main areas in which Protestant authors interested themselves: roughly half of his works were edifying - doctrinal devout treatises, and the remainder were biblical or polemic works, with a substantial collection of sermons, A New Postil. A survey of Becon's works, then, suggests the way in which the earlier reformed treatises were developed by the following generation, and ultimately helped to influence Puritan authors. It also helps to

correct the lack of balance which inevitably follows any attempt to extract for discussion a few of the more devotional treatises from the body of biblical and general doctrinal treatises which represent the characteristic Protestant devout treatise.

II

"Et verbum caro factum est."

(Treatises on the Mass; The Life of Christ, rosary books etc; The Passion of Christ and associated devotions)

The standing of private devotion in relation to public worship has undoubtedly varied at different times and in different places.[1] It was the Reformers' claim that they sought to restore the true Church of Christ; their beliefs and practices were to be those of the apostles in the primitive church. Jewel declared that "we have the holy ministration of the sacraments; we know the covenant of baptism; we know the covenant and mystery of the Lord's supper. We fall down together and confess our life before God; we pray together, and understand what we pray. This was the order of the primitive Church: this was the order of the apostles of Christ".[2] The emphasis here is upon the corporate participation in worship by the whole congregation of believers. The situation before the full recognition of the reformed faith in Edward VI's reign was, according to these Elizabethan reformers, far different. The people were kept in ignorance by an uneducated, ungodly and often corrupt clergy,[3] translations of the Scriptures were forbidden to them,[4] and the services of the church were also in a language "not understanded of the people", they were denied the reception of the Sacrament in both kinds, and even the basic rudiments of the faith remained untaught. Such a picture is, of course, exaggerated - there were well-educated and conscientious parish priests to be found, and over the centuries many bishops had enjoined upon their clergy the need to teach their parishioners the basic truths of their faith. But the developed ritual and foreign language of the liturgy could not but

inhibit corporate participation in public worship, which everyone was obliged to attend Sunday by Sunday. To compensate for this restriction of the congregation's part in the mass,[5] devout souls who could read had recourse to books of private devotion: treatises and devotions connected with the mass and the life of Christ,[6] for the late medieval doctrines of the Eucharistic sacrifice particularly emphasized the historic Passion and death of Christ.[7] Treatises connected with the mass, which is the Church's public re-enactment of the death of Christ, may stand as an introduction to the treatises on the life and death of Christ and the devotions which centre on His Person.

The organizing principle of the liturgical year is the celebration of the major events of Christ's life,[8] but it is unlikely that this fact was consciously recognized by the majority of church-goers. In parishes where regular sermons were preached the preacher often drew the congregation's attention to some aspect of Christ's life when he took the feast of the day as the subject of his sermon. Mirk's Festial, reprinted as late as 1532, was only one of a great number of late medieval De tempore sermon collections.[9] Feasts such as Palm Sunday not only allowed the congregation some part in the processions,[10] but may have reminded some of the participants of the event in Christ's life commemorated at that time. A more obvious and to the majority probably a more coherent record of the event of Christ's life than the liturgical year was to be found in the decoration of some of the more prosperous churches: the stained glass of Fairford or King's College, Cambridge, altar pieces, wall-paintings and carved work. In some places the life of Christ, indeed the whole story of mankind from the creation to the

final judgement, came to life even more vividly in the mystery plays publicly acted through the town. But in much the same way that Holy Week and Easter were the climax of the liturgical year, and the great rood usually dominated the other statues and decorations of a church, so the devotional literature of the decade 1530-40 which was concerned in any way with the life of Christ tended to focus particularly upon His Passion and death - it was an emphasis characteristic of late medieval devotions.

The elaborate ceremonies of Holy Week and Easter[11] illustrated the way in which the liturgy might impress itself upon the individual's senses and draw him into its action, which was often some form of re-enactment of the historic events of the Passion. The most obvious impact was visual. During Lent altars were shrouded and pictures and images including the rood were veiled or taken down,[12] thus altering the appearance of the church: "The spectacle presented to the eyes of the faithful in our English churches.....in the Holy Season of Lent was one of exterior penitence".[13] The additional services of Holy Week such as Tenebrae contained much visual symbolism concerning the number of the candles as well as their extinguishing and subsequent rekindling, often preceded by a loud noise,[14] and later in the week there was the hallowing of the new fire and the lighting of the Paschal Candle;[15] even if the symbolism was not fully understood the ceremonies must have been impressive. The congregation would also witness a number of ceremonies which were more obviously dramatic representations of the events of the last week of Christ's life - the processions of Psalm Sunday and the ceremonial footwashing of Maundy Thursday. The most elaborate ritual accompanied the adoration and burial of the cross,

sometimes with a consecrated host, in the Easter sepulchre and its raising on Easter day; it was a symbolic representation of Christ's burial and resurrection.[16] Thus the congregations, at least of the larger and more important churches, must have become accustomed to a strong visual emphasis, and the semi-dramatic character of some of the liturgical ceremonies combined with their symbolic and typological interpretation must have influenced the individual's meditation on the Passion of Christ. Many probably imagined Christ's appearance to be that of the figure on the rood of their parish church and His sepulchre to have been similar to the Easter sepulchre they knew. On one level at least these ceremonies were a re-enactment of the last days of Christ's life, and the members of the congregation were encouraged to imagine themselves present at the events commemorated. Roger Edgeworth declared:

> The devout ceremonies of Psalm Sunday in Processions and on Good Fridays about the laying of the cross and Sacrament into the Sepulchre, gloriously arrayed, be so necessary to succour the capability of man's remembrance, that if they were not used once every year, it is to be feared that Christ's Passion would soon be forgotten. 17

Some efforts were also made to provide instruction about the ceremonies and to explain what they meant, very simply for an ordinary congregation but in more detail for private readers and religious.[18]

For many people Easter was the occasion of their most important religious act of the year, when they were obliged to receive what was for most their annual communion.[19] Confession was obligatory before Communion. Shrove Tuesday seems once to have been the general day of confession,[20] but by the later middle ages confession was heard during Lent[21] and preachers had to warn people against leaving it until the

Thursday or Friday before Easter.[22] The beginning of Lent was marked then as now by the imposition of ashes,[23] and Royal Injunctions ensured that Lent was observed, if not with particular rigour or enthusiasm, as a period of abstinence and penance.[24] But although communion tended to be only once a year for all but the most devout, such as the Lady Margaret Beaufort, everyone would have been familiar with the service of the mass, at which weekly attendance was expected,[25] the more devout being encouraged to assist more often, even daily.[26] Not surprisingly literature about the mass was considerable: theologians debated various aspects of it, and in times of doctrinal controversy such as the 1530s and 1540s apologies, defences, satires and polemics, many of them in English, circulated in large numbers; there were also works designed to give instruction to priests and lay people, and several treatises of a more devotional kind related to the mass.

Treatises on the Mass.

By the end of the fifteenth century a number of works about the mass were in circulation, including The Lay Folks' Mass Book;[27] Meditacyons for goostly exercyse. In tyme of the masse;[28] A short tretys of the higheste and moste worthy sacrament of cristes blessed body and the merueyles thereof, which was to be found at the end of some versions of Love's translation of the Speculum Vitae Christi;[29] and the fourth book of A Kempis' De Imitatione Christi. During the 1530s several new works on the mass became available to English readers, including translations such as Garade's The interpretacyon and sygnyfycacyon of the Masse,[30] Erasmus' Epistle...concernynge the veryte of the Sacrament of Christes body and bloude and Nausea's A sermon of the sacrament of the aulter, which was translated by John More; there was also Sir Thomas More's A treatice to receaue the blessed body of our lorde, written in 1534 but not printed until 1557, and Whitford's Preparacion vnto howselynge. Aspects of the mass were also discussed in parts of more general works, such as Mirk's Instructions for Parish Priests, in the English version of the Stimulus Amoris,[31] in The myrroure of oure Ladye and The Dyetary of ghostly helthe, and in later recusant works such as A brief fourme of confession and A Manval of prayers.

Although I do not intend to discuss them, it is important to remember the large number of Protestant tracts and polemics directed against the mass, which began to circulate in England from the end of the 1520s and reached their peak in the first few years of Edward VI's reign.[32] The satirizing of traditional beliefs and customs found in a work such as Becon's Displaying of the Popish Mass, printed in 1563, in fact provides much valuable information about the celebration and

popular interpretations of the mass current some thirty years earlier. However, there was little profitable instruction, especially of a devotional nature, to be found in most of the tracts. Protestant authors seem to have enjoyed the wanton verbal destruction and vilification of traditional services and doctrines, and to have expended much of their energy in such attacks. There seems to have been little attempt made to provide the people with instruction about the new doctrines, nor are there signs of any popular rationale or devotional expositions of the new English liturgy. Doubtless Cranmer and his successors hoped that the use of a vernacular liturgy would enable congregations to take a full part in the service and so obviate the need for the traditional manuals of instruction and devotion, part at least of whose purpose had been to assist the understanding and devotion of those who knew no Latin.

Leaving aside the polemical tracts it is possible to divide the treatises on the mass into three groups: those whose interest is mainly doctrinal, those which concentrate upon the setting and actions of the services, and those which are mainly devotional, providing meditations and prayers to precede, accompany and follow the service. The categories are not mutually exclusive. For instance, several doctrinal works include prayers, and devotional manuals frequently include some explanation of the service or points of doctrine. But if most of the treatises are in fact of mixed content the division is useful in suggesting the way in which various authors chose to approach the mass.

The Doctrinal Approach and Preparation for Communion.

The doctrinal works - Love's Schort tretys, Erasmus' Epistle, More's Treatise to receive the sacrament and part of his Treatice vpon the passion of Chryste, and Nausea's sermon - seem mainly intended to strengthen true belief in the faithful against the overt or implied challenge of heretical doctrines. The Schort tretys, the earliest and most simple of these treatises, was written in a time of considerable Lollard activity, probably about the opening of the fifteenth century, when Love was translating the Speculum Vitae Christi. The Lollards, following the Aristotelian - Realist leanings of their founder, Wycliff,[33] particularly challenged the orthodox belief in the Real Presence, just as the Protestants were to do in the sixteenth century. The Schort tretys makes one brief attempt[34] to distinguish between the Aristotelian and the orthodox doctrine of the sacrament using the scholastic terminology - nature, substance and accident - but more often it is content to make the simple and common assertion that faith is above reason; what the Church declares to be true is to be believed. To prove the orthodox belief in the sacrament the author does not rely on philosophical or theological argument; instead he describes a series of miracles. These he divides into three kinds: those which bring comfort and joy to those who believe truly; those which convert the unbeliever - he uses the St. Gregory mass as one of the miracles to prove this - and thirdly those which prove the sacrament's power to deliver body and soul from physical harm or spiritual trouble such as the pains of purgatory. The floure of the commaundementes of god[35] similarly includes a collection of eighteen miracles which demonstrate the power of the sacrament, especially its power to convince unbelievers or even dumb beasts of

its virtue, and its ability to rescue men from trouble, especially to relieve those in purgatory. The miracles of the Schort tretys (St. Hugh and St.Gregory are cited as the main authorities), which make up the bulk of the work, are prefaced by exhortations to believe as holy church believes and followed by the author's gloomy forebodings that "the disciples of Antichrist/that ben cleped lollardes"[36] have so undermined orthodox belief in the sacrament, that error and unbelief are widespread, presaging the end of all things as predicted in the third of the iiij. Tokens, the whiche shall be shewed afore the dredefull daye of Dome.[37] At the end there is a "schort devoute preyere to hym/and his blessid body in the sacrament of the autere: the whiche oweth to be seide in the presence of that holy sacrament at the masse with inward deuocioun". A contemplation of affective devotion is thus provided to round off, or as the application of, an instructional treatise. It is a celebration of the Real Presence; it seeks that the reader may find forgiveness, healing, quenching of all vice and lust, and that he may cultivate all virtue, and so become "enflawmed with fyre of thi love" and finally be "knytte and ioyned to the" in mystical and sacramental union.

More's Treatice to receaue the blessed body of our lorde[38] concentrates upon the need for due preparation before communion and the importance of right belief, although beyond stating that the sacrament is "vnder the fourme and likenesse of breade, the very blessed bodye, fleshe and bloude of our holy sauiour Christe himselfe" he does not elaborate upon the content of the belief. His Treatice vpon the passion of Chryste,[39] however, includes three lectures on the Blessed Sacrament in connection with Christ's celebration of the Last Supper. The first lecture is

primarily a historical exposition of the Lucan narrative of the Institution reconciled with the different order given in the other synoptic accounts, and it deals particularly with the institution of the new sacrament in place of the old Jewish paschal sacrifice. The second lecture argues against those who deny that the bread and wine are really the body and blood of Christ. After a philisophically argued defence of the doctrine, which is more intellectually demanding than anything in Love's Schort tretys, More goes on to list the opinions of a great body of patristic and later writers as authoritative proof that the doctrine of the Real Presence is and has always been the belief of the Church. The catena of quotations serves much the same purpose as Love's miracles, to confirm the truth of the orthodox faith. The third lecture deals briefly with the three ways in which the sacrament may be received, sacramentally, or spiritually, or sacramentally and spiritually. Like Love, More seems unwilling to divorce doctrine and devotion entirely, and each lecture ends with a prayer.

Erasmus' Epistle...concernynge the veryte of the Sacrament of Christes body and bloude was written as an introduction to an edition of Algerus' De veritate corporis et sanguinis dominici in Eucharistia,[40] and not surprisingly it shows an interest in the historical development of the doctrine, but it is also a personal defence of the orthodoxy of Erasmus' belief. In common with several other authors[41] Erasmus sees the sacrament of the altar primarily as a sacrament of unity; unity of the Church with its head, Christ, and unity between the members of the Church. He laments the dissension which has arisen in debate about the sacrament, and he is highly critical of contemporary polemic, its quantity, its harsh arguments and the affected style of the schoolmen's

successors:

> whiche do bestowe a gret parte of theyr bokes: with chydynges, & braulynge wordes agaynste other men or with diffamynge checkynge and tauntynge wordes, nor moche worse is they do not bestowe somtyme hole pamphelettes with irreuerent and bytter wordes agaynst those thynges which both they all other ought to haue in hyghe reuerence and dewly to worshyp.42

But unlike Love and Nausea, who saw in unbelief and debate the threatened coming of Antichrist, Erasmus optimistically saw such attacks as being of positive benefit to the Church, which, thus forced to call on God for help, received the spirit of Truth, so that Catholics have grown stronger and have been better instructed and the true faith has been confirmed in meeting the challenge of opposition.

In contrast to More's rather ingenuous use of patristic and other authorities to prove the doctrine of the Real Presence, Erasmus admits that many of the fathers and doctors of the church wrote darkly on the subject and may even appear to contradict one another through their imprecise terminology. Nevertheless he is adamant that taken together the views of the fathers and doctors and of the General Councils and the belief of all the congregations of faithful Christians throughout Christendom, provide an incontrovertible consensus of opinion that the sacrament of the altar is the true body and blood of Christ, and this is to be believed. Intricate questions about the nature of the Real Presence or about transubstantiation are to be left to those who are suitably learned and trained to discuss them:

> But as vnto the laye people it doth suffice, yf they do beleue yt after the wordes of consecration be once by the mynyster spoken ouer the creatures of breade and wyne, that there is in contynent the very body and bloude of our sauyour Christ, which neyther can be deuyded, nor yet/receyue any hurte...whatsoeuer chaunces to become of the outward formes. 43

Perhaps nowhere more often than in connection with the sacrament is the layman warned not to be curious and forbidden to question the doctrine; his part is to be "a meke follower of crist iesu in submittinge his reason & felyng to the holy feyth".[44] Those who prefer to believe Aristotle, Plato or other pagans and heretics rather than Christ and the Bible, Erasmus places on the side of the Jews, who rejected the chance of salvation and had their Saviour put to death.[45]

In the latter part of his Epistle Erasmus is critical of contemporary customs and abuses. He shows his disapproval of the prominence given to the Blessed Virgin by criticizing the recent custom of choirs singing Marian anthems and during the consecration.[46] He looks back to the early centuries of the Christian Church - perhaps idealizing them as he had idealized early monasticism in the twelfth chapter of his De Contemptu Mundi - as a period when priests were motivated by devotion, not money as they are in his time. In common with many other authors Erasmus was also critical of the way people behaved in church.[47] He censures those who "whan this holye mysterye at the masse tyme is in doing do walke vp and downe in the churche, pratyng and Iangelynge togyther", and he condemns the widespread customs of standing outside the church doors in the market place, "there spending theyr tyme aboute tellynge of Idell tales", and the habit of those who once they have seen the elevation "do get them in to some tauerne or alehouse, & do in maner leaue the churche empty."[48] The lengthy history and widespread occurrence of such strictures suggest that, despite occasional foreign praise of English piety,[49] standards of behaviour could at times be very low.

Medieval congregations received little instruction about the nature

of the sacrament, and preachers seem to have left theological matters - a complex and highly technical branch of learning - to the theologians. Preachers like Nausea attempted to confute "all these folysshe sophistycall sutteltyes brought agaynste this sacrament" by heretical factions. He did so by bald assertions of the truth and "by hole & sounde reasons of holy scripture" - the Protestants were not alone in using Scripture to support their cause - but there is no rationally developed argument to support the scriptural quotations, many of which were, as the Protestants showed, capable of more than one interpretation. The eloquent praise of the Sacrament designed to stimulate the emotions rather than to answer questions is no substitute for an explanation of the doctrine or a cogently argued exposure of the weakness of the opposition's positions:

> O the moste excellent sacrament. O moste to be worshypped. O moste honourable. O moste reuerend. O moste worthy prayse. O most worthy glory, highly to be magnifyed, to be extolled by worthye cryers, to be honoured wyth all the herte, with all deuocyon, wyth all reuerence. What more meruaylous then this sacrament, in whych brede and wyne is veryly conuerted in to the body and blood of Iesu cryste/in whiche perfyte crist is conteyned by the vertue of the word, vnder the forme and lykenes of a peace of brede: Take you this is my body, whiche is eaten of good Christen folke, & in the meane whyle ys not borne/ but||though the sacrament be deuyded, yet the bodye abydeth and contynueth hole vnder euery parte of that that is dyuyded....50

Almost as a substitute, it seems, and for want of solid doctrinal instruction and lack of convincing explanation of basic Christian truths, great emphasis is placed on the importance of devout behaviour. The large number of references to correct behaviour in church and instructions about what people are to do, both in church and by way of good deeds in the ordinary course of their lives, suggest that much emphasis fell upon

the external elements of religion. The test of a good Christian lay in what he was seen to do in the way of pious actions, his almsgiving, and the works of mercy he performed. Ideally such actions would be the expression of his faith, but in many cases the failure of priests and clergy to provide more than the most elementary instruction on the content of Christian belief, must have sometimes led, if not to a divorce of faith and works, at least to a tendency for works to be considered more important than an understanding of faith.

Richard Whitford, for example, in the second half of his "A dialoge or communicacion bytwene the curate or ghostly father: and the parochiane or ghostly chyld. For a due preparacion vnto howselynge"[51] is not unusual in reminding his readers at what points the service they are expected to stand, particularly observing the Gospel and doing reverence when they hear the name of Jesus.[52] He goes into detail which might by modern standards be considered excessive in explaining how the sacrament should be received:

> Whan the preeste dothe put the hooste into your mouthe: open it well, and take the hooste vpon your tonge, and holde it styll a whyle, and than it wyll relent/& so you may fold it in your mouthe with your tongue, and receyue it down with as litle brusur of your teethe as you conueniently maye.[53]

The motive is clearly reverence for the sacrament but this is almost lost amid the practical instructions. He goes on to explain the reason for the provision of unconsecrated wine for the laity,[54] and he warns against "these new heretykes" who encourage the people to demand for themselves the consecrated wine of the priest. This kind of attention to the minutiae of correct behaviour was perhaps some compensation to the many who were unable to occupy themselves in private reading and who could not understand the liturgy; it provided them with something

to think about and various actions to perform. Ill behaviour, talking, walking about in church or staying outside except for the elevation and departing before the end, were faults born not of doctrinal opposition or of unbelief but rather of boredom, a lack of interest in and understanding of the liturgy, and perhaps some frustration at the obligation to attend mass.

It was not only lay people who were in need of instruction about how to behave. Mirk's Instructions for Parish Priests begins by warning priests against wearing unsuitable clothes and indulging in wrestling, ribaldry and going to the tavern. They are not to be gluttons or drunkards but they must live chastely, eschewing such sins as pride, sloth, envy and lying. They are to turn away from "The cursede worldes vanyte", and instead "thys worlde þow moste despyse, And holy vertues haue in vyse"; thus they will set a good example to their parishioners. Having provided the ignorant priest with a summary of the kind of teaching he should make sure that his flock knows, Mirk goes on to instruct him more fully in the performance of his duties. He is instructed how to conduct baptisms and confessions, how to impose penances and what preparations are to be made for mass, as well as how to deal with difficulties such as having forgotten to provide the bread or wine, or what to do should a drop of the consecrated wine be spilt or an insect fall into it. It is interesting that Mirk concentrates almost exclusively on ensuring that the due forms are observed.

Mirk makes no reference to the priest's spiritual condition beyond the proviso that he should "be out of dedly synne" before he celebrates mass. The author of Stimulus Amoris demands a far more searching preparation from the priest.[55] First he is to:

> withdraw his mind from all outward things and gather himself all whole into himself if he may, so entirely that neither he be scattered by bodily wits nor by vain thoughts. And then ransack his own conscience and that he findeth unclean, that he may wash it away with tears of compunction. 56

As in Mirk the priest is to withdraw himself from all worldly concerns, but, in keeping with the mystical tendency of the Stimulus Amoris, the withdrawal is to be far more deeply felt and more comprehensive. The priest is also advised to make his confession and then to think of his own wretchedness and his nothingness, and to remember God's worthiness, His meekness and His love. He is to focus his thoughts entirely on God, and if he has time he should remember how our Lord took on him "the vileness of mankind" and recollect "points of Christ's passion for to stir his own heart to compassion". He is also provided with a brief prayer which acknowledges his sick and corrupt soul and prays for mercy and healing. The emphasis here is on knowledge of what man receives in the sacrament, "soothly (Jesus Christ) sooth fast God", on devotion, reverence and desire for the sacrament, prayer and due preparation of the soul to receive the heavenly King. Not a word is said about the practical preparations to be made for mass nor how it is to be conducted; as befits a contemplative work the author focuses upon the things of the spirit, and in contrast to Mirk's rather impersonal instructions his advice is personal and emotionally stimulating.

The fourth book of A. Kempis' De Imitatione Christi holds the office of priest in high regard, "O how great and honourable is the office of prestes",[57] particularly because the priest handles and often receives the body of Christ. In two chapters of the fourth book, five and seven, A Kempis deals with God-given power of the priest and the importance of

his due preparation for communion. The seventh chapter, which deals with preparation for communion, although initially addressed to a priest would be of great assistance to devout lay people as well. It is similar to the preparation recommended in the Stimulus Amoris, although it spells out in more detail the kind of sins, weaknesses and inclinations to be confessed or eschewed. Sins are to be confessed and wept for[58] and, characteristically of A Kempis, man is to offer himself to God "purely/ and entyerly with the oblacyon of the holy body of Cryst Iesu in the masse and the holy communion". The second part of the fifth chapter does not neglect the importance of the priest setting an example of a good and holy life, but it is more concerned with the priest's office in relation to the mass. God is "the pryncypall and inuysible worker" of the sacrament, but to the priest is given the great and mysterious power to "doo and to consecrate the holy body of Iesu cryste". The priest vested at the altar "occupyeth the rometh of our lorde Ihesu cryste", and the sign of the cross on the front and back of his chasuble helps him to "contynuallye remembre the passyon of our lorde iesu crist". Lydgate in rather more detail recommends that the priest going to mass "thynke on hys woundys fyne":

> Ye shall also most louyngly remembre
> Vppon hys most peynfull passyon,
> Howe he was hurt and bled in euery membre,
> Suffryd dethe for your redempcioun,
> Yeueth thanke to hym of humble affeccioun
> Whyche for your sake was woundyd on hys syde, 59

Mirk's Instructions concentrate upon the practical, external aspects of a priest's behaviour and the solution of practical difficulties encountered in the conduct of various services. The author of the Stimulus Amoris and A Kempis assume the priest will know how to manage the practical demands of his job and make only the briefest reference to the need to set his flock a good example in daily living. They are

concerned with the spiritual state of the priest as an individual; and their teaching, with its emphasis upon tears of contrition, the soul's recognition of his own unworthiness, and remembrance of Christ's Passion, reflects the common concerns of numerous late medieval spiritual directors, especially those influenced by mystical writers. A Kempis, however, considers the priest not only as an individual before God but as God's agent in the profound mystery of the sacrament of the altar; the priesthood is no longer just a job but a holy vocation which sets the priest in a special relationship to God.

If priests required advice on how to prepare for and receive communion, the need for instruction was even greater among lay people. A number of authors made some reference to the need to prepare for communion in the course of comprehensive manuals of instruction such as Handlyng Synne, the Somme Le Roi group or Speculum Christiani, and warnings to prepare for the Easter communion were sounded from the pulpit during Lent.[60] Advice varied from the kind of brief reminder found in The dyetary of ghostly helthe:

> And whan ye be commonde/se that ye dyspose yourselfe before with hyghe deuocyon and mekenes/by contrycyon/confessyon/and deuoute prayers/so yt ye maye receyue your maker to ye saluacyon and strength of your soules. And after to contynewe the more stedfast in vertu 61

to the more detailed recommendations of the Stimulus Amoris or the De Imitatione Christi, much of which would have been valuable to devout lay people as well as priests, for whom it was originally intended. Garade deals with the preparation for communion in a fuller and more systematic way in the third book of his Interpretacyon and sygnyfycacyon of the masse; More's Treatice to receaue the blessed body of our lorde seems to have been found useful by the English recusants[62] although it

was more a theoretical exposition than a practical guide; but Whitford, who devoted a whole work to the question, probably intended his Preparacion vnto howselynge[63] to be a practical handbook, although it does not confine itself to practical matters. Whitford's Werke for housholders clearly encouraged him to write the Preparacion, and suggests that among certain groups, lay and religious, there was considerable demand for instruction in practical matters of devotion.[64]

Nearly every writer who refers to people receiving communion emphasizes the need for them first to "purge and clense their soules by confession, contricion and penance". Mirk's Instructions, for instance, provides a form of confession to be taught by the priest to his flock as well as detailed teaching on how the priest should conduct confessions. Garade gives a form to be used in confession in the sixth and seventh chapters of his third book, while Whitford, never slow to recommend his own work, refers his readers to the form of confession he had provided in the Werke for housholders.[65] Confession, a topic discussed more fully in the first chapter, was customary before communion and it is perhaps the most frequently mentioned element of preparation.

The third book of Garade's Interpretacyon and sygnyfycacyon of the masse has much to say about preparing for communion, and in common with many manuals of confession he launches into teaching about various sets of sins, sins against the Holy Ghost or the five wits and so on, that they may be recognized and confessed. In addition to confession he pays attention to the dangers of unworthy reception, which can be overcome by suitable preparation. The introduction to this third book shows how man needs the nourishment of this spiritual bread, which is Christ, just as physically the body requires the nourishment of ordinary bread. Garade then introduces an elaborate analogy between the preparation of natural

bread, from the first sowing of the corn and its cultivation to the processes which follow its reaping until it is rendered into flour and baked into bread, and the events of Christ's life, from His conception and birth to His Passion, Resurrection and Ascension. Like others, Garde seeks to banish pride and encourage reverence by reminding man of his unworthiness to receive the sacrament.[66] The author of Stimulus Amoris put it more bluntly:

> For if a man dipped all in stink were unworthy to stand in the presence of the King, how mickle unworthy is any man, as of himself, for to receive Christ in the precious sacrament. For why? All our good deeds are not but as uncleanness in his sight; what are our sins then? Nevertheless his goodness and pity is more than our wretchedness.67

Emphasis on man's unworthiness and his need to emulate the devout reverence of Elizabeth when she was visited by the Blessed Virgin[68] is also one of the most obvious lessons of More's Treatice to receaue the blessed body of our lorde. Garde reinforces the point by reminding his reader of the devotion of the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets, who made elaborate and lengthy preparations to meet their God - an example of humble reverence probably derived from A Kempis IV:i. Even if he had a thousand years to prepare himself to receive Christ in the mass and if he possessed in addition the holiness of all the saints and the desire of all just men, man would still not be worthy to receive so great a gift. This sense of man's unworthiness is related to the pessimistic view of man expressed in the "vile body" genre of the contemptus mundi tradition, and also to the kind of humility which comes not through a consideration of his own sin and wretchedness but from the contemplation and love of God, the self-negation of the mystic.[69]

But is is not sufficient to be humble; not even going to confession will guarantee that a man is in the state of grace and able to receive the sacrament worthily. The late medieval eucharistic theology helped to instil into people great reverence for the sacrament, which was none other than the very body and blood of Christ, and the customary infrequency of lay communion would have encouraged at least the more devout to take their preparation very seriously. Over them hung the threat of St.Paul that "whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord".[70] Among others who remind their readers of this threat, More uses it to warn against deviating from correct belief in the Real Presence,[71] while Nausea threatens those who do not love or serve the Lord faithfully with judgement.[72] Garande lists four types of people who receive the sacrament to their damnation:[73] those who receive it knowing themselves to be in deadly sin, those whose mind is peverse and evil and who are still willing to sin, hypocrites who feign goodness or who refuse the sacrament through false humility, and finally those who presume too much on God's mercy and whose preparation is inadequate. Such people only receive the sacrament bodily; it has no spiritual power in them.[74] With the proviso that no man can know for sure whether he is in the state of grace Garande does suggest four signs which accompany a good confession: that a man hears the word of God gladly, desires to serve God and do good works, intends to sin no more, and repents of his past sins. But they depend too heavily on the individual's feelings to offer much firm assurance to the communicant.[75] Those who for any reason do receive the sacrament unworthily are condemned as worse than the Jews who killed Jesus in ignorance; they despise God the Creator and

ignore His gift of Himself in the sacrament, and will share the fate of the traitor Judas in hell.[76] On a personal level they will be less happy than worthy souls, because God's goodness is hurtful to them and they will be more liable to sickness and sudden death than other Christians. Indeed, Garade attributes the plagues which so often follow Easter to the numbers of unworthy communicants. The mood here is akin to Love's Schort tretys, which saw in widespread unbelief the threatened coming of Antichrist, and of Nausea, who saw this miserable time with its wars, deadly pestilence, rampant iniquity, absence of charity and failure of the true faith as a warning that the end of the world was at hand.[77] The sacrament was not a purely personal concern. Denial of its truth would have cosmic repercussions: God's intervention in history was seen as surely in the plagues of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as in the Lord's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the plagues He sent upon Egypt.[78]

But the eucharist was not entirely dominated by the fear of judgement. It was both spiritual food and medicine to the soul. A Kempis describes how the soul should approach the sacrament "with meke hope/and reuerence" and "in ferme feythe" believing that Christ is truly present there:

> And thou wylte I shall receyue the/and Ioyne me vnto the by charyte, wherfore I humbly pray/and requyre that it may plese the to gyue vnto me thy specyall grace/so that I may be all relented/and flowe in thy loue in suche wyse that I shall not desyre any other consolacyon. For thys hyghe worthye sacrament ys the helthe of soule/and body. It is the medycyne of all spyrytuall sekenes, in the whyche my synnes be heyleed, passyons be refrayned, temptacions be ouercome/and mynysshed, more greate graces be gyuyn, the vertue begonne increased/faythe ys enestablysshed/hope ys made stronge and fortyfyed/charyte is brannynge & spred abrode. 79

The idea of the sacrament as nourishment went back to the words of

Jesus Himself;[80] and as early as the fourth century the sacrament had been described as the drug or medicine of life, for the body as well as for the soul, in the Eucharistic Prayer of Bishop Sarapion.[81] In the introduction to the third book of his Interpretacyon[82] Garꝑde provides six "case studies" of men who through feebleness, lack of courage, wasted time, or because near despair or surrounded by enemies, are in difficulty or estranged from God, for whom Christ gives Himself in the sacrament. For the fearful man Christ makes Himself small in the sacrament so that none should fear Him; and God gives Himself in the sacrament to protect the man surrounded by enemies, to whom He is a faithful companion bringing quickness to the slothful, victory in temptation, joy in tribulation, patience in sickness and pleasure in persecution. Like A Kempis, from whom he may well have borrowed the idea, Garꝑde laments that many receive the sacrament with little desire, show little devotion to it or do not receive it because they are loth to go to confession or to fast. How everyone would wish to see him, if there was one man in the world who was worthy on his own merits to receive the sacrament, declares Garꝑde.[83] The idea of Christ as the source of all health was often expressed in terms of Christ as the fountain or well of life:[84]

> For whoys he that cometh mykely vnto the founteyne of swetnes, and shall not brynge some lytell quantite of swetnes therfrom. I shall alwey put my mouthe vnto the hole of the heuenly pype of that founteyne, that I maye at the lest take a lytell droppe to satysfye my thyrste, so that I be not all drye. And though I may not be heuenly enflamed as the cherubyns and ceraphyns, yet wyll I enforce me to deuocion, and prepare my herte mykely to receyue this holy louynge sacrament, and shall desyre to be enbraced with a lytel flame of that goodly loue. 85

To a few souls of mystical inclinations, to see or receive the sacrament could be a profound devotional experience,[86] or even in the case of some

mystics such as St. Catherine of Siena the prelude to ecstasy.[87] But although few could reach such heights the authors of treatises on the mass did not neglect the devotional stimulus and the spiritual, or more material, benefits and rewards to be gained by worthy communion or by devout assistance at mass. In fact the list of benefits is very similar to the rewards which are claimed to be derived from devout contemplation of Christ's Passion. According to Gerade[88] there is nothing which so quickens a man in virtue, illumines him in devotion and raises him to high contemplation as to receive the sacrament of the altar and to remember Christ's Passion. Among other benefits, to receive communion devoutly promises relief from tribulation, it stimulates tears of devotion and feelings of spiritual joy, and gives the grace to die wisely. In the sacrament the believer is united with Christ, and generally becomes partaker of His merits, shares His powers over temptation and sin, shares His wisdom in discerning good from evil, and is restored to His inheritance in the glory of Heaven.

The first half of Whitford's Preparacion vnto howsellynge helps the ghostly child prepare to receive the sacrament; the second half provides a series of prayers and devotions to accompany the mass. Whitford takes a high view of the sacrament and is correspondingly emphatic about the need for serious preparation:

> For I acerteyne you: ther is no persone in this worlde can tell you wt how greate reuerence, howe depe deuotion, howe lowe and meke harte/with howe reuerente drede howe pure and cleane conscience with howe well adornate, garnyshed & apperelled soule with howe firme & stedfast fayth, with howe hyghe & strong hope & with howe ardente feruent, inflamyng and burnyng charite: any true Christian shulde accede approyche, & go vnto that honorable meruelouse, and moste hyghe mystery where (doubtles) is presente, the very naturall body/and soule, flesshe, & blode of our lord, & sauyoure Iesu very god/& very man in one persone very Christ his humanytie, and his diuinite.89

He reiterates St.Paul's warning about the danger of judgement to those who receive the sacrament unworthily, and recommends two acts of preparation: the first being a thorough search of conscience so that no trace of sin remains; the second is "that the persones so clered in conscience/should ordre & appoynte themselfe vnto some maner of memorie by meditacyon or contemplacion/of our lorde/and sauyour Iesu/and of ye actes of our saluacion".[90] Considering the emphasis usually placed on the importance of confession before communion - Garade, for instance, devotes a third of his work to confession and related topics - Whitford dismisses the subject very briefly. He does little more than refer his readers to the form of confession given in his Werke for housholders. He chooses rather to dwell upon the second point of preparation, meditation on the acts of man's salvation. He provides neither the usual sort of contemplation of Christ's Passion so often associated with the mass, - although there is some reference to such meditation, nor does he provide a theory or method of contemplation. What he does is to provide a set of meditations on the acts of our redemption which include a good deal of general teaching about the nature of man and the progression from self-knowledge to devotion.

Whitford's introductory remarks offer a good summary of the conditions of meditation, be it on Christ's Passion, the nature of man or any other devout subject:

> You shulde fyrste geder yourselfe, vnto yourselfe, that is to say, your soule, harte, mynde, and wyll, in as muche as you may, wt all force and diligence, holly & clerely: from all cures, cares, charges, and busynes of the worlde and frome all bodyly maters and all cogitations and thoughtes, that by any meanes myght lett you, & hynder you in this exercise and so to compell your spirite to labor alone herin.[91]

The condition of withdrawal from all external concerns was necessary alike to the life of perfection and to successful meditation. As a devotional introduction it is suggested that those who have the time should say "Veni Creator Spiritus" - the eight verses are given in Latin and English as are the versicle, response and two collects— but "if you have but small or shorte tyme" Whitford recommends two verses of "Rex Christe clementissime".

At the request of the ghostly child the spiritual father suggests some forms of meditation. For those who are short of time, a condition which Whitford always takes seriously and makes allowance for, (a consideration not often acknowledged by devotional writers who tend perhaps to overrate the leisure and application of their readers), he refers the reader to the exercise to be found towards the end of the Werke for housholders. It is a summary of the events of Christ's life from His Incarnation and Nativity to the Resurrection and Ascension and the sending of the Holy Ghost, which is set out briefly and factually in forty articles. It is interesting that he feels it necessary to protest that he has no intention of persuading readers to forsake "theyr owne vsed exercises, takyn of good and sufficient auctorite"; one wonders whether the Werke for housholders, which preceded the Preparacion, had been so popular as to cause devout souls to use it in preference to the exercises prescribed by their spiritual directors.

The first half of the Preparacion consists of three eightfold meditations. The first considers the redemptive work of God and Christ and offers a summary of salvation history, beginning with the power and goodness of God as shown in creation and how man was made "souerayne of all" and God " put all vnto his frewyll, & liberte." The fourth

consideration "of the Werke of iustificacion" describes the debate in heaven after the Fall, and how Christ offers to come into this vale of misery and to take upon Himself "our frayle and vyle nature, therin to suffre..." At this point the reader is encouraged to meditate on the life of Jesus, either in the form given in the Werke for housholders or in some other treatise such as The golden letany, which he names, or perhaps Simon's Fruyte of redempcyon.[92] Christ's work is made to seem all the more good and wonderful, and the glory of His resurrection is stressed in contrast to him for whom Christ suffered, "For a stynkyng lumpe of drytty and slyme erthe", man. The "vile body" of man is emphasized to show that Christ did not despise corrupt and sinful man, a reflection intended "for the syngular comfort of all synful soules". This fourth consideration is the longest in the first meditation and represents the climax of Christ's saving work. Subsequent points remind the reader that he is not only saved by Christ but made co-heir of His kingdom; then there is the gift of the Holy Spirit, which also taught the due form and manner of the sacraments, "whiche forme hathe euer sythe that tyme and euer shall continue in Christes catholicall churche/what so euer theyse new heretykes say vnto the contrary"; finally the subject of man's glorification leads to "the werke of fruicion" and the promise of the eternal endurance of these heavenly joys.

The two much briefer eight-fold meditations which follow, on the eight days of creation and on the eight beatitudes, seem not to have been part of the original plan. They were added at the request of "a good deuoute persone", "which thyng I was loth vnto, bothe bycause I lacked abilite thervnto, and also bycause this werke: whiche I intended to be short: shuld be therby inlarged". The additional length

is excused by telling the readers to select "what they wyll" according to their leisure and inclination. The eight days of creation (the eighth is the day of Eternity) are briefly considered under the same headings as the first meditation: the work of creation, the work of governance, God's bounty, the work of justification, of remuneration, of glorification, of fruition, and finally "of sure persueracion & duraunce"; but the interpretation is given a more personal application than in the first meditation. For instance, the first day, the separation of the light from the dark and the heaven from the earth, is related to the spiritual and the earthly in each person and taken to show that a person should be both active and contemplative in the course of the day. The third meditation on the eight beatitudes relates them to eight general devotional precepts on the life of perfection. Thus the first beatitude, on the poor in spirit, is used to remind man that he has nothing of his own, God lends him all that he possesses, and from this Whitford declares that those who possess riches occupy the lowest degree of the state of perfection:"In the hygest degree wherof: done religiouse persones lyue, if they kepe theyr promyse, and vowe duely". The fourth beatitude, on the desire for justice, reminds the reader of his obligations to love and dread God, to honour and obey his sovereigns and parents, to be friendly to his neighbour, to guard his soul and correct his body; and the last beatitude, on those who are persecuted, sums up the high respect enjoyed by the doctrine of tribulation, "For alway to suffre euyle, is of more perfection than is to do good". Of the three meditations the first is especially suitable for use before communion, which could be regarded as the focus and seal of Christ's saving work, but like the others it is sufficiently general to be suitable for use at almost any time, and in each case the regular eight-fold division was practically useful,

enabling the reader to choose appropriate sections from any of the meditations.

The organizing factor of division into eight is maintained when Whitford turns to consider in detail the words of St. Augustine, that "meditacion dothe ingender/and brynge forthe science or knowledge: & science dothe bryng forthe compunction, and compunction bryngeth forthe deuocion/& deuocion dothe make prayer perfecte".[93] Rather than deal with the higher reaches of contemplation, or present a purely theoretical exposition of the art of meditation, Whitford chooses to dwell upon self-knowledge, which is the product of meditation. He takes a pessimistic view of man, seeing him as physically corrupt, sinful and subject to death.[94] In eight considerations, whose topics are those of the first meditation, the virtues, power and goodness of God are set against the shortcomings and corruptions of man, and in the light of this comparison man is taught how and why he should approach the holy sacrament. The first consideration is to remember the power of God, that man should reflect upon his own weakness and infirmity; "And so shall you, approyche/& go vnto this holy sacrament: as a sore syke persone vnto a sure phisicion". Secondly, by comparison with God's wisdom man appears foolish, ignorant and blind, and so he approaches the sacrament "as ye ignorant & blynde vnto the sonne of iustice & vnto the true doctour & teacher of all verity & trouth". Thirdly, against God's bounty and goodness man is "all nought and fruytles", and should approach the sacrament as "a baren beast vnto the mooste fruytfull progenitour & begetter of all goodnes & vertue". Reflection on the work of justification should cause sinful and ungrateful man to "haste vnto this holy sacrament: as a thefe or

traytour founde gylty to aske forgyuenes and pardon". Man has given nothing to God in return for His generosity, and so he approaches the sacrament "as a nedy beggar vnto the moste rychest and lyberall lord", who will inspire him to offer his good will and his heart to the Lord. Again, man has not maintained his state of glorification but has often fallen into the mire and dirt of unclean thoughts, and so he goes to the sacrament "as a filthy defouled body vnto the ryuer and fountayne of all purity & clennes", or "as a person in depe consumpcion for sorowe vnto the meate of mercy/the fode of all helth and saluacion and the very restoratiue of all recouery & comforte". Finally, in contrast to the certain endurance of God's promises, man appears inconstant, "euer flyttynge", who goes "vnto this holy house" like a vagabond or prodigal to the house of his father, there to be received and to dwell for ever.

The sacrament is seen as medicine and food for the soul of man, as a fountain of purity and cleanliness, and as being of abiding permanence. It enshrines the hope of mercy and pardon, it stimulates the soul to virtue, leads it into truth, and teaches man to respond in love to the love of Christ, to offer Him his heart and will. Whitford chooses to emphasize the positive merits of the sacrament, its healing, saving and inspiring qualities rather than its doctrinal significance, its miraculous properties or the threat of judgement to the unworthy. It is shown to be freely available to sinful man and the antidote to his corrupt nature and many failings. The teaching is clear, practical (because of its systematic treatment and simple form) and, despite Whitford's pessimistic view of human nature, encouraging to the devout and conscientious soul. There is not a hint of any mystical fervour in

connection with the sacrament, and this is characteristic of the author, whose nature seems to have been firmly practical rather than imaginative or mystical, that he should deal briefly with the more emotional and spiritual contents of the quotation from St. Augustine, compunction, devotion and prayer.

Meditation - the first three eightfold meditations - leads to knowledge, discussed in the fourth set of eight considerations, which in turn produces compunction or awareness of and sorrow for sins. Whitford does no more than give three definitions of compunction, St. Augustine's, St. Isidore's and his own, which dwells upon the external gestures by which inward remorse of conscience finds expression : to "knocke vpon the brest, lyfte vp the handes, eyes or syght, wepe or sygh, that is compunction, and doth include contricion". Devotion, the next stage in this implicitly hierarchical progression of spiritual development, is also dealt with briefly. The definitions used are those of St.Augustine and Hugh of St.Victor in De Modo Orandi; Whitford clearly prefers to rely on the authority of those who had personal experience of affective devotion to God, even though the definitions given are very brief and elementary. About prayer nothing is said, beyond St.Augustine's conclusion that "deuocion doth make the prayer perfecte". Rather than theorize about the subject, Whitford refers the reader to the prayers "gadered out of dyuers auncient auctours" which comprise the second half of the Preparacion. While insisting that meditation, knowledge, compunction, devotion and prayer are all necessary for "the due receyuynge of ye sacrament of the aulter", Whitford's almost exclusive concentration on the first two suggests that he was seeking to provide not only a

readily understandable and easily followed instruction on how to prepare for communion for ordinary people, those without any pretensions to high devotion or mystical insight, but he was also providing them with more generally useful meditations which could be used on any occasion and which covered many of the basic truths of the Christian faith in more detail and more systematically than most Catholic works readily available during the 1530s. While such teaching had been available to religious for some time Whitford's Preparacion, even though it was probably written for someone at Syon, was unusually neutral, it did not presuppose the convent setting.

Interpretations of the Mass and devotions to accompany it

In addition to doctrinal teaching on the mass and works designed to help the reader prepare himself to receive communion there were two other types of treatise about the mass, both of which derived much of their structure and content from the shape of the liturgy which in different ways they were designed to accompany. One method was to provide an explanation of the service; either a straight-forward rationale, such as the very detailed expositions and translations of the Sunday and weekday services provided for the nuns of Syon in the second part of Oure Ladyes myroure,[95] or else an allegorical interpretation of the setting, vestments and actions of the liturgy, which were translated into the events of Christ's life and focussed on the Passion narrative. The other method was to provide the reader with prayers and meditations of his own to be said at various points in the service, so that the individual pursued a private course of devotion loosely attached to the actions of the liturgy as in the Lay Folks' Mass Book or the later Manual of Prayers. There were available, of course, in other treatises and primers a number of prayers relating to the mass, especially prayers to be said before mass and at the elevation. Both types of treatise, even when they referred to the action of the priest at the altar or used paraphrases or translations of liturgical prayers, remained essentially separate from the liturgy, and although they presupposed the setting of the mass they were often capable of being used separately as self-contained private devotions.

Allegorical interpretations of the mass reaches back beyond the ninth century.[96] Meditatyons for goostly exercyse. In the tyme of the masse, derived from a chapter in Bonde's Pilgrymage of perfeccyon,[97] and the second book of Garade's Interpretacyon and sygnyfyacyon of the Masse are basically allegorical expositions. The Meditatyons

begins with an exposition of the setting of the mass: the priest signifies Christ, the altar the cross, and each side has its own significance. Of the eucharistic vessels, the chalice signifies the sepulchre of Christ, the paten the stone which covered it; and the water and wine represent the effusion of blood and water from Christ's side. The statement with which this introductory section concludes indicates the main emphasis on the interpretation: "Lett this be your daily medytatyon to styr you. to the diligent and sompendyous Remembrance of the Passion off Cryst", or, as Garade puts it, "Cwith what and howe great deuocyon shulde we be at the masse/and shuld remembre the blyssed passyon of our lorde God: the whiche is represented & showed in the masse". The Meditatyons then turn to consider the bishop's vestments "after Sainet Thomas", which include the amice worn upon the head[98] which "doith signefye hys goostly strengthe", while the white alb signifies innocency and the chasuble charity - in other words, a moralization of the vestments. Thus apparelled he "representhe the sone of Gode", who proceeds "from the chamber of The wombe of hys blyssed Mother lyke A champyon or Gyant". A similar view of the priest concludes Lydgate's moralization of the vestments:

> A parfyte preste made strong with thy Armure,
> Tofore the Auter as Crystes champioune,
> Shall stond vpryght, & make a discomfyture,
> All our .iij. enemyes venquysshe and bere downe,
> The flesshe, the world, Satan that fell dragowne.99

It is an important reminder of the celebrant's dispensation of the power of Christ.

After the static moralization of the vestments and setting the Medytatyons embark upon the narrative allegory of the process of the

service. Since the narrative begins with the vesting, the vestments are interpreted again, only this time with reference to the Passion narrative, which dominates the remainder of the interpretation. Garade's interpretation of the altar and eucharistic vessels is very similar to the Medytatyons but he does not moralize the vestments. Instead the amice on the priest's head symbolizes the cloth with which the Jews blindfolded Christ at His mocking, the stole is the rope put around Christ's neck and body while in the Medytatyons it is the rope used to strain Christ to the cross, both agree that the maniple symbolizes the rope which bound His hands, and the chasuble is the purple garment of Christ's mocking. Garade sees the cross on the chasuble as the fifteen foot long cross that Christ bore on His shoulders to Calvary, whereas A Kempis, IV.v, describes how the cross borne front and back on the chasuble helps the priest keep Christ's Passion in continual remembrance, and he goes on to elaborate upon its significance for the individual priest. Only A Kempis gives personal application to the remembrance of Christ's Passion; Garade, the author of Medytatyons and Lydgate are, at this stage, concerned only to translate the setting of the mass into objects involved in Christ's Passion.

The Medytatyons go on to detail the main actions of the mass, providing for each some brief meditation, mostly of a fairly general but appropriate kind. The Canon, the heart of the mass, noted as coming after the Sanctus, begins after the priest has kissed the mass-book and ends after the sacring. It is occupied by a summary recital of the main events of the Passion, "frome Mandy vnto the poynt of [crysts] deeth", and is interrupted only by two brief Latin prayers to be said at the first and second elevations. The description is

not very detailed, and although it describes Christ's injuries and talks more than once of "the crueltie of the Iewys" it is not particularly emotive. It does, however, make use of a familiar image of the Passion, describing Christ's silence, patience and meekness "In the wyne presse of hys blyssed Passyon".[100] It was a figure which was related to the vita fountain or well of life (both could be interpreted as eucharistic symbols), but although known in England it does not seem to have been as popular there as it was on the continent. The author of the Medytatyons dwells upon this meditation on the Passion:

> because yt shuld not lyghtly passe ouer. but rayther graueid in the soule of man. and Inprinted In hys harte. and for this consyderatyon. the prest Immedyaitly. after the Sacryng. spreides and splays hys armys Abroyde. In manner of A crosse. sygnyfying. the presse of the Passyon of Cryst. the whiche owght to be remembryd in the hartes of faithfull Crysten People. 101

The remainder of the work related the events of Christ's life after his crucifixion to the actions of the mass which follow the Canon. Reference is made to the seven words from the cross, to the peace achieved through Christ's sacrifice between God and man and among men, and to the idea of the sacrament as the food to restore and relieve all the necessities of the soul and the body. The author once again introduces a well-known symbol of Christ:

> Therfore neuer forgeyt this moost tender louyng Pellycane. whiche of hys meyr marcy. wolld wouchayffe. not only to dye. for to sawe hys byrdes. but ouer that he haith ordeynd and dysposyd hys moost gloryouse and blyssyd fleyche and bloode. to be our dayly foyde. mynystreid and consecrayte in the masse. in the moost gracyous Sacrament of the awter. 102

This is an unusually detailed explication of a symbol which is better known as an iconographical representation appearing in woodcuts, carvings, on seals and book-bindings;[103] it was also the personal crest of Bishop Fox, and used as his device by the printer Richard Jugge.[104] The pelican also

figures in a very crude woodcut,[105] wrongly described as a phoenix by Hodnett, in A gloryous medytacyon of Ihesus Crystes passyon, where it is accompanied by an explanatory verse which makes clear the sacramental significance of the figure.[106] The image is thus related to the idea of Christ as the fountain of life and the mystic wine press, which also have sacramental connections.[107] The Medytatyons continue by reminding the reader of Jesus' meekness, the Lamb of God, as the priest repeats the agnus dei. The fraction, with the division of the host into three parts, looks beyond the Passion narrative, for the parts symbolize the three parts of the true Church, the saints in glory, the church on earth "as yet in this pylgramaige as lyuyng people In the vaile of mysery", and thirdly the souls in purgatory. The meditation concludes with brief reference to the Resurrection and the Ascension, and an appended note on the characteristics of the Requiem Mass which is really too brief to be of much practical use.

Since the reader restricted to English could take little active part in a Latin service, the author of the Medytatyons provides little more than a key to the more obvious and important actions and prayers of the mass, and he uses these as a point of departure for a rather miscellaneous and unstructured collection of private devotions which are dominated by the narrative and symbols of Christ's Passion. The work has no overall shape or development, and although most of the devotions make some reference to the Passion it is not the author's only interest, nor is it explored chronologically.

The second book of Garde's Interpretacyon and sygnyfycacyon of the Masse has a far more regular structure; it is also more detailed, and the symbolism is more systematically applied. Like books one and

and three, book two has thirty-three chapters, the traditional age of Jesus, and the mass is divided into three parts which correspond to the three parts of Jesus' life. The first part of the mass, from the priest's vesting to the Sanctus - the equivalent of the synaxis - corresponds to Christ's life from His conception to the Triumphal Entry; then the canon covers the Passion and death, divided with reference to the canonical hours; and thirdly the remainder of the mass is related to Jesus' Resurrection, His appearances to the disciples and the Ascension. The three parts are each introduced by a prayer carrying with it the promise of an indulgence.[108] The chapters all follow a regular pattern, first describing the actions or words of the priest, then giving the allegorical interpretation with reference to some event in Christ's life, and concluding, after a "Pater" and an "Ave", with a brief prayer.

Most of the chapters hold together well, with little sign that the events of Christ's life have been unduly stretched to fit the action of the mass- perhaps because the liturgical action and the events of the life follow parallel courses rather than one being translated into or read out of the other. The fourth chapter, for instance, considers the priest going towards the altar after the "Confiteor", which corresponds to the coming of the Three Kings to see Jesus, and the prayer asks that the reader's obscurity of conscience may be illumined by the light of grace so that he may offer to Christ the myrrh of fervent devotion, incense of diligent prayer and gold of divine "dyleccyon"; the links between the parts of the chapter are strong enough to weld it into a satisfying whole. After the Canon the elevation of the chalice commemorates the renewed bleeding of Christ's wounds caused by the jolt

as the cross drops into the mortice, and the prayer runs:

> O Blyssed lorde Ihesu chryste/Ithanke the that thou hast suffred thy selfe to be drawen and nayled vpon the crosse/so that a man myght haue compted all thy membres/wherof dyd yssewe abundantly thy prescyouse blode vpon the erth/I pray the good lorde graunt me that I may vse all my power & vertues in thy seruyse: and to thy honour and not in synne/to the entent that all my membres maye laude & prayse the euerlastyngly. 109

The reference to the jolting of the cross in the mortice, the re-opening of Jesus' wounds and the echo of the Psalm XXI:8 (Vulgate)-"dinumeraverent ommia ossa mea"-are all common-place in devotional descriptions of the Passion. In the selection of events from Christ's life and the kind of language used to describe them Garde is content to remain within the tradition built up by numerous devotional treatises; he has no need to strive after originality. The structure of the prayers is also similar to those found in the Meditationes Iordani de vita et passione iesu christi and in Fewterer's Myrrour of Glasse of Christes Passion, whose central section translated Jordanus' prayers. They fall into two parts; a brief description of some event from Christ's life, followed by some personal, often moral, application which is frequently linked to the first half by a catchword, the repetition of some word or phrase from the first half. Had Garde's prayers been published separately, as Fewterer's were in Deuoute prayers in englysshe of thactes of our redemption, they would have made a collection very similar in form and content, only enlarged in scope so as to cover the whole of Christ's life, not just the Passion sequence. Interestingly, if Garde's prayers were removed from their original context no trace of their original connection with the mass would remain, so thoroughly has the mass been subordinated to the life of Christ. The author suggests that the book

was intended to be read during the service; the illiterate person, who could perhaps learn some of the prayers by heart, was to occupy himself in thinking of the Lord's Passion.[110] To have read it thoroughly during the service would have left little time or energy to take much heed of the service, for which it is a substitute. Whether the reader attends the service or in case of need reads it elsewhere,[111] the life of Christ, the subject of the private devotions, supplants the liturgy. This kind of dissociation between the public liturgy and the individual's private devotion, even though this was usually intended to be followed in church, tends to happen with all the treatises designed to accompany the mass, although the type represented by the Medytatyons and Garade's Interpretacyon - the narrative type - is liable to exclude the liturgy more completely.

The Lay Folks' Mass Book[112] makes direct reference to Christ's life only at the offertory, which is linked by the Three Kings' journey to see Jesus in His birthplace at Bethlehem; otherwise there are a few general references, such as "þenk on him þat dere þe boght" or "þou boght me dere with þi blode, | and dyed for me o-pon þo rode". There is, in fact, no separate narrative content, and in contrast to the Medytatyons or Garade's Interpretacyon, the Lay Folks' Mass Book depends far more upon the service. Expanded translations and paraphrases of sections of the mass, the Confiteor, the Gloria, the Creed and Lord's prayer, establish a closer contact between the reader and the liturgy, but because they are said as part of the reader's private devotion there is still some dissociation; the reader is saying his own devotions even though these overlap to some extent with the public liturgy. The main occupation of the devout mass-goer who followed the Lay Folks' Mass Book

was frequent repetition of the Lord's prayer;[113] and he is provided with prayer to say at the beginning of the office, the Gospel, the offertory, during the secrets and the Canon, at the elevation, the Agnus Dei, and there are a couple of post-communion prayers. They are mainly prayers of personal praise, thanksgiving, or intercessions, which frequently follow the pattern of the priest's prayers. For instance, the prayers during the Canon and after the sacring[114] include sections which correspond to the mementos for the living and the dead said by the priest. The prayers were intended to be learnt by heart—most are brief and the use of rhyme would help the memory—and the rubrics, which often describe and sometimes explain the significance of the priest's actions, were to be referred to from time to time. The assumption seems to be that when the work was composed even devout church-goers were generally illiterate, whereas to be fully effective the narrative type of devotion demanded an audience which could read.

Lydgate's poem "The Virtues of the Mass"[115] offered its readers an explanation of the mass, much of it typological, with a prayer to be said at the elevation. It seems designed to instruct the reader about the mass but, with the exception of the elevation prayer, it does not seem intended to accompany the liturgy. The Medytatyons and Garde's Interpretacyons, although clearly intended to be used at mass, were sufficiently self-contained, especially the latter, to be used independently. In the Lay Folks' Mass Book, however, the reader is enjoined: "when þo preste saies he, or if he singe, | to him þou gyue gode herknynge" and later, "take gode kepe & here him wele".[116] Even if he does not understand the mass-goer is expected to be attentive and to listen to the priest's words, and "at þo messe no ianglyng make".

The priest's actions, described in some detail, are not as in the Medytatyons and Garade cues for meditation on Christ's life and Passion, but tell the layman when to pray, when to listen and when to respond with devout actions: "Take gode kepe vnto þe prest, when he him turnes, knoc on þi brest". Even if no verbal response was required from the layman he was expected to respond with the appropriate actions:"Knelande on þi knese", "ioyntly hold þi handes" and "a large cros on þi þou make".[117] As mentioned earlier, considerable importance was attached to devout actions, and although reformers such as Thomas Becon attacked this emphasis on external matters as empty ceremonies they perhaps overlooked the fact that some pious but illiterate persons may have found comfort and a sense of community in them.

The prayers which make up the second half of Whitford's Preparacion vnto howselynge are not so closely related to the mass as those of the Lay Folks' Mass Book. To judge by some characteristics of style, notably the indulgence in the use of doublets, most of the prayers were either original compositions or thorough reworkings of extant material.[118] His prayers are intended to edify the reader and there is a strong moral emphasis. They are conventional in their phraseology, for example in their frequent references to the Passion, and as a collection their predictability tends to become dull as they repeatedly ask forgiveness for various sins and for assistance in virtue:

> I beseche the for all the whole vertue of thy bytter passion/put away from me the spirite of elacion, and pryde, of enuy, and detraction, of yre wrathe, malyce, & impacience, and of all other morbes (sic), diseases, and pestilences of ye soule. And plante, good lorde, and ground in my hart and mynd very true mekenes/charity, and pacience, innocency, and the loue of pouerty/due temperaunce/&pure chastity/with

> all suche other vertues/medicynes/and preseruatynes vnto the soule.119

This kind of listing is characteristic of the prayers, and though they are worthy and edifying they are hardly likely to inspire devotion. The lists of sins and virtues may vary, as do the length of the prayers, but they persist in saying very much the same kind of thing. Some of their weakness as prayers lies in their lack of clear structure, either the two-part structure used by Garade or the looser form of the Lay Folks' Mass Book (although that is shaped by the verse line and influenced by liturgical forms), and also in Whitford's determination to use each one as an occasion for comprehensive instruction. Successful prayers usually focus upon one theme or have a unity of language or imagery which Whitford's lack. He is too much the instructor and catechist to write the kind of prayer which would rouse the soul to love and devotion. It is interesting that a religious whose extant works have so much to say about various aspects of devotion should be so prosaic and should so consistently fail to penetrate the more spiritual levels of devotion. It is characteristic of the times in which he wrote that Whitford should assume a literate audience and make many references to Christ's Passion, but his determination to use each prayer as an occasion for instruction again draws the reader away from the mass to concentrate on other, quite unconnected matters.

The fourth book of A Kempis' De Imitatione Christi, first printed in the Lady Margaret's translation from the French version, does not fit conveniently into any of the groups outlined above. It is made up of meditations, prayers and intercessions of the Disciple, and chapters which tend to be of a more didactic nature spoken by Christ. Several

places[120] suggest that the Disciple is a priest, but the book contains much of value for, and was undoubtedly used by, devout lay people such as the Lady Margaret herself. It was not intended to accompany the service; it neither comments on nor allegorizes the liturgy, nor does it contain any readily separable prayers. But neither was it a doctrinal exposition or defence, although it is not without doctrinal content. It is a work of affective piety, whose meditations are characterized by an intense personal devotion to Christ.

The Disciple of Jesus is to turn away from all worldly concerns[121] and offer himself to Jesus. The daily obligation of the Disciple in the mass, that re-enactment of Christ's supreme self-oblation, is asked for by Christ in a speech which retains something of lyrical complaints of Christ:

> O man, as I dyd offre myselfe/and my free wyll vnto god my fader, my handes sprede on the crosse/and my naked body for thy synnes. In so moche that no thynge remayned in me/but all passed in sacryfyce to apease his wrathe, in lyke wyse thou oughtest to offre vnto me wyllyngly thy selfe in pure oblacyon dayly in the masse, wythe all thy affeccyons/ and strengthes, as profoundely/and feruently as thou maist. What aske I of the more but that thou study to resynge thyselfe vnto me enterely? 122

The Disciple who can thus deny himself to resign himself to Jesus in love becomes united with Him in the Blessed Sacrament,[123] the Sacrament of unity between the individual and Christ which gives a foretaste of the enjoyment of Christ's presence in heaven. The author of The Goad of Love suggests the kind of devotion with which the believer should approach the body of Christ:

> Wherefore it seemeth wonder that a man in receiving of this worthy sacrament melteth not all into love. The gathering of Christ's love into us, and of his passion is a sovereign mean to stir man's affection to devout receiving of this sacrament. 124

It is this kind of love and devotion which the Disciple strives after and laments his inability to attain fully. The language, with its talk of "the plenteous effusion of holye terys" and how "all my herte ought to brenne & wepe with ioye" and the monologue of John the Baptist,[125] is characteristic of much affective-mystical devotion both in the Low Countries among the Bretheren of the Common Life and in England among mystics such as Rolle and Hilton.[126] Although he conveys some instruction and gives practical advice on how to prepare to receive the sacrament, A Kempis is mainly concerned with the spiritual development of the Disciple and his personal relationship to Jesus.

A Kempis' focus on the whole person of Christ is unusual when compared to later fifteenth-century devotions connected with the mass, where the tendency was to concentrate upon Christ crucified. The laity were, as we have seen, encouraged to link the mass with the process of Christ's Passion. To stimulate the celebrant's devotion the "T" of the "Te igitur", with which from about the eighth century the Canon was understood to begin, was frequently decorated with a crucifix, in many cases full page,[127] and a rubric in the Medytatyons reads: "after that he haith kyssed the Crucifix on the masse book", which seems to have been accepted as a common custom. In ~~the~~ Dives and Pauper,[128] however, the celebrant is said to arouse his devotion by looking at the crucifix on the altar.

The re-enactment or realization of the process of Christ's Passion within the mass was supported by two not unrelated doctrines, that of the eucharistic sacrifice and of the Real Presence.[129] Popular works of devotion tended to leave theology to theologians, but most insist that the doctrine of the Real Presence is to be believed even if they give no

indication of the content of the belief.[130] More often, as in Love's Schort tretys, the doctrine was"illustrated" by miracles, of which The Play of the Sacrament is one of the most fully developed.[131] Many of the legends involve the incredulity of the Jews, who question, mock or physically attack the host: an example of the strong antisemitic current of the middle ages, which also found expression in many Passion narratives.[132] Probably the most widely known miraculous proof of the Real Presence was the legend of the mass of St. Gregory.[133] This was VIII b usually illustrated by an imago pietatis: the wounded Christ, crowned with thorns, standing in a grave before the cross and surrounded by the instruments of the Passion. In view of the way in which private devotion for the time of the mass tended to emphasize the Passion, it is not surprising that the imago pietatis was the form chosen to illustrate Christ's presence in the sacrament. It was, after the crucifix, one of the most often used visual stimuli for devout meditations and prayers, especially on the Passion.

Some of the miracles were told in the context of Corpus Christi sermons, and indulgences were often obtainable for attendance at them.[134] The feast of Corpus Christi, formally instituted in 1264, provided an occasion for the annual public celebration of the doctrine of the Real Presence. From childhood people were taught to venerate the sacrament as the body of Christ, both in church[135] and if they saw it being carried through the streets to the sick or dying.[136] Desire to see the host, especially the newly consecrated host of each mass, was regarded as a sign of devotion, and it was also believed to confer a wide range of spiritual and material benefits. Consequently the elevation was considered by many to be the most important moment of the mass.[137] The sacring bell

warned of its approach,[138] and people came in from the churchyard or moved forward to see "the preest...lyft oure lorde in the blessed sacrament". The custom was, of course, strongly attacked by the Reformers,[139] but traditional authors such as Garade[140] also commented on the abuses to which the custom was open. Yet against this evidence of ill-behaviour must be set the numerous prayers which were provided to be said at this point of the service.[141] Such a widespread effort to instil a feeling of reverence and devotion in the members of the congregation was surely not entirely in vain.

The promise of various rewards to those who witnessed the elevation devoutly may also have been some incentive to good behaviour. It undoubtedly encouraged superstitious reliance on the benefits to be gained by mass-going.[142] According to Garade,[143] simply to see the sacrament guaranteed that all bodily needs would be met that day, and promised preservation from sudden death and forgiveness of such things as vain or unadvised oaths. Substantially, the same list was to be found in Mirk's Instructions[144] where they are attributed to St. Augustine. In the Festial the list includes the promise of not growing older so long as mass lasts.[145] Lydgate too quotes St. Augustine "of the medys of the Masse",[146] and the benefits listed consolation and help in case of sudden death - not in this list the power to prevent such death - forgiveness of venial sins and the promise that attendance at mass prospers voyages and helps women in childbirth. Preceding this list is another, "The vertu of heryng of the masse after the opynyon of seynt Bernard", a mixture of spiritual graces and material benefits. Many undoubtedly believed that the benefits thus promised automatically attended those who met the requirement of going

to mass. Reformers of the 1550s challenged such superstitious credulity. For instance, in The Resurrecion of the masse, the mass boasts:

> There is no disease in all the contrie
> Whether it be pockes/pyles/or other sicknes/
> But to heale it I haue habilitie
> Helping all kyndes of people in their distres,
> Messeled swyne and mangye horses likewise
> Do I cure/and chickens that haue the pyppe/
> A wynchester goose to heale is my gyse
> No kynde of disease do I ouerhyppe...
> Of ought be loste/Iam very profitable
> To bring it agayne to the true owner/
> To gyue rayne or fayre weather/I am able
> Whan soeuer to me men make theyr prayer...
> Come to me who lyste/and they shal be sure
> To haue good successe in all their doynge/
> For my vertue is great/if it maye endure
> And farre surmounteth all earthely thing...
> Golde/syluer rychnesse/glorie and honoure
> Fame/renoune/and worldly felicite/
> House/lande/lordshippe/village towne and bowre
> Do I gyue to all them/that come vnto me.
> Whatsoeuer in this worlde is contayned
> Is myne to geue at myne owne pleasure/
> Fall doune and worshippe me with hartes vnfrayned
> And ye shall wante no worldly treasure. 147

In addition to material benefits, the mass could also inspire the sinner to conversion, and God's holy angels would help the mass-goer's prayers and protect him. But the spiritual benefit of the mass tended to focus on the relief or liberation of souls in purgatory. Stories such as that in the Dialogues of St. Gregory, where a soul is freed from purgatory by a trental of masses,[148] were very common by the late fifteenth century.[149] The second memento of the mass, the commemoration of the dead, was used by devotional writers as an occasion to remind their readers that "til alle in purgatory pyne, þis messe be mede & medicyne" and to encourage prayers for the dead.[150] The provision of masses to speed a soul through purgatory became a popular, complex and costly business, and a large proportion of the

masses celebrated in churches and convents and especially in chantry foundations were designed to help the dead. Garade describes one sequence of masses which, said daily through the week by a devout priest, is claimed to deliver souls out of purgatory speedily. Each of these seven Golden Masses corresponds to some part of Christ's Passion;[151] again the Passion narrative and the mass are drawn together, the once-for-all historical work of salvation is offered daily in the sacrifice of the mass. Yet despite the high values attached to prayers and masses for the dead Garade still argues that it is better for a man to hear one mass in his life-time than to cause a hundred to be said for him after his death.[152] Similarly he declares that it is better to hear mass than to give to God an amount of land equivalent to that which could be traversed while mass was in progress.[153] It was better to make sure of salvation in this life than to risk the pains of purgatory and have to rely upon the good offices of executors; personal attendance at mass was one of the most meritorious actions a man could perform.

The Life of Christ and some associated devotions

Corpus Christi day was marked by special services, sermons, processions,[154] and in a number of places by the performance of mystery play cycles.[155] In their choice of incidents from the life of Christ and in the style of their descriptions the plays frequently overlapped with devout treatises and religious lyrics.[156] Many of the more common descriptions and phrases such as the "O vos omnes" refrain were to be found in treatises, drama and lyrics, and they can be traced back, often through the liturgy, to the Bible.[157] Methods of biblical exegesis gave wider currency to some texts than they would have received if

interpreted in the literal sense only. Other often-repeated details were absorbed into the tradition from influential works such as the Dialogus Beatae Mariae et Anselmi de Passione Domini and the Liber de Passione Christi[158] - much was attributed to saints Anselm and Bernard - and the Speculum Vitae Christi often linked with saint Bonaventura's name; the Revelations of St.Bridget,[159] and Ludolphus of Saxonia's Vita Iesu Christi[160] were also very influential. The increasing importance of the Passion was also reflected in the institution of new liturgical feasts, such as the masses of the Five Wounds, of the Crown of Thorns and of the Compassion of the Blessed Virgin.[161] Up to the reforms of the later 1530s the printed primers often contained not only the biblical Passion narrative or harmony but also prayers to the wounds of Christ, the Hours of the Passion and the compassion of Our Lady.[162] Residual division of the Passion narrative according to the canonical hours was very common in devout treatises.[163] Thus, while concentrating upon the devout treatises, the contribution to the tradition of the religious lyrics, drama, the liturgy, preaching and biblical exegesis as well as art must not be forgotten. There was by the later middle ages a common body of tradition concerning the life and Passion of Christ, derived from and at the same time contributing to a wide range of literature, art and theology.

Scenes from the life of Christ were to be found illustrated in the glass, painting or carved work of many churches,[164] and the illiterate probably knew the main events of Christ's life from seeing them there or perhaps in the drama, and from hearing them in stories and lyrics. The qualities demanded for effective iconographical representation and for vivid or moving description were not, of course, to be found in every

event, and so the number of scenes was reduced. It is not difficult to think of famous paintings, woodcuts or other illustrations depicting the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Circumcision, the visit of the Magi and the adoration of the Shepherds or the Flight into Egypt. The tendency of art was to illustrate selected episodes and to ignore others; and literary description too concentrated on certain scenes, often drawing upon the infancy Gospels for supplementary details.[165] The rays of light which surround the newborn child, the ox and the ass, and the Blessed Virgin kneeling in adoration before her son so often depicted in nativity paintings were probably all derived from such literary elaboration.[166] Many of these details, and others such as the star having in it "a fourme and a liknesse of a yonge childe, and aboue hym a sygne of þe holy Cros", were to be found in the first half of The Three Kings of Cologne, which was printed as late as 1530.[167]

The Gospels, apart from the incident recorded in Luke when the twelve year old Jesus was lost in the temple of Jerusalem,[168] were silent about Jesus' childhood, and from the Flight into Egypt moved on to record the Baptism and Temptations.[169] Apart from the miracle of Cana in Galilee,[170] which was distinctive in its representation and easily linked to the eucharist in interpretation, the miracles were comparatively rarely portayed. In an age which seemed ready to accept the miraculous in the stories of saints or concerning the host, this neglect seems strange. One reason may well be the difficulty of making the healing miracles sufficiently distinctive in art, but another may have been that they were not to a medieval audience sufficiently different from the miracles performed by numerous saints, and consequently attention focused on the parts of Christ's life which were more distinctive: His infancy

and the last week of His earthly life. The teaching too, was given little if any place in the narrative cycles;[171] that found its place in more didatic works in drastically summarized form.[172] The illustrated and narrative versions of Christ's life then tended to be unbalanced by the inadequate treatment given to the central portion of it; the works and words of Jesus were almost wholly ignored.

In England the most influential life of Christ, indeed one of the most popular devotional works of the fifteenth century, was the Speculum Vitae Christi[173] - one of the best known of the many works to bear the title Speculum or Mirror.[174] It was to be found in many convents and among lay people in both manuscript and printed form;[175] there were at least ten printed editions produced in England 1486 - 1530. It was recommended as suitable reading for lay people by Sir Thomas More in his Apologye,[176] and the author of A dvurnall: for deuoute soules assigns a chapter to be read each day "to styrre your herte to compunccyon".[177] Its popularity was probably encouraged by its guaranteed orthodoxy: the episcopal approbation of Archbishop Arundel was copied in many of the manuscripts and appeared in the printed copies.[178] The only other such licence known to me was that granted by the conservative and lollard-hating bishop of London, Richard Fitzjames, to Simon's Fruyte of Redempcyon.[179] It is unlikely that either represented any effective form of censorship,[180] but the guarantee of orthodoxy must have been important to the success of these devotional works at a time of lollard activity when possession of English treatises might be taken as proof of lollard inclinations.

The translator and adapter of the work was Nicholas Love, religious and later prior of Mountgrace Charterhouse. He was prevailed upon to

undertake the work "at the instaunce and the prayer of somme deuoute soules", to the edification of those "that ben of symple vnderstondyng".[181] There are signs that within this wide audience Love's particular concern was for his fellow religious.[182] The division of the narrative according to the days of the week, and the Passion section according to the canonical hours, together with a number of references to the feasts of the Church, would all accord with a religious setting. However, Love recognizes "the freelte of mankynde" and does not insist upon his readers following the daily scheme, but rather he advocates that they should choose the parts " as it semeth moste comfortable and stirynge to (their) deuocioun",[183] and especially those appropriate to the feasts of the Church.

Love's treatise is characteristic of the affective piety of the later middle ages. But he was more explicit than many authors as to his purpose and methods. He makes clear the distinction between gospel narrative and pious imagining,[184] and he justifies the kind of imaginative elaboration which makes his book so vivid. Starting from the premise that "a symple soule that kan not thenke bot bodies or bodily thinges"[185] requires "somwhat accordynge vnto his affeccioun", he uses an argument ascribed to St. Gregory: it is only by likening heaven and heavenly things to the earthly, visible and known, that a soul without any intellectual training or understanding of abstract thought can grasp anything of the unseen and spiritual world. This type of reasoning justified the use of imaginative description found in Love's treatise, the use of images and representations of the life of Christ and the saints in church, for they are all intended to make the scenes and people of the bible narratives and saints lives real to

the unlearned and to stir them to devotion. From the time of Bede[186] onwards the use of images as books for the unlearned had been approved by the Catholic Church,[187] and much late medieval devotion to Christ's Life and Passion presupposes some visual focus for the contemplation, and imago pietatis, a pieta or a crucifix. The Reformers, of course, challenged the use of images as idolatry and superstition,[188] but they were unable to break away entirely from the visual element of contemplation.[189] Literal and materialistic interpretation of imaginative detail or of images was a risk which Love and authors such as Bonde recognized and tried to prevent by careful explanation. Vivid description, imaginative elaboration and images and other representations at their best did make the scene real and enable the reader to imagine himself present at the events described. Christ was a real person to him, to be loved, known and followed. The reformers' solemn moralizing and their tendency towards an unimaginative literalism made religion a matter of intellectual apprehension and duty. They banished as unscriptural the devout stories of the life and Passion of Christ and brought to an end one very important strand of late medieval devotion.[190]

The Speculum Vitae Christi uses a chronological narrative structure - an accommodating form and one which is easy to follow. It begins with the Council in Heaven where it is determined that the second Person of the Trinity shall become man to redeem fallen mankind.[191] The process of that redemption is unfolded through the narrative which follows. An introductory chapter on the life of the Blessed Virgin leads on to the usual sequence of the Annunciation, the Visitation, IXa

the Nativity, the Circumcision, Epiphany and the Purification.[192] The second part, Tuesday, covers the flight to Egypt and return, the child Jesus in the Temple, His hidden life from the age of twelve to thirty and His baptism, which is awkwardly separated from the third part, which begins with Christ's fasting in the desert and His temptations. Starting with the miracle of Cana in Galilee a number of the healing miracles and the feeding of the five thousand are included, and other episodes from Christ's ministry are discussed, including the disciples' eating of corn on the Sabbath and some of His encounters with the Pharisees. Considerable space is devoted to the conversion of St. Mary Magdalene, and the raising of Lazarus is also the occasion of lengthy teaching. There is much teaching too, about prayer, in chapter xviij, on Jesus' sermon on the mount, and later, chapter xxvij; and there is also a long chapter, xxxiij, on the active and contemplative life. Inevitably the narrative structure is weaker in this central section than in the part which concludes with Jesus' temptations or in the Passion week part, which begins with Palm Sunday and which will be discussed later with the other Passion literature.

Even in the narrative life to the temptations, the work is never content merely to describe scenes and events. In each case Love extracts some moral or spiritual edification. Reference to saints Augustine, Gregory and especially to saint Bernard indicate his nominal sources, but he also refers to Hilton and was perhaps familiar with the Ancrene Riwle.[193] His teaching indeed reflects and gathers together many of the concerns noted in the treatises of Part I of this discussion. Readers are warned against singularity and slander, while moderation and discretion in matters such as abstinence are commended.[194] The virtue

of silence is praised and Christ's obedience[195] to His parents is held up as an example to be followed especially by religious in obedience to their superiors. The miracle of Cana in Galilee[196] provokes some discussion on marriage, and, although Love is not so hard on the married state as Hilton in the Scale, it is clear that he too believes that the heavenly marriage is better. The virtues of tribulation and meekness, recurring topics of medieval devotion, also find their place. Tribulation is the means by which God teaches men patience. Mary and Joseph know it on the flight to Egypt, Mary experiences it when Jesus is lost in Jerusalem (ca.xii), and the disciples learn its lesson on the lake (ca. xxvii).[197] The Blessed Virgin is praised for her meekness at the Annunciation, and there is a brief discussion on the relative merits of meekness and virginity.[198] The most extended discussion of the virtue of meekness is to be found in the chapter (xiii) dealing with Our Lord's hidden years.

In the Scale of Perfection Hilton had insisted that the contemplative must be subjected to the ordinances of the Church, especially in matters regarding confession and penance. Traditional teaching on these subjects was challenged by the Lollards, and although anchoresses and enclosed religious were probably protected to some extent against their heresies[199] the general audience addressed by Love were more obviously open to danger. Love takes the opportunity of the occasion of Mary Magdalene's conversion to refute Lollard views on oral confession and penance. He also refutes the Lollards' heretical views on the sacrament of the altar,[200] and especially the doctrine of the Real Presence. He answers them in three ways: he asserts that natural reason cannot fully comprehend this marvel, which is to be believed as it has been by the faithful for centuries; secondly he gives a clear and brief statement of the actual doctrine; and

finally he challenges the Lollards on the grounds of personal experience[201] - the lack is in those who do not share in that experience:

> and by cause that he tasteth nought the swettenesse of this precious sacrament/ne feleth the gracious worchynge thereof in hymself/therfore he leueth nought that eny othir dothe. 202

These arguments against the Lollards would, of course, be equally useful in the 1520s and 1530s against the views of the Reformers.

Love was aware that there were dangers not only from without, but within the Church, even among enclosed religious,[203] and that the inward life did not always live up to the outward profession.[204] This failure "to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called" resulted often from lack of instruction or of understanding, and sometimes even from a lack of vocation. Love also included a more specific attack on the hypocrisy which so often lay behind conventionally pious behaviour:

> We mowe see alday many men and wommen berynge bedes with trillynge on the fyngres and waggynge the lippes/ bot the sight caste to vanytees and the herte that only god knoweth/ as it is to drede/ sette more vppon worldely thinges.205

The treatise contained a great deal of fairly elementary teaching and the author employed all his skill to make his message heard. There is, for instance, a splendid passage on prayer, which is worth quoting as an example of Love's mastery of English style; the meaning is clear and the repetitive rhythm and the verbal repetition hammered home the central point:

> Wherfore yif thou wilt paciently suffre aduersitees and myghtily ouercome temptaciouns and diseses/be thou a man of prayer. Also yif thou wilt knowe the sleightes of the deuel and be not begiled with his false suggestions/be a man of prayer. Also yif thou wilt take the streight wey to heuene by trauaile and penaunce of flesche and therwith gladly contynue in goddis seruice/be a man of prayer. Also yif thou wilt putte away veyne thoughtis and fede thi soule

> with holy thoghtis and gostly meditaciouns and deuociouns/ be a man of prayer. Also yif thou wilt stable thy herte in good purpos to goddis wille/putting awey vices and planting vertues/be a man of prayer. for thorugh prayer is goten the gifte of the holi goste/that techith the soule all thing that is nedeful therto. Also yif thou wilt come to heuen by contemplacioun/and fele the goostly swetnesse that is feled of few chosen soules/and knowe the grete gracious giftes of oure lorde god that mowe be feled bot not spoken/be a man of prayer. for by the exercise of prayer specially a man cometh to contemplacioun and the felynge of heuenly thinges. 206

Like all the best teachers he does not merely tell the reader what to do and what not to do; he inspires him to strive after the heavenly things and feel for himself that "goostly swetnesse".

One of the reasons for the popularity of the Speculum was Love's ability as a story teller. There is the variety of descriptive narrative, teaching, and meditation, and even the occasional pieces of dialogue. Many of the meditations open in a beguilingly conversational manner, "Now take we hede...", "Bot leuynge this matere...", "Now lete vs abide here awhile and take hede inwardely of the foreside notable poyntes"—and immediately the reader is counted in. Another time the narrator steps out of the story to comment upon it and instruct his readers, or even to address one of the characters in the drama, so that the audience is always kept in touch with the narrative. The author sought not only to involve his audience but to convince them of the reality of what he describes, so that they feel themselves present at the scenes:

> thou that couetest to fele the fruyte of this boke/ thou moste with al thy thought and al thyn entente in that manere make the in thy soule present to tho thynges that ben here writen/ seide/or done of oure lord Jesu and that besily/likyngly/and abidynge. as they thou herdest hem with thy bodily eeres/or seie hem with thyne eigen done. 207

This practice of the devotional present[208] is the key to so much of the affective devotion, which is characteristic of late medieval piety and which tended to focus upon the life and Passion of Christ. Three types of detail, by no means peculiar to the Speculum, are used by Love to encourage the sense of reality and concreteness of the scene. The first is visual detail, which enables the reader to see the setting; the second is what might be termed methodological detail, which describes how something is done - the most obvious example is the crucifying of Jesus (ca.xliii) where Love describes the two methods most commonly depicted - and the third type is the kind of homely detail which helps to bring the setting of Jesus' life into the present, making it familiar to the reader.[209]

The chapter on the nativity (ca.vi) is characteristic of Love's method.[210] He begins with a paraphrase of the narrative in Luke II, but the detail is elaborated. We see how Joseph and Mary, "ledyng with hem an oxe and an asse/they wenten al that longe wey to gidere/as pore folk/ hauynge no more worldely good bot tho tweyne bestes". The "inn" becomes a definite locus, "in a comoun place/bytwixe tweyne houses/that was held aboue men for to stonde ther fore the reyn".[211] Joseph, the carpenter, builds them a small enclosed area and he makes a manger for the animals. The setting established, the author pauses briefly to remind the reader of the Blessed Virgin's plight. She was young, only fifteen, and had travelled some seventy miles in great poverty when near her time, and arrived in Bethlehem she was unable to find rest or proper shelter. The sympathy of the reader thus gained, the birth on "the sunday at mydnyght",[212] which is pure and "with outen trauaille", is given as a brief statement of fact. The author dwells

upon the mother love of the Virgin and her homely care for the Child, and the homage of the beasts completes the scene.[213] Mary's homage is expressed in her attitude, "deuoutly enclynande",[214] and in a brief prayer, while Joseph gives practical expression to his worship: he took "the sadel of the Asse and made therof a kusshyne oure lady to sitte on and a suppoayle to lene to". The birth of Christ exemplifies the virtues of poverty, meekness and bodily penance, which Love draws out in a short didactic passage that remains firmly rooted in the scene previously described. He goes on to describe the worship of the angels and of the shepherds, the latter being briefly mentioned, in contrast to the mystery plays which tend to elaborate the adoration of the shepherds. The chapter closes with a recapitulation of the main points, showing why Christmas is celebrated by the Church and how the Feast should be honoured. The importance of the Feast is supported by reference to miracles which have taken place in Rome - as we have seen miracles were often used to support teaching about the Sacrament of the Altar.[215] The scene is "realized" not by lengthy description but by a number of minute but deftly chosen touches, such as the rain or the use of the ass's saddle.

A number of other works derived their structure from chronological reference to the events of Christ's life. They are all much shorter than the Speculum, and the tendency is for them to reduce or omit altogether the instructional matter and much of the narrative description and to use the life merely to provide some structure for a work of pure devotion.

The popular Fruyte of redemcyon[216] by Simon, Anker of London Wall,[217] is much shorter than the Speculum and probably reflects the growing demand of individuals, especially lay-people, for compact works of devotion.

The author's main source is the Revelations of St.Bridget, especially I.x, which may suggest a connection with Syon Abbey;[218] and his work would doubtless have appealed to nuns of the house - there is some evidence that the author had a particular concern for religious although like Love he addresses a general audience - and to the intimate circle who had some connections with Syon. The book's thirty-one chapters unfold the scheme of salvation from the Creation and Fall of man, through the life of Christ, to the Resurrection, Ascension and sending of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. The characteristic emphasis of late medieval devotion is to be seen in the fact that over half the book, chapters xiii - xxviii, ~~are~~ is concerned with the Passion of Christ.

Although there is much less instructional matter in Simon's work than in the Speculum his work is not exclusively devotional. Several familiar topics are mentioned if not discussed in detail, both in the contemplations which from the first half of each chapter and in the prayers which conclude them. This pattern of teaching or contemplation, which is summed up in a personal, separable, prayer, we have found used a little earlier in Garade's The interpretacyon and sygnyfycacyon of the Masse, and it was later used by Fewterer in The Myrrour or Glasse of Christes Passion; it seems to be characteristic of devotional works of mixed content - teaching, contemplation and description as well as prayers - with a strong narrative element. In the opening chapter of The Fruyte of redempcyon the emphasis on the Trinity is characteristic of orthodox devotion of the period.[219] The creation of man, especially his power of reason and understanding, which distinguish him from the beasts, and God's mercy in redeeming man are to be recognized thankfully.

On a more personal note the author thanks God for his own temporal estate, for a sound body, for shelter and for food - things not to be taken for granted in the early sixteenth century. The meekness, obedience, sobriety and abstinence of Jesus are noted as exemplary virtues to be followed. There is a brief consideration of man's last end, and the prayer at the end of chapter thirteen expresses the trust that the faithful had in receiving the sacrament before death, "that thou wylte not exclude them from thy heauenly kyngedome/vnto whome it pleaseth the to be knytte vnto by connexyon of this honourable sacrament".

Simon, perhaps influenced by the Revelations of St.Bridget, gives rather more prominence to the Blessed Virgin than the Speculum, which as a longer work seems better able to absorb the story of the Virgin's early life, her cultivation of virtue and her great devotion to God and her will to serve Him. In the Fruyte Mary is portrayed as the ideal woman, or more especially, as the ideal religious. The nun, as we have seen in The tree &.xii.frutes and The abbaye of the holy Ghost, must centre her whole life upon God and like Mary learn to conform her life to His will. Like Mary's, her love for God must be burning and fervent. The nun's vows of poverty, obedience and chastity are reflected in Mary's giving her goods to the needy, in her obedience to her parents and to the law, accepting the laws of purification like other women though she has no need, and especially her chastity, who "fyrst of all in the worlde amonge women hast vowed ye vowe of chastyte and offred therby a gloryous gyfte to god".[220] Mary also sought solitude, kept silence and practised abstinence, besides cultivating that supreme virtue of meekness which every religious should seek to emulate. Simon is alone among the devout treatise writers of the period in suggesting that Mary's sorrows -

mentioned by several authors in connection with the Passion - began at the nativity:[221]

> good lady whan thou behelde and consydered the places in his fayre handes & prety fete where ye sharpe nayles sholde perce through/as thou had herde by holy prophetes/ thy blessed eyen were replete with teres of wepyng/& thy virgynall herte was as coluen a sonder for sorowe. And whan thy lytell swete sone behelde thy eyen full of wepynge/ he was sorowful as vnto ye deth for the. And whan yu consydered the myght of his dete thou were comforted/ knowynge well that thy sone wolde haue it so/and that it was expedyent. 222

In the first dialogue of The boke of conforte agaynste all tribulacions and in The dialogue betwene our sauior Ihesu Chryste and a synner, which seems to be a later version of the same work,[223] Jesus Himself describes the continual pain, the double martyrdom of soul and body, which He knew throughout the Thirty-Three years of His life:

> For truelye I receiued ye crosse of my bytter passyon in ye wombe of my mother/& bare hit continually in my hart & stablyshed hit in my body with great austerite/ wherfore to shew the endles measure of ye hydeous paynes of my soule/I wylled al my membres to haue sweten blode and water/in the fynall & instant ende of my bytter passion. 224

The general perception of the Passion which checks the simple joy of the Nativity makes the event, both emotionally and theologically more significant. But the perception is more effective coming from the lips of Jesus in the Dialogue, when He describes how He came into this world by three steps of humility, poverty and pain, as a needy child wrapped in clothes of sorrow, lying in a manger.[225] The Blessed Virgin's perception of her Son's Passion is prophetic; Christ's view is retrospective, and the Dialogue makes a serious attempt to describe not only the ways in which Christ suffered throughout His life but how it was that the Son of God suffered such pains. The brief discussion of the relationship between Christ's Godhead and His Manhood makes it clear

that Christ, by the very perfection of His nature and from the superfluity of His love, suffered more than any other man.

Although the prayers in Simon's work grow naturally out of the contemplations it would have been possible, as in Garde's Interpretacyon, to detach them and use them separately. It is possible that the type of devotion encouraged by the use of the rosary suggested this kind of chronological meditation. The prayers are of much the same kind as those in Book II of Garde's work; they referred to and gave personal application to the events of Christ's life. Thus the prayer which concludes chapter V on the circumcision asks Jesus "to circumcyse me from euery spotte of synne" and that love of "thy holy name Iesus may be imprynted in my herte". The prayer at the end of chapter xvi, which describes Christ's stripping and scourging, asks for grace to remember Christ's suffering "& that thoy wylte ouersprynge ye interyour partes of my herte with thy precyous blode". There is nothing unusual about the subject or expression of the contemplations or prayers, although the language is occasionally a little more ornate and emotional than in some other works. The distinctive feature of the work is its expression of praise and thankfulness. The tone is set by its opening:

> Lorde my god I desyre to laude the/for I knowe myself to be made to laude ye. Open my mouth in thy laude/ that I may synge ioy to thy name. Stere my herte in the/ put awaye euery tedyous thynge/ infunde grace/kendle loue/take away wyckednes of thy seruant/ clense me from all vnclennes of body and soule/that I may be founde worthy vnto the honour of thy name/and therto open my lyppes...226

and each chapter begins with a phrase such as "Thankynges I yelde to the lorde" or "I laude and gloryfye the lorde". Although Simon does not overlook man's unworthiness: "a frayle man fylth and wormes meet fayleth in thy condygne laude. And so doth euery creature, euery orysson/

euery tunge and sermocination [sic]" yet he persists in his praise of God and in his thanksgiving for the work of redemption. In his meditations on the Passion Rolle renders thanks to Jesus for every article of His Passion,[227] and the Monk of Farne talks of the exultation which grows out of frequent meditation on our Lord's Passion.[228] Thankfulness and praise[229] are of course a good and valid response to Christ's incarnate life and His Passion, which were the means of man's redemption. Often lost amid the more harrowing details of the Passion and the late medieval concentration on the realistic description of Christ's sufferings, the note of thanks and praise in Simon's Fruyte of redempcyon does something to redress the balance.[230] Though characteristic of its time in its tendency to concentrate upon the more emotional scenes, especially those concerning Christ's Passion, the work is noteworthy for its expression of thankfulness for the work of redemption.

Rosary books and other devotions based on Christ's life.

Three rosary books are known to have been printed during the 1530s. The Rosary of our Sauyour Iesu seems always to have been published in relation to William Bonde's Pylgrymage of perfeccyon,[231] while The Rosarye of our lady[232] and The Mystic sweet Rosary of the faythful soule[233] both seem to have been first printed in Antwerp and to have been reprinted several times during the 1530s. To these may be added the Jesus Psalter, which was organized in a similar manner to the rosary books[234] and which occurs in many manuscript and printed versions from the late fifteenth century onwards.[235] Because they are based on a recital of the events of Christ's life and combined with a repetitive formal structure two other works will be included in this section, The golden letany[236] and an

imperfect rosary-type devotion found among the Copland tracts at Blairs College, Aberdeen.[237] I have not included any version of the Hortulus Animae in the discussion since the English version really belongs to the English Primer tradition.[238]

The use of prayer beads and numbered series of prayers with a repetitive element were known in the Christian church from very early times,[239] but it was not until the last quarter of the XVth century that the rosary acquired a more settled form.[240] The devotions seem to have developed first in the Rhine valley and the Low Countries, an area which had had considerable influence on English devotional literature long before it began to disseminate reformed literature.[241] In England prayer beads had been in use for several centuries,[242] but from about 1500 onwards it became more likely that the beads bequeathed in wills[243] or portrayed carried in many ways[244] were rosary beads. Around 1500 an Italian visitor noted that English women came to church carrying long rosaries in their hands,[245] and a little later in the century there were some churches where a set of beads was provided for common use.[246] There were also special beads which seem to have been particularly associated with Syon and Shene, where the repetition of certain prayers on these hallowed beads carried the promise of substantial indulgences.[246A] From Sir Thomas More's brush with a Franciscan friar in Coventry sometime before 1520[247] it looks as though people were on occasion encouraged to use the rosary devotions in a superstitious manner by the promise that daily recitation of the rosary would preserve a soul from damnation - the same kind of benefit as was often attached to the mass. Not surprisingly the rosary was attacked as superstitious by the Reformers and officially condemned in Henry VIII's second Royal Injunctions of 1538.[248]

The Rosary of our sauyour Iesu would be far easier to place were the word Rosary not contained in the title. Bonde refers to the work in The Pilgrymage of perfeccyon,[249] where he says that it was originally divided into seven parts to be used before the seven canonical hours, but subsequently it was applied to the seven days of the week as printed.[250] He seems to be aware of the Rosary's early history, and whether or not he was its author it was probably known at Syon. It is recommended to the readers of the Pilgrymage as a book where "they may lerne yt maner to forme a meditacyon" on the points of Our Lord's Passion. But apart from the fact that each chapter ends with a Pater and an Ave it is difficult to find much common ground between the discursive meditations which make up The Rosary of our sauyour Iesu and the more compact and organized devotions of The Rosarye of our lady or The mystic sweet rosary.

The title yields two clues about the contents of the work: firstly that it offers "thankes and prayse "to Christ's holy name, and secondly that these thanks are given "for all the labours and great paynes that he suffred for man in this worlde/from the first instant of his blessed incarnacion/vnto his glorious ascencyon". Though less exuberant than in Simon's Fruyte of redemcyon a note of praise is sounded at the opening of each chapter. Grammatically, indeed, each whole chapter depends on some phrase such as "glory/ioye/honour and reuerence/be euer to thy holy name". Although the title claims to cover the life of Christ from the Incarnation to the Ascension the bulk of the work is occupied by the Passion. The opening chapter briefly lists the events of Jesus' early life from the Incarnation and Nativity, pausing to give thanks "for the

great pouerty in body/wherin it pleased thy grace to be borne bytwene two beestes/ & layde in a cryb/& wrapped in poore clothes" to Mary's loss of the twelve year old Jesus in the Temple. The second chapter spans the period from Jesus' baptism to His entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and the repentence of Mary Magdalene. The remaining chapters are mostly rather longer and their references to events in Jesus' life more detailed; they cover from Maundy Thursday to the burial of Jesus; the Resurrection and Ascension find no place in the meditations. The last chapter departs from the chronological sequence, describing the descent into "Lymbo patrum" and the burial, and then giving a set of prayers based on the seven words from the cross. These in turn give way to personal dedication, confession and petitions for salvation, with which the work concludes.

To the recital of events - there is little direct description apart from Christ's scourging, mocking and crucifixion - is frequently added some comment pointing to Jesus' meekness, patience and goodness, to His loneliness, or to the cruelty and violence of the Jews. The latter part of each chapter tends to become more personal in tone, expressing devotion to the instruments of the Passion, to the injured members of Christ's body and to His holy name, and asking for some spiritual virtue or blessing such as forgiveness of sins, patience and comfort in tribulation, the grace to make a good end, the virtues of chastity, abstinence and temperance, obedience, silence, and acceptance of the works of penance - virtues which suggest a predominantly religious audience. They are not separable prayers but rather a personal extension of the meditation. The difficult grammatical form[251] and the lack of clear distinction between narrative, comment, adoration and petition

make the work seem wanting in the kind of clear structure which tends to characterize the other rosary devotions.[252] The longer chapter divisions also make the author's task more difficult. What distinguishes The Rosary of our sauyour Iesu from other Passion literature is its devotion to the instruments of the Passion, more clearly stated here than usual, and devotion to the Holy Name, which was particularly characteristic of mystics such as Rolle and Hilton.[253]

The Rosarye of our Lady presents what may be described as the classic pattern for a rosary devotion. The five decades of brief chapters describing the life of Christ from His conception and birth to His resurrection, ascension and the Last Judgement are each concluded by an elaborate expression of praise addressed to the Blessed Virgin. In addition each chapter is addressed to her[254] and asks for her prayers; there is also a chapter on her Assumption in the final decade. The author of The tree &.xii.frutes of the holy goost, who encourages the newly professed nun to have special devotion to Our Lady, recommends to her that if possible "thou saydest to her among, her psalters of Aues, called our ladyes psalter". The Marian emphasis of the Lady Psalter seems to have been carried over into The Rosarye of our Lady. Yet, despite the important place held by the Mother of God in this work, the focus remains firmly on her son. With few exceptions (the Visitation and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin) each chapter relates some event from Christ's life, and this is frequently taken into the petitionary second part of the chapter, although not as consistently or neatly as in Garide's Interpretacyon of the Masse, book II, or in Fewterer's Myrrour or Glasse of Christes Passion. The application of the event sometimes sounds rather forced:

> Mother of God which did lappe thy lytel swete babe in clothes/and bytwene two beestes in a crybbe layde hym in hey, praye for me that my naked soule may be lapped in drede & loue for my lorde god & the/& that I may oft remembre my flesshe is but donge & hey in this crybbe of mortalite. 255

or

> Blyssed mother of our sauyour whose holy fete mary magdalene wasshed with ye teares of penaunce. Also she kyssed them deuoutly & dried them wt her heare, & anoynted them with swete oyntment/& there by penaunce she did wynne full remission of all her synnes, pray for me yt my fete of carnal affections may be wasshed from all fylth of synne, & haue them anoynted wt bawme of deuocion, yt I may vnto the loue of god myghtely clymme. 256

The brevity of each chapter gives little scope for description, but many of the familiar details are included, such as the beasts at the nativity and the cold marble pillar of the scourging. Also the requests of the petitions seek the usual selection of virtues: patient acceptance of poverty and tribulation, abstinence, chastity and the subjugation of fleshly desires; the flesh is seen as dung and hay, and this life as an exile and desert; the doctrine of holy church is to be obeyed during the "pilgrymage to that heuenly cite", and there are references to confession, penance and the need to receive the sacrament faithfully.

In the Dutch edition of the Rosarye of our lady, c.1525, each chapter is illustrated by a crude woodcut,[257] which while it may not have stimulated the reader's devotion probably did help to fix his thoughts and may have been useful to people of limited reading ability. In the devotion based on Christ's life found among the Copland tracts at Blairs College[258] the woodcuts which dominate the text suggest in their composition some familiarity with the Dutch ones. They appear on every page followed by a complete verse describing the event portrayed and ending with a "Pater" and an "Ave". This unsophisticated life, which could have been

easily committed to memory by the illiterate, seems to be a rudimentary type of rosary devotion. The work is incomplete,[259] and it is difficult to know how many episodes were originally included. However, following the life are a set (incomplete)[260] of devotions to each of the five wounds which seem to belong to it - the five wounds are celebrated as the five mysteries of The mystic sweet rosary. These prayers to the five wounds, together with the "Pater" and "Ave" following each episode, suggest that it was some kind of rosary devotion.

The mystic sweet rosary of the faythful soule, like the Rosary of our ladye, consists of five decades separated by five mysteries, addressed not to the Blessed Virgin but to the wounds of Christ. The title declares that the fifty chapters of Christ's life are each provided "with certayn placis of the holy scripture","a deuoute prayer" and with "a fayer picture: that the inwarde mynde might sauour the thinge that the vtwarde eye beholdeth". The woodcuts are of a much higher standard than those of the Rosary of our ladye, which also seems to have been produced in Antwerp some eight years earlier. In their handling of the human body, their architectural backgrounds and balanced scale and composition they betray a strong Renaissance influence.[261] The whole volume is unusually well produced, the Latin, Dutch and English versions all having the same format.[262] The illustrations include a number showing the Blessed Virgin crowned, holding the Christ child and standing or sitting on the crescent moon, the serpent crushed beneath her feet and the whole surrounded by a rosary acting as a mandorla around her.[263] IX b There is also a cut showing Mary being received in heaven and another X a of her coronation. The mystic sweet rosary begins at an earlier point in time than the other rosary devotions: starting with the creation it

includes chapters on the birth, presentation and marriage of the Blessed Virgin before embarking on the usual sequence of the Annunciation, the visitation and the nativity. In illustration and organization the Marian interest of the work is unmistakable, but apart from the Hayle Mary which ends most of the chapters there is no formal address to her. The wounds of Christ are saluted and honoured, but the prayers which accompany them are not as emotional as might be expected.[264] The subjects of the illustrations[265] are those of traditional catholic piety. The fact that there is no narrative description - the pictures tell the story - and that the text consists of biblical quotations, often from the Old Testament, commenting on the event and prayers which are addressed to Jesus, is surely not sufficient ground for describing The mystic sweet rosary as a work of the Reformers.[266]

The prayers follow the pattern found in Book II of Garade's Interpretacyon of the Masse and in Fewterer's Deuoute prayers in englysshe. The first part refers to some event from Christ's life, and often includes a traditional non-biblical detail, such as the fifteen steps of the Temple ascended by Mary at her presentation, the painlessness of Jesus' birth, the renewed bleeding of Christ's wounds as He is stripped naked before His crucifixion and His body being stretched upon the cross; the second part contains a personal petition. The connection between the two halves is less obvious than in Garade or Fewterer because The mystic sweet rosary rarely uses catchwords, but there are no glaring incongruities between narrative and petition.

The concerns shown by the petitions are not so obviously monastic as in The Rosary of our Sauyour Iesu or Simon's Fruyte of redempcyon, and

in that respect are closer to Garade's and Fewterer's. The virtue of chastity is sought[267] but not stressed. There is no reference to obedience, poverty, silence or even the use of abstinence, but the more general virtues of humility, purity, charity and restraint of tongue are sought. The world is condemned not because it is evil in itself, but because of its vices,[268] and even more because worldly concerns and affections draw the soul from love of and desire for Christ.[269] More often the prayers condemn pride, vain-glory and other vices in the individual, and a few call upon the reader to mortify himself and follow "with feruent loue the stepis of thy life".[270] Considerable emphasis is given to the requirement to love one's enemies, to prefer others to self, and never to slander a neighbour, as well as asking that the virtue of Christ's Passion and blood may "descende into the soulis dede thorow synne".[271] The traditional tribulation doctrine makes its appearance,[272] but the emphasis falls not upon the ennobling virtue of tribulation or on the accumulation of merits thereby but on the purifying aspect which will enable the soul to join Christ after death. Christ is also seen as the sinner's refuge and hope in temptation.[273] Although the prayers show awareness of man's sinfulness they do not dwell upon the corruption of his nature as in the <u>contemptus mundi</u> tradition. Rather, the emphasis falls on the soul's need of contrition and desire for absolution and cleansing. The reader is encouraged to weep for and bewail his sins.[274] The most conspicuous element of the prayers is the expression of love for and yearning after Christ, a spirit reminiscent of the <u>Imitatio Christi</u> which may be due in some measure to the influence of the <u>devotio moderna</u>. To the usual late medieval insistence on the importance of

meditation on the Passion:

> Swete Iesu/prynte into my herte the continuall rememberance of thy passion/incessantly to prik my mynde/to mollifyeit: that it may be hole swellowed vp in thy loue 275

is added a strong desire to know Christ personally, which is expressed in physical terms:

> Make my harte to be syk for thy loue/make it to yrke all worldely thingis onely to thirst ~~and~~ & honger aftir the so feruently that nothinge els may make me glad;276

or again the soul asks to be "swellowed vp whole of thy moste feruent loue" and Christ is besought "Burye thou my harte my wittes and all my strengthes in the". Not only does the soul desire Christ "for the effusion of thy bloude and water take me into thy only possession and tuicion/and to knitte me wholl vnto the in loue",[277] but more physically and dramatically, in language reminiscent of some mystics, He is implored "O moste gloriouse passion of my sauiour/wounde thou my soule. O moste precyouse woundis of my loue/make moyst my mynde"[278] and again, "wound my harte (I beseche the) with the spere of thy loue/that I nother think vpon nor desier nothing els then the my lord for me crucified".[279] Although not florid in the way that so much devotional writing about the Passion and wounds of Christ tends to be at this period, the language suggests a fervent personal devotion to Christ.

The rosary is particularly associated with devotion to the Blessed Virgin.[280] Legends concerning its origin nearly all include some vision of Mary,[281] rosary paintings too tend to focus upon her,[282] and while the "Pater" and "Credo" are used irregularly in the English rosary devotions the "Ave Maria" is used much more regularly and frequently.

The fullest praise addressed to her among the rosary devotions is to be found in the five prayers which conclude each decade of The Rosarye of our Lady; with the exception of some Primer prayers[283] nothing as elaborate as this is to be found in the English devotional literature of the 1530s. In the course of the salutations many of the traditional epithets for Mary are listed;[284] and she is praised as the instrument of God in the Incarnation, and seen as the solace of sinners, their sanctuary in the hour of death and mediatrix between God and man-the two latter are perhaps her most prominent roles.[285] The fifth salutation concludes:

> Accept good lady of thy maydenly benignite these.v.roses which I haue offred to the/not accordyngly dere lady to thy moost excellent dignytye/but after myne exile and feble power...286

In The mystic sweet rosary there is no verbal equivalent to the illustrations of Mary in glory. The decades are marked by the salutations of the five wounds of Christ, and as previously noted verse prayers to the wounds seem to have concluded the Copland tract. Woodcuts with emblematic representations of Christ's wounds, sometimes including instruments of the Passion, surrounded by a rosary,[287] gave iconographical expression to what was from early on a common subject of meditation for part of the rosary cycle.[288] Extravagant praise of the Blessed Virgin was by no means an inevitable part of the rosary devotions, and the extant English rosary books suggest a preference for contemplation of the life, Passion and Wounds of Christ.

The surviving rosary books provide a compact and systematic meditation on the life of Christ. The clear division of sections and chapters allowed the individual to select various portions according to his time and inclination. This adaptability, and the fact that none of the rosary books - even The Rosary of our Sauyour Iesu, which seems to have

been originally intended for religious - betrays the overt preference for the religious way of life so often found in devotional writing of the period, must have helped to make the rosary a popular devotion among lay people as well as religious. The chapters and prayers were brief and usually followed a regular structure, which helped to check the tendency for them to grow into shapeless meditations. The narrative reference was also restricted by length, and while it was sufficient to remind the reader of the more detailed tradition the description was not over-written. But perhaps the most interesting feature of the rosary books is the way in which pictures seem to have been considered an important part of the meditation. The static picture was the focus for many Passion devotions. One author recommends that when meditating on Christ's bitter Passion "thou shalt haue before thee in place of a book a representation of Christ suffering or crucified".[289] Unser Lieben Frauwen Psalter, printed in 1489, was even more explicit in drawing the reader's attention to the illustrations of the mysteries; "these you may look at and meditate upon while you are saying the psalter: or else you may study the picture before you begin to say the psalter".[290] The Carthusian author of The Pomander of prayer was surely thinking of this type of illustrated rosary book when he describes how some people use against distractions in prayer:

> lytell bokes/in the whiche is conteyned pyctures of the articles of the lyfe and passion of our lorde Iesu/and tournynge ouer theyr leues doth worshype our lorde/ saying for euery article a Pater noster. an Aue. and a Crede. And this exercise is good for them whiche be vnlerned. 291.

In the Copland tract and The mystic sweet rosary, while an illustration accompanies each episode, the woodcuts carry the narrative; they alone tell the story. The sight - both the physical sight and the imaginative

seeing - was a sense frequently stimulated by devotional authors, most often in connection with certain events of Christ's life, particularly His childhood and the Passion.

Another work which is based upon the life of Christ and uses a regular structure, in this case derived from liturgical use, is The golden Letany in Englysshe.[292] It seems to have made its appearance at about the same date as the rosary devotions, the late fifteenth century, and to have remained popular among English recusants.[293] The golden Letany is a continuous narrative which unlike the rosary is not broken up into shorter sections, nor does the total number of petitions seem to be significant.[294] It begins with petitions for mercy couched in the usual litany form, and then launches into a recital of salvation history from the creation to the sending of the Holy Ghost. In the last few pages the narrative ceases and the same sentence form is used to carry a number of more personal petitions for mercy addressed to Christ, calling on His Holy Name and the merits of Himself and Mary. It continues, in the manner of contemporary litanies, by seeking the intercession of a number of apostles, martyrs, holy fathers and confessors, including saints Francis, Augustine and Anthony, and among holy women saints Anne, Catherine and Barbara, and the piece ends with a number of supplications:

> Succour vs swete Iesu in the tremblynge and strayte day of iudgement, & graunte vs in this exile & transytory lyfe those thynges that be necessary to the helth of our body & soule/and after this lyfe to lyue in ioye with the euerlastyngly withouten ende 295

and brief commendations of the dead and prayers for the church and for individual salvation. Copland's and Skot's editions[296] both conclude with a "deuoute blyssnge", "lately translated out of fresshe by Robert

Copland".[297]

Although the form is regular—"By....have mercy upon us"—the petitions vary considerably in length. Many of the familiar details are to be found: the harsh surroundings and poverty of the nativity for instance:

> By the colde crybbe in ye whiche wt vyle clothes
> ye were wounde and put/&nourysshed with maydens
> mylke....298

and the painful circumcision, with the shedding of blood and receiving the Holy Name, Jesus. His obedience to His parents in Nazareth and the "humble & meke conuersacion" of His thirty-three years on earth, His pains and weariness, the poverty, the hunger, thirst, cold and heat "whiche in this vale of mysery thou suffred", together with the detractions of His enemies, show the privations which Christ endured on earth.[299] Though nothing is said, the reader with some knowledge of the standard views on the value of tribulation would surely see Christ's life as an example to be followed. The "holy meditacions", "stedfast contemplacyons & knelynges, and ouercommynge of the fendes temptacion" suggest another side of Christ's life which should be emulated. Very brief mention is made of His "holsome doctryne" and of His miracles. But, as might be expected, the bulk of the work, nearly half of it, is devoted to Passion week.

The incidents of the Passion which are recorded follow the usual sequence: the entry into Jerusalem, the institution of the Sacrament, the prayer in the garden[300] and the betrayal, followed by the process of the trials, with the mocking and physical pain inflicted on Christ, and His crucifixion, with the "thyrling" of the hands, the "boystous nayles" and the nailing of His feet to the cross.[301] The expansion and suggested

rather than real variation of form in describing the wounds seems to have as its background the widespread popular devotion to the wounds of Christ. The language in which the wound of the side is described is similar to that of the rosary devotions:[302]

> By the openynge of thy syde & the reed wounde of it and the precyous blode good lorde thyrle our herte with ye spere of all thy loue & haue mercy vpon vs. By the precyous bloode and water that ranne out of thy holy hert/wasshe and make vs clene in the same holy water & blode from all our synnes/& haue mercy vpon vs. 303

The descent into hell is recounted before the deposition, then follow the usual sequence of resurrection, ascension and the sending of the Holy Ghost.

Reference to the Blessed Virgin is limited, being confined as usual to the time before the nativity and during the Passion. She is chosen by God to be Christ's mother, her conception, birth and the "perfyte purite and the mekenes of her" are described. Then in the Passion sequence there is the meeting as Christ bears His cross to Calvary, the words He speaks from the cross recommending His mother to the care of St.John, "the swerde of sorowe that went vnto thy moders herte, and the compassyon & teares that she shed out of sorowe standyng vnder the crosse", and her lamentation over her Son's dead body. Although Mary's joy at the resurrection is mentioned there is no reference to the common tradition that the risen Jesus appeared first of all to His mother. Basically the narrative contains the usual selection of events briefly described with the traditional detail. But despite the usual tendency to dwell upon the physical pains of Jesus during His Passion:—

> By al the dolours that yu suffred in thy rybbes hyppes and sholders crucyfyed/haue mercy vpon vs.

> By all the paynes that thou had spredde on the crosse in thy synewes, veynes, fete, and all thy membres, haue mercy vpon vs. 304 —

the Golden Letany pays more attention to Jesus' inner state than might be expected in so brief a work. Jesus' heaviness of heart, "hugely great heuynesse", afflicts Him during the Agony in the Garden, when Pilate shows Him to the people and at His crucifixion. On two occasions during the trials the reader is reminded of His "labour and secret vnknowen turment". Inner virtues too are revealed, Jesus' compassion for His "sorowful mother", His patience and stillness before the judges, and above all His meekness, shown in His washing of the disciples' feet, His acceptance of comfort from the angel of the Passion and His prayer from the cross for His enemies' forgiveness.[305] Finally, attention is drawn to the love and charity with which He accepted suffering, His profound Love for Saint John, His "immutable goodness" in not refusing the traitor's kiss, and "the triumphant wyl" with which He went to meet His enemies. All too often in the Passion narratives Jesus is seen as one who endured with exemplary patience the worst malice of man. Here we catch a glimpse of a Saviour, motivated by love: "By thy inflamed desyre that thou had to redeme vs/haue mercy vpon vs".

The last work to be considered in this group is the Jesus Psalter. Although it is not based on the life of Jesus, its structure clearly places it in the same tradition as the Lady Psalter and the Rosary books. The preface to the Copland edition of 1529 recounts how the "xv prycipal petycions...times repeted make also thries.L.". Each of the sections begins "Ihesu. Ihesu. Ihesu merci", "Ihesu. Ihesu. Ihesu. helpe me" and so on, and is to be repeated ten times. This opening leads into a number of personal requests, and all the sections end in the same way:

> Haue mercy on the soules in purgatory for thy bytter passyon I beseche the/and for thi glorious name Ihesu. The holy trinyte one very god haue mercy on me. Pater noster. Aue maria.

After each group of five prayers occur two Latin biblical quotations, which are not translated.[306] The repetitive structure of the piece as well as its content emphasizes the merit of repeating the "gloryous name of our sauyour Ihesu", which is named "liiC. & lxxx.tymes" according to the Preface. This Psalter seems to have become popular at about the same time as the rosary devotions. It exists in several versions in fifteenth-century manuscripts.[307] Its earliest printed version seems to be by Copland, 1529, but it was popular later in the century among English recusants.[308] Its authorship has frequently been attributed to Richard Whitford,[309] but some of the manuscripts are a little too early, and in view of Whitford's fondness for recommending to his readers his own and other suitable books it does not seem likely that he would have passed over the Jesus Psalter in silence had he written or substantially revised it. As so often in Whitford's books there is a note at the end giving practical advice as to how the psalter may conveniently be shortened,[310] suggesting that other writers were aware of practical limitations of time available for devotion.[311]

Despite the regular repetition within each of the fifteen sections of the Jesus Psalter there is no organized development of topics from one section to another, such as was provided in the rosary books by the narrative of Christ's life. The various petitions express many concerns commonly found in late fifteenth - early sixteenth century devotional works. A number of petitions are moral in content, seeking help to turn from and protection against various forms of sinful delectation and

carnality. More specifically help is sought to repress the motions of the flesh in sloth, gluttony and lechery, and to be preserved from pride, anger, envy and covetousness - the seven deadly sins. One of the principal petitions asks "grace to fle yl company", and goes on to ask "Kepe me mouthe good lorde fro sclaunderous spekynge/lyenge/ falas wytnes berynge/cursyng/sweryng/vncharytable chydinge/dissolute laughyng/and wordes of vanyte"; it also reminds the reader that God hears and will judge all that is said. Other petitions encourage contempt of the world and its vanities, seek to recompense mis-spent years and ask help to use time virtuously. In a rather more positive vein assistance is sought to overcome temptation and "to perseuer in vertue" acceptable to Jesus. Among the virtues sought are patience in tribulation, obedience (especially to the doctrine and observances of the Church), to be constant and stable in faith, hope and charity. "Graunt me ye.vii.giftes of ye holy goost/the .viii.beatitudes/the.iiii. Cardynall vertues/& in receyuynge of the sacramentes deuoutly to dyspose me" is a petition which seems to betray the influence of popular catechetical teaching with its reliance on numbered groups of sins, virtues and other precepts, while on another occasion the beatitudes are paraphrased to form a petition.[312] Many of the petitions are moral in tone and are clearly intended to edify the reader and remind him of what he has learnt.

Two subjects touched upon by a number of petitions in the course of the work reflect common devotional concerns of the period: the desire to make a good death and the fear of hell and damnation. Although only one principal petition asks "Ihesu. Ihesu. Ihesu graunt me grace for too remembre my dethe", there is some reference to the subject in five of the

fifteen sections. Two seek protection from sudden death, and other prayers express the hope that the reader will keep his five wits until he dies, that he will have the protection of the sacraments, the help of his good angel, the mediation of the Blessed Virgin and the prayers of the saints at his end. In the face of the threat of God's vengeance, the strictness of His judgement, the torments of purgatory and the eternal damnation of hell such protection seems very necessary. On occasion the threat of damnation can have positive results, encouraging "the spirite of perfyte penaunce/contrycion/confessyon/& satysfacyon to opteyne thy grace/& fro fylthi sinne to purge me". There is frequent reference to the Passion and bitter pains Christ suffered to redeem sinners. The sinner prays that Christ's merits may help to save him:— "The merytes of thy meke pacyence thrugh charyte & chastyte mytygate ye pronyte to synne & fraylte in me"— and later in an effective set of contrasts Christ's virtues are set against the sinners faults:

> Thi obedyence lord recompence for my obstynacy/thy abstinence for my superfluyte/thy mekeness thy pacyence for my pryde/yrefull hert & enmite. Thy charyte for my malyce/thy deuocion for my dulnes: thy louyenge hert for myn vnkindnes/ thy holy deth for my wretched lyfe & for al my misery. 313

Christ is not some remote source of grace, but a man whose virtues and sufferings are known to be available to help the soul towards salvation. Christ is addressed directly with a variety of requests relating to the soul's salvation:

> The water & blode which ranne fro thy blyssed hert wasshe my soule fro synne & iniquyte/& purches to me abundaunce of grace faythfully to serue ye. O my lorde/my might/mi lyfe/my syght/lede me/fede me/and spede me in the pylgrymge pf thys mortalyte...At ye hour of deth whan I shal be acused afore ye for deth yu suffred for synners haue mercy on me. Breke my frowarde hert & make it obedyent to the/fro sodeyn & vnprouyded dethe lorde preserue me. Grace to departe

> wyth contempte of this worlde/& with ioyfull herte
> to come to the. 314

Earlier on the language of mystical writers had been used to express the hope of eternal life with Christ:

> Ihesu confort me/& gyue me grace to haue my moost
> ioy & pleasure in the. Sende me heuenly meditacions
> goostly swetnes/& sauour of thy glory. Rauysshe my
> soule wt brennynge desyre to ye heuenly ioy there I
> shall euerlastyngely dwell with the. 315

The author is not, in general, striving after original thoughts or modes of expression. The topics are sufficiently familiar to encourage the reader to meditate upon them rather than leaving him fumbling with obscure meanings or seeking to impress him by verbal display. The repetition and regular structure of the sections, together with the personal note of the petitions, provide sufficient unity to hold together what at first appears to be a random, even haphazard selection of topics within each section. The sections are not carefully developed, unified meditations on a single theme, but the petitions are nearly all concerned in some way with the soul's salvation: the threat of hell, personal sinfulness and lack of virtues threaten the soul's safety while hope lies in the merits of Christ. The Jesus Psalter provided a collection, a kind of rapiarium, of devotional topics which would have been familiar to any devout soul, religious or lay - again as with the rosary books there is no overt religious orientation - about the end of the fifteenth century. As if to emphasize this element of familiarity a number of well-known prayers in English are included at the end of Copland's 1529 edition: among them "Adoro te Domine Iesu Christe", Richard de Caistre's hymn, "A prayer to Ihesu",[316] and a piece attributed to Gerson on confession. It is of interest that in the 1583 edition these miscellaneous prayers are replaced by "a hoolsome doctrine, hovv to resiste and

ouercome the ghostly temptations of the Fiende", which is in fact by William Bonde.[317]

The rosary structure was sufficiently firm to contain the late medieval tendency to produce rather lengthy and shapeless meditations which often contained much elaborate description. The short sections of the rosary, usually grouped in tens, fifteens or fifties, contained sufficient detail to remind the reader of more elaborate descriptions of, for example, the crucifixion or of some ars moriendi book, and some of the brief descriptions are themselves quite moving. The form was adaptable: the user, religious or layman, could choose particular sections according to his time or inclination. The same form could also accommodate differing contents: some were structured on the life of Christ; others, such as the Jesus Psalter, were more exclusively personal in content although they did not ignore the benefits of Christ's life and Passion, just as the narrative works included personal petitions. The regular forms and frequent use of repeated words and phrases combined to provide a coherent and satisfying group of devotions. The familiarity of the contents and the regular repetition of form [318] provided a set of devotions which could be used by those with no meditative experience; it could be used when the soul was troubled, unable to concentrate or devoid of devotion,[319] or it could help to encourage a state conducive to the higher states of contemplation.[320]

The Passion of Christ.

The Passion of Christ was undoubtedly considered by medieval authors and the Reformers as the most important part of His life. Nicholas Love's estimation of the spiritual benefits of meditation on Christ's Passion was shared by many other authors:

> it byhoueth to sette therto all the scharpnesse of mynde/with wakyng eygen of herte/putting away and leuynge alle othere cures and besynesse for the tyme/and makynge hym self as present in all that byfelle aboute the passioun and crucifixioun effectuously/besily/auisely/and perseuerantly. and nought passynge lightly or with tediouse heuynesse/ but with al the herte and goostly gladnesse. Wherfore if thou that redest or herest this book hast here byfore besily taken hede to thoo thinges that hauen ben writen and spoken of the blessid lyf of oure lord Jesu crist in to this tyme/ moche more now thou schalt gedre alle thy mynde and al the strengthe of thi soule to thoo thinges that folowen of his blessid passioun. 321

Love also mentions the two common requirements preparatory to any meditations, the need to banish all worldly thoughts from the mind and to concentrate upon the object of devotion. This concentration is the practice of the devotional present, and, in the case of devotion to the Passion, more often than perhaps any other form of devotion, it is assisted by visual stimuli: the crucifix, the imago pietatis, representations of Christ's wounds or the instruments of the Passion.[322] In many cases devout beholding of some such image, accompanied by the repetition of a few prayers, carries with it a substantial indulgence. To the numerous examples found in horae, prayer rolls and other manuscripts[323] may be added the one which occurs at the end of Bonde's Deuoute Epystle....for them that ben tymorouse...in Conscience. There, a scroll at the bottom of the cut bears a verse,

> Vox xpi : O man vnkynde) My paynes smerte
> Bere in thy mynde)
> And ye shalt fynde) Lo here my herte
> Me true and kynde)

324

and around the border runs "The pardon for.v.pater nosters.v.aues & a crede wt pyteous beholdynge of these armes is.xxxii.M.&.iv.yeres".

Fewterer's The Myrrour or Glasse of Christ's Passion was the most substantial English work on the Passion of Christ to be printed during the 1530s.[325] It is an eclectic work, citing not only the usual authorities, saints Augustine, Anselm, Jerome, Bonaventura and Bernard, but relying heavily on more recent continental authors, Simone de Cassia (Fidati), Reinhardus de Laudenburg, and especially Jordanus of Quedlinburg and Ludolphus of Saxonia.[326] The instruction and information provided in the first five "particles" - nearly a third of the work's total length - gathers together a great deal of material which is to be found scattered in many other works. Despite its apparent organization into various lists and under separate headings there is much repetition. But just because it is derivative this introductory matter is of considerable interest, providing an insight into widely held views about the Passion. The Preface, addressed to the Lord John Hussey,[327] makes it clear that Fewterer shared Love's view of the importance of meditation on the Passion: "no thynge is thought always more frutful, than the continnal [sic] meditacion of the passion of our lorde god Iesus Christ, for the exercyses of all other spirituall meditacions may be reduced and brought vnto this".[328]

The prologue provides a formal exposition of Exodus XXV:40 - "Inspice et fac, secundum exemplar quod tibi monstratum est in monte" - which holds up Christ as an example to be followed and particularly stresses the way in which He suffered for man, which is to be acknowledged in penance and thankfulness. The first section which follows it is "an exortation/ mouyng men vnto the meditation of the passion of Christe", a sustained

piece of emotional writing in the manner of the Stimulus Amoris and Suso's Orologium Sapientiae.[329] The reader is drawn into the description until he suffers with Christ, experiencing something of His physical pain and appreciating a little of His mental anguish. This sense of suffering with Christ was widely encouraged and took many forms. A person could relate his own suffering and adversities to those of Christ on the cross and offer them to Him,[330] or he could imagine himself present at the scene, witnessing Christ's sufferings and imagining the agony He endured;[331] and a few chosen souls received a visible sign of participation in Christ's Passion or experienced actual pain.[332] The former view tended to see Christ on the cross as the examplar of all virtue - a point to be considered in more detail later on - the latter approach, the more common one in the later fifteenth - early sixteenth centuries, emphasized the visual - descriptive and emotive aspects of the Passion.

The second section of Fewterer's introduction considers "the meane and maner of the remembraunce of the passion of Christe". The main method is to "ordre hymselfe/as if Christe were to put all the paynes of his deth and passion in his presence" - the practice of the devotional present.[333] He is also to set aside all worldly business.[334] The Passion is to be remembered at least seven times a day, and if the heart is not moved to sorrow with Christ, the eyes do not weep for him nor the soul feel thankfulness, then Fewterer recommends that the inward remembrance be coupled with:

> outwarde laboure of thy bodye/as exercysynge thyselfe in lyftynge vp thy handes or thy syght/vnto the crucifixe in ofte knockynge on thy breste/in deuoute genuflexions/ knelynges/or peyne takynges/or in exercysyng thyself in takyng disciplines or scurgyng/or in other lyke outwarde exercise/and so continue vnto thou haue goten the grace of teares. 335

The third practice suggests the ways in which the reader should learn to know Christ's Passion in his understanding and his affections, and to show it in his outward actions, his acceptance of poverty, rebukes and other adversities. The fourth particle is concerned with "diuerse maners and wayes to remembre Christes passion", and the six headings are the same as those used in the fourth chapter of the Stimulus Amoris.[336]

In the course of the fourth particle Fewterer introduces two images of Christ which were quite widely used in verse and prose, Christ as a lure or bait, and as a book; and although not used in The myrrour or Glasse of Christes passion it seems appropriate to link with these images some consideration of the Charter of Christ. According to Fewterer Christ of His infinite charity, by His bloodstained body, made Himself a lure to reclaim "those wylde hawkes and vnkynde people/the whiche by inordinate loue to the flesshe and the worlde/had taken theyr flyght from the hand and fauour of the noble fawconer our sauiour Iesus".[337] The same image was used by the Protestant author William Thomas in The Vanitee of this World, 1549,[338] but there the lure is heaven although the complaint is still that men forsake Christ, despite all He has suffered for them, preferring the pleasures of the world.[339] As used by these authors it is a physically precise image, and may well be derived from transactional views of the doctrine of the atonement, which saw Christ's sacrifice on Calvary in terms of a bait.[340]

The book image was more widespread in its application.[341] In Fewterer Christ is likened to "a boke layd open on the pulpyt of the crosse".[342] Two more elaborate versions of the image dating from the fourteenth century are to be found in Rolle's Meditations on the Passion

and in the monk of Farne's Meditation on Christ Crucified.[343] According to Rolle the wounds on Christ's body are like the red ink in which a book is written, whereas the monk of Farne sees Christ's wounds as the letters and the five chief wounds as the five vowels.[344] This emphasis on the wounds and the writing of the book is closely related to the concept of the Charter of Christ. The most elaborate exposition I have found of the book image is in Bishop Fisher's A Sermon verie fruitfull, godly, and learned.[345] It begins with a straightforward application of the parts of the book to the position of Christ spread upon the cross,[346] then adds "Neuer anye Parchement skynne was more strayghtlye stratched by strength vpon the tentors then was this blessed body vpon yt crosse" - a figure found again in the Charter of Christ. Again. Fisher, like the authors of the Charter, Rolle and the monk of Farne, compares the wounds of Christ to the lines and the small red, black and blue letters of the text:

> Besides these small letters, yet there was also greate Capytall Letters precyousle illumyned with Roset colour: Roset is a reade colour lyke vnto the colour of a Rose which colour that most precyous bloude, whiche issued out of his hands and feete, doeth represent vnto vs, with this most precious blud was illumined the fyue great Capital letters in this wonderful booke. I mean by these capital letters ye greate wounds of his body, in his handes, and in hys feete, and in his side|| These fyue great woundes were ingraued with sharpe & vyolent pennes, that is to say, the sharpe nayles, and the speare.[347]

Fisher is here surely drawing upon the Charter of Christ traditions, which lived on at least to the middle of the sixteenth century.[348]

The book, however, was not only something to be looked upon and learnt from; it taught the Disciple the virtues he should try to emulate, "þe wheche beþ writene and grauen in þis opune boke as þou seeste, þat is to seye, in mye bodye crucifyed".[349] Fewterer saw the open book of

Christ crucified as teaching exemplary patience, meekness and charity and how to do penance. William Bonde also approached the image in this way. It is to the exemplary virtues of Christ that he draws the reader's attention in "an exercyse to be used before the ymage of pite":

> And that thou mayst the sooner come to this holy sacrifyce of teares of contemplacyon/lyfte vp thyne eyes reuerently/and loke on his blessed body/hanynge on the crosse/as on ye boke of lyfe/wherin thou mayst rede & lerne all maner of vertues/as obedyence/pacyence/ mekenes/charite/mercy/& suche other. Lokyng thus on this boke/consyder all the course and processe of his holy lyfe/ and compare his moost pure & innocent lyfe to thy croked maners and euyll customes of lyuyng...350

It is not surprising that it was this moral interpretation of what is to be learnt from the book, rather than the more emotional comparison of Christ's body and wounds to the parts of a book, which was taken up by Protestant authors. In the preface to The Lamentacion of a synner Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley,commends the author, Catherine Parr,[351] who did not disdain "to submitte herselfe to the schole of the crosse, the lernyng of the crucifixe, the boke of our redempcion, the very absolute library of Goddes mercy and wysdome"; and in the course of the work Catherine uses the image several times:

> this crucifix is the boke, wherin god hath included all thynges, & hath morste compendiouslye written therin, al truthe, profitable & necessarye for our saluacion. Therfore let vs indeuor our selfes to study this boke, that we being lightned wt the spirit of god, may geue him thankes for so great a benefit. 352

John Bradford frequently reminds his readers that "You learned Christ's cross, afore you began with A.B.C."-a reference to the child's horn-book[353] - which shows that the cross was as basic to the Protestant faith for what it taught, as it was to Catholic tradition for the devotion it inspired. It is significant that in the Protestant usage the more abstract word cross is preferred to the word crucifix, a visual symbol inseparably linked with

"papistical superstition".

The Charter of Christ, based on the legal form and using legal terminology, seems to have originated during the fourteenth century but to have been at its most popular during the fifteenth century.[354] Legal forms and formulae - wills,[355] charters[356] and proclamations[357] - were employed in a number of literary and devotional works during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries but here the deed is identified with the crucified body of Christ. In several versions, such as the "Carta libera" and "Long charter", there is quite detailed reference to Christ's wounds and the instruments of the Passion; and in B.M. ms. Addit.37049 the charter is shown nailed to the cross with Christ.[358] The most graphic description of Christ's sufferings is to be found in a description of the charter, rather than an actual charter. A generall free Pardon or Charter of heuyn blys,[359] which purports to have been granted "in the yere of our lorde God M.iiii.C", is in fact taken from the popular fourteenth century compilation of religious pieces Pore Caitiff,[360] and it provided, in effect, an allegorical interpretation of the crucifixion.

Just as Fisher had compared the crucified and wounded Christ to the parts and writing of a book, so does this author liken Christ to the elements of the charter. The parchment of the charter was neither sheep nor calf but the body and skin of that spotless lamb Jesus Christ, "& there was neyther skyn of shep neyther of calfe/so sore & so hard strayned on ye teyntur/eyther harow of any parchement maker/as was ye bleesed body & skyn of our lord Iesu Chirst/for our lyfe streyned & drawen vpon the yebet of the crosse".[361] No scribe ever wrote upon animal parchment with "so hard & hydous pennys: so bytter so sore or

so depe" as did "the cursed Iues" on Christ's body with hard nails, a sharp spear and a crown of sharp thorns pressed down onto His head, "that lyghtly perced his brayne pan". The wounds upon His body, which numbered "fyue.M.CCCC.lccv" according to St.Anselm, are the number of letters with which the charter was written. Beneath all hangs the seal, its print Christ on the cross, the crucifix described in terms attributed to St. Bernard: the head bowed down, ready to kiss those who turn to Him, His arms spread to embrace them and His hands and feet nailed to dwell with them:

> And he hath al his body spred abrode/to gyue himselfe holly to vs cleuyng to him and verely he hath his syde openyd/& his hert clouen for our sake: so yt without lettyng we must crepe into his hert & rest there thorow stedfast beleue & herty loue.[362]

Many of these details—the idea of Christ strained on the cross, the description attributed to St.Bernard, the thorns piercing His brain pan, the number of wounds and the idea of them as a refuge together with the flash of anti-semitism—are all to be found so frequently in the Passion literature of the later middle ages, that they might be described as commonplaces of the tradition. The visual and affective content is for the most part conventional, and even the more striking metaphors of Christ's body being stretched like parchment on the nails and spears as pens may be found in other works. The charter image, however, remains a striking one, and it is able to combine the physical description of the charter and the wounded body of Christ with some reference to the content, and the meaning and obligation attached to Christ's sacrifice. The charter confers a heritage which can only be claimed by virtue of right belief - the sentence "is our beleue" - by repentance and trust in God's mercy and His promises - the two laces of the charter from which

hangs the seal and by a virtuous life. Considerable emphasis is placed on the need for repentance and penance. To the penitent sinner Christ's wounds offer medicine and health, but to the sinner who does not persevere in virtue and falls back into the bondage of sin they spell sorrow. The reader is encouraged to have "the last day - ever afore our eyen", to refrain from all vice and evil covetousness and to trust in the merits of a good life. The second part of the printed work elaborates the teaching, warning the repentant sinner of the hell which awaits him, and contrasting that fate with the reward of the faithful in heaven. Its content is conventional enough; "despyse we all thynges that by vayne & fallyng", eschew vice and follow virtue. The lusts of the flesh and the deadly sins are condemned and the reader is warned to keep silence and speak but little. The teaching has little relevance to the conceit of the charter of Christ, but as a devotional work the second half helps to weight down the affective piety of the description of Christ's suffering and to add a number of conventional moral admonitions. The charter, the grant of heaven's bliss, is dependent upon the sinner's repentance, right belief, devout love and good living.

The Passion of Christ was widely regarded as the climax of His incarnate life and as of direct relevance to man's salvation. In the same way that men were encouraged to attend mass and see the sacrament by the promise of various rewards to be gained from so doing, the profits of meditation on Christ's Passion were also widely advocated. The author[364] of "A deuoute frutefull and goodlye remembraunce of the passion of oure sauioure Christ Iesu", which appeared in Certaine prayers,[365] refers, without enthusiasm, to those who have gathered together "diuerse commodityes" which come from:

> the diligent beholdynge of thys passyon/wherof is the sayenge of Albert in euerye mans mouth: that it is better to remembre the passyon of Christ once in oure lyfe all though it be but slenderlye/then to fast euerye daye a hole yere together: or to reade ouer the hole Spalter of Dauid....[366]

Many authors, including Fewterer (who acknowledges his indebtedness to Reynardus de Laudenburg), Garade, Jordanus and the author of the Dialogue or communicacion betwene our sauiour Ihesu Chryste and a synner,[367] include lists showing the profits which accrue from remembrance of Christ's Passion.

Fewterer gives one of the most comprehensive lists in the fifth particle of his introduction. The negative advantages of such meditation include preservation from the pains of hell[368] and from sudden evil, which is not further defined but which probably included sudden death, protection against temptation[369] and from the power of devils. It weakens the soul's propensity to vice, recalls those in error and purges the soul, and Garade claims "that the synner ofte tymes is conuerted therby/from his euyll".[370] The world-denying outlook of so much late medieval devotion is reflected in the way that recollection of the Passion teaches a man to set the world at nought[371] and makes him ready and glad to die. Garade and Jordanus[372] add that it will comfort a soul in death - a view shared by the ars moriendi writers.[373] On a more personal level remembrance of the Passion eases the pains of tribulation,[374] comforts God's warriors, brings peace between God and the sinner[375] and helps him to know God's will. The meditation also establishes the righteous man in faith and good works, gives him hope, brings him grace and directs him in the way of eternal life.[376] The Dialogue particularly emphasizes the love, compassion and devotion

which recollection of Christ's sufferings and awareness of all He has done for man should arouse.[377] The fact that Christ here addresses the sinner directly helps to make the list of profits seem less materialistic and less in danger of sounding like a system of automatic rewards - a danger which besets the promised profits of patient endurance of tribulation or of faithful attendance at mass as well.

The opening of A gloryous medytacyon,[378] for instance, suggests the kind of mechanical, numerically calculated reward which the promise of such profits could induce if applied uncritically. If a man says the requisite number of paters and aves daily, he will receive forty days' pardon every time he repeats them; if he reads them to another he is promised everlasting bliss;[379] "I shall kepe hym from all perylles and I shall defende hym from wyked spyrytes". The more materialistic rewards promised for meditation on the Passion are similar to those previously mentioned which were promised for devout attendance at mass. A late fifteenth - early sixteenth century prayer roll[380] provides two lists of profits of a kind which must have encouraged people to place a distinctly superstitious reliance upon it. Beneath a picture of the wound of Christ's side[381] are drawn three nails with a crown of thorns, the two outer nails each transfix a wounded hand, the central nail pierces a heart, and below are two wounded feet. The rubric reads:

> Pope Innocent hath graunted to euery man and woman yt berith vpon them ye length of these nailes seyng daily .v.pater nosters.v.Aue marias.and.i.credo shall haue .vij.giftes.

These are: "he shal not dye no suden deth", "he shal not be slayne wt

no sward ne knyffe", "he shal not be poysoned", "his enemys shal not oncom hym", "he shall haue sufficient goodes to his lyues ende", "he shal not dye wt oute all the sacramentes of holy church", and finally "he shall be defendid fro al euall spiritus pestelens ffeuers and all other infirmytes on londe and on water". The other list is even more sweeping in its promises and does not even require the repetition of any prayers;[382] it seems to rely entirely on physical contact with the piece of paper. As might be expected the author of the "godlye remembraunce of the passion" in Certeine prayers denounces those who "caryed aboute them ymages/paynted papers/carued tables/crosses and soch other trifles", trusting to be saved thereby from fire, water and other perils. "For all theire politike meanes and studyouse ymaginacyons" those whose faith was unreformed cannot obtain the full profit of Christ's Passion as long as they seek it for "their owne priuate welth". Apart from the strong element of superstition which attached to such charm-like profits, any devout act which promised personal reward or increase of merits was condemned by the Reformers as being tainted by the pernicious doctrine of "works and merits".[383]

The Passion narrative, like the complete life of Christ, tended to crystallize into a series of separate scenes.[384] It was usually prefaced by the triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the Last Supper and other events of Maundy Thursday. Although the amount and selection of detail varied from work to work the following list represents a fairly standard selection: the agony in the garden, the arrest, a trial scene, the mocking, the crowning with thorns, an "Ecce homo" scene, and Christ's wrongful condemnation; the second part begins with the bearing of the

cross, the crucifying and Christ on the cross; there follow the deposition, a pietà scene and the entombment. Forming a kind of coda to this main sequence are the events of the resurrection and resurrection appearances, the Ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit. Several scenes were less than secure in the chronological sequences, especially the trial sequence (which varies in the Synoptic accounts) and the associated mocking, buffeting and crowning with thorns, which in some versions seem to happen all on the same occasion. Other scenes, especially those which lent themselves particularly to iconographical representation, such as the "Ecce homo" figure, Christ in distress[385] and the pietà, were operative outside the chronological scheme, and this was especially true of the imago pietatis, which had no fixed place in the narrative but was purely an iconographical symbol. If some events lent themselves particularly to artistic representation others were better conveyed by verbal description, such as the process of the crucifying of Christ and the cumulative effect of the pain and disfigurement of His wounds. The trial sequence is probably most effective in the drama, where Christ can be seen confronting Annas, Caiaphas, Herod and Pilate in turn; and although the prose treatises include various lamentations of the Blessed Virgin at the foot of the cross, or more commonly in a pietà setting, the lyric versions are usually more poignant and moving.[386] One must turn again to the lyrics to find the more subtle shades of emotion which may accompany the Passion scenes.[387] Finally it is worth noting that the prose and the verse narratives[388] are of mixed content. In addition to narrative description, most contain some legendary material and provide various explanations about the events, which sometimes refer to the ceremonies of

the Church but are more often of a didactic or hortatory nature. The prose narratives may contain snatches of verse and they frequently include meditative material and prayers.

Cyclical representations of the Passion survive from as early as the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries,[389] but they seem to have reached the high point of their development around 1500.[390] It is not difficult to think of famous paintings of most of the Passion scenes mentioned above,[391] but no English work figures among them. The large mural cycles such as those by Giotto or Piero della Francesca have no counterpart in extant English art, nor have the numerous carved[392] and painted[393] altar-pieces of Austria and North Germany any significant parallels in England. Yet while England may not have produced artists of the same calibre as those in Northern Europe, and many productions doubtless suffered in successive periods of reforming zeal,[394] there are traces of mural cycles still to be found, tapestries seem to have been widely used, and many scenes were carved on roof bosses or friezes[395] and above all on the alabasters for which England was famous.[396] There was also stained glass, such as that at Fairford, Malvern and King's College, Cambridge[397] which frequently included Passion scenes. Series of Passion illustrations were often found in manuscript and printed Horae,[398] and although English woodcuts did not reach the standard of Jacob Cornelius or of Dürer,[399] Caxton, Pynson and de Worde did produce series of woodcuts,[400] and continental cuts were known[401] and copied in England.[402] There was then some contact between England and the continent, especially as far as woodcuts were concerned, and the descriptions given in English Passion narratives, which are themselves often translations of French or Latin originals, may occasionally be

indebted to Flemish or French works of art.

It would require a full-length study to cover all the variations of description, to discuss their sources and inter-relationships, and to do justice to the descriptive content even of the comparatively small number of Passion narratives which were printed in England between 1530 and 1540. It is clear that authors did not strive after originality in their choice of scene nor in its expression, yet within this broad similarity variations were sufficient to prevent verbatim repetition.[403] Writers did not seek to impress their audience by their literary skills but to stimulate their devotion. To this end the descriptions tend to emphasize the physical and spiritual sufferings of Jesus,[404] and they depend heavily on visual and other physical details and information about how things were done. The result was usually a description of intense, sometimes even harrowing physical detail, which focused exclusively on Christ's anguish perhaps supplemented by the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin or Mary Magdalene. Not infrequently such emotionally charged passages were allowed to stand alone, being neither applied for instruction or edification nor specifically related to any meditation or other devotion.

Descriptive emphasis tends to fall on those points of the narrative which enabled writers to describe and artists to depict the physical pains inflicted on Jesus, such as the scourging and the crowning with thorns. Chertsey's translation, A goostly treatyse of the passyon of Christ, like Fewterer's Myrrour or Glasse of Christes Passion, has a regular structure,[405] but it is much shorter and it is generally more concerned to instruct the reader than to present him with a vivid picture of the scene. In common with many authors[406]

Chertsey paraphrases Isaiah I:6, describing how Jesus was beaten "so horrybly that from his heed to his fete there was on him no place hole" and the servants then "folded a crowne of thornes sharpe and prickynge whiche they put on his heed". Fewterer's version of the scourging shows how descriptive detail could be elaborated:

> (Jesus) was bounde fast to a pyllar, whiche was so great and thycke that his armes & his handes myght not compas it. And therfore the saugiours corrupt by mony drewe out his armes with harde cordes: that all the vaynes of his armes appered out to the extremitie. And then those saugiours called in all theyr compaigney and our sauiour Iesus so bounde and naked/they bette so cruelly with roddes/knotted whyppes and thorny rushes of the see: that they dyd teare the flesshe and drewe it away/so that his bones ware sene bare, and also greate gobettes and pecys of the flesshe hange vpon the scourges and whyppes. There stode naked before all the people: the most louely yonge man/eligant and shamfast, beautious aboue all other men, speakynge not one worde/but as meake as a lambe dyd suffer pacyently the harde/sharppe and paynfull beatynges of those most vyle & cruell tormentours. That most innocent and tender flesshe, most pure and most fayre the floure of all mankynde was replete and full of strokes/ blomes/woundes and brosers/he was wounded thorow out all his moste holye bodye, so that fro the toppe of the hed vnto the sole of his foote: there was none hole skynne. 407

He continues, citing St.Bernard, to describe how Jesus was loosed from the pillar, then bound with His back to it and beaten on His front and face - the position in which artists usually depict Him. The reference to the beauty and shamefastness of the naked Jesus[408] seems to be an unacknowledged borrowing from the Speculum Vitae Christi,[409] while other details such as the reference to the pillar, often said to be cold marble,[410] and Jesus' being beaten to the bone,[411] occur in other works and may be counted as part of the common tradition. The description of the crowning with thorns is told briefly by Chertsey, more elaborately in the accounts of Simon, Bonde and Fewterer,[412] who attributes to St. Bernard the often quoted phrase that the thorns[413] pressed down onto

Christ's head "persid greuiously into the brayne panne and made it all full of blood",[414] and an unusually detailed version is given in "The Revelation of the Hundred Pater nosters".[414A] Chertsey puts into a list[415] eleven of the pains which, according to late medieval tradition, Christ was believed to have suffered during His Passion. In most of the accounts the Jews are seen as "the fyers cruell tyrauntes & tormentours of our mercyfull lorde", who out of pure malice seek every means "to put Christ to the more payne".[416] Longland sums up: XIVb

> He gaue his bodye for the to the Iewes to handle, to treate, to beate, to scourge, to turmoyle, to kyll, to flee, to crucifye, to do with it what they wolde: an' so dyde they, euen to theyr own dampnacyon, he gaue so hys bodye into theyr handes to redeme and bye the. 417

The event of the crucifixion is the culmination of this type of physical description. It takes two forms: a methodological approach giving a detailed account of what happens, or a static description of the crucified Jesus - the verbal counterpart of numerous devotional images of the crucifix. The Speculum Vitae Christi and Bonde's Pilgrymage of perfeccyon[417A] describes the two methods of crucifixion. According to the Speculum in the first the cross is already set up and Christ ascends a short ladder, turns His back on the cross and gives His hands to "tho wicked mynistres"[418] who had climbed up a longer ladder set up behind the cross and who were ready with nails and hammers. With the hands nailed the ladder is removed and the whole weight of Jesus' body, with the added pressure of "another harlot" drawing down His feet, is sustained by His hands.[419] The other method, whereby Christ is nailed to the cross as it lies on the ground, His limbs being strained to reach the holes previously bored for the nails, is the one more usually described and illustrated in English works:[420] XVa

> Than the turmentours moost buystously extended & spred thy blessed body on the crosse/& began moost vtterly to shewe all theyr cruelnesse...moost violently they ioyned thy gracyous hande to the crosse/& smote in a great nayle/ so buystous & harde/that thy moost precyous blode myght not yssue out/the nayle so fylled the wounde/&than after they toke ropes/and with all violence drewe the other arme to the palme of the crosse/& also smote in it another nayle: And lykewise with ropes they drewe thy fete so harde & strayte/and so naylynge them/that all thy vaynes & senewes/ & ioyntes & bones of thy moost blessed body were so dissolued & losed/that they myght haue ben nombred & discerned.421

The quotation, "dinumeraverunt omnia ossa mea",[422] is frequently included in the description, which tends to concentrate on the stretching of Christ on the cross, the wounds of the great, blunt, iron nails and the jolt of the cross as it falls in to the mortice.[423]

One of the most detailed static descriptions of the crucified Jesus is to be found in the eighth revelation of Dame Julian's Revelations of Divine Love.[424] The same kind of realism is to be found briefly in Simon's Fruyte of redempcyon.[425] His source is St.Bridget's Revelationes I:x, which is also used in Bonde's more lengthy catalogue of the injuries done to the body, limbs, head and face of Jesus, where their aspect in life is compared to their present state: thus His face, which was so joyful to behold in life, is "now transfigured & deformed wt stremes of blode", His cheeks are "all bloo & wanne/wt buffettes & beatynges/&all discoloured with spyttynges", and His hair "now mixt with blode & dryed by the wynde & sonne/&made styffe as a corde".[426] Lengthy descriptions of the Lord's physical state as He hung on the cross are not common. More often some occasional detail sounds an effective note of realism as it is pointed out to the reader how "his lymmes quake & tremble for payne"[427] or "how horryble was it to here the sounde of the hamerse stykynge ye grosse nayles through skynne bone and senows".[428] These details usually point a more general exhortation to the reader that he should remember and

see in his mind's eye what Christ suffered and "haue therof grete compassyon"[429].

Authors did not rely exclusively on physical description in their endeavour to convey something of what Jesus suffered. One author suggests that "yf thou canst not remembre the anguysshe of this payne/thou mayst pynche thy finger or some other parte of the body/yt by the felynge of thyn owne lytell payne thou mayst the better remembre the grete payne/that he suffred for the whiche yu were cause of".[430] At the other extreme from this trivial-sounding comparison is the attempt made in The myrrour of the chyrche to convey the anguish, pain and grievous sorrow of Christ. If one man were to bear in his body all the pain, sickness and sorrow of the world, it would be little or nothing compared to Christ's sufferings;[431] to live for 100,000 years and to die daily 1,000 times the death He died would be nothing in comparison to His pain. While on the cross Christ endured pain worse than that of hell itself: "he sayth hymselfe by Ieremye ye propheth. O vos omnes qui transitis per viam attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus surely thene is none/or neuer was yet sorowe lyke yours".[432]

In addition to such comparisons there were several lists which included the spiritual and mental sorrows of Jesus in addition to His physical pains. One of the more compact summaries is given by the Monk of Farne,[433] who reminds the reader how Jesus was afflicted in all His five senses: "Thou dist see thyself crucified and hanging between thieves, thy friends deserting thee, thine enemies gathering round, thy mother weeping, and the corpses of condemned criminals strewn round about; whatever met thy gaze was a source of pain and sorrow, of horror

and dismay". The five-point list of the Legenda Aurea[434] includes the shame of death on Calvary, the unjustness of His accusation, the desertion of His friends, the tenderness of His body and the affliction of His five wits. Longland's sermon for Good Friday, 1536, also includes discussion of five things which augmented the pains of Jesus' Passion[435]. He dwells particularly upon the Person who suffered and those for whom He suffered. The motif of Jesus' nakedness found in a number of works helps to suggest something of His chasteness, His innocency and His physical vulnerability,[436] but Longland also reminds the audience that Jesus was creator and sustainer of the world. Similarly a piece attributed to St. Bernard contrasts the estate enjoyed by Christ before His incarnation with His sufferings on the cross: "The heed that made aungels to tremble is perced", "The mouth that teche & ensygneth aungels/is made drynke vynayger & gall", and "The handes yt fourmed ye heuens ben stratched vnto ye crosse and nayled wt nayles".[437] Behind the reproach of Christ—"O my people, what haue I doon to the. haue not I doon ye good..."—there lies a threat, the day of Judgement, when the instruments of the Passion and the wounded Christ will accuse the unrepentant sinner.[438] Prose authors do not seem to explore the more subtle feelings of Christ, His regret and sorrow at man's unkindness, which find fuller and more eloquent expression in verse laments,[439] such as Ye new Notborune mayd vpon ye passion of cryste.[440] The closest prose equivalent is to be found in a dialogue between Christ and a sinner.[441] In answer to the Sinner's questions about His sorrows, Christ describes the continual spiritual martyrdom He endured throughout His life, the sorrow of His fore-known Passion and the sufferings which His lovers would face, and the torment of His spirit, which came from

the superfluity of His love. The greater intimacy and personal involvement made possible in the dialogue form - Ye new Notborune mayd is also a dialogue, between Jesus and His mother - helps to suggest something of Christ's love for man and His sorrow: "I do the daily good, and ye dayly doste crucifye me, by this abominable lyuinge", "Thy synfull lyfe greues me more then dyd all the tormentes that were putt vnto me".[441A] Although late medieval devotion concentrated its attention on the physical, mental and spiritual sufferings of the Son of Man, the divinity of Christ, His prescience, the depth of His love and His work as Creator, Redeemer and Judge, was not entirely forgotten.

According to the dialogue, Christ mentions one other source of sorrow at His Passion, "the most sharpest darte and most bitter anguysshe of the blessed virgyn my mother was an excessive cause of all my dolorous paynes".[442] The Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, plays a vital role in the early part of Christ's life[443] and she is involved too in the events of His Passion. Several authors prefaced their life of Christ with some account of Mary's life,[444] and Lydgate's Lyfe of our Lady[445] was reprinted as late as 1531. Although traditionally the birth of Jesus was said to be painless, Mary was widely held to have foreseen her Son's sufferings from His birth.[446] A little later she has compassion upon His pain at His circumcision[447] and she experiences anguish over His loss in Jerusalem,[448] but it is during the Passion the she suffers most, when Simeon's prophecy,[449] "a sword shall pierce through thine own soul", is fulfilled. Fewterer lists three reasons why "it pleased our sauyour Christ to haue his mother present at his passyon/ and there to suffer with hym in soule as he suffred in bodye":[450] that she might be involved with Him in reversing the condemnation of Adam and Eve;[451] that as Christ became

our Father through His Passion so because of her suffering "our blessed ladye myght be called our mother",[452] and finally "that after Christ: we al shulde honoure the gloriouse virgyn as our modre". Longland, like Fewterer, openly acknowledges the subordination of the Blessed Virgin to her Son[453] in her role as mediatrix:

> Afore the sone, thou haste his modre Marye. And to procure grace and mercy, to moue god to pytie, she dothe shewe to hir sone Christe, hir breste & pappes: the sone dothe shewe to his fadre, his syde and woundes: there can be no repulse, no denyall of our peticions, where are shewed and alledged so many tokens of loue and chaytie.[454]

The isolated, single-subject lyrics addressed to the Blessed Virgin, often based on secular models, cannot be expected to show the firm hierarchial frame of reference which is usually to be found, stated or implied, in the prose treatises.[455]

Some of the Passion narratives, the Speculum, Chertsey's Goostly treatyse, Simon and Fewterer, introduce the subject of the Blessed Virgin's compassion into the narrative and perhaps devote a separate section to her sufferings. Other accounts tell the sufferings of Jesus through the eyes of His mother. In neither case does the Mother's grief eclipse that of the Son's; rather it reflects and responds to His.

The point in the Passion narrative at which Mary is usually first introduced is where Jesus bears His cross towards Calvary. Simon and Chertsey refer briefly to His Mother's grief at this point. The Speculum Vitae Christi records Mary's prayer as she learns of her Son's arrest,[456] and then how she, St. John and the other women take a short cut so as to meet Jesus as He bears the cross and His mother is overcome by the sight.[457] Fewterer heightens the encounter: "Iesus seynge and consederynge her great heuynes: fell downe for sorowe and werynes vnder the crosse. And that seynge his moste louynge mother: for sorowe

she fell to the erth as deade".[458]

Attention focuses on the Blessed Virgin as she stands at the foot of the cross. The hymn, "Stabat mater dolorosa",[459] is a justly famous expression of the Virgin's grief and of the author's desire to share her pains and to mourn with her. The chapter on Our Lady in the Stimulus Amoris begins "Fast by the cross of Jesus, stood Mary Virgin his mother".[460] It falls into two parts, the first describing how she was crucified with her son "in heartily compassion", and in the second the meditator pleads "I ask not but wounds" that he might share in the Passion of his Lord and Lady. Fewterer seems to echo the opening in his chapter "Of the passion that Christ had vpon his mothers sorowe".[461] He goes into considerable (and repetitive) detail, pointing to the closeness of the bond between Mother and Son and the way in which she suffered with Him. He adds a separate section "Of the sorowe and compassyon of our ladye".[462] There he draws attention to the Mother's sense of helplessness, which together with her desolation at the loss of Her Son was frequently dwelt upon.[463] Fewterer holds up Mary as an exemplar to be followed, as she followed the way of Her Son, and he takes the opportunity to deliver a moral lesson on the need "to have compassion of the afflyccyon of our parentes, and to prouyde for them in theyr mecessityes".

Fewterer's treatment is detailed, but the brief indirect dialogue between Mother and Son recorded in the Speculum[464] is a far more moving expression of the love and concern of each for the other. Their concern is expressed in the form of a brief prayer to God, asking that the pains of Son and Mother might be eased, and commending the Beloved to God's care. In Chertsey's Goostly treatyse[465] Mary gives expression to a

much lengthier lament as she stands at the foot of the cross. She reflects on the apparent strangeness of God's judgement which would condemn His Son to the death of the cross:

> Alas my dere sone....what haue ye done that I se you in this confusyon? What caused you to take the nature of man in your humble handemayd to susteyne so cruell dethe? Alas Haue I norisshed you so tenderly to dampnacyon/namely in the floune of your chefe youthe and in your parfyte age whan I sholde moost haue inioyed your holynesse. Who shall nowe comfort me? or of whom shall I nowe haue ayed or socoure/ is this the rewarde that you iewes of curresy (sic) yelde vnto my sone for the grete benefytes yt he hath done to you....How might I than enioye to tary amonge you/ or to beholde yourvysages disteyned with rightuous blode/suffre me not dere sone to lyue after you right it is that I be not disceuered fro you by dethe/syth we haue lyued here togyder/delyuer me from these euyll and cruell iewes whiche thus hath put you to dethe. 466

She goes on to express the wish that she too might die and join her son in Paradise. Although it is unusually placed - the planctus Mariae usually follows the deposition or accompanies the burial - the contents are characteristic of the genre.[466A]

The deposition, in which Mary frequently takes a part, and some kind of pietà scene are usually included in the Passion narratives. Simon and Fewterer tell how she held Jesus' body on her lap[467] - the classic pietà position [468] while according to the Speculum and Chertsey she takes Him in her arms. In the Speculum she gazes at her Son's wounds and weeps over Him; Chertsey and Fewterer heighten the scene describing how she kisses the wounds "tyll that her blyssed vysage/and her precyous vestmentes were tatched and spotted with his moost precyous woundes & the noble blode".[469] Fewterer is content to do little more than paraphrase the narrative of the Speculum, characteristically elaborating the expression of the Mother's grief.[470] Simon adds a description of the Lord's dead body which is derived from St.

XV b-c

Bridget's Revelationes,[471] but only in the Speculum and Chertsey does a planctus mariae precede the burial. In Chertsey's Goostly treatyse[472] Mary dwells particularly upon the separation she must endure and on the need for Jesus' body to be buried - "wolde to god it were his pleasure that I were buryed now with hym"-that the prophecy might be fulfilled and His sepulchre made glorious. This sense of expectation contradicts and to some extent invalidates the expressions of grief preceding it. The lament in the Speculum[473] is much more convincing. The Mother dwells particularly on the sorrow of the bodily separation, but her personal grief, though profound, is also restrained and tempered by her acknowledgement of the purpose for which He died, to "agen begge and saue mankind": "but ful hard/peynful/and dere is this bigginge: wher of neuertheles I am glad for the hele and saluacioun of men: but in thy passioun and deth I am ful harde tormented". Her faith is not made to seem easy by any reference to the Resurrection. Simon and Fewterer describe Mary's behaviour, which betokens her grief. In the Speculum her grief is dignified in its restraint and her faith is edifying. She appears not simply as a mother afflicted by the death of her innocent Son, but as the Mother of God who co-operates in the work of redemption.

There were a number of other works, apart from the Passion narratives, which included some consideration of the Virgin's sorrows. Since her sorrows are caused by the sight of the pains endured by Jesus these pieces tend to retell part of the Passion narrative from Mary's view, dwelling particularly on the physical torments of her son. In honor of ye passion of our lorde. And the compassyon of our blyssed lady moder of chryste, printed by Copland in 1522, contains ten sections which nominally cover the pains of the Blessed Virgin from the point at

which she first saw her son bearing His cross, to the deposition and burial. In fact there is very little reference to Mary's sufferings. The work provides one of the most detailed accounts of the pains Jesus underwent and includes some harrowing descriptions of His appearance as well as a number of the kind of emotive details found in St.Bridget's Revelationes.

In view of the liturgical celebration of the Compassion of the Blessed Virgin it is not surprising to find that Our Ladyes Myrroure,[474] prepared for the nuns of Syon, contains in its rationale of the service for Friday an exposition of the Passion of Christ and the various sorrows of His mother. In the section on the Passion the pains of Jesus are described in some detail and they are answered by the sufferings of His Mother.[475] Thus, as His cheeks are reddened by blows and blood, "her chekes waxed pale", blood flows from Him at the scourging "And water of innumerable teres ranne oute of the vyrgyns eyne"; as she hears the sound of the hammer-blows nailing Jesus to the cross she falls to the earth as one dead, "And when the iewes gaue hym drynke galle & vyneger. The anguysshe of harte dryed so the tongue & palate of the vyrgyn. that she myghte not then meue her blyssed lyppes for to speke". Although concerned almost entirely with such external manifestations of pain and grief the lesson concludes with the reminder that Mary alone kept faith and knew that her son would rise again.[476] The liturgical connection is maintained in the "houris of oure Ladyis dollouris", from MS.Arundel 285, a translation from Jordan's Meditationes.[477] The seven verse quatrains describe Jesus' sufferings, which Mary hears of, follows, sees and in some cases feels: "The blud droppit doun on his moder Mary", and after He has been taken down from the cross the body is laid "with mony salt teir, In our Ladyis bosum".[477A] The affirmation

which concludes the hours-"And þe faith of Crist remanit in our Lady all-[Ane]" parallels the conclusion of the third lesson of the Friday service.

Following the meditations on The shedynge of the blood of oure lorde...seuen tymes the reader is invited to direct his attention "towarde his sorowful moder/& beholde well her heuy chere & sorowfull contenaunce/& see how pyteously the teares renne out of her gracyous eyen & dystayne her bewteous vysage". The reader is to imagine her sobbing, wringing her hands and often falling swooning as she looks up at her Son hanging on the cross. Eight sorrows of Mary follow, in which she is addressed by such traditional epithets as Mother of Pity, Queen of Heaven, well of Mercy and Tree of Life, which were to be found in liturgical use. Like the lessons of the Friday service in Our Ladyes Myrroure these sentences place particular emphasis on Mary's care for the infant Jesus. She sees her Son given "bytter aysell and galle", "to whom thou were wonte to gyue swete virgynes mylke of thy blessyd breste", and she sees the limbs she had once swaddled cruelly pierced with nails. The contrast between the Mother's joy in and care for her infant son and her helpless sorrow as she witnesses His present sufferings are ably exploited in these sentences - and in some lyrics and verse laments - but the reference to her sad face, her sighs, sobs, tears and fainting which precedes the contrast is superfluous. The contrast suggests a deeper, more subtle sorrow than these physical signs of grief which have, in any case, already been described in the opening paragraph. The lament which follows again exploits the retrospective view, contrasting the way in which angels sang at His birth and the homage of the three kings with the unfriendly crowd which

clamoured for His crucifixion and used deceit against Him. The greater part of the lament is rather unusual in taking the form of reproaches against those who have slain their "connynge surgyne", "your wyse physycyen yt gaue lyff to the deed",[477B] and she accuses the Instruments of the Passion :

> O ye vnkynde scourges nayles spere and thornes/ how durste ye perse the flesshe of your maker & lorde. O thou stronge & sturdy tree/for vnkyndnes also may I accuse the/why dydest thou not leue ~~and~~ & put awaye thy naturall styfnes & bowe thy braunches to fauour & ease my dere sone all weryed wt sore payne & tormentes.[478]

Similar accusations are made by Mary in some lyrics[479]. In mood they seem not unrelated to the Improperia of the Good Friday liturgy,[480] and these reproaches sound far more dignified than the near-hysterical outpourings of personal grief to be found in many planctus Mariae pieces. Also, the references to the people and instruments which caused Jesus pain recall indirectly the events of His Passion without the need for the usual description of His sufferings, which would have interrupted the unity of this extended reproach. These pieces are as near as the prose treatises seem to come to any formal celebration of the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin which were to be found in verse and semi-liturgical pieces.[481]

Most of the pieces which describe Mary's grief during her Son's Passion and burial record, with varying degrees of detail, the physical manifestations of her sorrow such as her crying - "blude ran of hir eghen bright"[482] - wringing her hands, - "I hadde loste mye voys for criynge & sorowynge"-and her frequent faintings. The emotionalism of the scene is further heightened by such acts as "whanne I knowde fynde none oper confort, with a grete liste I kissede þe hote blode þat droppede downe

into the erþe owt of þe wondes of mye der sone, in so moche þat þe moder face was alle blodye of þe slayne sones blode",[483] or the kissing of Jesus' wounds as He lies in her arms before burial. Many of these actions are repeated in the Digby "Burial of Christ",[484] which includes lengthy and emotionally loaded lamentation by the Blessed Virgin. The lamentacyon of our lady[485] represents Mary as fainting with great frequency and indulging in such extreme grief that her behaviour seems unbecoming. For instance, on hearing of Jesus' arrest:

> whan these tydynges were brought to me it was the begynnynge of the nyght/& the derkenesse came aboute me that I wyst neuer wheder I went/& mannes helpe had I none but as I laye al that nyght on the erth wepynge & cryenge that heuen myght be fylled therwith/& all my hous I wette with my wepynge of myn eyen; 486

and the next day it is only with difficulty that she can go in search of her Son, "for feblenes of my body soo sore I had beten it on the nyght before". After news is brought by Mary Magdalene of Jesus' arrest Mary breaks into laments, bewailing the loss of her child to Gabriel.[487] She hears report of Jesus'"lokynge" as He was led from one judge to another. She sees Jesus exhibited to the people - an "Ecce Homo" scene - and suffers the opprobium of other women as the thief's mother. The piece concentrates on two brief dialogues between Mother and Son, the first as Jesus bears the cross when she begs to die with Him, the second as Christ hangs on the cross. He explains to her why He suffers thus, "to helpe mannes soule & to bye the soules out of payne that were lost for synne", begs her to leave off weeping, and declares "I shall ryse the thyrde day". Unlike the Speculum Mary seems here to have no part in or knowledge of the redemptive work of her Son: "I the wretched moder wende neuer to haue seen this sorowe

of the nor these sorowes haue suffred for the/but I wende for to haue had many ioyes & neuer to haue departed for the". She is certainly not seen as the only one to have kept faith until the Resurrection. It is hard to see in this weak hysterical woman the Mother of God.

The picture of the Blessed Virgin indulging in unrestrained grief and hysterical behaviour seems to have been a late medieval development.[488] There is little apparent edification to be found in such scenes. But in an age of highly wrought emotions, where ready tears were widely attested and expected,[489] these scenes were the unmistakable demonstration of the extent and depth of Mary's sorrow. External behaviour of table,[490] in general conduct[491] at church and in devotion, counted for so much that it was necessary that her grief should be seen to be more extravagant than that of other pious mourners. Since the greatness of her love for Jesus caused her such intense suffering[492] the reader may, by contemplation of her sorrow, learn of her love, receive the "Inwarde wounde of sorowfulle compassione",[493] and so learn to love Jesus for himself:

> Ye that can not wepe, com lern at mee!
> Kepinge this Crucifixe still in your mynd! [494]

The more hysterical manifestations of grief are also characteristic of and perhaps more appropriate to Mary Magdalene. She brings tidings to the Blessed Virgin, mourns with her and attempts to comfort her in a number of pieces,[495] but she also has her own part to play in preparing Jesus' body for burial; she washes His feet with her tears.[496] Rather surprisingly there is no reference to this well-known episode in the highly emotive verse narrative <u>The complaynt of Mary Magdaleyne</u>.[497]

This is set at the empty tomb early on Easter Day and it is essentially a lover's lament; Mary mourns the loss of "my turtell doue", "my most excellent paramour|Fayrer than rose/sweter than lylly flour". While much of the complaint is occupied by emotional lamentation expressing her sorrow, her sense of desolation and her desire to find her Lord again, she also, as in the Digby "Burial of Christ", recalls the events of the crucifixion. She describes Jesus' sufferings and her own reaction to them:-

> Than kneled I downe in paynes outrage
> Clypynge ye crosse within myn armes twayne
> His blode dystylled downe my vysage
> My clothes eke the droppes began to steyne 498—

and the seven sorrows of His Mother. She also details the insatiable xvi a vengeance of the Jews, making them appear more monstrous than usual: "ye Iewes worse than dogges rabyate". Towards the end she makes her will, asking to be buried in the sepulchre beneath the inscription: "Here wt in resteth/a gostly creature|Christes true louer/Mary Magdaleyne",

> And in token of loue perpetuall
> Whan I am buryed in this place present
> Take out my hert/the very rote and all
> And close it within this boxe of oynment
> To my dere loue/make ther of a present. 499

Mary Magdalene was widely regarded as the perfect penitent,[500] and as the forgiven sinner she was a source of hope to the repentant sinner who confesses his sins and seeks to die in the love of Christ; for this reason she was sometimes pictured in <u>ars moriendi</u> scenes.[501] The legend of her life was widely known in the later middle ages[502] and the cult of her tears became very popular towards the end of the sixteenth century among recusant authors.[503]

Prayers and Devotions associated with Christ's Passion

The distinction between narrative description, meditation and prayer is an extremely fine one in devotional literature. The narrative Speculum Vitae Christi, for instance, contains a number of devout contemplations; Rolle's Meditations on the Passion and several of the rosary pieces are essentially narratives divided into prayer sequences by the addition of formal introductions and concluding "Paters"and "Aves"; or the narrative may be divided according to the seven canonical hours. Some narratives add distinct, separable prayers at the end of each chapter. These nearly always make some reference to the episode narrated and carry through a word or idea from the narrative into the personal petition. The prayers at the close of each chapter in Simon's Fruyte of redempcyon are loosely structured and variable in length; many of the personal petitions are concerned with the desire to make a good end and the hope of heaven:

> O swete Iesu hertely I praye the for all the woundes of thy precyous body/& for the ferwent anguysshe whiche thou suffred on the crosse to be there as a man forsaken of god/for that god sholde not forsake vs eternally/and for the bytter wepynges whiche yu wepte on the crosse for vs wt dolefull cryenge for huge bytternes of sorowes and ardent desyre of charite/forsake me not meke Iesu at my laste ende/but receyue me to thy mercy and saue my soule that thou hast bought so dere. 504

Although they are longer, with more elaborate introductions and more detailed descriptions of Jesus' sufferings, The .xv. oes,[504A] perhaps the most widely known Passion prayers in England during the early sixteenth century, are very similar in tone and structure. However, the prayers which conclude each article of the second book of Gararde's Interpretacyon and sygnyfycacyon of the Masse and the articles of

Fewterer's Myrrour or Glasse of Christes Passion are more highly organized, regularly employing a collect-like structure. The prayers of Fewterer's Myrrour were printed separately as Deuoute prayers in englysshe of thactes of our redemption by Robert Redman, probably at about the same time.[505] The narrative content of each prayer details some event of the Passion, and the personal petitions are generally appropriate to the episode commemorated. Whereas emotional description and the stimulation of the reader's feelings and compassion seem to be the main purpose of the XV.Oes and Simon's prayers, and the personal petitions are both limited in subject and rather perfunctory, in Garade and Fewterer the narrative element is not so emotionally loaded and the personal petitions are given more emphasis and range over a greater number of topics. The long central section of sixty-five prayers in Deuoute prayers in englysshe is, in fact, translated from the Meditationes Iordani,[506] which were printed by Pynson in 1513[507] and which seem to have been known among the brethren of Syon.[508]

In addition to these set prayers and distinct contemplations, late medieval devotion to the Passion was intensely felt and deeply personal. The fervent tone and intimate personal address to Jesus characteristic of mystical works such as the Orologium or Stimulus Amoris is found too in shorter works such as The Rosary of our Sauyour Iesu and The.xv.oes., and in parts of the Speculum, Chertsey's Goostly treatyse and Fewterer's Myrrour. Numerous rhetorical devices were employed by these authors to heighten the emotional impact and involve the reader more deeply.[509] Many of the earlier chapters of the Stimulus amoris are written in the first person, while Dame Julian's Revelations provide a first-hand account

of what she witnessed. The introduction to each of Rolle's Meditations on the Passion and the opening of every chapter of Simon's Fruyte of redempcyon begin with a personal act of thanksgiving—"I yeld to þe þankynges" or "I laude and gloryfye the lorde"—which helps to make the ensuing description a personal act of commemoration. The use of dialogue in the Orologium and the Dialogue betwene our sauiour Ihesu Chryste and a synner places the reader in the position of the Disciple or the Sinner, and in the latter piece the sinner addresses Jesus directly as He hangs upon the cross. Similarly nearly every type of petitionary prayer addresses Jesus directly, from the rather prosaic four pages of A deuoute Intercessyon and prayer[510] to the brief and immensely popular "Lorde Iesu Christe sonne of liuing god, set thy holye passion, crosse and deathe, betwene thy iudgement and oure soules".[511] The individual addressed his needs and aspirations to an intensely real Person, the epitome of suffering humanity, seen on the Cross or in the composite Image of Pity.[512]

In addition to the prayers and contemplations related to the Passion, the widespread practice of the devotional present, and intense personal devotion to Jesus, there were a number of more specific devotions connected with various aspects of Christ's Passion. A number attached themselves to the physical places and things mentioned in the narratives. From the fourth century onwards pious Christians had shown a desire to visit and see for themselves the places and objects associated with Christ's life and Passion.[513] By the second half of the fifteenth century there was a regular pilgrim industry and among English pilgrims to leave accounts of their travels were William Wey and Sir Richard Guylforde.[514] Those who preferred a more romantic survey doubtless

turned to the legends of Mandevilles Travels.[515]

In the treatises references to the places visited by these pilgrims, such as the judgement hall, Pilate's house or Calvary, are given no significance beyond their setting, except for Calvary which is seen to afflict Jesus's senses. There are occasional references to "al þe steppis and pacis þat þou yede"[516] or "Thy fete steppes as thou for the yode were seen thrugh she dynge of thy blode".[517] In his article on "Howe Christ was led vnto Golgotha" Fewterer concentrates on an allegorical explanation as to why Jesus died outside the city and the shameful treatment He suffered on His way to death. The concluding prayer makes brief general mention of the way:

> O Iesu which for me wolde be led vnto Golgotha to be there crucifyed: lede me in the pathe of thy commaundementes, that I may folowe the steppes of thy passion with the holye women and wepe vpon myselfe the miserie of my frayle condicyon.[518]

At the end of the chapter he notes that Jesus bore His cross for 666 paces and that it was 50 paces from the bottom to the summit of mount Calvary.[519] Doesburgh printed a brief devotion on "the nombre of the sore steppes of oure lorde the whiche hy wente in his passion", and counters any challenge of authenticity by declaring that "it hath hondred tymes bee more and gretter than men there of can writte".[520] This curiosity about the number of paces Christ covered, like the interest in the number of His wounds,[520A] was, on the one hand, an aspect of the precise realism which writers strove after in their descriptions of the Passion and, on the other, part of the more general fascination with numbers, especially their symbolic significance.[521] The most precise reference to what was later to become the Stations of the Cross seems to be in

Chertsey's Goostly treatyse, where he tells how the Blessed Virgin, St. John and the other Marys returned to Jerusalem after the Burial: "in the waye they shewed the places/in the whiche our lord Iesu Christ hadde ben euyll entreated/and often tymes they retourned agayne towarde the crosse sayeng/here he was stryken/here he might no lenger bere the crosse/here he commaunded vs to wepe no more...".[522] The Speculum Vitae Christi also seems to suggest that the journey back to Jerusalem was made in the consciousness of what had happened on the way to Calvary, but it chooses to dwell particularly upon the Blessed Virgin's veneration of the Cross;[523] "sche was the firste that honoured the crosse". The cross was the most obvious of all the instruments of the Passion; it was widely venerated,[524] and legends concerning its origin, composition and history were numerous.[525]

Other symbols of the Passion were frequently illustrated, either in an imago pietatis setting[526] or as part of a church's decoration, carved on the roof bosses, especially over the chancel, or on bench ends.[527] The instruments of the Passion lent themselves particularly to iconographical representation of a schematized kind, and were often illustrated on shields held by angels or as a heraldic composition in the arma Christi shields.[528] However, they were also referred to in Passion lyrics, narratives and devotions. In art and literature reference was made more often to the instruments which came into closest contact with the Lord - the crown of thorns, the cross, the nails and the vernicle; but other objects, especially those of which relics were claimed to remain such as the seamless robe, the column ofthe scourging, the scourges, sponge and lance are frequently included.[529] Nearly all the instruments portrayed, with the exception of the vernicle, are either mentioned in the Gospel accounts

or, like the column of scourging, the nails, hammer, ladder and pincers, may be inferred from them. The "instruments" were not confined simply to objects but included pictorial references to a number of events: the kiss of Judas; the smiting hands and spitting faces of the Jews, who also plucked out His hair.[530] It is surprising that in neither art nor literature was any obvious attempt made to detail the instruments in chronological order or to use them as a mnemonic summary of the Passion narrative. The instruments were undoubtedly thought of as relating to more general Passion devotions, but there seems to have been no desire to relate devotional objects or stimuli to the chronological narrative. Despite the practice of the devotional present the Passion narrative was a historical account; the instruments of the Passion, like the imago pietatis or the pietà, were present devotional images lifted out of a strictly historical context.

In narratives, lyrics and devotions the descriptions of some of the instruments tended to become stereotyped. Thus the pillar of scourging was thick and of cold marble; the thorns of the crown were "not of ye commune thornes/but of ye moost harde & tough sharpe thornes/called the lunkes of ye see"[531]; while the nails were said to be of iron, large and in some versions blunt.[532] There were a few lists of the instruments to be found in devotional literature,[533] but perhaps their most effective setting is when Christ is shown them before His crucifixion on Calvary:

> Where anone as thou were comme/thou myght se (for the encreasement of thy payne) all the instrumentes & armes of thy blessed passyon. There wanted nothynge/but all was prest & redy/that myght make or helpe for thy confusyon: The buystous nayles/the hammer/the pynsons/the speare/the ropes/the ladder/ye sponge/& the gall/with all other instrumentes/whiche they vsed in theyr moost cruell tyranny. 534

Apart from their Passion setting, the instruments also occur with some frequency in connection with the Last Judgement, where they reproach and accuse the sinner.[535] The most elaborate showing of the tokens of the Passion is in Doesburgh's Lytel treatyse the whiche speketh of the .xv. tokens, where fifteen instruments, each illustrated by a woodcut, are shown in turn to those guilty of various sins, with an appropriate moral comment, usually attributed to a church father. Thus the column of scourging is shown to the unmerciful, the crown of thorns to the proud, the lance to the angry, the nails of His hands to the covetous and the nails of His feet to those who preferred dancing to the remembrance of the Passion: "And therfore the deuyl shal daunce wyth them in hell."

> And at the syxte tyme shal hi shewe yt glorious Crosse to them yt haue not be pacient in this worlde.& haue wolde not suffre nothinge fore the loue of our lorde. Gregorius sayde to them ¶ Si illic...Desire we ye swetenes of yt paradis. Than is it of nede that wea haue bitternes in this worlde. 536

Here the instruments receive a basically moral interpretation; in Garde's Interpretacyon and sygnyfycacyon of the Masse and Bonde's Meditatyons for goostly exercyse some of the priest's vestments are said to betoken various instruments: the cloth of the blindfolding, the white garment, the purple robe and the ropes with which He was led and bound.

The instruments are illustrated, described and made the basis of brief personal prayers in a series of devotional verses found in several manuscripts[537] and printed with a number of other pieces by Richard Fakes in A gloryous medytacyon Of Ihesus Crystes passyon.[538] The list is for the most part conventional except for the inclusion of the

pelican,[539] and more chronological than most, although the spitting Jews seem oddly misplaced after the ladder and the pincers, instruments of the Deposition. Although they are in verse the prayers are of the same general type as Garade and Fewterer, recalling the event connected with each instrument and adding a petition for some virtue suggested by the episode:

> The crowne of thorne on thy heed fast
> Thy heere to torne/thy skynne all brast
> Lorde kepe me from payne of hell pytte
> Neuer to deserue it by mysspent wytte.
> To the pyller lorde also
> with a rope men bounde the so
> Herde drawne and strayned fast
> That synewes from the bones brast
> Lord lose me of bandes in dystresse
> Though I am vnkynde ayenst kyndnesse.540

The use of illustrations and verse would presumably appeal to the same kind of audience as the illustrated rosary books, such as that among the Copland tracts at Blair's College. As with the rosary books, looking at the illustrations was an integral part of this devotional exercise: "Of grete synnes that I haue do| Lorde of heuen forgyue them me.| Thrugh vertu of yr fygure that I here se".[541]

In Doesburgh's treatise and A gloryous medytacyon the instruments seem to be illustrated and described as a stimulus to devotion and virtue, and not as objects worthy of veneration in their own right. Yet, even though England possessed comparatively few relics of the Passion, there is no doubt that there was a tendency to venerate them. At the conclusion of the fifth chapter of The Rosary of our sauyour Iesu, for instance, the author prays:

> that by the remembraunce of thy innumerable paynes I
> may lerne ye vertue of scylence/pacyence/& obedyence.
> All workes of penaunce/bothe goostly and bodyly/gladly
> to suffre for thy holy name/and that I may worshyp that

> blessed crowne of thorne & scourge/that pyller & ropes that were consecrate in thy blessed blode....542

To those who lacked theological training this must have sounded like an open invitation to idolatry. Fewterer warned against the tendency to focus devotion upon the external objects associated with Christ's life and Passion:

> For yf the nayles that persed his handes and feet were sanctified and called holy by tochyng of his blessed membres/how moche more then shulde our reasonable thoughtes whiche cleue fast to Christe crucifyed by continual or ofte remembraunce of his passion be called holy. 543

Protestant authors made a similar plea that devotion should go beyond the external objects to follow the living example of Christ:

> ...we wolde be wonderfullye well contente, to handle the table at whiche Chryste dydde sytte, the garmentes or vestures he vsed, or other lyke reliques, beyng as consecrate with his holye touchynges: muche better me thinke we ought to be apaied to handle afflictions, as reliques whiche besydes that they were oft halowed by his most holy touchyng, be also commaunded to be fingered of vs, specially seigne yt more rewardes, & merites come by the handeling of them, than by ye afore named. 544

As in the case of images, relics were believed by many to have independent powers, and popular belief concerning them must often have tended towards superstition.[545] External forms seem to have assumed an unduly important role in late medieval popular religion, with its stress on the observance of due forms, ceremonies and behaviour, and the tendency to venerate relics and images alike to excess suggests an obvious limitation of such externalism.[546]

The veneration of relics and images nearly always involved pilgrimage. Very few travelled as far as Sinai or Jerusalem to see the holy places for themselves; a much larger number probably sought to make the journey to one of the great English shrines at Canterbury or Walsingham or to see

the roods at Boxley[547] or Bromholm[548] or the Holy Blood of Hayles.[549] The pilgrimage motif was widely used in medieval literature - for example Deguilleville's Pilgrimage of the Life of Man and Bonde's The pilgrymage of perfeccyon - where it conveyed something of the quality of man's life, its shortness, temptations and tribulations, against an eternal perspective.[550] This view the Reformers accepted.[551] The Lollards had, however, attacked pilgrimages as idolatrous and superstitious;[552] and their criticisms were taken up, in very different styles, by the satires of Erasmus[553] and in the more outspoken condemnations of Protestant authors.[554] Apart from the way in which the credulous and superstitious were deceived into parting with their money[555] there were two main criticisms. The first concerned the nature and status of the relics and images. Pecock had declared that "God is lyk presentli euerywhere, and therfore he is lyk ready for to geue hise gracis and giftis euerywhere, whereuer a man sechith after hem; and therfore no place in erthe is holier than an other place is".[556] This view challenged the whole meaning of pilgrimages on theological grounds, but it undoubtedly overlooked the possible devotional benefits of a religious journey, especially if the pilgrim was accompanied by other devout souls, and the special atmosphere and different ceremonies of worship at the shrine, which might stimulate the faith of some. Protestant authors, given suitable safeguards, were prepared to "alowe pylgrymages and oblacyons very expedyent in the syght of god/& profytable to the soule/so that it be done accordynge to the lawe and wylle or pleasur of god".[557] The other main criticism reflects the lollard-protestant preference for practical religion; time and money could be

more profitably spent by reading the Bible, hearing godly preachers and especially by relieving the poor.[558] Thomas Cromwell's support for moderate reform and the destruction of numerous images in the last few years of the decade would further have checked the social pilgrimage.[559] Again, those of reformed views were unlikely to make provision in their wills for pilgrimages, which had traditionally been considered meritorious.[560] Gnapheus, who was extremely hostile to the traditional trappings of religion, boasts: "there is not so much resorte to the bloude of Hayles, oure lady of Walsyngam, to this or that sainte as ther hat bene: By reason the myrakles haue not now so much fayth geuen vnto them".[561] As much as reformed views one is tempted to see increasing education as a means of lessening the credulity and superstition upon which much popular pilgrimage-going was based.[562]

Devotions associated with the Blood and Wounds of Christ.

Reverence for the Holy Blood of Christ had pre-Christian antecedents in the almost universal tendency to identify blood with life.[563] In Christian theology the blood of Christ is most obviously connected with the sacrament of the altar, suggested iconographically by the chalice in which the blood from His wounds is caught, on the Cross or from the mystic wine press.[564] The verbal equivalent of this image is to be found in a verse by Robert Copland following The doctrynall of mekenesse:

O heuenly folke and good
which lyst for to take payne
To taste of this swete flode
which on ye rode dyd straine
In your hertes let remaine
Thy swete tast & sauoure
Of that heuenly lycoure.

Out of that doulcet well
To sowles con ortatyfe
Moost reuthfully dyd swell
The very streme of lyfe
To vs restoratyfe
Whice payd ye hole raunsom
For thy heuenly kyngdome

Let in your hertys degout
yt spryng of lyfe most swete
that from god hert did spoute
And from his handes & fete
And thus wt grace replete
Ye may be full sure
From all myseuenture. 565

Apart from the pilgrim's veneration of the Holy Blood, which was ridiculed or condemned by several humanists and reformed authors[566] and which, even to the orthodox, raised problems concerning the physical survival of Christ's blood after the Resurrection,[567] the only devout treatise to provide any meditations on the subject was A contemplacyon or medytacyon of the shedynge of the blood of our lorde Ihesu Cryste at

seuen tymes.[568] The seven occasions upon which the contemplation focuses are the circumcision,[569] Christ's bloody sweat, the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the renewed bleeding of His wounds when His clothes were pulled off, the nailing of His hands and feet to the cross, and finally the piercing of His side. The seven articles[570] are mainly descriptive, and the reader is repeatedly invited to "thynke on thou sawest" Jesus, to behold Him and to remember all that He endured. The descriptive details are precise and vivid. Jesus is to be pictured, for instance, in the Garden: "thynke as thou sawest hym knelynge on the grounde holdynge vp his holy handes/lyftynge vp his face to heuen with the moost pyteous chere & rufull contenaunce that yu canst ymagyne". As the thorns are pressed down on His head until they pierce the brain "he shrynketh his necke in to his sholders"; and again His physical reaction is noted when His clothes are pulled off Him re-opening the wounds, "he shrynketh trembleth & quaketh/& stoupeth lowe downe in all his body". The reader is reminded of the physical contrast between the past beauty of His appearance and His present disfigurement,[571] and in addition to seeing Jesus' sufferings he hears His sighs and groans as He is stretched on the cross: "it may seme to the that yu herest his Ioyntes to cracke & the senews to braste in sondre". On occasion Jesus faces the reader more directly:

> amonge all thyse paynes & sorowes he lyfteth vp his eyen & loketh vpon the in token of loue. As who sayth I loue the so moche yt I wylfully suffre this payne for the/& am redy to suffre more yf it be put to me. 572

A little later[573] He addresses a substantial reproach, nominally to the Jews, but in fact it is applicable to any sinful Christian reader.

The conditions of the meditation are the usual ones, the need "to withdrawe our mynde & wyttes fro all outwarde thynges & besynes as moche as we may" and to concentrate on the subject of devotion. At the beginning two reasons are given why the reader should remember Christ's sufferings, "that our loue may be the more feruent to hym" and we "may for his loue pacyently suffre trybulacyons & dyseases in this worlde/leste we for our vnkyndenes be cast from his face in to euerlastynge payne"; but the main object of the meditations is for the reader to have compassion - to suffer with and respond to his Saviour - and to remember all that Jesus has done for him. The two opening articles suggest that the way to give expression to this compassion is to weep with Jesus "yf yu can". Beyond the vivid "beholding" of Jesus' suffering and the remembrance of all He has done for the individual sinner, who was the cause of all His pain, the devotion does not seek to go. It is, as the first three articles[574] suggest, an introduction or preparation to more formal prayers - religious might use an article before each of the canonical hours, for instance; it creates an atmosphere, focuses the attention upon the suffering Christ, reminds the reader of the love he owes to one who loved him enough to suffer and die for him, and serves generally to stimulate devotion.

The wounds of Christ, especially when portrayed in a semi-heraldic manner on a shield, were a very popular decorative motif in England during the late fifteenth - early sixteenth century.[575] They were also mentioned with some frequency in devotional and liturgical[576] works and in numerous prayers.[577] Although devotion to the wounds received considerable impetus after the stigmatization of St. Francis in 1224[578], it can be traced back to the Gospels, notably the Johannine account of

the Risen Lord's appearance to His disciples and St.Thomas.[579] By the late fifteenth century the physical aspect of the wounds was often described in narratives of Christ's life and Passion, and in the numerous devout treatises, including rosary books,[580] which made some reference to the Passion. Such descriptions of the physical wounding of Christ, in addition to being an event in the narrative, seem also to have been intended to awaken the reader's compassion, to make him feel with Christ, and perhaps further to make him recognize himself as the cause of Jesus' sufferings and to remember all that He underwent to redeem mankind; certainly they were intended to stimulate in him love, devotion and a sense of thankfulness. Thus in The tree &.xii. frutes the new religious is encouraged during divine service to imagine:

> in thy herte as though yu se lyeng afore the Christ Iesu streyned vpon the crosse. And he with the crosse togyder lyft vp on hygh with woundes bledyng. And in that lyfting, than lyft vp thyn eyes suynge after, and renne from wounde to wounde, and so sigh and sob pryuely. Now for the nayles, now for the thorns, now for the spere, now for the crowne, now for the fete, now for the handes/ and so thanke hym for his passyon whiche he suffred for the. [581]

To the practice of the devotional present is added a token thanksgiving, and the sighs and sobs which should betoken compassion.

One of the most extended celebrations of the Passion and wounds of Christ is to be found in the Stimulus Amoris.[582] The opening chapter, and to a lesser extent the following one, is an outpouring of love and devotion to the crucified Christ which displays the controlled fervour of the best English mystical writings. The wounds of Christ and His precious blood are seen as aspects of His marvellous love displayed in His Passion. It is impossible to divide these various elements into

separate compartments, and so in selecting from the Stimulus some of the topics which were taken up by other authors, frequently from a common or analogous source or more general tradition,[583] the division has to be artificial, even arbitrary.

Two virtues of the wounds which are touched on in the course of these chapters are their cleansing and their medicinal powers.[584] It is particularly the blood of Christ, together with the water that flowed from His side, which was thought of as cleansing and purifying the sinner's soul. Thus as he approaches death the soul prays: "wasshe my soule from synne with those stremes of the bloode whiche ranne from the fountayne of thy right syde".[585] A number of authors remind their readers of the blood and the water which flowed from the wound of the side: "Blode in token of our redempcyon. water in token of remyssyon of our synnes".[586] The sacramental significance of the effusion is made clear by Simon in The fruyte of redempcyon and by Fewterer. Simon gives a standard typological interpretation: as Eve was created from Adam's side, so the church was formed from the side of the second Adam, "& al the sacramentes of the same our sayd good mother of thy fore-sayd precyous wounde toke all theyr strength & vertue".[587] Fewterer adds to this a brief reference to the Longinus miracle,[588] and he also gives a paraphrase of St.Bernard's well known celebration of the wound of Christ's side in Sermo lx in Cantica;[589] the mystical language and mode of interpretation, which is very similar to the Stimulus, is clearly congenial to Fewterer. The first of his two lessons on this article seeks, in common with other mystical authors, to receive the wound of love,[590] the second teaches the sacramental significance of the wound.

The idea of the medicinal virtues of the blood and wounds of Christ is closely related to the general idea of cleansing: "What thynge is so spedfull to hele and purge þe spyrytuall woundis as entytyf medytacion of þe sorowfull woundys of our swete lord Ihesu Cryste."[591] The Stimulus describes Christ's body as full of medicinable ointments and recommends that the sinner annoint his soul with the blood of Christ's heart; "That blood is medicine for all sins, restoring of all graces, comfort in all tribulations, feeding in all sickness".[592] The idea is related to widespread concept of Christus medicus.[593]

The author of The tree &.xii.frutes counselled his reader to "Quenche thy thurste there with plente of haboundaunce of his moost blissed blode",[594] and the author of the Stimulus will "eat thy flesh for sweetness of love".[595] Not only does Christ vouchsafe food and drink to the hungry soul: "Ioyne or put thy mouth to that wounde: that thou may sucke or drawe the watre of helth from ye fountayns of our sauiour",[596] but the wounds are seen also as the door of love, the gate of paradise. The Tauerne of goostly helthe[597] invites the thirsty reader who desires "a drynke of euer lastyng lyfe" to "come to the tauerne of heuenly swetnesse. I meane to the woundes of Ihesu cryst." The conceit upon which the work is based is clearly related to the figure of the "cella vinaria" used by a number of mystical writers.[598] Before the soul can enter the tavern he has to call on the Taverner, Christ, to open the door to him.[598A] After some, often lengthy, delay the soul is allowed in, and perceives the body and wounds of Christ all naked, without skin; a sight which generates more compassion than the contemplation of Christ's outward appearance can ever do. The notion of seeing Christ without skin, His flesh all red and bloody, seems to

be a curiously crude attempt to convey in physical terms the inwardness of the mystic's vision.[599] This inward vision induces a heavenly drunkenness - a theme frequently mentioned in the Stimulus[600] - and the sight of the streaming tuns so ravishes the soul that "ye soule is made able to reste in the woundes for a tyme. And thanne the eye of the soule loketh in at the gate of heuen".[601] Such spiritual drunkenness is, of course, an extreme form of spiritual ecstasy, and as such it required careful explication and control by spiritual authors such as Hilton, who are quick to warn the contemplative of the dangers which attend such a state.[602] The end of this kind of mystical contemplation of the wounds of Christ is that the soul may enter the wounds of the side; "thou shalt soon then come to his heart and «then thou mayst rest thee there as in thy bedstead»", or,[603] a more commonly used simile, "as a doue buyldyng thy nest and restyng place in the deapnes of this hole or wounde".[604] The mutual love of the soul and his spouse, Christ, will generate such sweetness, "and in thine heart shalt sometime be enflamed, that the soul would out of the body, and aye wone in Christ's wounds".[605]

Related to the contemplation of the soul's indwelling in the wounded heart of Jesus is the idea of the wounds as a refuge and a hiding place. It was probably the most widely known function of Christ's wounds, and as with many other ideas connected with the wounds it goes back to the Canticum Canticorum and was popularized by St. Bernard.[606] References to the idea are very common, especially in devotional works which tend towards mysticism.[607] The wounds offer the sinner protection from the temptation of the fiend,[608] from the three great enemies of

mankind-the world, the flesh and the devil[609] and from ~~the~~ numerous other sins.[610] Conversely, of course, the wounds of Christ and symbols of the Passion accuse the unrepentant sinner on the day of Judgement.[611] Where the wounds are invoked as remedies for sin there is a tendency to link specific sins to one or other of the five wounds. In The mystic sweet Rosary various sins are consigned to the wounded feet of Christ; to the right "al my synnes/lyfe/ingratitude/my infirmities and vyle naughtynes" and to the left "al of my synnes negligently done and that bynde me to damnacion/praying the not to reken them/but to absolue me..."; and all the reader's worthy deeds, the benefits he has enjoyed and all his strength and affections are offered up to the wounded hands and side of Jesus. In Fewterer's prayers to the five wounds of Jesus, basically taken over from Jordanus,[612] and preceded by expository articles and lessons of some length, he seeks to "hyde all myne aduersities & temptations in the most swete wounde of that lefte hande/and that I may fynde in it a sure and holsome remedy agaynst all maner of tribulations"; in the right hand are hidden "al my good workes that it shall please thy goodnes to worke in me"; while the left foot is prayed to as a source of medicine for all "euyll cogitations/ sinistrall affections and desyres"; and to the right foot, from which "Iesu...dyd make a fountayne of thy grace/sprynge to vs", is joined "all my good desyres....with a louely kysse". The reference to the fountain of grace springing from the wound brings us back again to the idea of the fountain of life[613] and to the cognate figure of the wounds as wells.

The idea of the wounds as separate named wells is found in a series of brief verses, each illustrated by an angel bearing a shield depicting a

wounded hand or foot, in A gloryous medytacyon.[614] The wound of the right hand is the well of mercy, and the prayer asks: "Be my socour in the extremyte | Of dethe"; the left hand is the well of grace and source of deliverance from vices; the right foot is the well of pity, and the prayer seeks to serve God; and the left foot, the well of comfort asks: "Gracyously be my refuge and bote | And comforte in aduersyte". The centre-piece of the series is a full-page woodcut of the heart of Jesus, wounded and crowned, labelled "welle of lyfe"[615] which is followed by three seven-line stanzas[616] which deals with the events of the wounding and the virtues of the blood and the water which flowed from Jesus' side. Although most of the ideas outlined above concern the five principal wounds there is a tendency, especially in devotions of a more mystical kind, or those which deal with eucharistic motifs, to concentrate on the wound of the side. The measure of the wound of Christ's side is perhaps another example of the late-medieval interest in precise physical detail, so often pursued in the desire for realism; it was frequently illustrated[617] and, together with the other wounds, pseudo-magical powers were sometimes attributed to it.[618] Like the superstitions attaching themselves to the mass and the merits of the Passion, those associated with the wounds grew mainly from the uncritical assumption that performance of the required "ritual", usually looking at an image and repeating a few simple prayers, would automatically secure the promised end, which is not infrequently involved personal security or advantage.

The tendency to move from a general contemplation of the wounds to focus on the wound of the side as the entrance to the heart of Jesus (this despite the mirror-image placing of the wound on His right side

in nearly every illustration)[619] has been traced by a number of authors who have written about the devotion to the Sacred Heart.[620] The heart of Jesus figured in a number of woodcuts, drawings and carvings of the late fifteenth - early sixteenth centuries;[621] on the woodcuts it is usually shown in association with some representation of the wounds. Similarly in devotional writings the heart of Jesus was rarely addressed on its own but usually in a set of prayers which included devotions to the wounds of the hands and feet, as in A gloryous medytacyon, The mystic sweet Roasary and Fewterer's Deuoute prayers in englysshe, which does not name the heart of Jesus:

> O Iesu which for me wold haue the syde of thy deed body opened/from whens came plenty of blode & water for our helth & comfort: wounde I beseche the my hert with the speare of thy charyte/that I may worthely receyue thy sacramentes/whiche flowed out of that thy moost holy syde. 622

The only set of extant printed prayers specifically addressed to "the moost holy & sacred herte of our sauyour Iesu cryst" dating from the first half of the sixteenth century follows The doctrynall of mekenesse, printed by Copland in 1529.[623] There are eight prayers, all of which address the heart of Jesus with various epithets such as "most gloryous and precyous", "moost humblest", "moost sacred", "moost swetest" or "moost full of sorowe & heuines". The last prayer includes two more personal petitions addressed to Jesus. In each of the eight prayers the description of the pains Jesus bore concludes with the phrase "And all for loue", followed (except in the first prayer, where it is inserted at the beginning, and in the last, where it is elaborated into a personal petition) by some version of the prayer "I beseche the swete Iesu that this payne habounde in me/as moch as it dyde habounde in the."

The first two prayers describe the pains of Jesus' infancy and His ministry, and the remaining six detail the sufferings of His Passion, from His sweating blood to His crucifixion.[624] Apart from the prayers being addressed to the Heart of Jesus there is no reference to the piercing of His side, and the "woundes in handes hert & fete" only receive the briefest mention. The prayers focus on what Christ endured during His Passion and show why He suffered - "all for loue". The reader seeks to share something of His agony:

> Now swete Ihesu for this moost greuous & sorowful paine yt thou suffred in thy herte/wounde my herte so that thy paines may be mi paines/& that thy dethe be mi deth And if I may not haue it in affeccyon/at the leest that I may haue it at wyl and desyre/all onely for thy loue.[625]

The final petition asks for grace to taste of the chalice of the Passion and that Jesus will "opres myne hert wyth ye within the pressoure of thy most bitter passyon" - surely a reference to the figure of the mystic wine press. The emphasis falls upon the need for the sinner to suffer with Jesus, but the refrain "all for loue" and the eucharistic imagery of the final petition suggest that pain and suffering can be redemptive.[626] These prayers are distinguished from many other Passion devotions only by their address to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Like the wounds, the Heart of Jesus was seen as a place of refuge and a source of redemption, but it was not fully distinguished from the wound of the side. It was not, at this period in England, an object of separate devotion.

The story of the Passion, and narrative and symbolic illustrations of various aspects of it, were undoubtedly familiar to late fifteenth - early sixteenth century congregations. They were clearly considered suitable subjects for the decoration of religious buildings.[627] Their placing on bench ends, high in stained glass windows, on roof bosses and chancel vaults, makes it unlikely that they were intended to be used for any specific devotional purpose, but the very multiplicity of Passion symbols and illustrations must have had its effect on the general spiritual atmosphere.[628] Occasionally narrative sequences of the Passion depicted in carving or stained glass may have been used for didactic purposes, and some of the larger murals and statues probably had brief prayers addressed to them, but for the most part these Passion motifs were decorative rather than functional; their application was of a very indirect and general kind, not specific.

Just as this type of illustration kept the image of the suffering Jesus constantly before the people's eyes, so those who could read were offered numerous verbal equivalents of the carved and painted Passion scenes. Authors tended to concentrate on visual, physical description of Christ's sufferings, sometimes supplemented by reference to His mental and spiritual sufferings and to the sorrows of His mother. On their own these descriptions, found in drama and lyrics as well as in devout treatises, are not strictly devotional, any more than the decorative motifs of religious art; they require some kind of application to turn them into devotions. Frequently this was supplied by the form into which the narrative was cast, the rosary form, the litany, the addition of regular introductions and conclusions to turn small sections of the

narrative into a series of prayers, or even the common division into seven parts after the canonical hours. A substantial proportion of the Speculum Vitae Christi, Simon's Fruyte of redempcyon and Fewterer's Myrrour of Glasse of Christes Passion was devoted to descriptive narrative. Fewterer seeks to explain and give moral application to what he describes before he gathers each article into a concluding prayer. The descriptions in the Speculum and Simon more often seem intended to stimulate the reader's imagination and his emotions, and similarly the brief descriptions of the Passion found in numerous other treatises. A clue to the "function" of these "unapplied" descriptions is to be found in A Contemplacyon or medytacyon of the shedynge of the blood of our lorde Ihesu Cryste at seuen tymes. Following the three opening meditations is some phrase such as: "And whyle yu hast this fresshe in thy mynde saye thy deuocyon". This suggests that the preceding description was to be used as a prelude to more formal devotion or recitation of the hours.[629]

This kind of descriptive writing could stir the affections, and in some souls helped to stimulate a very real and intimate personal relationship with Jesus. Under the guidance of a good spiritual director the contemplative could advance from the practice of the devotional present encouraged by these descriptions to the deeper experience of Dame Julian or the author of the Stimulus, and, entering the wounds of Jesus, experience a foretaste of the rapturous love of heaven. But what of more earth-bound souls or those who were not well instructed in spiritual matters? Beyond a very real and, in the case of someone like Margery Kempe, an impressively emotional attachment to the Person of Jesus, it is hard to see how a soul could

develop spiritually through contemplation of the Passion. The printed texts of the early sixteenth century suggest that all too often the descriptions of the Passion were isolated from the basic doctrinal teachings of the Christian faith. This is much less true of the Speculum than of Simon or even Fewterer, whose explanations and applications tend to be particular, arising from specific details of the narrative. The practical instruction associated with catechetical and penitential literature seems to be divorced from the more emotional piety of the Passion.

In the devotional writings and translations of the English recusants there seems to have been some attempt to control and organize the affective piety of the late middle ages. The growth of methodical prayer and systematic schemes of meditation which were founded on a solid doctrinal basis seems to have developed first among the Brethren of the Common Life.[630] It received a classic form in St. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises.[631] The devotional literature of the English recusants retained the sense of vivid reality, the love, compassion and strong personal relationship with Jesus characteristic of late medieval piety but the meditations tended to be better structured. The set of fifteen meditations on the Passion in A Manual of Prayers[632] are basically moving narrative descriptions, but the reader is given a reason for using them: "If thou wilt profit and growe in the loue of God, thou must haue an often and frequent memorie, & as it were an Image before thine eyes, of thy Lord and Sauiour crucyfied for thee". Again, the prayer to be said after the meditations gives thanks to Jesus for His love manifested in His suffering; asks mercy for sins seeking to be made "like vnto thy holy humanitye"; and finally offers

the life and Passion of the Son to the Father "for my saluation, and for the saluation of all men, as for full amendmente and purgation of all our sinnes and offences."[633] Here at least there is some attempt to relate the historical events of the Passion to the saving work of the Son of God.

Where any attempt was made by medieval authors to explain the significance of Christ's Passion, it tended to take the form of a list of profits as in the Legenda Aurea.[634] The difficulty is to prevent any list of this nature from sounding impersonal, especially with its neat parcelling out of points, and the parallels drawn in this instance between Christ and Adam, which make it sound remote in time as well. Allegorical interpretations sounded equally distant, such as the idea of the four corners of the cross being adorned with precious stones, the virtues of charity, obedience, patience and humility.[635] The seven words from the cross, which are listed by numerous authors with or without explanations[636] and made the basis of several prayers,[638] offered an opportunity for authors to break off the narrative and to use them for teaching. Several do this, but the teaching is more likely to be about the various virtues exemplified in Jesus' words[639] than about the Redemption of mankind. The instruction given in the course of the longer Passion narratives tended to be about specific virtues and sins, ~~and~~ about good works and matters of behaviour. Christ was seen above all as an exemplar of all virtues who was to be emulated. Indirectly He was also recognized as the Son of God as well as the perfect man, but this aspect of His Person is rarely emphasized in the treatises or in the iconography of the Passion. Somehow the moving narrative of the sufferings of the Son of Man needed to be related to the redemptive work of the Son of God.

The Resurrection Faith of the Reformers

Like the Lollards before them the Reformers attacked traditional beliefs and practices at their most vulnerable points, where popular superstitions and abuses were all too apparent. Catholic authors too recognized and condemned popular superstitions connected with the mass and the Passion, with indulgences and pilgrimages. But, like Whitford, they felt that it was better "to praye...to gyue studie and diligence...rather to refourme and amende bothe" than, like the Protestants, "to blaspheme/detracte/depraue/and to speke yuell"[640] and to seek change by destruction. It cannot be denied that the Protestants were fervent in their destruction not only of relics, shrines and statues, which were objects of pilgrimage, but of much architecture and decoration, furnishings and vestments, which they considered superstitious.[641] Some of the destruction was probably wanton damage; some might have been prevented by a little foresight.[642] Under Edward VI the content[643] and setting of worship[644] underwent drastic change, and demands for change were being made in the 1530s. But the zeal of the Reformers was not entirely, nor even mainly destructive; they sought to edify the people, to open the Bible to them and teach them the essential truths of Christianity.

Narratives of the life of Christ and saints' legends were an important section of the religious press of the late fifteenth - early sixteenth century.[645] The saints' lives contained a lot of legendary material and frequently provided tales of adventure and entertainment, but their popularity seems to have declined after the early 1520s; 1530 saw two editions of The life of St.Margaret and 1534 The life of St.Alban. The same year saw the

publication of what seems to be the last life of Christ, Fewterer's Myrrour or Glasse of Christes Passion. Since both types of work made use of legendary material and pious imaginings they were condemned by the Reformers as superstitious, not adhering strictly to the standard of Scripture. Since saints' legends would have been particularly vulnerable to reforming Protestants of the first or subsequent generations it is hard to estimate the significance of extant publication figures,[646] but it looks as though readers had begun to neglect them before the views of the Reformers could have been widely influential. But if the medieval "lives" did not continue after the middle of the 1530s they were supplanted in 1538 by the book which was to become as influential in the shaping of English langauge and literature as it was in religious matters - the English Bible.[647]

There seems to be only one work in the second half of the decade whose title suggests any continuity with the medieval Passion narratives: "A deuoute frutefull and godlye remembraunce of the passion of oure sauioure Christ Iesu", which was printed in the Byddell - Marshall Primer about 1534 and again in Certeine prayers and godly meditacyons, 1538.[648] It is a translation of Luther's Ein Sermon von der Betrachtung des heilgen Leidens Christi, of 1519.[649] It opens with a condemnation of those who trust superstitiously in the fruits of Christ's Passion or the profits of the mass, and it also censures those who vent their anger on the Jews or who advance no further in understanding the Passion than a vague feeling of pity. The true beholders of Christ's Passion "consyder & marcke in his passyon their awne synnes & enormityes which were the cause & grounde of his passyon and deeth/for they are feared/and their consciences tremble

as sone as they remembre the passyon".[650] The Catholic martyr, John Fisher, had made the same point in his Good Friday sermon,[651] and like Luther he declares that the sinner deserves to suffer a thousand-fold what Christ endured,[652] for his sins were the cause of Christ's pains.[653] Indeed, the two works follow similar lines: they both strike fear into the audience for the enormity of their sins:

> for on this hangeth the hole profyte and vse of Christes passion/that a man maye knowe him selfe/ that he myght tremble and repent in beholdinge his greuous enormytes. 654

Having brought the soul "euen to the brinke of desperacyon", Luther then begins to raise the soul, not by the self-satisfaction of good works, but through faith in Christ's work of redemption, through prayer and recollection of God's love. The second half of Fisher's sermon also concerns itself with the promise of the cross and the love, hope, joy, comfort and mercy to be derived from it. Fisher ends with the offer of joy to those who will amend, and the threat of pain and damnation, described in some detail, to those who refuse to suffer with Christ. Luther's conclusion is perhaps less threatening, but no less adamant, on the need for the sinner to conform his life to Christ's. The Christian must learn to express Christ's Passion not only in his outward behaviour but in his inner life and thoughts. This is the true meditation of the Passion; "And we haue chaunged it all together in to an outwarde apperaunce and haue thought it sufficient to behold the story of the passyon paynted vpon walles", to hear it told as a story or to see it re-enacted in the mass. The lack of personal application and the externalism of many late medieval descriptions of, and devotions connected with, the Passion which Luther condemns was, on the whole, justified. It was not enough

to describe the Passion in moving or harrowing words and simply to tell people to imagine that they were present at the events described or to encourage them to respond with feelings of love and compassion. They needed to understand why the events of the Passion were important and how they affected the individual's salvation.

The "frutefull and godlye remembraunce of the passion" does not banish all the emotive detail characteristic of traditional descriptions. The reader is reminded of the nails which were fastened into Christ's hands, which pierced His tender flesh and "his brayne perced with the croune of thornes". There is even a suggestion of the medieval practice of the devotional present: "when thou seyst", "when thou beholdest", "where thou seyst" what is done to Him. However, what description there is is incidental, it is not the main substance of the work, and it is proportionately much, much less than in Fisher's or Longland's Good Friday sermons. The work is a carefully constructed explanation of how to meditate Christ's Passion and of the spiritual and practical fruits which should come from such an exercise. It concentrates particularly upon the individual's inward apprehension - of mind, not merely of sight and feeling - of Christ's redemptive work. The conscience is brought to the brink of desperation and then assuaged, not by running to good works, pilgrimages and pardons, but by faith in Christ's redemption and His satisfaction, by prayer and recollection of God's Love. Later Protestant devotion was to pay great attention to the inner state of the believer and his conscience, which had been largely neglected, except in some preparation for confession, by traditional treatises on the Passion and on death and the last Things. It is also characteristic of Protestant devotion that everything should be spelt out in precise detail; for

instance, the way in which meditation on the Passion was to be used against particular temptations.[655] John Frith takes over Luther's application in his Preparation to deathe:

> If thou be punished with sickenes reken with thy selfe, howe it is not to be compared with Chrystes crowne of thorne and his nayles. If thou be restrayned of thy desyres and lustes, remembre Christ led hyther and thyther If pryde styre thy mynde, remembre Christ nayled on the crosse betwene two theues...If thou brenne in lechery, or any other yll desyre, remembre howe Christes tendre flesshe was all to torne with strypes, thrist through, and al to broken...If thou be vexed with enuy or desyre of reuenging, thinke with thy selfe, that Christ dyd preye his father for theym, whiche crucified and scorned him....[656]

Where there is description it is not intended simply to stir the reader's affections but to contribute to the reader's awareness or understanding of some point which is to be grasped with the mind.

Catharine Parr's Lamentacion of a synner[657] retains a number of traditional characteristics, not least the principle that "inwardelye to beholde Christe crucified vpon the crosse is the best and godlyest meditacion that can be". Yet despite repeated invitations to see Christ upon the cross, there is no description of His sufferings. The object is not to contemplate the figure of Christ crucified to be moved to compassion by the sight, but to learn from "the booke of the crucifixe". No longer does the crucified Jesus bow His head to kiss the sinner or spread His arms to receive him, nor does He give utterance to any lamentation. Although the sinner still prays to the Lord, He is no longer the Son of Man on the Cross, but a more remote, less clearly defined being. Christ is seen as the supreme exemplar, the source and object of saving faith and grace; a being who is to be understood and who requires the performance of various duties rather than a Person to

be seen, known and loved.

The Lamentacion of a synner combines personal confession with instruction, and the intention is to edify the reader, to bring him to, or strengthen him in, the true faith of Christ. Catherine laments, sighs and weeps for her former life so evilly spent in gross idolatry and under misguided belief in and obedience to the Pope's promises and the ways of Rome.[658] Aware that she has deserved damnation, rather than despair she "wil cal vpon Christ the light of the worlde the fountayne of lyfe...ye peacemaker betwene god & man, & the only health & comfort of al true repentant sinners". She confesses her sinfulness, her ignorance and her inability to "bring myselfe out of this intangled & waywarde maze". As Luther had recommended she asks for the grace of the Holy Spirit and for increase of faith, and she remembers the love of God. From faith springs assurance and good works, "Yet we may not impute to the worthynes of fayth or workes, our iustificacion before God: but ascribe & geue the worthines of it, wholly to the merites of Christes passion, and referre and attribute the knowledge & perceiuyng therof onely to fayth".[659] From spiritual autobiography - a form of religious literature which was particularly favoured by later Puritan writers[660] - the author passes on to instruction, taking the cross of Christ as her exemplar.

In her final section she turns her attention to the contemporary situation. She especially gives thanks for "suche a godly and learned king" as Henry VIII, who has banished the mists of error and given England the knowledge of truth and the light of God's word. This glorification of the English monarch as the instrument of God's will in the cause of reform seems to have begun in the early 1530s.[661] and to

have been characteristic of those who favoured reform, for only the King could subdue the traditional church to make way for the new learning.[662] Then, like contemporary authors such as Becon,[663] Catherine outlines the responsibility of various classes to teach or follow God's words in their particular vocation, and to set a good example to others. This detailed, practical concern to teach every person his Christian duty was, of course, characteristic of later Protestantism.[664] Yet despite the benefits of Henry's enlightened and godly rule, she is "able to iustifie the ignoraunce of the people to be greate", in their ignorance of God's word and of the true - the Reformed - faith. She prays that God may defend all men from the Bishop of Rome's "iugleinges and sleytes. But specially the poore simple, vnlearned sowles", and she concludes with a warning of the awful judgement that awaits the unfaithful servant contrasted with the joyful abode promised to the blessed in heaven.

Another reformed author who was much concerned with the contemporary situation was Nicholas Wyse, whose Consolacyon for chrysten people was printed by John Wayland in 1538.[665] His chief targets were ignorance, pilgrimages and idolatry. Wyse attacks the apathy of the people who will not use their newly granted liberty, especially their freedom to read the English Bible. They do not seem to appreciate that they have been freed from the heavy traditions of Rome, and they are heedless of the benefits conferred on them by the enlightened rule of Henry VIII, who is likened to "Esechias" and "Josias".[666] Henry's establishment of the reformed faith and the provision of the Scriptures in the "maternall tonge", "is of suche valure that Englyshe men had neuer greater cause to thanke God for, and to pray for the gracyous properyte of theyr kynge

then for this matter".[667] Allowing for the fact that Wyse was keen to see reforms implemented, his comment—"it is a straunge rekenyng to here the vnwyse sayenges of many of the people, say they not, why shulde we not lyue as our fathers haue done before vs"[668] does suggest considerable popular reluctance or apathy to change, if not a positive preference for the old ways, which of course had the great advantage of familiarity.

The bulk of his work is occupied by attacks on and exposures of papistical ceremonies and superstitions, and defence of "these newe gospellers". He attacks images of saints, on the grounds that they are against the first commandment,[669] and because during their life saints had refused the kind of wealth and power accorded to their shrines in death.[670] He suggests that images of saints are used to rob people and to maintain priests' harlots or sturdy beggars,[671] and he mocks the placing of strong boxes by the images as though the priest did not trust the saint to guard the money.[672] Again he ridicules the way in which saints were invoked to cure every kind of disease, and he asks pity for saint "Uncombre" of St.Paul's, so recently pulled down, to whom wives used to offer oats to remove troublesome husbands. More seriously he condemns prayers made to saints' images:

> When the people wold saye, our blessyd lady of Walsyngham helpe me, the holy rode of Northdore, and the crosse of Chaldon be my comforte, the trewe remembraunce of the crosse of Christ wherin they ought only to seke their consolacyon, ioy & conforte, was forgotten or at lest abused vnto a great nombre of crosses & rodes within this realme. For.... many are pulled downe, but ther remayne some yet, for all thynges cannot be done at one tyme. 673

Like earlier Lollard authors[674] he objects to the impression given, especially by pilgrimages, that some saints' images, and some places,

are more meritorious than others.[675]

Rather than wearing out their bodies, spending their substance and abandoning their children to go on pilgrimage to holy places, they should give their money to relieve Christ's "owne quycke and lyunge Image" in the poor, the sick, the lame, the blind, the helpless, the aged and the prisoners.[676] He mocks the traditional literature - official and that permitted for private use - asking whether men will seek the Kingdom of God "in the bysshops of romes decretals and in Legenda aurea as your fathers dyd....ye shall as sone fynde it in Beuys of Hampton, & Guy of Warwycke as amonge the holy bokes that ye & your fathers in tymes past haue ben permytted to loke on."[677] They should give up such books and their babbling prayers in foreign tongues.[678] Rather they should read the Bible, learn to test all claims against the standard of Scripture and go willingly to hear godly preachers. The teaching they purvey is not new, but it is that of the New Testament and the Apostles, which has endured over a thousand years.[679] He concedes:

> It is not moch to be meruayled at, and yf there be many yet that murmour at the puttynge downe of ydolatrye, specyally in them that are not learned in goddes worde. For it is harde sodenly to roote out superstycyous holynesse from the vnlearned peoples myndes...680

But he is insistent that the people must labour to build up the Lord's Temple, to reform abuses, and establish church and state upon the Word of God. But, as with many other Protestant authors, Wyse's zeal to right wrongs tended towards polemic and propaganda rather than towards devotion. There was little in his book to console the Christian reader who did not share his vision of an English Church purged of all superstition and abuses and based on the sole authority of the Bible.

Despite set-backs, especially during the last nine years of Henry VIII's reign, the progress of the Reformation was steady. Images were destroyed, pilgrimages and the use of the rosary forbidden; the traditional Passion literature and saints' lives were no longer produced and the development of devotion to the Sacred Heart[681] prevented - all in those same years 1538 - 47.[682]

However, the Reformers' contribution was not entirely destructive. As far as the life of Christ was concerned they changed the emphasis ~~from~~ on the sufferings endured by Christ during His Passion to dwell upon the triumphant victory of the Resurrection. Proportionately the period from the Resurrection to the Ascension receives little attention in medieval lives of Christ.[683] The author of A goostly treatyse does not take his life as far as the Resurrection but ends with the return of Mary and the Disciples to Jerusalem after the burial. It is more usual to find some reference to the Resurrection and Ascension and perhaps the coming of the Holy Spirit and the Last Judgement, the concluding act of Christ's saving work.

Within the chronological framework of the lives of Christ, the supernatural events following His death demanded some place although they defied all attempts at physical description. In fact, most authors made no attempt to describe the events of the Resurrection or the Ascension[684] in any detail. The scenes would have been familiar to the reader from numerous illustrations, woodcuts and stained glass,[685] XXIV and perhaps from the mystery play cycles.[686] Fewterer made use of quotations from the psalms and the prophets in his attempt to convey the joy of the Resurrection - in much the same way the patriarchs and prophets responded with verses of Scripture when Christ came to liberate

them from hell.[687] In the Speculum Vitae Christi the event of the Resurrection is announced in advance to the souls in hell, and the Lord goes forth to rise from the grave accompanied by their words of acclaim and expectation.[688] Immediately the scene moves to His Mother, whose solitary prayers are fulfilled by the presence of her Son.[689] Thereafter the Gospel narratives are used as the basis for separate descriptions of Jesus' various post-Resurrection appearances, supplemented by other appearances, such as to St. Peter and to the patriarchs of the old law. Individually some of the appearances are made the occasion for a brief instruction, so that the encounter at Emmaus teaches the reader to do "the werkes of pitee and hospitalite" and to desire Christ to dwell with him; but taken together the appearances represent a joyful, triumphant progress which culminates in the Ascension with the jubilation and homage of all heaven. The Speculum stresses the importance of the Ascension more than either Fewterer or Simon:[690]

> this gloriose feste of the ascencioun of oure lorde Jesu us an ende and fulfillynge of alle othere solempnitees and feestes/and a blessed conclucioun of all the iourney of oure lorde Jesu after his man hede. Thus mowe we opounly see that this day and this feste is moste highe and solempne of alle othere. And that soule that loueth trewely oure lorde Jesu schulde this day be more rauisched to heauen and more goostly ioye haue in herte thanne yn any day of the yere. 691

The Reformers neither related the events of Jesus' life to the liturgical year nor did they endeavour to produce a chronological relation of His life, which was almost bound to rely on pious imaginings rather than on the bare word of the Scripture. Thus freed from the need to describe the historical content of these events[692] they were able to concentrate on their meaning in terms of salvation history. As might be expected they make extensive use of biblical quotations

concerning the promises of the Resurrection, especially I Corinthians XV.[693] One of the most forthright statements is found in A myrroure or glasse for them that be syke: "The mystery of the ressurreccion of Chryst, is the chefe, the princypall poynt of our fayth".[694] The author goes on to explain that, had He not risen again, Christ's death alone would have achieved nothing. To believe in the resurrection of Christ is to believe that He reigns and has subdued sin and death.[695] It is a guarantee of His victory, and by faith the believer becomes a partaker of that victory. Thus to the faithful death is not to be feared,[696] for "beholdynge stedfastly with the eies of faythe in the resurrection, by deathe he shall so passe awaye, that surely he shall not see deathe".[697] The final chapter of the "consolacyon for troubled consciences" describes the benefits the soul enjoys on account of the Resurrection of Christ, and especially the way in which the believer is taken up into the righteousness of Christ, so that sin and death can no longer harm him. The fact that Jesus rose from the dead is for the Protestant, as it was for the early church,[698] the event which makes His death both meaningful and effective.

There was much that was truly moving in the medieval concentration upon the sufferings of Jesus, and the descriptions and meditations must often have aroused compassion and moved more sensitive souls to tears. The weakness was in the lack of real spiritual application. Description can only go so far, and, even if the reader is able to imagine that he is present at and involved in the events described, his feelings do not necessarily relate to his own needs and spiritual state. The Reformers abandoned the descriptive - imaginative approach to the Passion and concentrated instead on man's inner state. They insisted on his

identity as a sinner before God, but, rather than generating physical revulsion through the use of "vile body" language,[699] they encouraged the reader to look within his own conscience and to recognize his failure to trust and to love God. Any reaction is likely to produce a certain imbalance, and Protestant treatises, because they overlook the power of human feelings and ignore the evocative impact of descriptive writing, tend to sound rather dull and prosaic. But their insistence that man should understand what it means to have faith and to be assured of salvation was a healthy corrective to the emotional piety of most late medieval Passion narratives and devotions, whose teaching tended to be about good works and matters of behaviour and morality rather than about the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. The Protestants did not ignore morality or good works, but they put faith and right belief before them; and, although they did not encourage emotional demonstrations of feeling in response to Christ's Passion, the love of God in Christ was deeply known and responded to in the more sober and restrained language of the Reformers' devotional treatises:

> No man can vse due loue in God without he be sure fyrst by fayth inwardly how wel God doth loue vs, reioycing in the same loue, and puttynge al his saluacyon therin. Thus doynge he shall passe by all creatures, estymynge them as donge, countynge CHRIST onely his ioye, glorye, & hertes desyre. He now that vttereth ye loue, (for true loue can not be ydle) he vttereth it, ye which God the louer of loue wyl haue ye louyng man to do. 700

PART III

"Per multas tribulationes oportet intrare in regnum dei"

(Tribulations and related topics: The awareness of death and decay: The contemptus mundi: The preparation for death, the ars moriendi and The Four Last Things).

Many of the themes and attitudes dealt with in a brief and general manner by the authors of tribulation treatises are reiterated or elaborated in ars moriendi books and other works connected with the literature of death and related topics. For instance, the contemptus mundi theme and warnings about the dangers and transitoriness of wealth and position are found in both tribulation treatises and death literature. Death was regarded by some authors as a kind of final or intensified form of tribulation; both were to be borne patiently in expectation of a heavenly reward, and correct faith was important to overcome the temptations accompanying them. The death-bed literature placed great emphasis on the need to prepare for death throughout life, and ideally the patient endurance of tribulation encouraged the kind of growth in faith and virtue which would ensure that a man died well and received the heavenly reward he had been promised. A discussion of some of the tribulation treatises available during the 1530's may well serve as an introduction to a survey of the literature of death and the Four Last Things.

Man's immortal soul could be saved by death-bed repentence and frantic alms-giving,[1] but it was undoubtedly risky to leave provision for the soul's eternal welfare so late: there was always the danger of

sudden death, of the body weakened by illness succumbing to temptation, or failing to recognize that this illness would prove fatal.[2] The unmistakable intention of numerous lyrics, plays, sermons and treatises concerned with some aspect of man's mortality was that now was the time to repent, to have done with the cares of this world: "nolite conformari huic saeculo, sed reformamini in novitate sensus vestri: ut probetis quae sit voluntas Dei bona, et beneplacens, et perfecta."[3] The assumption was that the glad acceptance of suffering was particularly pleasing to God. The view may be summed up in the words of Luther's last two "theses":—

> Exhortandi sunt Christiani, ut caput suum Christi
> per penas, mortes infernosque sequi studeant
> Ac sic magis per multas tribulationes intrare
> celum quam per securitatem pacis confidant[4]—

and it was confirmed in numerous stories of saints and martyrs who had overcome the temptations and persecutions of this world and received a heavenly reward.[5]

New Testament and patristic authors tended to see the world, the flesh and, of course, the Devil as the implacable enemies of the Christian. St.Paul expressed the fallen soul's propensity to evil, against which the Christian is bound to struggle, in memorable words,[6] and it was he who seems to have crystallized the idea - far older than Christianity[7]- of the spiritual warfare into the image of the Christian soldier.[8] Deeply influenced as he was by St.Paul's thought,[9] it is not surprising to find Erasmus declaring that "The seruyse of god is a ~~proffesyon~~ professyon of a chrysten warfare",[10] and his <u>Enchiridion militis christiani</u> opens with a frequently cited quotation from Job[11] in which

man's earthly life is described as a continual battle. The Enchiridion begins by outlining the field of battle, gives some idea of the enemy to be engaged, and then goes on to deal with the weapons of Christian warfare: prayer, knowledge of the Scriptures and of selected wisdom from the ancients, and love of Christ, which help the soldier to obtain the arms of justice, the armour of truth, the breast-plate of justice, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit and the handy "enchiridion" which he is always to have by him.[12]

A more elaborate allegory of the Christian's armour, along the lines of A tretyse of gostly batayle,[13] is The assaute and conquest of heven, translated from the French by Thomas Paynell and printed by Berthelet in 1529.[14] Designed to help "the vnlerned people" to resist their ghostly enemy, by abstinence and penance, especially during Lent, "the tyme and season of gostly ~~and~~ & spiritual warre", it not only likens the various pieces of armour to the Christian virtues but it also outlines the strategy and goal of the Christian warfare.[15]

It is more than just a list of pieces of armour equated with various virtues. In some cases the form of the piece helps to convey the quality of the virtue: thus the coat of mail represents charity to neighbours:

> For as the mayles of this coote knytte one mayle to another: so all good christian people shulde be ioyned and knytte with the corde of charite one to another.[16]

In other cases the author may consider the functions of the limbs a piece of armour protects: as the feet carry the body from place to place so is the sould carried about by man's affections, and the shoes of the armour, which are either the good example of holy fathers or else,

"hevenly desyre/couetyng to be out of this worlde/and to come to the company of our lorde god", are designed to protect and regulate these affections. To the traditional ascetic virtues of chastity (the shirt), penance (the doublet) and abstinence (the gorgette) are added the more spiritual values outlined by Erasmus, the helmet of the fear of God created with the virtue of hope, the two-edged sword of God's word and the shield of faith, and the author includes much basic Christian teaching in his exposition. The chapter on "the Coote armour" is a particularly rich example of his method. He first describes what coat armour is, how it is worn over the body armour and is richly decorated with gold and precious stones of various colours,[17] and how the arms of Christ are emblazoned front and back upon the purple and white material of which it is made. The coat is likened to the virtue of chastity, and the three jewels which decorate it, chrysolite, beryl and topaz, reflect the pure heart, good conscience and true faith from which the virtue proceeds. The nature of each of the jewels is then considered in some detail. For instance, chrysolite is noble and sparkling, and if set near a fire it becomes all fire:

> The fyre is of very pure nature and vertue: For hit taketh away the rustynes and all fylthynes from golde/sylver/& other metall/and maketh hit bright and shynynge: so in lyke maner the fyre of charite remoueth from mans harte all fylthynes of synne...18

The description of fire purging rustiness and filth from gold and other metals will be encountered later as a common figure for the purgative aspect of tribulation. Here a parallel is drawn with Christ, who, wishing to inflame man with the fire of charity, took our fleshly body and shed his blood for our redemption, thus showing how much He loved

us; it is for man to light his small reflective fire at the large fire of Christ. Later in the same chapter there is an extended comparison between the nature of fire and the qualities of charity.[19] The other two jewels enable the author to explore other aspects of charity, and he then goes on to consider the cloak, woven with the thread of grace and the Holy Ghost, made of the inward parts of our Lord and dyed purple at the time of his Passion.[20] Thus not only is the nature of charity explained but it is closely linked to Christ, the greatest exemplar of the virtue, whom the Christian knight is encouraged to imitate. The imagery too, while not complex, is richly symbolic and at several points echoes the teaching of tribulation treatises, the contemptus mundi literature and more general ascetic works.[21]

The treatise goes on to consider the weapons of the knight and the horse's harness,[22] and concentrates increasingly upon the way in which the knight is to advance in the Christian faith. He requires various provisions, including the ability to foresee and take defensive action against adversity,[23] and the virtue of hope (the crest of the helmet) so necessary to those in tribulation. The horse is to be guided in the right way by the reins of discretion and the bridle of wisdom. The allegory, then, is not simply a static picture of a Christian knight; he is armed for a purpose in the same way that the pilgrim is equipped for his journey in Deguilleville's Pilgrimage of the Life of Man.[24] The armour is to enable him to reach his destination, the city, safely, to attack it and to bring the ensuing siege to a successful conclusion. The city is, of course, the Kingdom of Heaven, and the quickest way in is by shooting darts against the tower where the king and queen, Jesus and Mary, dwell. "Agaynst this towre we must cast... many syghes/compunctions of harte/

teares/and deuoute prayers"; and if this fails we should use prayers to various saints and especially to Mary, the compassionate "mother of mercy and of all pite".[25] If the siege continues the walls may be scaled with the ladder of contemplation, and even if the weight of the body drags the soul off the ladder there are still saints who may be taken prisoner by special devotion and spoil to be won in the shape of the gifts and virtues of the Holy Spirit. Provided he perseveres in the attack it is not dishonourable to be wounded, or even to be killed in the battle; the knight can still be sure of his victory and look for a heavenly reward.[26] Although the Christian warfare receives more dramatic treatment here than in most tribulation treatises,[27] the assurance of victory to the faithful and the idea that without experience of adversity the Christian cannot hope for any reward are common to most works which discuss the subject of tribulation at any length.

The religious life was generally regarded as the better life,[28] but neither the taking of vows nor the seclusion of the cloister nor a sheltered life given to good works and devout exercises secured automatic separation from the troubles of this world: tribulation, adversity and suffering were as much a part of religious as of a secular life.[29] While the more advanced contemplative received fairly detailed instruction about the reasons for suffering and various aspects of temptation,[30] and was shown ways of overcoming or at least containing the attacks of the Devil, the newly-professed religious and many pious lay people were in need of more elementary instruction about the suffering or adversity which they had to face. Unlike the contemplatives they were hardly ever given practical advice as to how they should overcome various forms of adversity; rather they were provided with a general justification of suffering.

The approach is nearly always theoretical, with no attempt to give practical help or comfort to those in trouble. The burden of the tribulation treatises is that suffering is to be endured becuase it is good for man's soul and if borne patiently it carries with it the promise of an eternal reward; and A. Kempis is only one of the authors who quotes St.Paul's "quod non sunt condignae passiones hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam".[31]

The characteristic English tribulation treatise, such as those available in print about the year 1500 - The Chastysing of goddes Chyldern, The boke of conforte agaynste all tribulacions, The remedy ayenst the troubles of temptacyons by William Flete,[32] the Six Masters on Tribulation,[33] The xii profytes of tribulacyon[34] and The Rote or myrrour of consolacyon and conforte - seems to be an outgrowth of two distinct but not unrelated traditions. The ascetic traditions of the New Testament and the early fathers helped to shape the world-denying attitude which is fundamental to tribulation teaching, although the Fathers rarely discussed tribulation on its own.[35] St. Augustine's views, together with St.Gregory's, which do not differ substantially from those of his predecessor, are the most commonly quoted non-biblical sources cited in the tribulation treatises and may be taken as representaive of this patristic tradition.[36] He saw temptation in terms of a battle[37] in which salvation was the reward of victory and where failure meant damnation, but because Christ has overcome temptation and the power of darkness, union with Him will enable the Christian to conquer sin.[38] The individual could profit from the experience of tribulation in a number of ways: it helped the good to persevere in virtue and so to increase their heavenly reward,[39] and it encouraged them to pray.[40] It purged a man's

soul[41] and taught him to know himself and God more truly.[42] But the struggle was more than just an individual concern. Christ talked of the clash between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan,[43] and St. Augustine used the figure of two cities.[44] Somehow authors had to express the fundamental opposition between the two powers without falling into the heresy of manichean dualism.[45]

To the spiritual combat and world - denying outlook of the ascetic tradition may be added the influential tradition of the pagan-Christian consolatio genre.[46] Cicero and Seneca were among the most influential pagan users of the form, and Seneca's views on worldly values, fortune and suffering are frequently quoted in devout treatises.[47] Boethius in his De Consolatione Philosophiae was the first Christian to make use of the genre, and his influence on subsequent authors was very great,[48] although he is not mentioned in the English tribulation treatises. Two reasons may be adduced for their silence. The first is that they are primarily devotional works which contain little theological argument and even less philosophical reasoning;[49] they tell the reader what is to be believed and do not really attempt to console him in his adversity. The second reason is that the English tribulation treatises lack the essential form of the Boethian consolatio, the debate.[50] The kind of civilized dialogue characteristic of Cicero, Seneca and Boethius is not found in English until the time of More and Lupset, and even More seems unwilling to use the method whole-heartedly in works of a religious nature. On a superficial level, however, the apparent world-denying strain of Stoicism was clearly congenial to many medieval moral and religious writers,[51] and on occasion the effect of the "reversal ethics" of the Kingdom of God seems remarkably similar to the changes wrought by Fortune.[52]

The English tribulation treatises printed about 1500 may be seen as brief and much simplified versions of the large consolation books of Dambach and Nider.[53] They are very simple in form, relying mainly on numerical division[54] or on casual connection without any sense of overall structure or development, and they rarely attempt to discuss any wider issues. The boke of conforte agaynste all tribulacions is unusual, both in its use of the dialogue form and in its inclusion of standard elementary teaching on the seven deadly sins, the five wits, the Sacraments and the Creed.[55] However, they seem to have provided the beginner in religion with the rudiments of an ascetic theology,[56] and they are of particular interest because they overlap at several points with other devout literature.[57] Many general works of edification have something to say on the subject,[58] and in particular a number of images which seem to have been closely connected with tribulation literature have a very wide diffusion.[59]

Only two of the tribulation treatises printed in England before 1500 are known to have reprinted during the 1530's, The xii profytes of tribulacyon and The Rote.[60] The latter is an expanded version of The xii profytes, to which it adds four introductory paragraphs and another eight chapters, which for the most part are no more than variations on what has gone before,[61] and a number of moral passages.[62] At other times the expansions are the result of the author's attempt to make the meaning clearer and capable of practical application, especially in matters relating to religious practice and personal piety.[63] A number of phrases such as "I exhorte you" or "I counseyll the"[64] are added, which help to temper the impersonal address of The xii profytes and make the conclusion of several chapters more emphatic.[65] The Rote may be a reworking of

The xii profytes by some ghostly father,[66] a conjecture which might be supported by a phrase such as, "I counseyll the as the ghostly phesycyon of thy soule..." or "wherefore dere beloued soule I praye the..."[67] The xii profytes is known to have been popular in nunneries and among people connected with religious houses, but it was not confined to them.[68] The two treatises are unusual in betraying no sign of any particular religious interest, a neutrality not often found in fifteenth century devotional works.[69] The Chastysing and The remedy ayenst the troubles of temptacyons are more obviously intended for religious,[70] but provided a lay person was sufficiently advanced in the spiritual life they would be as useful outside as inside the cloister. The boke of conforte, like the later Assaute and conquest of heuen and More's Dyalogue of comforte, is completely neutral; and one reason for the popularity of the tribulation treatises may have been that they dealt with a problem common to all men in a general way.[71]

The various ways in which tribulation profits the soul may be likened, in a very general way, to the stages of growth in the spiritual life, and readers at different stages of spiritual development could concentrate on the aspects of the teaching which they found appropriate. The purgative way is the foundation of the spiritual life,[72] and tribulation purges the soul.[73] It also encourages separation from the cares of this world and fear of offending God,[74] and prevents the soul falling further into sin;[75] more positively, tribulation nourishes the heart.[76] The illuminative way is concerned with a growth in knowledge, with the way in which the soul learns from its sufferings; and The Rote quotes St.Augustine's dictum "Nouerim me nouerim te".[77] Through his tribulation man learns to recognize his own sinful nature[78] and to

comprehend something of God's love for mankind. Thus the soul learns to see its suffering as at least in part deserved, the payment of a small part of the immense debt owed to His Creator.[79] Once tribulation is accepted as a token of God's love—"For whom the Lord Loweth he chasteneth"—[80] the way is open for further progress. Adversity leads the soul to seek "the things that are above",[81] and gradually the soul becomes more malleable, more open to the influence of God's grace, and more eager to pray to Him and to serve Him.[82] Knowing that even suffering is within God's providence,[83] the soul may endure it more easily and though it be drawn into deeper communion with His Maker:"tribulacyon ioyneth mannes soule vnto god".[84]

Unlike The Assaute, The xii profytes and The Rote together with The Chastising, The boke of conforte and Flete's Remedy show no sense of progression and are not arranged so as to show the kind of development outlined above. A well structured and developing theme is not characteristic of the fifteenth nor of many sixteenth-century devotional treatises, and The xii profytes and The Rote are good examples of a characteristic method employed by many authors. Each chapter revolves around a proposition, which is illustrated and repeated with variations. The method was well suited to an unlearned audience; it could be read a section at a time and the reader or hearer was constantly reminded of the main point. The Rote was introduced by four paragraphs of what can only be described as miscellaneous reflections on the subject of tribulation, while the printed versions of The xii profytes[85] were prefaced by two originally independent pices, the Six Masters and the "Nota de pacientia".[86] For some reason the latter, a general encomium of tribulation, was not translated, making it the longest piece of

untranslated Latin found in the English treatises under consideration. It repeats many of the points already noted and emphasizes the purgative aspect and the value of separation from the world.

> Infirmitas enim corporis generat odium mundi & parat amorem dei. Cogit nos vitam presentem tamquam erumnosam peregrinacionem & exilium odio habere & vitam eternam desideranter concupiscere.

The Six Masters is like the kind of "Sprüche" often attributed to Eckhart and his followers,[87] and it uses a series of comparisons to show how much better it is to suffer tribulation then to live a life of perfect devotion, to have the Blessed Virgin and all the saints pray for one, or to gain worldly reward. The summary of the fifth master of the virtues of tribulation may be compared with those of the Orologium and More's Dyalogue of comforte.[88]

Tribulation was considered a necessary condition of salvation—"Per multas tribulationes oportet intrare in regnum dei" is the quotation with which The Rote begins and The xii profytes ends[89] — and there was no alternative way to heaven.[90] The Christian is irrevocably committed to the fight. Man's debts must be paid and those who refuse suffering in this world face the prospect of the eternal pains of hell.[91] The Rote gives the orthodox view, that sins which have been confessed (actually or by intention) will not merit damnation, although "yu muste suffre temporall payne for them here or in purgatorye".[92] This encouraged a tendency to emphasize the quantitative value of tribulation—"after the quantyte of trybulacyon shall be the qualyte & mesur of thy glorye & consolacōn"[93] and not unrelated is the idea frequently expressed that tribulation is a more meritorious and less painful choice than purgatory.[94] As might be expected from one who wrote much against the Reformers in

defence of traditional doctrines, More's Dyalogue of comforte discusses the question of purgatory in more detail than the other tribulation treatises; but observing the distinction between devotional and doctrinal or polemic work, he refuses on this occasion to be drawn into controversy.[95]

Although the experience of tribulation was a necessary part of the salvation process and could help to reduce the pain of purgatory, ultimately salvation depended upon the saving work of Christ. The boke of conforte with its dialogue between Christ and the poor sinner is far more obviously Christocentric than other tribulation treatises of the same period. Christ addressed the sinner in language which echoes the complaints of Christ characteristic of the passion literature. It is far more personal and emotive than the rather impersonal and unemotional style of most of the other treatises:

> ... I say you that all my life hath ben in dolours and my yeres ben ended in wepynges/to the ende that ye lerne for to bere pacyentlye your peyne and labour & that ye ayde and helpe me for to bere my crosse. Wepe/wepe your synnes. Offre to me in the place of the droppes of my precyous blode the whyche I haue shedde for you abundauntly clere teris for to washe and to clense your conscyence so purely that I there may haue my dwellynge place: and to the entent that ye knowe the loue whych I haue shewed vnto you: I demaunde and aske now of you what thynge may I more do for you than I haue done/and yet dayly I ceasse nat to gyue you goode inspyracyons for to withdrawe you frome synne I sende you the goodes of the erthe and somtyme of trybulacyons to call you ageyne. 96

Obvious references to Christ's Passion are not common in The xii profytes, The Rote or More's Dyalogue of comforte.[97] There are two direct references to the Passion in The xii profytes. The first offers a summary of Christ's sufferings and dwells, as did so much devotion centred in the Passion, on His wounds:

> For here he || toke mankynde/in whichehe suffred many tribulacyons detraccyons/blasphemyes/scornes/repreues slaunders/hunger/thurste & colde/& many betyngs/sharpe scourgynges/many thousandes of great woundes/and was nayled vpon ye crosse bytwene two theves/& dyed the shamefullest deth y^t^ the iewes coude ordeyn for hym. And after yt he was rysen from deth & styed vp in to heuen he kepte his woundes as for tokens that yu sholdest knowe that he wold have mynde of the...
> Loo I have wryten the in my handes/yt is in all my woundes whiche I suffred for ye love of the & mankynde.[98]

The second example presents Christ as an exemplar of suffering and introduces the simile of the true knight, around which a number of images cluster:

> And yf the smytynge of trybulacyon in the syde be sharpe & greuous to suffre/beholde our lorde Jesu Chryst thy maker & thy brother wounded in the syde for thy love/& yu shalte suffre it the more easely/ as a true knyght whom he seeth his lordes woundes/ [he felith not his owen woundis].[99]

Sometimes the tribulations are seen as knights of Christ sent to defend the soul against temptation; on one occasion the soul besieged by tribulation is delivered by God's aid;[100] and finally, as the knight must be proved in battle before he is dubbed, so must the soul be tried by tribulation before it can be rewarded.[101] The remaining references to Christ's work are perhaps less direct and they are all derived from biblical metaphors for, or types of, Christ. These include the third, fourth and fifth manners of purgation—the gardener pruning his vines, the threshing of corn and the pressing of grapes,—[102] and there are several references to the <u>Christus medicus</u> theme.[103] More describes various types of tribulation as "medicinable or els more than medicinable", and later introduces a discussion justifying the use of physic;[104] discussion as to how far medicine was to be trusted was frequently raised in the <u>ars moriendi</u> literature. The final image

of Christ to be considered is that of a nurse or mother:

> For as the mother with the shylde cheweth harde meat/ the whiche the chylde may not chewe/and draweth it into her body/where that meat is turned in to mylke to nourysshynge of the chylde. So Christ that in holy wryte is cleped our mother/for the greatnes of his tender love that he hath to vs/he chewed for vs bytter paynes/harde wordes/ repreues & slaundres/with bytternes of his passyon that he suffred for us to nourysshe vs/& strayneth vs ghostly by ensample of hym to suffre trybulacyons & aduersytees of this worlde.105

It is characteristic of late medieval devotion that the references to Christ should concentrate on His Passion, and the first of the quotations from The xii profytes given above is an expanded version of the Latin and of the first group of manuscript sources.[106]

Most of these biblical metaphors were fairly well known, but one which was very widely used and seems to have been particularly connected with the theme of tribulation is that used in the second manner of purgation, the purging of gold by fire, or of iron by a file.[107] The purgative value of tribulation was widely accepted; but it encouraged other virtues as well, notably patience and meekness, of which Christ was the perfect exemplar,[108] but Job is frequently cited as an example of patience.[109] Other virtues referred to, but again neither explained nor elaborated upon, include obedience and trusting God.[110] The promise that man will not be tempted above what he will be able to bear[111] is reiterated: "as tribulacyon encreaseth/so god multiplyeth grace & virtue". But just as the soldier must be ready armed before the attack, "so is it spede full afore tribulacyon yt the herte be heted with perfyte love & charite/that temptacyon of tribulacyon may be suffred ye more pacyently & gladly".[112] The more endowed with virtues a man is, the more he will profit from tribulation, which rather enhances the virtues

he already possesses than creates new ones. Unless it is well taken, tribulation will profit a soul nothing.[113] The only virtue which may be seen as positively encouraged by tribulation is hope, which takes the form of the expectation of the heavenly reward promised to those who suffer patiently.[114] Only More's Dyalogue of comforte questions but does not alter the traditional view that tribulation is a good and necessary experience, a gift of God.[115]

More's work is far longer than The xii profytes or The Rote, and would hardly be appreciated by anyone unable to read it for himself. The leisure of greater length and the lack of any tightly-woven driving argument[116] encourages the discussion of topics raised in the course of the dialogue between Vincent, whose role is mainly that of prompter and questioner, and his uncle Anthony. These include the question of purgatory, the nature of pusillanimity and scrupulosity (subjects dealt with more authoritatively but less amusingly by Bonde in his Devoute Epystle), and the long digression on suicide.[117] The mood, as might be expected of a work written in prison, is reflective; and the blending of truth and fiction, his mixture of personal history with allegorical touches and his use of "merry tales"[118] in a serious work provides a variety, a reality of setting[119] and a personal interest[120] not to be found in the fifteenth-century compositions which used allegory and exempla in a more formal way. The care over setting is characteristic of the dialogues of Cicero, Seneca and Lucian, which were often translated by humanist writers.[121] Unlike most of the fifteenth-century treatises, we not only know the author's name, but much about his personal life, through his own correspondence and through the lives of Roper, Harpsfield, and

Ro:Ba.[122] It is difficult to avoid reading More's own circumstances, reminiscent of Boethius' when he wrote De Consolatione, into his text and to wonder, for instance, whether Dame Alice More was the model for the shrewd wife and the woman who found the prison room so claustrophobic.[123] More's thoughts were often with his family during his imprisonment and it would be surprising if they did not find some place in his work.[124]

Just as the setting and the "merry tales" suggest the humanists' care for detail and concern to make a treatise interesting and occasionally entertaining as well as edifying,[125] so More, like Erasmus and Lupset but unlike Colet and most medieval authors,[126] was content to use the "goodly sayings" of the pagan philosophers in a devout treatise. He considered that their lack of Christian knowledge made them inadequate, but neither useless nor necessarily dangerous, guides to life.[127] Apart from Aristotle, Cicero and Seneca classical authors are not often cited in the more popular medieval devotional treatises. Of those three More quotes only Seneca by name, but he included references to Martial's Epigrams and to Pliny, and Æsop's fables are quoted four times; his own fable of the ass, the fox and the wolf is of a similar kind, lightly satirical and with an obvious moral.[128] St. Augustine is the patristic author most often quoted in the Dyalogue, but saints Ambrose, Bernard, Cassian, Cyprian and Jerome are also referred to - a highly traditional list of authorities.[129] Gerson too seems to have been influential, and although not quoted Boethius' De Consolatione may well have been in his mind.[130] By far his most important source of quotation was the Bible, with a preference for the Pauline epistles, while Psalm XC (Vulgate) plays an

important part in the Dyalogue's structure, almost acting as a refrain linking together the various types of temptation.[131] Important though these literary influences are, More's main debt was probably to the spirituality of the "Holy munkes...of the charter house order."[132] In the Dyalogue the peace of mind and quiet confidence of Anthony seem to reflect the mood of More, "well content to goe, if God call me hence tomorowe".[133]

More's views on tribulation differ little from the earlier treatises; like them he emphasizes the necessity of suffering and the profits to be gained from patient endurance of it. Though he analyses different types of tribulation and forms of temptation in rather more detail than The xii profytes or The Rote, the approach is still reflective and theoretical, not practical.[134] He stresses the importance of contrition and tears, confession and penance, and describes some of the seven deadly sins, the summons of "the gryselye cruell hangman death" and scenes from Christ's life and Passion in a manner which could be paralleled from a large number of fifteenth-century treatises.[135] The advice given in The Dyalogue, II xvi, on private devotion seems to be largely autobiographical,[136] and offers a fine summary of the mood and content of late medieval piety, as does his rather more world-denying "Godly meditation":

> Geue me thy grace good Lorde to set the worlde at nought.
> To set my mynde fast vppon the
> And not to hange vppon the blast of mennes mouthes.
> To be content to be solitary.
> Not to long for worldy comapny.
> Lytle & little vtterly to cast of ye worlde.
> And ridde my mynde of all the busynesse therof...
> To knowe myne owne vilitee & wretchednes.
> To humble and meken myselfe vnder the myghty hand of God.
> To bewayl my sinnes passed.
> For the purgyng of them, paciently to suffer adversitie.
> Gladly to beare my purgatorye here.

> To be ioyful of tribulacions.
> To walke the narowe way that leadeth to lyfe.
> To beare the crosse with Christ.
> To have the laste thynge in remembrance.
> To have euer afore myne eye, my death
> A death, that is euer at hande.
> To make death no straunger to me.
> To forsee and consider the everlasting fier of hell.
> To pray for pardone before the iudge come.
> To have continually in minde, the passion that Christ suffred for me.
> For his benefites vncessantly to giue him thankes.
> To bye the time again, that I before have lost...
> Of worldly substance, frendes, libertye, life, and al, to sette the losse
> at right nought, for the winning of Christ.
> To thinke my most enemies my beste frendes.
> For the bretherne of Ioseph, coulde neuer have done him so much good with their loue and favor, as they did wt their malice and hatred.
> These mindes are more to be desired of everyman, than all the treasure of all the princes and kinges christen & heathen, were it gathered and layde together all vpon one heape.[137]

The world-denying strain of medieval piety is reflected in the Dyalogue of comforte's warnings on the insecurity of money, lands and possessions, and the folly of seeking them for personal gain.[138] Persecution is seen as a means of exposing men's true attitude to outward goods: "Non potestis Deo servire et mammonae."[139] But while most of the content takes up the standard moral denunciations of the medieval devout treatise - usually written for religious, whose business ought not to have been with worldly goods - there are signs of a greater social awareness. More recognizes the practical necessity for men of substance to supply the materials and a market for labour and produce; "For surely ye riche mannes substaunce, is ye wel spring of the poore mannes liuing."[140] He makes it clear that the wealthy are not always courting damnation, nor are the poor always virtuous; it need not be wrong to possess riches but it is always wrong to covet them.[141] Of

his other work it has been said that he "anticipated some of the most penetrating social analysis of the revolutionary thirties by almost a generation"[142] - the Dyalogue's teaching is consistent with that of his earlier works.

As so often, what may be described as the catholic tradition was continued in the writings of the English recusants. The second part of Person's Christian Directory[143] deals with impediments which hinder or reduce the effectiveness of the Christian's witness. The third impediment takes up the problem of the fear among the English Catholic community of the 1570's and 1580's.[144] Although better arranged, being clearly set out, with introductions, headings and sub-sections, and going into more detail on some points, such as how to behave in tribulation, than the earlier treatises, Persons adds little that is new. The only conspicuous difference is his greater use of scriptural quotation, not only verses but whole passages.[145] Tribulation is seen as the mark of the just man, of the elect, indeed, for a man in adversity may comfort himself that suffering is a sign of predestination.[146] The godly person cannot escape the battle - if not against external enemies then against inward passions.[147] The list of reasons why God sends affliction gives an indication of how much Persons was indebted to earlier thinking on the subject.[148] Tribulation increases the merit of this life and therefore the glory of the future reward; it draws men from love of this world; it is a medicine to cure, or purge their diseases; it preserves them from future sin and lessens the pains of purgatory; it proves men; it makes them run to God[149] and it demonstrates and makes men appreciate God's power to deliver them; it exercises the Christian

virtues, makes men more resolute to serve God and helps them to grow more like Christ.

In the third section he reiterates several of these points, but with variations and additions intended to comfort those in tribulation. God, he declares, has ordained suffering to be "the ordinary meanes of his servantes saluation, the badge and livery of his Sonne; the highway to heaven vnder the standard of his Crosse".[150] Persons reminds the sufferer that all his pain is within God's providence; it is laid on him by Christ and the quantity of his suffering is a measure of God's love; the sufferer must trust God and he will be helped by His grace. The emphasis again falls on the consolation of the reward which suffering will merit provided it is well taken:

> The hole scripture/all the wrytinges of the fathers/ and all the deades and actes of the holy men are consenting vnto thys that those thynges whyche are most noysome are most profytable to theym that belewe/so that they be well suffered. 151

Like The xii profytes, The Rote and even More's Dyalogue of comforte Person's attempt at consolation relies almost entirely upon the promised reward and upon the rationalization and explanation of various aspects of tribulation.

A Kempis's brief summary of the uses of adversity[152] is traditional enough in content, but the negative contemptus mundi element is balanced by the positive emphasis on what man can learn about himself and particularly how, in his helplessness, he can through prayer draw closer to God.[153] The following chapter shows how no-one can escape temptation, but how its effects may be reduced by firm resistance at the very beginning and how by enduring it patiently a man may progress in virtue.[154] By emphasizing the way in which tribulation helps a soul to grow in virtue and draw nearer to God, and omitting all mention of the heavenly reward

as a compensation for earthly suffering, A Kempis offers a new understanding of tribulation, which may best be seen in the chapter "Of the royall & victorious waye of the ~~tidy~~ holy crosse".[155] Christ's call to his disciples, to deny themselves, to take up their cross and follow Him, is contrasted with the far more awful words of judgement: "Go ye fro me for ever, to be in perpetuall fyre";[156] and the way of the cross is shown to be not only the safer, but the most truly joyful and glorious way to inward peace and salvation. It is the only way, and since it is inescapable it is better embraced willingly than violently against the will. Neither the saints nor Christ Himself could escape suffering. But the way is not without solace; Christ offers both help and comfort, and provided the soul will trust God there is the promise of consolation, perpetual life and joy.[157] The xii profytes, The Rote, The Chastising, Flete and More all at some stage seek to answer the problem of suffering in terms of an equation whereby the heavenly reward - never more closely defined - will be commensurate with the amount of suffering endured on earth. A Kempis deals with the problem in a more personal way. He is sympathetic and understanding in his treatment of the subtleties of temptation and its varying effects on the individual; and he resolves the problem of tribulation not in terms of an equation, but in terms of a progressive personal relationship with Christ, a relationship animated by love.[158]

Two things link the Protestant treatise, Of the Preparation to the crosse, and to Deathe, and of the comforte vnder the crosse and deathe,[159] to A Kempis's chapter on the victorious way of the cross: the first is its refusal to make suffering a matter of merit deserving reward:-

> And when god doth afflicte his people for theyr synnes, he dothe not therfore afflycte them, that by theyr afflictions, they shuld satisfie for theyr synnes. For the passion and sufferynge of Iesus Christe only, is the raunsome and expiation of our synnes. But therfore he afflicteth, that by affliction he maye dryue synners to repentaunce. For repentaunce or penance cometh fyrste by the knowlege of synne: and then by faythe, that our synne is forgyuen vs for goddes promise sake: and of faith burgeth forthe the callinge on the name of god. 160—

and the second is the emphasis upon the cross, not so much as conformity to the example of Christ in His sufferings (although this aspect is not ignored)[161] as conformity to the word of God:—

> For the gospell is the worde of the crosse, who soeuer preacheth it trewely, and confesse it, muste nedes suffre afflyction. 162

The greater part of the Preparation to the Crosse is made up of direct quotation or paraphrase of the Scriptures. Catenas of quotations from the Bible are used to prove, illustrate or justify the main points, and the margins are peppered with references in the approved Protestant style. The long final chapter (xv) provides the reader with an armoury of quotations suitable for the refutation of all manner of temptations by the Devil. The same method, of allowing scripture to speak for itself, had been used a little earlier in The Fountayne or well of lyfe, but the almost complete lack of headings makes this a difficult book to use.[163] However dull this weight of exclusive biblicism may seem to the modern reader, it is clear that then the Bible, until so recently banned to the English reader, was not only regarded as authoritative, but was also immensely popular.[164]

The unrelieved biblicism - there are no "merry tales" or exempla or even quotations from the fathers or saints' writings - together with the author's determination to preach the gospel of truth makes Of the preparation to

the crosse sound much more earnest than the earlier works. Earnestness was a common but, as Hughe's Troubled mans medicine demonstrates,[165] by no means inevitable characteristic of Protestant writers. Although he does not indulge in the kind of bitter anti-Roman polemic found in Turner's slightly later Huntyng and fynding out of the Romishe fox, Becon's Relikes of Rome or the numerous anti-papal tracts of the 1530's, the author makes sure that his readers will be able to distinguish the true cross from any strange one: "as prescript dayes of fastynge, vowed chastitie, shurtes of heane, disguised garmentes, and such other trifles".[166] Many of the traditional points are made-about all tribulation being within God's providence, the promise that man will not be tempted above what he can bear, the need for patience and resort to prayer-but the underlying sola fideism frequently alters their interpretation. God's providence, for instance, is seen to extend beyond His conduct of tribulation; it becomes the undergirding principle of all creation.[167] God is not only the dispenser of tribulation, which does not just happen but is sent for some good reason, but Creator of the world, who cares for all His creatures. Thus medicine, made from things created by God, may be used as an instrument of God, but it cannot be effective without faith in the Creator.[168] God is seen as actively involved in the salvation of men, and tribulation is not a matter of ill-luck, fate or chance, nor is it sent to destroy but to save man. It is God's way of proving him and strengthening his faith, or of calling him to repentance. Seen in this way, with faith, there is no reason to despair, for the cross "sanctifyeth, and declareth goddes favoure. Happy is he that vnderstandeth... howe god euen in striking vs, wylleth vs wel",[169] and there is further comfort in the knowledge that Christ too was tempted and suffered adversity.[170]

Tribulation was not just to be accepted passively and endured in expectation of a heavenly reward. The man in adversity must pray to God.[171] After a general introduction of quotations and examples from Scripture of those who prayed to God in adversity the author goes on to explain what prayer is and to insist on the need for it. He defines it in terms of a request made to God or a calling on the name of the Lord, and goes on to show by means of scriptual quotation, whose prayers are heard of God and to define the parts of prayer - the promise, faith, the desire, to ask in the name of Jesus and thanksgiving - each of which is briefly explained.[172] The wish to define and explain is again characteristic of the Protestant desire to ensure that Christians should understand what they believe. The reader is also warned against being tempted in adversity to use prayer in a way which dictates to God the time or manner of relief [173] - a warning which suggests considerable understanding of human weaknesses. As well as praying to God the man in adversity must trust Him, believe in His presence with him, believe in His promises, and in His power and willingness to forgive.[174]

Apart from the increased biblicism of the Protestant treatises, their other distinguishing feature is their emphasis upon faith, in particular the faith that God will forgive men's sins for Christ's sake. Tribulation therefore is not something which earns a heavenly reward, nor is it taken up into love as in the Orologium or A Kempis, but it is a summons, a sign and a promise:

> God calleth to repentaunce, and by affliction he in a manner speketh and declareth, that he wylle forgyue. For as baptisme, or eatynge of the lordes body, do wytnesse vnto vs, that we are forgyuen: euen so nerehande affliction maye be called a certain sacrament. For it sygnifieth that god wyll forgyue... euen as other sacramentes haue the worde of the element: so to affliction is the word annexed, whereby is promysed grace. 175

Adversity frequently brings a man to repentance, which is defined as contrition coupled with faith.[176] But once he has repented, and provided he has faith and believes in God's promise of forgiveness, tribulation may encourage great hope and desire for the life of the world to come.[177] In the "consolacyon for troubled consciences" there is an excellent summary of the Christian hope, which sees it not as the expectation of a post mortem reversal as in The xii profytes or The Rote[178] but in terms of Christ's resurrection in which the believer will share.[179]

It is worth noting the translator's dedication Of the preparation to the Crosse to Thomas Cromwell because, he says:

> I evydently perceyue, that you are endewed not only with godly knowledge and doctryne, but also haue a right fervent zeale, good mynd, and desyre to set forth all suche thynge as may be for the vtilitie helpe and comforte of the hole congregation and churche of this realme. 180

The work is translated and put into print for the good of the common weal. This desire to advance England's knowledge of and adherence to the true faith was in succeeding years to encourage considerable national pride and the sense that England was in some special way under God's providence.[181] However, with the hardening of the Protestant - Catholic opposition, particularly under Mary's and Elizabeth's reigns, tribulation treatises seem to have flourished, especially among Protestant authors. A full treatment of the subject was to be found in Otto Werdmüller's A spyrytuall and most precyouse pearle, translated by Coverdale and first printed in 1550.[182] It is a classic exposition of the Protestant doctrine of tribulation, emphasizing the need for faith and repentance but including a great deal of traditional material, of which the most notable are the numerous similitudes showing how God

chastens and proves the soul in adversity.[183] Some tribulation treatises were a direct outcome of and written for those caught up in the political situation. The party enduring persecution is encouraged by its own priests or ministers to stand firm and to use the occasion to advance in knowledge of the faith and grow in virtue. Hide's A consolatione Epistle, printed in 1579, is a summons to the English Catholics to suffer for God's cause and to preserve the unity of the Church:

> This cause is so important that none can suffer for it but by the gratious gifte of God, and God gyueth this gyfte to none but to his speciall friends. This ioyneth you neare vnto God, causeth you to set lesse by the worlde, diminisheth your paynes in Purgatorie, and encreaseth your finall rewarde in heaven. 184

Some twenty years earlier under the Marian persecution Protestants had sought to comfort their followers. Bradford's Exhortation to the Brethren in England,[185] like many of his letters,[186] contains much that is traditional. He opens by reminding his readers that they are strangers and pilgrims in the world and that all God's children have tasted adversity in their journey to heaven. Among the commodities of tribulation he mentions that it brings knowledge of God and of self and that the cross of affliction is a means whereby God increases virtues in us. However, in one sense Bradford resorts to the idea of the post-mortem reversal of earlier Catholic writers, in his promise that the apparent triumphs of evil - identified with the Roman Church - would at the last be reversed. Becon makes the same point in his Comfortable Epistle[187] and adds much more in the way of anti-Roman polemic. Bradford and Becon saw England's captivity under Mary as God's just punishment for the country's failure to live the true faith. Their present sufferings were a collective warning to repent, in much the same way that the fifteen tokens of Doom

were to be the culminating tribulations before the end of all things: "For in those days shall be tribulation, such as there hath not been like from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never shall be". [188]

The Contemplation of Death

The tribulation treatises, with their justification of suffering and their teaching on how man was to behave in adversity, were probably intended less for those who were actually enduring suffering than as a preparation for it. Apart from the chance of adverse fortune, political or financial, physical suffering from illness or wounds was not only more painful, unrelieved by modern drugs or surgery, and more public, since the sick person would be nursed at home, in houses which generally had far fewer separate rooms, but it was not infrequently fatal. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries anyone who reached maturity would almost certainly have known death in his own family, death from illness, or the death of an aged relation or more frequently an infant's death.[189] The victims of public hanging or execution remained on the gibbets or exhibited on stakes long after they were dead.[190] The fact of death was commonplace, an ever present reminder of man's mortality.[191] The churches too were crowded with memorials to the dead, which ranged from the ornate chantry chapels and cadaver tombs of the great cathedral and abbey churches to brasses of shrouded effigies or skeletons and simple stone memorials in local parish churches. During the course of the liturgical year many a preacher would, no doubt, have something to say about death.[192] It was obviously even more important in the case of death than of suffering that men should be prepared and equipped to face it, and this is what much of the literature about death was intended to do. But although death was undoubtedly considered an important subject it was not the only nor the most frequent preoccupation of devout souls during the period.[193]

Before embarking on a more detailed survey one point must be made: nearly every modern writer on the literature and art of death has dealt with it either from a European point of view or has at least made use of examples drawn from European sources.[194] From her study of the English religious lyrics of the middle ages Miss Woolf has been led to question the application of Huizinga's conclusions to England,[195] conclusions which have sometimes been applied rather uncritically.[196] A study of English devotional literature confirms the view that, despite the influence and borrowings from continental sources, during the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the native tradition eschewed the excesses of morbidity and the fascination with the more macabre aspects of death found, for example, in France.[197] The literature and art of death does not seem to have occupied the English presses - even including English translations produced in France - to anything like the same extent as it did the French presses between about 1470 and 1540. In this chapter emphasis will wherever possible be placed upon English illustrations - that is, examples available in England even if not of English provenance.

Memento mori

The only sure defence against death was to be prepared for it, replenished with good deeds, shriven, and at peace with man and God. For those whose lives were not cut off by accident or illness there were natural warnings of advancing years. Too often the young and lusty delay for too long the contemplation of death, saying:

> They shulde lyue in thoughte and care for drede of deathe, That be olde and croked, and stoupyng to the erthward/that haue a lyghte shakynge heed/hangynge chekes/ and holowe eies/ a continuall droppynge nose/ a fewe tethe and rotten...[198]

These signs show none of the crude physical detail of a poem such as "Burgeis, thou haste so blowen atte the cole" nor the elaboration found in a lyric such as "From þe tyme þat we were bore",[199] and they seem to have been a far less popular form of warning in devotional treatises than among poets and preachers.[200] The treatise writers also ignored the possibilities of the old man's warning;[201] they seem to have avoided this type of dramatic confrontation, which was so congenial to artists and to the writers of lyrics. They did, however, make considerable use of the signs of death, more effective as a warning to repent because more urgent, decisive and final. In themselves the signs listed[202] are no more religious than in books of practical instruction such as The boke of knowledge/whether a syke person beynge in perylle/shall lyue, or dye & c., Prognosticacion drawen out of Ipocras or The treaures of pore men;[203] it is the use to which they are put that invests them with religious significance. The list in The mirroure of golde concludes: "And the forsayde signes shalbe neghbours doynge servise to deth". Death here is not, as in the medieval treatises, a simple physical fact but an event of eternal significance. The obscurity in H.R.Robbins' useful article, "Signs of Death in Middle English",[204] is due to his inability to maintain the distinction between medical and religious lists of signs, whereas it seems to me that the difference lies not in the lists of signs but in the differing attitudes to death. In the medical treatises the emphasis is upon the signs and the way in which they may be treated to try to avert death; in the devout treatises the signs are less important than the death they herald.

For the most part the signs of death are given as a simple list of

things which warn that death is imminent. In the Speculum Vitae Christi Christ shows signs of death just before he utters the seventh word from the cross and dies. More uses them in a more effective way than most when he makes his reader imagine what it would be like to feel those signs now, in his own body:

> ....yf thou dye no worse death, yet at the least wise lying in thy bedde, thy hed shooting, thy backe akyng, thy vaynes beating, thine heart panting, thy throte ratelyng, thy fleshe trembling, thy mouth gaping, thy nose sharping, thy legges coling, thy fingers fimbling, thy breath shorting, all thy strength fainting, thy lyfe vanishing, and thy death drawyng on...[205]

He goes on to relate the signs even more closely to the reader's own experience by asking him to remember the pain of some illness he has suffered, and warning that the pain will be greatly intensified at death. Somehow men must be made to realize that death is not just a remote possibility, but that it will happen to them all and that it will feel like this. Later in the century and during the following century this imaginative anticipation of the circumstances surrounding death was elaborated and explored by St. Ignatius Loyola, by John Donne and by Luis de Granada, who wrote:

> imagine yourself sometime all alone in the face of the agonies of death, and consider the things that would most likely trouble you at that hour.... For one blow that can be struck but once should be well rehearsed.[206]

Interest in death was not confined to the aged or the ill but, as Owst has said,[207] it casts its shadow back across the whole of life. The subject though important was not, to judge by the surviving printed works, by any means an obsession in England; the first half of the sixteenth century was not an age which "saw the skull beneath the skin" all the time. The subject of death can be treated in many ways, but the

most direct was the simple memento mori injunction. Because it was so simple the memento mori motif was frequently fused with other themes, forming a starting point, for example, to the ubi sunt or quid profuit themes, or involved in the idea of the body's decay or in the contemptus mundi outlook; it is rarely found alone in the devout treatises. Most of them, however, were agreed upon the importance of the recollection of death, and authorities cited in support of this view included biblical ones such as Ecclesiasticus VII: 36, XXVIII:6, XXXVIII:20 - 3; the philosophers Plato, Socrates as quoted in Cicero's Tusculan Disputations I.xvi, and Seneca Epistulae Morales XVI, and, among the Fathers, saints Augustine, Gregory and Bernard.[208]

The most interesting thing about this otherwise unremarkable list of characteristic medieval authorities is that the emphasis tends to fall upon the wisdom of the pagan philosophers and their discernment of the subject's importance: "Tota vita philosophorum, meditatio mortis est".[209] Thomas Lupset was particularly impressed by the pagans' philosophy of death and the practical courage this inspired,[210] but pagan exemplars were quoted by Legrand, Dionysius the Carthusian and in the Cordiale well before the influence of the humanists reawakened interest in the classics.

The value of the memento mori was well summarized but without approval in Certeine prayers:

> se how many meditacyons: howe many bokes: how many meanes: howe many remedies: are ymagined/that by the memorye of this ane euil [death] they may fear vs from synne/make vs dispyse the world/alleuiate oure passyons/& euylls/andcomfort theym that are vexed by the comparyson of this horrible & great euyll/whiche for all that is necessarye. 211

The first benefit claimed is that recollection of death will make men afraid to sin and so help to keep them in the way of life. The same

point was made by many authors, including Isidore, Legrand ,Whitford and in The mirroure of Golde and the Cordiale,[212] and it is perhaps the most obvious lesson of the memento mori teaching. Coupled with the recollection of death as a warning against sin is the exhortation, frequently found, to live in a state of constant preparedness for death as though each day were the last, and thus the memento mori is taken up into the carpe diem theme.[213] The second and third benefits of the remembrance of death noted in Certeine prayers were that it encouraged man to despise the world and that it helped to alleviate the fear of death, two subjects frequently discussed in the devout treatises. In order to despise the world, however, it was necessary to be cut off from any involvement in it, to hold no affection for the things of this world, riches, position or possessions, and here the memento mori merges into the contemptus mundi theme: "he lyghtly dyspisyth all thingis: that thinketh alwayes to dye". [214] The third benefit, that the recollection of death alleviates fear, since what is familiar by anticipation is never so alarming as the unexpected and unknown, is one of the reasons which seems to have prompted Whitford to write A dayly exercyse and experyence of dethe. Both Whitford and Lupset expose the foolishness of fearing that which is inevitable.[215] If familiarity and inevitability were rather negative comforters against death, there were several authors who offered more positive comforts in the vision of death as a joyful release, the means of entry into eternal life.[216] Protestant authors were particularly concerned to remove from their readers the fear of death, and the author of To teche a man to dye was critical of traditional teaching, which he thought played upon man's natural fear.[217] Suso had lamented that few were well disposed to die:

> The whiche (with) grete abstraccyone for ye worlde and devocyone of herte coveyten to dye for ye desyre of everlastynge life and with alle hir inwarde affecyouns desyren to be with Cryste, 218 —

but in the closing prayer of the Orologium the description of the reception of the disciples' souls into heaven has about it a joyousness which dispels all trace of reluctance and fear.[219] An outburst of the enthusiastic language associated with mysticism is not surprising at the end of a work like the Orologium, but it is surprising to find Christ referred to as "the spouse" in Protestant tratises,[220] and to find writing as powerful as that of the seventh chapter in the first part of the "Concolasyon for troubled consciences",[221] which must not only have comforted its readers but inspired them to face death with confidence:

> Truely whyle thou herest that Iesu Christ the sonne of God hath (by his most holy touching and passyon) consecrate and hallowed all oure evylles/and suffrynges/ye the deth itselfe most extremest and greitest of all other/ hath blyssed the curse/ glorifyed the slaunder made ryche the povertye/ so that deth is compelled to be the gate of lyfe/ curse/the begynnyng of blyssyng.222

The only way in which the memento mori finds expression on its own rather than as the starting point of or an element in other themes is in the form of an exercise: the ways in which the individual can imagine or practise death and the benefits which accrue from such a contemplation.[223] Richard Whitford's A dayly exercyse and experyence of dethe, printed by John Wayland in 1537,[224] is the fullest exposition of the memento mori theme to be published during the 1530's, and it is also one of the earliest attempts in English to treat the subject at all fully and systematically.[225] The treatise is in two parts: the first part is concerned to banish the fear of death (a subject to be considered in

more detail later) and to encourage the reader to welcome death;[226] the second part offers a more practical form of "dayly exercyse" although it is liberally provided with theoretical definitions of words such as exercise, experience and death. After discussing various forms of death such as spiritual death and death to sin, Whitford introduces:

> another maner of deth called of lerned men, meditatio mortis (that is to saye) the cogytacyon, thought and remembraunce/the busynes, tractacyon or intreatye, mencyon, & disputacyon of dethe.[227]

It is by frequent remembrance, discussion and exercise that a thing becomes known, and what is familiar and understood should not be frightening. Having stated the value of such recollection, to prepare the reader for his last end and to put away sin from the soul and replenish it with all good virtues,[228] Whitford at last introduces the first of his two methods of meditation on and exercise of death.

The first method is for the reader to remember or imagine someone condemned to death, to reflect that every deadly sin committed merits more pain than the cruellest physical distress, and to think what he would do to save his soul were he to find himself thus condemned. Or he may remember a death-bed scene, the weakness and temptations of the dying man, so familiar from numerous woodcuts and <u>ars moriendi</u> books and, no doubt, from actual experience.[229] Whitford, like the author of the <u>Exornatorium curatorum</u>,[230] is here recommending the use of the <u>ars moriendi</u> while a person is in good health to help him prepare for death and its temptations. Having persuaded him of the need to be prepared for death, Whitford then provides the reader with a dramatic monologue to say to himself: "I wil now in helth study, & exercise my selfe wt this fourme:

& specially how I shal answere ye lothly beste ye fende".[231] This calls upon the Lord, the "blessed lady mother of mercy", his good angel, patrons and his own saints to help him at his end; his sins are offered up "vnto ye ston there to be polysshed, rubbed, & scoured|| (that stone is the holy sacrement of penaunce)",[232] and so washed away by the merits of Christ's blood. Paraphrasing a familiar prayer he continues:

> I put yt precyous blode with his bytter passyon and his most cruel/and shamefull deth/ bytwene me & all the synnes & that ever I dyd in thought, worde , or dede, & betwexe me and his wrath and displeasure|| 233

The fiend is challenged to produce any unconfessed sins, but is powerless to harm where there is "desyre of perfect contricyon", and finally all his sin is bequeathed and committed to the cruel beast. The monologue ends with a recapitulation of the death scene, " as yf you were than at the poynt of deth", a cry for forgiveness and the final committal:

> In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum: redemisti me/domine deus veritatis. In nomine patris & filii, & spiritus sancti. Amen. Makynge a crosse wt a holy candell yf you haue it present... And thus do .iii. tymes together/and so go vnto reste as you shulde || go vnto your grace. 234

This rehearsal of the <u>ars moriendi</u> followed daily, a requirement only practicable for religious such as the nuns of Syon for whom it was written [235] but easily adaptable to weekly or less frequent use by lay-people, would familiarize the reader with the thought of death and help to allay fear in that way. But the monologue also seeks to remove the fear of sin,[236] one of the main causes of the fear of death, and to encourage the reader to have faith in the merits of Christ's blood and the sacraments.[237] Unlike the second exercise this one requires no

contemplative gifts; it could be followed by beginners in religion and by lay-people, and its outline was simple enough to be easily grasped.

The second exercise, described as "more hygh & excellent", seeks not only to prepare the reader for death and to allay his fear but to give him "an auidiouse & gredye appetite to thurst & wysh for deth";[238] it provides the knowledge, art and "very practyse of dethe". Whitford begins with a conventional definition of death as a "departynge in sondre/ of the soule and the bodye",[239] and he goes on to show how the mystical experience of such holy people as St. Catherine of Sienna, where the body loses all its physical senses, is, according to this definition, an experience of death. For further information he refers the reader to another of his works (a not infrequent practice of Whitford), A werke of preparacyon, but this does not prevent his giving a brief summary of the familiar threefold remembrance - what I was, what I am and what I shall be[240] - in practice he ignores the last. The foulness of man's generation is handled in the usual contemptus mundi manner, but the consideration of man's present state takes the unusual form of a comparison between the infirmity, ignorance and villainy of the sinner and the power, wisdom and love of Christ, without which man would be "but an hethen hounde". The exercise goes on to consider how much He did for man, and it gives an outline of Christ's life and work in rather more detail than the forty-word summary given at the end of the Werke for housholders, to which the reader is directed. The mention of Christ's Ascension leads into a lengthy description of heaven, clearly intended to sound attractive but in fact earth-bound by Whitford's wordy parallelisms, contrasts and lists. It lacks the sense of spontaneous joy found, for example, in many of

Thomas More's letters, at the end of the Orologium or in Cyprian's Sermons of Mortality. In this narration of Christ's life and description of heaven, some nine pages in all, Whitford seems to have lost the thread of the exercise and embarked upon teaching which seems more suitable for householders or beginners in religion than for contemplatives. From meditation on heaven and the Trinity the reader is abruptly summoned, without any obvious preparation, to the climax of the exercise:

> Sehowe (I saye) and take hede where and with whome you be. And here kne||lynge or rather lyenge downe prostrate vpon your face: remayne byde & dwell here styll/here expyre & dye starke deed/ & vtterly that no soule ne spiryte be lefte/ or byde in your body/but all for the tyme so ferre departed/not onely from all thynges of the world, but also from the selfe body yt there lyenge as a lumpe of cley be lefte without any senses or wyttes. 241

From this description of the body's trance-like state Whitford returns to the subject of fear, which occupied the first part of the Dayly exercyse, showing how death cannot possibly hurt the body - bodily sensations are numbed in such a trance as in death-and going on to offer various comforts against the fearsome presence of the Devil.

The first exercise bears some resemblance to parts of the ars moriendi books, and they could well have been used in conjunction with the first or last section of the exercise. Although it is not highly schematized as later meditations of this nature were to become, it would probably have been of practical use to the less intelligent and imaginative sisters of Syon and, used less frequently, to lay people. His werke for housholders and A werke of preparacyon show that Whitford was at his best when dealing with practical affairs, the monastic vows, devotions during mass or the organization of household devotion. The first exercise

seems to succeed in showing how fear of death may be dispelled and in providing a practical form of daily remembrance of death. The second exercise, however, does not seem so successful, and one reason for this may have been some lack of insight into the higher reaches of comtemplative life[242] - a limitation which Erasmus seems to have shared.[243] There is no real indication given as to how the reader is expected to achieve the trance-like state which lies at the heart of this exercise, nor is there any suggestion of the arduous discipline required to reach such a state; a rare experience as most of the great mystical writers warn.[244] Also, if this second exercise was intended for those who were well advanced in the contemplative life the rather elementary instruction on Christ's life and heaven would hardly seem necessary. His thought, like his language remains earthbound, and seems unable to penetrate with any success what is essentially a mystical experience.

The Image of Death

In the Orologium "þe ymage of deth" counsels the Disciple:

> Ofte-sypes sette byfore thyne eyen þis þat þou now seest, my sorrowful persone, and bisily brynge hit to thy mynde...ffor þou schalte so profyt þere-by þat not only þou schalte not dredeto dye, but also that deth þat is to alle leuynge men dreedful þou schalte abyde and receyue with the desyre of þy herte, in þat it is þe ende of trauayle and þe bigynnynge of felicite euerlastynge; þis þinge oonly I-do, þat þou euery daye brynge me inwardly to thy myne. 245

Here the starting point of the meditation is a young man at the point of death. More often the image of death itself was conceived as the skeleton or cadaver of wall-paintings, carvings, manuscript illustrations and woodcuts. Although Sir Thomas More contended that no visual representation of death could ever sufficiently bring home to man its

awful reality,[246] the fact is that representations continued to be produced, reaching their greatest popularity in England between the last few decades of the sixteenth and the middle of the seventeenth centuries [247] rather later than on the continent, where Tenenti states that:

> Dès la fin du xve siecle, ce thème du miroir et du memento mortis s'est transformé en méditation spontanée....les symboles macabres se multiplient et ils sont à la portée de tous. La nouvelle religion de la mort a donc des images sensibles qui entretiennent son culte et excitent la réflexion. Grâce à ces moyens d'expression, elle a pu pénétrer partout et exercer une influence psychologique toujours plus vaste. 248

The way in which people thought about death must have been influenced by what they saw around them. Funeral monuments including brasses and wall-paintings were to be found not only in the great cathedral and abbey churches but in numerous parish churches, and they were a constant reminder to their congregations of the fact of death. Death appears usually as a decomposed corpse, sometimes in a grave, sometimes as an upright skeleton, in the popular wall-painting of the Three Living and the Three Dead, and in surviving panels of the Dance of Death.[249] xxiv b
Despite the popularity of both - the Dance of Death does not seem to have been as widely popular in England as in Europe - neither finds any place in the devout treatises, except for More's reference to the Dance of Death in St.Paul's.[250] The treatises' authors preferred other means than the direct confrontation pictured in these two moralities to warn men against pride and to exhort them to be prepared for death.

During the fifteenth century increasing attention was given to the physical effects of death and the lesson to be derived from the spectacle of human decay.[251] A more brutal reminder of the dead than the familiar graveyard which was to be found in many parishes was the charnel house,[252]

although this was never made a compulsory provision in England as in some continental dioceses.[253] Inside the church from about 1430 onwards cadaver tombs, a form derived from France, began to make their appearance, although because of their cost they were never very common.[254] Monuments and brasses of shrouded effigies and skeletons also began to appear during the same period and were perhaps at their most popular during the last quarter of the fifteenth and the first quarter of the sixteenth centruy,[255] while death's heads occasionally occurred as decorative details in other pieces of carving and sculpture.[256] However, cadaver tombs and brasses of shrouded effigies and skeletons were at no time so popular as to make them the dominant form of funerary art, and the great scarcity of death's heads or other macabre subjects as decorative motifs during the late fifteenth-early sixteenth century suggest that Huizinga's macabre vision was not to be found in England.

There was one other way in which the figure of death was seen publicly, and that was in the drama. Several treatises mention the fear inspired by the terrible "visar and outward face" of death.[257] This fear might have been inspired by the sight of a painted or carved corpse, but it is likely that the appearance of death moving about on the stage with his spear poised to strike, as in the Ludus Coventriae, Everyman or the Castle of Perseverance,[258] would have been far more frightening. Whitford gives the example of women and children almost frightened out of their wits by "a bugge that is a personage, that in playe dothe represent the dewyll".[259] The image of death as a physical fact and in some form of iconographical image must have been common enough for most people to have been familiar with it.

It was not necessary to be able to read or to possess books in order to be confronted with the image of death, but illustrations of death were also to be found in both manuscript and printed books. In England, as on the continent, Horae sometimes contained illustrations of funerals and burials, although not so frequently as in contemporary Flemish or French books.[260] There are also pictures of death-bed scenes to be found,[261] but skeletons, cadavers and death's head motifs are very scarce in English manuscripts of the period,[262] although they seem to have been popular in France and Italy. The woodcuts range from the scenes of hanging and execution already noted to representations of death as a skeleton or cadaver, frequently shown in the act of arresting someone or sometimes carrying a coffin,[263] and a few portray skulls and cadavers.[264] Although these woodcuts were used by English printers in English books most of the illustrations of death and skeletons are confined to two books, The crafte to lyve and to dye well and The Kalender of Shepardes; both are French in origin, and their English printers copied the French woodcuts of the Verard editions.[265] For the most part the crudity of the English cuts limits their ability to evoke horror or disgust; they are symbols whose effect is associative and indirect, not immediate as in the case of some of the unpleasantly realistic continental panel paintings.[266] The three relevant illustrations of the Hortulus animae, of 1531, which was produced in France for the English market, are clearly in the continental tradition.[267] Sometimes the woodcuts are accompanied by verses such as those found in The Kalender of Shepardes,[268] which relate to the profit to be derived from the contemplation of death. The crafte to lyve well and to dye well opens with the same woodcut on

successive pages, of a shrouded, wormy corpse lying upon a horse-drawn hearse,[269] and the second cut is followed by some admonitory verses:

> O mortall man/lyfte vp thyn eye
> And put all vanytees out of thy mynde
> For as thou seest/this corse here lye
> Even shalt thou/ by nature and kynde...
> ... Take ye example/of this carkes here
> Wheron these wormes: do gnawe & fede
> No man is sure/houre daye/ne yere
> In this worlde to lyue: it is matter in dede
> Hyder thou camest/without ony wede
> All naked & bare: save onely the skynne
> In lyke wyse from hens:departe ye myst nede
> By ye neuer so ryche or noble of kynne...
> ...Now take hede/what I to ye haue sayd
> Remembre this lesson/& often it repete...270

Gathered into this verse, which is explicitly related to the illustrations of the rotting corpse above it, are many of the themes associated with death, which will be discussed in more detail in subsequent sections. There is the warning against vanity, and the reminder that "As I am so shall you be" associated with the ubi sunt theme. The natural nakedness of man, the uncertainty of his hold on life and the inevitability of his death are also common topics, while the idea of man as worms' meat is elaborated in the contemptus mundi literature. This type of verse was also to be found on funeral monuments, where the known contents of the grave made an accompanying image of death unnecessary. The verses ranged from a simple couplet to fairly elaborate pieces, but nearly every one, directly or by implication, reminded the passer-by that he too would return to dust.[271]

The Ubi sunt and Quid profuit themes.

Although medieval authors tended to see death as a focus for the more ascetic teachings of Christianity and emphasized the need to flee the world, to repent and do penance, it was possible to regard the subject in a more gentle manner, of regret or even wistfulness for the loss of people and things past.[272] Generally, however, the devout treatises show little sorrow for past times, there is no suggestion that things were better in the past than nowadays;[273] their lament is over people's failure to learn from the past and to discern and eschew the false values of the world and the folly of trusting in fortune. In the thirteenth chapter of A lytell necessarye Treatyse/the whiche speketh of the estate of the Comonalte,[274] the author quotes from Maximian:[275]

> O lyfe humayne that thou arte myserable/for thou art alwaye in peryll of deth/thou arte without surete/thou arte no thynge stable... Alas where ben bycome the goodes of tyme passed / in stede of lawghynge now I wepe/my Joy is tourned in to heuynesse/thenne is it folye for a man to affye and truste in fortune/ne in the lyfe humayne/for naturally all demaunde ruyne ¶ More ouer late vs enquyre and demaunde where they ben bycomen yt haue lyued so pleasauntly in this worlde ¶ And me semeth yt the grete myddle/ and lytell/deth hath put in his subgeccyon is not Octauyan deed/~~and~~ & Cressus whiche were so|ryche. Salomon the wyse. Sampson ye stronge. Dauyd the loyall. Holofernes the geaunt/~~and~~ & all other puyssaunt conquerours/hath not deth dysconfyted theym.[276]

Reflection on the transitoriness and instability of human life leads the author on to pose two questions: where are all the goods of times past, not only the riches but the virtues of strength, wisdom and loyalty; and, secondly, what has become of the great ones of the earth?

In the prose treatises the ubi sunt list, which may, as above, include the qualities for which each person was noted, is usually set in the form of a rhetorical question, so that even the form helps to

emphasize the hollowness of worldly fame and power. The ubi sunt lists[277] cite a strange variety of names, classical and biblical figures, and men of letters or of medicine, as well as those most frequently quoted, the rich and the great rulers of the world; all that was necessary was that readers should recognize the names and preferably the reason for their fame. The list in the Cordiale, for instance, includes Aristotle and Virgil, Galen and "Auycenne". Erasmus' list is far more compact than most, being limited to tyrants of old, among whom he lists Alexander, Xerxes, Hannibal, Emilius Paulus, Julius Caesar and Pompey. The contrast between man's estate in life and his condition after death was most obvious where he had held not only riches but great power and lordship in life. As the greatest ruler the earth has known, and a figure whose exploits were familiar from numerous romances, it is not surprising that Alexander was sometimes singled out.[278] In the Cordiale, Erasmus' De contemptu mundi and the first part of Hughe's A troubled mans medicine Alexander is supposed to have returned to the world and to tell of the difference between his state in life and his present state.[279] In Erasmus' oration Alexander describes the benefits and honour he enjoyed as ruler of the world compared to his present estate, where he is "thrust in to a lytell vessell, and a .vii fote space suffyseth me", and vulnerable to the insults of any page-boy.[280] The smallness of the grave was frequently used as a warning against pride in this life.[281] Death is the great leveller, and ubi sunt's proof of this was reinforced iconographically by the Dance of Death, where rulers and prelates are plucked by Death in the same way as fools, beggars and infants. The

message is memorably conveyed in The mirroure of golde's ubi sunt passage:

> And where be the popes/Emperours/kynges/dukes/princes/ Marques/Erles/Barons/noble Burgeis/Marchauntes/ laborere/and folkes of all estates/ they be all in powder and rotteness/and of the most greate: ther is noo more but a lytell memorye vppon their sepulcre... ... goo see in their sepulcres and tombes/and loke and thou canst wel knowe/and truly Iuge: whiche is thy mayster: & whiche is the verlet/whiche bones be of the pore: and wiche be of the riche/deuide yf thou maye: the laborer from the kinge/the feble frome the strong the faire/from the foule/and deformed...

Death cannot be bought off with riches, and no knowledge can outwit it;[282] in the grave all men will find themselves equal; "Dethe onely maketh a shewe and a profe of what valure mens bodyes be".[283] The ubi sunt theme warns men against pride and reminds them of their mortality.[284] One of its most telling statements is to be found in Fisher's commentary on Psalm CII, where the listed names of the great men of the past and the description of the estate of the great families of the more recent past are set within the framework of reminders of the shortness of man's life.[285]

It is almost inevitable that Alexander's speech should partake of something of the nature of a lament for the things that are past and for the way in which the soul is now made "to suffer payne for all the yuel lyuynge of the bodye".[286] In this it has links with the sort of extended lament which comprises The complaynt of the soule and The deynge creature, which in turn derive ultimately from the debate between the Body and the Soul. The following passage from the Orologium illustrates the connection between the lament for things past, the Quid profuit complaint and the Body and Soul debate. Here the body demands:

> Alas, what profetid hit to me, pryde, or the boste of richesses what hath þat holpen me?.... And þerfore now is my worde & my speche in bitternesse to my soule, and alle my wordes ful of sorowe, and myne yen daswed. O who schalle now geue to me þat I myghte be after myn olde dayes, whom I was cloþed with strengthe and with beute and hadde many yeeres byfore me to come...287

It is only from the other side of the grave that the true vanity of worldly power and riches can be seen, and this is perhaps one reason for summoning Alexander back to this world to make his complaint. Like the ubi sunt motif the Quid profuit, which concerns itself with things rather than people, is posed as a question whose answer lies in the opposition between the things of this world and the true riches of eternal life - a contrast which underlies so much medieval teaching. Sir Thomas More, for example, in his Dyalogue of comforte deals with topics such as the unsurety of lands and possessions, the small commodity of riches, fame and authority, and the danger which such outward possessions can do to the soul.[288] He shows how the desire to possess these things leads to violence, pride, gluttony, flattery, the abuse of authority and many other sins: Hughe demands of his readers what they have gained by winning worldly preferment, and suggests busy fear, unquietness and care will be their reward.[289]

Both the ubi sunt and the quid profuit remind man of the powerlessness of his own hold on life and of its brevity. It was not a new idea: biblical authors and pagan philosophers had both exposed the vanity and the brevity of human life.[290] Erasmus declared that "an ernest contemplation" of the brevity of man's life "is no lyght remedy ayenst the horrour of deathe";[291] and many treatises included warnings on the inevitability of death,[292] or reminded the reader that from the moment of his birth his life was nothing more than a process of dying;[293] reminded him of his vulnerability to disease and accident,[294] of the folly of presuming to live another day, let alone until old age,[295] and of the minute span of even the longest life when measured against the true life

of eternity.[296] Some of the most telling examples of the ravages of time are drawn from the natural world.[297] The Cordiale likens man's brief duration on earth to a piece of snow, a red berry or the lustre of a new apple.[298] A little later it describes the passing of time in terms of two worms, one black, the other white, (night and day), which gnaw continually at the root of the tree of life,[299] and Erasmus gives a detailed description of the life of an apple tree, from its blossom-covered spring-time through the attacks of worms, wind and inclement weather on blossom and fruit, to the three or four apples which will eventually reach maturity, as an illustration of the chances and uncertainties to which man may so easily succumb.[300] Time, then, is the implacable foe of man in this life, and the only defence lies in so living as to ensure that death will be the entrance into eternal life. There is no suggestion in these treatises that there exists in this world any means of halting or transcending time's destruction.[301]

But if death is inevitable there is nothing so uncertain as the time or manner of its coming.[302] Man must therefore live in a state of constant preparedness; "Let every day be reckened with you as your last".[303] The urgency of the twenty-third chapter of A Kempis' first book, "Of the remembraunce of death",[304] is largely due to the emphasis placed upon the passing of time; it might well be sub-titled "The precyousnesse of tyme and the shortnesse of the same".[305] The chapter opens with the uncompromising statement "The houre of death wyll shortely come", and goes on to lament men's unpreparedness. They think only of the present and let that which is out of sight remain out of mind as well. If men were to live always so as to be ready for death at any moment, that is

with a clear conscience, they would not fear death.[306] Amendment now is the only way; man may not live until tomorrow, and a long life more often brings increase of sin than amendment.[307] À Kempis, like Whitford,[308] asks the reader to recollect "yf thou euer sawest any man dye" and reminds him that he too will die; "Blessed be tho persones that euer haue the houre of deth before theyr eyen";[309] they will not die unprovided.[310] Man should labour now to achieve this state - note that the underlying contemptus mundi theme is present:

> Truly a perfyte dispisynge of the worlde, & a feruent desyre to profyte in vertue, alone to be taughte a fruteful laboure in workes of penaunce, a redy wyl to obey, a ful for sakyng of our selfe, & wylful sufferynge of all aduersy||tes for the loue of god, shall gyue vs a great truste that we shal dye well.[311]

Security is to be sought in doing good deeds now, for À Kempis declares that few achieve amendment in sickness or through pilgrimages, and it is folly to trust to the good offices of friends, who will quickly forget you once you are dead. He returns again to the chapter's theme:

> Nowe is thy tyme very precyous, but alas for sorrowe that thou spendeste thy tyme so vnprofitable; in which thou shuldest wyn the lyfe euer lastyng.[312]

Now, in fact, is the time to choose between this world, with its earthly, material interests, and the life eternal. Many, he warns, have died unexpectedly; now is the time to work out your own salvation. Meanwhile:

> Kepe the as a pylgryme & as a straunger here in this worlde to whom nothinge belongeth of worldly besynes, kepe thy herte fre alway lyft vp to god...[313]

Thus in a few pages À Kempis gathers together two important strands of medieval devotional teaching, the need for the Christian to separate himself from the world and the urgent need for him to redeem the time.

It is more surprising to find a full exposition of the traditional memento mori, ubi sunt and quid profuit written by a Protestant during the 1560's - Thomas Becon's The Prayse of Death,[314] which takes the form of a dialogue between Man and Reason. Running through the work like a refrain is Man's reiterated lament that death has summoned him before his time. A summary of Reason's often-repeated answers to this complaint will show how closely Becon was following earlier thought.[315] Reason declares that a long life will not benefit Man, since the older he becomes the more sinful he will be, and, in any case, the continuance of life may not be counted on. St. Augustine and Innocent III are quoted as saying that death is necessary, and since death abolishes the miseries of man's life it is advantageous to die young and thus escape the miseries of old age. If the old cannot live long, the young may soon die. Man laments that death has come unexpectedly, which Reason counters by saying that it would have hurt less had it been remembered more often, and that the best preparation for death is "the contempt and despysyng of worldly thynges, (and) the diligent remembraunce of the heavenly Jerusalem".[316] Remembrance of death prevents sin, and Becon approves the custom of the Egyptians, who provide "that the Image of death be offered to thy syght" at each banquet.[317] He goes on to quote the familiar saying of Plato, that the whole life of a philosopher is a continual meditation of death, and to describe death in terms of the liberation of the soul from its bodily prison. Reason then returns to the familiar theme "Nothing is more certain than death: yet is it vncertain what day death wil com".[318] Briefly the seven ages of man are rehearsed. Man is reminded that riches cannot profit the soul, and that he is earth and to the earth he will

return. An ubi sunt passage [319] is used to emphasize the levelling power of death; rich man and beggar cannot be distinguished in the grave, and the body of both becomes the inheritance of serpents, beasts and worms.[320] Theodore is cited on the indifference of where the body is buried; what matters is Man's state of soul. He cannot avoid death but he can make sure that he will die a good death. Finally Man's fears about the pains preceding death are allayed, and he is encouraged to bear his tribulation bravely and patiently. It is only in the last few pages of The Prayse of Death, where Becon rehearses Christ's promises of forgiveness to all those who repent and believe in the justifying power of His Passion and gives biblical examples of God's care for the souls of the righteous, that the Protestant views of the author find expression. In the context of a complaint against Death Becon has gathered together a great many of the traditional medieval themes related to death. As a summary of the ubi sunt motif and other topics it would be hard to better, even though one would not immediately think to find it among Becon's works.

The widespread teaching about the inevitability of death and the uncertainty of its time and manner had one result which Erasmus found it necessary to condemn. If, he says,[321] people knew when they were to die, they could put off repentance until the last possible moment but still repent in time. As it is, he feels that the uncertainty makes the good live better and the evil worse. However, it is clear that some people were endeavouring to have the best of both worlds:

> what meane these men, whiche renne to pronosticatours, whiche diuyne by the inspection of a mans hand, of the sterres, of the mans nature, of his byrth, of the bealye,

> and babylonicall numbres, and wytchecraftes, to the extent they may knowe the space of theyr tyme? 322

In addition to the more general almanacks and prognostications available in England during the mid-sixteenth century, at least two books, The boke of knowledge/whether a sycke person beynge in perylle/shall lyue or dye and a Prognasticacion.... shewynge the daunger of dyuers syckenesses, that is to say, whether peryll of death be in them or not,[323] dealt specifically with illness and the threat of death, and attempted to resolve the uncertainty in a pseudo-scientific manner. Dives and Pauper,[324] originally printed in 1493 and reprinted by Berthelet in 1536, also finds it necessary to condemn the practice of prognostication[325] as a branch of witchcraft, as does Richard Whitford.[326] Another popular superstition to outwit death is referred to in an earlier chapter of Dives and Pauper:

> Dives: Is it lefull to trust in these fastynges newe founde to flee sodain deth? Pau: It is a great foly to trust therin... god wyll that man and woman be vncertayn what tyme that they shulde dye and in what maner. For god wylle that man and woman be always bysye to flee synne, and for to do well for drede of deathe, and alway redy what tyme that god wyl sende after them.327

Fear of sudden death, which gave a man no time to prepare his soul, to make his confession and receive the sacraments, was clearly widespread, and there are numerous prayers seeking protection from it.[328] The author of Dives and Pauper, however, like Erasmus, argues that if men knew they were protected from such a death it would encourage them to do amiss. The evidence of popular attempts to insure against sudden death, together with the criticism of Protestant authors about the fear generated by the traditional teaching on death,[329] suggests that the Church had not

fully succeeded in answering the fear it had generated in its attempt to raise moral and religious standards, and that people frequently turned to popular superstition in their search for security.

De Contemptu Mundi.

The quid profuit theme was mainly concerned with those worldly and transient things esteemed by men: pride of place, honours, riches, beauty, power and worship. Many more treatises than actually pose the quid profuit question are also concerned to expose the essential insubstantiality of the things of this life, and of the world itself, as their chapter headings record: "Of the vayne Ioye/might/dignite/honours/and riches of the worlde", "Of the dyspysynge of all vanyties of the worlde", "That the world is both miserable and scelerous".[330] According to the "monastic philosophy"[331] which dominated late medieval devotional teaching, the only security lay in being cut off from the world and in learning to despise it. The world-denying strain found particularly forceful expression in the de contmeptu mundi tradition of Christian teaching, which in its developed form may be traced through saints Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Gregory the Great, Peter Damian, Anselm and Bernard and Pope Innocent III.[332] The two last named are the most frequently cited, and Innocent's De Miseria Humanae Conditionis seems to have been very influential.[333] The assumption of most authors up to about 1540 who held to traditional beliefs and were not influenced by Protestant thought was that the world could only be truly forsaken in the cloister, and there was little relaxation of the monastic ideal made

to accommodate lay-people. Protestant authors did not regard the cloister as either a necessary or a desirable condition of the Christian life, but they were as forthright as their predecessors in their condemnation of the world. Hughe, for instance, describes it as "not onely an harlot, but the most fylthy, and most durtye queane, whose face is foule, horrible, sharpe bytter and cruell".[334]

Among the charges levelled against the world one of the most common is that of its instability and transitoriness[335] and the way in which its promises deceive men.[336] But it is also described as corrupt,[337] unable to satisfy man's needs,[338] to comfort or save him,[339] and its rewards are hell and damnation.[340] A characteristic indictment of the world, ascribed to St. Jerome, is to be found in The mirroure of golde[a]:

> O lyf of the worlde: not lyf but deth/a lyfe false & deceyuable/a lyfe mixed/and medled with disters (sic)/A lyfe shadowed with lyes/nowe as a fresshe floure: & a noon drye/a lyfe fragile & caduke/ O lyf miserable: to the true lyfe contrary/that the more he groweth:the more he myssheth/the more he goeth forth: The nygher is the deth: O lyfe full of sanres. ¶ Howe many haste thou in this worlde of miserable men:taken and wrapped in thy lases/howe many hast thou ledde and dayly leadeth: in to the tourmentis || infernall...[341]

It offers a summary of the sort of charges most frequently levelled against the world. A far more comprehensive and effective indictment is to be found in The treatise of faith, hope and charite, by an anonymous Protestant author:

> ... I wente astraye whan I soughte the, I was beguyled whan I fande the, I was blynde whan I set my love vpon the, I was amased whan I pleased the, I was comfortlesse whan I occupyed the, I was parted from god whan I serued the, I

> was in death whan I lyued with the, I was restlesse whan I behelde the, I was sorye whan thou gauest me noughte, I was not suffised whan thou gauest me muche, I was myscaryed whan thou madest my glad. Oh thy wysdome is folyshnesse before God, thy glorye is heye, thy smylynge is deceate, thy bewtye is fylthynesse, thy ryches are vnstable, thy presence is without rest, thy rewarde is but death, thy joye|| endeth with sorow...[342]

The charges and style of the second part of this extract are in the traditional form, but in the first part the use of the first person suggests personal experience and conveys the lack of fulfilment felt by the servant of the world. For the first time the world impinges upon the reader's own experience and may be judged by that experience. The effect of this part of the passage is further enhanced by the echo of the form of the parable of the Sheep and the Goats,[343] and in the shadow of the Judgement meted out there by the Lord the reader is encouraged to judge both himself and the world. Protestant authors, such as Thomas, Hughe and Becon,[344] are as insistent as their predecessors on the Christian's need to despise the world, and their analyses of the world's corruption are often very detailed. But unlike the writer who accepted the "monastic philosophy" of perfection, they do not like Bernard counsel their readers "to flee the worlde and vse a religious lyfe".[345] The world is not to be abandoned for the cloister but for Christ—"lyfte vp oure hart and ascend vp into the mountayne of Myrthe with the spouse"[346] to love and serve Him.[347]

<u>The golden epistle</u> declares that two things are necessary for the man who would be truly solitary and thereby find God's grace: the first is to withdraw himself from all transitory things, and the second is "that thou sette thyselfe at sovyle a pryce in thyne owne syght, that thou accompte thy selfe as nought..."[348] To impress upon the reader

the frailty of human life was one of the purposes of the ubi sunt passages, but the contemptu mundi authors went considerably further in their attempt to destroy man's pride in himself and to make him know himself. The author of the Cordiale quotes from two of the most influential contemptus mundi writers, St. Bernard's Meditations and Innocent III, who is quoted thus:

> That humayn flesshe is the vessell of fylthe/ and a vessell of teeres/a drye thought/a stynkyng sacke. The lyfe of the flesshe is laboure. The concepcyon of the flesshe is but fylthe. The ende therof is rotennesse. And the byrthe is but vyle. It was fyrst a sparme. That is to saye. The seed of man/and now it is a stynkynge sacke: and after fynally shall be wormes mete in the erthe. Now wherfore sholde a man then be proude. 349

His method is to expose the bestiality of man as he is, to look back at his conception and procreation, and forward to his end as worms' meat in the earth. This form of three-fold meditation, what I was, what I am, and what I shall be, was widely used in devotional treatises, particularly when the writer sought to draw his readers out of their involvement with sin and thus out of the world.[350] The idea of the foulness of man's beginning goes back to Psalm L:7 (Vulg) and its interpretation by St.Augustine and his followers.[351] Of the present Bernard points to man's natural functions as evidence of the foulness he bears within him,[352] not to mention other miseries, such as illness or the burden of old age, which are often cited. The contemplation of man's future state is based upon the kind of view expressed in Ecclesiasticus: "Cum enim morietur homo, hereditabit serpentes, & bestias, & vermes",[353] and with it one returns to the cadaver tombs and brasses of skeletons and shrouded skeletons mentioned earlier. The author of the Medytacyons of saynt Bernarde reflects:

> I haste towarde theym ye whyche by bodyly deth ben passed out of this worlde. Whan I beholde their sepulcres ~~and~~ graves: I fynde notelles in theym but powder/wormes/stenche ~~and~~ lothsomness. Suche as I am now thei were by lately: ~~and~~ suche as they ben I sahl be hastly. 354

Up to about the middle of the sixteenth century this three-fold meditation not only encouraged reflection upon the state of man's life, which ideally would lead to repentance and rejection of the world,[355] but it tended to make considerable use of "vile body" details, and indeed the sort of description of man found in the Medytacyon was often found apart from the three-fold meditation.[356]

There were two weaknesses of this "vile body" genre which may have limited its effectiveness. The first was that the description of man's foul conception or of the state of his body after death was sometimes long enough to give the impression that it had become independent of the lesson it was intended to teach. In his Dayly exercyse Whitford ~~was~~ uses the meditation on man's past, including a description of his conception and birth, to emphasize the point "that you hadde newer/ ne have, or shall have anythynge of your selfe but euyll"; a view which may serve to introduce the second, more theological weakness of the genre. In denigrating man's physical origins in this way there was some danger of forgetting that man is God's creation, that he was made little lower than the angels, and that God loved him enough to sacrifice His Son for man's redemption. In The mirroure of golde, for example, it is said "that amonge all thing that almighty god hath created and fourmed man is made of the most foule ~~and~~ & abhomynable mater".[357] Such statements were clearly intended to rebuke man's pride, but in warning him against presuming

on salvation there was a danger that the sensitive soul might ~~well~~ despair of it. Careful literary and theological balance is required if this "vile body" type of illustration is to be used successfully; the illustration must be clearly and closely related to its context and not allowed to become an independent piece of description for its own sake, and theologically it needs to be balanced by some reminder that man was made in the image of God, who loved him enough to provide for him the means of salvation.

Protestant authors seem not to have made use of the "vile body" tradition,[358] but that does not mean that they ignored the misery of the human condition. In the "Consolacyon for troubled consciences" of Certaine prayers there is a striking description of human misery, which is the more moving for concerning the living and for being linked to the reader's own probable experience:

> Who is so hard harted that wyll not pytye the myserabyll condicyon of theym whiche lye before the churche/and in the streates with deformed faces/theyre noses eaten of/theyr iyes out/& other of theyr membres consumed with matter/fylthe/and corrupcyon/in so moche that the sense can not onely abyde to beholde it/but also the mynde doth abhorre to remembre it. And whate meaneth god by these lamentable monstres of our flesh & lykenesse but to open the iyes of oure mynde that we may perceyue with whate en horrible facyon the soule of a synner sheweth out his matter and corrupcyon...[359]

The author is not saying that their mis-shapen misery proves their sinfulness,[360] but rather he offers the reader a general comparison, showing him that the soul of a sinner is more hideous than these physical "monstres". Bernard's descriptions of the physical man cause revulsion; here horror of the soul's deformity is tempered by pity. Frith in The Preparation to Deathe is uncompromising in his assertion that "The cause of deathe is synne", and shows how in Adam all have

sinned.[361] Like the author of the Treatise of faith, hope and charite[362] Frith shows how sin affects the individual, making him dull towards virtue, inclined to self-love and hating God.[363] While not overlooking the generic inheritance of sin in Adam, the Protestant tendency is to stress its effect upon the individual, so that men may see in themselves the corrupting effects of sin and as individuals they may remedy the situation. The "vile body" tradition, with its emphasis upon the physical transmission of sin, perhaps made sin seem less real to the individual and almost certainly gave the impression of being less remediable by him. Frith does not abandon the reader to his sins: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive",[364] which is the burden of the fourth chapter of The Preparation to Deathe. Because they never allow a description of the sinfulness and misery of man to stand for long unrelieved by some reminder of the saving work of Christ, Protestant authors such as Frith, William Thomas and the translator of the "Consolacyon for troubled consciences"[365] tend to sound more obviously hopeful than substantial passages of Bernard's Medytacyons or The mirroure of golde.

Although the contemptus mundi theme was often used during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, it more often occured as a chapter in a treatise, a passage in a sermon or in brief references than as a complete work. There are two works which were printed during the 1530's that have the de contemptu mundi as their main theme: Erasmus' De contemptu mundi, which was translated by Thomas Paynell and printed by Thomas Berthelet in 1533,[366] and A svvete and devovte sermon of holy saynct Ciprian of mortalitie of man, translated by Sir Thomas Elyot and also printed by Berthelet, in 1534 and 1539.[367]

Erasmus' work, written in his early twenties while still a monk at Steyn, was not printed until 1521.[368] Its avowed intention, which would have been approved by St.Bernard and countless later followers of the "monastic philosophy", was to persuade a friend, Joyce, to withdraw from "the hurly burly & busynes of the world" and to bring him "to a lyfe monastycke". The treatise falls into two halves, with the problematic twelfth chapter, a later addition, standing on its own.[369] The first half describes the miserable life of the worldly man, and there are chapters dealing with the evil of riches and fleshly lusts and the transience of worldly honours.[370] Erasmus also gives examples of some of the arguments used by others to stifle the call to religion: these include the appeals of wife and parents not to abandon them, warnings that his upbringing has made him too delicate to withstand the austerities of religion, and that youth is not a time to wail in solitude. The long ubi sunt passage which occurs in chapter five concludes with praise for those "whiche be contentedde with theyr fortune and state" and who are more concerned to rule themselves well than to seek to govern others - a point which would have appealed to Henry VIII and to Thomas Cromwell.[371] The chapter on the necessity of death lays particular emphasis upon the inevitability of death, which surrounds people and yet is rarely thought upon: a reflection of the common concern to make men realize the frailty of their own lives. This half of the treatise ends with a picture of the soul's nakedness before God's judgement, as it stands deserted by riches, beauty and friends, which flee like swallows after summer - the plight of Everyman-and like Everyman the reader is exhorted to be prepared in advance by good acts and virtues.[372]

The second half, which might well be subtitled "Laus vitae monasticae",[373] provides a counter-balance to the view of the first half "that the world is both miserable and scelerous". The world can neither satisfy nor save a man, but apart from the world he may find both "felicite" and salvation in the religious life. In successive chapters Erasmus outlines various aspects of the pleasure to be found in religion, its liberty and its tranquillity, and returns to dwell upon the "voluptas" of religion. The twelfth chapter, innocuously entitled in English "Howe one ought to entre in to religion", is in fact a warning against a too hasty flight to religion, and contains much criticism of contemporary monastic life, which is compared with primitive monasticism. It warns the postulant to choose an order suitable for his needs, to think seriously before taking vows which cannot be revoked, and finally there is the suggestion that it is perhaps better to live out the religious life in the world:

> repute thyself to be in a monastery, where so euer thou be conuersante amonge them that loue trouthe, pure chastite, sobrenes, and temperance/and do bothe in worde and dede expresse the same.[374]

The abbaye of the holy Ghost had attempted to provide a spiritual cloister for those who were for some reason prevented from entering religion. Erasmus in this last chapter reverses the assumption upon which the "monastic philosophy" was based - that the religious life was the best life - by suggesting that the life of perfection might be better lived outside the cloister.

Because the two halves of De contemptu mundi reflect the traditional contemptus mudi contrast between the condition of the worldly man and the "felicite" of the religious or solitary life, it is not immediately

apparent that Erasmus' views differ considerably from the picture of the monastic life to be found, for example, in John Alcock's Mons perfectionis or in Whitford's Pype or Tonne of the lyfe of perfection. The author of The Tree and the frutes of the holy goost tells the newly professed nun to:

> Thinke therfore why thou comest to relygion. I trowe for the profyte of thyn owne soule and of thin ordre. It is not ynough for the onely to entre religion for thyn owne profite... 375

Erasmus recommends the religious life for its liberty, its tranquillity and its pleasure - concepts which seem at first sight to have little to do with the cloister. The restraint of the monastic rule is passed over with a neat chiasmus —

> For we wyll nothyng but that is leful: and therfore it is lefull for vs to doo what soeuer we wyll 376 —

and the subject of obedience, which occupies so many monastic authors, is given no further mention.[377] By liberty Erasmus means freedom from the captivity of the world and sin, and freedom to fight in God's service against the Devil with the expectation of victory.[378] As previously noted, the conceit of the Christian warfare was much used from St.Paul's time onwards;[379] but the idea of the Christian soldier battling against the world and sin[380] - especially the former - seems more suited to the individual in the world, for whom the Enchiridion militis christiani was written, than to a member of a religious community. Within the cloister obedience and penance were more commonly advocated, and appropriate antidotes for the spiritual sins found there; open warfare against the world should no longer concern those who have left it. The tranquillity of which Erasmus speaks is both the outward setting, notably the silence, and the inward peace, which springs from a pure mind and a clear conscience.[381]

The contrast he draws between the troubled mind of the worldly sinner and the inward peace of the religious makes no reference to the troubled and scrupulous conscience or the desolate soul often found within the cloister.[382] In contrasting the two lives he makes the one sound worse, the other more peaceful than it is likely to prove. It is a weakness of Erasmus' method to encourage the reader to regard the life of the world and the life of the cloister as total opposites rather than simply as different or even complementary. Finally, there is the pleasure of religion. For learned men there is the abundant and varied joy of study, reading and writing. The range of literature included[383] covers not only the Scriptures and the Fathers, Albertus Magnus and St. Thomas Aquinas, but, in addition, for him "that knoweth howe to chose the holsome herbes amonge those that are venomous", there are the writings of pagan philosophers and poets.

> Tell me/what tyme thou arte conuersant amonge these thinges quietly at rest in thy studye/and at thyne owne libertye/voyde of all care and trouble/dothe it not seme that thou dwellest in a paradise of al delytes and pleasures? [384]

and the author breaks into a lyrical description of the most perfect and varied countryside in an attempt to convey the idyllic setting for study provided by the monastic life.

By comparison the earlier description of the "pleasures of the soule" seems a little dull and lifeless. Basically these pleasures are the possession of a clear conscience and the contemplation of heavenly bliss to which the soul aspires. Although Bernard's warning that glimpses of heavenly delight are but rare and brief is noticed,[385] and Erasmus says, "I am vnworthy as yet to be admitted to come to these delytes",[386] his description of the joy of contemplation, which employs the sort of

terminology used, for example, by the Brothers of the Common Life,[387] gives no impression of the hard discipline required and of the extreme rareness of such experiences:

> Farthermore, that swetnes, that the holy goste many tymes secretely entrynge in to the cleane and pure myndes cause the, howe ofte in the moste chaste cham||bre he embraceth and clyppeth his spouse, languishynge in his love/and lamentynge as lovers are wont that love feruently/with mooste gentyll and frendly familiarite, dothe comforte and chere her...[388]

Like Whitford in the second part of A dayly exercyse and experyence of dethe, Erasmus makes it sound too easy to reap the greatest reward of the contemplative life.

Superficially Erasmus' De contemptu mundi seems to be a product of medieval piety, but closer inspection reveals significant departures from the contemporary view of the monastic life. Pineau says that "Dans son petit livre, il a donné la juste image de son idéal monastique. Et cet idéal est fort humain".[389] In the entire work there is no reference made to the Opus Dei, probably the most obvious activity of the monastic life in any order, nor to the Sacraments, nor to Christ and scarcely to God. He does not mention the monastic discipline, and there is no suggestion that the religious life involved communal obligations nor that private study and devotion might well be prescribed by the monk's superior. The Erasmian freedom is hard to envisage in the context of a monastic community and its organization unless it was unusually slack. One cannot help but feel that the courts of Cambridge or life in More's household offered Erasmus a more congenial setting than the cloister of the Augustinian Canons at Steyn.

Another thing which distinguishes Erasmus' treatise from the tradition of Bernard and Innocent is his view of man. There is no reference made to the "vile body", nor is there any suggestion that man carries with him a weight of inherited sin or even any proclivity to sin. The sin and temptations which assail the worldly and the religious man are seen as external adversaries, not as part of the inherited corruption of fallen men. Erasmus, like Lupset, suggests that human bestiality is avoidable.[390] Man is not simply a body, like a beast, that he should gratify his bodily lusts, but he must understand that he has an eternal soul. It is in his description of the body as "a thynge erthie, beastly, slowe, mortal, syckely/caduke, vncraftye, and vnpoble"[391] that Erasmus comes closest to the "vile body" genre, but if man will exercise his reason and understanding he can overcome these weaknesses. There is no sense of the unceasing struggle to be waged against the flesh: "hit is impossible to enjoy the pleasure of the bodye and of the soule bothe at ones. The one muste nedes be forgone".[392] The opposition between body and soul is a traditional element of ascetic Christianity, but Erasmus never really shows how the pleasure of the body is to be "foregone". Similarly he never specifically defines how the soul's pleasure is to be followed. The evidence of the treatise suggests that he thought the choice was made in the quiet and ordered study he was able to pursue at Steyn, a very different life from that suggested in the eighth chapter of St.Bernard's Medytacyons, "Who is able to have ye Joyes of heven".

The third indication of Erasmus' growth away from medieval traditions is to be found in the high proportion of quotations drawn from classical sources, which, although they by no means exclude quotation from Scripture and the Fathers, seem to be considered as of at least equal authority.[393]

For instance, the use of Epicurus as the authority for his definition of pleasure[394] may not seen unusual until it is remembered that the pleasure Erasmus is discussing is a virtue of the monastic life. Most of the names cited, Plato, Epicurus, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Juvenal and Terence, would have been familiar enough to educated men of the late fifteenth century. What was unusual was their use in a devout treatise; until about 1540 it was unusual to find more than occasional classical references in an English devotional treatise.[395] In addition to quotation from classical authors Erasmus makes use of classical literature, mythology and history in a more general way. Thus Joyce is called upon to "shewe thyselfe to be Vlyxes" against the Sirens of the world; "Eutrapelus'" corruption of his enemies by riches is described, but knowledge of Crassus' and Irus' relevance to a discussion of riches is assumed. Joyce is assured that the monastic life does not call for the labours of a Daedalus or a Hercules, and to illustrate the subject of remorse of conscience the curious examples of Cain, Lucius Sulla and Orestes pursued by the Furies are given. So pervasive are the classics in the De contemptu mundi that it is hard to realize how much contemporary ignorance and prejudice Erasmus had to overcome to pursue his study.[396]

In its nominal support of the religious ideal and in its reliance upon recurrent sets of opposites or contraries Erasmus' treatise is characteristic of numberless medieval devout treatises. Cyprian's sermon, however, shows no trace of the monastic philosophy and it is not structured upon opposites; its connection with the contemptus mundi theme of medieval tradition must be sought elsewhere. In the translator's preface Sir Thomas Elyot recommends the work to his sister, Dame Suzan Kyngestone, as a preservative against sickness and death, declaring "howe we

may be alway prepared agaynst those naturall and worldly afflictions".[397] The sermon has many affinities with the tribulation treatises discussed earlier in this chapter.

Cyprian wrote his sermon to encourage the Carthaginian Christians, who were suffering under the Decian persecution and also being ravaged by plague, to hold fast to their faith, and it seems to have survived the centuries without obvious alteration.[398] Having announced the sermon's purpose, to restore backsliders and encourage the faint-hearted, Cyprian firmly places his readers on God's side in the battles and tempests of the world. Because God has already spoken of the things which should come to pass before the end of time, Christians should not be dismayed to find themselves amid battle, famine and pestilence, but should realize that "The kyngedome of hewen...beginneth now to approche". The only people to fear these troubles will be those who lack faith and hope: "for he onely feareth death, whiche wyll not go vnto Christe, and he whiche wyl not go vnto Christe, is he whiche doeth not beleve, that he nowe begynneth to rayne with Chryste".[399] The note of eager expectancy and the desire to be with Christ captures the authentic spirit of the Apostolic faith[400] which the Reformers sought to reawaken.[401] The words of Simeon, Luke II: 28 - 32, are quoted as an example of the peaceful tranquillity with which the faithful soul is able to face affliction or death.[402]

The sermon goes on to survey the perpetual battle against the Devil which engages the Christian in this life. The conflict with sin is not here as in Erasmus' De contemptu mundi something which may be defeated by reason and understanding; it is hard and bitter, a constant and all-embracing struggle:

> The mynde of man is besyged, and all aboute compassed and assaulted with synne, and hardly is matched on al partes, and may vneth resiste and defende hym frome all. For if he overthrowe Auarice, than stereth vppe lecherye: If lechery be oppressed, ambicion commeth in her place... Pride inflatith, drunkenness allureth, enuy breketh concorde, and by the same is frendshyp dissolued...403

No sooner is one vice defeated than another rises up to take its place. He who would also choose to remain in such a world when he might depart to "be mery" with Christ is blind of mind and mad. Yet despite God's promises many "flitter in a mynde mistrustefull and wauerynge", insult Christ with the sin of incredulity, and fail to see the profit to be derived from departing this life to be with Christ.

The next consideration is how grief, disease and death afflict all men. The vulnerability of the body to disease[404] is stressed here not so much to make the reader reflect upon the inevitability of his own death as to remind him that Christians too are human and do not enjoy some sort of special protection against the plague. Even a little later on,[405] when a variety of human illnesses are described in some detail, it is not done primarily to expose the body's frailty but, like the tribulation treatises, to show that suffering patiently taken "profiteth to the doctrine of fayth". This theme of patience in adversity, illustrated by the examples of Job, Tobias and the Apostles, occupies the central section of the sermon. The date and circumstances in which the sermon was written mean that the emphasis falls not upon the heavenly reward to be won by patient endurance but upon suffering as an opportunity to prove and declare the Christian faith. Cyprian was writing to Christians who were a minority group in the pagan world,[406] and the point of his argument was that although

all men suffer Christians suffer differently: "The feare of god ~~and~~ & faithe shulde make the redye to sustayne all thynge".[407] This is illustrated in a set of sentences, many with biblical overtones, which have an almost proverbial sound:

> ... in a tempest a good master is knowen, ~~and~~ & the soudiour in bataile is proued. Bosting out of perill is pleasant, but resistence in aduersitie is the tryall of truth. The tree whiche with a deepe roote standethe faste in the grounde, is not melled with everye puffe of wynde that bloweth... And whan the corne is thresshed in the barne, the sounde and stronge grayne continueth the wyndes, while the chaffe is blowen about with every light blaste.... 408

Every adversity offers the Christian a chance to test his faith and to draw nearer to Christ.

If the warning against the fate of the unbaptized was hardly relevant to the sixteenth-century readers of Christian England, the warning against trying to defer or avoid troubles and pains in this life because it will earn eternal torment after death is common enough; the tribulation treatises often stress that it is better to suffer pain within the limited duration of this life than to face the more intense pain of purgatory or hell hereafter. Contrary to the Carthaginian Christian's expectation, persecution and pestilence have worked to their advantage. They have not only secured to the good welcome release from the miseries of the world, but it has rekindled the faith of many, curbed social vices and encouraged charity, and

> in lernynge not to feare deathe, we the more wyllungly desyre martyrdome. This to vs is no death, but an exercise, whiche bryngeth to the mynde renoume of valyante courage, and by dispysynge of deathe prepareth to receiue the garlande of vyctory. 409

Again, the problem of how to comfort whose who, having prepared themselves for martyrdom, were then cheated of their glory was of more immediate concern to the third than the sixteenth century;[410] but the general point that God judges according to faith, not according to the manner of death, is frequently found in the Tudor literature on death.[411] Cyprian goes on to condemn lamentation for the departed, whom faith declares to be alive with God - another subject much debated in later literature, to be discussed later - the infidels are right to see such mourning as a denial of the faith Christians profess. This section of the sermon emphasizes that Christians should always be ready to welcome death whenever or however it comes, a point reiterated by Protestant authors in Certeine prayers and in The troubled mans medicine,[412] whose second part owes much to Cyprian.[413] The remainder of the sermon returns to the subject of the world's miseries, and points out that since man is but a stranger and a pilgrim on earth[414] he should rejoice at the prospect of death on two counts, firstly because it will free him from the snares and miseries of the world, and secondly because it will restore him to God and his dwelling in heaven. The sermon ends with a description of heaven as a place of joyful meeting with friends and ancestors, apostles, martyrs and prophets - Hughe's Troubled mans medicine ends with the same "ioyouse compaine" - "To those let vs hye a peace good frendes, that we may shortly be with them, lette vs desyre feruently to come vnto Christe".

Elyot's translation follows the Latin faithfully,[415] and the sermon's main characteristic is its positive, joyous and expectant attitude toward death, typical of the first few centuries of Christianity. Unlike the medieval contemptus mundi authors Cyprian's work shows little sign of

of opposition between this world and the life to come, between the body and the spirit; rather there is a consistent emphasis upon that which is eternal and of the spirit. The Christian is in God's hand, and the miseries of the world and the fate of the body are of little importance to him except in so far as they are profitable to faith and speed the soul to heaven. Man is regarded not as filth and worms' meat, nor particularly as a creature of sin, although his sinful nature is taken seriously, but as a servant of God journeying towards his heavenly home, to whom the adversities and miseries of this world can be a positive asset. The corruption of the body and the evils of the world were so emphasized in the medieval contemptus mundi tradition that they had become important in their own right; and had the power of evil been stressed much more the dualistic structure inherent in the contemptus mundi form, but usually controlled by the wider context in which it occured, might have threatened Christian orthodoxy. In Cyprian contempt of the world is hardly possible - it is not sufficiently important. The whole direction of the sermon is so emphatically Godward that other things are judged as helps or hindrances to the achievement of God. Protestant authors of the 1530's and 1540's sought to recapture this concentration upon God. Like Cyprian they made little or no use of the traditional oppositions between this world and eternity, the body and the spirt, but dwelt instead upon the power of faith and the hope of God's promises.[416] In Cyprian the exhortation to hope for death is set in the context of the eschatological hope of the early church,[417] and the tempests and evils which assault the world herald the end of all things. This vision the English Protestants did not entirely recover. In Hughe the miseries of the world are seen as a

reason for wishing to depart life, and had the source of the passage borrowed from Cyprian not been recognized it would have sounded like another pessimistic lament on the degeneracy of the present times.[418]

The Business of Dying

Although the treatise writers sought to instil into their readers the idea, that "the best meane to dye well: is well to lyue",[419] death remained a moment of supreme importance for which suitable preparation must be made. The preliminary preparations are for the most part only mentioned incidentally in the devout treatises. Several of them do, however, emphasize the need for a man - they tacitly assume a man of some means - to have settled all his worldly affairs in the time of his health so that his death will not be burdened by business concerns.[420] Erasmus goes into the matter in some detail in his Preparation to deathe. He includes the particular advice that all litigation should be settled while still in health, and counters what seems to have been a popular superstition:

> Some do abhorre from makynge their testament, as though it were some euyll lucke of death. But the making of thy testament good felowe causeth not the to dye the soner, but safelyer. 421

Like the charter, the will was widely used in literature.[422] Two verse pieces printed during the 1530's make use of some form of the testament, Sir David Lindsay's The complaynte and testament of a Popinjay and The fantasy of the passyon of ye fox. Lindsay's Complaynte begins with two epistles from the popinjay, the first to King James V of Scotland, the second "to her brether of the Court", which contain much moral teaching, especially on the fickleness of fortune and the falseness of the world; and the exposition of the instability and mutability of the court includes a long catalogue of past rulers of Scotland and a more orthodox ubi sunt verse which lists the court of Troy, Alexander, Julius Caesar and Agamemnon. The second half of the poem, "the commonynge betwyxte the Papingo and hyr Executors", deals mainly with the

corruption of the church, its hypocrisy, sensuality, love of property and riches, and its banishment of chastity. However, it is introduced by a satire on the rapaciousness of corrupt clergy, who under the appropriate guise of raven, magpie and kite attempt to extort from the popinjay her confession and the disposition of her goods in return for the promise of a good burial and a number of trentals said after death. At her end in the absence of any more trustworthy friends the popinjay distributes the parts of her body to various birds, only to be eaten by her executors as soon as she is dead. A more obviously allegorical series of bequests is made by the guiltless fox, whose death has been brought about by envy, and the fox's will also contains an echo of the legal formula. The testament begins:

> The fyftene kalender of Novembre mysty
> In the name of the kyte/crowe/and py
> I Curribus of Mere dyoceses of Sarum
> of subtyle mynde and wyl con do testementum,423

which suggests that the legal form was sufficiently widely known to be recognized. The fox first disposes of his natural body, leaving his eyes to the blind, his ears to the deaf, his teeth for burnish to the book-binder, and his skin to "my maysters of the chauntry" to make them amices when they win prebends — a detailed list containing several ironic bequests. He goes on to bequeath his name to Ingratitude and some of his other qualities to suitable recipients - the irony is more obvious in some bequests than in others:

> My slyes and wyles vnto the wever
> My flatterynge also to the bruer
> My obedyens to every good wyfe
> My fast holdynge to hym that wyll make stryfe
> Me lepes and skyppes of great quycknes
> I gyve to servauntes in theyr busynes.424

The animal will provided a convenient vehicle for allegory, satire and irony, and Perrow mentions a Testamentum Porcelli as early as the fourth century.[425] The testaments of the popinjay and the fox are neither fables nor exempla so much as the literary counterparts of the babewyns of fourteenth-century English manuscript illustrations or the grotesques found on misericords where animals are pictured in human situations.[426]

The emphasis in both the Complaynte and testament of a Popinjay and The fantasy of the passyon of ye fox is upon the bequests, and there is little or no reference to the legal form. The wyll of the Devyll,[427] however, relies almost entirely upon its audience's knowledge of the usual form of a will, which is at once faithfully reproduced and perverted:

> In mine owne name Amen: I Belseebub chiefe of Hell,
> Prince of Darckenesse, Father of the Vnbeleevers, and
> Gouernour of the vniuersall Sinagogue papisticall,
> being sycke in body and soule, make this my Testament
> and last wyll, in a maner and forme following...
> Fyrst I bequeath my spitefull soule & body, to
> my sonne Antichriste...

The will is, in fact, a piece of anti-Roman polemic, which provided for the total perversion of all religious good and social justice - bequests entirely in keeping with the character of the testator. Having itemized the bequests, the Devil concludes:

> Ouer this my Testament and last wyll, which I haue
> here made, in my ragious minde and spightfull deuylish
> memorye, in the presence of my great counsaylours....
> I doo make the Furies of Hell Executors,
> That is to saye: Megero, Alecto & Tisiphone: all
> Massemongers and Papistes, with the Author of Heresies
> Wyll and Testament, being faythful Ouerseers of the same.
> Written to our faithfull Secretaries, Hobgoblin, Rawheade,
> and Bloodybone: in the spightfull audience of all the
> Court of Hel. Teste Meipso. 428

Here the emphasis has moved from the satire or irony which may be drawn from the general will situation - although the same kind of moral/religious comment is made by the bequest - to the more precise parody of legal forms, a more elaborate, but perhaps a more restricted literary form than the animal wills.

Surviving wills give a fascinating insight into the spiritual preoccupations of men and women as they thought of death,[429] as well as providing information about the possessions, including sometimes religious books, owned by people.[430] Changing religious views were reflected in the different words used and concerns shown by Protestant testators.[431] A few Protestant authors refer to the contents of wills in order to counter what they feel to be misguided traditions; thus A myrrour or glasse for them that be syke condemns the habit of leaving money for masses or for the foundation or repairing of churches, or giving money to religious orders at the expense of providing for one's own dependants.[432] The same author goes on to condemn the provision of altars, monuments and costly graves intended to keep a person's fame alive. A multiplicity of "tables" and memorials, he complains, are to be found hung in churches as a bird net is spread.[433] Certainly provision for tombs was sometimes made in the wills of the wealthy.[434]

Legrand devotes a chapter to the subject "How noo man ought to be curyous of his sepulcre".[435] He attacks such curiosity as a sign of pride and vanity and continues:

> in my lyfe I have seen many sepulturs/but I have not apperceyued yt ye people is meoued to douocion/ or || to praye to god by cause of them/but I have well seen moche poeple beholde/aduyse/and I angle by cause of suche sepultures/and me semeth it is noothynge aduenaunt/ne apperteyneth not to a synfull creature to have a sepelture soo curyous ne so enhaunced as many men have. 436

Vives too criticized the provision of an over-costly tomb.[437] Legrand allowed that a monument appropriate to a man's degree could be provided, but he would prefer to see the money used "to shryne the bodyes of the sayntes" - a suggestion which the author of The myrrour...for them that

be syke would have found abhorrent. Legrand goes on to cite with approval a number of pagans, including Diogenes, Theodore[438] and King Lygurgus, who cared nothing for their burial, although he feels it is reasonable for a Christian to seek burial in hallowed ground. The chapter concludes by commending those who are diligent to bury others but warning people against taking too much interest in their own sepulchre. The author of Dives and Pauper[439], however, finds it necessary to warn against mean and "preuy burienges," which cheat the poor of their dole and deprive the souls of the living and the dead of the prayers of Holy Church. In particular he argues that "they offende greatly ayenst all the soules that ben in purgatorie, that shulde be releued by masses singing by the prayers and suffrages of holy churche, whiche ben ordeyned in the burienge of deade folke for the helpe of all christen soules". He goes on to quote scriptural support for his views including Ecclesiasticus XXXVIII:16-17, which suggest that God requires mourning and "worshypfull buryenge" from those who can afford it. A good funeral and burial, together with suitable provision for obits and masses to be said after death, are justified and required for religious and social reasons. Alter the theological view to banish purgatory, and expose the vain expense of the grand funeral, and the arguments of Dives and Pauper are no longer tenable.

Erasmus' Preparation to deathe[440] goes on to outline the following course of action: having settled his worldly affairs, preferably some time before, while still healthy and active, but otherwise by a "nuncupatory testament" or by remitting care of the will to the heirs, "all babblers of worldly goodes" are to be removed from the sickman's chamber. Several authors comment on the place of the physician; with the older works tending

to ignore his skills while those touched by the Renaissance tend, like Erasmus, to allow the use of physical remedies provided that a man's chief hope remains fixed in God.[441] Finally, however, it is to the physician of his soul that the dying man must turn, and Erasmus advises care in the choice of a priest, one who will sustain and comfort the sick man and not flatter him or cast him into despair.[442] If possible he should receive the Last Rites of the Church, Confession and absolution, the Sacraments of the Altar and anointing:

> Ye souerayne medycyne bothe for soule and body are
> ye sacramentes of the chyrche/wherfore yf it please
> god ye shall have your helth agayne ye shall have it
> ye soner and ye better/for without ye specyal helpe
> of god there is no medycyne that may helpe nature...443

Protestant authors too recommend that the sick man should receive communion,[444] but the author of A myrrour...for them that be syke warns against receiving it merely in the hope of obtaining health and prosperity. Erasmus also warns against popular superstitions involving the Last Rites. Some people believed that to receive the Last Rites, like making a will, would make death come the sooner, which Erasmus counters by showing that the sacrament can be health-giving. There were also those who feared to die unless they had received the Last Rites,[445] a fear which Erasmus attempted to allay. Of course every Christian desires the comfort of the Sacraments at his departure, but Erasmus reassures him that God will accept sincere confession even if it is not made to nor absolved by a priest. He adds that not even burial is necessary, for some have been received by God without Sacrament or burial, while others buried with the full solemnity of the Church have gone to Hell. What

matters is not the outward manner of death but the life which preceded it and the faith which accompanies it.[446]

Finally there is one more provision:

> Whan ony lyklyhode shal deye/therme is moste necessarye to have a specyall frende/the whiche wyll help and praye for hym & therwyth counseyll the seke of the wele of his soule/& moreouer to see that alle other so do aboute hym/or ellys quyckly for to make him departe. 447

The Exornatorium curatorum urges the same course, saying that, if some one who is concerned to minister to the bodily needs of a dying man may be called a friend, the name is far more worthily bestowed upon one who ministers to the soul; the body will soon be dissolved to become meat for worms, but the soul shall live forever in either heaven or hell.[448] Most of the ars moriendi books seem to assume the presence of some friend to read the book to the sick man and to interrogate him on the points of belief. Although the priest is called in to administer the Last Rites the ars moriendi books, like many of the tribulation treatises, seem to have been written for a neutral audience, but perhaps predominantly lay. The friend must be carefully chosen and tested in life, for it is only at and after death that the true friend will be revealed.[449] Dives and Pauper contains a cautionary tale about those who trust, unwisely, to executors and attorneys,[450] and goes on to tell a tale from the Vita Barlaam[451] about a rich man's three friends, two of whom he loved while disregarding the third. Threatened with ruin and death by the king the rich man turns to his friends for help. The first offers him a burial sheet, the second offers to accompany him on the way, but it is the unregarded third friend who goes to the king and saves the

rich man's life. The tale is then interpreted: the rich man is anyone who has worldly possessions; the first friend is the world, who gives him nothing for his love; the second ~~are~~ is family and bodily friends, who bear him to his grave, perhaps shed a few tears, but then soon forget; and the third friend is almsdeed, often disregarded in life, which alone will stand with the soul before God's judgement. This story, so like the play Everyman[452] in outline, makes it clear that the dying man will need not only a bodily friend to help him through the process of dying and who will fulfil his trust and pray for him after his death but he must during his life acquire those virtues which will remain his friends through death and judgement.

The most telling exposition of the preparations customary for death is to be found in Ye dyaloge called Funus by Erasmus, which was added to the 1526 edition of the Colloquia and printed in an English translation by Robert Copland for John Byddell in January 1534.[453] There are several points of contact between Funus and Erasmus' Preparation to deathe, written at the end of 1533 and dedicated to Thomas Boleyn, Earl of Wiltshire and Ormonde.[454]

The greater part of Funus tells of the death of George, which is marked by constant activity, the presence of hordes of assistants and onlookers, and almost continual contention occasionally erupting into violence; yet while contriving to ridicule many aspects of the scene Erasmus presents it as substantially true. By contrast the death of Cornelius is told briefly and simply and his last days are marked by tranquillity and quiet hope. At the outset Phedrus undertakes merely to describe the death of the two men, - "it shall by thy parte to iuge

whiche of the dethes is moost to be wysshed to a chrysten man"— but despite the lack of overt polemic the reader is left in no doubt as to which is the more dignified, charitable and Christian ending.[455]

George is first seen surrounded by physicians, who have given up hope of a physical cure but who yet disagree as to what the illness is and are eventually allowed to perform "an Anothomye" on the dead body.[456] A Franciscan is called to hear George's confession,[457] and is soon followed by a multitude from the "four" begging ordres". The parish priest called to administer the Sacrament and anoint the sick man refuses unless he hears the confession also. The ensuing altercation between friars and parish priest is settled when George, having succeeded in making himself heard above the noise, offers to confess again to the priest and to pay for "bell rygynge, dyriges, the herse, for buryall vnder stole" if the priest will leave the house forthwith. The payment settled, the priest pronounces the absolution without hearing confession, administers the Sacrament, and departs. Cornelius, on the other hand, feeling his death approach, goes to church on Sunday to be confessed, to hear the sermon and attend mass. He consults one physician, a close friend, and joyfully accepts the doctor's judgement that "he thought there was more socoure in god than in physyciens".

In George's house there ensues contention between the four orders of friars and a fifth, "the crouched frere", which degenerates into a violent argument between the orders. By promises of money to each George again purchases peace - money gained by false accounting while he was an army captain. The next issue is George's will, which sought to make his wife and each of his children enter the religious life and their portions were to be forfeit to the various convents if they refused. Other bequests went

to the two friars and to the Charterhouse that George might become a partaker of all the good works done by those orders, and the remainder of his money was to be bestowed by the friars on poor people.[458] By contrast Cornelius was always liberal towards the poor, distributing as much as he could spare to industrious poor people, not giving indiscriminately to "ambycyous beggers", and during his last days he continued to relieve the poor, especially those who "dwelled nygh to hym". His will had long been made, "for he denayed vtterly that they were called testamentes, whiche were made of suche as lye on dyeng: but rather folisshe dotinges", and it contained no bequests to religious or monasteries. The parish priest being called for administers the Sacrament of the Altar and anoints him, but Cornelius does not require confession, being recently confessed and feeling at peace.

Cornelius' priest asks about burial arrangements, to be told that Cornelius does not care where his body is buried, "whiche shal be founde in the last day as well out of one place as other", nor does he wish to have anything to do with "the ringyng of belles, trentals, and yeres myndes, of bulles, of bying part takyng of merites". All he needs is a simple mass, and he trusts to the merits of Christ and the prayers of the whole Church, of which he is a member.[459] George's funeral arrangements are very different, and the elaborate typology seems to mock contemporary methods of exegesis:

> ....ix of everyone of the .v.ordres should be present in the honour of the .v. bokes of Moyses/ and of the .ix. ordres of aungelles. And that every ordre sholde haue theyr crosse borne before them/ and they sholde synge theyr mournyng songes. Moreouer .xxx. (besyde suche as were kynne to hym) shold be hyred, (for so many pyeces of money was our lorde solde) all in blacke to bere the torches. And for his honours sake.xii. mourners (this nombre is in the honour of the .xii. apostles) sholde go about the corps... 460

The tomb is then discussed in detail: his effigy will make it clear that "he was a gentyll man of cote armour" and his epitaph will be "mete for a worthyman" - a splendid illustration of the "curiosity", pride and vanity condemned by Legrand. His body is to be divided for burial in various worthy and meritious (and expensive) places of rest. Everything pertaining to his funeral and burial is arranged with an eye to the due honours of the participants as well as to the greater glory of the dead man.

George shows unmistakeable signs of death: "The last acte of the comedy was therfore prepared". George is thrown into desperation by a legal fault in the bull promising him forgiveness of sins and escape from purgatory[461], but Vincent quickly volunteers to exchange souls and if necessary to suffer even hell for George's sake; the numbers of masses and nocturns, "truely it was an vnreasonable nombre", to be provided are ~~then~~ agreed upon. George is then laid on a mat covered with ashes and a grey friar's coat laid over him.[462] He grasps a cross and holds a holy candle in each hand, while for nearly three hours Bernadine and Vincent canvass the respective merits of their orders, Franciscan and Dominican in to his left and right ear. After death, the anatomy being made, the mangled remains are buried with due solemnity. Phedrus ~~Hednus~~ justifies the publication of the account thus:

> ...yf these thynges be godly whiche I shewe,
> it is theyr profet that the people do know them/
> yf they be otherwyse, so many as be good among them,
> will gyue me thankes whiche haue shewed forthe suche,
> wherby some correcte with shame, may refrayne lyke dedes.[463]

Cornelius passes his last hours having the Bible read to him. He then commends the care of their children to his wife, warns her to choose

carefully if she marries again, and exhorts his children to follow virtue and obey their mother. He blessed them all and the children are sent to bed for the night. At his end Psalm xxii is read to him and he takes up the cross and candle with appropriate biblical quotations. At last he raises his eyes to heaven, saying. "Lord Jesu, take my spyryte", and dies as gently as if he had simply fallen asleep. The death of Cornelius, indeed, exemplifies the principles of a good death which Erasmus describes in The preparation to deathe, while George's activity, his reliance on mechanical means of grace and post-mortem compensation, is characteristic of one who has refused to hear God's call to repentance during his life. The description in The preparation to deathe of how sick a man faces death sums up George's last hours:

> Than haue they ynough to do with theyr sycknes, whiche suffereth them to do nothing els: with the phisitions, with their heires, with them to whom they bequethe, & with wayters for prayse, with creytours and dettours, with wife and chyldren, with stwards and seruauntes, with frendes and foes, with durges & burial, with confessions, dispensations, and censures, with restitutions and makyng amendes, with sundry doutes of conscience, fynally with the articles of the faith. 464

While Erasmus on more than one occasion had to protest his orthodoxy and deny Protestant sympathies, the manner of death he sought to encourage in The preparation to deathe and which was exemplified by Cornelius was clearly congenial to Protestants. For instance Werdmüller's A moste frutefull/pithye and learned treatise may well owe something to Erasmus' Preparation. In the fortieth chapter of Book I, Werdmüller persuades the reader to make his will while still healthy, which "causeth not thee to dye to sooner...but...the more quietly", and he uses a series of comparisons which in structure and occasionally in content seem similar to Erasmus': it is good to restore ill-gotten goods in the will, but better to do it while

still healthy; it is good to bequeath goods to the poor but it is better to give to them during life and be able to oversee the distribution of what is still yours to give; and finally it is good to forgive enemies at death but better to forgive them in life.[465] Elaborate funeral ceremonies were seen by Protestants as superstitious or hypocritical, and in any case unnecessary since heaven was to be won by personal faith in the merits of Christ and trust in His forgiveness and it was not to be bargained for or purchased with money or masses. Cyprian, as we have seen, condemned excessive mourning, among other reasons because infidels noted that such mourning contradicted Christian belief in man's immortal soul and the Christian assertion that there exists a better world than the present one. Hughe echoes Cyprian again, and offers a useful summary of Protestant views.[466] With purgatory removed and faith in the resurrection affirmed, the Christian who dies passes directly from the cares and miseries of this world straight to the comfort, light and joy of heaven. It is the survivor left on earth, still far from "the port of our sweet country", who should mourn.

The Comfortable exhortation against the chance of death, made by Erasmus Roterodamus,[467] which may well have been used by Werdmüller in the third book of his Moste frutefull...treatise, is one of the few works that pays any attention to the state of the bereaved. The medieval ars moriendi books concentrated upon the behaviour, temptations and faith of the dying man, while Protestants such as Frith and Hughe emphasize the importance of right belief. The death of kindred or friends seems to have been generally regarded as a tribulation to be

borne"; Thou muste paciently suffre, and grutch not at it that can not be ammended".[468] Mourning and tears are unprofitable, in that they cannot restore the dead and they may harm those who indulge in them.[469] Compassion and sympathy for the bereaved seems to have been largely ignored in favour of more important issues, how to make a good death and what is to be believed. For the most part the Comfortable exhortacion reiterated familiar themes - the inevitability of death, the wretchedness, frailty and shortness of life-and Erasmus gives numerous examples of the heroic stoicism shown by pagan men and women in the face of death - a list substantially reproduced in Werdmüller's seventh chapter. Erasmus' Exhortation deals particularly with the death of a child, and the father's lament, "He died ere his daie", is very similar to that of the man in Brecon's The Prayse of Death. It is answered partly by showing that no-one can presume to live another day, that life is a "perpetuall course vnto death", that few reach old age, and that an early death saves a child from subsequent miseries and corruption.[470] The point is illustrated by the tale of a prince who lends a fine "table", which should be enjoyed while it can be and gladly returned when it is asked for again.[471] The other part of the answer is given in terms of the familiar medieval opposition, heightened in the contemptus mundi writings, between the miseries of this world and the joys of heaven. The body is seen as "the burial or prison of the sowle" - a common enough view[472] - and the mourner does wrong to begrudge the soul its new-found liberty and security in heaven. The thought of the loved one's soul alive in the joy of heaven was clearly intended to be the chief consolation. Werdmüller gives body to the consolation by talking of the Christian's living hope of a joyful

resurrection,[473] and he reminds the reader that time is a great healer. But perhaps the greatest concession to human feelings is made in Erasmus' insistence that friendship continues beyond the grave. The father may still enjoy the company of his son in his thoughts,[474] and he may find comfort in the thought of a son in heaven whom he can reverence and who can help his cause on earth.

The ars moriendi

The undated monument to Richard and Margerie Nordell at St.Edmund's, Lombard Street, bore the following inscription:

> Returned to erth ans so sall ye
> Of the erth we were made and formed
> And to the erth we bin returned
> Have þis in mynd and memory
> Ye þat liuen lerneth to dy.
> And beholdeth here your destine
> Such as ye erne somtyme weren we
> Ye sall be dyght in þis aray
> Be yeme nere so stout and gay
> Therfore Frendys we yow prey
> Make yow redy for todey
> þat ye be not for sinn atteynt
> At ye dey of Judgment. 475

It is to the living that the warning to learn to die is addressed,[476] and Erasmus recommends attendance at other men's deaths that the onlooker may learn to distinguish the good and holy from the detestable, and by implication avoid the bad.[477] The ars moriendi is essentially a conduct book designed to instruct man how to "deye & departe in our Lorde/that is to say from the worlde and his pleasurys and deye in the treme fayth of the chyrche and repentaunce for hyr synnes". Since the sources and variants of the two main versions of the ars moriendi have been ably dealt with by Sister Mary Catharine O'Connor,[478] I shall concentrate upon the ars moriendi books printed in England during the 1530's: Wyer's edition of "Caxton II", A lyttll treatyse schortely compyled and called ars moriendi;[479] The doctrynall of dethe;[480] and Erasmus's Preparation to deathe, which does include some practical advice towards the end.

The xylographic editions of the ars moriendi seem never to have been produced in England, but The boke of the craft of dying circulated quite widely in Latin and English versions.[481] It was divided into

six chapters; an introductory commendation of death, the five death-bed temptations, the interrogations, and in the last three chapters miscellaneous instructions and devotions. Most of the ars moriendi books seem to have contained an introductory exhortation/commendation, the temptations, the interrogations thought to be derived from St.Anselm,[482] and various devotions or prayers. The Lytell treatyse is somewhat unusual in not having a separate section on the temptations,[483] although they are not wholly disregarded. It begins with a general introduction - exhortation, which is followed by the interrogations, and then the work provided a rather more miscellaneous collection of general information and devotions than is usual in ars moriendi treatises: various snatches from primer prayers and psalter, a remembrance of the sacraments of the altar, remedies against venial sins, a confession of sins ascribed to Gerson, - "iij verytees", a prayer for the dedication of a church, and finally lists of catechetical material: the twelve degrees of humility, seven degrees of obedience, twelve degrees of patience and the fifteen degrees of charity. As a whole it lacks the organisation of subject matter or the schematized divisions necessary to a successful practical guide to the business of dying, and much of its content is clearly peripheral or irrelevant to the subject of death. However, as a general devotional treatise intended for the living but including some instruction on the business of dying, the Lytyll treatyse seems a rather less misdirected work, although it is still difficult to justify the inclusion of the prayer for the dedication of a church. The doctrynall of dethe is rather better organized, and had Sister Mary Catharine[484] seen

it, she would surely have linked it with The boke of the craft of dying. Though shorter than that book it is organized on the same lines, with an introduction-exhortation, then a detailed treatment of the five death-bed temptations, which had figured so prominently in the earlier xylographic editions,[485] followed by the interrogations and a number of prayers.

The Lytyll treatyse, The doctrynall and the practical section of Erasmus' Preparation to deathe[486] are addressed to the friend who is to help the sick-man through the last hours of his life and to whose care the safe departure of the dying man's soul is committed. More obviously than perhaps any other class of late medieval devotional literature these treatises were written for lay people. Although the priest is to be brought in to hear confession and administer the Last Rites he has no other part in the process. In the Lytyll treatyse, Gerson's La Médecine de l'Ame and The doctrynall he is hardly mentioned, and in Erasmus' Preparation to deathe, while the Last Rites should be desired by the Christian and the priest carefully chosen, they are not necessary to a good death. Against the frequent tendency of medieval religion to insist upon the correct performance and fulfilment of religious obligations, in this case the reception of the Last Rites,[487] the authors of these treatises seem more concerned with the general state of the dying man's soul and with the need to strengthen his faith and console him.

The type of consolation offered is two-fold: one is the rather theoretical consolation of the tribulation treatises, the other is centred in the far more sympathetic figure of Christ crucified. The doctrynall sees death in the terms of the last struggle of the Christian's warfare:

"ye shall vnderstonde that none shall have ye kyngdome of heuen but such as fyghteth for it/and specyally agaynst theyr body in tyme of temptacyon and sekenes." Death is the last and decisive tribulation, and it is to be borne with fortitude and patience. The Lytyll treatyse exhorts its audience "to be glad for to departe from this wretchyd worlde and fall of alle mysery/and thynke that ye nedes must departe", and reiterates the familiar idea that the time of death is better than the time of birth.[488] Since death is inevitable God's summons is to be accepted willingly whenever it comes. The arguments of the tribulation treatises are reproduced to console and encourage the sufferer. Tribulation is to be desired and taken patiently and thankfully, not "wyth grutchyng". To suffer now is to be sure of avoiding the pains of purgatory or hell hereafter. Gerson sums up the rather more diffuse reflections of The doctrynall upon the subject:

> si dois bien prendre la painne de ta maladie
> et la douleur de ta mort en bonne pacience,
> en priant Dieu que tout ce tourne en la purgation
> de ton ame et a la remission de tes pechez; que ce
> soit yci ton purgatoire car tu dois mieulx aymer estre
> pugny en ce monde qu'en l'autre; et se ainsi tu le
> demandes de bon cuer et repentent, tu feras de necessité
> vertus; et Dieu te pardonra et peine et coulpe; et iras
> certainnement en paradis; et aultrement, par impacience,
> tu porrois cheoir en pardurable dampnacion.[489]

Finally The doctrynall declares that patient endurance of pain is a proof of faith and a valuable example to others.[490]

Whereas the tribulation treatises offered a heavenly reward hereafter commensurate with the amount of suffering endured in this life, the Lytyll

treatyse suggests a more immediate exchange: the miseries of this world are soon to be exchanged for life with Christ and the possession of the heavenly inheritance "that he dyde bye for you with his precyous passyon & blood".[491] Christ is seen as the perfect example, and The doctrynall encourages the sick man "with all the force that ye may applye your body to suffre payne/lyke as our sauyour applyed his body to ye crosse for you". Erasmus's Preparation to deathe ends with a description of Christ's Passion from His sermon on Maundy Thursday. through the Agony in the Garden to His crucifixion, and what Christ did outwardly the dying man is to do spiritually. Like Christ the dying man must go out alone, leaving behind him all possessions and "domestical affections", and speak to his heavenly Father as the extreme necessity approaches. In the Garden Christ had felt weak and afraid but he had continued to cry to God, and so must the dying man, whose good angel will at last come and wipe the bloody sweat from his mind:

> Last of al we muste with our lord al naked, ascende vpon the crosse, far from erthly affections, lift vp to the loue of the heauenly lyfe... And there nayled with three nayles, fayth, hope, and charite, we muste constantlye persuer, fyghtyng valiantely with our ennemy the diuel, vntil at last, after we have vanquished hym, we maye passe into eternal rest, throughe the ayde and grace of our Lorde Iesus Chryste.[492]

Christ will help those who endeavour to follow His example. To inspire faith and hope most of the ars moriendi treatises recommend that a crucifix should be held before the dying man,[493] and this is illustrated in the xylographic illustrations and in the Verard and de Worde woodcuts.[494] In the third chapter of her Revelations of Divine Love Julian of Norwich

gives a vivid description of her awareness of the crucifix held before her eyes by the priest as she begins to lose consciousness, and it is from the vision of Christ crucified that her revelations proceed. The author of The boke of the craft of dying declares that "the disposicion of Criste in the Crosse shuld grettly draw" the sick man, and he goes on to quote the often-used but most moving words of St. Bernard:

> What man is it þat shuld not be rauysshed and draw to hope ~~and~~ & to have full confidence in god, ~~and~~ & he take heed diligently of the disposicione of Cristis body in the crosse: take heed ~~and~~ & see his heed enclyned to salue the, his mouth to kysse the, his armes I-spred to be-clyp the, his hondis I-thrilled to yeue the, his syde opened to loue the, hys body alonge straught to yeue all hym-selfe to the.495

Here Christ is seen not only as a noble exemplar to be followed but as a tender and loving Saviour, whose care for the individual must have offered consolation and hope to the suffering and despairing.

In addition to the crucifix it is recommended that the friend read to the sick man, especially from Christ's Passion, but the Lytyll treatyse and The doctrynall also recommend the seven psalms, and the litany with perhaps part of "our lady psalter"; Erasmus simply suggests appropriate topics from Scripture. The doctrynall also recommends some representation of Our Lady, while Erasmus suggests pictures of saints, in whose lives God's goodness was to be clearly seen; The doctrynall adds the the provision of a holy candle, and together with the Lytyll treatyse calls for plenty of holy water to be cast upon and about the sick man "for auoydung of euyll spirytes, ye whiche thenne be full redy to take theyr auauntage of the sowle yf they may". It was generally believed that the Devil intensified his attack on the soul as it drew towards death, when its resistance was lowered by pain, by natural weakness of mind, by the

dread of death and the horror of hell. The struggle was crystallized in the dramatic series of illustrations which accompanied the xylographic ars moriendi books and continued in Verard's woodcuts for L'Art de bien vivre et de bien mourir, which were in turn copied by de Worde.[496] In the standard ars moriendi illustrations it is the devils and their temptations which threaten the dying man, not a direct representation of death. Pictures of devils struggling with angels for the possession of a soul or of devils dragging souls to hell, not to mention sculptured devils or the devils who appeared in the Doomsday plays of the Chester or Ludus Coventriae cycles, must have helped to make the Devil seem all too real and threatening, especially to the dying.[497] The problem of death-bed temptation was widely recognized in both traditional Catholic and Protestant treatises.[498] Traditionally there were five temptations: loss of faith, despair, impatience, vain glory and avarice. All of them as described in the ars moriendi books are psychologically credible afflictions of the soul in its last hours, and as a guide to the living their teaching is very relevant; three of the temptations—vain glory, impatience, and avarice—are counterparts of three of the seven deadly sins—pride, anger or hatred, and avarice.

Faith is the basis upon which man's salvation is built: undermine it by, for example, superstition or heresy, or deny it by living a wantonly evil life, and the soul will be in serious danger of being lost. The authors of the ars moriendi books, like those of many devout treatises, emphasize the importance of obedience to the Church and of belief in her teachings, even though the individual "may not actually & intellectually apprehende hem". To reinforce the sick man's faith The boke of the craft of dying, The doctrynall and Erasmus all recommended that the creed be recited before him, and The boke and The doctrynall suggest that stories showing the

faithfulness of patriarchs, apostles and martyrs be read to him. The doctrynall sums up the antidote to this temptation by encouraging the sick man to put his confidence in God and to trust in the power of God and the help of the Blessed Virgin. Erasmus particularly warns of the danger of being drawn into arguments with the Devil,[499] and he illustrates the warning with an amusing tale of two men who were tempted by the Devil at their death. One, a philosopher, entered into argument with the Devil and was induced by his philosophical reasoning to show that Christ could not be God and Man, and that a Virgin would not conceive a Son: his faith thus undermined, the philosopher wavered and was lost. The other, a simple Christian, was asked what he believed and answered "As the church beleueth". The Devil demanded:

> How doth the churche beleue? Mary quod he, as I beleue. How dost thou beleue? As the church beleueth. How beleueth the church? As I beleue;[500]

and the Devil departs, vanquished. Erasmus advocates this type of argument against subtle questions on such subjects as the Trinity and the Sacrament of the Altar. He goes on to give a dialogue between the Devil and the sick man - it is substantially reproduced in Hughe's Troubled mans medicine[501] - in which the sick man is provided with quotations and paraphrases of scripture with which to refute the Fiend's suggestions. This was the method used by Jesus when tempted by the Devil after His baptism; and, not surprisingly, it was the method most often recommended in Protestant works, such as A myrrour...for them that be syke, and Frith provides an armoury of biblical quotations against numerous temptations at the end of his Preparation to the crosse; A godly and holsome preseruatyue against disperaciō uses the same method.

William Bonde recommends a passive response to spiritual temptations against faith or to desperation:

> Wysely & dyscretly we must resyste them/
> but in no wyse wrastell wyth them. When
> the enemy putythe to you a mocion of infydelyte/
> reason not with hym/and lyke wyse when he castyth
> a suggestion of desperacion/styue not with hym... 502

One of the Devil's aims in undermining a man's faith is to induce him to despair of salvation[503] - the sin of Marlowe's Dr. Faustus - or, even worse, to commit suicide.[504] His chief means is to remind the sick man of all the sins he has committed and so lead him to doubt God's mercy.[505] The Chastising of God's Children[506] shows how remembrance of Christ's Passion will overcome the sinner's despair, and other treatises use the Bernardine description of Christ crucified(quoted above), leaning down from the cross to save His people, to dispel despair. It is to the suffering and crucified Christ, the proof of God's love for man, that the soul tempted to despair must turn. He must trust in Christ's mercy and believe the promises of forgiveness recorded in Scripture and shown in the reconciliations of such sinners as St.Peter, who denied His Lord, and St.Mary.Magdalene.[507] Although despair is particularly dealt with in the context of death-bed temptation, as the full title of "A godly and holsome preseruatyue against disperacion at al times necessarye for the soule: but then chieflye to be vsed and ministered when the devil doth assault vs most fiersely, & deth approcheth nieste" shows, the temptation does not only afflict the dying. Both the author of The Chastising of God's Children and Bonde in his Deuoute Epystle[508] devotes a chapter to the dangers of despair, for the living.

The remaining temptations, to impatience, vain-glory and avarice, are even more obviously the concern of the living, but they intensified their

attack as a man drew towards death. Impatience is described in The boke of the craft of dying and The doctrynall as a denial of charity, and warnings against "grutchynge agaynst god" in pain or illness suggest that death was regarded as the final tribulation. Its pain if borne patiently would please God and help to satisfy for sins committed, so reducing or saving the soul altogether from purgatory. The temptation to vain-glory or spiritual pride particularly afflicts the devout soul, and according to The boke of the craft of dying shows itself as complacency or self-satisfaction. The antidote is to remember the sins which have been committed - but not so pessimistically as to cause despair; - to think along the lines of the contemptus mundi writings on the vileness of the body or the misery of the human condition; and to follow the example of St. Anthony,[509] in confounding the Devil, by showing hope when tempted to despair, meekness when tempted to pride. The final temptation, to avarice, particularly afflicts "carnall men & seculer men" according to The boke of the craft of dying. It concerns not only love of riches but all manner of worldly business and earthly affections, all that ties a man to this world and leads him to hope against all reason that he may escape death. Preachers, authors of contemptus mundi works and numerous more general devout treatises all inveighed against the love of riches, undue affection for this world, and the refusal to recognize the inevitability of death and prepare for it. Life was to be a preparation for death, and a good life ensured a good death. It is unlikely that any of these temptations would occur for the first time when a man was on his death-bed. Ideally they should have been overcome in life, but the Devil

was particularly ready at death to remind the dying man of past failures and to make use of any remaining weaknesses. The final piece of comfort offered in this chapter by The boke of the craft of dying is the reminder that, however sorely tempted, a man who has free will does not sin unless he consents to it, and the assurance, given in many tribulation treatises, of I Corinthians X:13 is reiterated, that God "will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able".

Although traditional ars moriendi books were reprinted during the 1530's and Erasmus' Preparation to deathe contains so many familiar teachings and examples that it may be counted as traditional, the same decade saw the appearance of several Protestant works. Two of them have been associated with the name of John Frith: The preparation to deathe[510] and A treatyse to teche a man to dye/and not to feare deathe.[511] The latter was probably first printed at Antwerp, as was Certeine prayers and godly meditacyons*, "Emprinted at Marlborow...per me Ioannem Philiponon",[512] whose "consolacyon for troubled consciences" contains some teaching about death. Also originating from Antwerp, probably, was A myrroure or glass for them that be syke & in payne, which was "Translated out of Dutche in English", perhaps by Coverdale, from Guilielmus Gnapheus' (Fullonius) Troost ende spiegel der siecken.[513] It is a list which clearly shows the importance of the Low Countries, especially Antwerp, in supplying Protestant works for the English market during the 1530's.

The Protestant treatises differ from the traditional ars moriendi books in two very obvious ways: they abandon the division into exhortation, temptations, interrogations and miscellaneous instructions, prayers and devotions; and they are clearly not designed as practical guides to conduct but are usually longer and more discursive. Their method is not to instruct the reader in the art of dying so much as to teach him

about death and what he is to believe. Yet despite their shift of emphasis and their obvious scorn for the traditional paraphernalia of the sick room[514] and condemnation of traditional Catholic doctrines, the shadow of the ars moriendi books still lingers to be discerned in the choice of topics, in some of their teachings or rebutted by the more aggressive Protestant authors. Their greatest contribution to the literature of death is the Reformed authors' confident assertion of the hope and joy of the resurrection of faith.

new para/ Frith's Preparation...to deathe reveals many of the characteristics of the Protestant authors. The first six chapters deal generally with the nature of death and contrast the hopefulness and security of the death of the godly with the miserable plight of the ungodly. The teaching is derived exclusively from Scripture, especially the Pauline epistles, and many biblical quotations and paraphrases are included in each chapter. A typical example of Frith's method is the sixth chapter[515] "Baptisme is a comforte in the poynte of deathe" which owes much to Romans VI. Baptism is the sick man's "letter and token" that his life is "incorporate with the deathe of Christ", and as Christ by His death has overcome death so the Christian is to trust that he too will be delivered. He is to remember:

> that thou arte baptysed, || that is, that thou hast receyved remission of synnes: that thou haste made a couenaunt with god, that thou arte delyuered frome the ~~deuyll~~ dyuell, deathe, and synne, reconsiled to god.516

The Christian by virtue of his baptism is reconciled to God and is heir to His promises.[517] The following chapter, entitled "The goodlye knowe the tyme of dyinge to be determyned of god", sounds at first as if it runs counter to the widespread traditional teaching on the inevitability of

death and the uncertainty of when or how it will strike, but although there is a change of emphasis Frith does not contradict the traditional teaching. The Christian is assured that no matter when or how he may die he will be in God's hand, because God alone has appointed his time. The godly man will so live as to be constantly prepared to die, while the ungodly, assuming a long life ahead, will invariably be caught unprepared. Unlike the traditional ars moriendi authors Frith is much less concerned to encourage the heedless to repent and prepare for death, which may strike at any moment; he addresses himself to the godly reader, and offers them assurance, comfort and hope in the promises of Jesus and in the resurrection of the flesh and the life everlasting. Frith's treatise contains no Protestant polemic or criticism of Catholic customs, but its exclusive biblicism, the assurance of salvation promised to the believer, its emphasis upon the resurrection and the importance it attaches to the personal faith of the believer all help to make it a distinctively Protestant treatise.

A treatyse to teche a man to dye/and not to feare dethe is more obviously intended as an antidote to the traditional ars moriendi books and Catholic teaching about death. Its opening is surely a deliberate echo of L'Art de bien vivre et de bien mourir, that popular collection of Catholic teachings on death and the Last Things—

> When the only eternall and all myghtie god had created/and made hewen and erthe and all manner of beastes/he created also man/after his owne Image 518 —

and the introduction goes on to give a brief account of the Fall and to show that it was by sin that death came into the world, a point also made

in Frith's Preparation... to deathe. Since God has ordained corporal death to be the punishment for sin, all men - for there is none without sin - must die, and the Christian should welcome it whenever it comes, both in obedience to God's will and also because it heralds "a lyfe thousande folde better". The treatise's main concern is to remove three causes which make man fear death: fear of the sin, which gnaws his conscience, fear of God's judgement, and ignorance about the fate of the soul after death. Fear of sin is, of course, closely related to the traditional death-bed temptation to despair.

The great fear arising from sin is that man has not done sufficient by way of satisfaction to earn forgiveness; the tendency to quantify religion must have left many people feeling incapable of balancing the equation between merits and reward. The author laments "that so many of Christen people are now is (sic) euylle enstructed and taught", that they trust their own deeds or the works of other men rather than the works and merits of Christ.[519] Good works are of value in helping to form a Christian character and for the assistance of other Christians, but they cannot without faith save a man, and a series of biblical quotations proves the often-stated Protestant assertion that salvation is in Christ alone. Pardon for sins is to be found not in the promises and pronouncements of men but in Scripture, and it is up to the individual to test whether he is forgiven against the standard of Scripture and according to his own feelings. Reminders of the joy of Christ's promises of forgiveness, and numerous biblical quotations, take up much of the remainder of the chapter, and as in Frith the emphasis falls upon the individual's faith. A myrrour...for them that be syke also deals with

the fear born of sin, although in the more traditional context of the death-bed temptation to despair. Its author provides a catena of scriptural quotations to show that Christ's natural work, like that of a physician, is to save His people and to heal their sins. He goes on to emphasize, like Frith, the importance of belief in the resurrection of the flesh.

The second fear dealt with in To teche a man to dye is the fear of judgement; and the author returns to his attack on the inadequacy of external works to pay the debt of sin, and he particularly attacks those who hope to live long in order to accumulate more merits: "Shewe me wherin are ye amended sente (sic) youre last sycknes/when you thought that ye shulde haue dyed?" Man stands condemned by the law, but if he has faith in Christ all his debts may be laid upon Him; and the treatise goes on to show the ways in which sin may be covered. The third fear arising from ignorance of where a man will go after death is answered by faith in God and belief in life everlasting, and the author returns to his attack upon the way in which "the multitude of symple people" are taught. He contends that doctors and preachers instil into the people fear of death and terrify them with their stories of purgatory and hell.[520]

By comparison with A myrrour or glasse for them that be syke, To teche a man to dye is very mild in its criticism of Catholic teaching and customs. A myrrour begins with a bitter indictment of the Catholic clergy, and later denounces pilgrimages and devotion to saints. Like To teche a man to dye, the author of A myrrour laments the people's ignorance of God's word, "that they beleue rather, the visions of Tundall, the tales of legenda aurea, or such fantasies" than the Bible. It is

largely by Timothy's exposure of Catholic superstitions and his exposition of Scripture that Lazarus is brought to repent and to apologize for having gone so far from God, with his "pardon letters, my reliquyes, my folysshe treatises of meditation, my bedes, and all such superstitions", and a little later he tells Tobias that all have been burnt. The attack on the superstitions and materialism of Catholic religion is to be expected from Protestant authors, but it is to be noted that in Funeus and his Preparation to deathe Erasmus had indirectly attacked the more obvious abuses, and one of the declared aims of the traditional ars moriendi books was to help the soul prepare to meet death, with all his worldly concerns settled.

But the Protestant treatises do not simply replace Catholic teaching by heavy-footed biblicism and condemn earlier customs as superstitious, nor are they solely preoccupied with the question of faith and works. Their writers are convinced that death has been conquered in Christ:

> And yf that this aduantage of deth do but lytell moue vs/ it is a signe that oure faith in Christ is verey weke with vs/for he that doth not well exteme the pryce and value of a good deth/or elles that deth is good/he doth not yet beleue but is ouer moche lette by the olde adam/and the wysdome of the flesshe yet reynyng in hym/we must therfore laboure that we may be promoted to knowe and loue thys benefyte of deth. 521

Thus death, so fearful to other people, becomes the greatest advantage to the Christian; "deth is now dede to faythfull men/and hath nothyng to be feared for/but hys visar and outward face". Those who join themselves to Christ by baptism and in faith will be partakers of His victory. Contributing to the Christian's victory, however, is the traditional virtue of patient bearing of tribulation and death,[522] and awareness of being a member of the communion of Saints.[523] These Protestant authors of the 1530's would, one feels, have greatly admired Donne's sonnet, "Death be not proud..."[524]

It is apparent that by the 1530's devotional writers, whether Catholic or Protestant, who wish to treat of death find themselves having first to overcome a widespread fear of death. Whitford in his Dayly exercyse and experyance of dethe puts the case in some detail. Before he can introduce the devout meditations and exercises of his subject:

> It is necessarye ~~and~~ & spedefull that we inforce and gyue dilygence to auoyde, exclude, exyle, and put ferre away: that chyldysh vayne and folyssh feare, and drede of deth, that many persones haue: for doubtless it is both vayne and || folye: to feare ~~and~~ & drede that thynge: that by no meane, may be auoyded ~~and~~ & yet some persones ben so afrayde of deth/that they shrugge, temble and quake, whan they here speke therof: and renne or departe out of company/bycause they wyll not here tell of dethe. And to excuse theyr folye they take auctoryte of Aristotle the great Philosophour: that sayth: that of al terryble thynges, deth is moste terryble...'525 —

the quotation from Aristotle was used by a number of authors. Where the majority of people are morally lax and heedless of their end it may be argued that to impress on them the horrors of death, judgement, purgatory and hell is justifiable as means of recalling them to a more godly life. A work which aims to frighten people into dying well is The nedyll of the fere dyuyne for to dye well, which was one of the pieces included in The Crafte to lyue well and to dye well. It particularly stresses the way in which fear of God drives sin out of the soul. The opening sentence, however, seems calculated to inspire the kind of uncertainty which was closely linked to ignorance of man's fate after death; "For that no man lyuynge in this lyfe presente ne may knowe ne vnderstande certainly yf he be in the grace and loue of god..." The Protestant emphasis upon assurance and the love and forgiveness of Christ can be seen in part as a reaction against this

kind of teaching. Another class of literature, to be considered in more detail later, which did nothing to comfort and allay the fears of those facing death, were the laments of souls who had died unprepared, such as The dyenge creature, The complaynt of the soule and, despite its title, Fisher's A spirituall consolacyon. The author of To teche a man to dye believes the traditional teaching about death to be based upon fear,[526] and argues that this fear has done nothing to bring people "to well doynge and to lyue vertuously". He continues:

> One may preache vnto me longe ynough of hell/ of the deuyll/of gyuinge a straite accomptes/ of a rygorous iudge and soche lyke thinges/or euer I can haue a loue to God/for they shulde rather make me drawe back from God and bringe me to haue soche a concayte/that I shulde alwayes be afrayed of God willynge to abyde styll in this lyfe/ or else to dye as beastes do in body and soule/and so by that meanes to escape deathe/hell/the deuyll/& that dredefull accomptes also in the daye of iudgement. [527]

But, as More noted,[528] the sad tendency of human nature is to be bored by hearing of heavenly things, whereas when someone preaches about the pains of hell the congregation is all attention. Preachers have to address themselves to the majority of their congregation, so that an individual looking for consolation and needing comfort in his fear was all too likely not to receive help from the pulpit. However, Protestant preachers did attempt to redress the balance, and the First Book of Homilies issued in 1547 contained a sermon in three parts against the fear of death.[529]

Erasmus considers the fear of death to spring either from no belief in an after-life, which sees death as the end of all things, or from distrust of God's promises, or from man's despair of himself, which stems from lack of faith usually coupled with love of the world. The first half of The preparation to deathe is in some ways an answer to these

fears, dealing as it does with God's promises and the saving work of Christ. Lupset's Compendious treatise, teaching the waie of dieyng well names fear of death and love of life as the two main hindrances to dying gladly, the former being the greater. In seeking to explain this fear he comes to the conclusion that fear of death is natural, being found even in young children, who know nothing "of this lyfe, nor of the deadly panges, nor of heuen, purgatorye, or helle".[530] Erasmus reminded his readers that Christ's victory had broken the power of sin, death and the Devil, not banished all trace of them. Christ did not escape the fear of death, and the Christian has still to fight against all three.[531] Lupset, while he condemns excessive fear as cowardly, allows that "there is a meane measure of fere in dethe, that may be rekened honest and iuste, bycause nature maketh it necessary". In Certain prayers, the "Consolacyon for troubled consciences" describes fear as "a passyon of the mynde about euyll to come...And the more vncerteyn this euil is/the greater it is!"[532] Whitford deals with this anticipatory fear, which is fed by tales of great pains and sickness suffered in death, in the first half of his Dayly exercyse, and diagnoses love of this world and lack of faith as its main causes.[533] His indeed is by far the most detailed discussion of the fear of death provided in the devout treatises of the 1530's. In some ways the two exercises of death he provides may be seen as answers to the problem: death is to be thought of, anticipated and even experienced until it becomes so familiar that it cannot frighten. Whitford also seeks to counter the fear that death will be a painful experience, a fear that the quotation from Aristotle about death being

the most terrible of all things and More in his Quattuor novissima did nothing to ally. Like Lupset and Erasmus, Whitford accepts that some fear is natural, nature always seeks to continue and resists death, and all three authors find reason to praise examples of pagan fortitude in resisting the impulses of nature and facing death so calmly. Whitford argues that bodily pain precedes death, and death itself is without sensation like a swoon and may even happen as a person sleeps.[534]

From the 1530's onwards those who write about death usually make some reference to or attempt to overcome the fear of death. The first half of Whitford's Dayly exercyse and the whole of To teche a man to dye concern themselves with the fear of death. Protestant authors tend to blame the traditional Catholic teaching, and they condemn the threat of purgatory and hell as fantasies, the product of a fearful imagination.[535] Yet belief in purgatory and hell had been challenged well before 1517, when Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg. The first chapter of The nedyll of the fere dyuyne, which appeared in various editions of L'Art de bien vivre et de bien mourir during the last decade of the fifteenth century, contained "the dysputacyon yt I thynke to make agaynste them the whiche as vnfaythfull people byleue not yt there is helle nor purgatorye and the reasons and auctoryytees the whiche I thynke to brynge and alledge agayn them". Despite the Protestant criticisms the traditional ars moriendi books make very little reference to purgatory and hell and do not use them to threaten the dying man. The threat of death and damnation was more often used by preachers and writers on more general topics as a means

of moral coercion, and was not applied in the ars moriendi books.[536] The fear of death seems to have been in part a result of the stress laid upon the importance of making a good death and fear of the consequences if one did not die well:

> For this is of mans lyfe the last parte (as it were) of the play wherof hangeth either everlastyng blisse of man, or everlastynge dampnation. This is the laste fyghte with the enemy, wherby the souldiour of Christ loketh for eternall triumphe, if he ouercome: and everlastynge shame, if he be ouercome. 537

But the threat of purgatory, generally described as being physically as painful as hell but offering hope of eventual release, and of hell for those who did not die well, probably did contribute, as the Protestants asserted, to popular fear of death. Descriptions of death, the signs of death, the "vile body" teaching about the bestiality and sinfulness of man and the fate of his body after death, and the debates between the body and the soul, must all have helped to make death sound both a painful and a bitter experience and have contributed to fear of it. Also awareness of man's bestiality and sinfulness would have done nothing to encourage confidence or hope in the face of death.

Most of the writers who concern themselves with the preparation for death at some stage hazard a definition of what it is, and the majority define it in terms of the separation of the body and the soul. Erasmus, like Whitford and Lupset, sees nature as frightened by this threat of destruction:

> The first affection of nature is, that everythyng shulde defende it selfe. But death against this affection of nature, thretneth destruction, which so moche is the more detestable and to be abhorred, that it diuideth.ij.which be most conioyned and knit to||gether. For there is no straighter copulation or knot, than is of the body and soule. 538

Recourse to the bond of nature to explain man's fear of death seems to be more characteristic of authors who have had some academic training, especially those influenced by humanism, such as Erasmus, Lupset and Whitford, than of earlier writers, such as the authors of the Cordiale, The crafte to luye well and to dye well or The mirroure of golde; these latter generally contented themselves with definitions and made little attempt to explain or understand the reason for that fear. On the other hand the Protestant author of A myrrour...for them that be syke warns his readers against regarding death after the philosopher's definition as a separation of the body and the soul, because to see death thus will frighten them and cause a man to hate death for taking away the body he loves.[539]

Lupset's Compendious treatise, teachyng the waie of dieyng well[540] is the most obviously humanist work to be considered in this chapter; neither Erasmus nor Whitford despite their academic training are as whole-heartedly classical as Lupset contrives to sound. The treatise gives little practical instruction about how to die, and, unlike the other treatises discussed so far, there is no sense of urgency about the work. There is little appeal made to the emotions, and Lupset seems deliberately to avoid all reference to Christ's Passion and death, the emotional focus of medieval and much reformed devotion. The only reference made to Jesus is to His teaching. The atmosphere of the treatise is one of relaxed and civilized discussion, and it is addressed to a friend, John Walker.[541] Lupset assumes in his readers some knowledge of Roman history - Cato, Catulus and Merula[542] are not all obvious names of the period; an interest in the discussion of metaphysical

problems; and the intellectual ability to appreciate a well constructed and well reasoned argument - not the usual demands of a devout treatise. It was noted that Erasmus' De Contemptu Mundi made greater use of classical quotations, references and exempla than was usual in devotional works: Lupset goes much further. His admiration for the courage and virtue of the pagans and their quest for truth tends to overshadow God's part in natural revelation,[543] and although he talks of the difference between pagan and Christian philosophy the treatise never really defines the philosophia Christiana or sufficiently explains its supposed superiority - a similar weakness is to be found in Erasmus' Enchiridion. The inspiration for Lupset's work is to be found in the work of Stoic philosophers, especially Seneca's Epistulae Morales and his essays, rather than in the Bible.[544]

The first part of the treatise presents a series of contrasts between the courageous death of Canius and the cowardly emotional death of Frances Philippe,[545] which earlier authors would have seen as an example of despair, and Lupset goes on to contrast at greater length the worldly man and the spiritual man, "in whome the mynde and spirite chefelye ruleth". The actual distinction is familiar enough from earlier treatises, but not perhaps the clear definition and balanced contrast found here. The real business of the treatise starts with Lupset's definition of what it is to die gladly, that is "in a sure hope to lyue ageyne". This requires faith, which includes the expectation of "the rewarde of vertue", the rather vague notion of the confidence "of a good mynde", a strong trust in God's mercy-although there is no word of repentence or penance-and also charity "whiche euer burneth in the loue of doinge good".[546] Like his predecessors[547] Lupset insists that the way to die well or to die gladly was to live well. But whereas the usual view of a good life in the middle ages was one which approximated

most closely to the religious ideal - dedication to God, abandonment of the world, a life of prayer and obedience, regular church going, alms deeds and performance of the seven works of mercy—Lupset's treatises leave the reader with the impression that his idea of the good life is more closely modelled on the ideals of a pagan stoic philosophers, where courage, honesty, friendship and the cultivation of intellectual powers are the most important qualities.

Much of the treatise is taken up by the discussion of the two "letters to dye gladly", fear of death and love of this life. The latter receives fairly brief treatment. Lupset does not simply attack the possession of wealth.[548] but the attitude of mind which sets great value on the acquisition of worldly possessions. This wretchedness of fortune's bondage is as likely to afflict religious, merchants, ploughmen and beggars as rich men.[549] All man's care should be "for the kingdom of heuen, the whiche standeth in the clennes of conscience", and goods are to be valued "no more than is convenient for instrumentes & toles to the pilgremage and passage of this strange countrey": the idea of this life as a pilgrimage was highly traditional. Like Erasmus[550] Lupset recommends almsgiving as a means of breaking down love of possessions. Lupset again makes use of the traditional teaching towards the end of the treatise, when he warns of the passing of time,[551] the uncertainty of when death will strike, and he warns John Walker to flee all temptations to idleness and exhorts him to live well and be always prepared for death.

The central portion of the treatise discusses the fear of death and related topics. Lupset concludes that a large part of the fear is natural and cannot be entirely banished although it should be

controlled. In order to understand the fear more fully he considers "What deth is," taking as his point of departure the usual definition, "the losyng a sonder and departyng of .ii. thinges, the soule from the bodye"; unusually he does not stop with the definition but seeks to understand its meaning. When the body's life is lost the soul departs, since it cannot remain where there is no life, and Lupset even attempts a scientific definition of life.[552] However life is to be distinguished from the soul, for although the soul cannot remain where there is no life, not everything that lives[553] - plants, birds and animals - has an immortal soul:

> Yet the hande of god hath not gyuen to any creature lyuyng in the erthe water or ayre, to hawe besyde lyfe a soule, the whiche is a thynge formed after his lykenes, sauynge onely to man, whome he hath putte here to rule ouer thynges created. 554

It is the soul which brings the use of reason,[555] and Lupset suggests that it is by reason that man realizes what he is and who made him, and faith, by which he apprehends his soul's immortality, has little to do with feeling but seems to be a higher kind of reason based on the "vnfallible doctrine of Christe". Lupset's view of man is far more optimistic than that of most medieval devout treatise writers, who were so often influenced by the "vile body" genre; and many Protestant authors continued to see man as weak and sinful, helpless apart from faith in Christ, with little claim to any independent dignity or nobility. By emphasizing that natural reason alone was capable of carrying man far on the road to truth and inspiring many noble virtues and actions, Lupset allows man far more independence and encourages greater respect for man's powers of thought and action. He approaches what may be described as

the Renaissance view of man more closely than any other English author of the 1530's.[556] Faith in Christ, a matter of eternal life or everlasting death to most of the other Catholic and Protestant authors of devout treatises, has in Erasmus's Enchiridion and even more obviously in Lupset's treatises become little more than a desirable extra, a better, because truer, philosophy of life.

Having analysed the nature of death Lupset goes on to discuss whether death in itself is good or evil, a question which does not seem to have interested earlier writers. Since no living man knows what death is like it may seem folly to discuss whether it is good or evil, but Lupset shows an interest in reasoned debate as a tool of knowledge apart from experience, "we maye for oure lernyng debate with reson the thyng, as moche as shalbe within the bondes of our capacytye..." If death were good the generally accepted view that it was wrong to murder or commit suicide would receive no support. But since Christ willingly surrendered Himself to death, and the holy martyrs received a heavenly reward for accepting death, it cannot be evil. So Lupset concludes that death in itself is neither good nor evil, but the manner in which a man dies determines its evil or goodness. Judas' death was evil because it was an act of desperation, the consequence of avarice and of mistrust in God's mercy.[557] Of the two thieves crucified with Jesus, the physical circumstances of whose deaths were identical, only one died well.[558] The determining factor is the state which follows death: "For by the maner of hym that dyeth, we coniecture the state and condition of the soul." This tendency to judge the fate of man's soul hereafter according to the manner in which he died is condemned by Erasmus; "But what fascion of deathe so euer chaunceth, noo man is

therby to be estemed".[559] Lupset and Erasmus answer the fear which arises from uncertainty about the soul's fate, the third fear discussed in To teche a man to dye, by asserting that "it cannot be an euyll death, be it neuer so sodeyne, before whom went good lyfe".[560] As long as a man lives it is never too late to repent, but not to be prepared for death is to court uncertainty and to make death seem fearful.

Lupset then returns to his discussion on the natural fear of death, concluding that fear may be overcome by strength of mind and faith. He seems to revere the courage of pagans who did not have the comfort of faith but relied on their own courage almost more than the example of courageous Christians. He reiterates the folly of fearing death, which is as yet unknown but which is inescapable and common to all men. If the thought of the pain of death frightens a man, he may take comfort from Epicurus' assurance that where pain is "vehement" it cannot last long, and after death there will be no more pain. Most men could help themselves to die well by amending their lives and so avoiding an evil death. The necessity of death should inspire courage to face it and not degenerate into panic and despair. After the example of Theodore's courage, also cited in Legrand's Book of Good Manners, Lupset gives his one extended reference to Christian sources, describing St.Paul's sufferings and St.Lawrence's martyrdom, and detailing the different sorts of death suffred by "manye thousande martyrs." It is in the witness of these martyrs, in "innumerable myracles", and in the testimonies of "the divels with all the damned spirites", that the truth of Christ's teaching, His

infallable doctrine, is proved. The word of Christ, Lupset declares, is to be believed above everything the world or even heavenly angels may say or do to the contrary. Yet the supremacy given to Christ's word seems to be a question of intellectual assent, and to lack the spirit of devotion or the animating power of love centred on the sufferings of Jesus which permeates the earlier ars moriendi books and Protestant treatises on death.

The whole atmosphere of Lupset's Compendious treatise...of dieyng well is that of a civilized debate and quite unlike any of the other treatises on death, even Erasmus' Preparation to deathe with which it has most in common. It is, on the whole, a clearly reasoned and lucidly written piece of intellectual discussion, conducted in a tone of studied informality, and appealing to the mind not the feelings of the reader. Man appears as a more dignified, self-sufficient creature, and much less abjectly sinful than in most of the other treatises on death, and emphasis falls less upon how to die than how to live; "who so euer feareth death, he shal neuer do a dede worthy for a lyuyng man". [561] Despite its use of and reference to common motifs of earlier literature on death, the treatise's inspiration lies in the ideals of Stoic philosophy. [562]

The Four Last Things.

In the most often quoted biblical source, "In omnibus operibus tuis memorare novissima tua",[563] the last things are not further defined. By the later fifteenth century the Last Things were generally understood to be four in number: death, judgement, heaven and hell. They form a natural group spanning the gulf between the conclusion of this temporal life and the decision made at God's judgement which determines the soul's eternal fate. It was probably the popularity of works such as the Cordiale in the latter half of the fifteenth century which helped to establish the four as the standard content of the Last Things; until then, and frequently thereafter, the connection between them seems to have been casual and far from settled.[564] This organisation of content may have been due, as Tenenti suggests,[565] to clerical pressure and the desire to present a coherent body of teaching and devotion based on the growing contemporary awareness of death, and to widen the restricted scope of the traditional ars moriendi:

> La posizione di precedenza che la morte ha nella enumerazione dei novissimi e ancora di più la sua priorità cronologica ha certamente facilitato il compito degli autori di questi trattati di rinsaldare il senso cristiano dell'aldilà. 566

However, in England, apart from the Cordiale the four last things were not generally discussed as a distinctive self-contained group. More often they would be discussed along with other topics, in the course of a general treatise, or else they were discussed separately, so that the literature on death or legends concerning the pains of hell stood as independent works. All four topics are discussed in the course of the Medytacyons of saynt Bernarde, The myrroure of golde for

the synfull soule and Hughe's Troubled mans medicine, but none of these works confines itself to those four subjects; the two former treatises discuss in general terms what man is and what his destiny should be, and are closely related to the contemptus mundi genre, while Hughe's work conveys much general instruction and may be seen as an extension of the ars moriendi book. As the preceding discussion of the business of dying has shown, consideration of death raised not only the question of the judgement which was to follow death, but the life which went before was of importance too. Heaven and hell were more often discussed as a pair of opposites than separately, and purgatory was rarely ignored altogether.[567] The four last things could only be separated from wider and related issues in a rather arbitrary way, for catechetical purposes, or to provide a treatise or sermon with a useful structure. But although they are not often discussed as a group in the devout treatises of the 1530's, death, judgement, heaven and hell were all considered important subjects by Protestant authors as well as in traditional Catholic treatises.

Death.

That there was a distinction between natural or physical death and the more significant spiritual death or death of the soul seems to have been widely accepted, and some such division is implied in the very notion of a good death.[568] For the most part little attention was given to physical death and devotional writers concentrated on the state of the soul at death. In his Preparation to deathe Erasmus introduces four categories of death: natural, spiritual, transformatory and eternal. Natural death is described in the usual terms of the severance of soul and body, while spiritual death is the separation of

the mind from God, by which he seems to mean some form of rebellion against or denial of God. When natural and spiritual death coincide then eternal death, "the deathe of hel", occurs, because there is no chance of repentance left after this life is ended.[569] Erasmus dwells most upon the transformatory death, the casting off of the old Adam and taking up the "ymage of the newe Adam whiche is the Chryste our lorde", the triumph of the spirit over the flesh: "This death is mother of the spirituall life, likewyse as syn is father of the spiritual death, and also of the death infernall".[570]

Apart from Lupset's treatise, the signs of death and medieval handbooks such as the Boke of knowledge were as near as most authors came to considering physical death. The ars moriendi books by concentrating upon the preparation of man's soul for the life hereafter tended to overlook death itself, and at most provided a few prayers to be said after the soul's departure. However, one group of treatises conveys a rather more vivid picture of death, in the form of complaints or laments of those who find themselves under sentence of death. Three treatises of this nature were printed during the 1530's: The complaynt of the soule[571] and The dyenge creature,[572] both printed by de Worde, and Bishop Fisher's A spirituall consolacyon.[573] The complaynt and the Spirituall consolacyon are both laments made by the dying man,[574] while The dyenge creature takes the form of a series of complaints[575] made by the creature to his good angel, to reason, dread and conscience, to his five wits, and to faith, hope and charity, and their replies to him; it also includes a complaint of the soul to the body and the body's lament, and the work ends with the creature's supplication to the Blessed Virgin and her intercession on his behalf to Jesus. It is the complaint of the

soul to the body and "The lamentable lamentacyon of the dyenge body to the soule" which give the most obvious clue as to the type of literature in which such complaints originated, the Debate between the Body and the Soul.[576]

The laments share with the ubi sunt and quid profuit motifs a retrospective view-point; the soul looks back over its past life and laments its barrenness, its selfishness, and heedlessness of the death and judgement which now confront it. Having been summoned by death[577] - none of the laments makes it quite clear at what stage in relation to death the lament is spoken; in The dyenge creature it seems to draw nearer as the work progresses - the soul finds that there is no time left for amendment of life and it must seek salvation by other means. The use of the first person, which is not common in devotional treatises about death, makes the effect of the lament the more urgent and dramatic: this is what it is like to face death unprepared, this is the panic and despair you will feel unless you prepare in advance for death - the warning to be prepared for death was of course common place in sermons, ars moriendi books and other devout treatises. In each case the subject of the lament finds himself unprepared[578] and each soul has plenty with which to reproach himself as he passes in review (it sometimes sounds more like holding an inquest) his past life. The fear, despair and anguish they express exemplifies that remorse of conscience which Erasmus believed accompanied sinners to hell and formed not the least part of their torments there.[579]

The complaynt of the soule opens with what is, in effect, a variation upon the familiar threefold recollection of what I was, what I am, and what I shall be; and the soul because of his past life, his present

hopelessness and consequent fear of the future can see nothing but "sorowe/myserye & synne". He feels himself vile and stinking before God, less on account of any bodily corruption as in the vile body genre than because of his sinfulness. He has been unkind and ungrateful to the Lord, who "suffred the moost bytterst dethe for me", he has denied his Creator, and is a dry and unfruitful tree.[580] He has abused the time God has given him[581] and his God-given faculties, his five wits, his life and above all his reason, which should distinguish him from the beasts:

> My reason is gyuen to me for to knowe my lorde god/ and for to knowe howe I sholde lyue to the pleasure of hym/and to thynke vpon the lyfe that is to come/ & holyly for to ordre myselfe therto/and for to auoyde the greate tourmentes and the endlesse trybulacyon the whiche after this lyfe is ordeyned for synne. 582

So he returns to lament his wretched inclination, which is always to earthward and which is drawing him towards damnation, and to sue for mercy to God.

The quotation "tedet animam meam vite mee", with which the work opens, introduces the second and subsequent sections and acts as a refrain to the whole.[583] In the second section the soul laments a comprehensive list of shortcomings from negligence to evil thoughts, from "vnprouffytable heuynesse" and "vnlawfull sadnesse" to "vayne Ioyes" and "myserable pleasures". Life, "a rennynge to dethe", has now brought him close to death, and he is ashamed of his sinful life and afraid to die, unready to face the judgement of God and the possibility of eternal damnation or at least of great pain in purgatory. He laments that he has not feared God, which would have checked his inclination to sin:

> A good lorde what shall I do for I want fayth of the/ dere of the/loue of the/ ~~and~~ & drede of the...what shall I do than but turne me to the ~~and~~ & aske mercy/for that I have spended my lyfe so myserably. 584

This is the first decisive move of the sinner towards God, to ask mercy and acknowledge his shortcomings. He recognizes that sin must needs have sorrow; "and al my lyfe sholde be wepynge. & ~~and~~ who shall gyue teres ynoughe to myne eyen yt I may wepe ynough for my myserable lyuynge". In tears, whose virtues are often sought and praised in devout treatises, lies the answer to the soul's plea-for "moysture" of contrition and grace-of the first section.[585] The lament grows into a prayer for compunction, whose opening is reminiscent of the seventh of the Fifteen Oes.[586] But soon the soul is again lamenting its dullness and its predilection for evil. Unless the soul abandons its sinful ways it will be destined to spiritual or eternal death, and the familiar exhortation to suffer short temporal pain in this life so as to win eternal joy is reiterated. Also, if it is tempted to think sin is unimportant, the soul is reminded how God has punished many, even angels, who sinned, and cast them out of heaven. To sin is to repay the lover Christ by making Him suffer death again; it dishonours Him, and such ingratitude will arouse the wrath of the Judge. Death will come sooner than it is looked for, and the soul will be called upon to account for every word and action:

> O wretche lerne to wepe aptly and to take wylfull sorowe/ a greate cause hast yu to wepe ~~and~~ & sorowe/for yf yu might wepe as moche water as is in the see/yet it were not of thyselfe suffycyent to wasshe thy soule from synne... 587

The third section again opens with the quotation from Job, and launches into another lament for the soul's yearning after evil and its refusal of its Lord and Lover. Not even the threat of eternal torment or recollection of sins committed can break "this greate hardenesse of

myne herte". The soul is alone responsible for its "wretched dysposycyon" to sin;[588] the choice to do good or evil was free. The section ends much as the first one, in a lament for the soul's dryness and the reminder that "I am but as a bayly and a mynystre vnder god and taken charge well to spende his goodes".

The final section is introduced by the same quotation and a request for tears to wash away his accumulated sins. The soul is scorned—"O yu blynde asse"—for its inability to discern the truth or to see the difference between life and death, virtue and vices, felicity and misery. Again the theme of ingratitude is raised. God seeks to overcome unkindness by still more kindness, by good thoughts: "And outwarde he calleth me by prechynge/and by moche good counseylynge by redynge/by example gyuynge..."[589] As long as a person lives God will be merciful, but at the Judgement He will be hard and rigorous. In the face of the imminent threat of God's wrath the sinner condemns his own lack of fear and his failure to realize that this life is uncertain and that he is not immortal, a common delusion of men to judge by the numerous warnings given in devotional treatises. In imagination the unrepentant soul is taken to judgement, where Christ, who has loved him most and done most for him, will be his accuser:

> where he shall laye his woundes agaynst me/
> his crosse/his spere/his crowne of thorne shall
> testyfye agaynst me", 590

together with his good angel. He finds himself in the same position as the Dying Creature—a frightening reversal of the <u>ars moriendi</u> books, where Christ crucified holds out the hope of mercy to the dying man. Not only the devil's, but all the creatures of God for which he has held any responsibility, will join in his condemnation:

> The Iudge shall be aboue vs whose handes we shall
> not escape/the helle vnder vs and the fendes redy
> to drawe vs thyder/the Iudge angred without forth/
> the conscyence bytynge and tourmentynge within forth/
> and sythen the ryght wyse man scarsely shal be saued/
> the wretched synner so vmbelapped wt wretchednes where
> shall he become whome feere of dampnacyon || and remorse
> of conscyence shall shake/and make hym to cry for woo. 591

Yet, although the soul is threatened by the terrible prospect of judgement, the work does not end on a pessimistic note any more than do the ars moriendi books. From the helpless and despairing toils of sin the sinner is encouraged to look upon his Saviour Christ, whose merits are sufficient to redeem the most grievous sins. He is to look up, to trust Christ and not despair. The work ends with a prayer for mercy, "Now Iesu/Iesu haue mercy vpon me..." and with the hope of admittance to "the nombre of thyne electe chyldren", where the name of Jesus will ever be praised.

In a work of this nature the medieval love of repetition and lack of logically ordered arguments are positive assets: repetition helps to intensify the emotional power of the sinner's laments, and the absence of a developing argument enables the author to suggest a vacillation between despair and cautious hope which is entirely appropriate to the soul's state. The monologue conveys well the struggle of a soul seeking to rise but made helpless by its proclivity to sin. The ebb and flow of the work, where hope of mercy is repeatedly swallowed up in despairing lament only to rise again, seems much closer to the experience of most Christians than the sudden conversion or turning point, followed by an irreproachably reformed life, or a steady progress towards virtue untroubled by doubts, temptations or relapses—the two ways implied by most saints' lives and by many treatises on the life of perfection. The

personal feelings which find expression in the monologue help to make the work more effectively moving, more akin to some passages from the drama or from lyric pieces, than many traditional devout treatises, whose rather impersonal style gives little scope for the expression of personal feeling apart from devotion to Jesus. The work manages to make both the near-despair of the sinner and the awful threat of judgement real enough to be taken seriously, and yet the hope of Christ's mercy is never entirely lost: the Complaynt of the soule is an effective warning against unprepared death rather than a negative condemnation of a sinner's death.

Fisher's A spirituall consolacyon is far more overtly didactic than the Complaynt of the soule. Addressed to his sister, Elizabeth, the exercise is recommended to stir the reader to a devout and virtuous life. The three conditions of undertaking this exercise are that the reader should imagine herself confronted by death; that she should read it alone, when she may concentrate upon it without distractions; and that she preface its reading with a prayer, that it "may fruitfully worke in your soule a good and vertuous life". It is designed to serve as a meditatio mortis, not unlike Whitford's Dayly exercyse, but because it is so intent upon making the message clear it is less dramatic and perhaps less immediately effective as a warning against unprepared death.

The work opens with a lament for death's sudden assault, and a comparison between the death the sinner might have died had she been prepared and the death to which her unpreparedness has condemned her. Death cannot be put off to allow time for repentance, neither by bribery, riches nor by "as many teares as there be in the seas droppes of water".[592] There is a long section where the soul details the ways in which it has misused

time, prefaced by a warning to the reader to use his time well and so to avoid his plight. He goes on to express hatred of the earth, his body and the world, whose appetites he has followed: Fisher makes sustained use of the "vile body" motif to express his hatred, including in it a version of the signs of old age and death.[593] By not looking below the surface appearance of things the sinner has so lived as to condemn himself to hell, or at least to purgatory. Repentance in time may save a soul, but the repentance of a damned soul is simply one more torment to him, remorse of conscience. For the second time the soul expresses the hope that "by the example of me all other might beware" and avoid his fate.[594] A conventional quid profuit passage leads to yet another "vile body" condemnation of the body, whose misdeeds will have to be answered for "before the throne of the Iudge most terrible". The soul is now faced with the dilemma of Everyman and the Dying Creature, to find witnesses who will support him at the judgement. The few good deeds he has are invalidated, because they were done from impure motives, not for the love of God; and he cannot trust to the prayers of his friends[595] nor to the intercession of his particular saints, since his devotion to them was but slight. His only chance, like that of the soul in the Complaynt of the soule, lies in God's mercy; but Fisher does not pause to elaborate, and immediately passes on to underline the need to prepare for death in good time and the folly of not so doing, so the note of hope with which the Complaynt concludes is not sufficiently emphasized to lighten the Spirituall consolacyon. Fisher has, in fact, chosen to cast a sermon in the form of a lament; but in his desire to instruct and warn the reader he has not allowed the soul to speak for itself, and so despite many effective and moving passages he has undercut

one of the lament's strongest points, the personal expression of grief and despair which arises out of a particular situation. The "consolacyon for troubled consciences" in the fourth chapter of the second table declares:

> The examples of theym that do euyll dye and are dampned/or sayne Gregory doth shewe in a dialoge/do profyt vs to be a monysshement/and an instructyon that they may be happye whome other menne perylles do make wise... These holsome instruccyons/the examples of wretched persones do profitably confirme in vs/whiche them chyefly be of power-and efficacyte/yf we put on vs the mynde of theym whiche suffer theym/and conuict oure selfe in theyre stede and place...596

It is a useful summary of what Fisher seems to have intended in his Spirituall consolacyon.

It could be argued that the Complaynt of the soule generates the greatest intensity of emotion of the three works under discussion, but the most dramatic piece, even apart from its use of dialogue, is The dyenge creature. It has several points of contact with the morality play Everyman: for instance, the treatise's dramatic opening and description of Death's summons could almost be a prose summary of the opening of Everyman:

> Alas that euer I synned in my lyfe/to me is come this day the dredefull tydynges that euer I herde/here hath ben with me a sergeaunt of armes whose name is crewelte frome the kynge of all kynges/lorde of all lordes/& Iuge of all Iuges/ lyenge on me his mace of his offyce sayenge vnto me I arest you & warne you to make you redy & yt ye fayle not to be redy euery houre whan ye be called on/ye shall not wete whan. 597

The same messenger advises the creature to think back over his life and to see how God has from the beginning provided for him. There were his

three "borowes" or sponsors at baptism and his good angel; when he was older he received three "sad counseyllers", reason, dread and conscience, and also five wits to govern; and now he must give account of his stewardship before the righteous and incorruptible Judge. So, in turn, the creature seeks the help of these guides only to be told by one after the other that although sympathetic and willing to help they cannot, because the creature has in life neither heeded their advice nor ruled them properly. The successive failure of each potential source of help, from kindred, neighbours and friends, his good angel[598] and finally his five wits, leaves the creature, like Everyman, ever more exposed.

Having failed to find any comfort in his own powers the creature turns to complain to Faith and Hope, asserting "I have alway byleued as ye chyrche of crystendome hath taught me".[599] He goes on to detail some of those beliefs, particularly regarding the mystery of the Incarnation and the Blessed Virgin's part in it. He then asks Faith and Hope to be "my a vocates in the hyghe courte",[600] and to "be a meane to me" to the Blessed Virgin, who is described in her role as mother of mercy and friend of sinners:

> She is quene of heuen/lady of the worlde/
> and empresse of hell/and saynge to her sone
> cryst Iesu hath dyed ~~and~~ & suffred so tourmentous
> a deth/and in her owne syght to her grete sorowe
> ~~and~~ & moderly compassyon/I hope she wolde be lothe eke
> yt the precyous passyon sholde be loste in ony
> creature yt her blyssed sone suffred so pacyently.[601]

Faith and Hope, however, advise recourse to Charity as well, of whom the creature asks forgiveness and promises to forgive all who have in anyway hurt him.

At this point the creature's efforts to gather advocates are interrupted by the complaint of the soul to the creature. The first part of the complaint is occupied by an indictment of the world and an exposure of hypocritical worldly friends, whose only concern is to get their hands upon the creature's coffers as soon as possible. For a moment the creature is forced to look outside himself and to consider the fate of his possessions. However, the soul gives an unusual twist to the conventional warning not to trust earthly friends too far, for he turns it into a condemnation of the creature's treatment of his closest friend, his soul, and this provides the transition into the traditional lament of the soul, as to why it had to be coupled to one who would use it so ill and for whose misdeeds it would be forced to suffer. To this charge the body can only plead guilty and like the soul place its hope in Mary.

On their return, now eagerly awaited, Faith, Hope and Charity report that the "pryncesse" is willing to plead the creature's cause and Faith and Hope agree to stand by him. He is advised to arm himself with "a sure and hole confession", with contrition and the will to do satisfaction. Having attempted to comfort the soul by retelling the progress of his case so far, the creature then puts his case before Mary. He begins: "Mekely besecheth and sorowfully complayneth your dredefull supplyaunt", in language reminiscent of the law court. His case is mainly a recapitulation of his sinful life and his attempts to find someone willing to speak for him. A few details are added, such as the information that his infirmity is now beyond the power of "erthly medicyne" to cure, but the second half of the supplication is mainly an appeal to Our Lady's mercy, which concludes: "now in this grete trybulacion couer

my synfull soule with the mantyll of your mercyes and set your sones precious passion betwene me & eternall dampnacyon". The remainder of the work is taken up by Our Lady's supplication to Christ on behalf of the dying creature. She emphasizes the creature's sorrow and contrition, his fear of judgement and his abiding trust in Christ's eventual pardon, and she describes his incessant appeals and lamentations to her and his constant reference to her God-given role of mediator between God and man:"soo all synners that be not in estate of grace sholde be reconsyled and restored to grace by me & be made partyners of your Ioye by me".[602] Mary uses the figure of Aaron's rod to prove her point. The rod signifies Mary, the flower Christ. The rod or stalk is a straight line to the flower, so whoever wishes to reach the flower either ascends by the rod, or bows the rod, causing the flower to stoop. Whoever wishes to rise from sin must do so by Mary; she must be bowed by prayer so that the flower Christ will stoop to hear the sinner's prayers and lighten him with His grace. The illustration suggests that the author regarded Mary's role as mediator as of great importance.

It is Mary's duty to plead the sinner's cause, and she argues that since she shares with the sinner the same father, God, and mother, the Church, she is unwilling to see her brother, the sinner, tormented in prison while she is in bliss. Her second argument is that, as Christ took flesh and blood of Mary and offered them in sacrifice for the redemption of the world, she would not see that redemption miscarry. Thirdly she adduces various passages of Scripture to show the joy in heaven over the reconciliation of a sinner; and fourthly she pleads the

sinner's contrition and remorse, his will to amend and to accept penance, as evidence that he will become a true creature of God. The creature has persuaded her to offer her merits for his and to set her tears[603] in place of his contrition and penance, and added to this there is the work of Charity and the creature's unwavering faith and hope of mercy. Mary's supplication concludes that the creature cannot be left unforgiven, and the Mother of God is not accustomed to have her petitions refused. The work ends on such a note of confidence that the verdict is already known although not formally declared.

The dyenge creature does not discuss how to make a good death, how to prepare for death or how to wrest salvation from the jaws of death; rather it offers a dramatic enactment of the process of salvation. The subject matter, the type of dialogue[604] and the use made of various personified abstractions, such as Reason, Dread, Conscience, Five Wits, Faith, Hope and Charity, bring the piece very close to morality plays such as The Pride of Life and Everyman. Despite its inclusion of a traditional reproach of the soul to the body, its scope is wider than many Body and Soul Debates, ranging from the time of man's birth and his youth to his death and judgement. Like Everyman the creature is active in his pursuit of salvation, and there is far more sense of action and development than in the rather static Complaynt of the soule; also the diversity of characters provides more interest than the sustained monologue of the Complaynt. The dyenge creature might almost be described as a scaled-down morality play; there is certainly a close connection between it and the drama, and its diversity of characters, liveliness and sense of plot are not common characteristics of the devout treatise.

Since The dyenge creature gives unusual prominence to the role of the Blessed Virgin in assisting the soul at death and pleading for it before God, this seems a suitable point at which to consider, briefly, references and prayers to her found in other treatises. The doctrynall of dethe had recommended[605] that "an ymage of our lady... eyther in pycture or in carued werke" be set before the sick man, and the eyes of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick's effigy are indeed directed towards an image of the Blessed Virgin as Queen of Heaven in the vault above him. Her presence was a comfort and offered hope to the dying. Some form of prayer to Mary is suggested in most of the ars moriendi books; in Gerson's La Médecine de L'âme;[606] A lytyll treatyse ... called ars moriendi, which recommends: "Maria plena gracie mater misericordie. tu nos abhoste protege. et in hora mortis suscipe".[607] The doctrynall of dethe gives a longer one: "O Quene of heven and moder of mercy", also translated in an Horae of 1514, which asks her to purchase by her merits and prayers "forgyuenes and fredome from the doute of synne"; and a little later she is petitioned in a manner reminiscent of the Dying Creature: "I beseche the moost pyteful mother the true aduocate for mannes soule be medyatryce for this soule at this tyme to the great Iudge our lorde god". This type of prayer was often preceded by a prayer to the Trinity, together or severally, and followed by a prayer to the Good Angel.

The Orologium suggests that Mary's intercessory powers are based on her special relationship to Christ and God as mother of God, on what she did and suffered for Jesus, and her faithfulness through the Passion.[608] The Exornatorium curatorum explains why every man should call on her "for helpe and comforte and assystence":

> For she may helpe vs and succoure vs for she is moste of power vnder god/and doubtles she wyll helpe vs ~~and~~ & succoure vs if we call vnto hyr/for she is the mother of mercy and of & pyte. And our specyall adoucate for to shewe ~~and~~ & present all our causes and||our necessytyes to the hyghe Iuge of hewen hyr owne blyssed sone. And doubtles it is not to be thought yt suche a noble sone so louynge and so gentyll vnto his mother wyll denye hyr ony thynge that she asketh/ wherfore lette euery man and woman at all tymes but specyally at the houre of deth call vnto hyr for helpe ~~and~~ & succoure... 609

Copland's editions of the xv Oos[610] and the Jesus Psalter[611] include general petitions to the Blessed Virgin, but apart from the threat of death they are not common. In the dyenge creature she is sought as "moder of orphans", "consolacyon of theym that ben dyssolate/she is guyde to all that be oute of the waye", and worshipped as Queen of Heaven. The treatise suggests two main reasons why the creature should make his appeal to her: the first is the special closeness of her relationship to the glorious Trinity, especially the Second Person:

> for her chastyte her pure virgynite here mekenesse her vertue and her constaunce was cause that she was chosen by all ye hole gloryous trynyte to be daughter mother and spouse to the moost gloryous trynyte and that she shold bere hym that sholde redeme all mankynde from dampnacyon/who may so well be aduocatryse to the fader the sone and the holy goost as she...". 612

and the second is her motherly involvement with her son's mission, her joy at the redemption of the world, and her deep compassion for His sufferings and the sufferings of those He came to save.[613] The treatises seem to be in general agreement about the merits and faith of the Blessed Virgin, and her unique relationship to the Son and through Him to God the Father, which make her peculiarly fitted to intercede for mankind. The frequency with which she is sought in the face of death suggests that her motherly love and sympathy were particularly attractive

in the shadow of judgement, when her son must appear in the role of Judge rather than Saviour of mankind. In view of the widespread popular devotion to Our Lady evinced by the contents of many Horae - which usually included the Hours of Our Lady, perhaps the Rosary of Our Lady and various other prayers - by the dedication of churches, shrines and sanctuaries to her, and by the ubiquity of images of Mary,[614] she seems strangely neglected in the English devout treatises of the early sixteenth century. It looks as though popular devotion to the Blessed Virgin was of another kind than that which found expression in the treatises, that it was liturgically based, and on her own she rarely appeared as the object of devout contemplation.

Judgement

The Last Things do not only concern the final destiny of the individual soul, but of mankind in general and the world. One of the signs which it was believed would show that the end of the world was imminent was that of the fifteen tokens of natural disorder, usually attributed to St. Jerome. The other main sign was the intensification of the struggle with evil, which was often bound up with the legend of the birth and coming of Antichrist. Despite Jesus' warning that "of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father",[615] there have always been those who attempted to predict when the End would come, and from time to time groups and individuals have tried to anticipate it by realizing their ideals in the present age.[616]

The enormous popularity of prognostications of various kinds which

were printed during the sixteenth century points to a widespread interest in the future.[617] In addition to predictions concerning the individual's future, or political-religious prophecy such as Osiander's Coniectures of the ende of the worlde, there lived on a legendary - apocalyptic strain which concerned itself with the end of all things. The apocalyptic words of Jesus, Mark XIII, themselves rooted in the tradition of the Jewish apocalyptic, lay behind the legend of the fifteen signs before the Day of Doom.[618] The Fifteen tokens were included in The crafte to lyue well and to dye well and in A lytel treatyse the whiche speketh of the xv.tokens the whiche shullen bee shewed afore yt drefull daye of Iugement. Versions were to be found in numerous earlier English works,[619] and they are listed, with the ascription to St.Jerome, by the seventeenth-century author Isaac Ambrose;[620] in addition they are illustrated in the "Pricke of conscience" window at All Saints', North Street, York, and the printed texts were accompanied by wood cuts; also they were the subject of a tapestry at the Ewelme almshouses, Oxfordshire. There is no doubt that they were widely known in the fifteenth-century England and they were not forgotten in the following century.

In the mid 1530's Robert Wyer printed a small volume bearing on its title page the words "As Iheronimus, sheweth In this begynnynge, so wyll I wryte of the.iiij. Tokens the whiche shall be shewed afore the dredeful daye of Dome, of our Lorde Iesu Christe". This is an extraction of the four general signs which precede the fifteen tokens, which Wyer has lifted word for word - even copying the word "menschen" - from the version he found in Doesburgh's translation, with no attempt to account for its independent existence.[621] As they stand these four preparatory

tokens (of which Heist makes no mention) are far more general than the specific unnatural portents of the fifteen tokens.[522]

The first of the four tokens is that Satan, who was bound by Christ's victory over death, will be unloosed for a time to test the chosen with still more temptation and tribulation, so that the good will become better and the wicked even more evil. Secondly, love will wax cold: men have only to look about them to see that God is served without devotion and torn to pieces by blasphemers, while the naked and hungry die for lack of mercy. Thirdly, sin and evil will triumph over the fear of God, and the reader has only to look about him to see plenty of evidence that pride and selfishness are dominant and that great sins are being committed. Finally, "afore the other.xv.tokens, and afore the great orryble day of Dome", there will be war among nations and between towns throughout the world. Cloisters of monks and nuns will be banished and their places filled by "peruertes". It will be as Jeremiah prophesied; men will not trust each other, brothers will deceive one another and children their parents; people will care for nothing but to gather their own riches; there will also be signs in nature, famines, earthquakes, plagues and storms. In its original context the latter part of this fourth general sign would have led into the fifteen tokens. As it stands, however, The.iiij. tokens suggests the decay of the world and the urgent need for repentance and penance in a manner akin to the type of mournful analysis of the lamentable estate of this present world found, for example, at the opening of The Pomander of prayer. In both types of work God's direct intervention in history is assumed.

The Last Judgement was a familiar scene in the decoration of numerous churches,[623] and in some versions the Blessed Virgin is shown interceding on behalf of the sinful soul by adding the weight of her rosary to tip the scales in the sinner's favour - an iconographical expression of Mary's mercy, so often sought by the dying.[624] In addition to church decoration the judgement was illustrated in manuscripts and printed books,[625] it was represented on stage in the Chester, Towneley, York and Ludus Coventrie cycles,[626] and described by many preachers;[627] but the subject was, apparently eschewed by the English lyric writers, and the magnificent Dies Irae did not become a regular sequence in the mass of the dead until much later in the sixteenth century. Despite his attempt to control the fear of judgement the author of To teche a man to dye and not to feare deathe never denies the reality of "a rygorous accomptes". Indeed, he lists several advantages of the threat of judgement: it stirs up devotion, and makes people trust entirely in God's mercy,[628] and later, when he expresses disapproval of the use of the threat of hell, the Devil and judgement,[629] he is challenging the purpose for which they are commonly used rather than their existence. Though men should be taught primarily to love and trust God there is still a place for fear of judgement in his scheme. A very different type of author, William Bonde, is also worried by "vndiscrete consyderacion of the Iustice of god, or of the paynes of hell", which encourages servile fear;[630] and he saw the danger of the individual's meditation on judgement or damnation usurping the secret sentence of God.

> I wol graunte to the yt in tyme and place it is good a man to remembre dampnacion/~~and~~ & in his meditacion to recount with him selfe as he were byfore ye iudgement of god remembryng his synnes. the iustice of god. the paynes of hell, new for syn/ ~~and~~ & suche other, 631

but such meditation must remain general and not attempt to define the sentence. The vision of the Last Judgement must have been very familiar, and it seems to have been used rather indiscriminately to frighten people into good behaviour, pious works and almsgiving. By the 1530s the reality of the judgement does not seem to have been questioned, but responsible authors were advising caution in the way it was to be used in meditation.

Although there are plenty of references to the judgement in the devout treatises, especially those concerned with death,[632] they are nearly all general references to the fact of judgement; there is no attempt made to describe the scene in any detail. Probably because the judgment scene was so familiar to people from church decoration the devout treatise writers did not consider it necessary to describe it. One of the more detailed accounts is to be found in the Cordiale, whose extant English editions fall well outside the 1530s. The author there makes use of biblical quotation and a "proof" of St. Bernard to describe the appearance of the Judge before going on to describe the Judgement in more detail. In his description of the judgement the distinction between the particular judgement of the individual soul immediately after death and the last and general judgement is not always clear; he seems to refer sometimes to the particular judgement as well as the general judgement. He deals in turn with three aspects of judgement: the accusations of the sinner's own words and works, and of Christ; the account which must be given, where nothing can be hidden and where, among other things, the sinner will have to declare whether he has kept his body well in discipline, in the labour of good works and in penance; and finally the Judge's passing sentence, with the doubt as to whether the sentence

will be good or bad, the horror of the division between the sheep and the goats, the awful thunder of the Lord's voice, and the fiends waiting to drag the condemned souls off to hell the moment the judgement is given. Meditation upon these aspects of judgement, especially the pronouncement of the sentence, is recommended on the authority of saints Jerome and Gregory as a preservative against sin.[633]

The crafte to lyue well and to dye well also contains a long chapter on "The Grete Iugement". Nominally the emphasis falls upon the process of judgement, but in fact the author devotes most of his attention to general moral teaching, the avoidance of particular sins, stewardship of time and of goods, and so on. The successive parts of the judgement are distinguished by seven thunders, derived from the opening of the tenth chapter of the Apocalypse of St.John, and in an additional section at the end the author expounds the difference between particular and general judgement. The first thunder heralds the resurrection of the dead; a long procession of saints and sinners, religious and devils, headed by Adam, shall come forth to judgement. The second thunder marks the separation of mankind into four orders; the blessed, who will sit as assessors with Christ; faithful Christians, who will be placed on Christ's right hand; fallen Christians, who will be banished to hell; and finally pagans and heretics, to whom no judgement will be shown. The third thunder introduces the longest section, in which sinners are convicted by the instruments of Christ's Passion and God demands account of all thoughts and words, the way in which a soul has ordered and disposed of his goods and the use he has made of his time. It is a formidable list which gives the author considerable scope to reiterate familiar general moral teaching. The fourth thunder introduces three

accusers which witness against man: his sins, the Devil and the world. The fifth thunder, no more than a sentence in length, refers to the laments of the damned. The sixth thunder marks the sentence of God; and the seventh mentions briefly, but does not describe, hell and heaven, the final destination of the damned and the saved. Although the distinction between the last three sections is somewhat contrived, the author does manage to suggest to his readers something of the process of judgement, what he must be prepared to face, and who will question and judge him. As so often, the description of judgement is clearly intended as a warning to the reader to amend his life, do penance for his sins, and hold himself in continual readiness for the summons to judgement.

It is much more usual to describe the soul's reaction to judgement than the setting and process of it. The influential Medytacyons of Saynt Bernarde contains a brief description of the soul's "quakyng & tremblyng in the Iugement before our lorde",[634] especially when the book is opened "wherin all my purposes desires & thoughtes shall be rehersed in ye presence of almyghty god", and the soul must render accounts and receive the sentence. In his chapter "Of the last iugement and peynes deputed for synne", III:24, A Kempis reminds the sinner that he will have to appear before the righteous and incorruptible Judge, from whom nothing can be hidden. He does not describe the occasion in any more detail, but together with the threat of the pains of purgatory and hell, described in a little more detail, the threat of judgement was clearly considered sufficient warning against indulgence in and love of the things of this world, without the need of elaborate description.

A few authors, however, paused to dwell upon one aspect of the judge, who was not God the Father but Christ, still bearing the wounds of His Passion. From the last article of the creed as given by Mirk in his Instructions for Parish Priests it is clear that the second coming of Christ was often identified with the Last Judgement:

> þat cryst schale come on domes day
> wyþ hys woundes fresch and rede
> To deme þe quyke and þe dede.[635]

In illustrations of the Last Judgement Christ is usually shown naked save for a cloak, His wounds clearly visible, and sometimes with a sword and a lily — justice and mercy — coming from his mouth, as in the appropriate illustration of The mystic sweet rosary. The Last Judgement play of the Chester cycle presents a rather different picture, as indicated by the stage direction: "descendet Iesus quasi in nube, si fieri poterit... Stabunt Angeli cum Cruce, Corona, Spinea, lancea, aliisque Instrumentis, omnia demonstrantes".[636] A little earlier Christ had commanded his angels to wake the dead and bring them to Judgement, and added:

> Shew you my Crosse apertly here,
> Crown of Thornes, Sponge and Spear,
> and Neiles, to them that wanted never
> to come to this anye;

and later as He begins to give sentence He particularly emphasizes the shedding of His blood.[637]

In his Good Friday sermon for 1536 Longland describes not only how Christ's wounds accuse the Jews,[638] but he reproaches the Christian with his sinful life:

> O vnkynde christen man, what shalte thou ley for thyne excuse att ye daye of iudgement whenne this shal be layde annenste the? whenne thy iudge god shall ley this vnto thy chardge. Whan he shall shewe the, the crown of thorne, the scurges, the buffates, the strokes, ye crosse the nayles, the aysell, the gall, the sharpe spere, the woundes and all the artilery

> & armes of hys passion: when he shall ley to thy chardge, that yu ware the doer of hyt that thou war the cause and occasyon of his passion and deathe? 639

Following the Doesburgh edition of the XV Tokens[640] is a detailed description of Christ's showing of the instruments of His Passion at Judgement, where every instrument is related to a specific sin. The particular instrument, illustrated by a woodcut, is shown to each group of sinners, thus: the column of scourging to the unmerciful; the crown of thorn to the proud, who have loved the world and not cared that Christ suffered; the lance to the angry; his wounded hands to the covetous; the cross to the impatient; and so on, through fifteen tokens. A similar list is to be found in "The grete Iugement" chapter of The crafte of lyue well and to dye well. In Doesburgh's version each of the tokens is basically a condemnation of some particular sin, which frequently includes some comment on the sin and perhaps quotation from one of the fathers, such as Ambrose or Bernard, or even the philosopher Seneca; there is also an element of reproach in the condemnation. Christ says to the damned:

> loke here the wondes the whiche ye haue made hem. loke here the syde whiche ye haue wonded and dore passed wyth a spere. loke here my handes the whiche bee thorugh nayled for your sake on the crosse. the whiche I haue put oute for to receyue you hadde it plesed you. And for that case that ye haue cared not for my. And I haue called and cryed after you and ye haue sette not thinge be me. 641

Similar complaints are to be found at greater length in all the Last Judgement plays of the English cycles except the Ludus Coventriae. The sentence which follows, "Therefore goo ye in that euerlasting fyre...", is the final condemnation of those for whom Christ has suffered so much but in vain. In addition, then, to their most obvious devotional use, to stimulate love and compassion for Christ and thus indirectly inculcate a hatred of sin, Christ's wounds and the signs of His Passion add emotional

weight to the Judgement scene, There is more to it than just fear, and a touch of irony: the wounds and other instruments, which are the sinner's greatest hope and his refuge, turn to condemn the unrepentant sinner after death.

Purgatory

It is impossible to leave out of the account the place of purgatory, which in the twenty-five years that followed the publication of Luther's ninety-five Theses was one of the most conspicuous issues debated in England between Catholics and those who sympathized with the new Protestant theology. Much of the debate was printed in English, and thus available to a wider audience than most earlier theological debates, although the debate was virtually confined to the late 1520s - early 1530s. Protestant authors continued to attack the doctrine of purgatory as unscriptural and dishonouring to Christ.[642] Because the issue was doctrinal it tended to be dealt with separately and to find little reflection in devotional writings. A warning against false heretics who denied the existence of purgatory was sounded, at least as early as the end of the fifteenth century in some of the pieces included in L'Art de bien mourir.[643] The Carthusian author of The Pomander of prayer repeated the warning; "in these days there be many heretykes that saye and affyrme that there is no purgatory". He continues:

> I myght bryng in diuers auctorites of holy scripture to confute this false opinion with/ but as nowe I wyll let them passe/partly bycause that of late catholicall and greate famous clerkes

> in theyr bokes lately compyled:hath confuted suche opinions/moche more strongly than my symple lernyng is able to do. And partely bycause it was my purpose in the begynnyng to write this poore treatyse as an erudicion of prayer to suche as haue but small or none vnderstandyng in holy scripture/and not as a confutacion of heretykes. 644

He also advises his readers not to debate the matter with heretics, especially those of superior learning, for fear that their arguments may prove persuasive and draw the unlearned away from the belief of the Church.

The passage in Sir Thomas More's Supplication of Souls[645] paints a vivid picture of the pains of purgatory to inspire pity and so encourage the living to pray for the poor souls. The author of The Pomander also attempts to mollify men's hard hearts by describing the sufferings of the souls in hell and reminding the living that if they were to experience such pain "howe glade he wolde be to be released by the merites of suffrages and prayers".[646] The pains of purgatory, traditionally seven in number and often similar to the pains of hell, were frequently described in detail and referred to more generally during the fifteenth century;[647] and the seven pains are enumerated as late as the middle of the sixteenth century in A lytell boke that speketh of Purgatorye, which provides the most detailed popular exposition of the traditional doctrines of purgatory still extant in printed form.[648] Clearly the threat of the pains of purgatory generated considerable fear - part of the fear of death. Erasmus in his Preparation to deathe describes some of the remedies, in his view ineffectual, which were popularly used to alleviate this fear, and singles out the buying of pardons, a precaution taken by George in Funus, as a particularly

popular defence. He feels that the prayers and masses are a better defence, but the best remedy is to stir up a man's faith towards God and his neighbour. The author of the treatise To teche a man to deye goes still further, and suggests that where a man has faith in Christ and knows himself forgiven, hell and purgatory will cease to frighten him:

> And yf hell can do nothinge/what can purgatory do?
> yf there where any soche as we haue feared so greatly
> this many yeares? which purgatory though it be but
> only an ymaginacion of false ypocrites/and no fyer
> in verydede/yet many men stonde in more feare of it/
> then of the fyer of hell/so euell are we instructe
> and taught/but oure synnes haue deserued it,650

Other reformers were even more outspoken, and Veron's The Huntynge of Purgatorye to death, printed but apparently not for the first time in 1561, was one of the most substantial refutations, claiming to provide "sufficient armore & weapons for to withstand and beate down ...the found maynetayners of thys blasphemouse doctryne of Purgatorye." It is most unlikely that the chantries act of 1547 ended belief in purgatory and the desire to provide masses for the souls of the departed. But although religious belief cannot immediately be controlled by statutory legislation the ending of the chantry provision must in time, in the course of Elizabeth's reign, have assisted the decline of an active belief in purgatory.[651]

The lytell boke that speketh of Purgatorye enunciated clearly the view that there were two purgatories, one on earth and one beneath it.[652] Purgatory on earth is basically the patient endurance of every kind of tribulation in this life and the acceptance of death whenever it comes. The tenth petition of the Jesus Psalter, "Iesu. Iesu. Iesu.

sende me here my purgatory", expresses the belief found in the tribulation treatises and the ars moriendi books that to suffer patiently in this life is almost to guarantee a heavenly reward whereby the soul will escape the worst torments of purgatory. But it was the other purgatory, which the souls of the dead had to endure, that was the more influential in public and private devotion. As the sermons in the Festial and the Speculum Sacerdotale show, All Souls' day was the Church's annual remembrance of "all þe sowles þat ben yn purgatory, hauyng full beleue for to relesch hom of hor payne, other yn parte, othyr yn all",[654] but prayer for the departed was by no means confined to one day in the year; it was the unceasing duty of every living Christian. All prayer was of assistance to the poor souls in purgatory, especially when said on a Sunday[655] or during mass or on All Souls' day. The poor souls were remembered in each celebration of the mass; outside some churches, such as Bisley, Gloucestershire,[656] there stood a light of the dead; numerous monumental brasses appealed to the charity of the passer-by with some version of the formula "Orate pro anima...", and on the other hand numerous prayers and image pietatis woodcuts promised remission of years in purgatory to the devout:[657] the dead could not be forgotten, but neither was their service without profit to those who survived:

> My orayson the qwych I do for the saowllys
> of purgatory shal retowrn in my bosum and
> shal proffyt to me for to haue ewyrlestand
> lyue. 658

Although, as we have seen, the author of Dives and Pauper and A Kempis[659] warn against relying too much upon the devotion of friends to fulfil the necessary obligations after a man is dead, much remainded

for them to do. The tenth chapter of "The nedyll of the fere dyuyne for to deye well" in the Crafte to lyue well and to dye well suggests that the poor souls should be remembered not only on account of the pains they suffer but because they are the inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, and from Paradise they may be of considerable assistance to one who has yet to die. The chapter contains one of the most detailed lists of the occasions when, and the ways in which, the living should remember and seek to assist the souls in purgatory.[660] The fifteen points, for which the authority of holy doctors is claimed, show how many pious customs could be used to remember and assist the poor souls; these include lighting candles, remembering them when the incense was lit in church, offering bread and wine for them at mass, praying for them to the saints and the Blessed Virgin, having masses said for them, remembering them when they are prayed for, and by "fastynges& abstynences/knelynges prosternacyons (sic) made in the worlde" and by accomplishing works of mercy spiritual and corporal for them. Apart from forgiving the dead any offences they had committed, those who survive are encouraged to pay the debts of departed souls, fulfil their last will, and accomplish outstanding vows and penance. The ways in which the living could help the dead were usually suggested in more general terms, which must have been widely known from the frequency with which they are mentioned. The Festial lists devout prayer, almsgiving and mass-singing as the chief ways to assist the poor souls; while the author of the Spiritus Guydonis goes into considerable detail about the kind of mass offices and prayers which are most helpful to the dead,[661] but he also mentions almsdeeds, as does the fiftieth chapter of The Kalendar of Shepardes, together with

prayer and fasting.[662] Thus those things which were advocated as being of the greatest value to the souls of the living—the mass, prayer and good works—benefitted the living and the dead, an encouragement to survivors to assist their departed friends. The weakness of the traditional doctrine of purgatory as presented in the devout treatises was the suggestion that God required man to suffer and if he did not fulfil his designated measure of suffering through the tribulations of this life the balance would have to be paid hereafter in purgatory. Despite the clear distinction drawn between hell and purgatory, where the pain "is passaunt" and where souls receive consolation from visits of good angels, relief from the suffrages of their friends and have the certain hope of eternal beatitude, the intensity of the pains to be endured made it a fearful place, and the God who would consign a soul to such purgation must have seemed just to the exclusion of all mercy.

Hell

In the Dyalogue of comforte Sir Thomas More, stout upholder of traditional catholic belief, laments the way in which men's affections wax cold towards heaven, so that "If dread of hell were as far gone, verye fewe woulde feare God".[663] As it is, when a preacher describes the pains of hell towards the end of his sermon his congregation are roused from their lethargy and pay attention.[664] There was a rich store of iconographical tradition and legend for the preachers and treatise writers to draw upon. Some concept of hell seems to have

developed in most of the major religions and to have been elaborated and become more vivid and concrete as time went on.[665] Ideas such as the ladder, pictured in the twelfth-century Doom painting at Chaldon, Surrey; the bridge, which features in a number of the visions, including Visio Tundalis, St. Patrick's Purgatory and the Vision of Thurkel; and even the familiar weighing of souls[666] — all have their counterparts in non-Christian traditions of hell.

However, late fifteenth - early sixteenth century English congregations who saw representations of hell's mouth or of the devils who ruled the infernal regions are most unlikely to have known of any non-Christian analogues.[667] Representations of hell's mouth were to be found in England before the conquest,[668] and there is a splendid one in the mid-twelfth-century Winchester Psalter.[669] By the late fifteenth century the hell's mouth was illustrated in church decoration, in manuscripts and woodcuts,[670] and it seems to have been a regular stage property for the appropriate part of a number of mystery play cycles.[671] Of fearsome aspect itself, it threatened worse punishment within: the plays, wisely, made no attempt to show the pains of the damned. Devils of many kinds were very often depicted in church decorations and book illustrations,[672] for example crowding round the bed of the dying man in the illustrated ars moriendi books, or inflicting punishment upon the damned,[673] and they appeared in the Judgement plays of the mystery cycles dragging souls off to hell. The third part of the Cordiale discusses hell in some detail, listing the names of hell, describing the nature of its fire, and then dealing with the devils, their great strength and their lust for vengeance:" And therefore they be so paynted in the churche with hydeous & horryble fygures".[674]

Written descriptions of hell tend to focus on the sufferings inflicted upon the damned:

> In helle is great morenynge
> Great trouble of crynge
> Of thonder noyses rorynge.
> With plenty of wylde fyre
> Betynge with great strokes lyke gonnes
> With a great froste in water ronnes
> And after a bytter wynde comes
> whiche gothe thorugh the soules with yre
> There is bothe thyrste and honger
> Fendes with hokes pulleth theyr flesshe a sonder
> They fyght and curse/and eche on other wonder
> with the syght of the deuylles dredable
> There is shame and confusyou (sic)
> Rumoure of consyence for euyll lyunge
> They curse them selfe with great crynge
> In smoke and stynke they be euermore lyenge
> with other paynes innumerable. 675

Descriptions of the pains of hell seem to have been elaborated in the context of visions of the other world. For instance, the Book of Enoch, whose second section is dated by R.H. Charles to the first half of the first century B.C.,[676] is announced as being a vision, and Enoch is accompanied by an angelic guide.[677] The second and third parables of this section are much concerned with judgement, both the first judgement of the angels and the Final Judgement, and the place of punishment is usually seen in terms of a deep valley where darkness, fire, chains of iron and bronze, scourges and floods variously afflict the wicked. They will suffer acute pain and a penance of great shame, and their repentance will be unavailing. In view of Owst's comments on the medieval preaching of Judgement[678] it is interesting to note that vengeance falls particularly upon the kings, the mighty, the exalted and those who rule the earth, and that their punishment will be a spectacle enjoyed by the Elect.[679]

There were various Christian visions of the other world[680] dating from the second century, of which some of the more influential for the descriptions of the pains of hell were the Apocalypse of Peter, the Visio Sancti Pauli and the visions in the Dialogues of Saint Gregory.[681] Both The mirroure of golde for the Synfull soule and the Corriale cite St. Gregory in their description of hell.[682] It is, however, to a pseudo-Augustinian homily and later to Comester's Historia scholastica[683] that we must look for the apparent source of a vision which in its late fifteenth-early sixteenth century form seems to have concerned itself almost exclusively with the descriptions of the seven pains of hell, the Vision of Lazarus.[684] The setting is the supper at Bethany of which Jesus partook six days before His death.[685] Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead, was there as well, and with the Lord's consent he proceeded to tell Simon and the others "suche paynes as he han sene in helle and in purgatory". This vision of Lazarus is recounted briefly in the Goostly treatyse of the passyon of Christ,[686] and in similar but not identical versions in The crafte to lyue well and to dye well and The Kalendar of Shephardes, both of which are illustrated; the latter gives briefer descriptions of the punishments and is more overtly moralistic. Each of the seven pains is shown to be the punishment for indulgence in one of the seven deadly sins. The proud are bound upon incessantly-turning spiked wheels, the envious are plunged in an icy flood and blasted by cold winds, the bodies of the wrathful are pierced. and "detrenched" by "the most horryble & ferefull bochers of helle", the slothful are confined in a dark hall, tormented and stung by serpents, covetous people are immersed in cauldrons of molten metals and boiling oil, gluttons are

fed with toads and venemous beasts and made to drink foul water, and the lecherous are tormented in deep wells full of fire and sulphur. There is no particular attempt to match the crime to the punishment except for the gluttons, as the ninth chapter of The Nedyll of the fere dyuyne in The crafte (which deals generally with "many paynes infernalles") says, meditation on the pains described should be a good enough reason for every man to resist the devil and temptation.

A number of pains described in the Vision of Lazarus are to be found in other visions. The pain of the icy flood and the bitter wind recurs in the Visio Tundalis and St. Patrick's Purgatory, while the spiked wheel and the molten metals are to be found in the Visio Sancti Pauli.[687] The fullest description of the pains of hell, drawn from various sources including the Visio Tundalis and the Dialogues of St. Gregory the Great, is in an undated book printed by Robert Wyer, Examples howe mortall synne maketh the synners inobedyentes to haue many paynes and dolours within the fyre of Hell. Knowing Wyer's propensity for extracting and printing as separate books sections from larger volumes, it is not surprising to find that these Examples are extracted from the "Peni Inferni" section of deWorde's The floure of the commaundementes of god.[688] The pains here are worked out in greater detail than in the Vision of Lazarus, so that in some instances they perhaps fascinate the reader rather than frightening him, especially where imaginative ingenuity demands more attention than the suffering of the damned: the rich man in the chair of the fire, the knight clad in armour full of wounding darts, and the noble man who oppressed the poor, are of this kind.[689] On the other hand in the

vision of Tundale, the longest example given, the punishments are not so localized; they involve not individuals but numerous souls in an endless process and there is a suggestion of malignant, elemental power at work. Tundale travels from one place to another seeing the oven with flames, the cruel beast and the icy pond, the valley of the smiths and the pit of hell, and the reader builds up a cummulative picture of the vast extent of hell as well as the variety of its torments.

Apart from the vision literature the pains of hell are more usually described briefly in general terms, although as might be expected it is sometimes possible to find pieces of description which recall the visions:

> In helle is colde intollerable. Fyre withoute lyghte/the whiche shall euer endure. Styngynge wormes euer busy tormentynge incessantly. Stenche or sauour inportunate/for any man to sauour. And darkenes/whiche may be felte: and tormentes/whiche shall euer endure. & And abhomynall (sic) & terryble syghtes of deuylles & despyracyon of all good werkes.[690]

St.Bernard's Medytacyons indicated the physical and mental pains of hell - the latter is described in many treatises as remorse of conscience - the sorrow, the "incomparable stenche", the horrible dread and the total absence of any hope of mercy.[691] He asks the reader to choose between such a fate and "the rewardes of blessed soules" in heaven, which he goes on to describe in the next chapter. The mirroure of golde is another work which juxtaposes "the Ioyes of paradyse/and paynes of hell". The contrast itself offered adequate comment and made elaborate description of hell or of heaven unnecessary. The author of the Cordiale too contrasts hell with the promise of heaven, which he goes on to describe in the next and last part of his work. His

third part closes with a statement of choice:

> ... I haue suffysantely shewed you the manyfolde maners of the dyuerse paynes of helle/and howe vayllable and to what proufyte groweth the memoryale Remembraunce therof. O mortall man/what errour/ what folye/and what faute is in the/whenne it lyeth in thy free arbytrement to haue Ioyes euerlastyng and wyllyngly castest thy selfe in to the Infernall tourmentes and paynes/from whens none may retourne. but brenne there in fyre worlde without ende. 692

Teaching about the pains of hell certainly survived into the 1530s, and the traditional view of hell as a location within the cosmos where the damned were tormented was probably accepted by the majority of devout treatise readers. Wyer's Examples howe mortall synne...dates from the 1530s or the 1550s, and The myrrour or lokynge glass of lyfe, probably printed during the 1530s, still recommends as "A good rule for a man to brynge vp youth" that he should teach those under his charge "of the moste horryble paynes of hell: prepayred for all them whiche dyspyse the trewth/& folowe theyr owne lustes and pleasures". However, there were signs during the same decade that some authors were interpreting hell in a more personal, interior sense. The author of the "Consolacyon for troubled consciences" relates the feeling, the pain of hell, to man's inherently sinful nature. This awareness of his own wickedness should warn a man to accept the lighter burden of tribulation in this life rather than risk feeling the full weight of his own iniquity:

> If truely he dyd feale his euyll/he shulde feale very hell/for he hath helle in him selfe. Thou wilt axe howe? The prophete sayeth euery man is a lyer. And ageyn/Everyman lyuing is all vanyte. To be vayne and a lyar is to be voyd of truth/and to be voyd of truth is to be with out god/and to be nothing. And that is to be in hell/& dampned. 693

Erasmus describes remorse of conscience as "the pyen most painful of al peines",[694] which afflicted sinners during this life and formed a significant part of their torments after death. A myrrour or glasse for them that be syke[695] makes it even clearer that hell is not confined to a specific place nor is it an exclusively post-mortem experience. Cain and Judas for example knew that the hell of the unrighteous begins on earth. The author sees hell as rebellion against God; the ungodly who do not love God cannot escape hell. Tobias tells Lazarus that hell is nothing but fear and dread of death, and for the faithful Christian who believes in the power of Christ's resurrection the threat of hell is banished. The third chapter heading of Frith's Preparation to deathe makes the same point: "To the electe and faythfull, eternall deathe by Christe is ouercome". Like the author of the "Consolacyon for troubled consciences" the writers of the Myrrour for them that be syke believes that he who perceives the extent of his own wickedness is in hell. Some sixty years later Marlowe's Mephistopheles answered Dr.Faustus' question about the location of hell, thus:

> Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscrib'd
> In one selfe place, for where we are is hell,
> And where hell is, must we ever be. 696

Milton's Satan knew the pain of remorse, and his visit to paradise did not abate his sufferings:

> ...horror and doubt distract
> His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stirr
> The Hell within him, for within him Hell
> He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
> One step no more then from himself can fly
> By change of place... 697

Even in the twentieth century, in Eliot's Cocktail Party, Edward declares "Hell is oneself. Hell is alone".

To the Protestant authors of the 1530s true faith, living belief in Christ, gave security against the threat of hell. They did not deny the existence of hell, but they did help to alter the traditional concept of hell as an actual location in which the wicked experience physical punishment and eternal pain for their sins. The pains of hell are thought of in the "Consolacyon" and the Myrrour for them that be syke in terms of mental anguish which results from a person's recognition of his own sinfulness; they can therefore be experienced before death. These authors seem to have abandoned the traditional idea of hell as a place, and developed the concept which earlier authors would have described as remorse of conscience.

Although Protestants preferred a more personal interpretation of hell they could not remove from the Creeds the clause which asserts that Christ descended into hell. In his Catechism[698] Thomas Becon cites as authority for the Descent three biblical passages, Psalm XVI: 10; I.Peter III:19;IV:6,[699] and he sees it as proof of Christ's victory over sin and death. "He went not down unto hell as a guilty person to suffer, but as a valiant prince to conquer, and as a most puissant and glorious king to triumph over his enemies, and to make us also lords and conquerors of Satan and of all his infernal army". Where it receives any attention in Protestant works the descent into hell is seen as a kind of mirror image of Christ's Resurrection victory. In general it was not an episode they chose to emphasize: it was too closely related to the non-scriptural medieval harrowing of hell traditions.

But although the Protestants sought to demythologize the legends in much the same way as they banished images, paintings and stained glass as non-sciptural and tending to encourage superstition, their emphasis upon the Resurrection faith expresses in indifferent terms a similar sense of joy, hope and triumph to that voiced by the partriarchs in the Chester play and the Gospel of Nicodemus when Christ comes to release them.

Stories of descents to the other world, sometimes to rescue a dead relative, or to seek a boon or even to free the damned, are to be found in many mythologies.[700] In Christian thought, knowledge of and belief in Christ's descent into Hades, His triumph over death, His preaching to the souls in prison and their release, seem to have developed from at least the second century onwards.[701] The Gospel of Nicodemus seems to have been one of the most influential versions of the Descensus narrative.[702] It seems to have been immensely popular in the early sixteenth century, being printed at least eight times in under thirty years. It was cited in the Legenda Aurea and The crafte to lyue well and to dye well, and in his Good Friday sermon for 1536 Longland gives an abbreviated account of it.[703] There were several middle English verse translations of it,[704] and it must have influenced Langland's vivid harrowing of hell scene in B Passus XVIII of Piers Plowman[705]; it undoubtedly helped the Chester and York (borrowed by Towneley) dramatists to shape their plays of Christ's descent into hell.[706]

The harrowing of hell narrative occupies only the last third of the Gospel of Nicodemus - the earlier parts cover the Passion and Resurrection of Christ - and it seems originally to have been

a separate work. The setting of the narrative has something in common with the vision literature. Like Lazarus, Thurkel, the Monk of Eynsham, Tundale and other visionaries of the pains of hell or the joys of paradise, Garius and Leuicius, the sons of Simeon who have risen from their graves, are commanded by the Jews to explain the reason for their resurrection and to recount their experiences in the other world. Separately they record what they have witnessed, and miraculously their accounts are identical; one paper is given to Nicodemus and Joseph for safe-keeping, the other to Annas and Caiaphas. Having completed their task, "anone they were transfygured ~~and~~ & was no more seen;" they had returned to their bodies at the command of the Archangel Michael to "shewe to you these holy secretes". The outline of the story is well enough known:[707] Christ enters Hades after His earthly burial, His light penetrates the darkness, the gates of hell are broken down, He is welcomed by the patriarchs but the princes of hell are desperately afraid of Him, He orders Satan to be bound and leads Adam and all the saints to Paradise, where they are joined by Enoch, Elijah and the penitent thief of the crucifixion, all three having come straight to Paradise. As a story it is well constructed, the characterisation is convincing, the debate between Hades and Satan, and Christ's greeting to Adam, are in their different ways expressive and dramatic. ~~The biblical~~ Scriptural quotations are used both directly, as in Christ's use of Psalm XXIV:7,9, and in the fathers' quotation of their own prophecies - an appropriate comment upon the present action - which of course marks their fulfilment - and in the saints' praise of Christ; biblical quotations are mingled to

suggest a liturgical hymn. The legend gave physical shape and form to the essential truth of Christ's resurrection victory, and it could be adapted or elaborated with less restraint than the canonical narratives. Dunbar's poem on the resurrection makes effective use of the legend in its opening verse:

> Done is a battell on the dragon blak,
> Our campioun Chryst confountet hes his force;
> The yettis of hell ar brokin with a crak,
> The signe triumphall rasit is of the croce,
> The divillis' trymmillis with hiddous voce,
> The saulis ar borrowit and to the blis can go,
> Chryst with his blud our ranson is dois indoce:
> Surrexit Dominus de sepulchro.

Heaven.

Heaven was not easy to describe. The traditional hell was a place full of devilish activity and movement, the tortures were exaggerated versions of pains and tortures known on earth, and even the mental anguish of the wicked could be imagined by intensifying some of the less pleasant feelings which afflict nearly all men at sometime. While the vision literature usually provides a fairly competent description of the setting of paradise as a fruitful, temperate country of peace and plenty, in the words of the Lord to Moses: "a good land and a large...a land flowing with milk and honey",[708] it gives no adequate description of how the inhabitants occupy their time. Faced with the need to describe heaven in the final section of his work, the author of the Cordiale confesses "I am as one born blynde" and he resorts to the Apocalypse and brief quotations from other parts of Scripture, St.Augustine and St.Bernard to describe the "souerayn

beaute & clerenesse" of heaven.

In attempting to describe what heaven is like more generally, to define the content of that eternal bliss, the author of the Cordiale can do little more than list some of its qualities: "Ther is peas/pyte/bounte/clerenes/lyght/vertu/honeste/glorye/reste/louynge/loue/good concorde/ioye/swetenes/blys/and perdurable lyfe",[709] and to crown all with the beatific vision. The author of the chapter on the Joys of Paradise in The Crafte to lyue well and to dye well also declares "yt it be impossyble of yt suffycyently to thynke/too vnderstonde ne pronounce/ne consequently to wryte alonely of the moost lytell ioye of heuen". Despite this disclaimer he not only gives a general description of the joys of heaven but looks in more detail at the satisfaction of the soul's desire, its delectation and above all its "perfyte possessyon of god ye treatoure (sic) without ony fere to lese ye sayd beatytude". He goes on to give some attention to the bodily gifts enjoyed by the blessed, "lyght/impossybylyte/subtylyte/& agylyte", and he then dilates upon St. Anselm's fourteen parts of beatitude, of which seven pertain to the glory of the soul: "sapyence/loue/concorde/honoure/suerty/puyssaunce/& joy/ye other.vii.partyes of beatytude apperteynynge vnto the bodyes gloryfyed ben beaute/agylyte/strengthe/lybete/helth/volupte longenyte". The dissection is sound, but it is not inspiring. Whitford's description of heaven in A dayly exercyse is also somewhat pedestrian. He begins by describing the beauty and abundance of the place and passes into a description of the other virtues of heaven. He deploys all his resources of language, varying structure and rhythm, using internal rhyme and alliteration to convey the "commodites of the body",

which includes:

> Beaute and fayrenes, without any deformyte/ or fadynge. Myght and strength. Without debilyte or feblenes helth without syckenes, or disease/all pleasure and neuer payne. Euer myrth without any mornyng, euer gladnes and neuer sadnes. Euer ioy, and neuer sorowe of all thynges contentacion without any murmure or grudge. Euer loue, and neuer hate. Euer charyte, and neuer enuye, mercye, pitye, and compassyon/without any crueltye, or vnkyndnes. Euer vnyte and peace and neuer varyaunce: ne debate. Euer trouth and fidelite: without any falshed or deceyte. Euer iustice equite: and ryghte/and neuer oppression/ne wronge. Euer due honoure/and reuerence & neuer dysdayne ne dyspyte.710

It is an impressive list but too long; the set of contrasts dulls rather than stimulates the imagination. Those who attempt to describe what heaven is like seem all too often to end up by listing the various qualities and virtues it must possess.

Some authors avoided the need for precise description by juxtaposing more general descriptions of heaven and hell, allowing them to complement one another. The author of The mirroure of golde does this in his chapter "of the ioyes of paradyse and of the paynes of hell", and the sixth and seventh chapters of the Medytacyons of saynt Bernarde, "Of dethe & also of ye paynes of wycked men after dethe" and "Of the rewardes of blessed soules. And of ye Ioyes of heuen" include several such contrasts. Protestant authors, probably because of their views on hell and their disapproval of its use as a weapon of fear, never exploit the contrast between heaven and hell. However, they do make use of what was one of the most successful approaches to the problem of how to describe heaven and make it desirable. Cyprian's sermon Of mortalitie ended by reminding its audience that they dwelt on earth "as pylgrimys and gestes" and that

all should long to return to their heavenly home. Hughe uses this passage from Cyprian to conclude The troubled mans medicine, where he reminds his reader that parents and friends will be waiting there to receive him; "At the syght and metyng of these, oh howe greate gladnes shall happen bothe to vs and them?"[711] The soul will then be received into the "ioyouse companie", which includes apostles, martyrs, prophets and virgins as well as kindred and friends. Whitford may well have had the same passage in mind when he too reminds his reader of the company which awaits him in heaven. His list is more detailed than Cyprian's, and he also mentions:

> Ye goodly bright company of angels/alredy
> to present you vnto our lady the blessyd
> gloryous virgyne Marye/and by her with
> them to be recommended/and committed
> vnto her dere sone our lorde/and moste
> swete sauyour Iesu;712

and Jesus in turn brings the soul "vnto ye presence of his most worthy father which (by him) is also your father". It is this vision of the godhead rather than the social pleasures of the company of the blessed which dominates the prayer of the Disciple of Eternal Wisdom with which the Orologium concludes. He prays to the Lord that:

> in þe lestes houre of her yeeldynge vp
> þe goost be they blessid of þe. and of
> þy swete moder, þat is þe moder of mercy,
> be þe broughte gloryously to þe kyngedome
> of heuene: where alle þe company and multitude
> of blessid spirites after þe exile and sorowe
> of þis life schullen be ioyfully make drunken
> of grete plente of goddes hows, seiynge þe kynge
> of blesse and lorde of vertues in thy godhede,
> Jhesu criste, oure lorde, whiche with þe fader
> and þe holy gost lyuest and regnest god euere
> worlde with - outen ende. 713

It is to the mystical writers that one must turn for the most inspiring vision of heaven. In the Imitation of Christ the disciple yearns "to have syght/& contemplacyon of the eternall glory of thy kyngedome", and asks Jesus "whan shalt thou be to me all in all/o whan shall I be with the in thy kyngedome/ the whiche thou haste of thy goodnes preparate to thy louers at the begynnyng?" Although this chapter[714] opens with a description of "the hygh cyte of heuen", bliss, joy and infinity are the only words used to describe it; it is characterized by the clear, shining, eternal light which seems to envelop it and illuminate the saints of heaven. The disciple, caught in the trammels of sin and the world, prays for the help of eternal truth; he asks pardon for his distraction, and begs "O thou heuenly swetenes, come and enter into me/& chase for me all vnclennes". The final chapter of the Stimulus Amoris [715] uses just four superlatives to describe "the restful place of the high Jerusalem"—highest, brightest, widest and strongest - there is no attempt made to describe what it looks like. Like The Crafte it lists four qualities which the body will enjoy in heaven—perfect health, lightness, brightness and unsufferableness-and it also praises the fellowship of heaven as "best, worthiest, fairest, most fervent in charity, <each one to other knit together,> with clean love that never shall stint nor cool". The quality of the fellowship is defined in terms of the relationship of its members one to another; there is no mention of apostles, prophets, martyrs or other types of people who make up the company of heaven. At the centre of the fellowship is the soul's possession of "our Lord", and the clear sight of the Holy Trinity, and a little later the Lord wipes

away the tears from their eyes and comforts the blessed "As the mother cherisheth her child". The nature of the soul's relationship to God is suggested by the tender care of the mother for her child, and so the soul is led on to that indescribable inner joy deep in the experience of God. As the Medytacyons of saynt Bernarde puts it:

> The rewardes of blessid men ben to beholdes god/ to lyue wyth god& to lyue of god/to be wt god/ & to haue god that is moost noble& souereyne goodnes. 716

Heaven is not so much a place as a relationship, the fellowship of the saints with one another, and above all the relationship of the individual to God in Christ. The relationship of the individual with Jesus cannot be fully realized in this life, but to the mystic is sometimes granted a foretaste, a glimpse of heaven. Hilton groups together some of the terms often used by the mystics to describe their experience of grace:

> This openynge of the goostly eye is that lyght darknes and ryche nought that I spake of before/and it may be called pouerte of spiryte and goostly rest/inwarde stylnes and peace of conscience/hyghnes of thought and onelynes of soule/a lyghtly felynge of grace and preuite of herte/the waker slepe of the spouse and tastynge of heuenly sauoure/brennynge in loue and shynynge in lyght/entre of contemplacyon/ and reformynge in felyng. 717

Protestant authors too were prepared to use the mystic's terminology. Lazarus in the Myrrour... for them that be syke as he waits for death longs to be embraced by the bridegroom Christ, while the author of the "Consolacyon for troubled consciences" calls upon his reader to "lifte vp oure hart and ascende vp in to the mountayne of Myrthe with the spouse";[718] and Catharine Parr is content to use A Kempis - like

language; "O Lord Jesu, most louyng spouse, who shall geue me winges of perfect loue, that I may flie vp from these worldely miseries, and rest in the".[719]

The author who attempts to describe heaven as a place or to enumerate its qualities and virtues may be competent and informative but he is unlikely on those grounds alone to inspire a reader to seek the kingdom of heaven. The social heaven, where the soul is re-united with friends and kindred and enjoys the company of apostles, prophets, saints and martyrs, is more attractive. But the desire for heaven is most surely based in the soul's relationship to God, his love for God and his desire to see God face to face. Because the contemplative has penetrated deep into the heart of God's love he is in a better position than other more objective authors, however good and devout, to convey something of ~~their~~ his experience of God's love. What the mystic has experienced rarely, briefly and incompletely on earth is a foretaste of heaven. It is usually described in highly wrought, poetical language which also helps to stimulate the reader's imagination and inspire in him longing for heaven. Richard Rolle, one of the greatest of the English mystics, sums up the way in which love of heavenly things can wean a soul from all earthly cares and affections:

> Als sone als þi hert es towched with þe swetnes of heven, þe wil lytel lyst þe myrth of þis worlde; and when þou feles joy in Criste lufe, þe wil lathe with þe joy and þe comforth of þis worlde and erthly gamen. For al melody and al riches and délites, þat al men in þis world kan ordayne or thynk, sownes bot noy and anger til a mans hert þat verraly es byrn and in þe lufe of God; for he hase myrth and joy and melody in aungels sang, als þou may wele wyt. If þou leve al thyng þat þi fleschly lufe

list, for þe lufe of God, and haue na thoght on
syb frendes, bot forsake al for Goddes lufe, and
anely gyf þi hert to coveyte Goddes lufe and pay
hym, mare joy sal þou haue and fynd in hym þan I
can on thynk. 720

CONCLUSION

Traditional Catholic devotional literature shows a remarkable continuity in its survival and circulation in England from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and, making the transition from manuscripts to printed books, on into the second quarter of the sixteenth century.[1] The continuity of this tradition has been noted by a number of historians,[2] but its character, extent and vitality during the 1520s and 1530s have not been studied in any detail.[3] The tradition lived on in the manner of life exemplified by individuals such as the Lady Margaret Beaufort, St. John Fisher and Sir Thomas More - ascetic, world-denying and pious - and in the lives of certain religious communities, notably the Carthusians and Syon Abbey, which was probably the most influential centre of traditional devotion in England during the 1520s and 1530s. The tradition continued to be added to until the mid 1530s, with the publication of new works by the Syon brethren Bonde, Fewterer and Whitford, and by the appearance in print, apparently for the first time, of older works such as The tre &.xii.frutes of the hooly goost or An inuocacyon gloryous Named ye psalter of Iesu. Yet with few exceptions (Whitford's works, A Kempis' Imitatio Christi and some reprinted by Skot being the most notable)[4] no traditional medieval works were reprinted after 1535 until the publications of the English Recusants began to appear during the 1570s.[5] The reason for this sudden demise seems to lie both in external circumstances and in internal weaknesses.

The most obvious of the external circumstances were the changes brought about by England's separation from Rome and by the King's claim to be "the only Supreme Head in earth of the Church of England". The deaths of More, Fisher and the London Carthusians in 1535 caused widespread fear and uncertainty among the faithful.[6] Their fear cannot have been

allayed by the dissolution of the lesser houses, the Lutheran tendencies of the Ten Articles, and the condemnation of many traditional customs as superstitious and idolatrous in the First Royal Injunctions of 1536. The government, however, although it encouraged the translation and publication of works sympathetic to moderate reform, does not seem to have acted directly to curtail the publication of traditional devotional literature. It seems to have died naturally. A more immediate threat to the continuance of the tradition was the death of Wynkyn de Worde in 1535, which severed the last direct link with the fifteenth-century English printers - Pynson had died in 1530. More than any other single person de Worde was responsible for reprinting the medieval devotional treatises which survived into the 1530s.[7] Amid the uncertainties and changing tastes of the second half of the decade it is not surprising that no other printer followed him.

The internal weaknesses will be clearer if the traditional literature is divided into three, extensively overlapping, categories (the humanist contribution and the character of early Protestant treatises will be discussed separately): treatises specifically intended for conventual religious and contemplatives and others, which suggests a monastic background; manuals such as the <u>ars moriendi</u> books or treatises on the method and content of confession, which usually included a considerable amount of catechetical material and general works on such topics as the vices and virtues, tribulation or death; devotional writing, which varied from the formal content of the <u>Horae</u>, to narrative lives of Christ and the saints: many were of mixed contents,

with instruction, narrative, prayers and meditations occuring together, but there were a substantial number that may be described as works of pure devotion, and devotion generally tended to focus on the life and Passion of Christ.

Treatises for religious varied from the substantial and demanding Pilgrymage of perfeccyon and Pype or Tonne of the lyfe of perfeccyon, both written in the sixteenth century, to briefer and more simple treatises such as the Dyetary of Ghostly Helthe and The tre &.xii. frutes of the holy goost - all four works seem to have Syon connections.[8] Whitford's Pype or Tonne is the only one devoted exclusively to monastic topics, a refutation of Luther's attack on monasticism and a fairly technical exposition of the three vows; the others contained a good deal of general teaching on vices and virtues, temptation, private devotion and even table manners. For the most part the pattern of the monastic day and the fact of the three vows are assumed, although several discuss the difficulties of concentration during choir offices and at mass, but they are hardly to be distinguished from more general treatises such as The myrrour of the chyrche or The golden epistle. The monastic treatise was marked more by certain attitudes than by its actual content, and these attitudes are in turn reflected in a much wider range of literature than that of specifically monastic application or origins. It was the widespread acceptance of the medieval view, stated as late as the 1530s, that "ye religion of Christe...is better & more perfectly & precisely kepte in religion monastical: than in any of the other states",[9] which gave the monastic standard of perfection an influence out of all proportion to the actual number of religious treatises. Whitford sees obedience as the most important of the

monastic virtues,[10] and while not every author would accept this, the principle of submission to ecclesiastical authority and assent to the teachings of Holy Church was applied to all Christians. Belief was to be unquestioning; it was usually untaught and unreasoned beyond the ability to recite the creed, Pater, Ave and perhaps some lists of sins or the commandments, impersonal and lacking in conviction. The exercise of private judgement in matters of belief was not encouraged, and inevitably it was also weakened in regard to moral decisions, forcing the individual to rely heavily on external regulations. Thus the attitude of obedience not only helped to maintain the authority of the Church and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, but it tended to lead the individual to an abdication of personal responsibility and a mechanical trust in the external forms of religion. Another attitude which received support from the monastic standard of perfection was the world-denying strain so common in medieval literature. The religious was vowed to chastity, and called upon to renounce the world and be physically separated from it. Chastity, which was usually interpreted in a sexual sense,[11] was a widely praised virtue, and the married state was generally considered as a necessary evil,[12] much inferior to celibacy. Both the flesh and the world were regarded as unequivocally evil. The bestiality of man was the subject of the "vile body" genre, while the world and all secular interests and ambitions were condemned in the contemptus mundi literature. Such attitudes did nothing to encourage a sense of human dignity nor to reconcile man to the world, and they effectively prevented the married layman following a secular occupation from aspiring to the life of perfection. The monastic rejection of the world, while it undoubtedly encouraged single-minded devotion to God, tended to overlook social concerns. Alms were given, not according to human need and desert, but

indiscriminately, since the merit accrued to the giver. The medieval treatises give little attention to social responsibilities beyond the formal listing of the works of mercy.

Works for contemplatives avoid many of the weaknesses of the monastic treatise. Because they are addressed to an individual rather than to a class of readers, they are more personal in their approach and more readily adapted to the needs of the individual. They are less insistent on the need for rigid conformity to external rules, although the printed treatises contain a considerable amount of general instruction on vices, virtues, tribulation, temptation and even external behaviour, and so they are more flexible in their advice and leave more to the discretion of the individual. While obedience to the teachings of the Church is firmly insisted on, this does not preclude the exercise of personal judgement in, for example, the use of time, choice of occupation or content of private devotion. It is for the individual - often with the aid of a spiritual director - to guide the course of his own spiritual development. This involves far more than the acceptance of an externally imposed rule of life; nor is the individual to be carried away by his feelings; they must be treated warily. Spiritual growth is based on deep knowledge - the knowledge of experience rather than intellect - of self and God. Inward disposition is therefore more important than actual performance, and meekness generally replaces obedience as the dominant virtue in contemplative treatises. The service of God cannot be reduced to a rule, but is a relationship. The contemplative treatises require not merely submission but total dedication and a strong desire of the soul to God, which they seek to strengthen. Yet they consistently avoid emotional or ascetic extremes, and encourage a common-sense attitude of moderation towards physical and practical matters. They are distinguished from the monastic and hand-book type of literature

by the flexibility and inwardness of their approach, and from many treatises of pure devotion by the moderation of their emotion. More than any other type of traditional literature the contemplative treatises present a balanced and refined view of the Christian life.

The rigidity, impersonality and externalism of much medieval teaching is to be seen particularly in the numerous forms of confession and accompanying catechetical instruction available in print during the 1520s and 1530s. Most of the confessions are comprehensive and very detailed, but entirely lacking in any sense of proportion. Both confessions and the instruction usually adhere to traditional categories, frequently no more than numbered lists of sins and virtues. But while many would be able to list the seven deadly sins, not everyone would be able to recognize them in himself and still fewer would understand their cause or know how to remedy them. The necessity of penance was taught, and authors usually explained that it meant sorrow for sins, but no further attempt was made to help the reader understand the meaning of penance. There was a lack of meaningful explanation which would help the reader relate the teaching to his own experience. Perhaps nowhere is the general absence of adequate doctrinal teaching in the traditional literature more obvious than in these confessional - catechetical handbooks. Some contemplative authors, like Hilton, and early sixteenth-century writers, such as Erasmus and William Bonde, recognized the dangers of rigid adherence to the prescribed forms for the sensitive soul and condemned the mechanical superficiality of such methods for others. Although they reflect many monastic attitudes - condemnation of fleshly and sexual sins, and of worldly interests or pleasures, and

insistence on submissive obedience to the requirements of the Church - these handbooks do not address a particular class of audience. Every Christian was a sinner, bound to make his confession at least once a year, and so the confessional-catechetical literature is neutral with regard to its audience. So too are the tribulation treatises, for spiritual and physical affliction was the lot of every man in this life, although some treatises that dealt with spiritual tribulation and temptation were clearly intended for enclosed religious.[13] The usual solution to the problem of suffering was a fairly mechanical application of the works and merits principle: the amount of suffering patiently endured in this life would receive a commensurate reward in heaven. The same kind of principle was applied to the whole of life, for a good life would be rewarded. Death, the common fate of every man, was regarded as, in many ways, the crisis of life, for a good death could do much to redeem a mis-spent life. As a devotional book supplying edifying thoughts for meditation to the living the ars moriendi was again neutral with regard to audience, but as a practical conduct book it seems more relevant to lay people. Although it usually followed a formal structure it seems far less rigid and impersonal than most medieval handbooks. Faced with the final temptation of the Devil, and threatened by the pains of death and of hell, recitation of the articles of belief seems less mechanical than it does in a catechetical context, and turning away from the world and the flesh to concentrate on the life to come is entirely appropriate for a dying man. The fear of death, Judgement and the pains of hell produced by ars moriendi books and other treatises on the Four Last Things may have frightened some

souls to amend their life before their last hours; certainly medieval religion had a substantial strain of threatening pain and torment. But the ars moriendi books also held out the hope of a heavenly reward to the soul that remained faithful to the end, and they did not omit the more personal comfort of Christ crucified and the intercessions of the Blessed Virgin to encourage the dying man. Similarly, the gloom and fear of the Last Things were lightened by descriptions of the joyous state of the blessed in heaven. The Last Things were made to seem intensely and physically real. The strong other-worldly strain and eschatological dimension that pervade so much medieval devotional literature did mean that this life was regarded in the perspective of eternity; it was important not for itself but as the preparation of the World to come.

Like the confessional and ars moriendi manuals, devotional books were not addressed to any specific audience. Many of the works described as devotional in fact were of mixed contents and, like the Speculum Vitae Christi, included instruction on moral and practical as well as spiritual matters. Some, such as those intended to prepare the reader for mass or to occupy him through the liturgy, were as practical as any other manual, but they probably contained more prayers and meditations. Although they sometimes provided explanations of the prayers and actions of the liturgy, they also stressed the importance of correct behaviour. But even devotional books on the mass or on the Last Judgement focused, like nearly all the traditional literary devotion that has survived in print, on the life and Passion of Christ. The most common type of devotion is what may be described as the practice of the devotional present, in which the reader imagines himself actually

present at the scene described and reacts accordingly. Thus a great deal of devotional writing is descriptive; it strives after realism and tends to be very detailed and physical. It gives detailed descriptions of what is done and tells precisely how it is done - for instance nailing Christ to the cross, setting it up, and the deposition. Attention is paid to the quality of things, for instance the coldness of the marble pillar to which Christ is bound or the keen wind as He is crucified; the delicacy and beauty of His body; the pain resulting from the silk robe sticking to His open wounds and being pulled off; or the aggravated cruelty of the blunt nails and the stretching of His limbs on the cross. The reader is meant so to see -aided, of course, by the iconographic representation of these scenes in books and church decorations - and feel what Christ endured that he will experience compassion for Christ. But outside the contemplative treatises there was no suggestion as to how the sympathy might deepen into love or awaken a practical response in the reader. There was no effective control over the emotional response encouraged, and the excessive emotionalism of Margery Kempe was probably not unusual. But the realism of such descriptive writing enabled many to feel that they knew Jesus well, and if their understanding of Him was limited the personal bond was strong, so strong and real that many claimed to have seen or spoken to Him or His Mother, whose grief was as real to them as the pain of Her Son and whose iconographical representation as familiar. There was undoubtedly far more popular devotion to the Blessed Virgin than is suggested by the extant literary treatises,[14] where her position is clearly subordinate to Her Son and references to her are less common

than might have been expected. The exclusive emphasis on Christ's Passion meant that the events of the Resurrection and Ascension were comparatively neglected, and the on-going redemptive work of Christ, His power and His mercy, were not given sufficient emphasis. Thus the Person of Jesus was regarded as historical rather than divine, and the devotions to His blood and wounds associated with the Passion were even further separated from doctrine or theology. Theology was generally presented in list or diagrammatic form - as with the Trinity - or through some symbolic narrative such as the Four Daughters of God and the heavenly counsel. Miracles rather than rational explanation were used to prove the truth of the traditional Catholic doctrines of the mass. Cut off from the controls of reason or theology it is not surprising that popular devotion often tended to be over-emotional, or to stray into superstitious and magical usage.

Some of the particular weaknesses of the Catholic devotional literature which survived into the 1530s are suggested by the above summary. More generally medieval religion had become fragmented. One is conscious of a gulf between conventual religious and lay people, between those who knew Latin and could read the Bible, engage in theological debate and follow the liturgy, and the illiterate or those who were limited to the vernacular, who were kept in comparative ignorance. There is a lack of connection between emotion and intellect; between external regulations and inward understanding; and the divorce between belief and practice led to the widespread problem of hypocrisy. Also, despite the fact that many treatises were of mixed contents, there was a tendency for some types of teaching, notably catechetical instruction on the articles of faith, the commandments and sacraments, to remain isolated from more general moral teaching or devotions. Lack of

theological content exaggerated the value of the emotions in religion, and such emotionalism could lead to fantasies and visions difficult to distinguish from true visions, dangerous to the ignorant and open to exploitation by the unscrupulous.[15] Widespread ignorance also tended to encourage credulous beliefs and superstitious practices. The character of late medieval devotion seems to owe much to the Church's need to control popular religion at a time when the vast majority of people were uneducated and illiterate. Simple rules and numbered lists that could be learnt by heart and a form of devotion which depended on the feelings and imagination rather than intellectual comprehension were well suited to such people. But as vernacular literacy increased, and courts and businesses became more sophisticated, the Church failed to adapt to the changing intellectual and social circumstances.

But although in retrospect the weaknesses are more obvious, the Catholic tradition had considerable strengths, which must have made it seem impregnable to the faithful. There was the unbroken tradition of the Church, stretching back over the centuries to the Apostles and Christ Himself. There was the geographical extent of the Church, and the general unity of her belief. The literary treatises, in contrast to much popular and non-literary devotion, were doctrinally sound; they do not, for instance, exaggerate the powers of the Blessed Virgin, nor do they suggest an unhealthy morbidity or preoccupation with death. Moderation and common sense characterize their ascetic, moral and devotional teaching. Because it seems to have been generally accepted, even though it could not be followed in its entirety by everybody, the monastic standard of perfection was not a divisive influence. The Church drew all Christians (religious, priests and laypeople, learned

and unlearned) together in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, penance, the mass and the Last Rites, and in the celebration of the Church's feasts, and prepared every one to withstand temporal tribulation and to face death. The gulf between this world and the next was to some extent bridged by the belief that those on earth could help the souls in purgatory by their prayers and offerings. Also the physical realism of the descriptive writing that made Jesus a real person. made the Judgement, purgatory, hell and heaven - all frequently depicted in art - as definite and real as anything on earth.[16] This materialistic interpretation of religion had many strengths, for instance it probably made belief easy, especially to the unlearned, but it did tend to overshadow the spiritual dimension of faith. However, the importance of descriptive writing and the desire to stimulate the reader's feelings encouraged the use of a wide variety of literary forms to express religious truths. They varied from lyrics and drama to prose narratives, catechetical lists, prayers and meditations. Longer works relied not on rational argument or thematic development for their structure but on a loose grouping of topics or else numbered divisions, which could become quite elaborate in some devotions. The language was sufficiently flexible to switch easily from instruction to meditation or narrative description in the course of a treatise. It was also rich enough to convey a wide range of experience from the mystics' "rich nought" to the brutal activities of Christ's persecutors; where appropriate it could be highly elaborate, making use of alliteration and techniques of repetition, or it could be utterly simple, and in mood it could range from the hauntingly beautiful and moving to the highly dramatic or harrowing. Catechetical lists apart, it was rarely dull, although it could be cumbrous. This

literary vitality is matched by the vitality of the religious arts in the early decades of the sixteenth century. During this period many churches were rebuilt or extended, and people seemed eager to raise money to refurnish them or to buy new carvings, screens, statues or glass.[17]

While the Catholic tradition certainly did not lack vitality, many recognized that there was widespread corruption and ignorance within the Church. Some kind of reform was needed. The austerity, purity and vitality of the Carthusians, Observants and the Bridgettines at Syon suggested a standard of monastic reform,[18] and it is notable that the brethren from these three houses suffered death in their defence of the traditional faith. Syon's influence on devotional literature was considerable. Bonde's Pilgrymage, Fewterer's Myrrour or Glasse of Christes Passion and Whitford's Pype or Tonne were all substantial works, written in English for a literate audience, with a more substantial intellectual-doctrinal content presented in a more systematic manner, than earlier vernacular treatises. Whitford was one of the first vernacular writers to attempt to adapt the traditional monastic-based devotion to the needs of laymen. He was probably influenced more by his contacts with secular households and by the ideals of the Christian humanists in this venture than by his monastic background. Erasmus was the figure-head of the Christian humanist movement. He sought to strip away the doctrinal, ceremonial and institutional accretions of later ages and enable the Church to rediscover her primitive purity of faith and doctrine, which he had found in the study of Scripture and the early Greek and Latin Fathers. Echoing Plato rather than contemplative

authors he re-asserted the inwardness of religion, the importance of understanding and good intentions against external conformity. The main instruments of his reform were to be learning and education. The classical languages and literature were to be the basis of this education, the manner of life recommended owed more to Stoic philosophy than to the traditional monastic virtues, and the end-product was a civilized, humane and reasonable man, dedicated to the pursuit of truth and willing to bear rule. The monastic virtues of chastity, obedience and humility are displaced by the classical virtues of justice, temperance, prudence and fortitude, and far more emphasis is placed on social duties and responsibilities and on human relationships, for example between married couples, between parents and children, or between friends. In contrast to the traditional view, the world was regarded as morally neutral rather than as unequivocally evil. Man was seen as a noble creature, made in God's image and capable of achieving perfection, rather than as the bestial, unclean, sinful wretch of the "vile body" genre. Admiration for the pagan virtues led the humanists to believe, optimistically, that by education and natural reason man could go far towards truth and perfection. Man was set free from the restraints of repressive obedience; the authority of the Church was less dominant, and far more weight was given to knowledge and the individual's exercise of private judgement. The basis of the humanists' concept of life and truth was secular: Christianity was an extension, the ultimate perfection, of all life and truth, but not fundamentally necessary. Faith was regarded as a matter of rational judgement and dedication to the pursuit of truth, the philosophia Christi; it had little to do with salvation. Probably as a reaction against the emotionalism and over-emphasis on the human Jesus characteristic of medieval devotion, the humanists saw Him as an ideal, a teacher and exemplar of a manner of life, rather than as the Son

of Man. But if their faith was rather impersonal and tended to discriminate in favour of the intellectual and socially influential, it was nevertheless a valuable corrective to the anti-intellectualism, pessimism and unworldliness of much medieval religion. The form of their treatises reflects their classical models: there is usually a sense of structure and proportion, they make use of a rational argument, they are not afraid to use satire or to allow the occasional trace of humour to appear, and they reflect their author(s) lively human interest in personal circumstances and surroundings.

The humanists opened up Christianity to the world and to the intellect, but Erasmus also wanted to purify the Church. Education alone was not sufficient. To achieve reform every Christian needed free access to and knowledge of the source-book of the Philosophia Christi, The Bible, in the vernacular. This demand, together with a number of other humanist ideas, was taken up in a far more militant spirit by the English Reformers. Unlike Erasmus, who refused to condemn outright the customs and institutions he criticized, they sought to abolish all the ceremonies, doctrines and institutions which they found to be superstitious or lacking in biblical authority. The Bible, interpreted literally, was to the the sole standard of Christian life and doctrine. Those who deviated from this standard - or from the Reformers' interpretation of it - or who preferred to follow what the Reformers regarded as the man-made traditions of Catholicism, put themselves beyond hope of salvation. Reformed doctrine was the hall-mark of pure faith and was necessary to salvation; the Protestant treatises were characterized by their biblicism and by their almost exclusive interest in and concern for doctrinal teaching; a few collections of prayers were the only specifically devotional works. They assumed

that true faith depended on knowledge, and they perhaps reflected the humanists' optimistic belief in education, in suggesting that men would be converted if they knew the true doctrine of Christ - the difference between the Gospels and the Law, and between justification by faith alone and salvation by works - but they were careful to emphasize that faith must be proved by works. A good life was the proof of faith, but the Protestants made little attempt to formulate a practical rule of life or to define precise standards of morality or behaviour. In their treatises doctrinal teaching invariably overshadows practical advice and personal experience. Faith was, in theory at least, grounded on personal decision, or experience of conversion: the individual became convinced of the saving power of the Risen Christ - for it was to the victory of Christ's Resurrection rather than to the pathos of His Passion that the earliest Reformers appealed. Yet the dynamic, joyous, confident, personal faith implied by the witness of individual Reformers and by their theology does not always find expression in their treatises. These tend to be dull, impersonal, heavily didactic rather than inspiring, and often contentious. Their language is largely biblical or else rather prosaic, unless they are indulging in polemic, when it can be more energetic. They do, however, tend to dispose their material in a more systematic way than most medieval vernacular treatises. But in its reaction against the abuses of the Catholic tradition the reformation swung too far in the opposite direction, and banished beauty, imagination, the arts and emotion from religion. The medieval overemphasis on the life and Passion of Jesus was corrected by a more balanced theological view of Christ, but at the expense of the strong personal relationship between Jesus and the believer; and the Reformers

reacted to the earlier concentration on the New Testament by dwelling on the Old Testament history and legislation: their lengthy, edifying prayers are nearly all drawn from the Old Testament. The Protestant treatises appealed to their reader's heads, not to their hearts. Only in a few biblical paraphrases, such as Savonarola's, or the prayers of Taverner's Epitome of the Psalmes, is there any sense of real feeling in reformed treatises, other than campaigning zeal for a cause. The Reformed authors assumed a literate audience, able to read the Bible for themselves - there was little to appeal to the illiterate in such a faith. They placed before the individual, in a way quite foreign to the vernacular authors of the Catholic tradition, the tools of his salvation - the Bible and reformed doctrine. It was then largely up to the individual to extend his knowledge and faith - the Protestants, like the humanists, allowed the individual considerable freedom and encouraged the exercise of private judgement in the practice of their faith. Again in common with the humanists, the Protestants placed much more emphasis on the individual's social obligations than did most medieval authors. In English Protestantism there was a hint of nationalism in the praise given to the King as leader of the reformation, obedience to the secular power was insisted upon, and the use made of Lollard literature to support the Reformers' claims for vernacular Scriptures and the abolition of Roman superstitions and Papal powers helped to suggest that the reformation was a native English growth, and neither a new nor a foreign invention. The Protestant, like his Catholic counterpart, was expected to give alms, but responsibility, to the honest and hardworking and to neighbours who were in need - the contrast between the almsgiving of George and Cornelius in Erasmus' Funus is instructive. He was also required by his manner

of life and, if he had suitable knowledge and gifts, by preaching and teaching to make known the Word of God and the reformed faith. The Church was no longer regarded by Protestants as the final arbiter of life and doctrine, nor was it seen as a material and hierarchical structure, but as the Body of Christ, made up of all true Christians. The ideal member of that Body was no longer the conventual religious or contemplative, nor was he necessarily in holy orders, nor was he the intellectual humanist, but the hard-working, literate, married householder. Protestant teaching and devotion must have appealed particularly to this rapidly expanding but previously much neglected section of the community.

The reformation of English private devotion was sudden and decisive. Until 1535 the Catholic tradition was dominant, and its flourishing condition is confirmed by the works appearing in print for the first time and by the publication of new works. The writings of the Syon brethren and the treatises of the Christian humanists suggest that the Church was slowly beginning to recognize the needs of lay people, and attempting to provide the public with a more intellectually satisfying faith. The writings of a mid-century parish priest such as Robert Parkyn and the works of the English Recusants prove that, although exiled by Protestant rulers, the traditional forms and topics of devotion did not die. But, like all private devotion, it relied heavily on a framework of doctrine, liturgy, ceremonial and custom; and the tradition was weakened by the Protestants' destruction of its intellectual, spiritual and physical setting. The Catholic Church in England seems to have been remarkably unprepared for the upheavals of the 1530s. She seems to have felt that by the appointment of Sir Thomas More as official apologist,

and with the assistance of the Crown, the new Lutheran threat could be contained, as the Lollards had been. But, bereft of the Crown's active support through Henry's break with Rome and by the ascendancy of Thomas Cromwell, she was vulnerable to attack. She had neither a well thought-out literary defence nor a popular leader of sufficient authority to rally clergy and people - the successful prelates were statesmen or intellectuals unsuited to popular leadership. The Protestants, on the other hand, were on the defensive from the beginning, and they made effective use of press and pulpit, both to attack the acknowledged weaknesses and abuses of the Catholic Church, and to preach a new, coherent presentation of the Christian faith with energy and conviction. Away from London, particularly in the poorer rural areas, popular support for the traditional faith and customs lived on, as witnessed by some of the demands made in the course of the Lincolnshire Rising and the Pilgrimage of Grace, and more emphatically in the Western Rebellion,[19] and by the preservation of church plate, vestments and furnishings among pious individuals. But traditional English Catholicism, the unselfconscious and natural faith of England, could not survive either Protestant opposition or the doctrinaire, continental Catholicism of Mary's reign without critical self-scrutiny and redefinition, which, together with the effects of Trent, meant that the Catholicism of Mary's reign and of the Elizabethan Recusants differed in many respects from the traditional faith of England before 1530.