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**AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY**

**GIFTED ORIGINS TO GRACED FULFILMENT  
THE SOTERIOLOGY OF JULIAN OF NORWICH**

**BY**

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Signed *Kerri Stole*

To Col  
Love is God's Meaning

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AW	<i>Ancrene Wisse.</i> E.g., AW: II. Outer Senses, 66. Ancrene Wisse part two, the outer senses, page 66.
BSAJN	<i>A Book of Showings to the anchoress Julian of Norwich</i>
DFT	<i>Dictionary of Fundamental Theology</i>
HCT	<i>Handbook of Catholic Theology</i>
LD	<i>Latin Dictionary</i>
LWHM	<i>Love Was His Meaning: The Theology and Mysticism of Julian of Norwich</i>
MED	<i>Middle English Dictionary</i>
NDCS	<i>New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality</i>
NSOED	<i>The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<i>Scale</i>	<i>The Scale of Perfection</i>
<i>Summa</i>	<i>Summa Theologica</i> E.g., 3a.q.1.5.2030. Part three a, question one, article five, page two thousand and thirty.

Scripture quotations are taken from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 1991.

## CITATIONS FOR THE TEXTS OF THE REVELATIONS OF DIVINE LOVE

### The Short Text

All citations for the Short Text are from: *A Book of Showings to the Anchoress Julian of Norwich*. Vol. 1. Edited by Edmund Colledge and James Walsh. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1978. There are twenty-six chapters in the short text. Chapter numbers are in lower case Roman numerals followed by a colon. Line numbers and page numbers are in Arabic numerals. Line numbers are followed by a comma and page numbers. E.g., xv:2-5,249. Chapter fifteen, lines two to five, page two hundred and forty-nine.

### The Long Text of the Paris Manuscript

All citations for the Paris manuscript are from: *A Book of Showings to the Anchoress Julian of Norwich*. Vol. 2. Edited by Edmund Colledge and James Walsh. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1978.

The Paris manuscript has eighty-six chapters and a postscript. The first three chapters present introductory material. The remaining chapters are organized into sixteen distinct revelations. Revelation One includes chapters four to nine. Revelations Two to Seven coincide with chapters ten to fifteen respectively. Revelation Eight includes chapters sixteen to twenty. Revelation Nine includes chapter twenty-one to twenty-three. Revelations Ten to Twelve coincide with chapters twenty-four to twenty-six respectively. Revelation Thirteen includes chapters twenty-seven to forty. Revelation Fourteen includes chapters forty-one to sixty-three. Revelation Fifteen includes chapters sixty-four to sixty-five. Revelation Sixteen includes chapters sixty-six to eighty six.

Revelation numbers are in Arabic numerals followed by a colon, chapter numbers and a fullstop. Line numbers are followed by a comma and page numbers. E.g., 15:65.37-40,631. Revelation fifteen, chapter sixty-five, lines thirty-seven to forty, page six hundred and thirty-one.

All translations are from: *Julian of Norwich Showings*. Translated by Edmund Colledge and James Walsh. Classics of Western Spirituality. New York: Paulist Press, 1978. Page numbers are cited at the end of the quotation.

## The Long Text Known as Sloane1

The Sloane text is not divided into revelations. Like the Paris text there are eighty-six chapters, but there is a longer postscript. Sloane1 references come from: *The Shewings of Julian of Norwich*. Edited by Georgina Ronan Crampton, Teams Middle English Texts Series. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1994. The Sloane Text translations have upper case Roman numeral chapter number, followed by a colon, Arabic line numbers followed by a comma and page number.

E.g., II:41-42,39. Chapter two, lines forty-one and forty-two, page thirty nine. I chose this rather than Glasscoe's edition because line numbers make more convenient referencing. We will examine the difference between manuscripts in the next chapter.

Translations are from: *Revelations of Divine Love Recorded by Julian Anchoress at Norwich Anno Domini, 1373*, 2d ed. Edited by Grace Warrack. London: Methuen & Company, 1907. Page numbers are cited at the end of the quote.

## Middle English Alphabet

The letter yogh is represented by z.

Because of the inconsistent spelling in this Middle English text, (e.g. *trynyte*; *trinitie*; *trinite*; *trinyte*; *trinytie* and *trynite*), I have endeavoured to use the Middle English spelling in the quote being discussed.

The referencing system is according to Kate L. Turabian. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Sixth Edition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.



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## ABSTRACT

Within the discipline of theology, this thesis examines the soteriology presented in the *Revelations of Divine Love*, composed by Julian of Norwich (1343 – ca. 1420). Through an exegesis of the Paris copy of the Middle English manuscript, the research analyzes the understanding of salvation implicit in the text. This study builds on and expands previous theological inquiry into Julian's texts. A hermeneutic for interpreting the theology expressed in this mystical literature creates guiding principles for interpretation. After demonstrating how in essence all Julian's theology is a trinitarian theology of love, the investigation addresses each aspect of Julian's soteriology within the framework of her trinitarian formula. The formula encapsulates the human journey summarized as: in the first we have our being, in the second we have our increasing, and in the third we have our fulfilling. The theological précis reveals that for Julian, salvation is a process of *oneing* from God to God. "In the first we have our being" appraises Julian's creation theology and her anthropology. "In the second we have our increasing" focuses on her Christology. It presents Christ's role in redemption through the cross, through his work as servant and his function as mother. "In the third we have our fulfilling" examines the importance of the Holy Spirit. It presents Julian's understanding of a partially realized experience of salvation and eschatology that expresses hope for final fulfilment in God. Julian's understanding of salvation, consolidated in her statement *all shall be well*, creates a soteriology grounded in a theology of the presence and action of divine love, in all things, from gifted origins to graced fulfilment.



JULIAN OF NORWICH

## PREFACE

*(A)nd ther he shewyd a feyer and delectable place, and large jnow for alle mankynde that shalle be savyd and rest in pees and in loue.*<sup>1</sup> Julian of Norwich believes in a God who saves. Belief in a God who saves, belief in a God who draws all human beings to God's self into the eternity of God's loving is a critical concept for a Christian. It is foundational for Christian hope. For as long as I can remember, this hope, embodied in Julian's statement, *all shall be well*,<sup>2</sup> has concerned me. Interested in spiritual direction and in the growth and development of the spiritual life, I wanted to articulate what salvation means in Christian terms. I aspired to explore the parameters of the human capacity for a life of communion with the transcendent mystery that pervades all reality.

My introduction to the writings of Julian of Norwich occurred when I was studying the history of Christian spirituality for a Master's degree. I realized that *The Revelations of Divine Love* was not simply a great spiritual classic that taught its readers how to live a life permeated in prayer. The text was more confronting. It presented the radically dynamic character of the human journey

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<sup>1</sup> 10:24.5-7,394-395. *(A)nd there he revealed a fair and delectable place, large enough for all mankind that will be saved and will rest in peace and in love.* 220. Julian of Norwich Icon of Motherhood (See, xii) is from Joan Chittister, *A Passion for Life: Fragments From the Face of God*, Icons by Robert Lentz (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996), 95.

<sup>2</sup> Because *shall* emphasizes both the present necessity and future dimension of making all things well, I will maintain this translation throughout the thesis. See Chapter 8, 324-325.

from God to God within the context of an all pervading theology of trinitarian love. This was a theological classic that could stand the test of continued interpretation without meaning being exhausted. I came to an awareness that Julian could inform my understanding of how God saves. She had something significant to say that was not ingrained in the Christian consciousness, about the relationship between God, Christ, Spirit, humanity, and creation, within the context of salvation.

Motivated by the belief that the Christian community at large had not had this woman's ideas about salvation clearly articulated, I decided to pursue my study of Julian. Familiarity with Julian's text and the research that was making Julian more accessible led to a realization that there was indeed a need for a systematic study of her understanding of salvation. Theologians such as Pelphrey, Nuth, Palliser, and Vinje laid the foundations. They demonstrated that Julian was a significant theologian in her development of a theology of divine love. They pointed to the importance of her soteriology. No one, however, had conducted a detailed analysis of the dimensions of Julian's theology that inform her doctrine of salvation. In a recent address Pelphrey remarked: "It is time to look carefully at this Julian. There is room for graduate students to explore every corner of mysticism here."<sup>3</sup> The corner of Julian's *Revelations of Divine Love* it is time to

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<sup>3</sup> Brant Pelphrey, "Afterword: Valerie's Gift," in Anne Clark Bartlett ed. with Thomas Bestul, Janet Goebel and William F. Pollard, *Vox Mystica: Essays on Medieval Mysticism in Honour of Professor Valery M. Lagorio* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1995), 234.

explore is soteriology. Soteriology, however, is not simply a corner. The meaning of salvation is the central thesis of the *showings*. All Julian's theology is grounded in soteriology. The research is timely. It is time for a formal re-opening and re-assessment of soteriological questions. It is time to look carefully within the tradition for soteriologies not given wide public access. It is time to redress the historical injustice that Julian's soteriology has not extensively informed the Christian tradition. This study is of consequence because Julian's vision of the saving grace of the Trinity addresses real existential questions that are at the heart of Christian theology today.

Soteriology has its origins in the religious quest and the theology which accompanies this search. Soteriology addresses the perennial longings of human beings and asks how salvation can be a reality in a world that knows so much destructive suffering. Soteriology arises from the human experience of the need for salvation. A technical theological term, derived from the Greek words σωτηρια (deliverance, salvation) and λογος (word or thought), soteriology is the study that aims to understand and interpret human hope for salvation or ultimate fulfilment. Soteriology is a dynamic practical aspect of theology that seeks to examine how we as spiritual/embodyed beings become one with God. Soteriology is the study of God's action in Christ for our salvation.

The title of the thesis, *Gifted Origins to Graced Fulfilment*, sets the context in which we will examine Julian's soteriology. For Julian, it is our gifted origins,

who we are created in the love of the Trinity with our being in God, that make salvation a reality. In origin, humanity is gifted with a relational responsiveness to the divine. This creates the potential for eschatological fruition in the fullness of God's time. Within history, God continues to share divine life and love through Christ and the Spirit, renewing, recreating, transforming and increasing who we are in God. Grace abounds. The experience of divine love in this life in well-being and woe incorporates us within the love within the Trinity. This originating love draws us to be one in the fullness of trinitarian joy in the eschaton.

Because Julian's writings fall within the genre of mystical literature, a systematic study of her soteriology presents its own difficulties. This is not a clearly structured text composed in question and answer dialogue that we are used to seeing in great theological authors such as Anselm and Aquinas. Julian's theology is integrated into vivid descriptions of her mystical experience of prayer, called *showings*. Mystical literature flows from a contemplative consciousness that is inherently creative, right-brain expression. It resists being constrained and systematized. Therefore, in order to be sensitive to the genre in which Julian composes and yet give some structure to her doctrine of salvation, I present a hermeneutic (Chapter 2) that gives guiding principles for interpreting Julian's soteriology. Julian's enunciation of the human journey of salvation, cast in a trinitarian framework, gives structure to the study. The formula is not imposed. It arises from within the text and draws all Julian's ideas about salvation into an

interlaced unity.

Julian summarizes the history of human existence: *(A)lle oure lyfe is in thre: in the first (we haue) oure beyng, and in the seconde we haue oure encresyng, and in the thyrde we haue oure fulfylling.*<sup>4</sup> All of life *is in thre*. The trinitarian God of love is the centre-piece of the story of salvation. All of life is immersed within the love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We can only understand the meaning of existence within the dynamic threeness of the Godhead. The words first second and third simultaneously unite and distinguish the role of each divine person of the Trinity in the work for salvation. The distinction between first, second, and third holds together the unity of the Trinity within the salvific process and the diversity within specific moments and activities of each divine person. The designation of time connects the beginnings and endings of salvation. Past, present and future, historical time and eternity are united in the sharing of trinitarian love. The rhythmical unfolding echo, created by the rhyming of our being, our increasing, and our fulfilling, conveys the dynamic work of each person of the Trinity. The Trinity draws all creation into a relationship of love that is uncreated, created and given. Within this harmonious unity, yet explicit diversity, the formula gives structure to the thesis.

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<sup>4</sup> 14:58.31-33,585. *(A)ll our life consists of three: In the first we have our being, and in the second we have our increasing, and in the third we have our fulfillment.* 294.



*Part One: The Showings: From Experience to Expression* examines Julian's visionary experience and her expression of the experience that has led others to reflect on, record and write about her text (Chapter 1). It presents a hermeneutic for interpreting the *showings* (Chapter 2). *Part Two: A Soteriology of Oneing* explores how all our life is in three by presenting Julian's soteriology as a trinitarian soteriology of *oneing* (Chapter 3). *Part Three: In the First We Have Our Being* delves into our gifted origins. Here we survey Julian's creation theology and her anthropology (Chapter 4). *Part Four: In the Second We Have Our Increasing* focuses on Christology. This section presents Christ's role in redemption through the cross (Chapter 5), through his work as servant (Chapter 6) and his function as mother (Chapter 7). In light of Christ's union with us, we consider how Christ enables redemption, change, transformation and recreation. *Part Five: In the Third we Have Our Fulfilment* inquires into graced endings. The chapters examine the present experience of graced fulfilment in the power of the Holy Spirit (Chapter 8) and the hope for fulfilment in the eschaton (Chapter 9). *Part Six: What Was the Meaning?* concludes the research by drawing together the understanding Julian comes to about soteriology. It appraises the relevance of these teachings for today (Chapter 10).

Great soteriologies have arisen throughout the history of the Christian tradition. Authors such as Irenaeus (d. ca 200), Origen (d. 254), Augustine (354-430), Anselm (ca. 1033-1109) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) have made a valuable

contribution to understanding this holiest of Christian mysteries. Yet these distinguished paradigms have, in the main, come from within a juridical framework. The classical expression of soteriology has tended to spiritualize salvation and place it on a supernatural plane where it loses contact with the existential lives of people. In the face of this heritage, questions arising from contemporary experience challenge the Christian tradition. Does life have meaning? Is love and the dynamic of sharing love at the core of all reality? Is all existence relational? Where does God stand in relation to human suffering and the incompleteness of the cosmos? How do we remain open to growth, to change and to transformation? How can we confront the non-being and non-doing of sin that creates so much despair and hopelessness? How do we keep hope alive? In search of some response to these questions about the salvific meaning of existence, this research will demonstrate how Julian comes confidently to conclude that life does have meaning. Love and the dynamic of sharing love are at the centre of all reality. Love is the harmonious wholeness that unites all things and draws them into a relationship with the divine. God is present in all things, healing, transforming, renewing, recreating and drawing those who suffer to an awareness of everlasting joy. The research examines Julian's understanding of *all shall be well*.

I began this preface with Julian's expression of hope. Within God there is a place large enough for all humankind, who shall be saved, to rest in, in peace and in love. Is this a valid Christian response to who human beings are and how they

will be saved? The thesis examines how Julian can answer a firm yes to this question. Yet, we will see, this is not a naive yes. The research will show that the answer is found in the love within the Trinity – uncreated love, created and given. Salvation occurs within the communion of God, Son and Spirit, engaging all creation in a dynamic *oneing*. Human beings are gifted in origin, marked with the sign of the cross, and formed through the experience of Christ's suffering, love and joy. Salvation is partially experienced and prefigured by the reality of the glorious resurrection and the continuous presence of grace. Salvation is fulfilment in the joyous face-to-face vision of God in the eschaton.

**PART ONE**

**THE SHOWINGS: FROM EXPRESSION TO EXPERIENCE**

*Here es a visionn schewed be the goodenes of god to a deuoute womann,  
and hir name es Julyan (i:1-2,201).*

## CHAPTER ONE

### JULIAN OF NORWICH

*That þat is vnpossible to the is nott vnpossible to me. I shalle saue my worde in alle thyng, and I shalle make althyng wele. (32:13.49-51,426).*

In 1373 a woman known as Julian of Norwich experienced a series of *shewings* or visions which she believed were a revelation from God. In the midst of these visions she came to appreciate that, in spite of all the woe that exists in creation, what looks impossible from a human point of view is not impossible in the divine vision. She articulated one of the most celebrated soteriological statements within the Christian tradition: *I wille make alle thyng wele, I schalle make alle thyng wele, I maye make alle thyng wele and I can make alle thyng wele; and þowe schalle se þat thy selfe, that alle thyng schalle be wele.*<sup>1</sup>

#### I. THE ANCHORESS JULIAN OF NORWICH

Despite interest in Julian's theology and spirituality we still know very little about her life. In fact not even her name is known for certain.<sup>2</sup> Our primary source of information comes from two versions of her book, *The Revelations of Divine Love*, the short text (ca.1373-74 ), and long text (ca.1393). At the beginning of the long

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<sup>1</sup> xv:2-5,249. *I will make all things well, I shall make all things well, I may make all things well and I can make all things well; and you will see that yourself, that all things will be well.* 151. *A Book of Showings to the anchoress Julian of Norwich*, 2 vols. eds. Edmund Colledge and James Walsh (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1978), (hereafter, BSAJN).

<sup>2</sup> Julian's epithet comes from the church where she was an anchoress. She was also known as Dame Julian or Lady Julian.

text she identifies herself as *a symple creature vnlettyrde*.<sup>3</sup> She tells her readers that she experienced a vision of Christ in *the yer of our lord a thousande and three hundered and lxxij, the xiiij daie of May*.<sup>4</sup> This occurs when she was thirty and a half years old. A priest brings a crucifix before her as she thinks she is going to die (*And when I was xxx<sup>th</sup> yere old and a halfe, god sent me a bodily sicknes in the which I ley iij daies and iij nyghtes; and on the iiij nyght I toke all my rightes of holie church, and went not to haue leuen tyll day*.)<sup>5</sup> Suddenly Julian's pain subsides. She has a sense that she is one with Christ, one with divine love, and experiences a series of fifteen *shewyngs* about the love of God. The following night she has the final vision which confirms the other fifteen:

*Of whych xv shewynges þe furst beganne erty in þe mornynge, aboute the oure of iiij, and it lastyd shewyng by processe, fulle feyer and soberty, eche folowyng other, tulle it was none of þe day or paste. Ande after this the goode lorde shewde the xvj revelation on the nyght folowyng, as I shalle say after; whych xvj was conclusyon and confirmation to all the xv.*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 2.2,285. *a simple, unlettered creature*. 177. Colledge and Walsh note that whatever unlettered may mean it cannot be illiterate. BSAJN, n.1, 177.

<sup>4</sup> 2.3-4,285. *the year of our Lord one thousand, three hundred and seventy-three, on the thirteenth day of May*. 177. Sloane1 says, *the yeere of our Lord 1373, the eighth day of May*. II:41-42.39. *The Shewings of Julian of Norwich*, ed. Georgia Ronan Crampton, Teams Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1994). In accordance with this date, the Anglican calender has Julian's feast day on May 8th.

<sup>5</sup> 3.2-4,289. *And when I was thirty and a half years old, God sent me a bodily sickness in which I lay for three days and three nights, and on the third night I received all the rites of Holy Church, and did not expect to live until day*. 179.

<sup>6</sup> 15:65.37-40,631 and 16:66.3-5,632. (*Of these fifteen revelations, the first began early in the morning, about the hour of four, and it lasted, revealing them in a determined order, most lovely and calm, each following the other, until it was*

Scholars disagree as to whether these details are historical or symbolic.<sup>7</sup> The details Julian gives suggest that she is reporting her actual experience. When she recovers, she records her insights about her experience.

### **Julian: Recluse at Norwich**

We know little of Julian's life prior to her visionary experience.<sup>8</sup> All that we know is that Julian was interested in a prayerful life from an early age. She describes her desire: *I conceiued a mightie desyre to receive thre woundes in my life, that is to say, the wound of verie contricion, the wound of kynd compassion and the wound of willfull longing to god.*<sup>9</sup> Some scholars suggest that she was a

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*three o'clock in the afternoon or later. And after this the good Lord showed the sixteenth revelation on the following night, as I shall afterwards tell; and this sixteenth revelation was a conclusion and confirmation to all the fifteen.* 309-310.

<sup>7</sup> Brant Pelphrey, *Love Was His Meaning: The Theology and Mysticism of Julian of Norwich* (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1982), 1, (hereafter, LWHM), notes that four in the morning would be about dawn for that time of year. Julian could have known the time with reasonable accuracy since there was a cathedral clock which regulated time throughout the city. Colledge and Walsh in contrast see the time as symbolic. They translate *tylle it was none of the day* as three o'clock. They suggest that here Julian probably means *usque ad horam nonam*, using the old Roman method that reckoned the hours from sunrise. They also note a possible connection to Matthew 27:45. Since Julian's visions begin with the passion, they argue, she could be wanting to situate the conclusion of her *showings* at the traditional hour of Jesus' death. BSAJN, 65, n.39, 631.

<sup>8</sup> Some scholars suggest that Julian was educated as a child by the Benedictine nuns at Carrow. Cf. Grace M. Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich: Mystic and Theologian* (Great Britain: SPCK, 1987), 18.

<sup>9</sup> 2.40-43,288. *I conceived a great desire to receive three wounds in my life, that is, the wound of true contrition, the wound of loving compassion and the wound of longing with my will for God.* 179. This desire to be metaphorically wounded by love was a common Medieval image, traditionally desired by

lay woman, others a Benedictine nun.<sup>10</sup> Whatever her status, however, she was well formed in scripture and theology.<sup>11</sup> At the beginning of the short text, the scribe names Julian: *Here es a visionn schewed be the goodenes of god to a deuoute womann, and hir name es Julyan, that is recluse atte Norwyche and zitt ys onn lyfe, anno domini millesimo CCCC xiiij.*<sup>12</sup> As a finale to the Paris manuscript the scribe identifies the author of the text as Julian, anchoress at Norwich: *Deo gracias. Explicit liber revelacionum Julyane ana(c)orite Norwyche, cuius anime propicietur deus.*<sup>13</sup> *Recluse*, from the Old French *reclus* – enclosed, describes a person living in seclusion or isolation as a religious discipline.<sup>14</sup> *An(a)corite* from the Latin *anchoreta* means to retreat or to withdraw.<sup>15</sup> The medieval anchoress was enclosed by a bishop in a ceremony where she entered the tomb of the anchorhold, usually attached to a church, and closed the door on

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contemplatives. See Wolfgang Riehle, *The Middle English Mystics*, trans. Bernard Strandring (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), 1981, 44-45.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Colledge and Walsh believe Julian was a Benedictine nun. BSAJN, 43. Warrack agreed with this point of view. *Revelations of Divine Love Recorded by Julian Anchoress at Norwich Anno Domini, 1373*, 2d ed., ed. Grace Warrack (London: Methuen & Company, 1907), xxi-xxii. Pelphrey considers that she was a lay woman. LWHM, 18.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of her remark about to being unlettered see BSAJN, 43-59 and LWHM, 18-28.

<sup>12</sup> i:1-3,201. *Here is a vision shown by the goodness of God to a devout woman, and her name is Julian, who is a recluse at Norwich and still alive, A.D. 1413.* 125.

<sup>13</sup> 16:86.28-29,734. *Thanks be to God. Here ends the book of revelations of Julian the anchorite of Norwich, on whose soul may God have mercy.* 343.

<sup>14</sup> NSOED, 2502.

<sup>15</sup> NSOED, 75.



the world. Her aim was to concentrate undistractedly on God by practising continual prayer through reciting the divine office, participating in Mass and the sacraments, spending time in silence, praying for humanity generally and offering spiritual advice to people.<sup>16</sup>

The evidence of four wills<sup>17</sup> substantiates the comments made in the short text and the Paris manuscript, that Julian became an anchoress at St. Julian's Church in the parish of Conisford in the later part of her life, sometime before 1393. She was still alive in 1416.<sup>18</sup> Margery Kempe (b.1373) corroborates these facts. Her autobiography records a visit to Julian in her anchorhold around 1415. In her autobiography Margery describes Julian as empathetic, wise and discerning. Margery tells us she spoke to Dame Julian, "and told her about the grace, that God had put into her soul ... for the anchoress was expert in such things and could give good advice."<sup>19</sup> A much later reference in Bloomsfield's history of Norfolk also mentions Julian:

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<sup>16</sup> See Ritamary Bradley, *Julian's Way: A Practical Commentary on Julian of Norwich* (London: Harper Collins, 1992), 10-11, for an outline of the prayers recited by the anchoress.

<sup>17</sup> The will of Roger Reed 1393 or 1394; Thomas Edmund, 1404; John Plumpton, 1415; Isabel Ufford, 1416. LWHM, 11-12.

<sup>18</sup> A bequest from a will of Walter Daniel suggests that a male anchorite occupied the anchorhold in 1423. Frances (Sister Anna Maria) Reynolds, *A Critical Edition of the Revelations of Julian of Norwich (1342-c. 1416) Prepared From All Known Manuscripts*, Ph.D. diss., (Leeds:University of Leeds, 1956), n.1, x.

<sup>19</sup> Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. B. A. Windeatt (Great Britian: Penguin Books, 1988), 77.

In the east part of the church-yard stood an anchorage in which an ankress or recluse dwelt till the Disolution, when the house was demolished, though the foundations may still be seen (1768). In 1393 Lady Julian, the ankress here was a strict recluse, and had two servants to attend to her old age. This woman was in these days esteemed one of the greatest holinesses.<sup>20</sup>

There is general agreement that Julian was an anchoress, attached to St. Julian's Church, Norwich. She was known as a holy woman who could discern the ways of God and give good advice to people.

Julian gives little evidence of the day to day reality of her living as an anchoress in her text.<sup>21</sup> Although there is no direct evidence to suggest that Julian used the *Ancrene Wisse*, it is certainly possible, since the rule was widely adopted by anchoresses in Julian's day.<sup>22</sup> In any case the text gives an indication of the style

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<sup>20</sup> Francis Bloomfield, *An Essay Towards a Typological History of the County Norfolk*, vol.4 (London: Fersfield and Lynn, 1739-75), 81; quoted in Warrack, *Revelations of Divine Love*, xvii.

<sup>21</sup> Julian may not have been an anchoress when she had her visions. It is likely that by the time she wrote the long text, twenty years after this experience, that she lived the life of a recluse.

<sup>22</sup> Originally the rule composed in the dialect of the South West Midlands (c. 1225 - 1230) was addressed to three female anchoresses in Hertfordshire. The writing was later revised and addressed to others. Cf. Elizabeth Robertson, *Early English Devotional Prose and the Female Audience* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 44. There were a large number of copies of this rule in circulation. Cf. AW, 41. The research of Hope Emily Allen suggests that this rule was in use in the fourteenth and fifteenth century. Hope Emily Allen, "Some Fourteenth Century Borrowings from Ancrene Riwe," *Modern Languages Review* 18 (1922): 1-8. Hope Emily Allen, "Further Borrowings From Ancrene Riwe," *Modern Languages Review* 24 (1929): 1-15. Ackerman and Dahood suggest it is by no means unreasonable to envisage this small plump volume in the hands of a long succession of English anchorites and their spiritual directors. *Ancrene Riwe: Introduction and Part I*, eds. Robert W. Ackerman and Roger Dahood (New York: Binghamton Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1984), 5.

of life a person interested in holy living would have lived. Instructions given in the *Ancrene Wisse* give glimpses of what the particulars of Julian's life could have been like. It is important to note, however, that anchoresses felt at liberty to interpret this rule reasonably freely.<sup>23</sup> The rule explains the relationship of the anchoress to the Church, which Julian expresses as being *fastenyd and onyd to oure moder holy church*. It gives directions to guide the internal disposition and outer observances of the anchoress. Julian's inner disposition was to focus on Christ, to have a *mynd of the passion*. Her outer disposition expresses the same reality, we are *cladde and enclosydde in the goodnes of god*.

### **Fastened and Oned to Oure Mother Holy Church**

The *Ancrene Wisse* describes the relationship of the anchoress to the church which she experiences both physically and spiritually. Physically, the anchoress lived beside but attached to the church. Although there is no record of the physical appearance of Julian's anchorhold as it stood in the fourteenth century, Warrack, writing in 1910, gives a description of the anchorhold before its bombing on June

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Baker points to the possibility of Julian knowing either Aelred's *De Institutione Inclusarum* or the *Ancrene Riwe*. Cf. Denise Nowakaski Baker, "Julian of Norwich and Anchoritic Literature," *Mystics Quarterly* 19 (1993): 148-160. Jantzen is also of this opinion. Cf. Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich*, 28-50.

<sup>23</sup> The title *Ancrene Wisse* points to this freedom. Some editors translate *Wisse* as *Riwe*. *Wisse* however maintains the emphasis on guide rather than strict rule. The rule guides the anchoress, "you should not in any way promise to keep any rules as though under a vow." AW VIII: Outer Rule, 199. Ackerman and Dahood point out that the rule, while important, was ancillary to the ultimate goal of the anchoress to model her life of Christ. Ackerman and Dahood, *Ancrene Riwe*, 5. Bradley is also of the opinion that Julian would have freely interpreted this rule as she needed to. Cf. Bradley, *Julian's Way*, 15-59.

27th, 1942:

The little Church of St. Julian (in use at this day) still keeps from Norman times its dark round tower of flint rubble, and still there are traces about its foundation of the anchorage built against its south-eastern wall.<sup>24</sup>

These foundations suggest that there was a cell or house of perhaps two or three rooms which Julian never left after her enclosure. Llewelyn describes the cell after its renovation:

The site of Julian's cell today is still marked by two fragments of stone jutting out from the walls of the church, dating back to Julian's time or before. These have been incorporated into the present cell, which is now furnished as a chapel and is rather more than twice the size of the estimated hundred square feet of the original.<sup>25</sup>

Small in size, the recluse's chamber generally had three windows, one looking into the adjoining church so she could participate in liturgy, one so that she could communicate with her maids and one opening to the outside. The parlour window where Julian communicated with the world looked onto the street. Today it is a garden.<sup>26</sup> The *Ancrene Wisse* advises: "Love your windows as little as you

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<sup>24</sup> Warrack, *Revelations of Divine Love*, xviii. The church was thought to be founded before the Conquest and given to the nuns of Carrow by King Stephen. (See 10), St. Julian's Church Norwich, *XVI Revelations of Divine Love Shewed to Mother Juliana of Norwich*, with a preface by George Tyrell (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1902), insert.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Llewelyn, *With Pity Not Blame. The Spirituality of Julian of Norwich and the Cloud of Unknowing for Today*. 3d. ed. (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1994), 7.

<sup>26</sup> Llewelyn, *With Pity Not Blame*, 7.



possibly can. Let them all be little, the parlour smallest and narrowest."<sup>27</sup> To be gazed through wisely, the window was the connecting link with the outside world of Norwich.

The stones jutting out from the walls of St. Julian's suggest more than a physical fusing with the church building. They signify a significant spiritual connection to the body of Mother Church. The rule also shows just how significant a role the anchoress played in the Church:

The bird of the night under the eaves symbolizes recluses, who dwell under the eaves of the church because they understand that they should be of so holy a life that the whole of Holy Church, that is, Christian people, can lean upon them and trust them, while they hold her up with their holiness of life and their blessed prayers. This is why an anchoress is called an anchoress, and is anchored under a church like an anchor under the side of a ship, to hold that ship so that waves and storms do not overturn it. In the same way all Holy Church, which is called a ship must anchor on the anchoress.<sup>28</sup>

Attached to the eaves of the church, the Church leaned on her and trusted her.

The image of the recluse being like the anchor of a ship, particularly relevant in a sea port such as Norwich, suggests that like an anchor under a ship, the prayerful, stable anchoress holds the Church steady in stormy times.<sup>29</sup> Julian expresses this unity as being *fastenyd and onyd to oure moder holy church*,<sup>30</sup> yielding herself

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<sup>27</sup> AW: II. Outer Senses, 66.

<sup>28</sup> AW: III. Inner Feelings, 204.

<sup>29</sup> We will examine Julian's ecclesiology in Chapter 6, 301-308.

<sup>30</sup> 14:61.63,607. *fastened and united to our mother Holy Church.* 302.

into the arms of the mother Holy Church: *And now I zelde me to my modyr holy chyrch, as a sympyll chylde owyth.*<sup>31</sup> As an anchoress, under the eaves of St. Julian's Church, Julian was valued and supported by the Church.

### A Mind of the Passion

Within the *showings*, Julian tells us that she prays for a *mynd of the passion*.<sup>32</sup>

Her emphasis on the passion reflects the guidelines of the *Ancrene Wisse*:

Keep him (Christ) in your nest, that is your heart. Think how much pain he suffered in his flesh outwardly, how sweet hearted he was, how soft within .... Whoever cannot have or hold this gemstone in the nest of her heart should at least have its likeness that is the crucifix in the nest of her anchorhouse; let her look on it often and kiss the places of the wounds in sweet memory of the true wounds which he patiently suffered on the true cross.<sup>33</sup>

Christ is central in explicating Julian's understanding that *all shall be well*.

### Clad and Enclosed in the Goodness of God

Julian gives little attention to outer observances in the *showings*. She only refers to exterior materiality in images that reflect the goodness of God: *For as þe body is cladd in the cloth, and the flessch in the skynne, and the bonys in þe flessch, and the harte in the bowke, so ar we, soule and body, cladde and enclosydde in*

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<sup>31</sup> 14:47.49-50,494. *And now I submit myself to my mother, Holy Church, as a simple child should.* 259.

<sup>32</sup> 2.5,285. *recollection of the Passion.* 177.

<sup>33</sup> AW: III. Inner Feelings, 99.

*the goodness of god.*<sup>34</sup> This reference to the body *cladd in cloth* implies a possible interest in cloth. At the service of seeing all things as clad and enclosed in the goodness of God, the *Ancrene Wisse* gives guidelines for the cloth that clothes the anchoress:

(I)t does not matter if your clothes are white or black, so long as they are plain, warm and well-made, the skins well tanned; and have as many as you need for your bed and to wear .... In winter let your shoes be soft, large and warm. In summer you have leave to walk and to sit barefoot, or to wear light shoes. Whoever wishes may wear stockings without feet to lie down in; do not sleep in shoes and sleep nowhere but in bed ... If you can go without wimples and are fully willing to, wear warm caps, and on them white or black veils.<sup>35</sup>

The guideline for clothing suggests that Julian would be modestly and warmly attired. The rule also provides details for harsh mortification of the body, but we will see in chapter four<sup>36</sup> that there is no evidence in Julian's *showings* that she engaged in such practices.

The *Ancrene Wisse* informs us that although the anchoress was to follow the days of fasting outlined by the Church, she was not to be extreme in this asceticism.

Food was to be nutritious and plain:

You must not eat meat or fat, except in the case of great illness, or unless someone is very weak. Eat vegetable stew willingly, and accustom yourself to little drink. Nevertheless dear sisters, your

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<sup>34</sup> 1:6.41-44,307. *For as the body is clad in the cloth, and the flesh in the skin, and the bones in the flesh, and the heart in the trunk, so are we, soul and body, clad and enclosed in the goodness of God.* 186.

<sup>35</sup> AW:VIII. Outer Rule, 202.

<sup>36</sup> See Chapter 4, 151-156.



food and drink have often seemed less to me than I would want you to have. Do not fast on bread and water any day unless you have leave.<sup>37</sup>

The anchoress could have two servants to help with daily chores: "An anchoress who does not have food at hand must be careful to have two women, one who always stays at home and another who goes out when necessary."<sup>38</sup> The will of Thomas Edmund left to Julian in 1404 mentions a servant Sarah, while another left by John Plumpton in 1415 mentions a maid Alice.<sup>39</sup>

Pets were limited to a cat:

(U)nless need drives you and your director advises it, you must not have any animal except a cat. An anchoress who has animals seems more like a house wife than Martha was; she cannot easily be Mary, Martha's sister with peace in her heart.<sup>40</sup>

She was not to conduct business:

Do not conduct business. An anchoress fond of bargaining, that is one who buys to sell for gain, sells her soul to the merchant of hell. Things that she makes, with her directors advice, she may sell for her needs. Holy people often used to live by their hands.<sup>41</sup>

She was to make Church vestments and poor people's clothes:

I would always rather that you do course kinds of handiwork. Do not make purses to win friends, but only for those for whom your director gives you leave, nor caps, silk bandages nor lace without leave; but cut out and sew and mend church vestments and poor

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<sup>37</sup> AW:VIII. Outer Rule, 202.

<sup>38</sup> AW:VIII. Outer Rule, 204.

<sup>39</sup> LWHM, 11-12.

<sup>40</sup> AW:VIII. Outer Rule, 201.

<sup>41</sup> AW:VIII. Outer Rule, 201.

people's clothes.<sup>42</sup>

The *Ancrene Wisse* helps us create a picture of Julian's daily life. In general we can conclude that Julian lived a simple life focused on a daily routine of prayer and concern for the poor. There is no suggestion in the rule or in Julian's text that observance of external rules was ever an end in itself. Her daily living only ever focused on an appreciation that all of life was clad and enclosed in the goodness of God.

### **I Often Beheld the Woe That Is Here**

In the short text suffering seems ever-present to Julian. Immersed in suffering she remarks: *For ofte tymes I behelde the waa that is here.*<sup>43</sup> While in the body of the thesis we will see how Julian tries to resolve the tension between well-being and woe,<sup>44</sup> I will briefly sketch here the historical background that could enable Julian to be so consciously aware of woe. Julian's world outside the anchorhold, fourteenth-century pre-Reformation England, was a world that knew the waves and storms of suffering. Julian was born during the reign of Edward III (1327-1377) shortly before the hundred years' war between England and France. Because so much energy went into war, the administration of English agriculture diminished, resulting in poor organization, failed crops and famine. The war exacerbated an already tense situation between feudal lord and labourer.

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<sup>42</sup> AW:VIII. Outer Rule, 203.

<sup>43</sup> xx:4,263. *For often I beheld the woe that there is here.* 160.

<sup>44</sup> See especially Chapter 8, 342-353.

Discontented with a collapsing economy and lack of justice, peasants rebelled against secular and ecclesial lords. In Norwich this rebellion was led by Geoffrey Litster, who seized Norwich Castle. Subsequently, he was captured and sentenced to death by the Bishop of Norwich, Henry Despenser.<sup>45</sup>

At the same time as England was ravaged with social disruption, it also suffered endemic disease. There were at least three outbreaks of the Black Death in Julian's lifetime: in 1349 when she would have been seven, in 1351 when she would have been nineteen and in 1369 when she would have been thirty-seven.<sup>46</sup> Norwich was particularly hard hit by its ravages, the population of 13,000 being halved. The aftermath was so devastating that not only did Norwich never recover its position in relation to England, but it barely regained its population by the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>47</sup> Although Julian does not mention these events in her text, she refers to the image of *the foul black dede* when she describes the suffering body of Christ, and also again when she describes a child's decaying body with words that create images of the black death. Langland's poem presents the atmosphere that the endemic plague created:

Deeth cam dryvyng after and al to duste passhed  
Kynges and knyghtes, kaysers and popes.

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<sup>45</sup> May McKissack, *Oxford History of England*, vol. 5, *The Fourteenth Century 1307-1399* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 418.

<sup>46</sup> See Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich*, 7-8.

<sup>47</sup> Mark Ormrod, "The Politics of Pestilence: Government in England After the Black Death," in *The Black Death in England*, eds. Mark Ormrod and Phillip Lindley (Stanford: Paul Watkins, 1996), 141.

Lered ne lewed, he lefte no man stonde  
 That he hitte evene, that evere stired after.  
 Manye a lovely lady and [hir] lemmans knyghtes  
 Swowned and sweltd for sorwe of Dethes dyntes.<sup>48</sup>

Bishops ordered services and processions to pray for the relief from the plague and to avert God's anger at the sins of the people. Because priests visiting the sick became so susceptible to the plague, with forty-five percent of them dying,<sup>49</sup> the bishop of Bath and Wells in 1349 ordered:

all incumbents in his diocese to make known to their congregations that if anyone on their death bed did not have access to a priest, they should make their confession to a layman, or even to a woman, and such confession would be most beneficial for the remission of their sins.<sup>50</sup>

There is no doubt that the plague instigated a climate of suffering, crisis and change. It is obvious in Julian's text that she often *behelde the waa that is here*.

Theological controversies raged. We see glimpses of Julian's knowledge of these controversies in her repeated comments about being loyal to mother Church and her image: *Holy chyrch shalle be shakyd in sorow and anguyssch and trybulacion in this worlde as men shakyth a cloth in the wynde*.<sup>51</sup> The image of cloth *in the*

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<sup>48</sup> Langland, William. *The Vision of Piers Plowman: A Complete Edition of the B-Text*, ed. A.V.C. Schmidt (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1991), Passus XX:100-104.254.

<sup>49</sup> Christopher Harper-Bill, "The English Church and English Religion After the Black Death," in *Black Death in England*, 86.

<sup>50</sup> Christopher Harper-Bill, "English Religion After the Black Death," 79.

<sup>51</sup> 13:28.6-8,408. *Holy Church will be shaken in sorrow and anguish and tribulation in this world as men shake a cloth in the wind*. 226.

*wynde* draws on the contrast between the fragile nature of woven cloth and the bitterness of the freezing, brawny wind that would blow from the North Sea over Norwich. It vividly describes the turmoil in the Church. A further reference: *For one singular person may oftyn tymes be broken*,<sup>52</sup> hints at individuals being broken over controversies of politics and heresy. Her reference in the short text to the *payntyngys of crucyfixes that er made be the grace of god aftere the techynge of haly kyrke*<sup>53</sup> could refer to the Lollard attack on the use of art objects for devotional or meditative purposes.<sup>54</sup> Yet Tanner's research suggests that Norwich was relatively free of accusations of heresy during Julian's lifetime.<sup>55</sup> While there is no evidence to conclude that the city had a continuous Lollard tradition as London had, it is possible that Julian would be aware of the theological controversies instigated by John Wyclif and his followers. Margery Kempe vividly records her detention stating that *if the Mayor could have his way, he would have her burnt*.<sup>56</sup> It is possible that Margery visited Julian to inform her of her trial at Leister in August – September 1417.

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<sup>52</sup> 14:61.59-60,607. *For one single person may often be broken.* 301.

<sup>53</sup> i.16-17,202. *as paintings of the Crucifixion represent, which are made by God's grace, according to Holy Church's teaching.* 125.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. BSAJN, n.14, 202.

<sup>55</sup> The earliest cases come from records of trials of suspected Lollards between 1428-1431. See Norman P. Tanner, *Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Norwich 1428-31: Edited From the Royal Historical Society From Westminster Diocesan Archives MS.B.2* (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1977), 7-31.

<sup>56</sup> *The Book of Margery Kempe*, 152.

A major crisis in spiritual authority occurred in 1378 with the Great Schism when a group of French cardinals challenged the legitimacy of Pope Urban IV and elected Clement VII pope. It is possible that Julian knew of the controversy because the bishop of Norwich, Henry Despenser, supported Urban and led a crusade promising indulgences for the families of those who participated. The campaign failed and Bishop Despenser returned home in disgrace.<sup>57</sup> Though Julian makes no mention of Church hierarchy, she has one reference to the sin of pride which indirectly relates to the Church: *I shal alle to breke yow from yowre veyne affeccions and yowre vyscious pryde, and aftyr that I shalle gader yow and make yow meke and mylde, clene and holy by onyng to me.*<sup>58</sup> Excommunications and depositions continued for forty years (1378-1417). With the unrest and rivalry of the leadership, the authority in the Church was weakened. Yet, true to the title of anchoress who holds the Church steady in turbulent times, Julian remained faithful to the Church.

#### A Medley of Wele and Woe

Contrasting this litany of sickness, war, violence, poverty and discontent, however, there were signs of well-being. Norwich, well positioned at the mouth of the river, with its proximity to a major highway, was able to develop into a centre of cultural and intellectual exchange. It became a prosperous city with a

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<sup>57</sup> McKissack, *The Fourteenth Century*, 432.

<sup>58</sup> 13:28.17-20,409-410. *I shall completely break down in you your empty affections and your vicious pride, and then I shall gather you and make you meek and mild, pure and holy through union with me.* 226-227.

vibrant textile trade, beautiful buildings, especially a cathedral, many churches, religious houses and beguinages.<sup>59</sup> Within the walls of Norwich there were at least twenty religious houses served by Austin Canons, Franciscans, Dominicans, Benedictines and Carmelites.<sup>60</sup> They built significant libraries.<sup>61</sup> Churches were rebuilt in the perpendicular style. Crafts people embellished and decorated, carving stone, painting colourful frescoes, designing altar pieces and fitting stained glass windows. The school of East Anglian art became famous for the delicacy of its illuminations. Great literary works emerged such as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Langland's *Pier's Ploughman*, *The Pearl* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Mystical texts were composed, such as the anonymous author's *Cloud of Unknowing*, Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* and Richard Rolle's *Fire of Love*. In the midst of pain and turmoil, the place was alive with creativity.

From this brief historical sketch arises the question which the thesis will address: How is it that Julian comes to conclude that *all shall be well*, while living in this

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<sup>59</sup> See Norman P. Tanner, *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich: 1370-1532* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984), 57-58.

<sup>60</sup> Tanner, *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich*, Map 1, xii-xiv.

<sup>61</sup> The Austin Canons lived opposite the anchorhold of St. Julian's Church. The house seems to have had a significant library because the house rule stated that duplicate books could be borrowed by people outside the friary. The Benedictine library of Norwich was expanded by the bequest of the Benedictine monk Adam Easton. The Franciscans established a house of studies in Norwich to train entrants for the University. See Patricia Mary Vinje, *An Understanding of Love According to the anchoress Julian of Norwich*, Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1983), 45-46.

medley of well-being and woe?

## II. THE MANUSCRIPTS OF THE REVELATIONS OF DIVINE LOVE

There is no extant copy of the manuscript of *The Revelations of Divine Love*.

Copies made in later centuries come to us in two versions: the short and long texts. The short text (25 chapters), known as the Amherst Text is in the British Museum, Additional manuscripts No 37790, fols.97-115.<sup>62</sup> Scholars generally agree that Julian recorded the short text immediately after her visionary experience in 1373.<sup>63</sup> The short text has a descriptive, immediate quality. It presents a vivid portrayal of Julian's visionary experience and the beginning of her search for meaning through the visions.

The longer version (86 chapters) occurs in two copies: Paris Bibliothèque Nationale MS Fonds anglais 40, known as "Paris" (P), and the London British Library MS Sloane manuscript No. 2499, known as "Sloane1" (S1). Paris and

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<sup>62</sup> The short text belongs to an anthology of devotional pieces possibly compiled for use by a religious community. See *Julian of Norwich's Revelations of Love: The Shorter Version*, ed. Frances Beer, Middle English Texts 8 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1978), 7- 37, for a description of the short text.

<sup>63</sup> Dundas Harford was the first to advance the theory that the short text was a separate text composed by Julian, with the long text being the outcome of her twenty years reflection on the meaning of the experience. See *Comfortable Words for Christ's Lovers: Being the Visions and Voices Vouchsafed to Lady Julian, Recluse at Norwich in 1373*, ed. and trans. Dundas Harford (London: R. A. Allenson, 1911), 8. For a comparison between the short and long texts see BSAJN, 18-25. Carol Lee Flinders, *A Comparison of the Short and Long Text of the Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love by Julian of Norwich*. Ph.D. diss. (Berkeley: University of California, 1972).



Sloane1 represent two different manuscript traditions. There is a second Sloane text, London British Library MS Sloane 3705 (Sloane2), which is an eighteenth-century modernization of Sloane1.<sup>64</sup> Evidence in the long text suggests that Julian takes some time to reflect on the meaning of the *showings* before she composes the long text. She notes: *xv yere after and mor, I was answeryd in gostly vnderstondyng.*<sup>65</sup> She also makes the aside: *twenty yere after the tyme of the shewyng saue thre monthys.*<sup>66</sup> Thus the long text was recorded around 1393.<sup>67</sup> Julian claims more authority for herself as an author in the long text. She omits the reference that denigrates herself as a teacher recorded in the short text: *Botte god for bede that ze schulde saye or take it so that I am a techere, for I meene nouzt soo, no I mente nevere so; for I am a womann, leued, febille and freylle.*<sup>68</sup> The long text is a mature theological treatise on the meaning of love composed by a theologian who is a teacher. I concentrate on the long text in the thesis because it gives most insight into Julian's understanding of salvation.

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<sup>64</sup> Reynolds, *Revelations of Julian of Norwich*, xxvi, points to evidence that suggests that the Sloane texts come from a common fifteenth-century original, but that Sloane2 is deliberately modernized.

<sup>65</sup> 16:86.14-15,732. *fifteen years after and more, I was answered in spiritual understanding.* 342.

<sup>66</sup> 14:51.86,520. *twenty years after the time of the revelation except for three months.* 270.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Nicholas Watson, "The Composition of Julian of Norwich's Revelations of Divine Love," *Speculum* 68 (1993): 637-683, for an argument that suggests a later dating of the texts.

<sup>68</sup> vi:40-42,222. *But God forbid that you should say or assume that I am a teacher, for that is not and never was my intention; for I am a woman, ignorant, weak and frail.* 135.

### The Long Text

There are significant differences between the Paris and the Sloane1 copies of the long text which raise questions amongst scholars. The Paris text, belonging to late sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century,<sup>69</sup> is scribed on paper in a style of calligraphy popular around 1500. It was designed as a companion in a library for medieval devotional manuals.<sup>70</sup> The language is sometimes modernized and it contains a few passages not in Sloane1.<sup>71</sup> Through her study of all Julian's manuscripts, Reynolds concludes that: "the original of P was close to the text as it left Julian's hand or that of her scribe."<sup>72</sup> Colledge and Walsh make contradictory statements about its value. They describe the text as: "an amateurish, Chatterton-like attempt to give the manuscript an appearance of antiquity by capricious departures from the norms of the seventeenth-century."<sup>73</sup> They condemn it as: "the work of a not especially gifted antiquarian, more concerned

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<sup>69</sup> Glasscoe dates this as late sixteenth to early seventeenth century while Colledge and Walsh suggest: "It is certainly of the seventeenth century, probably c. 1650." Cf. Marion Glasscoe, "Visions and Revisions: A Further Look at the Manuscripts of Julian of Norwich," *Studies in Bibliography* 42 (1989): 105. BSAJN, 7.

<sup>70</sup> BSAJN, 25.

<sup>71</sup> See Reynolds, *Revelations of Julian of Norwich*, iii-v, for a description of the text.

<sup>72</sup> Reynolds, *Revelations of Julian of Norwich*, xxiii.

<sup>73</sup> BSAJN, 8. Cf. Ritamary Bradley, "Julian of Norwich: Everyone's Mystic," in *Mysticism and Spirituality in Medieval England*, eds. William Pollard and Robert Boenig (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 139. Bradley argues for the superiority of the Sloane1 text.

... with appearance and form than meaning".<sup>74</sup> Yet they conclude: "There was never any serious question but that P must be chosen as the basic text."<sup>75</sup> Walsh gives reasons for this choice, citing Reynolds: "that the Paris MSS. represents more nearly the MS. tradition."<sup>76</sup> Aware of the text's limitations, they chose it for their critical edition because, in their opinion, it appeared a more accurate copy of Julian's original text than the Sloane1 manuscript.

Glasscoe in contrast argues for the priority of Sloane1 on the basis that it preserves linguistic forms closer to Julian's day.<sup>77</sup> It is written on poor quality paper in a sprawling hand. Although Reynolds agreed with the prevalence of linguistic forms close to Julian's day in this text, she envisaged problems in its usage. She pointed out: "The mid-seventeenth century S1, on the other hand, is frequently illegible and has numberless doubtful readings."<sup>78</sup> In keeping with these reservations, Colledge and Walsh characterize Sloane1 as:

marred throughout by the persistent omission of words and phrases which the scribe – or his copy – had deemed superfluous to the sense, but which destroys Julian's rhetorical figures, which are

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<sup>74</sup> BSAJN, 17.

<sup>75</sup> BSAJN, 26.

<sup>76</sup> *The Revelations of Divine Love of Julian of Norwich*, trans. James Walsh (London: Burns and Oates, 1961), v. Walsh also suggests that the Westminster florilegium supports this conclusion. Whether this collection is based on Paris is debatable. See the next section.

<sup>77</sup> Glasscoe, "Visions and Revisions," 105.

<sup>78</sup> Reynolds, *Revelations of Julian of Norwich*, xx.

integral to her thought.<sup>79</sup>

Furthermore, although Sloane1 has more linguistic forms closer to the language of Julian's day, the scribe takes a more predominant role. There are chapter headings summarizing the main theme in each chapter.<sup>80</sup> There is a lengthy postscript concerned that:

*(T)his booke com not but to the hands of them that will be His faithfull lovers, and to those that will submitt them to the feith of Holy Church, and obey the holesom understondying and teching of the men that be of vertuous life, sadde age, and profound lerning.*<sup>81</sup>

These comments suggest that the text has been more carefully scrutinized in terms of heresy. One wonders whether the *holesom understondying and teching of the men that be of vertuous life, sadde age and profound lerning*<sup>82</sup> does not describe the scribe.<sup>83</sup> The omission of Julian's name and the authority given to the judgement of the scribe present enough evidence for us to wonder whether the scribe has edited the text to some degree according to his or her theological perspective. We see examples of possible editing in the passages about the body as a purse and Christ as mother.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> BSAJN, 26.

<sup>80</sup> For a list of the slight variation in the division of chapters between Paris and Sloane1 see, Reynolds, *Revelations of Julian of Norwich*, xxii-xxiii.

<sup>81</sup> LXXXVI:3418-3421,155.

<sup>82</sup> See n.80, 25.

<sup>83</sup> Colledge and Walsh suggest that the copyist could be Mother Clementia Cary a Benedictine nun. BSAJN, 8. The scribe's comment at the end of the text, however, implies that it was copied by someone with more authority.

<sup>84</sup> See Chapter 4, 154, and Chapter 7, 279-281.

The disagreement is not an easy one to resolve in the confines of this thesis. Both texts are Post-Reformation copies which could have been amended accordingly. I am not arguing a clearly conclusive case for the superiority of Paris over Sloane<sup>1</sup>. Each is significant in that it represents a different manuscript tradition.<sup>85</sup>

Nevertheless, I have chosen to use Colledge and Walsh's critical edition of the Paris text<sup>86</sup> because it presents a tradition of Julian scholarship that has credibility within Catholic theology. The care taken to copy it in ornate calligraphy could suggest accuracy rather than inaccuracy. Moreover, Paris is more likely to be an earlier copy than Sloane<sup>1</sup>. Because it left England in the seventeenth century,<sup>87</sup> it is less likely to have been edited according to concerns of reformers who were suspicious of mystical literature. The first printed edition of the revelations was based on it. Paris names Julian as the author. Significantly, for this thesis on soteriology, the theology in Paris is more arresting in that it has a number of unique features regarded as significant for theology today.

Glasscoe warns:

(T)he present state of scholarship encourages commentaries on Julian's long text which scarcely begin to recognise, if at all, that there are interpretative differences depending which version is

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<sup>85</sup> Cf. *Julian of Norwich A Revelation of Love*, ed. Marion Glasscoe (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1986), ix.

<sup>86</sup> I am aware that sometimes the authors have deviated from the Paris text. I note this when it is relevant to the theology I am interpreting.

<sup>87</sup> Colledge and Walsh point out that the collection that this copy belongs to was begun in the first half of the seventeenth century by Jean Bigot and increased by his son Émeric until 1689. BSAJN, 7.

referred to."<sup>88</sup>

Glasscoe is correct. Many researchers of Julian have not consciously considered which tradition of Julian's theology they are studying. Throughout this thesis I exegete the theology in the Paris text. I refer to the Sloane<sup>1</sup> text at critical points to indicate discrepancies in the traditions. In no sense, however, is this an eclectic rendering of the theology. Conclusions about Julian's soteriology reflect the theology expressed in the Paris manuscript.

### Other Manuscripts

Other manuscripts that have come to the attention of scholars recently are extracts of Julian's texts in *The Upholland Anthology* that has brief selections from the Paris tradition of the long text,<sup>89</sup> and the Westminster text, a heavily abridged adaptation of the long version.<sup>90</sup> Palaeographic studies assign the Westminster text to the late fifteenth century or early sixteenth century. In his examination of the Westminster text, Kempster claims that Colledge and Walsh assert that the text belongs to the Sloane tradition.<sup>91</sup> Glasscoe maintains that Westminster

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<sup>88</sup> Glasscoe, "Visions and Revisions," 119.

<sup>89</sup> "The Upholland Anthology: An Augustine Baker Manuscript," eds. Hywel Wyn Owen and Luke Bell, *The Downside Review* 107 (1989): 274-292. Owen and Bell give convincing evidence that this copy was made by Augustine Baker from the Paris text as part of an anthology on contemplative prayer for Benedictine nuns around 1640-1684.

<sup>90</sup> "Julian of Norwich: The Westminster Text of a Revelation of Love," ed. Hugh Kempster, *Mystics Quarterly* 23 (1997): 177-245.

<sup>91</sup> Although as we noted above they have related Westminster to the Paris text. See *Revelations of Divine Love*, ed. Walsh, v-vi.

belongs to the Paris tradition. Neither sees a place for Westminster in their manuscript heritage. Kempster concludes: "I propose that neither is correct in positioning W on their branch of that of their own well-studied text. A comparative study of W, P, and S1 points to the existence of a third distinct branch of the LV tree."<sup>92</sup> If Kempster is correct and there is a third manuscript tradition that the Westminster text represents, this can be helpful in deciding whether an idea in the Paris tradition, which is not in Sloane1, belongs to Paris alone, or is reflected more widely in the tradition. Therefore, I will refer to Westminster when such discrepancy arises.

### III. SCHOLARSHIP ON JULIAN

Scholarship on Julian falls into four main categories. Two early types focused on making the manuscripts of the *showings* available in critical editions or translations, and placing Julian historically within the context of the medieval English mystics. A third group focused on her spirituality, while the fourth group of studies explored the theology expressed in the *showings*.

#### **Editions of the *Revelations***

The earliest printed edition of Julian's book, based on the Paris manuscript, was prepared by the Benedictine Serenus de Cressy, published in 1670 under the title

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<sup>92</sup> The Westminster Text, 180. W: Westminster; P:Paris; S1: Sloane1; LV:Long Version.

*Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love*.<sup>93</sup> It was reprinted in 1843 by George Hargrave Parker<sup>94</sup> and in 1864 by I. T. Hecker with some amendments by the editors.<sup>95</sup> The first printed edition of the Sloane1 manuscript was edited and translated by Henry Collins in 1877.<sup>96</sup> This century Grace Warrack's *Revelations of Divine Love*, 1901,<sup>97</sup> transcribed and modernized the Sloane1 manuscript for general use. A further edition of the Cressy text, with a preface by George Tyrell, appeared in 1902.<sup>98</sup> This was followed in 1927 by Roger Hudleston's

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<sup>93</sup> *XVI Revelations of Divine Love, Shewed to a Devout Servant of our Lord, Called Mother Juliana, an Anchorete of Norwich: Who Lived in the Days of King Edward the Third*, ed. Serenus Cressy (London: 1670). The copy is in Trinity College Library, Cambridge.

<sup>94</sup> *XVI Revelations of Divine Love, Shewed to a Devout Servant of our Lord, Called Mother Juliana, an Anchorete of Norwich: Who Lived in the Days of King Edward the Third*, ed. Serenus Cressy with a forward by George Hargrave Parker (London: 1843). See Alexandra Barratt, "How Many Children Had Julian of Norwich? Editions, Translations and Versions of Her Revelations," in Anne Clark Bartlett ed. with Thomas Bestul, Janet Goebel and William F. Pollard, *Vox Mystica: Essays for Valerie M. Lagorio* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1995), 29-30, for a description of Parker's modernizations.

<sup>95</sup> *XVI Revelations of Divine Love, Shewed to a Devout Servant of our Lord, Called Mother Juliana, an Anchorete of Norwich: Who Lived in the Days of King Edward the Third*, ed. Serenus Cressy with a forward by I. T. Hecker (London: 1864).

<sup>96</sup> *Revelations of Divine Love Shewed to a Devout Anchoress, by Name Mother Julian of Norwich*, ed. and trans. Henry Collins (London: Thomas Richardson and Sons, 1877). See Barratt, "How Many Children Had Julian of Norwich," 30-31 for a description of Collins' modernizations.

<sup>97</sup> *Revelations of Divine Love Recorded by Julian Anchoress at Norwich Anno Domini, 1373*, ed. Grace Warrack. London: Methuen & Company, 1901. The thirteenth edition occurred in 1958. Cf. See Barratt, "How Many Children Had Julian of Norwich," 31-32 for a description of Warrack's editorial policy.

<sup>98</sup> *XVI Revelations of Divine Love*, with a preface by George Tyrell. See Barratt, "How Many Children Had Julian of Norwich," 32-33 for a description of Tyrell's life.



editing of *Revelations of Divine Love* which again concentrated on the Sloane1 manuscript.<sup>99</sup> These editions helped make the revelations more available to a public audience. The research carried out by Sister Anna Maria Reynolds in 1956 marked a turning point in scholarship on Julian. Her dissertation, *A Critical Edition of the Revelations of Julian of Norwich*,<sup>100</sup> based on all known texts, encouraged further interest in the *showings*. Sister Anna Maria invited James Walsh to work with her in preparing a critical edition for publication,<sup>101</sup> but she was unable to see the project to completion. Subsequently, Walsh invited Edmund Colledge to collaborate with him.<sup>102</sup> Colledge and Walsh translated a significant critical edition based on the Paris manuscript, which I use in this study. Equally important however is Marion Glasscoe's research that has led to the publication of a critical edition of the Sloane1 manuscript in 1976, revised 1986, reprinted 1989 and revised 1993.<sup>103</sup> Georgia Ronan Crampton has also issued a critical edition of the Sloane1 manuscript, *The Shewings of Julian of*

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<sup>99</sup> *Revelations of Divine Love Shewed to a Devout Ankerss by Name Julian of Norwich*, ed. Roger Hudleston, O.S.B. (London: Orchard Books, 1927). This was reprinted in 1952.

<sup>100</sup> *A Critical Edition of the Revelations of Julian of Norwich (1342-c. 1416) Prepared From All Known Manuscripts*, ed. Frances (Sister Anna Maria) Reynolds (Ph.D. diss., University of Leeds, 1956).

<sup>101</sup> Sister Anna did publish an edition of the short text, *A Shewing of God's Love: The Shorter Version of Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love by Julian of Norwich*, ed. and trans. Sister Anna Maria Reynolds (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1958).

<sup>102</sup> BSAJN, preface.

<sup>103</sup> *Julian of Norwich: A Revelation of Love*, ed. Marion Glasscoe, rev. ed. (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1993).

*Norwich*.<sup>104</sup> *Mystics Quarterly* published Hugh Kempster's editing of the florilegium known as the Westminster text.<sup>105</sup> Brad Peters' dissertation *Julian of Norwich and the Composition of Mystical Experience*<sup>106</sup> is an example of recent scholarship that has focused on the composing process that Julian engaged in when creating her text.

### Medieval English Mystics

A second way scholarship on Julian developed was through recognition of the contribution she makes to English mystical literature. An early example of the research that places Julian amongst the other medieval mystics in England is Eric Colledge's *The Medieval Mystics in England*.<sup>107</sup> In Europe, Wolfgang Riehle's work contributed to the consideration of Julian as a great mystical author along with Richard Rolle, Margery Kempe, Walter Hilton and the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*. His comparative study, *The Middle English Mystics*,<sup>108</sup> focused on the language of imagery of the mystics. Within England, Marion Glasscoe's

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<sup>104</sup> Crampton, *The Shewings of Julian of Norwich*.

<sup>105</sup> Kempster, "The Westminster Text."

<sup>106</sup> Brad Peters, *Julian of Norwich and the Composition of Mystical Experience*, Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa (Ann Arbor: UMI Dissertation Services, 1992).

<sup>107</sup> Eric Colledge, ed. *The Medieval Mystics of England* (London: John Murray, 1962).

<sup>108</sup> Riehle, *The Middle English Mystics*.

symposia on the Medieval Mystics at Exeter University<sup>109</sup> and her book *English Medieval Mystics*,<sup>110</sup> have contributed enormously to this scholarship. Influenced by students who possess varying degrees of sympathy with the Christian tradition, ranging in response to mystical literature from being excited, sceptical, baffled, curious, enthusiastic to hostile,<sup>111</sup> Glasscoe has encouraged scholarship on the English mystics that engages a wide audience.

### Prayer and Spirituality

Other scholars have concentrated on Julian's teaching about prayer and how this can contribute to a Christian understanding of prayer and spirituality. Prayer discloses how human beings are consciously attentive and open to the divine. Spirituality delineates the lived experience of people guided and influenced by the presence of the divine. Paul Molinari's study, *Julian of Norwich: the Teaching of a 14th Century English Mystic*,<sup>112</sup> is an early example of the third area of inquiry that examined Julian's spirituality. Molinari presented the *Revelations* as a source for spiritual guidance and teaching about prayer. He analyzed the spiritual

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<sup>109</sup> Marion Glasscoe, ed. *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England* (Exeter: University Press, 1980). Marion Glasscoe, ed. *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1984). Marion Glasscoe, ed. *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England: IV* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1987). Marion Glasscoe, ed. *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England: V* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1992).

<sup>110</sup> Marion Glasscoe, *English Medieval Mystics* (London: Longman, 1993).

<sup>111</sup> Glasscoe, *English Medieval Mystics*, ix.

<sup>112</sup> Paul Molinari, *Julian of Norwich: The Teaching of a Fourteenth Century Mystic* (London: Longmans, Green, 1958).

doctrine contained in the *showings* by studying Julian's doctrine on prayer and contemplation. Robert Llewelyn, at the *Julian Centre*, was instrumental in educating people to recognize Julian as a great spiritual guide.<sup>113</sup> Ritamary Bradley's many articles and books on prayer in Julian have also extended this scholarship by presenting Julian as a model for teaching people how to practise prayer and lead a prayerful life.<sup>114</sup> The research of Molinari, Llewelyn and Bradley influences this thesis because it shows how prayer and spirituality are essential components of Julian's *Revelations of Divine Love*. Intrinsic to Julian's theology, prayer and spirituality play a significant role in her soteriology.

### **Theological Inquiry**

The fourth and most significant area of scholarship for this thesis is theological inquiry into Julian's *showings*.<sup>115</sup> Within Christianity, theology explores the meaning and significance of the central themes of the Christian faith. It examines the doctrine of God and the system of meaning of how God is revealed in Christ and through the Spirit. Theology considers the dynamics of hope expressed in the

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<sup>113</sup> Llewelyn, *With Pity Not Blame*. Robert Llewelyn, *Julian Woman of Our Day* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985).

<sup>114</sup> Ritamary Bradley, "Julian of Norwich on Prayer," *Analecta Cartusiana* 106 (1983): 136-154. Ritamary Bradley. "Julian on Prayer," in *Peaceweavers: Medieval Religious Women*, vol.2, eds. Lillian Thomas Shank and John A. Nichols (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1987), 291-304. Ritamary Bradley, *Not For the Wise: Prayer Texts from Julian of Norwich* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1994).

<sup>115</sup> I am aware that there have been other minor studies that relate to Julian's theology. My concern here is to address the studies that have contributed significantly to her theology.

search for meaning and fulfilment. Thus theological inquiry analyzes how Julian's text presents ideas about God. It interprets what she means when she says: *Thus was I lernyd, þat loue is oure lordes menyng.*<sup>116</sup> Theological inquiry is attentive to Julian's expression of Anselm's time-revered principle: "*Quaero intelligere ut credam sed credo ut intelligam*, 'I try to understand in order to believe, but I believe in order to understand.'<sup>117</sup> Investigation into Julian's text not only scrutinizes her expression of "faith seeking understanding", but appraises Julian's way of recording "faith, hope and charity seeking understanding". The research of theologians thus far has predominantly examined Julian's theology of love.

### A Theology of Love

Patricia Mary Vinje's study, *An Understanding of Love*, is the first serious study on the theme of love in Julian's *showings*. She focuses on the metaphors and images of love and shows how Julian presents: "the delightful image of God and man enfolding one another in one act of endless love."<sup>118</sup> Because of the inter-relationship between love and soteriology themes related to soteriology are integrated into this study. Margaret Palliser's thesis from the Pontifical Gregorian

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<sup>116</sup> 16:86.20,733. *So I was taught that love is our Lord's meaning.* 342.

<sup>117</sup> Rina Fisichella, "Theology," in Prosper Grech, "Hermeneutics," in *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, eds. René Latourelle and Rino Fisichella (New York: Crossroad, 1994), 1061. (hereafter, DFT).

<sup>118</sup> Vinje, *An Understanding of Love*, 228.

University, Rome, published as *Christ, Our Mother of Mercy*,<sup>119</sup> contributes to an understanding of Julian's theology of love by examining her perception of divine mercy and compassion within the context of Christology.<sup>120</sup> Palliser limits her reflections on salvation to her predominant topic, Christ, our mother of mercy. Denise Nowakowski Baker's research from Princeton University, published as *Julian of Norwich's Showings*,<sup>121</sup> is an historically-oriented study that contributes to an understanding of Julian's theology of love by tracing possible sources for her theology. She gives specific emphasis to Augustinian sources and argues that Julian has consciously engaged with this paradigm and developed a significantly different theology. Although Baker addresses themes of salvation throughout her work, particularly in her study of theodicy, original sin and the *imago Dei*, her research remains predominantly historical.

Joan Nuth's dissertation from Boston College,<sup>122</sup> *Love's Meaning*, published as *Wisdom's Daughter*,<sup>123</sup> has made a major contribution to an understanding of

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<sup>119</sup> Margaret Ann Palliser, O.P. *Christ Our Mother of Mercy: Divine Mercy and Compassion in the Theology of the Shewings of Julian of Norwich* (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1992.)

<sup>120</sup> Palliser, *Christ Our Mother of Mercy*, viii.

<sup>121</sup> Denise Nowakowski Baker, *Julian of Norwich's Showings: From Vision to Book* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

<sup>122</sup> Joan Nuth, *Love's Meaning: The Theology of Julian of Norwich* (Ph.D. diss., Boston College and Andover Newton Theological School, 1988).

<sup>123</sup> Joan Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter: The Theology of Julian of Norwich* (New York: Crossroad, 1991).

Julian's theology of love. In her introduction Nuth writes: "My aim is chiefly to expose, describe, and systematize the theology present in Julian's *Showings*."<sup>124</sup> She continues: "What I hope to have accomplished is a clear presentation of Julian's theology in order to restore to history one woman's theological reflection upon her experience of God."<sup>125</sup> Nuth achieves her aim by examining Julian's theology of divine love which includes the love of Jesus Christ and the love of the Trinity. She presents Julian's understanding of the effects of God's love through the work of nature, the work of mercy and the work of grace. In addressing Julian's soteriology within this book, Nuth concentrates on the motherhood of Christ. She presents this as the summary symbol of Julian's soteriology.<sup>126</sup> While this insight is significant for understanding Julian's soteriology, the confines of Nuth's study do not enable her to conduct a detailed study into the soteriological implications of this Christology. This thesis hopes to extend Nuth's significant study.

Pelphrey's research, *Love Was His Meaning*, is the ground-breaking inquiry that examines the theology and mysticism of Julian of Norwich.<sup>127</sup> He presents

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<sup>124</sup> Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, 65.

<sup>125</sup> Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, 4.

<sup>126</sup> Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, 65.

<sup>127</sup> Brant Pelphrey, *Julian of Norwich: A Theological Reappraisal* (Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1978). Pelphrey, *Love Was His Meaning*. Other significant works by Pelphrey include: Brant Pelphrey, "Uncreated Charity: The Trinity in Julian of Norwich," *Sobornost* 7 (1978): 527-535; Brant Pelphrey, "Spirituality in Mission: Lessons From Julian of Norwich," *Cross Currents* 34

Julian's theology of love around a series of themes: the *showings* and revelations of endless love, uncreated charity, created charity and charity given. Although it is never the predominant theme in his study, Pelphrey touches on soteriology. In his preface, composed on the feast of the transfiguration, he summarizes Julian's understanding of salvation as transfiguration:

If the *Revelations* could be said to have a single theme, it would be the nature of salvation in Jesus Christ. Salvation is seen as a maturing of the human soul through the Holy Spirit, into the image of Christ. Julian's vision is of human growth in love – divine Love – so that one takes on the love of God in Christ. In this process of growth in love, through love to Love, the human being becomes what it is meant to be. Here Julian sums up the Christian understanding of salvation (from *salve*, wholeness, health) as it is seen in the classic spirituality of the West and East.<sup>128</sup>

Pelphrey rightly points out that the single theme in the *Revelations* is the nature of salvation, the journey of the maturing of the human soul into the image of Christ. This is a journey from Love, through love to Love. Although Pelphrey identifies salvation as the single theme in the text, he does not systematically address this question throughout his thesis. The topic of salvation filters through his writing because of the inter-relationship between theology and soteriology. I study Julian's text through the lens of soteriology. I engage with Pelphrey's important study and hope to advance his conclusions by explaining and systematizing, where possible, what salvation is for Julian and how it is realized.

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(1984): 171-190; Brant Pelphrey, *Julian of Norwich: Christ our Mother*, ed. Noel Dermont O'Donoghue, *The Way of the Christian Mystics* 7 (Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1989).

<sup>128</sup> LWHM, x.



### Soteriology

The major studies on Julian's theology of love have helped establish Julian as a significant theologian. They have laid the foundations for a more detailed examination of Julian's soteriology. Four articles have also contributed to highlighting the unique nature of Julian's soteriology. In 1986 Mona Logarbo published an article on salvation theology in Julian of Norwich.<sup>129</sup> This was followed by Lillian Bozak-DeLeo, who wrote an essay on soteriology in 1990.<sup>130</sup> In 1992 Nuth authored a more detailed article on two medieval soteriologies, Anselm and Julian.<sup>131</sup> In this article, which is important for this study, Nuth addresses Julian's soteriology within the context of a framework that relates to Anselm's ideas about salvation. More recently Bradley's essay, "Julian of Norwich: Everyone's Mystic",<sup>132</sup> examines Julian's use of satisfaction theology. These researchers have identified that Julian's soteriology has indeed something to contribute to a Christian understanding of salvation. However, within the confines of brief studies they have concentrated on anthropocentric salvation in light of Julian's Christology. Their research points to the need for a detailed

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<sup>129</sup> Mona Logarbo, "Salvation Theology in Julian of Norwich: Sin, Forgiveness, and Redemption in the Revelations," *Thought* 61 (1986): 370-380.

<sup>130</sup> Lillian Bozak-DeLeo, "The Soteriology of Julian of Norwich," in *Theology and the University*, ed. John Apczynski, The Annual Publication of the College Theology Society 1987, vol. 33 (Maryland: University Press of America, Inc. 1990), 37- 46.

<sup>131</sup> Joan Nuth, "Two Medieval Soteriologies: Anselm of Canterbury and Julian of Norwich," *Theological Studies* 53 (1992): 611-645.

<sup>132</sup> Bradley, "Everyone's Mystic," 139-158.

exegetical study of Julian's soteriology that examines the role of the Trinity in the salvation of all things from gifted origins to graced fulfilment. Against this background of previous research on Julian, I present a study of Julian's trinitarian soteriology of love.

#### **IV. THE AIMS OF THIS STUDY**

This thesis contributes to scholarship on Julian and research into the meaning of salvation by presenting an exegetical study of Julian's trinitarian soteriology expressed in the Paris manuscript. The research demonstrates how Julian is a distinguished theologian who has something to say about the greatest of Christian questions – the meaning of salvation. This text is not simply the mystical ponderings of an unknown anchoress. This is solid, orthodox, trinitarian theology that gives a reliable perspective on the meaning of salvation.

Specific aims of the research are:

- \* To place Julian in her historical context and to see what type of life a person aspiring to a holy life would lead.
- \* To present a hermeneutic that gives guiding principles for how we can interpret the theology elucidated in Julian's mystical text.
- \* To organize Julian's ideas so that her soteriology may be comprehended by a contemporary audience.
- \* To examine what Julian means by her trinitarian enunciation of the human journey from God to God described as "in the first we have our being, in

the second we have our increasing and in the third we have our fulfilling".

- \* To show how in essence Julian's soteriology is a soteriology of *oneing*.
- \* To analyze each aspect of Julian's trinitarian soteriology of *oneing* by investigating the role each person of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit play from gifted origins to graced fulfilment.
- \* To demonstrate how Julian's soteriology is not simply anthropomorphic, but is creation-centred.
- \* To explore Julian's understanding of the relationship between nature and grace.
- \* To assess aspects of Julian's soteriology and illustrate how her ideas can inform a contemporary understanding of salvation.

Within the context of a brief historical sketch of Julian's life, editions of the *Revelations of Divine Love* that have been published, and scholarship on Julian, we are now ready to explore a hermeneutic that will assist in interpretation of the *showings*.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A HERMENEUTIC FOR INTERPRETING THE *SHOWINGS*

*Than meaneth he thus: behold and see, for by the same myght, wisdom and goodnes that I haue done all this, by the same myght, wisdom and goodnes I shall make well all that is not well, and thou shalt see it. (1.37-40,284.)*

The art of understanding the *Revelations of Divine Love* must be informed by the time in which the text was composed<sup>1</sup> and the genre of literature to which these writings belong. Julian's writing belongs to the tradition of medieval visionary mystical literature. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how we may interpret Julian's text by examining the information Julian presents about interpretation in her writing. This includes how her ideas came to fruition and how this influences the interpretative process. Throughout the chapter I will demonstrate how all Julian's thought occurs within a trinitarian framework. Interpreted through the prayer of *beholding*, her writing invites a hermeneutic of *beholding*. Through *beholding* an image of the crucified Christ, Julian distinguishes three ways of seeing. She sees a bodily sight, words form in her understanding, and she experiences spiritual sight. These ways of seeing influence how we might interpret the text. As well as experiencing the presence of Christ as a catalyst for her writings, Julian also integrates scripture and other sources into her text. Consequently, because of the way in which Julian comes to express her theology, the interpreter becomes engaged in a hermeneutical circle of ongoing interpretation. Although Julian's text may be classified as private

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 1, 1-40.

revelation, her insights into theology are of value as public revelation. The unique nature of the expression of Julian's theology has important consequences for this study.

## I. MYSTICAL LITERATURE

Mystics are people who are aware of a sense of ultimate mystery which is inherent in, yet transcends the created world. Mystical literature attempts to give expression to both the experience,<sup>2</sup> and the meaning of the experience, of having a perception that all of creation is part of a transcendent, unifying, meaningful whole. Christian mystical literature is grounded in a belief that union between human beings and God is possible in this life. It describes Christian belief and practices of what constitutes immediate or direct presence of God.<sup>3</sup> Julian's book is a classic example of the belief in, consciousness of, and reflection on the meaning of the presence of the divine.

A climax in Julian's discernment that she is grounded in ultimate mystery occurs for her when she gazes at the crucifix. Contemplation of this devotional object

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<sup>2</sup> I use experience in the sense outlined by Gerald O'Collins, *Fundamental Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1981), 33-36. Experience has an aspect of immediacy, it implies direct contact, that must be entered into and lived for ourselves. Although distinct from reflection on the experience, experience and thought on the experience are not separable. Experience points to our being alive. It affects the entire existence of our being.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Bernard McGinn, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, vol.1, *The Foundations of Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad, 1991), xvii.

leads to union between the experience of Christ and her own experience. This union, which she believes has divine origin, is communicated to her through vivid, visual and auditory phenomena. The value which she attaches to the experience leads her to write about her encounter with Christ and to create a genre of visionary literature. Visionary experience was expected in the medieval world.<sup>4</sup> The conditions of monastic life and instruction in prayer<sup>5</sup> encouraged the formation of mental images as an aid to prayer. Meditative techniques created a sensitivity to visualization and a receptivity to visionary perception as a way of expressing insights into the sacred. Naturally, the ideas suffused into consciousness through the vision would be embedded in the context of the visionary's tradition.

Julian's expression of her theology in this genre of visionary literature is, however, not as irregular as it may seem. The theology that emerges from the subjectivity of Julian's personal experience resonates with Lonergan's idea of transcendental method:

Transcendental method is not the intrusion into theology of alien matter from an alien source. Its function is to advert to the fact that theologies are produced by theologians, that theologians have

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<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Petroff, ed. *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 5-20, shows how prolific visionary experience was in women's piety.

<sup>5</sup> For example *lectio divina* or Franciscan meditation. Cf. *Meditations on the Life of Christ: An Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century*, trans. Isa Ragusa, ed. Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B. Green (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961). Kerrie Hide, "The Showings of Julian of Norwich as a *Lectio Divina*," *Tjurunga* 49 (1996): 39-50.

minds and use them, that their doing so should not be ignored or passed over, but explicitly acknowledged in itself and in its implications.<sup>6</sup>

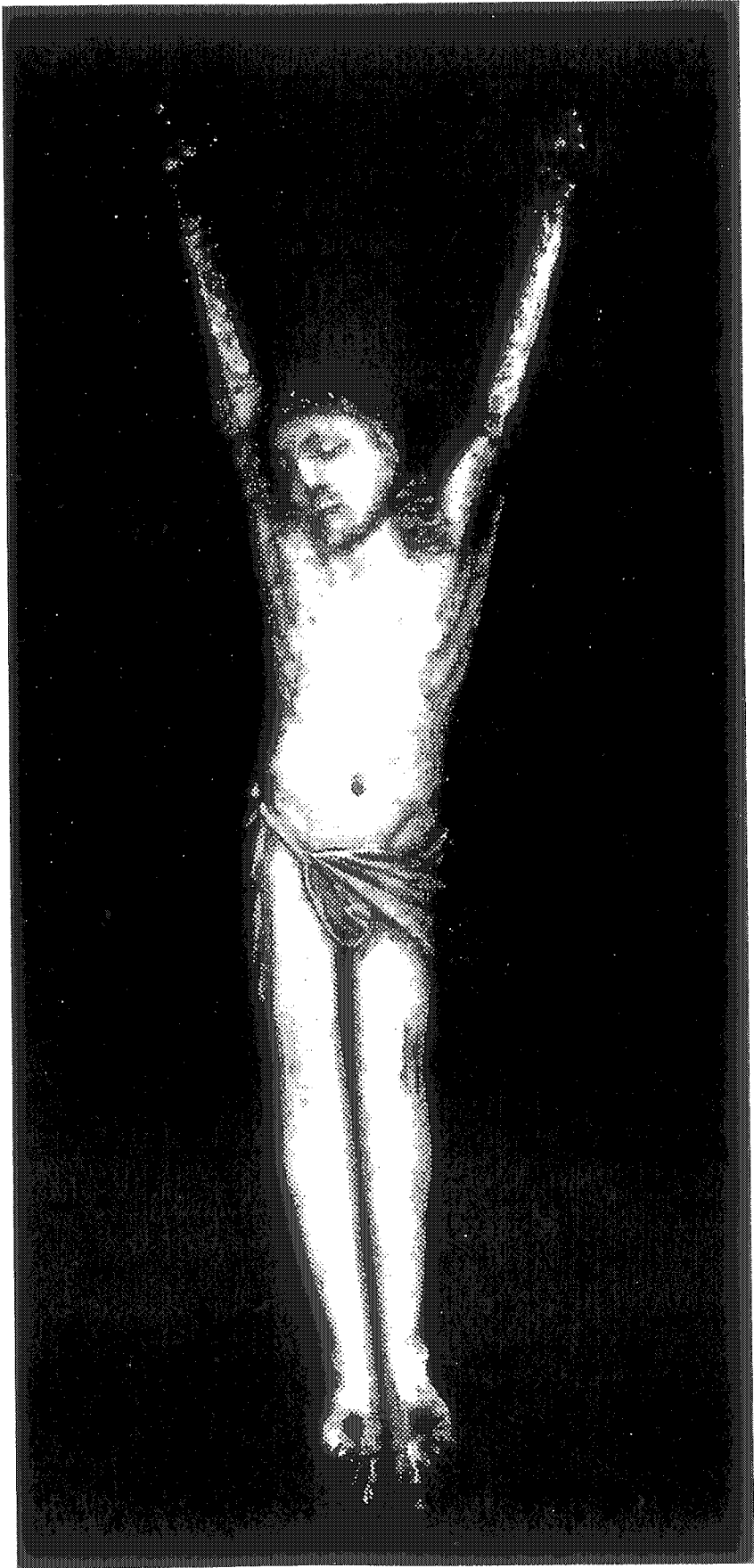
Julian's revelations express her understanding of the mystery of God. They incorporate doctrinal expressions, blended with loved familiar images from nature, paintings, stained glass windows, crucifixes, and illuminations from psalters or books of hours. Her theology is the fruit of her own view of reality informed by the culture she lived in, her own way of thinking and her woman's view of reality. Thus in order to interpret this visionary literature we need to be aware of the way in which theology was communicated to Julian and the way in which she gave concrete expression to understanding. This awareness enables the reader to engage in Julian's way of interpretation. It facilitates interpretation in this generation.

Julian begins her *showings* with a dramatic description of her illness. She thinks she is going to die. A priest attends her bedside and places a crucifix before her: *The persone sette the crosse before my face, and sayde: Dowztter, I have brought the the ymage of thy sauioure; loke there oponn and comforthe the pere with in reverence of hym that dyede for the and me.*<sup>7</sup> The bone crucifix, with a serene face, a muscular body, and a concentration on the five wounds of Christ in his

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<sup>6</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Seabury, 1972), 24-25.

<sup>7</sup> ii: 25-28,208. *The parson set the cross before my face and said: Daughter, I have brought you the image of your saviour. Look at it and take comfort from it, in reverence of him who died for you and me.* 128.





hands, feet and side illustrates the type.<sup>8</sup> From this experience of contemplating the meaning of divine love expressed so poignantly on the cross, Julian unfolds her theology of love. The priest invites Julian to observe *the ymage of thy sauioure*.<sup>9</sup>

The description continues: *I assendyd to sette myne eyen in the face of the crucyfixe zif y myght*.<sup>10</sup> She recounts the experience in a vivid scene:

*Aftr this my syght by ganne to fayle, and it was alle dyrke abowte me in the chaumbyr, and myrke as it hadde bene nyght, save in the ymage of the crosse there helde a commonn lyght, and I wyste nevere howe.*<sup>11</sup>

Julian sets her eyes on the face of the crucifix and all around her becomes dark, except for light directed to the face of Christ. In darkness, Julian begins to see with a special kind of light that illuminates her understanding of reality. With

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<sup>8</sup> It is uncertain whether this crucifix was made of wood, bone or bronze. The illustration (See 45) of a bone crucifix (ca. 1460), sixteen centimetres long, shows the realism that is typical of a Gothic figure of Christ. This figure from a crucifix was found on the site of London and Counties Bank, High Street, Colchester. The style is quite like the crucifixion illumination found in the Abingdon Missal dated 1461. Peter Lasko and Nigel J. Morgan, eds. *Medieval Art of East Anglia 1300-1520* (London: Thames and Hudson in association with Jarrold and Sons, 1974), 55. Cf. LWHM: xviii. Pelphrey provides a sketch of a gilded and enamelled crucifix (ca. 1400-1450) discovered beneath the floor of St. Crouch, Norwich, in 1838.

<sup>9</sup> Throughout the *showings*, Julian reinforces this initial identification of Christ as saviour. See Palliser, *Christ Our Mother of Mercy*, n.62, 69.

<sup>10</sup> ii:30-31,208. *I agreed to fix my eyes on the face of the crucifix if I could.* 128.

<sup>11</sup> ii:33-36,208-209. *After this my sight began to fail, and it was all dark around me in the room, dark as night, except that there was ordinary light trained upon the image of the cross, I never knew how.* 128.

eyes set on the cross, in the deepest darkness of suffering, Julian comes to understand how all things have meaning through the love of Christ.

While Julian gazes single-mindedly at the face of the saviour, the image acquires characteristics reminiscent of a medieval crucifixion image, such as this illumination of the crucifixion in the Gorleston Psalter (ca.1320-1330).<sup>12</sup>

*And in this sodenly I saw the reed bloud rynnyng downe from vnder the garlande, hote and freyshely, plentuously and liuely, right as it was in the tyme that the garland of thornes was pressed on his blessed head.*<sup>13</sup>

In this example of an illumination of Christ dying, the Italianate style emphasizes the central figure of Christ by enlarging his body and making it hang heavily on a tree-like cross. Mary, full of grief, focuses on the cross, while John weeps and looks away. The open wound on Christ's right breast is predominant, with blood and water flowing copiously from it. Christ's crowned head is bowed, his eyes closed, his expression peaceful. The generous use of colour creates an empathetic mood that helps the viewer comprehend the depth of divine love. Julian presents a collection of passion scenes, with similar pictorial qualities to the Gorleston Psalter. They depict the transition in Christ's suffering and dying to his glorified rising.

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<sup>12</sup> The Gorleston Psalter (See 48). Richard Marks and Nigel Morgan. *The Golden Age of English Manuscript Painting 1200-1500* (New York: George Braziller, 1981), 79. I am indebted to Baker for pointing to the possible connection of this Psalter to Julian. Baker, *From Vision to Book*, 43.

<sup>13</sup> 1:4.3-6,294. *And at this, suddenly I saw the red blood running down from under the crown, hot and flowing freely and copiously, a living stream, just as it was at the time when the crown of thorns was pressed on his blessed head.* 181.

ad- v̄s.

is ad- v̄s.

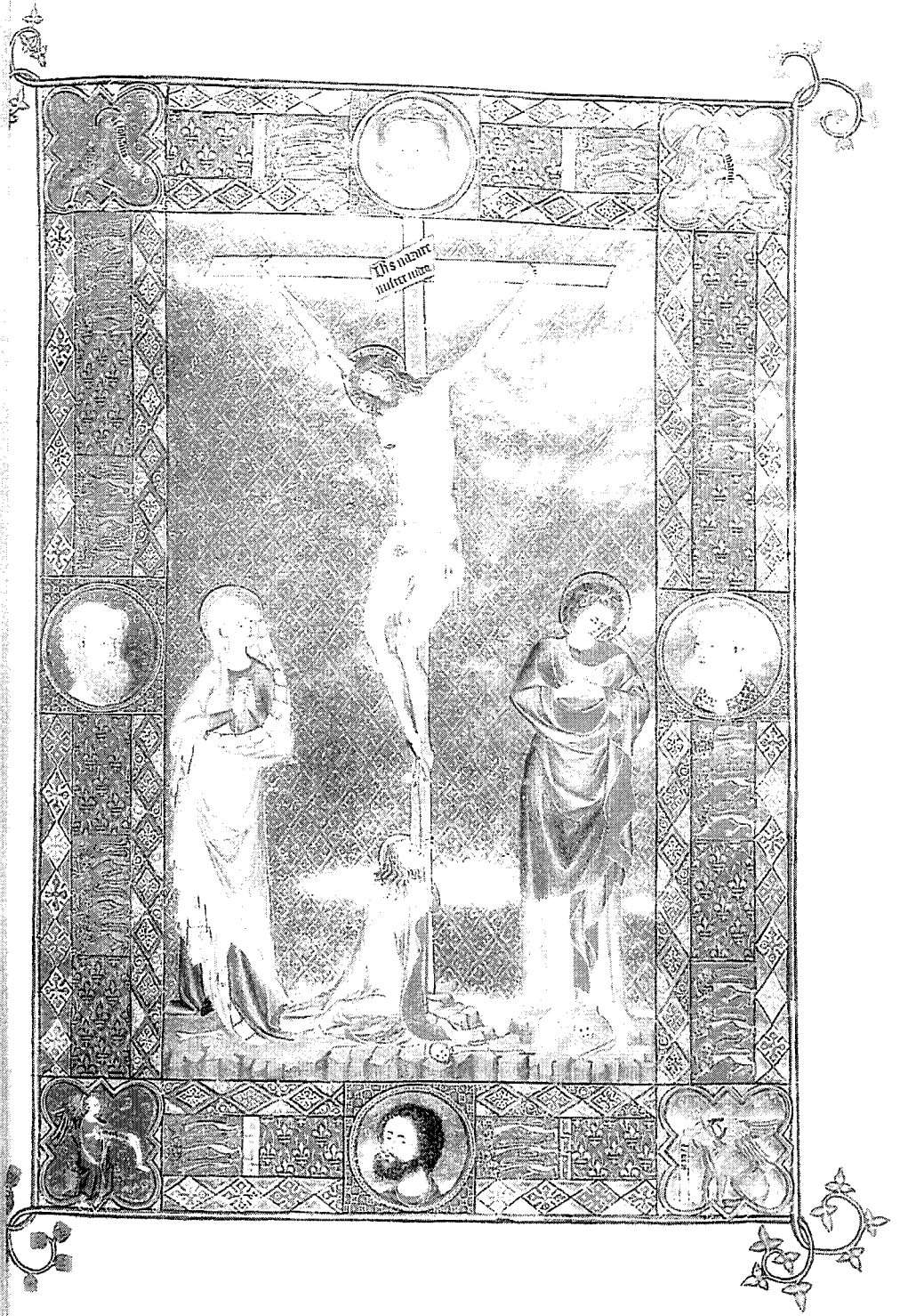
is ad- v̄s.

is ad- v̄s.

vigil.  
is ad- v̄s.

vigil.  
annus dup.  
duplet.  
duplet.  
duplet.  
duplet.

is ad- v̄s.



Thus the soteriology that emerges throughout the *showings* is grounded in an experience of suffering – Julian's suffering mirrored in Christ's suffering.

Walter Kasper points to the significance of such a starting point: "a theology that takes the human experience of suffering as its starting point, starts, therefore, not with a borderline phenomenon but with the centre and depth of human experience."<sup>14</sup> Julian is concerned with the centre and depth of human experience, of how God relates to humanity in suffering. Surrounded by her own physical and emotional suffering and the suffering of Christ, her major theological concern becomes the question of salvation.

## II. A TRINITARIAN FRAMEWORK

Julian's text is far more complex than a simple description of the crucified Christ: it presents the salvific meaning of the paschal mystery.<sup>15</sup> In the long text she makes it clear that the principal understanding she has from looking at the crucifix is an inter-connection between the paschal mystery and the Trinity:

*This is a reuelacion of loue that Jhesu Christ our endles blisse made in xvi shewynges, of which the first is of his precious crownyng of thornes; and ther in was conteined and specified the blessed trinitie.*<sup>16</sup>

This link between Christ in his passion, death and resurrection with the Trinity

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<sup>14</sup> Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 160.

<sup>15</sup> By "paschal mystery" I mean the event of Christ's passion, death and resurrection.

<sup>16</sup> 1.2-4, 281. *This is a revelation of love which Jesus Christ, our endless bliss, made in sixteen showings, of which the first is about his precious crowning of thorns; and in this was contained and specified the blessed Trinity.* 175.

gives Julian's theology a unique flavour. Her *showings* do not simply record a vision of Christ suffering, but contain and specify the blessed Trinity: *ther in was conteined and specified the blessed trinitie*. The vision marks the way her theology will proceed. There is no distinct separation of theology into discrete areas with one section of the revelations devoted to interpreting Christology, one devoted to trinitarian theology, and one to redemption. All elements of her theology intersect. All her theology is trinitarian. All her theology is soteriological. All that she will express as the revelations continue occurs within the context of a trinitarian doctrine of God. She explains in more detail:

*And in the same shewing sodeinly the trinitie fulfilled my hart most of ioy, and so I vnderstode it shall be in heauen without end to all that shall come ther. For the trinitie is god, god is the trinitie. The trinitie is our maker, the trinitie is our keper, the trinitie is our everlasting louer, the trinitie is our endlesse ioy and our bleisse, by our lord Jesu Christ, and in our lord Jesu Christ. And this was shewed in the first syght and in all, for wher Jhesu appireth the blessed trinitie is vnderstand, as to my sight.*<sup>17</sup>

Her added reflection presents principles that govern interpretation of her theology. Julian encounters Christ. She experiences trinitarian joy and understands that Christ reveals the Trinity. Life experience and theology converge. Consequently, she presents a rhythmical formula that identifies the trinitarian nature of her doctrine of God: *For the trinitie is god, god is the trinitie*. That the

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<sup>17</sup> 1.4.9-16,294-296. *And in the same revelation, suddenly the Trinity filled my heart full of the greatest joy, and I understood that it will be so in heaven without end to all who will come there. For the Trinity is God, God is the Trinity. The Trinity is our maker, the Trinity is our protector, the Trinity is our everlasting lover, the Trinity is our endless joy and our bliss, by our Lord Jesus Christ and in our Lord Jesus Christ. And this was revealed in the first vision and in them all, for where Jesus appears the blessed Trinity is understood, as I see it.* 181.

*trinitie is god, god is the trinitie* informs every *showing* that follows.

Furthermore, reflecting the mystical nature of her starting point, the terminology she uses in reference to the Trinity is sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit.

There are no hard and fixed doctrinal formulations about the inner life of the Trinity. Rather she adopts her own way of expressing beliefs about the presence of the Trinity to humanity through images that are inclusive, free and rhythmical.

### III. *BEHOLDING*

The process by which Julian comes to appreciate the immediate presence of God is known as *beholding*. Julian first makes reference to the significance of

*beholding* in the introduction that summarizes the *showings*:

*Than meaneth he thus: behold and see, for by the same myght,  
wisdom and goodnes that I haue done all this, by the same myght,  
wisdom and goodnes I shall make well all that is not well, and thou  
shalt see it.*<sup>18</sup>

*Beholding* relates to seeing. Julian gives sight or contemplative vision an important role. This is more than ordinary seeing, however. The *Middle English Dictionary* defines *beholding* as looking, gazing or seeing a visual appearance, applying the mind in thought meditation or contemplation, and being in a state of

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<sup>18</sup> 1.37-40,284. *Here he says: Behold and see, for by the same power, wisdom and goodness that I have done all this, by the same power, wisdom and goodness I shall make all things well which are not well, and you will see it.* 176.

relationship or connection.<sup>19</sup> Although this definition reflects Julian's use of the word, Julian expands its meaning to its limits. For Julian *beholding* involves the ability to see with the highest inner sensitivities of the soul. *Beholding* is a way of interpreting revelation.

Maisonneuve describes Julian's use of the term *beholding*:

BEHOLD c'est un regard intérieur, et qui veut aller au plus intérieur des êtres et des choses. Ce peut être un regard contemplatif; ce peut être également un regard pré-contemplatif qui, par delà les apparences, veut étreindre le fond de toute réalité.<sup>20</sup>

*Beholding* reveals the underlying truth of all reality. *Beholding* incorporates truth, wisdom and love: *Truth seeth god, and wisdom beholdyth god, and of theyse two comyth the thurde, and that is a meruelous delyght in god, whych is loue.*<sup>21</sup>

*Beholding* communicates a *lesson of loue*. This creates a response in the soul: *For of alle thyng the beholdyng and the lovyng of the maker makyth the soule to seme lest in his awne syght, and most fyllyth hit with reuerent drede and trew*

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<sup>19</sup> MED, 835-838. Molinari distinguishes *beholding* that is a special *showing*, a grace given by God that does not involve the effort of the will and *beholding* which is not a special *showing*, a lower form of contemplation, where deprived of accessory elements, the soul lives by faith. If Molinari's distinction is correct, it is *beholding* that is a special *showing* that affects Julian's understanding. See Molinari, *The Teaching of a Fourteenth Century Mystic*, 104-139. Cf. Llewelyn, *With Pity Not Blame*, 73-74.

<sup>20</sup> Roland Maisonneuve, *L'Univers Visionnaire de Julian of Norwich* (Ph.D. diss., Sorbonne University, 1978), 203.

<sup>21</sup> 14:44.8-10,483. *Truth sees God, and wisdom contemplates God, and of these two comes the third, and that is a marvellous delight in God, which is love.* 256.

*meknesse, and with plente of charyte to his euyn crysten.*<sup>22</sup> *Beholding* enables Julian to participate in what Christ's passion signifies, to become one with it, and to be transformed by it. Related to loving, *beholding* is seeing with the "eye of the heart" (Ephesians 1:18), or seeing with a felt understanding of love.

*Beholding* creates a sense of awe and mystery characterized as *reuerent drede*, which Julian later qualifies as: *softe; for þe more it is had, the lesse it is felte, for swetnesse of loue.*<sup>23</sup>

Julian presents Our Lady Saint Mary as the perfect teacher of *beholding*:

*And to lerne vs thys, as to my vnderstandyng, our good lorde shewyd our lady sent Mary in the same tyme, that is to meane the hyghe wysdom and truth that she had in beholdyng of her maker. This wysdom and truth made her to beholde hyr god so gret, so hygh, so myghty and so good. This gretnesse and this nobylnesse of her beholdyng of god fulfyllyd her of reverend drede; and with this she sawe hyr selfe so lytyle and so lowe, so symple and so poer in regard of hyr god that thys reuerent drede fulfyllyd her of meknes. And thus by thys grounde sche was fulfyllyd of grace and of alle maner of vertuous, and passyth alle creatours.*<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> 1:6.64-67,309. *For of all things, contemplating and loving the Creator makes the soul to seem less in its own sight, and fills it full with reverent fear and true meekness, and with much love for its fellow Christians.* 187.

<sup>23</sup> 16:74.19,673. *gentle. For the more it is obtained, the less is it felt, because of the sweetness of love.* 324.

<sup>24</sup> 1:7.2-11,310-311. *And to teach us this, as I understand, our good Lord showed our Lady St. Mary at the same time, that is to signify the exalted wisdom and truth which were hers as she contemplated her Creator. This wisdom and truth showed her in contemplation how great, how exalted, how mighty and how good was her God. The greatness and nobility of her contemplation of God filled her full of reverent fear; and with this she saw herself so small and so humble, so simple and so poor in comparison with her God that this reverent fear filled her with humility. And founded on this, she was filled with grace and with every kind of virtue, and she surpasses all creatures.* 187.



Mary demonstrates the fact that *beholding* creates an awareness of deep relationship in the transcendent nature of the Godhead. *Beholding* fosters a sense of awe and wonder that exposes the smallness of creatures in relation to the greatness of the Creator. *Beholding* activates wisdom and truth that leads to an appreciation that God is *so gret, so hygh, so myghty and so good*. The effect of *beholding* is a perception of *reuerent drede fulfyllyd of grace*.

Julian explains the process of *beholding*:

*And alle thys our lorde shewde in the furst syght, and yave me space and tyme to beholde it. And the bodely syght styntyd, and the goostely syzte dwellth in my vnderstondyng. And I aboode with reuerent dreed, ioyeng in that I saw, and desyeryng as I durste to see more, if it were hys wylle, or lengar tyme the same syght.*<sup>25</sup>

Though the bodily sight, or corporeal vision, was the catalyst for her emerging insights, space and time cause the bodily sight to fade. After the bodily sight, Julian describes an intermediary time that emerges before she can express herself in words:

*And after, or that god schewed any wordes, he sufferde me to beholde hym a conveniabile tyme, and all that I had seen, and all the vnderstandyng that was ther in, as the sympylnes of the sowle myght take it. Then he without voys and openyng of lypes formyd*

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<sup>25</sup> 1:8.17-21,318-319. *God showed me this in the first vision, and he gave me space and time to contemplate it. And then the bodily vision ceased, and the spiritual vision persisted in my understanding. And I waited with reverent fear, rejoicing in what I saw and wishing, as much as I dared, to see more, if that were God's will, or to see the same vision for a longer time.* 190.

*in my sowle these wordes: Here with is the feende ovyr come.*<sup>26</sup>

Essential to this process is *beholding* the experience for a *conveniabile tyme*. *Beholding* takes her beyond the *bodely syght*, beyond seeing Christ suffering (*bodely syght styntyd*) into *gostly syght* (*and the goostely syzhte dwellth in my vnderstandyng*). *Beholding* enables Julian to interpret meaning, to create theology, and to articulate her soteriology.

Although Julian's repeated use of *beholding* tends to privilege seeing as the most important sense that leads to understanding, she also makes reference to the other senses: *I had in perty touchyng, syght and feelyng in thre propertees of god, in whych the strenght and þe effecte of alle þe revelacion stonyth.*<sup>27</sup> Understanding also comes in a *perty touchyng*. Initiated by God, a *touchyng* creates mutual contact, or common ground where understanding can be deepened. A *touchyng* suggests physical and spiritual engagement that includes *syght and feelyng*. Nevertheless, understanding the mystery of divine loving is always partial. There is always something of the mystery yet to be revealed. A *perty touchyng* points to the presence of the divine in the act of interpretation that is intimate and familiar.

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<sup>26</sup> 5:13.3-7,346. *And after this, before God revealed any words, he allowed me to contemplate him for a fitting length of time, and all that I had seen, and all the significance that was contained in it, as well as my soul's simplicity could accept it. And then he, without voice and without opening of lips, formed in my soul this saying: With this the fiend is overcome.* 201.

<sup>27</sup> 16:83.2-3,722. *In this matter I had touching, sight and feeling of three properties of God, in which consist the strength and the effect of all the revelation.* 339.

When Julian describes the deepest knowledge of God that human beings will have in the face to face beatific vision, she includes all the senses:

*And than shall we alle come in to oure lorde, oure selfe clerely knowyng and god fulsomly hauyng, and we endlesly be alle hyd in god, verely seyeng and fulsomly felyng, and hym gostely heryng, and hym delectably smellyng, and hym swetly swelwyng. And ther shall we se god face to face, homely and fulsomly. The creature that is made shall see and endlesly beholde god whych is the maker.*<sup>28</sup>

Knowledge of God flows from both an intellectual vision of *clerely knowyng* and a non-cognitive, intuitive understanding of experiencing love. In attempting to describe what is involved in this seeing and *beholding*, Julian makes direct reference to the spiritual senses.<sup>29</sup> Seeing and *beholding* God involves *verely seyeng, fulsomly felyng, gostely heryng, delectably smellyng, and swetly swelwyng*. Thus for Julian the more complete the *beholding*, the more all the

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<sup>28</sup> 14:43.49-55,481-482. *And then we shall all come into our Lord, knowing ourselves clearly and wholly possessing God, and we shall all be endlessly hidden in God, truly seeing and wholly feeling, and hearing him spiritually and delectably smelling him and sweetly tasting him. And there we shall see God face to face, familiarly and wholly. The creature which is made will see and endlessly contemplate God who is the maker. 255.*

<sup>29</sup> This is a doctrine that goes back to Origen, who identified mystical senses of the soul that become Christ. "For that is why he is called the 'true light' (cf. 1 Jn 2:8) so that the souls might have eyes with which to be illuminated; and why he is called the 'Word' (cf. Jn 1:1), that they might have ears with which to hear; and why he is called 'bread of life' (cf. 1 Jn 6:35), that souls might have a sense of taste with which to taste. So too he is called 'ointment' or 'nard' so that the soul's sense of smell might receive the fragrance of the Word. And so too he is called perceivable, and touchable by hand, and the 'Word became flesh' (cf. Jn 1:14), so that the inner hand of the soul might be able to make contact with the Word of life." Origen, "The Mystical Senses," in Harvey Egan, *An Anthology of Christian Mysticism* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 29. For Origen these senses are always spiritual, not physical. Julian in contrast leaves the imagery more open to both a physical and spiritual interpretation.

senses are involved.<sup>30</sup>

Julian's reference to the senses, however, includes more than bodily knowing. The senses are "organs of mystical knowledge."<sup>31</sup> They convey a combined bodily, spiritual and intellectualized way of understanding. Riehle helps make this point clear. He suggests that in Julian's use of the senses it would be incorrect to understand her language as mere metaphor:

In these acts it seems to the soul that it is experiencing a supernatural object which reveals itself as if it were present in some concrete manner. Hence the spiritual sense perception can certainly become similar to that of the physical senses, and therefore the language which expresses such experiences is something rather different than mere metaphor.<sup>32</sup>

The *beholding* that occurs through the senses is part of an experience of God. Thus Julian's references to the senses communicate how she is awakened and sensitized to the originating presence of God within her being.

Julian further associates *beholding* with being *onyd* into the Godhead:

*But whan oure curtesse lorde of his speciall grace shewyth hym*

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<sup>30</sup> Maisonneuve elucidates Julian's sense of seeing: "le regard semble être chez elle une synthèse de tous les sens. On pourrait dire que, pour Julian, l'oeil goûte, sent, entend, savoure, touche"; Maisonneuve, *L' Univers Visionnaire de Julian of Norwich*, 260. Cf. Ritamary Bradley, "Julian of Norwich on Prayer," *Analecta Cartusiana* 106 (1983): 142.

<sup>31</sup> This is Karl Rahner's phrase. See Karl Rahner, "The 'Spiritual Senses' According to Origen," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 16, trans. Karl-H. and Boniface Kruger (New York: Seabury, 1979), 97.

<sup>32</sup> Wolfgang Riehle, *Middle English Mystics*, trans. Bernard Strandring (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 104.

*selfe to oure soule, we haue that we desyer, and then we se nott for the tyme what we shulde more pray, but all oure entent with alle oure myghtys is sett hoole in to the beholdyng of hym. And this is an hygh vnperceyvable prayer, as to my syghte; for alle the cause wherfore we pray is to be onyd in to the syght and the beholdyng of him to whom we pray, mervelously enjoyeng with reuerent drede, and so grett swettnesse and delyzte in hym that we can pray ryght nought but as he steryth vs for the tyme.*<sup>33</sup>

*Beholding* diminishes the gap between the human and the divine. Although it is an imperceivable prayer, *beholding* creates an ability to see partially as God sees, and to understand as God understands. *Beholding* makes the human and the divine one. The fruits of *beholding* are joy, reverent fear, sweetness and delight.

Significantly, then, Julian's interpretation of her experience does not come from thought that engages in analysis of the meaning of the passion, as we would see in scholastic writing. Her insights express wisdom felt, experienced and intuited in the deepest levels of her being. In *beholding* Julian engages her whole being in seeing, tasting, feeling, hearing, savouring, and touching the mystery of divine love revealed in Christ. *Beholding* enables her to have a deep sense of reverent fear that expresses itself in love that is beyond feeling. *Beholding* also enables her to know in wisdom and truth that all human beings are part of a meaningful whole that will make all things well. Thus *beholding* creates what might be called

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<sup>33</sup> 14:43.18-26,477. *But when our courteous Lord of his special grace shows himself to our soul, we have what we desire, and then for that time we do not see what more we should pray for, but all our intention and all our powers are wholly directed to contemplating him. And as I see it, this is an exalted and imperceptible prayer; for the whole reason why we pray is to be united into the vision and contemplation of him to whom we pray, wonderfully rejoicing with reverent fear, and with so much sweetness and delight in him that we cannot pray at all except as he moves us at the time. 254.*

a mystical rather than systematic soteriology.

#### IV. ALL THIS WAS SHOWN IN THREE PARTS

Division into three parts is a recurring theme in Julian's writing.<sup>34</sup> The space and time to *behold* lead to three levels of understanding which Julian distinguishes. In the short text she identifies these as teachings: *Alle this blyssede techyng of oure lorde god was schewyd to me in thre partyes.*<sup>35</sup> Both texts describe the three parts:

*All this was shewde by thre partes, that is to sey by bodyly syght, and by worde formyde in my vnderstandyng, and by goostely syght. But the goostely syght I can nott ne may shew it as openly ne as fully as I would.*<sup>36</sup>

The vision occurs *by bodyly syght, by worde formyde in my vnderstandyng* and *by*

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<sup>34</sup> We will examine three manners of understanding charity, three *beholdings* of suffering, and three *beholdings* of motherhood later in the text. Pelphrey, LWHM, 103, suggests that Julian's references to three demonstrate her awareness of the Trinity as the central and most important element of her visions. J.P.H. Clark, "Nature, Grace and the Trinity in Julian of Norwich," *The Downside Review* 100 (1982): 203, warns that we should beware of reading trinitarian references into all Julian's triads. Julian seems to follow a long line of Christian mystics who make use of patterns of three for trinitarian reasons. The fondness for three also resonates with the idea that when two things are co-joined there is a bond between them making a third. This goes back to Plato, and is common in Origen, Bernard of Clairvaux and William of St. Thierry for example. Cf. Bernard McGinn, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, vol. 2, *The Growth of Mysticism* (London: SCM Press, 1995), 234. See also n.65 and n.69, 520.

<sup>35</sup> vii.1-2,224. *All this blessed teaching of our Lord was shown to me in three parts.* 135.

<sup>36</sup> 1:9.29-32,323. *All this was shown in three parts, that is to say, by bodily vision and by words formed in my understanding and by spiritual vision. But I may not and cannot show the spiritual visions as plainly and fully as I should wish.* 192.

*goostely syght*.<sup>37</sup> These parts are not isolated ways of interpretation, but rather interact and inter-relate with each other and together make a whole. The Sloane<sup>1</sup> manuscript gives a greater sense of this unity as it records: *All this was shewid by thre*.<sup>38</sup> Never left to stand alone or presented as literal truth, the *bodyly syght* reveals something deeply hidden. Therefore, although Julian spends a considerable portion of the text describing bodily sights of the passion, this is always at the service of the deeper meaning communicated by the images. The understanding she receives from reflecting on these sights becomes paramount. Thus Julian's version of visionary literature is not simply a depiction of what she sees. It presents what she comes to understand through seeing. The visions are not significant because they represent a state of consciousness surpassing ordinary human experience. Their validity rests on the value they have as a means of communicating an intensive realization of the mysteries of God in words that convey unfathomable levels of meaning.

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<sup>37</sup> Molinari analyzes these ways of seeing in terms of the classical treatment of mystical phenomena. See Molinari, *The Teaching of a Fourteenth Century Mystic*, 32-48. Although Watson calls Julian's use of bodily sight, spiritual sight and words forming in her understanding an Augustinian hermeneutic, the examination of Julian's way of *beholding* shows that Augustine's categories of corporeal, spiritual and intellectual visions are too distinct for Julian. See Nicholas Watson, "The Trinitarian Hermeneutic in Julian of Norwich's Revelation of Love," in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England: Exeter Symposium V*, ed. Marion Glasscoe (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1992): 79-100. Cf. Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis: A Commentary in Twelve Books*, trans. John Raymond Taylor, vol. 2 (New York: Newman Press, 1982), 12.6.15. Cf. Andrew Ryder, "A Note on Julian's Visions," *The Downside Review* 96 (1978): 303.

<sup>38</sup> IX:340,50.

The movement in understanding *by bodyly syght, by worde formyde in my vnderstondyng* and *by goostely syght* is not linear. It is a blending together like colours on a canvas creating an integrated whole. At the beginning of the long text Julian explains how parts inter-relate:

*This is a reuelacion of loue that Jhesu Christ our endles blisse made in xvi shewynges, of which the first is of his precious crownyng of thornes; and ther in was conteined and specified the blessed trinitie with the incarnacion and the vnithing betweene god and mans sowle, with manie fayer schewynges and techynges of endelesse wisdom and loue, in which all the shewynges that foloweth be grovndide and ioyned.*<sup>39</sup>

The whole sixteen *showings* are one revelation of love. Within the bodily sight of Christ crowned with thorns the whole sixteen *showings* are *grovndide* and *ioyned*. In this context *grovndide* points to the origin or cause of the *showings* having their foundation in the Trinity. *Ioyned* describes the essential unity of the revelation that draws all that is communicated into an integrated whole.<sup>40</sup> Central facets of theology, an understanding of *the blessed trinitie, the incarnacion, the vnithing betweene god and mans sowle, schewynges and techynges of endelesse wisdom and loue* are *conteined and specified* within the visual image. The verbs in the Paris text *conteined and specified* suggest that the theology is included as part of the whole. Theology is defined and delineated within the whole. The Sloane1

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<sup>39</sup> 1.2-7,281. *This is a revelation of love which Jesus Christ, our endless bliss, made in sixteen showings, of which the first is about his precious crowning of thorns; and in this was contained and specified the blessed Trinity, with the Incarnation and the union between God and man's soul, with many fair revelations and teachings of endless wisdom and love, in which all the revelations which follow are founded and connected.* 175.

<sup>40</sup> We will examine *oneing* in Chapter 3, 109-120.



manuscript in contrast emphasizes the understanding that flows from the vision:  
*(and therewith was comprehended and specified).*<sup>41</sup>

The scribe's warning at the end of the Paris manuscript<sup>42</sup> accentuates the same unity: *And be ware pou take not on thing after thy affection and liking and leve another, for that is the condition of an heretique; but take every thing with other, and trewly vnderstonden.*<sup>43</sup> To understand what Julian is saying about salvation, we must take everything together and apply her method of *beholding*. Taking everything together includes not only *beholding*. Within these bodily sights are ghostly sights and words that form in her understanding that express theology. Both texts agree on this point.

In order to explain how Julian's method of interpretation works, I will apply formally the threefold process she outlines to one of her passion scenes as an example of how levels of meaning inter-connect. As we focus on each aspect of the passion scene, however, we must be mindful that each facet is part of an undivided whole. When we concentrate on the crown of thorns or the sea-bed, it is like converging on a small detail within a whole painting. Similarly, when we centre on words that form in her understanding, we are concentrating, for the

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<sup>41</sup> I:3,37.

<sup>42</sup> This comment is also recorded at the end of the Sloane1 manuscript.

<sup>43</sup> BSAJN, n.23, 734. *And beware that you do not accept one thing which is according to your pleasure and liking, and reject another, for that is the disposition of heretics. But accept it all together, and understand it truly.* 343.

moment, on one element that is essential to the composition of the whole canvas.

### **Bodily Sight**

Julian begins by telling us that she sees the face of the crucifix with *bodely sight*:

*And after this I saw with bodely sight in the face of the crucifixe that hyng before me, in þe which I beheld contynually a parte of his passion: dyspyte, spytyng, solewyng and buffetyng, and manie languryng paynes, mo than I can tell, and offten chaungyng of colour. And one tyme I saw how halfe the face, begynnyng at the ere, over zede with drye bloud, tyll it closyd in to the myd face, and after that the other halfe beclosyd on the same wyse; and the(re) whiles it vanyssched in this party, evyn as it cam.*<sup>44</sup>

Continual *beholding* of the figure hanging before her leads to partial sight of the passion. She presents a litany of pains that she sees Christ experience: *dyspyte, spytyng, solewyng and buffetyng, and manie languryng paynes*. This leads to a strange, dispassionate portrayal of Christ's face caked in a mask of dried blood.

These descriptions create a mystical, timeless quality about the portrait. There is an enigmatic ambience that incorporates the tangible with the transcendent.

Though corporeal, there is no sense in which this is an historical account of Christ's suffering. Julian points to the depth of meaning which it evokes as she sees *mo than I can tell*.

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<sup>44</sup> 2:10.3-10,324-325. *And after this I looked with bodily vision into the face of the crucifix which hung before me, in which I saw a part of Christ's Passion: contempt, foul spitting, buffeting, and many long-drawn pains, more than I can tell; and his colour often changed. At one time I saw how half his face, beginning at the ear, became covered with dried blood, until it was caked to the middle of his face, and then the other side was caked in the same fashion, and meanwhile the blood vanished on the other side, just as it had come.* 193.

Julian emphasizes the corporeal nature of her seeing: *This saw I bodely, swemly and darkely, and I desyred mor bodely light to haue seen more clerly.*<sup>45</sup> Her words enable us to picture a crucifix and see Christ's body on the cross *swemly and darkely* and yet lit by changing light as if tinged with the colours of stained glass windows. But Julian is answered in her reason and the seeing that evolves from *beholding* the cross is not the consequence of ordinary light. Seeing comes through the light of divine revelation. Glasscoe's words capture the manner in which Julian interprets the passion scenes:

They (Julian's bodily sights of the passion) hang as if vividly lit in a silent darkness for contemplation, and function sacramentally in that they crystallise forms which allow a depth of insight into the inner realities of human existence as perceived in Christian terms.<sup>46</sup>

Corless expresses a similar sentiment. The visions are for Julian "sacraments of the un-image-able, outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual truths."<sup>47</sup>

Julian sees the crucified body of Christ. The seeing begins to function sacramentally. It works mysteriously on her consciousness and begins to suggest more than she can clearly describe or define.

### **Words Formed in My Understanding**

The scene changes abruptly:

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<sup>45</sup> 2:10.11-12,325. *This I saw bodily, frighteningly and dimly, and I wanted more of the light of day, to have seen it more clearly.* 193.

<sup>46</sup> Glasscoe, *English Medieval Mystics*, 223.

<sup>47</sup> Roger Corless, "Comparing Cataphatic Mystics: Julian of Norwich and T'an-luan," *Mystics Quarterly* 21 (1995): 20.

*One tyme my vnderstandyng was lett down in to the sea grounde,  
and ther saw I hilles and dales grene, semyng as it were mosse  
begrowyng with wrake and gravell. Then I vnderstode thus: that if  
a man or woman wer there vnther the brode water, and he myght  
haue syght of god, so as god is with a man contynually, he shoulde  
be safe in sowle and body, and take no harme. And ovyr passyng,  
he should haue mor solace and comfo(r)te then all this wordle may  
or can tell.<sup>48</sup>*

We are now in the area of Julian's *vnderstandyng*. Elsewhere in the text she refers to looking with the eye of her understanding: *I looked theran with the eye of my vnderstanding, and thought;*<sup>49</sup> *(t)his shewing was geuen to my vnderstanding to lerne our soule wisely;*<sup>50</sup> *(a)nd this vision was a lernyng to my vnderstandyng;*<sup>51</sup> or *(t)his vision was shewde to lerne me att my vnderstandyng.*<sup>52</sup> Understanding expresses her thought, the wise learning of her soul, how she grasps the meaning of a vision. In this instance her understanding draws her on to visualize a possibly familiar experience of observing the sea-bed. Her understanding moves down *in to the sea grounde*, a traditional image for the unconscious. She evokes

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<sup>48</sup> 2:10.21-27,326. *Once my understanding was let down into the bottom of the sea, and there I saw green hills and valleys, with the appearance of moss strewn with seaweed and gravel. Then I understood in this way: that if a man or woman were there under the wide waters, if he could see God, as God is continually with man, he would be safe in soul and body, and come to no harm. And furthermore, he would have more consolation and strength than all this world can tell.* 193.

<sup>49</sup> 1:5.11,300. *I looked at it with the eye of my understanding and thought.* 183.

<sup>50</sup> 1:6.2-3,304. *This revelation was given to my understanding to teach our souls wisely.* 184.

<sup>51</sup> 2:10.68,332. *And this vision taught me to understand.* 195.

<sup>52</sup> 7:15.21,355. *This vision was shown to teach me to understand.* 205.

a colourful scene with surprising detail, *hilles and dales grene, seemyng as it were mosse begrowyng with wrake and gravell*, before describing her understanding in a convoluted manner that is not easy to interpret: *that if a man or woman wer there vnther the brode water, and he myght haue syght of god, so as god is with a man contynually, he shoulde be safe in sowle and body, and take no harme.*<sup>53</sup> The passage suggests that no matter where men and women find themselves, if they are aware of the continual presence of God, they will feel safe in body and soul and experience no harm. As words form in Julian's understanding she tries to articulate further her theology of divine presence.

Consequently she expresses her teaching more explicitly:

*For he will that we beleue that we see hym contynually, thow that vs thynke that it be but litle; and in the beleue he maketh vs evyr more to gett grace, for he will be seen, and he will be sought, and he will be abyden, and he will be trustyd.*<sup>54</sup>

She gives this teaching authority by qualifying that God wishes us to believe it. A teaching becomes clear: *he will be seen, and he will be sought, and he will be abyden, and he will be trustyd*. Julian experiences more sight and there is another rhythmical movement in the text. She relates this back to her original vision of Christ's face:

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<sup>53</sup> See n.48, 65.

<sup>54</sup> 2:10.27-31,326-327. *For it is God's will that we believe that we see him continually, though it seems to us that the sight be only partial; and through this belief he makes us always to gain more grace, for God wishes to be seen, and he wishes to be sought, and he wishes to be expected, and he wishes to be trusted.* 194.

*And then dyuerse tymes our lord gafe me more syght, wher by that I vnderstonde truly that it was a shewyng. It was a fygur and a lyknes of our fowle blacke dede, which that our feyre bryght blessed lord bare for our synne.*<sup>55</sup>

More sight reveals that Christ is *a fygur and a lyknes of our fowle blacke dede*.<sup>56</sup>

The image is sacramental because Christ does not simply show signs of human suffering: he is human suffering. He is the definitive form of the Black Death.

This *beholding* of Christ as the figure of human suffering draws her to think of another association, another veil:

*It made me to thynke of the holie vernacle of Rome,<sup>57</sup> which he portrude with his one blessed face, when he was in his hard passion, wilfully goyng to his death, and often chaungyng of coloure, of the brownhead and the blackhead, rewlyhead and leenhead. Of this ymage many marveyled how that myght be stanndyng that he portrude it with his blessed face, which is the feyerest of heauyn, flower of earth and the frute of the maydens*

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<sup>55</sup> 2:10.35-38,327-328. *And then several times our Lord gave me more insight, by which I understood truly that it was a revelation. It symbolized and resembled our foul, black death, which our fair, bright, blessed Lord bore for our sins.* 194.

<sup>56</sup> It is noteworthy that the Sloane1 text refers to the *black death* as the *foule dede hame*. X:374,51. This places less emphasis on the historical experience of suffering due to the Black death and more on sin. Christ is, however, still the image and likeness of harmful deeds.

<sup>57</sup> Based on tradition rather than scripture, the vernicle was a handkerchief believed to have been lent to Christ by Veronica on the Via Dolorosa. This cloth subsequently bore the impression of Christ's face. This relic was venerated in the Middle Ages, and was often mentioned in sermons and popular devotional books.

wombe.<sup>58</sup>

The face veiled in blood, the face the figure of the Black Death and the face imprinted on the vernicle subconsciously inter-relate and become pregnant with a depth of meaning that is evoked rather than stated. The crucifix becomes "a sacrament of divine darkness"<sup>59</sup> that transmits meaning. Thus Julian's inter-play of images that express darkness and light, ugliness and beauty, pain and joy reveal that light exists in darkness, healing in suffering, love in wretchedness and well-being in woe. This integration of well-being and woe enfolded in each other in a paradoxical unity is characteristic of her style.

Julian then brings in a teaching from the Church: *We knowe in our feayth and in our beleue, by the teachyng and the prechyng of holy church, that the blessyd fulle trinitie made mankynd to his ymage and to his lykenes.*<sup>60</sup> The echoes of *fygur* and *a lyknes*, and *ymage* and *lykenes* fuse the two ideas and enable them to interact in the imagination of the reader. Julian continues to add theological insights which she places side by side without fully explaining the connection:

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<sup>58</sup> 2:10.38-44,328-329. *It made me think of the holy Vernicle at Rome, which he imprinted with his own blessed face, when he was in his cruel Passion, voluntarily going to his death, and of his often-changing colour, the brownness and the blackness, his face sorrowful and wasted. Many marvelled how it could be the case that he imprinted this image with his blessed face, which is the fairest of heaven, the flower of earth and the fruit of the virgin's womb.* 194.

<sup>59</sup> This is a term used by Dermot A. Lane, *Christ at the Centre: Selected Issues in Christology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 77.

<sup>60</sup> 2:10.47-49,329. *We know in our faith and our belief, by the teaching and preaching of Holy Church, that the blessed Trinity made mankind in their image and their likeness.* 194.

*In the same maner wyse we know that when man fell so depe and so wretchedly by synne, ther was no nother helpe to restore man but thorow hym þat made man. And he that made man for loue, by the same loue he woulde restore man to the same blysse and ovyr passyng.*<sup>61</sup>

Julian then links the ideas more directly through her words *in the same maner wyse*. She places together two more theological positions about salvation. The first, *ther was no nother helpe to restore man but thorow hym þat made man*, reflects the idea that a God-man was needed to respond to the sin of humanity. The second, *he that made man for loue*, focuses on Christ becoming human for love. This juxtaposition creates a rhythm between different theological perspectives that enables her readers to appreciate the value of both positions. By placing a series of images side by side and connecting them with the repetition of imagery, Julian creates a thread of unity between the creation story, the creation of Christ, the problem of sin, the suffering that humans experience on account of the Black Death, the suffering Christ experienced at the crucifixion and the new creation brought to fruition in Christ. This interspersal of dogmatic Church teaching within the imagery occurs throughout the text.

Therefore, in order to understand what Julian is saying about salvation we need to hold the eclectic gathering of doctrines in dialectical tension. Though at times Julian seems to contradict herself, her method invites us to take everything

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<sup>61</sup> 2:10.49-53,329-330. *In the same way we know that when man fell so deeply and so wretchedly through sin, there was no other help for restoring him, except through him who created man. And he who created man for love, by the same love wanted to restore man to the same blessedness and to even more.* 194.



together and find meaning in the intersections which are not, however, easily pinned down. At the end of this revelation she reminds us of the difficulty of attempting to access the inaccessible:

*For his workyng is prevy, and he wille be perceyved, and his aperyng shalle be swet(h)e sodeyn. And he wylle be trustyd, for he is fulle homely, curteyse, blessyd mott he be.*<sup>62</sup>

The revelation of God is *prevy*. She confidently advises *he wille be perceyved*.

### Ghostly Sight

Though the second revelation provides a good example of bodily sight and words forming in Julian's understanding, it does not give an example of what Julian identifies as *ghostly sight*. Julian reserves her category of *ghostly sight* for times when she attempts to describe the meaning of divine love. Her first reference to a *ghostly sight*, coincides with a bodily sight: *In this same tyme that I saw this sight of the head bleidyng, our good lord shewed a gostly sight of his homely louyng.*<sup>63</sup> Later in the text *ghostly sights* become more ethereal: *(O)ure good lorde opynnyd my gostely eye and shewde me my soule in þe myddys of my harte.*<sup>64</sup> In both cases, however, she uses concrete imagery, namely, cloth and a city to describe the *ghostly sight*. Yet when she *is answered in ghostly understanding that loue*

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<sup>62</sup> 2:10.94-96,335. *For he works in secret, and he will be perceived, and his appearing will be very sudden. And he wants to be trusted, for he is very accessible, familiar and courteous, blessed may he be.* 196.

<sup>63</sup> 1:5.2-3,299. *At the same time as I saw this sight of the head bleeding, our good Lord showed a spiritual sight of his familiar love.* 183.

<sup>64</sup> 16:68.2-3,639. *(O)ur good Lord opened my spiritual eye, and showed me my soul in the midst of my heart.* 312.

was *his menyng*,<sup>65</sup> there is no reference to concrete imagery. Rather the idea of love becomes personified. Significant spiritual teachings emerge that point beyond the words that attempt to express them.

### **Ghostly in Bodily Likeness - More Ghostly Without Bodily Likeness**

Within the *showings* Julian recounts a significant parable about a lord and a servant that contains *ghostly sights*.<sup>66</sup> Like a preacher's exemplum,<sup>67</sup> the parable presents theological insights in the form of an allegorical narrative that unlocks the meaning of the revelations. She points to the centrality of the example in developing her understanding of salvation:

*I haue techyng with in me, as it were the begynnyng of an A B C, wher by I may haue some vnderstondyng of oure lordys menyng, for the pryvytes of the reuelacion be hyd ther in, not withstondyng that alle þe shewyng be full of prevytes.*<sup>68</sup>

The example contains the mysteries of the revelation. It gives *some vnderstondyng of oure lordys menyng*. During the presentation of the parable,

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<sup>65</sup> 16:86.16,733. *love was his meaning*. 342.

<sup>66</sup> We will examine the parable in Chapter 6, 238-269.

<sup>67</sup> An exemplum is a story used by preachers to illustrate the points to be made in a sermon. See Gerald Robert Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England: An Introduction to Serman Manuscripts of the Period 1350-1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926); Gerald Robert Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England: A Neglected Chapter in the History of English Letters and of the English People* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1961).

<sup>68</sup> 14:51.268-272,539. *I have teaching within me, as it were the beginning of an ABC, whereby I may have some understanding of our Lord's meaning, for the mysteries of the revelation are hidden in it, even though all the showings are full of mysteries*. 276.

Julian recapitulates the process by which she comes to understand its meaning:

*And then oure curteyse lorde answeryd in shewyng full mystely by a wonderfull example of a lorde that hath a servannt, and gaue me syght to my vnderstandyng of both. Whych syght was shewed double in þe lorde, and the syght was shewed double in the servannt. That one perty was shewed gostly in bodely lyknesse. That other perty was shewed more gostly withoute bodely lyknes.*<sup>69</sup>

It is *full mystely*, mysterious and mystical. Paradoxically, it gives sight to her understanding. She experiences the sight in two ways: *gostly in bodely lyknesse* and *more gostly withoute bodely lyknes*. In other words these seem to be spiritual, dream-like sights that resembled bodies but become more spiritual and ineffable without bodily likeness. Faithfulness to interpreting these two kinds of visions inspires three levels of understanding:

*The furst is the begynnyng of techyng that I vnderstode ther in in the same tyme. The secunde is the inwarde lernyng that I haue vnderstonde there in sythen. The thyrd is alle the hole revelation fro the begynnyng to the ende whych oure lorde god of his goodnes bryngyth oftymes frely to the syght of my vnderstandyng. And theyse thre be so onyd, as to my vnderstandyng, that I can nott nor may deperte them.*<sup>70</sup>

The parable unlocks three levels of meaning: the instruction that Julian

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<sup>69</sup> 14:51.2-7,513-514. *And then our courteous Lord answered very mysteriously, by revealing a wonderful example of a lord who has a servant, and gave me sight for the understanding of them both. The vision was shown doubly with respect to the lord, and the vision was shown doubly with respect to the servant. One part was shown spiritually, in a bodily likeness. The other part was shown more spiritually, without bodily likeness.* 267.

<sup>70</sup> 14:51.76-81,519-520. *The first is the beginning of the teaching which I understood from it at the time. The second is the inward instruction which I have understood from it since. The third is all the whole revelation from the beginning to the end, which our Lord God of his goodness freely and often brings before the eyes of my understanding. And these three are so unified, as I understand it, that I cannot and may not separate them.* 269.

understands immediately as she receives the vision, the inward learning that she gradually comes to after the event, and the condensation of the meaning of the whole revelation in the example. Julian notes that these are not separate levels of meaning: *theyse thre be so onyd, as to my vnderstondyng, that I can nott nor may deperte them.*<sup>71</sup> The integration of these three levels occurs as Julian presents the example of a description in bodily likeness, recapitulates her immediate response to the images, and adds her subsequent interpretation. Julian receives instruction *to take hede to alle þe propertes and the condescions that were shewed in the example, though þe thyngke that it be mysty and indefferent to thy syght.*<sup>72</sup> Though the example is communicated with a misty unreal quality, each detail in the parable conveys insight into the meaning of salvation expressed in the revelations as a whole.

In order to interpret her *ghostly sight*, *ghostly in bodely lyknesse* and *more ghostly withoute bodely lyknes* we must engage the hermeneutic of *beholding*. We must behold Julian's images and follow the explanations of meaning that arise. Yet Julian reminds us: *I can nott ne may shew it as openly ne as fully as I would.*<sup>73</sup> Julian tells what she can of her *ghostly sights* and surrounds them in

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<sup>71</sup> See n.69, 72.

<sup>72</sup> 14:51.87-88,520-521. *to take heed to all the attributes, divine and human, which were revealed in the example, though this may seem to you mysterious and ambiguous.* 270.

<sup>73</sup> 1:9.31-32,323. *But I may not and cannot show the spiritual visions as plainly and fully as I should wish.* 192.

interconnecting silences that leave room for mystery. *Ghostly sights* inspire revelation in the imagination of her readers.

### Understanding Meaning

Julian's preoccupation with the visionary experience could lead to an easy labelling of her as an affective theologian.<sup>74</sup> There is no doubt that Julian believes that God is love and that love unites humanity with God. But the intellect also plays an important role. Julian gives another threefold body of principles which govern how she comes to understand salvation:

*By thre thynges man stondyth in this lyfe, by whych iij god is wurschyppe and we be sped, kepte and savyd. The furst is vse of mannes kyndly reson. The seconde is the comyn techyng of holy chyrch. The iij is the inwarde gracious werkyng of the holy gost; and theyse thre be alle of one god. God is grounde of oure kyndly reson; and god is the techyng of holy chyrch, and god is pe holy gost.*<sup>75</sup>

Julian's epistemology or ground of knowledge includes three things: reason, Church teaching and grace. At times Julian interprets her experience through existing teachings of the Church as when she comments: *We knowe in our feayth and in our beleue, by the techyng and the prechyng of holy church.*<sup>76</sup> At other

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<sup>74</sup> Baker, *From Vision to Book*, 20-25, has done just that.

<sup>75</sup> 16:80.2-7,707. *Man endures in this life by three things, by which three God is honoured and we are furthered, protected and saved. The first is the use of man's natural reason. The second is the common teaching of Holy Church. The third is the inward grace-giving operation of the Holy Spirit; and these three are all from one God. God is the foundation of our natural reason; and God is the teaching of Holy Church, and God is the Holy Spirit.* 335.

<sup>76</sup> 2:10.47-48,329. *We know in our faith and our belief, by the teaching and preaching of Holy Church.* 194.

times interpretive elements occur in her personal experience: *And in thys I was taught by the grace of god.*<sup>77</sup> New insights emerge within the *showings* themselves. Julian points to the importance of integrating *kyndly reson*, *the comyn techyng of holy chyrch* and *the inwarde gracious werkyng of the holy gost*. Both the collective horizon of the Church and her own personal horizon shape and colour her understanding.

Judiciously, however, Julian qualifies the place of reason. Although *oure reson is groundyd in god*,<sup>78</sup> she warns:

*For only by oure reson we may nott profyte, but yf we haue evynly therwith mynde and loue, ne onely in oure kyndly grounde that we haue in god, we may not be savyd, but yf we haue, co(m)yng of the same grounde, mercy and grace.*<sup>79</sup>

Memory and love must complement reason. Therefore, although reason is important to Julian, she does not limit knowledge to a rationalism that believes reason alone can grasp the mysteries of faith. Nor does she suggest that uncritical faith is sufficient to grasp God's revelation. Knowledge is not based on reason alone, but on the memory of the history of God's fidelity in working for our salvation, memory of our true nature and the ongoing work of mercy and grace called to consciousness in love.

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<sup>77</sup> 32:13.51-52,426. *And in this I was taught by the grace of God.* 233.

<sup>78</sup> 14:56.39,574. *Our reason is founded in God.* 290.

<sup>79</sup> 14:56.51-55,575. *For we cannot profit by our reason alone, unless we have equally memory and love, nor can we be saved merely because we have in God our natural foundation, unless we have, coming from the same foundation, mercy and grace.* 290.

LaCugna's description of knowledge through the Spirit, articulated this century, seems to capture Julian's nuance here: "God is the object of knowledge, but only because God is seen with his/her own seeing. Knowledge in the Spirit means knowing God with the eyes of love."<sup>80</sup> Knowledge occurs not in abstract thinking about God, but by means of attention to our nature in God through the power of the Holy Spirit. In Julian's interpretative framework, knowledge transpires through direct, immediate, intuitive experience which occurs in mediation between knower and known. Pelphrey identifies this as: "one knows in an intimate, familial sense implied by 'homely loving'."<sup>81</sup> When Julian becomes certain of this knowing she gives it authority by associating her insights with the will of God: *It is gods wylle, as to my vnderstandyng, that we haue iij maner of beholdyng of his blessyd passion.*<sup>82</sup> This surety comes through experiencing deep communion in God.

*Beholding* bodily sight, words forming in her understanding, spiritual sight, spiritual sight in bodily likeness and spiritual sight without bodily likeness enable Julian to communicate her theology in a dialectical interaction of images and ideas

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<sup>80</sup> Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 364.

<sup>81</sup> LWHM, n.17, 121. Pelphrey mentions two kinds of knowledge identified by the scholastics: *scientia* (discursive knowledge) and *sapientia* (wisdom). I do not believe that Julian is making these distinctions in her description of knowledge. See Chapter 3, 103-105, for a description of *homely loving*.

<sup>82</sup> 8:20.33-34, 377-378. *It is God's will, as I understand it, that we contemplate his blessed Passion in three ways.* 214.

from a variety of sources. She combines the instruction that she understands immediately as she receives the vision, the inward learning that she gradually comes to after the event, and the meaning of the whole revelation in the visions, while always leaving room for mystery. She integrates ideas from scripture and other sources. She draws on her *kyndly reson*, Church teaching and grace.

## V. SCRIPTURE AND OTHER SOURCES

Scripture plays a major role in Julian's thought and the composition of the *showings*. As a woman interested in a life of prayer, possibly trained in the monastic method of *lectio divina*,<sup>83</sup> Julian would have memorized large sections of scripture enabling instant recall. Colledge and Walsh suggest that Julian was "deeply familiar with all four gospels, the Pauline and Johannine epistles and Hebrews, the Psalms, the sapiential books and Deutero-Isaias."<sup>84</sup> These were most probably in a translation from the Vulgate.<sup>85</sup> Naturally, then, her visionary experience and the interpretation of the experience include references and images from scripture.

Jean Leclercq's descriptions of the characteristics of the monastic use of scripture

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<sup>83</sup> *Lectio divina* consists of four phases in a single movement: *lectio* (active reading), *meditatio* (meditating), *oratio* (speaking) and *contemplatio* (contemplation), involving the mind, the heart, the will and the body.

<sup>84</sup> BSAJN, 43.

<sup>85</sup> The Vulgate was commonly used in Julian's time. See Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich*, 16-17.



popular in the Middle Ages resembles Julian methodology:

It is this deep impregnation with the words of Scripture that explains the extremely important phenomenon of reminiscence whereby the verbal echoes so excite the memory that a mere allusion will spontaneously evoke whole quotations and, in turn, a scriptural phrase will suggest quite naturally allusions elsewhere in the sacred books. Each word is like a hook, so to speak; it catches hold of one or several others which become linked together and make up the fabric of the expose.<sup>86</sup>

We see an example of this integration in Julian's reference to Christ, the deep wisdom of the Trinity. In the image of *wysdom* there are possible allusions to Wisdom literature, particularly the Book of Proverbs and the Book of Wisdom,<sup>87</sup> *logos* theology from John 1:1-18, and wisdom theology in 1 Corinthians 1:17-25. In her images, Julian integrates multiple scriptural allusions into her text, freely without references. These create verbal echoes, excite the memory, and evoke quotations, phrases and images. Although we know this integration is occurring it is impossible to say concisely how many allusions Julian's echoes evoke.

Julian also infuses her text with patristic ideas. She integrates these sources in a similar way to scripture. Commenting on this way of writing, Matter explains:

(O)riginality is here the process of borrowing, re-working, using old material in new ways to show the imagination and talents of a given author .... They did not distinguish between borrowing and the creation of new ideas. True creativity was often seen in the

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<sup>86</sup> Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, 2d. ed. trans. Catherine Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1961), 91.

<sup>87</sup> E.g., Proverbs 1:20-33; Proverbs 8:1-8; Wisdom 1:6-7.

way disparate sources were conceived to fit together.<sup>88</sup>

Without mentioning her sources, Julian freely borrows and reworks theological insights from patristic classics. It cannot be determined whether Julian actually read the works of the most important Fathers, or whether she integrated their ideas into her thought processes through listening to homilies, or to the works being read. Nevertheless, her writings show the influence of years of accumulated theological insights. We see a clear example where *beholding* evokes whole quotations from patristic literature in her question: What is sin?:

*Whate es synne? For I sawe trulye that god dothe alle thyng, be itt nevere so litille, nor nathynge es done be happe ne be eventure, botte the endeles forluxe of the wysdome of god. Whare fore me behovede nedes grawnte that alle thyng that es done es wele done.*<sup>89</sup>

Compare Augustine:

Whence then is evil, since God who is good made all things good? It was the greater and supreme Good who made these lesser goods, but Creator and Creation are alike good. Whence then comes evil?<sup>90</sup>

Julian's question about sin echoes Augustine's text in format and in content. In this example the word *synne* either consciously or unconsciously awakens her memory and becomes a "hook" which links her own thought with Augustine's.

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<sup>88</sup> Ann E. Matter, *The Voice of My Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 6.

<sup>89</sup> viii:5-9,226. *What is sin? For I saw truly that God does everything, however small it may be, and that nothing is done by chance, but it is of the endless providence of God's wisdom. Therefore I was compelled to admit that everything which is done is well done.* 137. Cf. 11:6-9;18-19,336-338.

<sup>90</sup> Augustine, *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, trans. F. J. Sheed (London: Sheed and Ward, 1949), 7.5.106.

This leads to a delicate process of fusion of language. Each time Julian considers the question of sin, Augustine's ponderings become part of the network of interlocking images. Although I point to possible sources of Julian's theology as an aid to interpretation, this is a task that could never be concluded. The thesis does not primarily aim to trace historical sources.

#### IV. THE HERMENEUTICAL CIRCLE

As much as we can understand of Julian's own intention will always be the primary concern in interpreting her theology. It is possible, however, that the reader of the text extracts further meaning from it not necessarily obvious to Julian herself. As we examine Julian's theology, informed by the unfolding of history, implications about salvation will emerge that may not have been apparent to Julian. Too often scholars of Julian assume that she knows exactly what she is seeking to communicate.<sup>91</sup> Unless she states categorically that it is God's will that we know a certain teaching, I would argue that Julian invites the reader into the continual reflection and analysis that she models. Furthermore, as Schleiermacher suggests, we can never totally objectify an author or her ideas:

Since speaking and writing is an "act" that almost leaves the "I" on one side, so the circle of understanding never closes itself because the inventiveness of the interpreter finds in the text truths not understood by the author; through the very act of comprehension these truths become fresh historical happening and thus a way of

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<sup>91</sup> Baker, *From Vision to Book*, 107-134, assumes that Julian knows Augustine's teaching and deliberately chooses to reframe his ideas. I consider Julian's theology to be less deliberate and more an expression of her personal understanding of divine love.

interpretation in different circumstances.<sup>92</sup>

The purpose of engaging in the art of theological interpretation is to attempt to be true to Julian's meaning and to transfer meaning from one cultural language to another. This includes becoming part of the hermeneutical circle, engaging in theology as Julian engages in theology. Yet, the hermeneutic we employ must heed Van Dyk's warning about atonement theology:

The dark mystery, the holy secret of the atonement must always serve as a caution and reminder to the theologian. The atoning death of Jesus Christ will not be reduced to a formula of scholars or a possession of the church. The tragic elements of the story, the inescapable judgement on human self-deception, and the mysterious salvific impact of the atonement must never be muted or dimmed in the legitimate interest of theological clarity and precision.<sup>93</sup>

Although we are interested in clarity and precision, Julian's theology always leaves room for the mysterious salvific impact of divine presence to continue to reveal itself. The key to a hermeneutic for interpreting the visions is that the theology expressed in the text is first contained in the visions. The pictures created by her words interact with the words that form in her understanding. They act sacramentally as they crystallize insights about divine love perceived in Julian's understanding. Therefore in order to interpret Julian's soteriology, I will attempt to draw together images presented throughout the text on thematic lines so that we may see more clearly the subtle links in images and the words that form

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<sup>92</sup> Prosper Grech, "Hermeneutics," in DFT, 419. This is in contrast to the argument that the true meaning of a passage is only the meaning intended by the author.

<sup>93</sup> Leanne Van Dyk, "Vision and Imagination in Atonement Doctrine," *Theology Today* 50 (1993): 4.

in her understanding. For clarity's sake, I will attempt to define words as Julian defines them, or where this is not possible point to their general meaning in Middle English. I will highlight the theology contained within the visions and express this in terms of organizing ideas that express her understanding of soteriology.

## VII. THIS IS A REVELATION OF LOVE

Julian's text is concerned with revelation. It is *a reuelacion of loue*.<sup>94</sup> This leads to the question of the significance of these revelations for the Christian community and for Christian theology. We may wonder whether these are personal revelations which have no relevance for the wider community.<sup>95</sup> I would argue, however, that Julian's revelations belong to a corpus of public literature that seeks to give insight into the mystery of the divine. While Julian's revelations may be classified as private revelation,<sup>96</sup> they are not revelations addressed only to her. The comment she makes towards the beginning of her text about the general nature of the revelation reinforces the value of the text as a more public revelation:

*In alle this I was much steryde in cheryte to myne evyn christen,  
that they myght alle see and know the same that I sawe, for I wolde*

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<sup>94</sup> See n.16, 49 and n.39, 61.

<sup>95</sup> Robert H. Thouless, *The Lady Julian: A Psychological Study* (London: SPCK, 1924), 25, points out that this experience could be a drug-induced hallucination.

<sup>96</sup> "Private revelation" is a term used by Rahner. See Karl Rahner, *Visions and Prophecies* (London: Burns and Oates, 1963), 13-14.

*that it were comfort to them, for alle this syght was shewde in generalle.*<sup>97</sup>

From Julian's perspective these are not private revelations solely addressed to her, because *syght was shewde in generalle* for the comfort of all. She repeats this opinion and gives it weight by suggesting that it is God's will that her readers *behold* God in it:

*And therefore I pray yow alle for gods sake, and counceyle yow for yowre awne pro(f)yght, pat ye leue the beholdyng of a wrech that it was shewde to, and myghtely, wysely and mekely behold in god, that of hys curteyse loue and endlesse goodnesse wolld shew it generally in comfort of vs alle. For it is goddes wylle that ze take it with a grete ioy and lykyng, as Jhesu hath shewde it to yow.*<sup>98</sup>

With humility, Julian counsels her readers not to focus on her experience of the vision, but to focus on the revelation of God that occurs through the experience and reflection on the experience. She advises her readers to *behold* God in the vision. The vision is a revelation given to the community for the comfort of all.

Although it is difficult to categorize Julian's writing, I wish to suggest that it belongs to the category of public revelation. Julian believes that her visions are an action of God which she experiences and interprets in language and images

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<sup>97</sup> 1:8.22-24,319. *In all this I was greatly moved in love towards my fellow Christians, that they might all see and know the same as I saw, for I wished it to be a comfort to them, for all this vision was shown for all men.* 190.

<sup>98</sup> 1:8.34-40,320. *And therefore I pray you all for God's sake, and I counsel you for your own profit, that you disregard the wretch to whom it was shown, and that mightily, wisely and meekly you contemplate upon God, who out of his courteous love and his endless goodness was willing to show it generally, to the comfort of us all. For it is God's will that you accept it with great joy and delight, as Jesus has shown it to you.* 191.

familiar to her. More specifically the revelation that Julian seeks to describe is what O'Collins calls *dependent* revelation, as distinguished from *foundational* revelation.<sup>99</sup> *Foundational* revelation describes the original apostolic experience of and witness to Jesus. *Dependent* revelation names revelation that is grounded in this primordial experience and continues to occur in history in the lives of believers. According to this distinction, then, Julian's revelations are *dependent* revelations which express her understanding of the continual revelation of God in her lifetime.

The revelation that occurs in the presentation of bodily sights, words forming in her understanding and spiritual sights resonates with Dulles' definition of revelation as symbolic disclosure.<sup>100</sup> In Dulles' model, revelation is never considered to be a purely internal experience or unmediated encounter with God. It is always mediated through an experience in the world. Specifically, it is communicated through symbol, through externally perceived signs that work mysteriously on human consciousness.<sup>101</sup> "Revelatory symbols," he concludes, "are those which express and mediate God's self communication."<sup>102</sup> Julian's

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<sup>99</sup> O'Collins, *Fundamental Theology*, 102.

<sup>100</sup> Dulles defines symbols in terms outlined by Wheelwright as tensive symbols, symbols which: "'draw life from a multiplicity of associations subtly and for the most part subconsciously interrelated,' and which derive the power to tap vast potential of semantic energy." Avery Dulles, "Symbolic Structure of Revelation," *Theological Studies* 41 (1980): 56.

<sup>101</sup> Dulles, "Symbolic Structure of Revelation," 55-56.

<sup>102</sup> Dulles, "Symbolic Structure of Revelation," 56.

*Revelations of Divine Love* are not simply a subjective, relative, reductionist, internal experience of God that is mediated through the prayer of *beholding* the crucifix. The crucifix becomes a symbol. It is an externally perceived sign that works mysteriously on her consciousness and enables her to interpret levels of meaning that objectively reflect orthodox Christian thought on the nature of reality. The experience belongs to the community's body of knowledge. The composition of Julian's text enables her to express her insights, to formulate theology, and to share her understanding.

Julian deserves to take her place amongst the community of theologians who seek to interpret divine revelation in their times. Just as she had something to say to her own times, so too she has something to contribute to a deeper understanding of salvation today. Rahner points to the value of taking such writing seriously:

In turbulent times, the minds of men are agitated not only by the events themselves, but they also seek an interpretation of present events and a promise for a future. And if they are believers they know that the interpretation of the present and the promise of the future ultimately can be found only in God. Then they hope that this enlightening and auspicious word of God may be imparted to them as clearly and unequivocally as possible. They seek people who claim to have perceived this special word from heaven, and they are disposed to believe it.<sup>103</sup>

Julian believed that she had something to say about the mystery of divine love, interpreted in the present and offering promise for the future. Some consider her vision of value, others will not. Ultimately the criterion Christian theology can judge her by is "by their fruits you will know them" (Matthew 7:16a; 20).

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<sup>103</sup> Rahner, *Visions and Prophecies*, 7.



## VII. A SUMMARY OF JULIAN'S STYLE AND METHOD

Julian gives primacy to her personal experience of God. This starting point, grounded in life experience, is highly significant for the theology that emerges. Negatively, her emphasis on her own visionary experience of God could lead to concern about authenticity, bias and introspection. Positively, however, Julian's *showings* resonate with some of the best expressions of Catholic theology. She displays an ability to record her personal experience of God, and to give fresh insights into the nature and meaning of revelation. She invites her readers to enter her experience, to journey with her as insights emerge, to encounter the story of salvation in a fresh, dynamic way.

The theology that emerges from *beholding* integrates insights that arise from contemplative gazing. This seeing comes from knowing that integrates wisdom felt, experienced and intuited in the deepest levels of her being. Insights surface as Julian engages her whole being in seeing, tasting, feeling and hearing the mystery of divine love revealed in Christ. This allows for the expression of ideas missed or disregarded in a more scholastic approach to theology. The contemplative nature of the theology balances other works within Western theology which stress a strictly philosophically fashioned doctrinal approach.

The threefold way of interpretation that Julian describes, bodily sight, words formed in understanding and *ghostly* sight, enables her to weave together diverse

strands of *kataphatic* and *apophatic* knowing,<sup>104</sup> and leaves room for the creation of a new fabric. The bodily sights emphasize the similarity between God and the created world, while the spiritual sights retain the ineffable incomprehensibility of God. Negatively, the use of such language is inherently imprecise. It relies on context to express meaning. It is susceptible to ambiguity and vulnerable to misinterpretation. Positively, however, language that creates images and concepts and yet points beyond itself and beyond images and concepts is sensitive to the problem of limiting the mystery of God to the language that defines the mystery. It maintains complexity inherent in theological articulation.

The crucifix becomes a symbol for Julian, an externally perceived sign that works mysteriously on her consciousness and enables her to interpret levels of meaning that objectively reflect orthodox Christian thought on the nature of reality. The composition of the text enables Julian to express her insights, to formulate theology, and to share her understanding. Thus the text becomes sacramental because it encourages participation in the meaning that unfolds. In the telling of her experience and the insights that emerge, Julian's personal experience becomes communal. It becomes part of the Christian community's reflection on the divine.

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<sup>104</sup> The *kataphatic* tradition or affirmative way emphasizes a similarity between creatures and the Creator. The *apophatic* tradition or negative way emphasizes the incomprehensibility of God. See Harvey Egan, "Christian Apophatic and Kataphatic Mysticism," *Theological Studies* 39 (1978): 405.

### VIII. IMPLICATIONS OF THE HERMENEUTIC FOR THIS STUDY

The unique way in which Julian presents her theology has implications for the way in which I will proceed with interpretation. The first implication comes from the presentation of ideas as a whole. All the ideas that emerge must not be isolated from each other. All must be taken together. While these inter-related and inter-connected ideas may not seem very clear at first, neither are they confused: they relate to each other as ripples form on the surface of a pond. This means that systematizing individual aspects of Julian's work creates a disharmony within its wholeness. At the same time, however, the reader needs some system and direction in order to comprehend aspects of her theology. Therefore, in order to aid interpretation of these ideas, I attempt to remain true to the mystical wholeness of the work and yet to identify and thematize her theology. This creates a tension. On one hand there is the inexpressibility of mystical consciousness and its resistance to being contained within a system, and on the other hand, the requirements of clearly presenting Julian's soteriology. The study is constrained by these requirements.

The second implication arises from the fact that Julian does not divide her theology into discrete segments, or concentrate on a single theme. Rather Julian inter-connects all the mysteries of Christian faith, placing these within a framework of trinitarian love. Negatively, this necessitates repetition when presenting an analysis of a single theological theme because often a single image

communicates more than one theological idea. Positively, the fruit of this infusion of different theological fragments into a trinitarian schema is that there is an underlying homogeneity that connects each dimension of theology. Thus a study of Julian's soteriology necessitates some repetition in order to remain consistent with her method.

The third implication occurs as a result of Julian's eclectic integration of scripture and other sources. This makes the theology extremely dense. It invites the synthesis of a wide range of images, doctrines and theological perspectives. This creates problems in that it is difficult to pin Julian down, to trace sources with any certainty or to place her within in any specific theological school. Positively, this intricacy leaves room for the paradoxical nature of theology and the complexity of revelation.

The fourth implication rests on the notion of hermeneutics. We can explain the language expressed through using the historical and literary means available to understand an author. There also is, however, the role the interpreter plays in the hermeneutical circle. Although Julian's own intention and theological interpretations are always paramount, the contemporary interpreter plays a role in the interpretive process. In other words, as author of the thesis I bring my own cultural, religious and personal perspectives on reality. In light of the specific nature of Julian's hermeneutic and the conviction that Julian's text has something

to say to contemporary society about the salvific meaning of divine love, we are now ready to address the soteriology expressed in the *showings*.

**PART TWO**

**A SOTERIOLOGY OF *ONEING***

*By þe vertu of that ech precyous onyng. (14:58.8,582).*

## CHAPTER THREE

### ONEING THROUGH THE TRINITY

*For alle oure lyfe is in thre.* (14:58.30, 585).

Julian's doctrine of salvation is a theology of love that has its foundation in the love within the Trinity. Although Julian never explicitly develops a doctrine of the Trinity or systematically outlines her trinitarian theology, the mystery of trinitarian love is behind all the key elements in her soteriology. Every word in *The Revelation of Divine Love* creates a network of interwoven images that reveals the certainty of salvation because there is an eternal ontological and existential relationship founded in love between the Trinity and all people that creates an ontology of being-in-relationship. The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of this central doctrine which forms the foundation of Julian's soteriology, the love within the Trinity. The exegesis will situate Julian's theology of love, described as *charyte vnmade*, *charyte made* and *charyte gevyn*, in a totally trinitarian context. After examining Julian's threefold understanding of *charyte*, we will discern how this understanding of salvation history is a soteriology of *oneing* with a movement that is similar to the Plotinian notion of *exitus* (exit) *reditus* (return). Thus, the exegesis will create a framework through which we can examine in more detail throughout the thesis what it means to be saved by the God of love, in Christ through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

## I. LOVE WAS HIS MEANING

Towards the end of the long text in the sixteenth revelation, which Julian describes as a conclusion and confirmation of the other fifteen *showings*, she summarizes the understanding she came to about the meaning of salvation: *at þe ende alle shalle be charite*,<sup>1</sup> and finally, *loue was his menyng*.<sup>2</sup> It took Julian fifteen years of prayerful reflection to come to know that the heart of God's meaning is love:

*And fro the tyme þat it was shewde, I desyerde oftyn tymes to wytt in what was oure lords menyng. And xv yere after and mor, I was answeyrd in gostly vnderstondyng, seyeng thus: What, woldest thou wytt thy lordes menyng in this thyng? Wytt it wele, loue was his menyng. Who shewyth it the? Loue. (What shewid he the? Love.) Wherefore shewyth he it the? For loue. Holde the therin, thou shalt wytt more in the same. But thou schalt nevyr witt therin other withoutyn ende. Thus was I lernyd, þat loue is oure lordes menyng. And I sawe fulle surely in this and in alle that or god made vs he lovyd vs, whych loue was nevyr slekyd ne nevyr shalle. And in this loue he hath done alle his werkes, and in this loue he hath made alle thynges profytable to vs, and in this loue oure lyfe is evyr lastyng. In oure makyng we had begynnyng, but the loue wher in he made vs was in hym fro with out begynnyng. In whych loue we haue oure begynnyng, and alle this shalle we see in god with outyn ende.*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 16:84.9,727. *in the end everything will be charity.* 340.

<sup>2</sup> 16:86.16,733. *love was his meaning.* 342.

<sup>3</sup> 16:86.13-27,732-734. *And from the time that it was revealed, I desired many times to know in what was our Lord's meaning. And fifteen years after and more, I was answered in spiritual understanding, and it was said: What, do you wish to know your Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well, love was his meaning. Who reveals it to you? Love. What did he reveal to you? Love. Why does he reveal it to you? For love. Remain in this, and you will know more of the same. But you will never know different, without end. So I was taught that love is our Lord's meaning. And I saw very certainly in this and in everything that before God made us he loved us, which love was never abated and never will be. And in this love he has done all his works, and in this love he has made all*



This famous exposition of love comes to Julian in the form of *gostly vnderstandyng*. Spiritual in nature, this is language that points beyond itself, beyond words. It is an understanding, that she *can nott be may shew it as openly ne as fully as (she) would*.<sup>4</sup> Through analytical questioning<sup>5</sup> Julian appraises the theological consequences of 1 John 4:8, "God is Love." She leaves aside her pattern of threes and repeats the word "love" ten times, emphasizing that love is the essence of the Godhead. What is God's meaning? Love. Who revealed it? Love. Why did God create? Out of love. How does God communicate? In love. To know our Lord's meaning is to know God's love, to know the creative, redemptive, ecstatic, unitive love of the Trinity. Divine love does not stay self-enclosed but shares itself in love. She summarizes the journey from love, to love: *In oure makyng we had begynnyng, but the loue wher in he made vs was in hym fro with out begynnyng. In whych loue we haue oure begynnyng, and alle this shalle we see in god with outyn ende*.<sup>6</sup> Love goes forth from God. God creates the world in love. God dwells within humanity in love. God provides a

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*things profitable to us, and in this love our life is everlasting. In our creation we had beginning, but the love in which he created us was in him from without beginning. In this love we have our beginning, and all this shall we see in God without end.* 342-343.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 2, n.36, 60.

<sup>5</sup> Colledge and Walsh consider that through these questions Julian echoes the 'four causes' as defined in Aristotle's *Physic*. "'Woldst thou wytt the lordes menyng?' inquires into the 'formal cause', 'Who shewyth it the?' the 'efficient cause', 'What shewid he the?' for the 'material cause', and 'Wherfore shewyth he it the?' for the 'final cause'." BSAJN, n.15, 732.

<sup>6</sup> See n.3, 93.

protective presence that redeems the world from within. God makes an eternal gift to the world through the gift to the world of God's self. Thus life is a journey in this love from God to God.

## II. CHARITY UNMADE, CHARITY MADE, CHARITY GIVEN

Immediately prior to presenting love as the meaning that underlies all reality, Julian gives a reflection on *charyte*.<sup>7</sup> Her insights about *charyte* emerge in a revelation which begins: *I had in perty touchyng, syght and feelyng*.<sup>8</sup> This suggests that her understanding is partial. Fragmentary insights are seen, felt, experienced and intuited in the deepest levels of her being after a considerable time spent *beholding*.<sup>9</sup> In her usual pattern of three, Julian delineates the *ijj manner of vnderstondynges in this lyght of (c)ha(r)ite*:<sup>10</sup>

*The furst is charite vnmade, the seconnde is charyte made, the thyrde is charyte gevyn. Charyte vnmade is god, charyte made is oure soule in god, charyte gevyn is vertu, and þat is a gracious gyfte of wurkyng, in whych we loue god for hym selfe, and oure selfe in god, and alle þat god lovyth for god.*<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> It is noteworthy that in the Paris and Sloane1 texts both words charity and love are used. It is not clear if there is a distinction between the two.

<sup>8</sup> 16:83.2,722. *In this matter I had touching, sight and feeling.* 339.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter 2, 51-59.

<sup>10</sup> 16:84.10,727. *three kinds of understanding in this light of charity.* 341.

<sup>11</sup> 16:84.10-15,727. *The first is uncreated charity, the second is created charity, the third is given charity. Uncreated charity is God, created charity is our soul in God, given charity is virtue, and that is a gift of grace in deeds, in which we love God for himself, and ourselves in God, and all that God loves for God.* 341.

Julian places her understanding about *charyte* within contrasting metaphors of divine light and the darkness of woe. *Charyte* is a light in the darkness. The description takes us into the area of Julian's understanding. Though not labelled as such, it has the ambience of a *gostly sight*.

The reflection on *charyte* expresses Julian's understanding about the meaning of love. As Glasscoe points out:

This passage, like the tip of an iceberg, signals a deep supporting structure. It is an intellectual formulation in simply ordered prose which assimilates all Julian's growth in understanding of the nature of God and his relationship to his creation.<sup>12</sup>

The passage creates an underlying supporting structure that interlaces all aspects of Julian's theology. It grounds every *showing* in love. The three-fold repetitive formula creates a dialectical relationship between the unmade, eternal nature of divine love and finite created love given. In the word, *charyte*, Julian incorporates a range of nuances.<sup>13</sup> *Charyte* enables human beings to live *medfully*

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<sup>12</sup> *A Revelation of Love*, ed. Glasscoe, xvi.

<sup>13</sup> Julian is not limiting *charyte* to the common usage of *charity* ultimately derived from the Old French *charité* and the Latin *caritas*, which describes the expression of love amongst people, or an act of kindness. See Lesley Brown, ed. *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 375. (hereafter, NSOED). Julian's use of the word *charyte* is more in the tradition of Aquinas who gives *charity* ontological status by associating *charity* with the being of God. He describes *charity* as the love that was in God from eternity and never distinguishes the loving of God from God. See Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 288-289.

with *traveyle*.<sup>14</sup> *Charyte* is one of the theological virtues: *Thus charite kepyth vs in feyth and in hope. And feyth and hope ledyth vs in charite*.<sup>15</sup> In this trinitarian context, however, the use of the qualifiers *vmade*, *made* and *gevyn* associate *charyte* with the being and action of the Godhead. *Charyte* has ontological status.<sup>16</sup> *Charyte vmade*, *charyte made* and *charyte gevyn* distinguish three ways in which divine love originates and shares itself.

The first way of understanding divine love, *charyte vmade*, accentuates that there is no beginning to God's loving. God has no other source except God's self from which God loves. God does not possess love, God is love. *Charyte vmade* establishes a trinitarian<sup>17</sup> ontology grounded in love,<sup>18</sup> which places the whole of

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<sup>14</sup> 16:84.5,726. *meritoriously, with labour*. 340.

<sup>15</sup> 16:84.8-9,727. *So charity keeps us in faith and in hope. And faith and hope lead us in charity*. 340.

<sup>16</sup> We will see that the ontological status Julian gives to love is in direct contrast to the non-ontological status she gives to sin.

<sup>17</sup> Maisonneuve agrees: "'Charyte vmade', c'est la Trinité, non dans son essence trinitaire, mais en tant qu'on considère le don d'amour qui, du Père va au Fils, et du Fils au Père, dans le don de consommation du Saint-Esprit. Est bien marqué, dans cette distinction, le caractère fondamental de la vision trinitaire chez Julian, toujours perçue sous l'angle de la communication, et non de l'être essentiel." Maisonneuve, *L'Univers Visionnaire de Julian of Norwich*, 213.

<sup>18</sup> Colledge and Walsh point to the similarity between Julian, Thomas Aquinas and Walter Hilton in the reference to *charyte vmade* and *charyte made*. For both Aquinas and Hilton "charity uncreated" is directly related to the Holy Spirit dwelling in the soul, while "charity created" is human participation in the Holy Spirit. BSAJN, n.10, 727. However, there is a distinguishing characteristic in Julian's use of *charyte vmade* and *charyte made*. *Charyte vmade* is not only an attribute associated with the Holy Spirit, but it reflects the essence of the Godhead, the being of the Trinity itself, while *charyte made* is the human soul in

reality in relationship to the love within the Trinity. She sees no beginning to the loving of *charyte vnmade*:

*For I saw that god began nevyr to loue mankynde; for ryghte the same that mankynd shall be in endlesse blesse, fulfylling the joy of god as anemptis his werkys, ryghte so the same mankynd hath be in the forsyghte of god knowen and lovyd fro without begynnyng in his ryghtfull entent.*<sup>19</sup>

There is one history of love founded in the eternity of God that begins before the creation of human nature. At the end of the *showings* Julian asserts her certainty at the eternal nature of God's loving: *And I sawe fulle surely in this and in alle that or god made vs he lovyd vs, whych loue was nevyr slekyd ne nevyr shalle.*<sup>20</sup>

The nature of *charyte unmade* is not to stay self-enclosed but to unite human beings in the love within the Godhead. This union in love creates an ontological bond that can never be destroyed. The eternity of God's loving is the background in which God creates.

The second way of understanding divine love, *charyte made*,<sup>21</sup> shows how completely divine love is shared with humankind:

*For or that he made vs he louyd vs, and when we were made we*

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the Trinity.

<sup>19</sup> 14:53.26-30,557. *For I saw that God never began to love mankind; for just as mankind will be in endless bliss, fulfilling God's joy with regard to his works, just so has that same mankind been known and loved in God's prescience from without beginning in his righteous intent.* 283.

<sup>20</sup> See n.3, 93.

<sup>21</sup> We will examine Julian's understanding of *charyte made* (her anthropology) in Chapter 4, 129-183.

*louyd hym; and this is a lo(u)e made of the kyndly substanncyall goodnesse of the holy gost, myghty in reson of the myghte of the fader, and wyse in mynde of the wysdom of the son. And thus is mannys soule made of god, and in the same poynte knyte to god.*<sup>22</sup>

Humankind is loved in eternity. *Lo(u)e made* is the shared love of the *kyndly substanncyall goodnesse* of the Holy Spirit, the *myghte* of the Father and the *wysdom* of the Son.<sup>23</sup> Each divine person shares divine love with *charyte made*. The unusual placement of the Holy Spirit first in the trinitarian formula emphasizes the dynamic role of the Holy Spirit in sharing divine love.<sup>24</sup> The sharing of trinitarian love means that humanity is *made of god, and in the same point knyte to god*.

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<sup>22</sup> 14:53.36-40,558. *For before he made us he loved us, and when we were made we loved him; and this is made only of the natural substantial goodness of the Holy Spirit, mighty by reason of the might of the Father, wise in mind of the wisdom of the Son. And so is man's soul made by God, and in the same moment joined to God.* 283-284.

<sup>23</sup> Although Julian does not use the term, she is assigning "appropriations" to each person of the Trinity. Based on an Augustinian doctrine, appropriations are characteristics or roles appropriated to a divine person although they do not belong in a formal sense to that person. Cf. Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins and Dermot A. Lane, eds. *The New Dictionary of Theology* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1990), 54. (hereafter, NDT). Julian appropriates might to the Father, wisdom to the Son and goodness to the Holy Spirit: E.g., 14:58.34-36,585. *þe hygh myght of the trynyte is oure fader, and the deep wysdom of the trynyte is oure moder, and the grete loue of the trynyte is our lorde;* (The high might of the Trinity is our Father, the deep wisdom of the Trinity is our Mother and the great love of the Trinity is our Lord; 294.) In keeping with the idea that the activities of God are common to all persons she also applies other attributes: E.g., 14:59.29-30,591-592. *(O)ur fader wyllyth, oure mother werkyth, oure good lorde the holy gost confyrmyth.* (Our Father wills, our Mother works and the Holy Spirit confirms. 296.)

<sup>24</sup> Julian's references to the role of the Holy Spirit align with the *filioque* clause, to the effect that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son as from one principle. See Chapter 8, n.6, 317.

The third way of understanding divine love, *charyte gevyn*, includes *vertu*, and *þat is a gracious gyfte of wurkyng, in whych we loue god for hym selfe, and oure selfe in god, and alle þat god lovyth for god.*<sup>25</sup> *Charyte gevyn* suggests that *charyte unmade* gives love to humanity gratuitously. This gift given, Julian further characterizes as *vertu*. In popular usage *vertu* characterizes valour, worth, merit, courage, uprightness and moral perfection. It can also describe the power inherent in a divine being.<sup>26</sup> But this does not adequately define Julian's theological use of the term. In reference to divine love, *charyte gevyn* is the power of love inherent in the Trinity which works in human lives as grace and makes present the theological virtues of faith, hope and love.<sup>27</sup> These virtues enable human beings to *loue god for hym selfe, and oure selfe in god and alle þat god lovyth for god.*

### III. HOMELY AND COURTEOUS: QUALITIES OF DIVINE LOVE

Another dimension of the *perty touchyng* that enables Julian to understand that

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<sup>25</sup> See n.11, 95.

<sup>26</sup> NSOED, 3586.

<sup>27</sup> Gregory the Great (d.604) was the first to apply the philosophical notion of virtue to faith, hope and love. Peter Lombard (d.1160) deals extensively with theological virtues as does Aquinas. Cf. *Aquinas, Thomas. Summa Theologica*. 3 vols. trans. the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947), 1-2.q.62.1-4.851-853. (hereafter, *Summa*). The term "theological virtue" came into use in the thirteenth century. Wolfgang Beinert and Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, *Handbook of Catholic Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 696-697. (Hereafter, HCT). As with other terms she uses, Julian could have heard of this through homilies and theological discussion. She does not use the descriptor "theological". She simply refers to virtue in an inclusive sense. See Chapter 8, 318-319.

love is our Lord's meaning is her identification of the qualities of divine love as

*homely and curteyse:*

*I had in perty touchyng, syght and feelyng in thre propertees of god, in whych the strenght and þe effecte of alle þe revelacion stondyth. And it were seen in every shewyng, and most properly in the twelfe, were it seyeth oftyn tymes: I it am. The propertees are theyse: lyfe, loue and lyght. In lyfe is mervelous homelyhed, in loue is gentyll curtesse, and in lyght is endlesse kyndnesse. Theyse iij propertees were seen in oone goodnesse.<sup>28</sup>*

There are three properties<sup>29</sup> in God, *lyfe, loue and lyght*, in which *the strength and þe effecte of alle þe revelacion stondyth*. These properties underlie and inform the entire revelations. They are *seen in every shewyng*, especially the twelfth which is a vision of the glorified Christ.<sup>30</sup> Julian further describes *the strenght and þe effecte* of these properties as *mervelous homelyhed, gentyll*

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<sup>28</sup> 16:83.2-8,722-723. *In this matter I had touching, sight and feeling of three properties of God, in which consist the strength and the effect of all the revelation. And it was seen in every revelation, and most exactly in the twelfth, where it says repeatedly: I am he. The properties are these: life, love and light. In life is wonderful familiarity, in love is gentle courtesy, and in light is endless nature. These three properties were seen in one goodness. 339.*

<sup>29</sup> Traditionally *properties* describes the relative contrasts between divine persons that are grounded in their particular ways of giving and receiving the divine essence. They ground the individuality of the persons. There are five properties. We recognize the Father by his being originless, generative, and breathing; the Son by his being generated and breathing; the Spirit by its being breathed. See HCT, 726. Notably, Julian uses the word in a more general sense. She does not refer to five properties, nor does she refer to the imagery of breath. Colledge and Walsh point out that for Julian these properties are actually appropriations that can be applied to each person of the Trinity in turn. Life, love and light, while specific to Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are not limited to any one person. They equally belong to each person. BSAJN, n.5, 722.

<sup>30</sup> See Chapter 5, 222.



*curtesse, and endlesse kyndnesse.*<sup>31</sup> Every *showing* reveals the quality of divine love to be *homely* and *curteyse*.

Julian often couples *homely* and *curteyse* love as two essential dimensions of divine love: *For oure lorde hym selfe is souereyn homelyhed, and so homely as he is, as curtesse he is; for he is very curteyse.*<sup>32</sup> Together the expressions of love create a *mervelous melody in endlesse loue*. They harmonize with each other to reveal the intimate and close, as well as majestic and polite qualities of divine love. *Homely* and *curteyse* love signify the trustworthiness of God: *And he wyll be trustyd, for he is fulle homely, curteyse, blessyd mott he be.*<sup>33</sup> *Homely* and *curteyse* love is shared with humanity through each person of the Trinity:

*For þe most fulhede of ioy that we shalle haue, as to my syght, ys thys marvelous curtesy and homelynesse of oure fader, that is oure maker, in oure lorde Jhesu Crist, that is oure broder and oure sauior. But this marvelous homelynesse may no man know in this lyfe, but yf he haue it by specialle schewyng of oure lorde, or of gret plenty of grace inwardly yeven of the holy gost. But feyth and beleue with charyte deserue the mede, and so it is had by grace.*<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> I will examine Julian's understanding of *kyndnesse* in Chapter 4, 145-147.

<sup>32</sup> 16:77.54-55,695. *For our Lord himself is supreme familiarity, and he is as courteous as he is familiar, for he is true courtesy.* 331.

<sup>33</sup> 2:10.95-96,335. *And he wants to be trusted, for he is very accessible, familiar and courteous, blessed may he be.* 196.

<sup>34</sup> 1:7.52-59,315. *For the greatest abundance of joy which we shall have, as I see it, is this wonderful courtesy and familiarity of our Father, who is our Creator, in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our brother and our saviour. But no man can know this wonderful familiarity in this life, unless by a special revelation from our Lord, or from a great abundance of grace, given within by the Holy Spirit. But faith and belief together with love deserve the reward, and so it is received by grace.* 189.

The love of the Father is *homely* and *curteyse* in Christ. Human beings participate in this love. We gain further understanding of this *marvelous homelynesse* through the *gret plenty of grace* given inwardly by the Holy Spirit.<sup>35</sup> Characterized as imparting joy, the *curtesy* and *homelynesse* within the Trinity bestows the joy human beings partially experience in this life and look forward to in our final return to God in the beatific vision. To know and experience the fullness of *homely* and *curteyse* love is the goal of the spiritual journey: *oure soule shalle nevyr haue reste tylle it come into hym, knowyng that he is full of joye, homely and curteys and blessydfulle and very lyfe.*<sup>36</sup> We shall fully see *homely* and *curteys* love in eternity.

### In Life is Marvelous Homliness

Julian gives a concrete image of what she means by *homely louyng*:

*(O)ur good lord shewed a gostly sight of his homely louyng. I saw that he is to vs all thing that is good and comfortable to our helpe. He is oure clothing, that for loue wrappeth vs and wyndeth vs, halseth vs and all becloseth vs, hangeth about vs for tender loue, þat he may never leue vs.*<sup>37</sup>

Understanding comes to Julian about *homely louyng* as part of a *gostly sight*. The

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<sup>35</sup> We will examine Julian's theology of grace in Chapter 7, 286-301, and Chapter 8, 316-322; 333-337.

<sup>36</sup> 12:26.4-6,402. *our soul will never have rest till it comes into him, acknowledging that he is full of joy, familiar and courteous and blissful and true life.* 223.

<sup>37</sup> 1:5.2-6,299. *(O)ur good Lord showed a spiritual sight of his familiar love. I saw that he is to us everything which is good and comforting for our help. He is our clothing, who wraps and enfolds us for love, embraces us and shelters us, surrounds us for his love, which is so tender that he may never desert us.* 183

language encourages felt cognisance.<sup>38</sup> The image of clothing enclosing the body, *wrappeth*, *wyndeth* and *halseth* creates a sense of being surrounded in Christ, held in Christ, and comforted by Christ. The quality of *homely* love is tender. It never leaves us. Later in the text Julian describes Christ making a home in humanity: *The place that Jhesu takyth in oure soule he shall nevyr remoue withouten ende, as to my syght, for in vs is his homelyest home and his endlesse dwellyng.*<sup>39</sup> *Homely louyng* describes Christ's intimate presence to humanity, his being at home, and endlessly dwelling within humanity.

The *homely love* that these images describe resonates with the interpretation of *homely* that comes from concrete Germanic words *homli*, *homlihed*, *homlines*.<sup>40</sup> *Homely* in this sense means belonging to a home or household, becoming as one of a household, intimate, at home with. It characterizes home as a place where one receives kind treatment.<sup>41</sup> It is also linguistically related to the word "humble" or could even be a variant spelling of the same word,<sup>42</sup> as in *a sely*

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<sup>38</sup> See Chapter 2, 70-71.

<sup>39</sup> 16:68.15-17,641. *The place which Jesus takes in our soul he will nevermore vacate, for in us is his home of homes and his everlasting dwelling.* 313. The imagery echoes John 15:4, "make your home in me as I make mine in you."

<sup>40</sup> Riehle, *Middle English Mystics*, 97.

<sup>41</sup> James Walsh, "God's Homely Loving: St. John and Julian of Norwich on the Divine Indwelling," *The Month* 19 (1958): 165.

<sup>42</sup> Pelphrey, *Christ Our Mother*, 108.

*sowle come to him naked, pleaynly and homly.*<sup>43</sup> Thus *homely* conveys a range of meanings. It integrates a sense of being friendly, humble, personable as well as a sense of exhibiting hospitality. It includes the word home and expresses the cosiness and lack of formality of a home. It further conveys the meaning of permanence, of making a home and remaining in that place. Theologically, then, *homely louyng* emphasizes the permanence of intimate, tender divine love. *Homely love* is divine love at home in humanity giving life to humanity.<sup>44</sup> Although equivalent in meaning to the Latin word *familiaris*, introduced into theological language by Gregory the Great, which denotes being familiar and later comes to be a synonym for mystical union,<sup>45</sup> Colledge and Walsh's translation of *familiar* for *homely* loses the power of Julian's word *homely*. In the *showings*, *homely louyng* expresses the personal love relationship between God and humanity. It emphasizes the permanence, strength and the effect of intimate, tender love. *Homely love* describes divine love at home in humanity giving life to humanity.

### **In Love is Gentle Courtesy**

Julian complements *homely* love with the quality of courtesy. She associates

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<sup>43</sup> 1:5.35,302. *a simple soul should come naked, openly and familiarly.* 184.

<sup>44</sup> Riehle points out that there was concern in the tradition that when intimate familiarity with God became common place that this would lead to common place profanity. Riehle, *Middle English Mystics*, 97. Julian does not seem concerned that her image of *homely* love would lead to excessive over familiarity between God and humanity.

<sup>45</sup> Riehle, *Middle English Mystics*, 97.

*curtesse* love most often with God's response to sin:

*And this is a sovereyne frenschypp of oure curtesse lorde, that he kepyth vs so tenderly whyle we be in oure synne; ... And than shewyth oure curtesse lorde hym selfe to the soule merely and of fulle glad chere, with frendfully wellcomyng, as if it had ben in payne and in preson, seyeng thus: My dere darlyng, I am glad thou arte come to me in alle thy woe. I haue evyr ben with the, and now seest thou me louyng, and we be onyd in blysse.<sup>46</sup>*

In this passage, composed in the language of courtly love, Julian relates the idea of courtesy to the mystical love between God and the soul. With no hint of any accusations, blame or severing of the courteous relationship because of sin, the *curtesse lorde* offers humanity *sovereyne frenschypp*, a friendship that surpasses all others. The friendship is open and revelatory as the *curtesse lorde* shows himself to the soul. The *curtesse lorde* addresses human beings as lovers, calms their woe and draws them to be one in bliss with God. In a later passage Julian associates courteous love with grace: *(G)race werkyth with mercy, reysyng, rewarding, endlesly ovyr passyng that oure lovyng and our traveyle deseruyth, spredyng abrode and shewyng the hye plentuousnesse, largesse of goddes ryall lordschyppe in his mervelouse curtesy.<sup>47</sup>* *Curtesse* love is grace. It is a love

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<sup>46</sup> 13:40.2-3;10-15,454-455. *And this is a supreme friendship of our courteous Lord, that he protects us so tenderly whilst we are in our sins; ... And then our courteous Lord shows himself to the soul, happily and with the gladdest countenance, welcoming it as a friend, as if it had been in pain and in prison, saying: My dear darling, I am glad that you have come to me in all your woe. I have always been with you, and now you see me loving, and we are made one in bliss.* 246.

<sup>47</sup> 14:48.32-35,503. *(G)race works with mercy, raising, rewarding, endlessly exceeding what our love and labour deserve, distributing and displaying the vast plenty and generosity of God's royal dominion in his wonderful courtesy.* 262-263.

offered in friendship that draws humanity into union with the Trinity. Courteous love is grace that returns human beings to their origin in God, to *be onyd in blysse*.

Many researchers have noted the significance of *curtesy* in Julian's writing.<sup>48</sup> Often associated with courtly love, particularly the wooing of a lady by a knight, *curtesy* points to nobleness and benevolence. It describes graceful politeness or consideration towards others. *Curtesy* also distinguishes a relationship of inheritance as it represents the tenure which a husband held after his wife's death where he inherited certain kinds of property.<sup>49</sup> Olson summarizes the meaning of *curtesy* in Middle English mystical literature that extends from the monastery to the court, is adopted by secular literature and taken over by spiritual writers:

The idea of good manners expanded to an ideal of life characterized by kind thoughtfulness, graceful speech, and nobility of character. In the hands of spiritual writers, courtesy reaches its highest manifestation. The courtesy of God far surpasses any example of human courtesy, or even any human ideal. Rather than being an imposed standard of relationships, God's courtesy is the expression

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. Riehle, *Medieval English Mystics*, 97. W.O. Evans, "'Cortaysye' in Middle English," *Medieval Studies* 29 (1967):143-57. Anna Maria Reynolds, "Courtesy and Homeliness in the Revelations of Julian of Norwich," *Fourteenth Century English Mystics News Letter* 5 (1979): 12-20. Rosemary Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 19-66. In these poems Christ is often depicted as the lover-knight who, though he receives wounds in battle, faithfully returns to his unworthy lover to shower loving attention on her. Nuth cites research carried out by Evans which shows that in religious works, courtesy often refers to God's virtue. Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, 74.

<sup>49</sup> NSOED, 533.

of his very nature, his liberality, goodness and grace.<sup>50</sup>

*Curtesy*, the very expression of God's inner nature, denotes God's love. *Curtesy* points to the majesty and nobility of this love. It conveys the radical character of God's intimacy with humanity that places all persons in a courtly love relationship. Olson also states: "Julian uses the image of God as father, but she does not make a particular connection between the father and courtesy."<sup>51</sup> But Julian does relate courtesy to the image of Father: *For þe most fulhede of ioy that we shalle haue, as to my syght, ys thys marvelous curtesy and homelynesse of oure fader.*<sup>52</sup> This enables her to show that *curtesse* love, grounded in the very being of God, is manifest in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The relationship between humankind and the Trinity as creator, saviour and bestower of grace characterized by courteous love creates an indissolvable inheritance of love.

In short, the threefold nature of *charyte vnmade*, *charyte made* and *charyte gevyn* suggests that in Julian's theology there is no distinction between who God is as love and how God acts in love. There is a unity between the being and work of the Trinity. God's being is love and the nature of love is to be self-giving. Thus in Julian's trinitarian theology it is impossible to conceive of God's inner life without seeing how God relates in *homely* and *courteous* love. What Julian

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<sup>50</sup> Mary Olson, "God's Inappropriate Grace: Images of Courtesy in Julian of Norwich's Showings," *Mystics Quarterly* 20 (1994): 58.

<sup>51</sup> Olson, "God's Inappropriate Grace," 53.

<sup>52</sup> See n.34, 102.

implicitly says is the principle Rahner made famous centuries later: "no adequate distinction can be made between the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the economy of salvation."<sup>53</sup> Grounded in her own experience of trinitarian presence, her teaching about the Trinity is not simply a doctrine of received formulations about the inner life of God that do not inform the realities of life. Julian's doctrine of the Trinity explains who human beings are and how salvation is an essential element in what it means to be in relationship with God. She shows that there is always an identity between the immanent Trinity, God's nature as *charyte vnmade*, and the economic Trinity, the historical manifestation of the sharing of this love in the world through *charyte made* and *charyte gevyn*. We will now see how this sharing of *homely* and *courteous* divine love is in essence a soteriology of *oneing*.

#### IV. BY THE VIRTUE OF THAT PRECIOUS *ONEING*

The movement of *charyte vnmade*, *charyte made* and *charyte gevyn* that draws humanity into relationship with the Trinity is a soteriology of *oneing*. This includes ontological *oneing* that God establishes for all time in sharing divine love at creation and existential *oneing* which increases human relationship with God and leads to the progression of humanity into the being of God. Each of these dimensions of *oneing* takes place through the working of the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Julian summarizes each divine person's involvement in the sharing of divine love that results in *oneing*:

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<sup>53</sup> Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 24.



*And in oure making he knytt vs and onyd vs to hym selfe, by whych oonyng we be kept as clene and as noble as we were made. By þe vertu of that ech precyous onyng we loue oure maker and lyke hym, prayse hym and thanke hym and endlesly enjoye in hym. And this is the werkyng whych is wrought contynually in ech soule that shalle be savyd, whych is the godly wylle before seyde. And thus in oure making god almyghty is oure kyndly fader, and god alle wysdom is oure kyndly mother, with the loue and the goodnes of the holy gost, whych is alle one god, onne lorde. And in the knyttyng and in the onyng he is oure very tru spouse and we his lovyd wyfe and his feyer meydyn, with whych wyfe he was nevyr displeyd; for he seyeth: I loue the and thou louyst me, and oure loue shall nevyr parte in two.<sup>54</sup>*

Julian does not identify what type of vision this is. The context suggests that these are words forming in her understanding. She is articulating her understanding of salvation. Julian outlines her progressive understanding of *oneing*: *in oure making he knytt vs and onyd vs to hym selfe, by whych oonyng we be kept as clene and as noble as we were made.* Human beings are *knytt* and *oned* to the Trinity when they are created and kept in a relationship of *oneing*.<sup>55</sup> In the act of creation God creates an ontological *oneing* that *ones* humanity to the

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<sup>54</sup> 14:58.6-18,582-583. *And in our creating he joined and united us to himself, and through this union we are kept as pure and as noble as we were created. By the power of that same precious union we love our Creator and delight in him, praise him and thank him and endlessly rejoice in him. And this is the work which is constantly performed in every soul which will be saved, and this is the godly will mentioned before. And so in our making, God almighty is our loving Father, and God all wisdom is our loving Mother, with the love and the goodness of the Holy Spirit, which is all one God, one Lord. And in the joining and the union he is our very true spouse and we his beloved wife and his fair maiden, with which wife he was never displeased; for he says: I love you and you love me, and our love will never divide in two. 293.*

<sup>55</sup> Vinje suggests that "By the term knyttyng Julian meant the union achieved between God and man in the act of the first creation and by the term oneing, or "joining", Julian referred to the incarnation of the second person." We will see that Julian's concept of *knyttyng* and *oneing* is in essence trinitarian and much more complex than Vinje suggests. Vinje, *An Understanding of Love*, 208.

being of God. Ontologically, *god almyghty is oure kyndly fader, and god alle wysdom is oure kyndly mother, with the loue and the goodnes of the holy gost.* A constant increasing or deepening of this *oneing* is *wrought contynually in ech soule that shalle be savyd* creating an existential *oneing*. In the progression of *knytting* and *oneing* human beings become the beloved wife of the divine.

### *Oneing*

Julian's concept of *oneing* is virtually untranslatable. *Onyd* in Middle English means to be one, united, joined, blended or fused.<sup>56</sup> Yet none of these words conveys the sense of this primordial inter-penetration of the divine and the human that preserves difference in identity. The concept is so extraordinary that Julian uses *oneing* to describe the union between Christ's humanity and his divinity: *for the vnyng of the godhed gauē strenght to the manhed for loue to suffer.*<sup>57</sup> There is something mystical and indefinable about the union that *oneing* conveys. In the Sloane1 text *oneing* describes the divine indwelling in humanity: *For in us is His homliest home and His endles wonyng.*<sup>58</sup> *Wonyng*, translated as dwelling,

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<sup>56</sup> NSOED, 1998.

<sup>57</sup> 8:20.2-3,374. *because the union in him of the divinity gave strength to his humanity to suffer.* 213. This resonates with the images of blending and joining that the Cappodocians used to describe the concept of the unity of Christ's human and divine natures. They used Stoic language about 'mixing' (*krasis*) and 'blending' (*synkrasis*) of two natural substances which completely permeate each other without losing their characteristic natures. See Gerald O'Collins, *Christology: A Biblical, Historical and Systematic Study of Jesus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 185.

<sup>58</sup> LXVII:2800,134. *Wonyng* appears as *dwellyng* in the Paris manuscript.

distinguishes the *homely* presence of Christ in the human soul. It also includes the activity of *homely loving* that makes humanity Christ-like. *Oneing* gathers human beings and makes them holy: *I shalle gader yow and make yow meke and mylde, clene and holy by onyng to me.*<sup>59</sup> *Oneing* continues the process of profound identification. *Oneing* makes the union we share with Christ complete. Thus I consider that Colledge and Walsh's translation of *oneing*, as uniting, does not communicate the complexity of *oneing*. Union does not adequately convey the indissolubility of our original *oneing* in *charyte vnmade* or the dynamism of the love that is shared in the continuation of this *oneing*.

Pelphrey points out that *oneing* is a forerunner of the modern word "atonement." Literally this term means *at-one-ment* with God.<sup>60</sup> Julian's concept of *oneing* is literally *at-one-ment*. Pelphrey rightly suggests, however, the word atonement generally assumes that there has been separation, subsequent reconciliation and the mending of the division.<sup>61</sup> Although Julian is concerned with sin and reconciliation,<sup>62</sup> this is not her concept of *oneing*. At creation the Trinity *knytt vs and onyd vs to hym selfe, by whych oonyng we be kept as clene and as noble as*

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<sup>59</sup> 13:28.19-20,410. *I shall gather you and make you meek and mild, pure and holy through union with me.* 226-227.

<sup>60</sup> Pelphrey, *Christ Our Mother*, 42.

<sup>61</sup> LWHM, 132-134.

<sup>62</sup> See Chapter 3, 139-141, Chapter 5, 192-203 and Chapter 8, 337-342.

*we were made*.<sup>63</sup> Humanity is always one with divine love. God never disengages from this original *oneing* in any way that would separate the divine and the human. Yet *oneing* also increases and fulfils this destiny of being one with God. The movement is paradoxical. We are one and yet are becoming more completely one.<sup>64</sup> We begin as children of God who is Father and Mother to us and become the adult spouse of God *his lovyd wyfe and his feyer meydyn*, in a more equal love relationship.<sup>65</sup> Thus we can see that salvation is intrinsic to what it means to be human because God creates humanity *one* with the Godhead within a relationship of *oneing*.

### *Knyttyng*

The image of *knyttyng* that Julian often couples with *oneing* helps clarify her use of *oneing*:

*(H)e wyll we wytt that this deerwurthy soule was preciously knytt to hym in the making, whych knott is so suttell and so myghty that it is onyd in to god. In whych onyng it is made endlesly holy. Farthermore he wyll we wytt that all the soulys þat shalle be savyd in hevyn with out ende be knytt in this knott, and onyd in this*

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<sup>63</sup> See n.54, 110.

<sup>64</sup> Riehle considers the process of becoming one to reflect *einunge*: "Just as in Meister Eckhart *einunge* as the equivalent of *unio* contains the idea of 'movement towards the one', so too the Middle English *onyng* is aimed at the process of becoming one ... Julian expresses the wedding of man and God in the words 'And in the knyttyng and in the onyng he is oure very tru spouse', which almost suggests an echo of Hilton's 'sopli in þis onyng, ys þe mariage mad, a twix God and þe soul'. This situation corresponds exactly to the frequent use of the term *einunge* in German mysticism." Riehle, *Middle English Mystics*, 89-90.

<sup>65</sup> Given Julian's culture, this is not an image of a fully equal relationship, however. It maintains the supremacy of the Godhead.

*oonyng, and made holy in this holynesse.*<sup>66</sup>

We observe how Julian engages the very concrete image of *knitting* to picture humanity's original *oneing* in Christ. We are *knytt* in a *knott ... so suttell and so myghty that it is onyd in to god*. Underlying this image are multiple representations of union. In the first instance, on a literal level, the word *knytt* draws on the craft of sewing or knitting suggesting to interlock, to tie, to bond, to thread, to link or to interlace.<sup>67</sup> In knitting, the knitter draws the yarn closely and firmly together so that it may knot with the other thread. From this multiple interlocking a cloth is created. The image also reflects Pauline theology of the mystical body of Christ.<sup>68</sup> *Knytt* to Christ, humankind is one body in Christ and individual parts of one another.<sup>69</sup> *Knytt* can further denote the mending of broken bones where the bones grow together to become one. *Knytt in this knot* draws on other images of union. It describes the inter-twining of thread that forms a secure fastening. In a personal sense, *to tie a knot* means to join peoples together intimately, to establish a covenant of peace or a marriage bond and to

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<sup>66</sup> 14:53.59-64,560. *(H)e wants us to know that this beloved soul was preciousy knitted to him in its making, by a knot so subtle and so mighty that it is united in God. In this uniting it is made endlessly holy. Furthermore, he wants us to know that all the souls which will be saved in heaven without end are knit in this knot, and united in this union, and made holy in this holiness.* 284.

<sup>67</sup> MED, 566-569.

<sup>68</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:15a; 12:12-27; Romans 12:4-6.

<sup>69</sup> This image of humankind *knytt* to the body of Christ introduces the theme of union that Julian will develop in depth once she identifies that Christ is our mother.

have a binding obligation.<sup>70</sup> *Knytt in this knot* suggest forming and maintaining a union.

The image of *knitting* shows how both the divine and human interact with each other to form a fabric. The image maintains the inter-connection between the divine and the human, yet it preserves difference in identity. There are always at least two threads in knitting and forming a knot. Thus *oneing* does not mean total absorption of humanity into the Godhead, or creating a fusion where human beings are God or become God. Rather, *oneing* brings to completion who human beings truly are in God *knytt in this knott, and onyd in this onnyng, and made holy in this holynesse*.<sup>71</sup> *Knitting* and *oneing* is about being made holy. *Knitting* and *oneing* point to a permanent intertwining of humanity with God that is so subtle it would be impossible to separate the two individual threads. Though distinct, there is a connectedness between the divine and the human that is constitutive of our being.

### **Enclosed in the Trinity**

A further image that helps us interpret Julian's concept of *oneing* is her depiction of mutual enclosure between the Trinity and humanity. The vision seems *ghostly* in its presentation, that is to say, it is neither pictorial nor completely abstract. The description communicates the oneness between God and humanity and the

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<sup>70</sup> NSEOD, 1502.

<sup>71</sup> See n.66, 113-114.

oneing that brings this oneness to fulfilment:

*For the almyghty truth of the trynyte is oure fader, for he made vs and kepyth vs in hym. And the depe wysdome of þe trynyte is our moder, in whom we be closyd. And the hye goodnesse of the trynyte is our lord, and in hym we be closyd and he in vs. We be closyd in the fader, and we be closyd in the son, and we are closyd in the holy gost. And the fader is beclosyd in vs, the son is beclosyd in vs, and the holy gost is beclosyd in vs, all myght, alle wysdom and alle goodnesse, one god, one lorde.<sup>72</sup>*

Julian begins by distinguishing the attributes of each divine person. She assigns *truth* to the first person of the Trinity, the Father, *wisdom* to the second person, the Mother, and *goodness* to the third person, our Lord.<sup>73</sup> Then her image of enclosure almost collapses the assignment of attributes in stressing trinitarian unity. Insights emerge as if one is gazing at an iconographic portrait of the Trinity such as *The Trinity* which depicts Christ and the Father embracing each other, forming a centre of enclosure. The Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, nests between the two.<sup>74</sup> As if she is *beholding* such a portrait, Julian's understanding moves beyond imagery into knowing that comes from the depths of her being. She perceives that human beings not only participate in this trinitarian

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<sup>72</sup> 14:54.20-27,563. *For the almyghty truth of the Trinity is our Father, for he made us and keeps us in him. And the deep wisdom of the Trinity is our Mother, in whom we are enclosed. And the high goodness of the Trinity is our Lord, and in him we are enclosed and he in us. We are enclosed in the Father, and we are enclosed in the Son, and we are enclosed in the Holy Spirit. And the Father is enclosed in us, the Son is enclosed in us, and the Holy Spirit is enclosed in us, almyghty, all wisdom and all goodness, one God, one Lord. 285.*

<sup>73</sup> We will examine the wisdom of the mother in Chapter 7, 273-276, and the goodness of the Holy Spirit in Chapter 8, 320-321.

<sup>74</sup> "The Trinity" Bedford Hours (See 117). Margaret M. Manion and Bernard J. Muir, eds. *Medieval Texts and Images, Studies of Manuscripts from the Middle Ages* (Sydney: Harwood Academic Publishers 1991), 41.



**O**mnia labia  
 mea aperies.  
 Et os meum  
 annuntiabit laudem tuam.

Miserere nobis,  
 auribus tuis, domine,  
 miserebere nobis.

Comme la benoite recrite est figuree, ainsi se verra en ce monde, comme en parady, par un saint esprit, le benoite  
 saint esprit, mais perloncs en vntre, vng seul dieu en dent, le quel fist le ciel, et la terre et tout le monde en la vntre.



life, but belong to it and are enclosed in it. Enclosure in the Trinity continues to unfold and Julian then appreciates that each person of the Trinity shares divine love in such a profound way that each becomes enclosed in every man and woman.

Julian's use of the image of enclosure rings with hauntingly expressive power over the entire *showings*. It contains all other images of human beings in relationship to the Trinity. Her repetition of *closyd - beclosyd* in God emphasizes oneness in God and oneness between God and us. The enclosure embodies both deep stillness and dynamic movement, which creates a sense of being surrounded by, being enveloped, being contained within, deriving existence from one another, sharing life with one another and belonging to one another. It suggests that human beings partake in divine life. Human beings literally exist in the Trinity. Mutual enclosure elucidates the indissolubility of the unity between human beings and the Trinity.

Julian's image of mutual enclosure is an example of *oneing*. It is a prototype of her adaption of the doctrine of *perichoresis* which maintains the reciprocal presence or indwelling of the three divine persons in one another.<sup>75</sup> The persons

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<sup>75</sup> *The Decree of the Jacobites* (1439) states: "The Father is wholly in the Son and wholly in the Holy Spirit; the Son is wholly in the Father and wholly in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit is wholly in the Father and wholly in the Son." Richard P. McBrien, *Catholicism. Completely Revised and Updated* (San Francisco: Harper, 1994), 304. Though this document dates from after Julian's death, it suggests that the concept of *perichoresis* or *circumincessio* was being discussed during her time. Church documents usually reflect doctrine that has been in

of the Trinity are within one another, they contain one another. At the same time they open their personhood to the other. But Julian's image of mutual enclosure goes much further than suggesting *perichoresis* within the Trinity.<sup>76</sup> It creates a sense of *perichoresis* in the God-human relationship. The image of mutual enclosure locates *perichoresis* not only in the inner life of the Trinity but in the mystery of one communion of love between all persons, divine and well as human. This emphasis on mutual enclosure between the Trinity and humanity is, I suggest, a most significant theological assertion that has not been made, to my knowledge, by another theologian so powerfully. Through this image of mutual enclosure, Julian creates an ontology of being-in-relationship. She confirms that it is intrinsic to God's nature not to stay self-enclosed but to reach out to human beings in relationship. She reinforces that there are not two sets of trinitarian relationships, one within the divine being and the other with human beings. The one mystery of communion includes humanity and God engaged in a relationship of *oneing*. God and humanity are one, or enclosed in each other, and are *oneing* or enclosing each other. This suggests that the relationship of *oneing* with human beings is essential for God's life of communion. It implies an inherent

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usage for a number of years.

<sup>76</sup> Scholars of Julian generally agree that without using technical theological terms, this description of trinitarian relations is similar to the Greek tradition of *perichoresis* or the Latin *circumincessio* or *circuminsessio*. These technical terms highlight the dynamic and vital character of each divine person of the Trinity as well as the coherence and immanence of each person in the other two. Cf. LWHM:105. Clark, "Nature, Grace and the Trinity," 206; and n.29, 217. Pelphrey, "The Trinity in Julian of Norwich," 527-535; 528. Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, 88.

relationship between theology and anthropology.

Julian's soteriology is a soteriology of *oneing*. *Oneing* is a hermeneutical principle that designates salvation as a dynamic process of being one and becoming one in God. Humanity is one with divine love and continually drawn into a vibrant process of further *oneing* until humanity finally returns to the Trinity, and at the end all is *charyte*. The relationship of *oneing* creates an ontology of being-in-relationship. In the *oneing* that occurs through the reciprocal sharing of divine love, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit fulfil the potential in human beings established at creation to become divinized or participate fully in the life of God.<sup>77</sup>

## V. EXITUS REDITUS

The pattern of the sharing of love *charyte vnmade*, *charyte made* and *charyte gevyn* that creates *oneing* in love between human beings and the Trinity reveals how in *loue we haue oure begynnyng, and alle this shalle we see in god with outyn ende*.<sup>78</sup> The sharing of divine love expresses the pattern of salvation history identified in the tradition as *exitus reditus*. Essentially, *exitus* implies emanation,

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<sup>77</sup> This sense of viewing salvation primarily as the communication of divine love and human participation in the divine life reflects 2 Peter 1:3-4a. We will see how this is reflected in Julian's anthropology in the next chapter.

<sup>78</sup> See n.3, 93.

going out from.<sup>79</sup> *Reditus* means returning.<sup>80</sup> All reality is understood in relation to God in the view that all things come from God and all things return to God. Because I am conscious that Julian never uses this technical language, I am not suggesting that Julian knew directly the source of the Plotinian principle of *exitus reditus*.<sup>81</sup> It is, however, a concept that had wide currency in Christian theology which Julian seems to have inherited and integrated into her theology.<sup>82</sup>

Briefly, in Plotinian cosmology<sup>83</sup> *exitus reditus* is a cyclic vision. The idea implies that it is intrinsic to the nature of "the One" to share itself with human beings. In this sharing, however, there is never any diminishment in the One. Plotinus suggests that the One can no more not produce some sort of offspring than the sun can fail to produce light or the fountain water.<sup>84</sup> Everything derives

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<sup>79</sup> Charlton T. Lewis, *A Latin Dictionary: Lewis and Short*. Founded on Andrew's Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary Revised, Enlarged and in Great Part Rewritten (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 689. (hereafter, LD).

<sup>80</sup> LD, 1542.

<sup>81</sup> Plotinus was born in Egypt ca.205, went to Rome in 244 and died there in 270. His life was written by Porphyry who gathered his writings together and edited these under six *Enneads*. See *Plotinus: The Six Enneads*, trans. Stephen MacKenna and B. S. Page, *Great Books of the Western World*, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins (Chicago: William Benton Publisher, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. 1952).

<sup>82</sup> The idea was popular in Medieval theology. Thomas Aquinas structured the *Summa* around this concept.

<sup>83</sup> Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), 38.

<sup>84</sup> Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright and Edward Yarnold, *The Study of Spirituality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 98.

from the One and everything returns to the One.<sup>85</sup> Due to our indwelling nature related to the One, the movement is circular, including emanation and return. Human beings can return to the One because they possess qualities of the One. Although return to the One involves conversion, this return is so intrinsic to human nature that Plotinus cannot conceive of the soul as having totally fallen. The journey of return to the One occurs through turning inwards and entering more and more deeply into contemplation of the mind. The journey inward is a staged ascent that involves union with the *nous* or intellect, as well as a higher uniting with that which is beyond all thought and being, the unknowable One.<sup>86</sup> Although primarily an intellectual ascent, love also plays a predominant role. Basic tenets of these ideas are expressed in Augustine's early writings in his stress on the relationship between knowledge of self and knowledge of God. Like Plotinus, Augustine also develops an introspective sense of staged ascent to God. The movement of emanation and return underlie his famous words, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."<sup>87</sup>

Julian reflects a similar understanding of salvation history. Like the One who cannot help but share itself, it is intrinsic to the nature of *charyte vnmade* not to

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<sup>85</sup> See *Second Enneads*, 2.1.40-41.

<sup>86</sup> McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism*, 44-55. McGinn gives a helpful example of how this works in the treatise on beauty.

<sup>87</sup> *The Confessions*, 1:1.1. Cf. *Second Enneads*, 2.1.40. The answer is that forthright movement is maintained only pending arrival at the place for which the moving thing is destined; where a thing is ordained to be, there it seeks, of its nature to come to its rest.

stay self-enclosed but to share divine love with human beings, *charyte made*. As the Trinity shares itself with human beings, there is no diminishment in the love within the Trinity. This sharing in divine love then means that it is intrinsic to the nature of *charyte made* to long to return to its source. We will see in the following chapters, knowledge of self in the journey inward is an essential component of this return.<sup>88</sup> Although sin hinders the return, and could even block the return, essentially human beings return to the Trinity because they are ontologically one with the Trinity and experience further existential *oneing* in the Trinity. While for Plotinus, the soul attains this return to the One without any assistance from the One, involvement of the Trinity in human lives is absolutely integral to Julian's soteriology. For Julian there is a *oneing* that is an ontology of being-in-relationship that the Trinity initiates and constantly participates in. *Oneing* occurs because of the gratuitous involvement in creation of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is a deeply personal, intimate, homely and courteous relationship of love. All things originate from the Trinity, are one with the Trinity and are drawn into a relationship of further *oneing* with the Father, in the Son, through the Holy Spirit that ensures return to the Trinity. Through possessing trinitarian love and receiving trinitarian love humankind return to their origin.

In one sense the *exitus reditus* is a single dynamic sharing of divine love, yet in another there are three distinct moments in sharing love associated with each

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<sup>88</sup> See especially Chapter 8, 327-353.

person of the Trinity. Julian summarizes each divine person's involvement:

*I beheld þe werkyng of alle the blessyd trynyte, in whych beholldyng I saw and vnderstode these thre propertes: the properte of the faderhed, and the properte of the mother hed, and the properte of the lordschyppe in one god. In oure fader almyghty we haue oure kepyng and oure blesse, and a nemptys oure kyndely substannce whych is to vs by oure makyng fro without begynnyng; and in the seconde person in wytt and wysdom we haue oure k(e)pyng, and anemptys oure sensuallyte, oure restoryng and oure savyng, for he is oure moder, broder and savyoure; and in oure good lorde the holy gost we haue oure rewardyng and oure yeldyng for oure lyvyng and oure traveyle, and endlessly ovyrpassyng alle that we desyer in his mervelous curtesy of his hye plentuous grace. For alle oure lyfe is in thre: in the furst (we haue) oure beyng, and in the seconde we haue oure encresyng, and in the thyrde we haue oure fulfylling. The furst is kynde, the seconde is mercy, the thyrde is grace.<sup>89</sup>*

Julian comes to understand the working of the Trinity as she *beholds* the Trinity.

These are insights that Julian sees with the highest inner sensitivities of her soul.

The first observation she makes is that this is the work of *alle the blessyd trynyte*.

The sharing of divine love involves the self-giving of *alle the blessyd trynyte*, who have the *properties* of *faderhed*, *motherhed*, and *lordschyppe*. It is noteworthy that each of these properties embodies personal attributes that describe how each

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<sup>89</sup> 14:58.19-33,583-585. *I contemplated the work of all the blessed Trinity, in which contemplation I saw and understood these three properties: the property of the fatherhood, and the property of the motherhood, and the property of the lordship in one God. In our almighty Father we have our protection and our bliss, as regards our natural substance, which is ours by our creation from without beginning; and in the second person in knowledge and wisdom we have our perfection, as regards our sensuality, our restoration and our salvation, for he is our Mother, brother and saviour; and in our good Lord the Holy Spirit we have our reward and our gift for our living and our labour, endlessly surpassing all that we desire in his marvellous courtesy, out of his great plentiful grace. For all our life consists of three: In the first we have our being, and in the second we have our increasing, and in the third we have our fulfillment. The first is nature, the second is mercy, the third is grace. 293-294. We will return to this important statement in Chapter 4, 129-132, Chapter 5, 187-190, and Chapter 8, 323-326.*

person relates to humanity. In keeping with her stress on the sharing of divine love, Julian emphasizes the *werkyng* of each divine person for human salvation.

Glasscoe points to Julian's subtle use of the concept of *werkyng*:

'Werkyng' is a word which Julian uses subtly to convey a number of meanings: effortful labour; creative potential (in the sense of 'how does this work?'); the aesthetic implications of something 'working'; and the activity of a transforming agent much as yeast 'works' in dough.<sup>90</sup>

The *werkyng* of the Trinity is revealed to Julian in this last sense because the ecstatic love within the Trinity extends from itself, becomes one with humanity and acts like a transforming agent such as yeast causing dough to rise. The *werkyng* of *alle the blessyd trynyte* is *oneing* that gives life, enriches, frees and brings human beings to their ultimate fulfilment in God.

Julian always maintains the trinitarian dimension of the Godhead: *For alle oure lyfe is in thre.*<sup>91</sup> All of life occurs within the horizon of the oneness of the Trinity. Simultaneously, however, she gives three distinct roles and ways of *werkyng* to each person of the Trinity. In the Father we have *oure kepyng and oure blesse*. We are *oned* to the Father in substance (the essence of who we are)<sup>92</sup> at creation and sustained in the blessedness we were created in. In the Son we have the *k(e)pyng* of our sensuality (how we exist in the world). He continues our *oneing* with the Trinity by *restoryng* and *savyng* human beings from the

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<sup>90</sup> Glasscoe, *English Medieval Mystics*, 230.

<sup>91</sup> See n.88, 123-124.

<sup>92</sup> See Chapter 4, 157-174.



effects of sin in the world. Finally, in the Holy Spirit we have our *rewardyng*. The *mervelous curtesy of his hye plentuous grace* carries on the work of *oneing* until we finally return to our source. The movement is from God to God through *þe werkyng of alle the blessyd trynyte*.

Subsequently, Julian creates a memorable trinitarian formula that summarizes the role of each person of the Trinity in the *oneing* in love that is human salvation. This informs the soteriology that unfolds throughout the *showings*: *in the furst (we haue) oure beyng, and in the seconde we haue oure encresyng, and in the thyrde we haue oure fulfylling*.<sup>93</sup> The one ecstatic movement of *charyte vnmade, charyte made* and *charyte given* that flows freely from emanation to return, has three specific dimensions that involves each person of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Firstly, God creates human beings one with God. Secondly, this *oneing* is increased during our lifetime, and thirdly this *oneing* is fulfilled at the end when all becomes *charyte*. The importance of Julian's concept of *oneing* for her soteriology cannot be over-emphasized.

Julian's doctrine of salvation is a theology of love that has its foundation in the love within the Trinity. The aim of this chapter was to show how Julian's doctrine of salvation is grounded in and shaped by her trinitarian theology of love. The exegesis demonstrates that essentially love is God's meaning by examining Julian's understanding of the how trinitarian love shares itself as *charyte vnmade*,

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<sup>93</sup> See n.88, 123-124.

*charyte made* and *charyte gevyn*. The qualities of divine love are *homely* and *courteous*. Reciprocally enclosed in divine love in a relationship of *oneing*, there is a *perichoresis* between God and us. Salvation is intrinsic to who we are as human beings – we are *one* with God and in a relationship of *oneing*. Thus Julian's soteriology is a soteriology of *oneing*. Furthermore, the movement of love from *charyte vnmade*, *charyte made* to *charyte gevyn* reveals that everything comes from the uncreated love of God and returns to God through Christ in the Holy Spirit. This cyclic movement of divine love, or *exitus reditus*, takes place from all eternity. It is manifested at every moment of creation until human beings finally return to the Trinity. Mindful that ultimately *alle oure lyfe is in thre*, we are now ready to address the first movement in the *exitus reditus*, *in the furst (we haue) oure beyng*.

**PART THREE**

**IN THE FIRST WE HAVE OUR BEING**

*in the furst (we haue) oure beyng (14:58.30-31,585).*

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *ONEING IN BEING*

*and so hath all thing being by the loue of god (1:5.15-16,300).*

Central to Julian's soteriology is the belief that human beings are in a permanent relationship with divine love. They originate in God and will return to God. Divine love initiates an originating presence which increases during human lives, fulfils, and substantiates God's salvific promise that *all shall be well*. This chapter focuses on our gifted origins. The determinant of our gifted origins is our being in God (*in the first (we haue) oure beyng*). Significantly, however, being in God is not limited to an anthropomorphic perspective, being in God includes all things. Alongside this universal perspective of all things having being through the love of God, Julian uses the image of knitting to describe the reciprocal nature of the distinctive relationship between God and human beings. Human beings are *knit* to God in the making and God is *knit* to humanity in taking flesh. In presenting the reciprocal nature of being *knit* to God, Julian shows that the understanding of human existence is grounded in the *imago Trinitatis* and in the *imago Christi*. In each of these dimensions of Julian's soteriology there is a *oneing* that places all being in relationship with divine love.

#### I. IN THE FIRST

We recall Julian's trinitarian formula that expresses how human beings are in a permanent relationship of *oneing* with divine love:

*For alle oure lyfe is in thre: in the furst (we haue) oure beyng, and in the seconde we haue oure encresyng, and in the thyrde we haue oure fulfylling. The furst is kynde, the seconde is mercy, the thyrde is grace.*<sup>1</sup>

Mindful that ultimately *alle oure lyfe is in thre*, I will focus on salvific origins *in the furst (we haue) oure beyng*. Julian does not define the phrase *in the furst (we haue) oure beyng*. She gives hints of its meaning by her use of the expression. The word *furst* is equivocal. *Furst* refers primarily to the first person of the Trinity, the Father. It designates the role of the Creator in sharing divine love through creating humankind. *In the furst* also refers to the collective creation of humanity when humankind was made like the Trinity: *ryght as we were made lyke to the trynyte in oure furst makyng*.<sup>2</sup> Thus *in the furst* denotes the first moment in history when *charyte uncreated* extends to *charyte created* and the eternity of God's loving embraces human beings. This idea of a *furst makyng* has some resemblance to Augustine's doctrine of an original creation.<sup>3</sup> In the *Literal Meaning of Genesis* Augustine describes creation in two phases:

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<sup>1</sup> 14:58.30-33,585. *For all our life consists of three: In the first we have our being, and in the second we have our increasing, and in the third we have our fulfillment. The first is nature, the second is mercy, the third is grace.* 294.

<sup>2</sup> 2:10.53,330. *just as we were made like the Trinity in our first making.* 194. Though Vinje, *An Understanding of Love*, 155, suggests that this is a prominent belief in the early Fathers of the Church and many Medieval authors, she does not give any references. Cf. Susan Mahan, *The Christian Anthropology of Julian of Norwich*. Ph.D. diss., Marquette University (Ann Arbor: UMI Dissertation Services, 1988), 165-166; 191. Mahan also does not cite sources for this idea.

<sup>3</sup> Although I am not suggesting that Julian was consciously familiar with this source, we noted in Chapter 2, 79-80, that there are many echoes of Augustine in her work.

one in the original creation when God made all creatures before resting from his works on the seventh day, and the other in the administration of creatures by which he works even now. In the first instance God made everything together without any moments of time intervening, but now he works within the course of time.<sup>4</sup>

Julian's reference to *in the furst* echoes Augustine's distinction between original creation and God's providence. As in Augustine, *in the furst*, refers to the collective creation of humankind as portrayed in the book of Genesis. Julian adapts Augustine's idea of *continuous creation* when she refers to God's work that continues to sustain creation as *geyn makynge*: *(O)ur maker would þat we should be lyke to Jhesu Cryst oure sauour in hevyn withoute ende by the vertu of oure (geyn) makynge*.<sup>5</sup> We will see throughout the thesis that for Julian, creation does not mean that God simply started creation at some time in the past. Creation is continuous. God sustains creation in being, through the presence and action of Christ and the Holy Spirit transforming or re-creating human beings again and again until they are fully Christ like.<sup>6</sup> Never disconnected from *geyn makynge*, *in the furst* refers to God's original act of creation. *In the furst* lays the foundations for the bringing together of creation and *geyn makynge*, of origins and destiny. *In the furst* refers to the originating gift of God's creative activity which institutes a

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<sup>4</sup> Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis: A Commentary in Twelve Books*, vol.1, trans. John Raymond Taylor (New York: Newman Press, 1982), 5.11.162.

<sup>5</sup> 2:10.54-56,330. *(O)ur Creator wished us to be like Jesus Christ our saviour in heaven forever, through the power of our making again*. 195. Colledge and Walsh note that Julian is contrasting our *first making* with our *again making*. BSAJN, n.55, 330.

<sup>6</sup> We will return to this idea of *again making* at the end of the Chapter, 174-183, Chapter 5, 187-190 and Chapter 7, 282-286.

continuity between past, present and future. At the same time it leaves room for the important elements of change and transformation.

*Beyng* has a theological meaning for Julian. In secular Middle English usage *beyng* refers to existence, material or immaterial life. It is the substance, nature, constitution or essence of persons.<sup>7</sup> Julian's meaning reflects this perception when she concludes: *and so hath all thing being by the loue of god.*<sup>8</sup> But there is a further theological connotation in the term *being* which associates our being with the divine being. God's being is *evyr lastyng beyng ... endlesse fro without begynnyng.*<sup>9</sup> Thus God is being. When God creates, God shares being so that all things have being through the love of God. All things exist because they come from God who is being. They continue to participate in the divine being.

## II. ALL THINGS HAVE BEING THROUGH THE LOVE OF GOD

*A little thing, the quantitie of an haselnott,*<sup>10</sup> reveals how all creation has its being

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<sup>7</sup> NSEOD, 208.

<sup>8</sup> 1:5.15-16,300. *and thus everything has being through the love of God.* 183. We will examine this idea in more detail in the next section.

<sup>9</sup> 14:58.2-3,582. *everlasting being ... eternal from without beginning.* 293. Julian's use of the idea of *being* is like Aquinas who believed God was the pure act of being. For Aquinas, God is the sheer act of existence itself that causes everything to exist. God exists in everything. The distinction between God and creation is that God *is* being, but all created things only *have* being. See *Summa* 1.q.2.3.13-14. We will examine Julian's use of this idea in more detail in the next section.

<sup>10</sup> See n.12, 133. Colledge and Walsh point to the similarity of this image to Wisdom 11:23-26. BSAJN, n.11, 212.

in God. This is a foundational image, recorded towards the beginning of both the short and long texts. Described as *a gostly sight of his homely louyng*,<sup>11</sup> the vision has an intangible quality that hints at the oneness between God and creation in a way that is difficult to verbalize:

*And in this he shewed a little thing, the quantitie of an haselnott, lying in þe palme of my hand, as me semide, and it was as rounde as a balle. I looked theran with the eye of my vnderstanding, and thought: What may this be? And it was answered generaelly thus: It is all that is made. I marvayled how it might laste, for me thought it might sodenly haue fallen to nawght for littlenes. And I was answered in my vnderstanding: It lasteth and ever shall, for god loueth it; and so hath all thing being by the loue of god. In this little thing I saw iij propreties. The first is þat god made it, the secund that god loueth it, the thirde that god kepyth it. But what behyld I ther in? Verely, the maker, the keper, the louer.*<sup>12</sup>

Julian examines this spiritual sight, *with the eye of (her) vnderstanding*, her interior eye and sees a little thing, like a hazelnut, *rounde as a balle*.<sup>13</sup> She understands that this is a vision of *all that is made*. The image communicates a paradoxical meaning. Creation is so small in relation to God. It looks worthless,

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<sup>11</sup> 1:5.3,299. *a spiritual sight of his familiar love*. 183. See Chapter 2, 70-71.

<sup>12</sup> 1:5.9-19,299-300. *And in this he showed me something small, no bigger than a hazelnut lying in the palm of my hand, as it seemed to me, and it was as round as a ball. I looked at it with the eye of my understanding and thought: What can this be? I was amazed that it could last, for I thought that because of its littleness it would suddenly have fallen into nothing. And I was answered in my understanding: It lasts and always will, because God loves it; and thus everything has being through the love of God. In this little thing I saw three properties. The first is that God made it, the second is that God loves it, the third is that God preserves it. But what did I see in it? It is that God is the Creator and the protector and the lover*. 183.

<sup>13</sup> It was common in Julian's day to believe the universe to be a series of concentric spheres. BSAJN, n.10, 299.



fragile, as if it could insignificantly fall into nothingness, and yet creation is of inestimable value, is precious, and belongs to God. Creation is eternally enfolded in the love of God. Julian unlocks the paradoxical nature of the image in words that become central to her soteriology: *It lasteth and ever shall, for god loueth it; and so hath all thing being by the loue of god.* She appreciates the oneness of all reality because all created reality extends from the divine being through love.

As Julian continues to contemplate the vision of the hazelnut with *the eye of* (her) *understanding* she sees three *properties* within it.<sup>14</sup> It is noteworthy that these properties are within creation and are not separate from creation. *The first is þat god made it, the secund that god loueth it, the thirde that god kepyth it.* The presence of the properties of *making*, *loving* and *keeping* reveals how all creation bears the mark of the Trinity. These activities indicate that creation is one and in a relationship of *oneing* with the Trinity. *That god made it* reveals God's role as creator in the foundational event of creation. *That god loueth it* shows that this is a continual creation. It places divine love within creation. *That god kepyth it* reinforces the constant presence of divine love and the faithfulness of God in drawing the divine plan for salvation to completion. The properties express the role of the Trinity in all that is made, from being to fulfilment, from *exitus* to *reditus*. The properties convey that the shared love of the Trinity expressed as *maker*, *keper* and *louer* ensures salvation.

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<sup>14</sup> See Chapter 2, 65-66.

Through the vision of the hazelnut, Julian makes some important theological conjectures about how creation has being in God. God does not create and leave creation to its own resources. Rather God's creating involves continuous involvement in creation as *maker*, *keeper*, and *lover*. The work of *making*, *keeping* and *loving*, like yeast that works with dough,<sup>15</sup> is an organic process of *oneing* that never isolates God's work of creation from God's work of keeping and loving in history. This unified process of making-keeping-loving establishes a oneness between Creator and creation formed at the original moment of creation and continued. This implies an evolutionary view of creation. Creation is not static or passive, but is like a hazelnut that has a potentially active kernel of growth within it. Creation responds to God's making, keeping and loving.

Julian extends the notion of the organic process of making, keeping and loving, when she says: *I saw god in a poynte*.<sup>16</sup> This is an even more ineffable sight than the vision of the hazelnut, for she sees it in her understanding.<sup>17</sup> There is speculation amongst scholars about the source of this image. Colledge and Walsh consider that Julian means she saw God in "an instant of time,"<sup>18</sup> a point of time,

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<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 3, 124-125.

<sup>16</sup> 3:11.3,336. *I saw God in an instant of time*. 197. Note the discrepancy in the translation.

<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 2, 65-66.

<sup>18</sup> BSAJN, n.3, 336.

or a fleeting moment. Sr Anna Maria Reynolds<sup>19</sup> and Pelphrey,<sup>20</sup> in contrast, suggest that Julian is referring to the point or the centre of a circle. In this sense God is likened to the unity at the centre of a circle that is in relationship to all the points in the circle. Pelphrey explains: "It was meant to convey the idea of God, the Creator, as the centre of a sphere: that is, the centre of the universe, the 'unmoved Mover' who is equidistant from all points of space and time."<sup>21</sup> Pelphrey qualifies this by adding that for Julian: "whether the image is meant to imply that God is equally distant from all points, or equally present to them, is perhaps a matter for interpretation."<sup>22</sup> Bradley expands this list of possible sources. She cites Pseudo-Dionysius who interprets a *pynt* as portraying geometrically the philosophical concept of God as the starting centre from which creation radiates. She refers to Dante who takes a point to be the light in God's mind, radiating out into all that is created. She notes a further reference to a point as the mystical centre or ground of the soul that is the "still point" where non-discursive knowledge of God is disclosed.<sup>23</sup> Bradley, however, argues that Julian's use of the term significantly qualifies these traditional applications:

The point does not connote a static centre from which creation radiates, for God is present in every particle of what is made. The point signifies the reality of God at the heart of all things. That is

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<sup>19</sup> Reynolds, "Some Literary Influences in the Revelations of Julian of Norwich," 24.

<sup>20</sup> LWHM, 112-113.

<sup>21</sup> LWHM, 112.

<sup>22</sup> LWHM, n.12, 112.

<sup>23</sup> Bradley, *Julian's Way*, 94.

why, in the showing, Julian says: "I saw that he is in all things" (LT11).<sup>24</sup>

God in a *poynthe* does not present God in an instant of time, or as "the unmoved Mover" uninvolved in creation, or as a philosophical concept that is the static centre from which creation radiates, or as the light in God's mind, or as the mystical centre of the soul. Julian makes her interpretation of the image clear: *for he is in the myd poynt of all thynges, and all he doth.*<sup>25</sup> God in a *poynthe* reveals the dynamic presence of God as the mid point of all things, and all God does. God is at the heart of all reality.

Julian explains further: *by which syght I saw that he is in althyng. I beheld with avysement, seeyng and knowyng in that syght that he doth alle that is done.*<sup>26</sup>

Julian's comment that she *beheld with avysement* and consequently sees and knows emphasizes that the theology that emerges from the image of the hazelnut and God in a point is not conjecture on her behalf.<sup>27</sup> She knows the truth of the statements: *he is in althyng* and *he doth alle that is done*. *Alle* becomes predominant. Garrett suggests, *all* presumably means what it says. "Not nearly all, or all important features, or all human beings, but all in the universal sense,

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<sup>24</sup> Bradley, *Julian's Way*, 94.

<sup>25</sup> 3:11.20-21,338. *for he is at the centre of everything, and he does everything*. 197.

<sup>26</sup> 3:11.4-6,336. *by which vision I saw that he is present in all things. I contemplated it carefully, seeing and recognizing through it that he does everything which is done*. 197.

<sup>27</sup> See Chapter 2, 74-77.

simply every aspect, function, being, system – the whole creation – is situated in relation to God.<sup>28</sup> God is in relationship with *all*. *Thynge* is similarly inclusive because in Middle English it refers to an entity of any kind, including the immaterial and abstract, material substance, living beings.<sup>29</sup> *Things* for Julian includes all reality. *That he is in althyng* is almost a paraphrase of Revelations 4:11 "for you created all things," with one significant change, however. God not only creates all things, God is actively present *in althyng*.<sup>30</sup> *All things* prevents a divorce between the human and the natural, between humanity and all created reality. Julian concludes: *For in mankynd that shall be savyd is comprehendyd alle, that is to sey alle that is made and the maker of alle; for in man is god, and in god is alle. And he that lovyth thus, he lovyth alle.*<sup>31</sup> We can understand *all* within human nature, which shall be saved. This is possible because human beings are in God and in God is all. To love God means to love *all things*. Thus, Julian's theology of divine presence extends beyond a personal mysticism that neglects social and cosmic responsibilities. Her theology of presence encompasses all creation, all that is. Furthermore, there is an intrinsic connection

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<sup>28</sup> Graeme Garrett, "Finding God in All Things," *The Way* 33 (1993): 3.

<sup>29</sup> NSOED, 3281.

<sup>30</sup> We will see this reference to *all things* continued in Julian's theology of the cross and her theology of hope that all manner of things shall be well. Cf. Chapter 5, 225, and Chapter 7, 366-368.

<sup>31</sup> 1:9.14-16,322. *For in mankind which will be saved is comprehended all, that is to say all that is made and the maker of all. For God is in man and in God is all.* 192. We will look at the phrase, *mankynd that shall be savyd*, and its implications for universal salvation in Chapter 9, 386-387.

between God being *in althyng* and God *doing all that is done*. God cannot be present to all things without actively participating in all that is done. Such an intense theology of gifted origins and divine presence, however, highlights the problem of sin.

In stark contrast to all things having being through the love of God and God continuing to be in all things, sin is the opposite of *all*. Sin has no being. Very early in the short text Julian confronts the dichotomy between being and non-being. She inquires into the existence of sin:

*A wriched synne, whate ert pou? Thowe er nought. For I sawe that god is alle thyng; I sawe nought the. And when I sawe that god hase made alle thyng, I sawe the nought. And when I sawe that god is in alle thyng, I sawe the nought. And whenn I sawe that god does alle thyng þat is done, lesse and mare, I sawe the nought. And when I sawe oure lorde Jhesu sitt in oure saule so wurschipfully, and luff and lyke and rewle and zeme alle that he has made, I sawe nouzt the. And thus I am sekyr þat þou erte nouzt, and alle þa that luffez the and lykes the and folowes the and wilfully endes in the, I am sekyr thay schalle be brought to nought with the and endlesye confownded. God schelde vs alle fra the. Amen pour charyte.<sup>32</sup>*

Julian's understanding of sin is in stark contrast to her understanding of the divine being who shares being. Momentously, when she confronts the tension between

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<sup>32</sup> xxiii:26-36,271. *O, wretched sin, what are you? You are nothing. For I saw that God is in everything; I did not see you. And when I saw that God has made everything, I did not see you. And when I saw that God is in everything, I did not see you. And when I saw that God does everything that is done, the less and the greater, I did not see you. And when I saw our Lord Jesus Christ seated in our soul so honourably, and love and delight and rule and guard all that he has made, I did not see you. And so I am certain that you are nothing, and all those who love you and delight you and follow you and deliberately end in you, I am sure that they will be brought to nothing with you and eternally confounded. Amen, for love of him. 166.*

the presence of God in all things and the problem of sin, instead of engaging in *beholding* that leads to the *ghostly* sight of a little thing like a hazelnut and God in a point, Julian engages in a hermeneutic of not seeing and not understanding. In opposition to being, *synne is nouzt*.<sup>33</sup> In the tradition of Augustine,<sup>34</sup> Julian differentiates between the being of God and the non-being of sin. Sin has no being (*er nought*). Sin is a nothing with no ontological status, no substance and no existence in God. Therefore Julian *sawe nought the*, because sin is an absence of being. The fivefold repetition *I sawe nought the, I sawe the nought, I sawe the nought, I sawe the nought, I sawe nouzt the*, emphasizes the nothingness of sin. It leaves no doubt that Julian cannot *behold* sin. Julian concludes that anyone

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<sup>33</sup> viii:9,226. *sin is nothing*. 137.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Chapter 2, 77-80. Alexandre Ganoczy summarizes other dimensions of Augustine's argument about the non-being of sin: "God's creation is good; goodness is a quality of all true being; hence whatever presents itself as 'not good' (*malum*) cannot truly be. Evil can be understood as a 'privation of being and goodness' (*privatio essendi et boni*) (*Conf.* 3.7.12; *De nat. boni* 17), as a nonsubstance (*Conf.* 7.12.18) as contrary to nature (*De civ. Dei* 11.17), as inherently tending towards nothingness (*De nat. boni* 4). Because the 'bad' (*malum*) has no being of its own, it can become actual only in something 'good' (*bonum*): the evil feeds on the good (*De civ. Dei* 11.9; 12.3). God, however is also Lord over evil and is able to turn it to good purpose (*bene utens et malis*), to enable the good to emerge from it (*Enchir.* 27.100). God's works are often good in the midst of our evil works (*De mus.* 6.30)." HCT, 233. Thomas Aquinas expanded this argument. See *Summa*, 1.q.48.1-6.q.49.1-3.248-256. This philosophical tradition also exists in the East. Cf. *Pseudo Dionysius the Complete Works*, trans. C. Luibhuid, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 4.19.85. "What in fact is evil? Where does it come from? And where is it to be found?" Evil is not a being for if it were it would be totally evil. Nor is it a non-being; for nothing is completely a non-being, unless it is said to be in the Good in the sense of beyond-being. For the Good is established far beyond and before simple being and non-being. Evil, by contrast, is not among the things that have being, nor is among what is not in being. It has a greater non-existence and otherness from the Good than non-being has." Cf. *First Ennead*, 8.1-12. 27-34.

who *luffez sin, lykes sin, folowes sin and wilfully endes in sin schalle be brought to nought with the and endlestye confownded*. Julian's use of the word *schalle* points to the certainty of sin leading sinners to that which does not exist.<sup>35</sup> Sin results in an abyss of nothingness and endless disorder.<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless, although Julian sees the non-being of sin as a contradiction to the divine presence in all things, years of reflection reinforce her theology of divine presence. She adds an important passage to the long text that emphasizes the immanence of God:

*And therefore the blessed trynyte is evyr fulle plesyd in alle his workes; and all this shewyd he full blessedly, meanyng thus: See, I am god. See, I am in all thyngs. See, I do all thyng. See, I nevyr lefte my handes of my workes, ne never shalle without ende. See, I lede all thyng to the end þat I ordeyne it to, f(ro) without begynnyng, by the same myght, wysdom and loue that I made it with; how shoulde any thyng be a mysse?*<sup>37</sup>

The five-fold repetition of *see* invites a hermeneutic of seeing that encourages deeper interpretation. The words *in all thyngs, do all thyng* and *nevyr lefte my handes of my workes* expand the meaning of *loving* and *keeping*. They describe

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<sup>35</sup> See Chapter 8, 324-325.

<sup>36</sup> We will return to the problem of sin in Chapter 5, 191-203, and Chapter 8, 337-342.

<sup>37</sup> 3:11.50-56,340-341. *And therefore the blessed Trinity is always wholly pleased with all its works; and God revealed all this most blessedly, as though to say: See, I am God. See, I am in all things. See, I do all things. See, I never remove my hands from my works, nor ever shall without end. See, I guide all things to the end that I ordain them for, before time began, with the same power and wisdom and love with which I made them; how should anything be amiss?* 199.



the constant presence of God in creation and the faithfulness of God in working to bring creation to its goal in God. *I lede all thyng to the end þat I ordeyne it to* accentuates God's *keeping* or providential care. The rhetorical question *how shoulde any thyng be a mysse?* inspires hope that God will bring to completion what God initiated in the act of creation.

I must emphasize that Julian's theology of divine presence is not pantheistic. She does not identify all created reality with God. Bradley's image of needle-point or lace-point helps make the important distinction between God and the world that Julian maintains:

In such a structure each point (or stitch) is everywhere the same, yet each is really distinct from the pattern which arises from the points. Also this pattern pre-exists in the mind of the worker, who, for a perfect work, never lifts her hands from what she makes. Such a metaphor conveys Julian's teaching that God is in all things, as maker and keeper, yet is really other from what he sustains in being.<sup>38</sup>

Bradley's image of a piece of lace signifies the distinction between each stitch, the overall design of the lace and the pattern that pre-exists in the mind of the worker. There is differentiation and yet there is unity. In a similar manner Julian can say that God is in all things, God does all things, and God never becomes detached from creation. Nevertheless, there is always a distinction between Creator and creation. Julian is consistent in taking a middle ground between pantheism and a theism which separates God from the world and sees

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<sup>38</sup> Bradley, *Julian's Way*, 95.

God as the irrelevant first cause of creation distant from the world.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, in pointing to God's providential care, Julian is not setting up a doctrine of predestination that diminishes freedom of response from human beings. Her accent, as Bradley's image of lace-work aptly conveys, is on *oneing* that follows the pattern of *exitus reditus*. The pattern of life that God originates at creation is grounded in all things having being through the love of God. Thus, being in God ensures a continuity between beginnings and endings. Being in God means that all things will return to God.

The images of the little thing like a hazelnut and God in a point imply a cosmic vision of all reality. The images present the universe dependent on God, the maker, keeper and lover. In this unified cosmic picture, all creation bears the mark of the Trinity. All creation exists in relationship of *oneing* from the origin in the Trinity to return in the Trinity. Although I am not suggesting that Julian had any idea of evolution as we know it, there is a sense in which there is a final convergence of all things in God. In her creation theology, Julian undermines the dualism between God and creation. She binds the transcendence and immanence of God in such a way that the immanence of God is predominant. She sees creation as both gift and promise. God, the source and ground of all things, is creation's hope and destiny. Within the perspective of all creation having being in God we are now ready to focus on human nature.

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<sup>39</sup> Strictly speaking this idea is really a pre-Christian Platonic notion, although it still influences the Christian doctrine of God.

### III. HUMAN BEINGS HAVE BEING THROUGH THE LOVE OF GOD

The first insight that the vision of the hazelnut reveals to Julian is God's role as creator: *the first is þat god made it*, or as she says in relation to human beings *in the furst (we haue) oure beyng*. She qualifies: *the furst is kynde (nature)*. Julian sees human nature in a relationship of *oneing* with the Godhead:

*I saw that oure kynde is in god hoole, in whych he makyth dyversytes flowyng oute of hym to werke his wylle, whose kynde kepyth and mercy and grace restoryth and fulfyllith. And of theyse none shalle be perysschyd, for oure kynde, whych is the hyer party, is knytte to god in þe makyng, and god is knytt to oure kynde, whych is the lower party in oure flessch takyng.*<sup>40</sup>

Without distinguishing what type of seeing this is, Julian describes humanity as *in god hoole*. Humanity is *in* God, included in God, enclosed in God. *Hoole* emphasizes the oneness of this inclusion, the ontological unity between God and human nature. Julian distinguishes dynamic movement in this enclosure, *oure kynde, whych is the hyer party, is knytte to god in þe makyng*. The higher part of human nature is knit to God at creation. Reciprocally, *god is knytt to oure kynde* in taking flesh. God becomes one with the lower part of our nature in the Incarnation. The movement is dialectical. We are in God and God is in us. We are knit to God and God is knit to us. We recall the significance of Julian's image of *knitting*<sup>41</sup> which points to a permanent intertwining of humanity with

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<sup>40</sup> 14:57.14-19,577-578. *I saw that our nature is wholly in God, in which he makes diversities flowing out of him to perform his will, which nature preserves and mercy and grace restore and fulfil. And of these none will be destroyed, for our nature, which is the higher part, is joined to God in its creation, and God is joined to our nature, which is the lower part in taking flesh.* 291.

<sup>41</sup> See Chapter 3, 113-115.

God that is so subtle it would be impossible to separate the two individual threads. The imagery creates a sense of *perichoresis* in the God-human relationship. There is one reciprocal communion of love between the divine and human. In order to understand how Julian comes to such a strong sense of *oure kynde* being *in god hoole*, human nature being *knit* to God, and God being *knit* to human nature, I will examine Julian's definition of *kynde* and the two ways we are *knit* to God. We are *knit* to God in the making and God is *knit* to our *kynde* in becoming flesh.

#### IV. AND THUS IS *KIND* MADE

Julian uses the word *kynd* in a theological way. She describes *kynd* as follows:

*God is kynd in his being; that is to sey that goodnesse that is kynd, it is god. He is the grounde, he is þe substannce, he is the same thyng that is kyndnesse, and he is very fader and very modyr of kyndys.*<sup>42</sup>

The first reference to *kynd* in this passage portrays God as *kynd in his being*. Thus *kynd* delineates the being or nature of God. In the context of the created order she further defines *kynd* as *that goodnesse that is kynd, it is god*. *Kynd* reflects the goodness of God. *Kynd* is the ground and substance of all being.<sup>43</sup> In

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<sup>42</sup> 14:62.13-15,611. *God is essence in his very nature; that is to say, that goodness which is natural is God. He is the ground, his is the substance, he is very essence or nature, and he is the true Father and the true Mother of natures.* 302.

<sup>43</sup> Julian is using the word *substance* here in a theological sense to describe the essence of God. In *substance* the three persons of the Trinity are one. This was a common Middle English usage. See NSOED, 3123. It has its source in Augustine: "But God is without doubt a substance, or perhaps essence would be a better term which the Greeks call *ousia*." *St. Augustine: The Trinity*, trans.

the second passage, *he is the same thyng that is kyndnesse*, the meaning of *kyndnesse* becomes more ambiguous. *Kyndnesse* still seems to refer to the nature of God, but it also characterises the quality of God's nature as compassionate, generous and benevolent. Significantly, for our understanding of human nature, the *kynd* or nature of God that reflects the goodness of God is not self-enclosed but is the *very fader and very modyr of kyndys*.

Pelphrey points to possible sources for Julian's theological use of the word *kynd* that integrates a sense of nature, goodness and benevolence. He demonstrates that the term has roots in the German word *kind* meaning child or offspring and suggests that in a familial sense, *kind* relates to a family, class or group:

In Julian's usage "kinds" can also indicate the various "families" of nature, *ie* of animal life. There is a further meaning in Julian however, which is significant for her theology. We shall see that to be properly "kind" (*ie* to be human or natural) really means to be kind in the modern adjectival sense as well, that is to be courteous or loving.<sup>44</sup>

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Stephen McKenna. *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 45 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1963), 5.2.3.177. Julian also gives *substance* another meaning in the context of her anthropology which we will examine shortly.

<sup>44</sup> LWHM, 88. Cf. *A Revelation of Love*, ed. Glasscoe, xvii-xviii. M. Diane F. Krantz, *The Life and Text of Julian of Norwich: The Poetics of Enclosure*. *Studies in the Humanities Literature–Politics–Society*, vol.32 (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), 97-109. It is noteworthy that in *Piers Plowman*, Langland also uses the word *kynde* with similar semantic richness. In his study of Langland, White notes: "Nature is one of the more polysemous words in Modern English, and it can be argued that Middle English *kynde* was even more so, since its field included not only the idea of nature but also the idea of kindness, which modern nature terms do not cover. This extreme polysemy, a resource for Langland, is something of an impediment to the critic; it is not always easy to know what meaning of *kynde* is operative, even before one starts to make

*Kynd* is a polysemous word that Julian utilizes to communicate shades of meaning. *Kynd* indicates that human nature is *one* with the nature of God. Human nature has familial ties with the Creator, ties that are bound by love. Humankind is true to this identity, truly natural, when it reflects the goodness of the divine nature, that is when human nature is kind. Although human nature designates familial relationship with God, Julian maintains a distinction between God and humanity by referring to the Godhead as *kynde vnmade*:<sup>45</sup> *And thus is the kynde made ryghtfully onyd to the maker, whych is substannycyall kynde vnmade.*<sup>46</sup> Humankind is *kynde made* as distinct from *kynde vnmade*. What Julian is stressing in these passages is that human lives ultimately come from God, and have familial ties with God that make human nature like God. This entry into divine relationship that begins at creation, as I have noted earlier, should not be mistaken for pantheism where humans disappear or are God, or where God is identified with human nature. Julian always maintains a distinction between *kynde made* and *kynde vnmade*. At creation, our *kynd* has a familial relationship in *kynd* with the Creator.

### Creation

Julian invites her readers into the realm of her understanding about the creation of

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allowances for the possibility of word play." Hugh White, *Nature and Salvation in Piers Plowman* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1988), 1-2.

<sup>45</sup> Note how this relates to *love unmade*.

<sup>46</sup> 14:53.46-47,559. *And so is created nature rightfully united to the maker, who is substantial uncreated nature.* 284.

*kynde* or human nature by presenting a myth-like depiction of God begetting human beings. The exposition incorporates a number of creation stories, more abstract doctrines that she has heard or been taught,<sup>47</sup> and some of her own imagery:

*And thus I vnderstode that mannes soule is made of nought, that is to sey it is made but of nought that is made, as thus: whan god shulde make mannes body, he toke the slyme<sup>48</sup> of the erth, whych is a mater medelyd and gaderyd of alle bodely thynges, and therof he made mannes body. But to the makynge of mannys soule he wolde take ryght nought, but made it. And thus is the kynde made ryghtfully onyd to the maker, whych is substannycyall kynde vnmade, þat is god. And therefore it is that ther may ne shall be ryght nought betwene god and mannis soule. And in this endlesse loue mannis soule is kepte hole.<sup>49</sup>*

In this eclectic rendering of the creation story, Julian speculates about the creation of *kynde*. She distinguishes the creation of the soul and the creation of the body. Julian does not make any reference to creation as a literal history of seven days. Rather she integrates two themes from the biblical creation myths, the Yahwist tradition of Genesis 2:7, that God fashioned human beings from the earth, and the Priestly tradition that affirms the goodness of creation (Genesis 1:1-25). To these

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<sup>47</sup> She could have heard these doctrines in homilies, for example.

<sup>48</sup> Sloane<sup>1</sup>, *slyppe*. See LIII: 2191, 113.

<sup>49</sup> 14:53.41-49,558-559. *And so I understood that man's soul is made of nothing, that is to say that it is made of nothing that is made, in this way: When God was to make man's body, he took the slime of the earth, which is matter mixed and gathered from all bodily things, and of that he made man's body. But to the making of man's soul he would accept nothing at all, but made it. And so is created nature rightfully united to the maker, who is substantial uncreated nature, that is God. And so it is that there may and will be nothing at all between God and man's soul. And in this endless love man's soul is kept whole.* 284.

myths she adds the later interpretation *creatio ex nihilo*.<sup>50</sup> The statement: *(f)or ryght as the blessyd trinite made alle thyng of nought*,<sup>51</sup> complements, or at least stands in tension with, her references to the immanence of God. This protects the distinction between Creator and creatures. *Creatio ex nihilo* affirms the transcendent, uncreated nature of God.

### The Soul

Julian begins with the creation of the soul. She does not give a precise definition of what she means by soul, although in a later passage she identifies the soul as a *lyfe*: *(F)or he wyll that we know that oure soule is a lyfe, whych lyfe of hys goodnesse and his grace shall last in hevyn withoute ende, hym lovyng, hym thankyng, hym praysyng*.<sup>52</sup> This understanding of the soul as the life-giving principle reflects the definition of the soul or *anima* popularized by Aquinas as

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<sup>50</sup> This was a common idea found in Origen, Tertullian, Irenaeus and the Shepherd of Hermas. Julian probably synthesized this idea from Augustinian theology. She may simply be using a formula she is familiar with without being aware of the implications for other aspects of her creation theology.

<sup>51</sup> 13:32.35-36,424. *For just as the blessed Trinity created all things from nothing*. 233.

<sup>52</sup> 14:53.52-54,559. *(F)or he wants us to know that the soul is a life, which life of his goodness and his grace will last in heaven without end, loving him, thanking him, praising him*. 284. Walter Hilton describes the soul: "Your soul is not a body but a life invisible, it is not hidden and held inside your body as a smaller thing is hidden and held within the greater, but holding your body and giving it life, much greater in power and virtue than your body is." *Scale*, 1.43.113. Also: "a soul is a life, deathless and invisible – having power in itself to see and know the supreme truth and to love the supreme goodness that is God." *Scale*, 2.30.252.



"that which makes living things live."<sup>53</sup> Also in keeping with Aquinas, Julian identifies this life-giving principle as immortal. She uses a series of metaphors to describe the soul: *I saw þe soule so large as it were an endlesse warde, and also as it were a blessyd kyngdom; and by the condicions þat I saw there in I vnderstode þat it is a wurschypfulle cytte.*<sup>54</sup> Thus for Julian the unfathomable depth of the human soul is the life-giving principle like an endless citadel. In emphasizing that God creates this life-giving principle from nothing, Julian alludes to the spiritual, transcendent nature of the human soul.

Significantly, then, in creation we see that human beings are ontologically one with God because from the first moment of creation nothing can come between God and the soul:

*Oure soule is onyd to hym, vnchangeable goodnesse. And betwen god and oure soule is neyther wrath nor forgesnesse in hys syght. For oure soule is so fulsomly onyd to god of hys owne goodnesse that betwene god and oure soule may be ryght nought.*<sup>55</sup>

The repetition of *oure soule is onyd to hym* and *oure soule is so fulsomly onyd to god* emphasizes the relationship of *oneing* between God and the soul. The image of *fulsomly onyd* shows how abundant, plentiful, copious and rich this *oneing* is.

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<sup>53</sup> Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 212.

<sup>54</sup> 16:68.3-5,639. *I saw the soul as wide as if it were an endless citadel, and also as if it were a blessed kingdom, and from the state which I saw in it, I understood that it is a fine city.* 312-313.

<sup>55</sup> 14:46.36-39,493. *Our soul is united to him who is unchangeable goodness. And between God and our soul there is neither wrath nor forgiveness in his sight. For our soul is so wholly united to God, through his own goodness, that between God and our soul nothing can interpose.* 259.

Julian pushes her point about the *oneing* between the soul and God so far that separation from God is impossible. Her comment: *that betwene god and oure soule may be ryght nought*, indirectly links into her image of the non-being of sin. Nothing, not even *wrath nor forgevenesse*, can come between the soul and God. Towards the end of the *showings*, Julian confirms how fair, good and precious the human soul is in the eyes of God:

*For I saw in the same shewyng that yf þe blessyd trynyte myght a made mannes soule ony better, ony feyerer, ony nobeler than it was made, he schulde nott a been full plesyd with makyng of mannys soule. But for he made mannes soule as feyer, as good, as precious as he myght make it a creature, therefore þe blessyd trynyte is fulle plesyd withoute ende in þe makyng of mannes soule.*<sup>56</sup>

The soul of humanity could not be any *better, feyerer, or nobeler* than it was created. The Trinity is pleased with the making of the human soul. Thus we can see that there is no doubt in Julian's mind of the intrinsic goodness of the human soul created one with God in a relationship of *oneing* that cannot be severed, even by sin. The human soul is *oned* to God.

### **The Body**

In contrast to the soul made from nothing, God creates the body from the *slyme of the earth*.<sup>57</sup> Julian integrates this comment into the text as if it is a doctrine she

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<sup>56</sup> 16:68.38-43,643-644. *For I saw in the same revelation that if the blessed Trinity could have created man's soul any better, any fairer, any nobler than it was created, the Trinity would not have been fully pleased with the creation of man's soul. But because it made man's soul as beautiful, as good, as precious a creature as it could make, therefore the blessed Trinity is fully pleased without end in the creation of man's soul.* 314.

<sup>57</sup> See n.49, 148.

knows. Traditionally this way of describing the body created from *slyme* points to the material nature of the human body considered sinful or base and in need of controlling.<sup>58</sup> I register a note of caution in interpreting this reference negatively, however, as the word *styppe*<sup>59</sup> in the Sloane1 manuscript implies that the reference alludes to the silt of the earth rather than slime. Thus *slyme/styppe* echoes Genesis 2:7 where God begets human beings from the dust of the soil. Julian's emphasis is on the human body as *a mater medelyd and gaderyd of alle bodely thynges*. *Medelyd and gaderyd of alle bodely thynges* is a subset of *all things* that we saw in the hazelnut image. We are reminded that all things have being through the love of God. Julian's appreciation of the *oneing* that occurs between God and the body becomes clearer when we consider one of her first references to the body.

Julian presents an important, unique image<sup>60</sup> that defies beliefs about the impurity of the body:

*A man goyth vppe ryght, and the soule<sup>61</sup> of his body is sparyde as a purse fulle feyer. And whan it is tyme of his necessery, it is openyde and sparyde ayen fulle honestly. And that it is he that doyth this, it is schewed ther wher he seyth he comyth downe to vs to the lowest parte of oure nede. For he hath no dispite of that he*

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<sup>58</sup> NSEOD, 2899.

<sup>59</sup> LIII:2191,113.

<sup>60</sup> I have not seen this image used by other writers.

<sup>61</sup> Colledge and Walsh point out that *soule* from the Old English *sofol* means cooked digested food. Though this usage was rare in Julian's day it appears in the *Ancrene Wisse*. BSAJN, n.35, 306.

*made, ne he hath no disdeyne to serue vs at the sympylest office that to oure body longyth in kynde, for loue of the soule that he made to his awne lycknesse.*<sup>62</sup>

In this image that Julian observes, *cam to my mynd*,<sup>63</sup> the body is like a well-made purse that opens and closes as it eliminates waste from the body. She points out that this is done by God (*it is he that doyth this*). The presence of God in the human body is so intimate that God is involved in the digestion of food and the elimination of waste. This implies that the elimination of waste is not something to be despised. It reveals how close God is to human physicality. God creates our bodies and loves our bodies. God then continues to serve us in the humblest of our bodily needs because our soul<sup>64</sup> is made in the likeness of God. Julian leaves no doubt about God's attitude to human physicality: *For he hath no dispite of that he made*. In contrast to many of her predecessors and contemporaries, Julian presents the body as good.<sup>65</sup> The human body is of value to God because God made it in love.

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<sup>62</sup> 1:6.35-41,306-307. *A man walks upright, and the food in his body is shut in as if in a well-made purse. When the time of his necessity comes, the purse is opened and then shut again, in most seemly fashion. And it is God who does this, as it is shown when he says that he comes down to us in our humblest needs. For he does not despise what he has made, nor does he disdain to serve us in the simplest natural functions of our body, for love of the soul which he created in his own likeness.* 186.

<sup>63</sup> 1:6.12,304.

<sup>64</sup> The use of the same word *soule* translated as food and *soule* translated as soul is noteworthy. This could be a deliberate word play on Julian's behalf to emphasize that the whole of human nature is made in the image and likeness of the Trinity.

<sup>65</sup> Pelphrey points out that many translators of Julian have had problems with this passage and wrongly assumed that the word *soule* (*food*) means *soul*.

It is significant that the Sloane1 manuscript does not have the image of the body as a purse.<sup>66</sup> Although this could cast doubt on whether this is Julian's image,<sup>67</sup> the Westminster florilegium, a highly abridged collection of Julian's *showings*, does contain this image:

*A man goeth vpryght, and þe soule of his bodi is sperd as a purse ful feyre. And when it is tyme of his necessary, it is opened and sperd ayen well honestely. And þat is he þat doth this; he shewyth þat he seeth; he commyth downe to vs, to þe lowest party of our nede, for he hath no dispyte of þat þat he hath made, neþer he hath no disdeyne to serue vs at þe symplest office þat longith to our body in kynde, for loue of the soule þat he hath made to hys owne lykenes.*<sup>68</sup>

The text clearly describes the presence of God in the opening and closing of the body for the elimination of waste. If Kempster is correct and this is a third manuscript tradition,<sup>69</sup> the reference to *þe soule of his bodi is sperd as a purse ful feyre* suggests that this image was known by more than one heritage of Julian's texts. Thus the reference could be Julian's and not the interpolation of a scribe. Moreover, the image is too unusual to be made up by anyone and simply added to the text. It is possible that the controversial nature of the image induced the scribe of the Sloane1 text to remove the reference. The image is important for

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<sup>66</sup> Cf. Sloane1: VI.203-210,45. The text simply refers to *the simplest office that to our body longyth in kinde*.

<sup>67</sup> As far as I know, scholars have not commented on the absence of this text from the Sloane manuscript. There have been a number of translators of the Paris text who give this passage a spiritual meaning. Cf. LWHM,157.

<sup>68</sup> Kempster, "The Westminster Text," 107-114, 215.

<sup>69</sup> See Chapter 1, 21-28. Even if this is not a third tradition, and is an eclectic gathering of both Paris and Sloane sources, it is significant that the compiler chose to include the reference.

Julian's soteriology, because it suggests that the body plays a role in salvation. It counteracts any implied images of the body as base, sinful and carnal. Salvation is not spiritualized.

Julian remains silent on whether anything can come between the body and God. She makes no comment about chastity and gives no cautions about sexuality. Neither does she advocate fasting, bodily mortification or other ascetical practices. She preserves this silence on the subject of denial of mortification of the body when she states towards the end of the book: *For that pennance that man takyth vppon hym selfe, it was nott shewde me.*<sup>70</sup> Julian has nothing to say about inflicting penance on the body. Moreover, Julian emphasizes the collective nature of the creation of humanity when she concentrates on the creation of the body. She refers to *mannes body* in the generic sense of humankind and does not distinguish the creation of women. This subtly eliminates common Medieval gender distinctions that associate women with the body or evil, and men with the intellect, transcendence or divinity. It is all humanity, the bodies and souls of women and men, that is normatively human. Julian uses bodily imagery extensively to describe the human relationship with God.

In the act of creation, there is a distinction between the creation of the soul, and the creation of the body. There is no doubt that nothing can come between the

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<sup>70</sup> 16:77.26-27,692. *As to the penance which one takes upon oneself, that was not revealed to me.* 330.

soul and God. In contrast, some ambiguity clouds the creation of the body in that Julian does not distinguish how the body is *oned* in God. Yet the convoluted nature of her depiction of the creation of the soul and body leaves room for both the creation of the soul and body to be the subject of her theological statement: *And thus is the kynde made ryghtfully onyd to the maker, whych is substannycall kynde vnmade, þat is god.*<sup>71</sup> There is enough evidence that Julian values the body to conclude that *kynde* or nature consists of the whole of human nature as God intends it to be. Soul and body, our *kynde*, is *oned* to the Maker.

Julian's treatment of the doctrine of the creation of the soul and body *oned* to God in creation presents a paradox. From one perspective there is a Platonic and Neoplatonic dichotomy between soul and body. The soul, created first, is made from nothing, whereas the body is made from *slyme* of the earth. Yet, Julian does not persist with these traditional metaphysical definitions of human nature defined as body and soul. Julian moves more in the direction of appreciating the wholeness of the human person as a unity of soul and body. Her teaching resonates with Church teaching based on the statement of Thomas Aquinas that the soul is "that which makes living things live." Strictly speaking, this philosophical approach<sup>72</sup> precludes ever dealing with the soul or body

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<sup>71</sup> See n.49, 148.

<sup>72</sup> Aquinas dismisses the question of whether the soul and body are one. He argues: "(T)here is no more reason to ask whether the soul and the body make one thing than to ask the same about the wax and the impression sealed on it, or about any other matter and its form." *De Anima* 2.1.234 in Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 209.

independently of the other, in life or in death. In short, for Julian, God creates a *oneing* of humanity in God that includes the whole of human nature both body and soul. Gifted origins include our body and soul.

Within this general context of the creation of human nature as a soul and a body, *kynde made oned to kynde vnmade*, Julian focuses on the *hyer party* of human nature which is *knytte to god in þe making*. It is important to note at this stage, however, that Julian does not simply relate the *hyer party* to the soul. In the text that follows we will see how we have being in God in the *hyer party*.

## V. KNIT TO GOD

We have noted that from Julian's perspective the whole human person, soul and body, is *oned* to the Creator in creation. This *oneing* institutes a bond between humankind and the Godhead that can never be separated. Moreover, in Julian's understanding of how we have being in God, there is a *hyer party* of the human being that makes this *oneing* inviolable: *for oure kynde, whych is the hyer party, is knytte to god in þe making*.<sup>73</sup> We will see explicit facets of this *knitting* in the *hyer party* through examining Julian's understanding of the *the imago Dei*, *substance*, *the godly will* and the *kindly will*. In each of these aspects of human nature, God creates a *oneing* that lays the foundation for our return to God.

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<sup>73</sup> 14:57.17-18,577. *for our nature, which is the higher part, is joined to God in its creation.* 291.



### Our Soul Is a Made Trinity

The doctrine of the *imago Dei* is foundational in Julian's anthropology. It is in fact *imago Trinitatis*.<sup>74</sup> She gives weight to this teaching by stating that this is not simply her idea. It is the teaching of Holy Church. She reiterates: *We knowe in our feayth and in our beleue, by the teachyng and the prechyng of holy church, that the blessyd fulle trinitie made mankynd to his ymage and to his lykenes.*<sup>75</sup>

When Julian interprets this doctrine further she places *the imago Dei* in the *soul*<sup>76</sup> and describes human nature as a *made trynyte*:

*And thus was my vnderstandyng led of god to se in hym and to wytt, to vnderstonde and to know that oure soule is a made trynyte lyke to the vnmade blessyd trynyte, knowyn and lovyd fro with out begynnyng, and in þe makyng onyd to the maker, as it is before seyde. Thys syght was fulle swete and mervelous to beholde, pesyble and restfull, suer and delectabyll.*<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> See Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, 104-116, where she argues that Julian's anthropology follows Augustine.

<sup>75</sup> 2:10.47-49,329. *We know in our faith and our belief, by the teaching and preaching of Holy Church, that the blessed Trinity made mankind in their image and their likeness.* 194. Colledge and Walsh's translation *their* loses the sense of the oneness of the Trinity which the Middle English *his* maintains.

<sup>76</sup> We need to be careful about Julian's use of the word soul here. I will show in the next section that our sensuality, the more bodily part of human nature, is also considered a soul. See 176. Note that in the first passage she uses the generic term *mankynd*. Therefore humankind or human nature is a more accurate translation. See Riehle, *The Middle English Mystics*, 148, n.60, 211. "Julian's understanding of the image of God is that it embraces the whole man, including his bodiliness, a theory that has been put forward in traditional teaching but not very frequently." Riehle cites Justin and Tertullian as examples.

<sup>77</sup> 14:55.39-44,568. *And so my understanding was led by God to see in him and to know, to understand and to recognize that our soul is a created trinity, like the uncreated blessed Trinity, known and loved from without beginning, and in the creation united to the Creator, as is said before. This sight was sweet and wonderful to contemplate, peaceful and restful, secure and delectable.* 287.

Julian uses multiple images of joy to describe the wonder of the image of God in humanity. This is a full, sweet, marvellous, pleasurable, restful, sure and delectable sight. She repeats her theological position: from the first moment of creation, the soul which is the life-giving principle of human beings is *in þe makyng onyd to the maker*.<sup>78</sup> Human nature is *onyd* to the maker, *lyke* the maker. Julian's reference to *lyke* emphasizes the capacity for actualization of the image of God. *Lyke* suggests that in human nature we bear a faithful resemblance to the Trinity. We share characteristics and qualities that are God-like so that we may perfect this image of God.<sup>79</sup>

The *lykenes* to God is so authentic that human nature possesses trinitarian qualities which will assist in returning to the Trinity:

*For the furst I saw and vnderstode that þe hygh myght of the trynyte is oure fader, and the depe wysdom of the trynyte is oure moder, and the grete loue of the trynyte is oure lorde; and alle these haue we in kynde and in oure substanncyall makyng.*<sup>80</sup>

Julian sees and understands. This suggests that the teaching expresses truth as Julian interprets it. The Trinity is Father, Mother and Lord to humanity. Because of this familiarity, humanity is uniquely gifted with trinitarian qualities

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<sup>78</sup> See n.77, 158.

<sup>79</sup> *Lyke* in Middle English suggests having the same characteristics or qualities. NSOED, 1588.

<sup>80</sup> 14:58.34-37,585. *As to the first, I saw and understood that the high might of the Trinity is our Father, and the deep wisdom of the Trinity is our Mother, and the great love of the Trinity is our Lord; and all these we have in nature and in our substantial creation.* 294.

of *hygh myght, depe wysdom and grete loue*. God creates humankind with the capacity to express the power, wisdom and love of the Trinity. Julian's repetition of this idea reinforces the teaching: *For god is endlesse souereyne truth, endelesse souereyne wysdom, endelesse souereyne loue vnmade; and a mans soule is a creature in god whych hath the same propertes made.*<sup>81</sup> Made like the Trinity, human nature possesses the trinitarian qualities of might or truth, wisdom and love. Anthropologically, this suggests that God-like qualities are intrinsic to human nature. Furthermore, the sharing of properties implies that God does not create human nature to rule over human nature. God creates in order to share divine life with human nature. For Julian, the *imago Dei* is a defining imprint in the human soul that determines the inviolable *oneing* of human beings to the Trinity. The image of the Trinity in the human soul initiates an originating participation in God that can never be destroyed.

### *Oneing in Substance*

Julian uses an additional image to point to the *oneing* that occurs between *kynde made* and *kynde vnmade*. She refers to the *substance* of humankind. *Substance* has a specific meaning for her which she finds difficult to define clearly. She tells of her inability to describe the full meaning of *substance*:

*And ferthermore with this was a suttell felyng and a prevy inwarde syghte of þe hye partys, and that was shewed in the same tyme, wher I myzte nott for the mene profer loke vp in to hevyn. And that*

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<sup>81</sup> 14:44.11-14,484. *For God is endless supreme truth, endless supreme wisdom, endless supreme love uncreated; and a man's soul is a creature in God which has the same properties created.* 256.

*was for that ech myghty beholdyng of the inwarde lyfe, whych inward lyfe is þat hye substannce, þat precious soule whych is endlessly enjoyeng in the godhede.*<sup>82</sup>

Insights into the nature of *substance* filter into her being through *a suttell felyng*, a *prevy inwarde syghte*. Her understanding comes through emotions that are delicate, ineffable, fleeting sensations that might lead her to look up to heaven. She understands that *substance* has to do with the *inwarde lyfe*. Possibly reflecting the inner life outlined in the *Ancrene Wisse*, the inner life is the deepest yearning of the human heart to be focused on Christ.<sup>83</sup> Her reference to the qualifier *hye* suggests that *substance* describes the most exalted part of human existence. *Substance* is the *precious soule* which endlessly enjoys in the godhead. It is the life-giving principle which enables us to know the joy of God.

Julian is certain that our substance extends from the being, creating, loving and keeping of God. There is no beginning to our *substance* having being in God:

*In oure fader almyghty we haue oure kepyng and oure blesse, and a nemptys oure kyndely substannce whych is to vs by oure makyng fro without begynnyng.*<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> 14:55.54-59,569. *And furthermore, together with this there was a perception and a secret inward vision of the higher part, and that was shown at the same time, when I could not, in response to the intermediary's suggestion, look up to heaven. And that was because of that same mighty contemplative vision of the inward life, which inward life is that high substance, that precious soul which is endlessly rejoicing in the divinity.* 288.

<sup>83</sup> See AW: III. Inner Feelings, 93-113.

<sup>84</sup> 14:58.22-24,584. *In our almighty Father we have our protection and our bliss, as regards our natural substance, which is ours by our creation from without beginning.* 293.

Julian sees our substance in the Father in eternity. Human beings dwell in God in substance:

*And I sawe no dyfference betwen god and oure substance, but as it were all god; and yett my vnderstandyng toke that oure substance is in god, that is to sey that god is god and oure substance is a creature in god.*<sup>85</sup>

Because the *soul* dwells in God in *substance*, human beings derive existence from the Trinity, share life with the Trinity and belong to the Trinity. Julian stresses the union between God and our substance so strongly that she makes an almost pantheistic statement: *I sawe no dyfference betwen god and oure substance*. Then she moderates her position by clarifying her statement: *god is god and oure substance is a creature in god*. Although at creation our *substance* is created a creature in God<sup>86</sup> and in union with God for all time, it is not fully identified with God. She makes another clear statement about human *oneing* with God: *there in were kepte a substannce whych myght nevyr nor shulde be partyd from hym, and that thorow his awne good wyll in his endlesse forse(ing) purpose*.<sup>87</sup> Through God's providential plan for human salvation there is an indissoluble unity between human beings and the Trinity because our substance is *kepte* in the Trinity.

Congruent with the insights that emerge from the hazelnut image, Julian

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<sup>85</sup> 14:54.17-20,562-563. *And I saw no difference between God and our substance, but, as it were, all God; and still my understanding accepted that our substance is in God, that is to say that God is God, and our substance is a creature in God.* 285.

<sup>86</sup> As we noted earlier this is not pantheism; see 142.

<sup>87</sup> 14:53.20-22,556. *in it a substance was kept which could never and should never be parted from him, and that through his own good will in his endless prescient purpose.* 283.

appreciates that God's *forse(ing) purpose* ensures that our substance can never be parted from God. *Kepte* in the Trinity, our substance is enclosed in God and dwells in God in eternal *oneing*.

Pelphrey attempts to clarify the meaning Julian gives to *substance* by comparing her use of the word to that in Walter Hilton's anthropology.<sup>88</sup> For Hilton the soul has two parts: a higher part which refers to the internal world, and a lower part which refers to the external world. The higher part is further divided into two offices: the *over* part and the *nether* part. The *over* part, identified with affection and the masculine, is the soul that aspires towards God. The *nether* part, associated with cognition and the feminine, is the part of the soul or the mind that knows the world. The lower part refers to the sensations and the movement of the body. Colledge and Walsh<sup>89</sup> suggest that Julian's use of the word *substance* reflects what Hilton calls the *over* part. Pelphrey, however, argues that Julian's use of the term *substance* does not correspond to Hilton's categories:

While "substance" for Julian also indicates a higher part of our existence, she does not identify it specifically with Reason (or any other faculty) and she does not make a radical division between soul and body, or sense and substance. In a general way, she understands "substance" to be the being of something in God's eyes – the thing that it is, in its nature (that is, as God intends it),

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<sup>88</sup> Cf. LWHM, 89-90. Mahan considers that Julian's reference to substance includes what William of St. Thierry calls the *spiritus* and what he calls the higher part of the soul, the *animus*. She does not show how she came to this conclusion. Mahan, *The Christian Anthropology of Julian of Norwich*, 194. I have tried to show, using Hilton's categories, that Julian's use of the terminology is more flexible than these strict categories.

<sup>89</sup> LWHM, n.9, 89.

regardless of how it may appear .... For Julian, however, "substance" is not immaterial or ideal, but is the truth of our being, body and soul: the way we are meant to be as whole persons.<sup>90</sup>

Jantzen seems to agree with Pelphrey, although she does not emphasize whole persons as clearly: "Our substance, on the other hand, is for Julian the essential part of ourselves, which she holds is directly united with God at all times whether we are aware of it or not."<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, Bradley concurs more with Hudleston's very early definition: "By the word substance is to be understood the soul, considered in its spiritual nature and higher faculties."<sup>92</sup> Bradley sees substance as: "the key-point where we are open to the Transcendent."<sup>93</sup> She suggests: "In contemporary terms the word substance bears some resemblance to the "deep self" or the unconscious in the psychology of Carl Jung, though it is clearly not the same reality."<sup>94</sup> Julian simply says:

*A hye vnderstandyng it is inwardly to se and to know that god, whych is oure maker, dwellyth in oure soule, and a hygher vnderstandyng it is and more, inwardly to se and to know oure soule that is made dwellyth in god in substance, of whych substance by god we be that we be.*<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> LWHM, 90.

<sup>91</sup> Grace M. Jantzen, *Power Gender and Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 148.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Hudleston, *Revelations of Divine Love*, 175; Bradley, *Julian's Way*, 200.

<sup>93</sup> Bradley, *Julian's Way*, 200.

<sup>94</sup> Bradley, *Julian's Way*, 201.

<sup>95</sup> 14:54.12-16,562. *It is a great understanding to see and know inwardly that God, who is our Creator, dwells in our soul, and it is a far greater understanding to see and know inwardly that our soul, which is created, dwells in God in substance, of which substance, through God, we are what we are.* 285.

Humanity dwells in God in substance. In our substance *we be that we be*, or as the Sloane<sup>1</sup> text says, *we are that we are*.<sup>96</sup> *Be that we be* echoes the hazelnut image where all things have being in the love of God. In our substance we are who we are. Although Julian has described substance as *high* and has identified it with the inward life,<sup>97</sup> she does not maintain an emphasis on substance as the exclusively spiritual part of human nature. In this statement where she makes a further qualification *of which substance by god we be that we be*, substance describes how we exist. Thus it would be incorrect to limit the definition of substance to the demarcation of the highest faculty of the soul, or only with the soul, our spiritual nature or the deep self, although these are a dimension of what she means by substance. Julian's use of the word *substance* seems more in keeping with Augustine who uses *substance* as a synonym for existence,<sup>98</sup> and the Scholastic term *substantia* which means that of which a thing consists, the being or essence of something, the contents or material matter.<sup>99</sup> Aquinas makes this meaning clearer when he describes the human being as "a compound whose substance is both spiritual and corporeal."<sup>100</sup> He delineates what substance contains:

For as it belongs to the very conception of 'this human being' that

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<sup>96</sup> LIV:2220,114.

<sup>97</sup> See 160-161.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, 109 and Baker, *From Vision to Book*, 119.

<sup>99</sup> LD, 1782.

<sup>100</sup> Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 209.



there should be this soul, flesh and bone, so it belongs to the very conception of 'human being' that there be soul, flesh and bone. For the substance of a species has to contain what ever belongs in general to every one of the individuals comprising that species.<sup>101</sup>

Julian's references to substance reflect this interpretation. Necessarily vague, because we can never fully describe the essence of human nature, *substance* includes soul and body, all that human nature is. *Substance* is the essence of who we are as spiritual/embodied persons *oned* to the Maker. We have being in God in our substance. *Oned* in *substance* in the Trinity we share in divine life.

### ***Oneing in the Godly Will***

The result of human beings having being in God in substance is that we have the ability to align our will with the will of God: *And anemptyys oure substannce he made vs so nobyll and so rygh pat evyr more we werke his wylle and his worshyppe.*<sup>102</sup> Julian describes this will as our *godly will*. Within our substance there is a *godly will*. Unlike some of the *showings* which Julian cannot understand as clearly as she would wish, this is a distinctive *showing* where she sees and understands fully:

*For in every soule that shalle be savyd is a godly wylle that nevyr assentyth to synne, nor nevyr shalle .... ryght so there is a godly wyll in the hygher party, whych wylle is so good that it may nevyr wylle evylle, but evyr good.*<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 210.

<sup>102</sup> 14:57.2-3,576. *And as regards our substance, he made us so noble and so rich that always we achieve his will and his glory.* 290.

<sup>103</sup> 13:37.15-17;18-20,443. *For in every soul which will be saved there is a godly will which never assents to sin and never will ... so there is a godly will in*

The *godly will* only ever wills good. It never assents to sin and never will. She repeats her description of the *godly will* and explains more fully:

*In whych shewyng I saw and vnderstode full suerly that in ech a soule that shall be safe is a godly wylle that nevyr assentyd to synne ne nevyr shall, whych wyll is so good that it may nevyr wylle evyll, but evyr more contynn(u)ly it wylllyth good and werkyth good in the syght of god. There fore oure lorde wylle we know it in the feyth and the beleue, and namby and truly that we haue all this blessyd wyll hoole and safe in oure lorde Jhesu Crist, for that ech kynde that hevyn shall be fulfyllyd with behovyd nedys of goddys rygh(t)fulnes so to be knytt and onyd in hym that there in were kepte a substannce whych myght nevyr nor shulde be partyd from hym, and that thorow his awne good wyll in his endlesse forse(ing) purpose.<sup>104</sup>*

Julian gives her teaching authority, *we know in feyth and the beleue*, it is the teaching of Holy Church that we have a *godly will*. *Knit* and *oned* to Christ, inseparable from Christ, the *godly will* designates the inviolable goodness of humankind that is kept whole and safe forever in the *oneing* that occurs through human beings and Christ. Colledge and Walsh relate the concept of the *godly will* to the theology expressed in 1 John 3:9-10. "Whoever is born of God does not

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*the higher part, which will is so good that it cannot ever will any evil, but always good.* 241-242.

<sup>104</sup> 14.53.11-22,555-556. *In this revelation I saw and understood very surely that in each soul which will be saved there is a godly will which never assented to sin nor ever will, which will is so good that it can never will evil, but always constantly it wills good and it does good in the sight of God. Therefore our Lord wants us to know it in our faith and our belief, and particularly and truly that we have all this blessed will whole and safe in our Lord Jesus Christ, because every nature with which heaven will be filled had of necessity and of God's rightfulness to be so joined and united in him that in it a substance was kept which could never and should never be parted from him, and that through his own good will in his endless prescient purpose.* 282-283.

commit sin ... and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."<sup>105</sup> They also suggest that the theologian whose thought and language is most like Julian's concept of the *godly will* is William of St. Thierry.<sup>106</sup> They quote from the *Golden Epistle*:

For love (amor) is a great will towards God, another love (dilectio) is a clinging to him or uniting to him, and a third love (caritas) is delight in him. Yet the unity of the spirit with God in a man who lifts up his heart towards God is the perfection of his will, when he not only wills God's will, he is not only drawn to God, but in that drawing he is so made perfect that he can will nothing but what God wills. For to will what God wills, this is to be like God; not to be able to will except what God wills, this is to be what God is, for whom willing and being are one and the same. So it is well said that we shall see plainly what he is, when we shall be like him (1 John 3.2); that is we shall be what he himself is.<sup>107</sup>

Although William describes the will towards God, he does not explicitly identify this will as a *godly will*. Furthermore, in his concept of the will that seeks God, clings to God, and delights in God, he emphasizes the incomplete nature of this will and the need for perfecting the will.<sup>108</sup> Julian, in contrast, stresses the

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<sup>105</sup> BSAJN, n.15, 443.

<sup>106</sup> Colledge and Walsh, *Julian of Norwich Showings*, 57. Baker points out that this was plausible because of the popularity of the work mistakenly attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux. She considers this to be more likely than Clark's suggestion of *De Natura et Dignitate Amoris* as the source. Baker, *From Vision to Book*, 76. Cf. John P. H. Clark, "'Fiducia' in Julian of Norwich," *The Downside Review* 99 (1981): 218.

<sup>107</sup> BSAJN, 57. Cf. William of St. Thierry, *The Works of William of St. Thierry*, vol. 4, *The Golden Epistle: A Letter to the Brethren of Mont Dieu*, trans. Theodore Berkley, Cistercian Fathers Series 12 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1980), 15.257-258.94.

<sup>108</sup> Mahan also agrees that there is a difference between William and Julian. She points out that William is writing for monastics, whereas Julian is writing for all Christians. Cf. Mahan, *The Christian Anthropology of Julian of Norwich*,

ontological union of the *godly will* that is always kept safe in Christ.<sup>109</sup> I would argue that Julian's *godly will* resonates more with Augustine:

The soul's goodness, therefore, is derived from the very Source which made it a soul. From the conforming of will to nature, the will in love converted towards that Good from which it derives existence which cannot be lost even should the will forsake its Source comes the souls completion in goodness.<sup>110</sup>

When Julian observes the *godly wylle*, that *nevyr assentyd to synne ne nevyr shalle, whych wyll is so good that it may nevyr wylle evyll*, she reflects the same sentiment. The soul's goodness is derived from the very Source which made it a soul. God's goodness fills all creatures. From this goodness emanates the *godly will* that always wills as God wills. This means that evil is outside the scope of the *godly will*. In a similar vein Julian observes: *for his goodnes fulfillith all his creaturs and all his blessed workes (and) ouer passith without end.*<sup>111</sup> We see the connection between the goodness of God and the *godly will* in the text when *godly wylle* sometimes becomes *goodly wylle*.<sup>112</sup> This lack of orthographical distinction

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n.50, 198.

<sup>109</sup> Here I agree with Baker, *From Vision to Book*, 78.

<sup>110</sup> *Augustine of Hippo Selected Writings*, trans. Mary T. Clark, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), On the Trinity, 8.3.5.317-318. Aquinas has a similar notion of the goodness of the will. "It would seem that the will desires all things of necessity, whatever it desires. For Dionysius says (Div. Nom.iv) that evil is outside the scope of the will. Therefore the will tends of necessity to the good which is proposed to it." *Summa*, 1.q82.1.413.

<sup>111</sup> 1:5.42-43,303. *for his goodness fills all his creatures and all his blessed works full, and endlessly overflows in them.* 184.

<sup>112</sup> Riehle points out that in Sloane1 there is no consistent orthographical distinction between *god* and *good*. Riehle, *The English Medieval Mystics*,158.

throughout the manuscript between *godly wylle* and *goodly wylle*<sup>113</sup> implies that human beings derive the *godly will* from the goodness of God. Furthermore, although Julian does not make a direct association between the *godly will* and the Holy Spirit, she does refer to the mutual enclosure between the *hye goodnesse of* Holy Spirit and humanity.<sup>114</sup> Therefore it is not unreasonable to suggest that the fluidity of Julian's imagery enables an implicit association between the *godly will* and human participation in the goodness of the Trinity through mutual enclosure in the Holy Spirit. Through God's *awne good wyll in his endlesse forse(ing) purpose*, human beings are *knytt and onyd* to Christ in such a way that the *godly will* is kept safe in Christ. The security of this *knitting* and *oneing* means that we have a *godly will* that can never be destroyed.

Julian is convinced that the *godly will* can never be eradicated from the human person. Nevertheless, she still struggles with the problem of sin. Alongside the *godly wylle*, there is also *a bestely wylle in the lower party that may wylle no good*.<sup>115</sup> Julian is silent about the source of our *bestely will*, apart from locating it

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<sup>113</sup> 14:59.40-42,593. *for in hym we haue this goodly wylle, hole and safe without ende, both in kynde and in grace, of his owne propyr goodnesse. for in him we have this godly will, whole and safe forever, both in nature and in grace, from his own goodness proper to him. 296-297.*

<sup>114</sup> See Chapter 3, 115-119, and Chapter 8, 309-316, where I outline Julian's theology of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>115</sup> 13:37.17-18,443. *an animal will in the lower part which cannot will any good. 242.*

in the lower part, our *sensuality*.<sup>116</sup> Julian's reference to the *bestely wyllle* could reflect Hilton's description of the lower part of human nature as like a beast without reason:

Now, I can say that a soul living according to the pleasures and lusts of his flesh like a beast without reason, and having neither knowledge of God nor the desire for virtues or the good life, but all blinded with pride, gnawed by envy, oppressed with covetousness, and defiled with lechery and other great sins, is not reformed to the likeness of God, for it lies and rests wholly in the image of sin, that is the sensuality.<sup>117</sup>

Julian gives no such list of deadly sins when she describes the *bestely wyllle*. Neither does she equate sensuality with the image of sin. She simply presents the paradox within human nature. Human beings are good and human beings can be evil. Through her concept of the *bestely wyllle*, she acknowledges that there is something within human nature that is in contradiction to the goodness of God: *that may wyllle no good*. Significantly, however, Julian does not claim that human beings are intrinsically beastly. Although her reference to *may*<sup>118</sup> emphasizes the power or influence the *beastly will* can exhibit, the absence of the word *nevyr* shows that this power has limitations. In contrast, the *godly wyllle ... may nevyr wyllle evylle*. We will return to the problem of sin in the next chapter. Mindful that sin intrudes into, but never destroys, how we have our being in God, we will examine Julian's additional description of the will as the *kindly will*.

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<sup>116</sup> We will examine *sensuality* in the next section, 174-183.

<sup>117</sup> *Scale*, 2.13.214.

<sup>118</sup> The Middle English suggests translations such as to be strong, to have power or influence, to prevail over. NSOED, 1721.

### *Oneing in the Kindly Will*

The *kindly will* gives a further dimension of human *oneing* in God: *oure kyndely wille is to haue god, and the good wylle of god is to haue vs, and we may never sesse of wylling ne louyng tulle we haue hym in fulhede of ioy.*<sup>119</sup> The *kindly will* is the source of our deepest desire for God which Julian also calls a *kynde yernyng*.<sup>120</sup> The *kindly will* longs for the fulfilment of human nature in God. The yearning it initiates directly reflects God's will to have us.

Through her conception of the *godly will* and the *kindly will*, Julian shows that there is an inviolable *oneing* between God and humanity that can never be destroyed. There is a unity between God's self-communication in *kind* to us and our dynamic self-transcendence towards the divine. Our deepest, most authentic desire is to align our will with the will of God and to return to God. The will enables us to be true to our nature in God and to co-operate with God's deepest desire that we possess God in the fullness of joy. The placement of the ontological *oneing* with God in the will plays a significant role in Julian's soteriology. It means that authentic human desire is to be good or godly, and to be true to our *kind*. This implies that our *oneing* in God not only affects our being, but has a direct consequence on our will and our actions. The *godly will* and *kindly will* inspire hope that human beings can respond to divine love.

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<sup>119</sup> 1:6.57-59,308-309. *our natural will is to have God, and God's good will is to have us, and we can never stop willing or loving until we possess him in the fullness of joy.* 186.

<sup>120</sup> See Chapter 8, 355-357.

Within the context of examining Julian's understanding of how human beings have being in God, we have concentrated on her interpretation of how we are *knit to God in the making* in the *higher part* of our nature. We have seen that the higher part of our nature is not limited to the soul, but distinguishes who we are. Julian presents multiple images of ontological *oneing*. Made in the image and likeness of the Trinity, humankind is like the Trinity. *Oned* to God in substance, human nature is one with God in the essence of who we are as spiritual-embodied persons. *Oned* to God in the *godly will* and the *kindly will*, the will is aligned with the will of God. *Knit to God in the making* creates a sense that *all is well*, and *all shall be well*. It describes humankind as God intends them to be with being in God. Yet this is not the complete story of human existence as we know it. Within the context of human beings *knit to God in the making*, we will now examine the reciprocal nature of this *oneing* that occurs through Christ when *God is knit to our kind* in taking flesh. In presenting the reciprocal nature of being *knit* to God Julian shows that an understanding of human existence is grounded not only in the *imago Trinitatis* but also in *imago Christi*. Our gifted origins have a special locale in Christ. The Incarnation plays an important role in how *in the first (we haue) oure beyng*.

## VI. GOD IS KNIT TO US

We have seen that from Julian's perspective the whole human person, soul and body, is *knit* and *oned* to the the Trinity, Father, Mother and Holy Spirit in creation. This *oneing* institutes a bond between humankind and the Godhead that



can never be destroyed. Unmistakeably, this *oneing* occurs in the *higher part* of human nature, in our *substance* where we are knit to God. Just as significant as the *oneing* that occurs in our substance, however, is the *oneing* that reciprocally occurs in the lower part of our nature, our sensuality, through Christ becoming flesh. We recall: *I saw that oure kynde is in god hoole ... and god is knytt to oure kynde, whych is the lower party in oure flessch takyng.*<sup>121</sup> The whole of human nature has being in God. God is knit to our full humanity in the Incarnation. *Knytt to oure kynde* demarcates the permanent *oneing* between God and humanity.<sup>122</sup> Thus the key to understanding how Julian envisages how we have being in God is to picture human nature in a type of *perichoresis* in the Trinity where we are *knit* to God in our substantial nature. This occurs again. We experience *geyn makyng* when God becomes knit to us in our sensual nature through Christ becoming flesh.<sup>123</sup> Both locales of *knitting* are integral to how we have being in God.

### ***Oneing in Sensuality***

When Julian describes how we are one with God in substance, she pairs substance with sensuality: *we be doubell of gods makyng, that is to sey substanciall and*

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<sup>121</sup> See n.40, 144.

<sup>122</sup> See Chapter 3, 111-120.

<sup>123</sup> See n.6, 131.

*sensuall.*<sup>124</sup> *Doubell* suggests that human nature has two essential parts or features, a substantial nature and a sensual nature. Our sensual nature, or sensuality, has a distinctive meaning in Julian's anthropology. As in her use of the word *substance*, she never defines the term definitively. The *Middle English Dictionary* delineates sensuality as: "the natural capacity for receiving physical sensation understood as an inferior power of the soul concerned with the body."<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> 14:58.39-40,585. *we are double by God's creating, that is to say substantial and sensual.* 294. *Maisonneuve, L'Univers Visionnaire de Julian of Norwich*, 10, gives an image that helps envisage how we are double: "'Sensuality' et 'substance' sont une seule âme. Saint Jean de la Croix utilisera les mêmes distinctions que Julian. Dans la *Vive Flamme*, il comparera la substance à une Cité et la sensualité, à ses faubourgs." Substance and sensuality, a single soul, have distinctive realities. Like the city, substance is the reality of the all encompassing essence of our being in God. Like the suburb, sensuality is the more localized reality of how we exist in the world. Yet in another sense they are one and the same. One exists within the other without distinction.

<sup>125</sup> Hans Kurath, Sherman Kuhn and Robert Lewis. eds. *Middle English Dictionary* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1954-), 436. (hereafter MED). The Oxford Dictionary defines the Middle English meaning of sensuality as the aspect of human nature concerned with the senses as opposed to the intellect or spirit, humanity's animal nature, the source of sensual appetites and desires. It can refer to absorption in temporal things rather than intellectual or spiritual matters. NSEOD, 2777. The source of understanding the human person as sensual finds its roots in Augustine, who in book 12 of *The Trinity* reflects on the image of God that was broken after the fall. He distinguishes the inner person or mind as having two parts, a higher one concerned with contemplating eternal truth; and a lower one concerned with the management of temporal and material affairs. For Augustine this lower function is derived from the higher function in a similar way that the woman was derived from the man in the creation narrative Genesis 2. In a context that is disparaging to both women and the body, Augustine refers to "the sensual motion of the soul which is channelled into the senses of the body, and which is common to us and the beasts, is shut off from the reasoning of wisdom. With bodily sensation, after all, bodily things are sensed; but eternal, unchangeable and spiritual things are understood with the reasoning of wisdom." *The Works of St Augustine: A Translation for the Twenty-First Century*, trans. Edmund Hill (Brooklyn: New City Press, 1990) 12.3.17.331. Aquinas also refers to sensuality: "Sensuality is defined as the appetite of things belonging to the body. I answer that the name sensuality seems

Julian's technical use of the term sensuality far exceeds this definition, however. In Julian's anthropology, there is no doubt that sensuality describes the bodily aspect of human nature: *And what tymeoure soule is enspyred inoure body, in whych we be made sensuall.*<sup>126</sup> We become sensual when our soul is inspired into our body. Sensuality describes our humanity, our body and soul, how we exist in the world. Yet, Julian stresses that sensuality is not simply our body when she says: *as anemptisoure substannce it may ryghtly be callydoure soule, and anemptisoure sensualite it may ryghtly be callydoure soule, and that is by the onying that it hath in god.*<sup>127</sup> She specifies that sensuality is a soul because it has a locale of *oneing* in God. Julian presents what she understands about sensuality:

*Thus I vnderstode that the sensuallyte is groundyd in kynde, in mercy and in grace, whych ground ablyth vs to receyue gyftes that leed vs to endlesse lyfe. For I saw full suerly thatoure substannce is in god, and also I saw that inoure sensuallyte god is, for in the same poynt thatoure soule is made sensuall, in the same poynt is the cytte of god, ordeyned to hym fro without begynnyng. In whych cytte he comyth, and nevyr shall remeve it, for god is nevyr out of*

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to be taken from the sensual movement, of which Augustine speaks (*De Trin.* xii. 12,13), just as the name of a power is taken from its act; for instance sight from seeing. Now the sensual movement is an appetite following sensitive apprehension ... sensuality is the name of the sensual appetite." *Summa*, 1.q.81.1.410.

<sup>126</sup> 14:55.16-17,566. *And when our soul is breathed into our body, at which time we are made sensual.* 286.

<sup>127</sup> 14:56.20-22,572. *as regards our substance, it can rightly be called our soul, and as regards our sensuality, it can rightly be called our soul, and that is by the union which it has in God.* 289.

*the soule, in whych he shalle dwell blesydly without end.*<sup>128</sup>

*I vndertode* suggests that Julian clearly discerns that sensuality is one in God.<sup>129</sup> *Groundyd in kynde*, in nature, *sensuallyte* is *oned* in God because all nature or being comes from God. Sensuality is an aspect of human nature where divine life is actively present. Sensuality is the dwelling place of mercy and grace, which are the gifts that lead us to endless life. Julian's appreciation that sensuality is grounded in mercy and grace reinforces that she does not simply define sensuality in terms of the body, the flesh or the senses. Sensuality includes our embodied/spiritual nature. It is where we experience the working of grace through Christ the mother of grace and through the presence of the Holy Spirit.<sup>130</sup> Julian states clearly: *in oure sensuallyte god is*. In the act of creation, when God creates the sensual soul, God immediately makes sensuality the city of God. Sensuality is the dwelling place of God, the locale of *oneing*. Critically, the indwelling of God in sensuality is not an afterthought to God's eternal plan: *in the*

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<sup>128</sup> 14:55.21-29,566-567. *So I understood that our sensuality is founded in nature, in mercy and in grace, and this foundation enables us to receive gifts which lead us to endless life. For I saw very surely that our substance is in God, and I also saw that God is in our sensuality, for in the same instant and place in which our soul is made sensual, in that same instant and place exists the city of God, ordained for him from without beginning. He comes into this city and will never depart from it, for God is never out of the soul, in which he will dwell blessedly without end.* 287.

<sup>129</sup> Though the exact definition of sensuality is impossible to pin down in the text, it is noteworthy that Julian does not say that she finds this difficult to understand. In contrast to the understanding she receives about our substantial nature which comes from an enigmatic *prevy inwarde syghte*, she understands how sensuality is one in God. She seems to assume that her readers will also understand.

<sup>130</sup> See Chapter 7, 286-301, and Chapter 8, 316-322.

*same poynt that oure soule is made sensuall, in the same poynt is the cytte of god.*

Participation in human *sensuality* is an integral part of the divine plan of sharing love.

Nevertheless there is something incomplete about sensuality. It is where we experience the effects of the fall that limit our *oneing* with God:

*(I)n oure substannce we be full and in oure sensuatyte we feyle, whych feylyng god wylle restore and fulfyll by werkyng of mercy and grace, plentuously flowyng in to vs of his owne kynde goodnesse.<sup>131</sup>*

In our substance we are full. In our sensuality we fail. *Feyle* in Middle English suggests that we are found wanting, or are lacking in something needed.<sup>132</sup> In our sensuality we experience an impediment in our union with God.<sup>133</sup> In our sensuality we experience the effects of the *beastly will*. Thus, in our sensuality we are not full, nor are we fully one with divine love, or fully one with our substance that is totally one in God. Momentously, however, in our sensuality, where we are inadequate, we are not separated from divine love, because in our incompleteness God *restores* and *fulfils* us through the working of mercy and grace. In keeping with this sense of incompleteness, Julian lists feelings that we experience in our sensuality: *for in þe lower perty be payns and passions, ruthis*

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<sup>131</sup> 14:57.8-11,576-577. *in our substance we are full and in our sensuality we are lacking, and this lack God will restore and fill by the operation of mercy and grace, plentifully flowing into us from his own natural goodness.* 291.

<sup>132</sup> NSOED, 906.

<sup>133</sup> We will return to this theme in Chapter 5, 192-204.

*and pyttes, mercis and forgevenesse and such other.*<sup>134</sup> Sensuality is not the image of sin, or our sinful nature. Sensuality is where we experience feelings associated with an incompleteness in our union with God. These pains, however, are never isolated from compassion and pity, mercy and forgiveness.<sup>135</sup> Sensuality is how we exist in the world, within the fragmentation in the human condition. Although sensuality is where we experience the effects of incompleteness due to the fall, more fundamentally, sensuality is where we encounter the effects of *oneing*. Sensuality is where we are open to the presence of divine life in human lives through Christ and are drawn into the process of growth or *increasing* until we become fully Christ-like.

We will return to Hilton's anthropology described in the last section, to isolate further Julian's specific understanding of the sensual aspect of human nature. We saw that for Hilton the soul has two parts.<sup>136</sup> The *lower* part Hilton identifies as sensuality:

One is called the sensuality: that is the carnal feeling through the five outward senses which is common to man and beast. From this sensuality, when it is irrationally and inordinately ruled, is made the image of sin, as I have said before, for the sensuality is sin when it is not ruled according to reason.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> 14:52.90-91,553. *for in the lower part there are pains and sufferings, compassions and pities, mercies and forgiveness and other such.* 282.

<sup>135</sup> We will return to this theme in the parable of the lord and the servant in Chapter 6, 238-269.

<sup>136</sup> See 163-164.

<sup>137</sup> *Scale*, 2.13.213.

Walsh assumes that Julian accepts Hilton's categories and simplifies them by combining Hilton's definition of the *nether* part with his definition of sensuality.<sup>138</sup>

But this is a misunderstanding. In contrast to Hilton, Julian never isolates sensuality as the aspect of the human person concerned only with the senses or the feminine. Neither does she denigrate the physical as opposed to reason or the spiritual. Julian never considers sensuality to be the image of sin. Pelphrey summarizes her distinctive definition of sensuality:

It is the most material part, if we could say such a thing. Using her term more broadly, therefore, Julian is able to speak even of the "sensual soul" (ch.57, CE, p.579) – – implying not that part of the soul which is non-Reason, but our whole selves in creation, the human existence which becomes God's in the Incarnation.<sup>139</sup>

Pelphrey is correct. Sensuality encompasses the whole of human existence in creation. It is the human existence that becomes God's in the Incarnation.

Therefore, if we want to know what Julian means by sensuality, we can see sensuality as God intends it to be in the humanity of Christ.

Julian utilizes the image of Christ being knit to our body in the Incarnation to describe what sensuality is:

*For in that same tyme that god knytt hym to oure body in the meydens wombe, he toke oure sensuall soule, in whych takyng, he vs all havyng beclosyd in hym, he onyd it to oure substance. In whych oonyng he was perfit man, for Crist, havyng knytt in hym all*

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<sup>138</sup> LWHM, n.9, 89.

<sup>139</sup> LWHM, 90-91.

*man that shall be savyd, is perfete man.*<sup>140</sup>

The image of *knitting* inter-weaves multiple threads of *oneings* or locales of union with Christ. Interwoven are the *oneings* between Christ and our substance and Christ and our sensuality. In being *knytt ... to our body in the meydens wombe* Christ encloses our sensual soul in himself and *ones* it to our substance. *Beclosyd* emphasizes the oneness between Christ's humanity and our sensuality. Sensuality is contained within Christ. *Beclosyd* further illuminates the indissolubility of the unity between human beings and Christ. Christ models perfect humanity. He points to the possibility for growth and perfection of both substance and sensuality being completely full, one in being in God.<sup>141</sup> Christ works to achieve this potential in human beings by eliminating all fractures between substance and sensuality through the presence of mercy and grace in sensuality. United to Christ in both substance and sensuality, we are brought to participate in divine reality, to exist fully in a divine relationship that encompasses every part of our being.

Moreover, in the Incarnation when Christ takes a sensual soul, he becomes the

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<sup>140</sup> 14:57.41-46,579-580. *For in the same time that God joined himself to our body in the maiden's womb, he took our soul, which is sensual, and in taking it, having enclosed us all in himself, he united it to our substance. In this union he was perfect man, for Christ, having joined in himself every man who will be saved, is perfect man.* 292.

<sup>141</sup> This occurs particularly in Christ's role as mother. See Chapter 7, 270-313.



mother of our sensuality:<sup>142</sup>

*And ferthere more I saw that the seconde person, whych is oure moder, substanncyally the same derewurthy person, is now become oure moder sensuall, for we be doubell of gods makyng, that is to sey substannciall and sensuall.*<sup>143</sup>

Because Christ is our *moder sensuall*, there is no doubt that we are ontologically one in our sensuality in Christ:

*And our substannce is in oure fader god almyghty, and oure substannce is in oure moder god all wysdom, and oure substannce is in oure lorde god the holy gost all goodnes, for oure substannce is hole in ech person of the trynyte, which is one god. And oure sensuallyte is only in the seconde person, Crist Jhesu, in whom is the fader and þe holy gost.*<sup>144</sup>

Our substance is whole in each person of the Trinity, Father, Mother and Holy Spirit, but our sensuality is only in the second person, Jesus Christ.<sup>145</sup> In other words, it is the second person of the Trinity, who as Mother is one with our substance, becomes flesh, and is *knit* to our sensuality. Consequently, through Christ being knit to our sensuality, human beings become the *imago Christi*. Christ, the perfect human being, incorporates both substance and sensuality in

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<sup>142</sup> See n.40, 144.

<sup>143</sup> 14:58.37-40,585. *And furthermore I saw that the second person, who is our Mother, substantially the same beloved person, has now become our mother sensually, because we are double by God's creating, that is to say substantial and sensual.* 294.

<sup>144</sup> 14:58:59-64,587-588. *And our substance is in our Father, God almighty, and our substance is in our Mother, God all wisdom, and our substance is in our Lord God, the Holy Spirit, all goodness, for our substance is whole in each person of the Trinity, who is one God. And our sensuality is only in the second person, Christ Jesus, in whom is the Father and the Holy Spirit.* 295.

<sup>145</sup> Note, however, this still has a trinitarian dimension because the persons of the Trinity are in Christ.

himself in a perfect unity.

What is remarkable about Julian's understanding of how human beings have being in God is that this *oneing* embraces all aspects of human existence, including sensuality. Our *substance* has being in the Trinity. Our *sensuality* has being in the Trinity because Christ includes our sensual soul in himself in becoming human. This *oneing* is foundational for Julian's soteriology. Salvation does not require a process of denying or suppressing sensuality. Salvation involves becoming fully sensual, *oneing* substance and sensuality, making both substance and sensuality full, just as they are in Christ. In *the first we have our being* means that in spite of the incomplete nature of sensuality, in principle, in both substance and sensuality our being is in God. This *oneing* in the Trinity in substance and sensuality ensures that we will return to the Trinity.

This chapter, *In the First We Have Our Being*, shows how salvation is inaugurated in the act of creation when God creates human nature with being in God. The aim of the chapter was to demonstrate how this first movement in the *exitus reditus*, where all things having being in God, is foundational for Julian's soteriology. Our origins are gifted because in the first we have being in God. The images of the hazelnut and God in a point illustrate that it is not only human beings who have being in God. All things have being in God. Within this inclusive perspective of all things having being in God, Julian envisages human nature. In the higher part of human nature, our substance, we are *knit* to God in

the making. Reciprocally, God is knit to us in the lower part of our nature, our sensuality. There are multiple images of ontological *oneings* in the essence of who we are in the *imago Dei*, *the godly will* and the *kyndely will*. Furthermore, in the Incarnation, in being *knytt ... to our body in the meydens wombe*, Christ designates our deepest humanity as the dwelling-place of God. The exegesis confirms that for Julian the whole of human nature, both substance and sensuality, irrevocably have being in God. The task of the next chapter is to concentrate on how Christ *increases* our sensuality, makes it full and *one* with God through the passion, death and resurrection.

**PART FOUR**

**IN THE SECOND WE HAVE OUR INCREASING**

*and in the seconde we haue oure encreasyng (14:58.31,585).*

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ONEING THROUGH THE CRUCIFIXION

*Here saw I a grett onyng betwene Crist and vs (8:18.14,367).*

In the Incarnation, Christ becomes the perfect human being who *ones* our substance and sensuality in himself. In this act of *knitting* and *oneing* God confronts the problem of the incompleteness of our sensuality and the fragmentation of our existence. Human nature is not fully one with Christ, not fully the *imago Christi*. Though we have being in God, there is need for change and transformation, for *increasing* or growth. We see the most confronting response that Christ makes that enables our *increasing* on the cross. The aim of this chapter is to see how Christ enables our *increasing* through the cross by drawing creation into the dynamic unity that exists in Christ's suffering, death and resurrection. Julian's theology of the cross focuses intensely on suffering. It stands within the parameters of Moltmann's reminder that: "The Cross is the form of the coming, redeeming kingdom."<sup>1</sup> The *exitus reditus* is cruciform. Yet the suffering of Christ never becomes an end in itself. Julian's concentrated attention on Christ's death leads to a theology of the paschal mystery presented as *oneing* in suffering, *oneing* in love and *oneing* in joy. Julian's theology of the cross is a theology of glory, a *glorious asseeth* (glorious satisfaction).

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<sup>1</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1974), 185.

## I. IN THE SECOND

We recall Julian's trinitarian formula that describes the pattern of *oneing* that occurs between the Trinity and humanity in the *exitus reditus*:

*For alle oure lyfe is in thre: in the furst (we haue) oure beyng, and in the seconde we haue oure encresyng, and in the thyrde we haue oure fulfylling. The furst is kynde, the seconde is mercy, the thyrde is grace.*<sup>2</sup>

We have seen that at creation God establishes for all time that human beings will participate in the life of God or have *being in God*. There are a series of ontological *oneings* between God and humanity that can never be destroyed. Yet, this is not the complete picture of human existence as we know it. In our sensuality we experience the effects of sin and the incompleteness of the human condition that prevent our substance and sensuality being fully one in Christ. There is a need for redemption. Julian describes the process of this transformation as *in the seconde we haue oure encresyng*.

Without defining the phrase *in the seconde*, Julian uses the concept in two ways. *In the seconde* points to the role of the second person of the Trinity. It identifies the *seconde* period in the history of salvation or continual creation<sup>3</sup> when God's self-communication achieves an absolute and irrevocable concrete historical manifestation in Christ becoming flesh. Beginning with the Incarnation, the

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<sup>2</sup> 14:58.30-33,585. *For all our life consists of three: In the first we have our being, and in the second we have our increasing, and in the third we have our fulfillment. The first is nature, the second is mercy, the third is grace.* 294.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 4, 129-132.

expression *in the seconde*, draws together Christ's saving work on the cross and his ongoing continual presence as servant and mother in history.<sup>4</sup> *In the seconde* refers to what Julian calls, *geyn makyn*, or re-creation through Christ: *(O)ur maker would þat we should be lyke to Jhesu Cryst oure sauour in hevyn without ende by the vertu of oure (geyn) makyn*.<sup>5</sup> When Christ becomes human, human nature is drawn into the process of being re-created in Christ. Significantly, re-creation does not occur once. *Geyn makyn* has the dynamic of continual *encresing*. It occurs again and again. *In the seconde*, Christ engages humanity in a process of continual *oneing*.

In popular usage, *encresyng* suggests making something greater or more numerous. *Encresyng* specifies growth.<sup>6</sup> Julian's usage of the word *encresyng* gives it an energy that conveys the dynamic, renewing, reforming relationship that Christ sustains. Julian gives *encresyng* a specifically theological meaning through relating it to Christ's work of *oneing*:

*(F)or in oure moder Cryst we profyt and encrese, and in mercy he reformyth vs and restoryth, and by the vertu of his passion, his deth*

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<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 6, 238-269, and Chapter 7, 270-313.

<sup>5</sup> 2:10.54-56,330. *(O)ur Creator wished us to be like Jesus Christ our saviour in heaven forever, through the power of our making again.* 195. See Chapter 3, 129-132, 174-183 and Chapter 7, 284-285, for Julian's further development of this idea.

<sup>6</sup> MED, 111.

*and his vprysyng onyd vs to oure substannce.*<sup>7</sup>

Paired with *profyt*, *profyt* and *encrese* suggests that *encreasyng* benefits humanity, bringing about prosperity, progress, fullness of life. Related to mercy, *encreasyng* occurs in Christ's passion, death and resurrection as Christ reforms and restores all that was lost through the fall.<sup>8</sup> *Encreasyng*, however, is not simply saving creation. There is an evolutionary sense of perfecting creation. *Encreasyng* has a transformational, evolutionary consequence that makes the God/human relationship more complete than it was before the fall:

*And all the gyftes that god may geue to the creature he hath gevyn to his son Jhesu for vs, whych gyftes he wonnyng in vs hath beclosyd in hym in to the tyme that we be waxyn and growyn, oure soule with oure body and oure body with oure soule.*<sup>9</sup>

All the gifts that God gives to creatures, God gives through Christ. Christ *ones* us into himself, encloses us in himself and draws us into the *perichoresis* of divine loving until we are *waxyn* and *growyn*. *Waxyn* in Middle English has a double meaning. It can refer to an increase in size, potency or intensity as in the waxing of the moon. It can also refer to something made of wax that is able to receive impressions like wax.<sup>10</sup> In the context of our *encreasyng*, it is possible that Julian

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<sup>7</sup> 14:58.46-48,586. *(F)or in our Mother Christ we profit and increase, and in mercy he reforms and restores us, and by the power of his Passion, his death and his Resurrection he unites us to our substance.* 294.

<sup>8</sup> See, Chapter 7, 289-293.

<sup>9</sup> 14:55.31-35,567. *And all the gifts which God can give to the creature he has given to his Son Jesus for us, which gifts he, dwelling in us, has enclosed in him until the time that we are fully grown, our soul together with our body and our body together with our soul.* 287.

<sup>10</sup> NSOED, 3640.



is implying, that like a wax object, Christ *ones* us to himself, moulds us into the *imago Christi* until he makes us fully grown, fully Christ like.

Although every dimension of Christ's work increases us, Julian considers the passion to be the greatest work that brings about *encresyng*: *But for to dye for my loue so often that the number passyth creatures reason, thys is the hyghest profer that our lorde god myght make to mannes soule, as to my syght.*<sup>11</sup> The event that brings the *hyghest profer* to humanity is Christ's suffering for love that draws all creation into the meaning of the cross. Through the passion, Christ meets humanity in suffering. He *ones* humanity to himself and continues this dynamic *oneing* by drawing humanity into the mystery of divine love and joy. In the cross *encresyng* occurs at a moment in time for all time. The purpose of this chapter is to see how we experience the *hyghest profer* by the virtue of Christ's passion, death and resurrection.

## II. A THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS

In Christ crucified, Julian sees the most powerful expression of the sharing of divine love that facilitates human salvation or *encresyng*. Her interpretation of *the passion, death and vprysyng* begins in vivid visual experience that is confrontingly graphic. What emerges as the revelation unfolds is, I would argue, a theology of the cross. Julian interprets how the crucified Christ reveals the meaning of who

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<sup>11</sup> 9:22.38-41,386. *But to die for my love so often that the number exceeds human reckoning, that is the greatest offer that our Lord God could make to man's soul, as I see it.* 217.

God is for us, how God loves and how God saves through the cross.<sup>12</sup> In suggesting that Julian has an intentioned theological purpose in highlighting the theology of the cross that emerges in the long text, I am in disagreement with Pelphrey's work. Pelphrey considers that Julian's main aim is to reflect compassionately on Christ's suffering. She only incidentally develops a "theology of suffering" or "a theology of the cross." Pelphrey argues:

Julian's aim in the *Revelations* is not to develop a theology of suffering, or a metaphysical explanation of it or even a theology of the cross. She simply wants to be compassionate for Christ's pains ... The extent to which there is a theology of suffering in the *Revelations* demonstrates the extent to which she actually did participate in the pains which she saw in Christ, and in the experience of his disciples.<sup>13</sup>

The first chapter of the short text suggests that the youthful Julian wishes to attain an understanding of the meaning of Christ's passion by sympathetically participating in Christ's pains: *that I myght have sene bodylye the passionn ofoure lorde that he sufferede for me, that I myght have sufferede with hym as othere dyd that lovyd hym.*<sup>14</sup> The extent to which there is a theology of the cross in the revelation demonstrates the extent to which she participates in Christ's pains and feels these pains as her own.<sup>15</sup> Yet, as I have shown in the

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<sup>12</sup> See Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 65-75 for an overview of a theology of the cross.

<sup>13</sup> LWHM, 259.

<sup>14</sup> i:12-14,201-202. *that I might have seen with my own eyes our Lord's Passion which he suffered for me, so that I might have suffered with him as others did who loved him.* 125.

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 2, 49-77.

hermeneutic for interpreting the *showings*, understanding and knowing are central to Julian. She seeks to know and to understand Christ's meaning. I will demonstrate in the following analysis that Julian's "theology of the cross" is far from incidental. After twenty years of reflection on the revelations,<sup>16</sup> she adds significant theology to the long text that explains the meaning of who God is for us, how God loves and how God saves through the cross.

### III. HUMAN NEED

We have observed in previous chapters that central to Julian's soteriology is the idea of being saved for relationship with God, saved for fulfilment in God.

Related to this movement from God to God, however, is the question of what we are being saved from. In the previous chapter we saw how Julian comes to the conclusion in the short text that *synne is nouzt*.<sup>17</sup> Years of reflection lead her to move beyond trying to define the being of sin and to concentrate on the consequence of sin as *no dede*:

*What is synne? ... For in this tyme the workyng of creatures was nott shewde, but of our lord god in the creatures; for he is in the myd poynt of all thyngs, and all he doth. And I was sewer that he doth no synne; and here I saw verely that synne is no dede, for in alle thys, synne was nott shewde.*<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 1, 22.

<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 3, 139-141.

<sup>18</sup> 3:11.6-7,336 and 3:11.19- 23,338. *What is sin? ... For at this time the work of creatures was not revealed, but the work of our Lord God in ceatures; for he is at the centre of everything, and he does everything. And I was certain that he does no sin; and here I was certain that sin is no deed, for in all this sin was not shown to me.* 197-198. Sloane1 also refers to sin as *no dede*. XI:442,54.

Echoing the idea of not seeing presented in the short text, Julian does not see sin.

In common speech, a *dede* is an action, performance or actual fact.<sup>19</sup> Julian uses

*dedys* in a similar sense to describe the behaviour of humankind:

*For man beholdyth some dedys wele done and some dedys evylle, and our lorde beholdyth them not so, for as alle that hath beyng in kynde is of gods makyng, so is alle thyng that is done in properte of gods doyng. For it is esy to vnderstand that the beste dede is wele done; and so wele as the best dede that is done and the hyghest, so wele is the least dede done, and all in the properte and in the order that our lord hath it ordeynyd tofor withoute begynnyng, for ther is no doer but he.*<sup>20</sup>

From a human perspective some deeds seem well done and some deeds seem evil.

This is not so, however. All things are done by God (*alle thyng that is done in properte of gods doyng*). Therefore if God does all things, sin is the opposite of

God who does all; sin is *no dede*. Sin is the direct opposite to all that God does.

In keeping with sin as the negation of being and doing, Julian also describes sin as *vnkynde*:

*(S)ynne is wurse, vyler and paynfuller than hell without ony lycknesse. For it is contraryous to our feyer kynde; for as verely as*

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<sup>19</sup> NSOED, 613.

<sup>20</sup> 3:11.36-43,339-340. *For a man regards some deeds as well done and some as evil, and our Lord does not regard them so, for everything which exists in nature is of God's creation, so that everything which is done has the property of being of God's doing. For it is easy to understand that the best of deeds is well done; and the smallest of deeds which is done is as well done as the best and the greatest, and they all have the property and the order ordained for them as our Lord had ordained, without beginning, for no one does but he.* 198.

*synne is vnclene, as trewly synne is vnkynde.*<sup>21</sup>

God is *kynde vnmade*, whereas human beings are *kynde made*.<sup>22</sup> The opposite to *kynde vnmade* and *kynde made*, sin is *vnkynde*, unnatural, and *contraryous to our feyer kynd*. Sin is inhuman. Sin is so against our humanity it is *wurse, vylter and paynfuller than hell*. Sin destroys our humanity by enabling us to deny and reject meaning, truth, goodness, beauty and love.<sup>23</sup> Sin creates a blindness that makes us unable to recognize the unnaturalness of our ways. Ultimately, sin distorts our nature and we become *vnkynde* or unnatural.

### The First Sin

Consistent with her emphasis on the non-being of sin, Julian does not name the original sin that influences the human condition. She refers to original sin as *the fyrste synne* and points to its consequence as *wrecchydnesse*:

*Wrecchydnesse es alle thyng that is nought goode, þe gastelye blyndehede that we falle in to in the fyrste synne, and alle that folowes of that wrecchydnesse, passions and paynes gastelye or bodely, and alle that es in erth or in othere place whilke es nouzt goode.*<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> 14:63.14-16,615. *(S)in is incomparably worse, more vile and painful than hell. For it is in opposition to our fair nature; for as truly as sin is unclean, so truly is sin unnatural.* 304.

<sup>22</sup> See Chapter 4, 145-147.

<sup>23</sup> 13:27.15-16,405.

<sup>24</sup> xxiii:38-41,271. *Wretchedness is everything which is not good, the spiritual blindness that we fall into by our first sin, and all that follows from that wretchedness, sufferings and pains, spiritual or physical, and everything on earth or elsewhere which is not good.* 166. It is noteworthy that the definition of wretchedness occurs in the short text.

Wretchedness is a kind of spiritual blindness that creates *gastelye* or *bodely* pain. In keeping with her understanding, that *synne* is *nought*, wretchedness is all that is *nouzt goode*. It is the opposite to goodness. Julian also calls the consequence of the first sin *contraryous*:

*And therefore we fayle oftymes of the syght of hym, and anon we falle in to oure selfe, and than fynde we feyng of ryght nowght but the contraryous that is in oure selfe, and that of the olde rote of oure furst synne with all that folowyth of oure owne contynuance.*<sup>25</sup>

We note how Julian creates a subtle link between the first sin, the fall, failure and the fall into the self. She repeats the idea of the nothingness of sin (*feyng of ryght nowght*) and associates this with *contraryous*. *Contraryous* is a feeling of nothingness that opposes our true human nature. The image of the first sin as an old root<sup>26</sup> (*the olde rote of oure furst synne*) suggests that the root is deeply buried in the human condition. Julian links the *old rote of oure furst synne* to existential sin when she suggests that sin occurs when *we falle in to oure selfe*. Thus, stemming from the root of original sin, *contraryous* haunts our being by creating an antagonism that results in an absence of peace. *Contraryous* violates the harmonious *oneing* of our being in God. *Contraryous* creates an impasse between creatures and God. It turns human beings in on themselves and causes a blindness which prevents the recognition of the constant presence of divine love.

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<sup>25</sup> 14:47.39-43,498-499. *And therefore often we fail to perceive him, and presently we fall back upon ourselves, and then we find that we feel nothing at all but the opposition that is in ourseleves, and that comes from the old root of our first sin, with all that follows from our own persistence.* 261.

<sup>26</sup> Colledge and Walsh point out that the author of the *Cloud* also refers to *pe rote of synne*. BSAJN, n.42, 499.

## Two Sicknesses

Julian's emphasis on sin as *nouzt*, *no dede*, *vnkynde*, and original sin as influencing all that is *nouzt goode* and the *feylng of ryght nowght*, is distinctive for its lack of reference to actual sins. Although Julian mentions Church teaching in regard to *synnes whych wolde lede vs to endlesse payne, as holy chyrch techyth vs*, usually referred to as mortal sin, and *venyall (sin)*,<sup>27</sup> she does not develop lists of sins or pursue a distinction between mortal and venial sin. She singles out two sicknesses, impatience and despair, through which she comprehends all sin:

*That one is vnpacyens or slouth, for we bere oure traveyle and oure payne hevily. That other is dispeyer or doughtfulle drede, as I shalle sey after. Generally he shewde synne, wher in alle is comprehendyd; but in specyall he shewde noone but theyse ij, and theyse two are it þat moste traveylyth and trobyllyth vs, as by that oure lorde shewde me, of whych he wylle we be amendyd.*<sup>28</sup>

God only ever reveals what sin is generally. Yet, *alle is comprehendyd* in two sicknesses, *vnpacyens or slouth*, *dispeyer or doughtfulle drede*. Traditionally, *vnpacyens* describes a failure to bear sufferings, irascibility, annoyance or intolerance.<sup>29</sup> *Slouth* refers to an inactivity or reluctance to exert oneself.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> 14:52.59-60,551. *sins which would lead us to endless torment, as Holy Church teaches us .... venial sin.* 281.

<sup>28</sup> 16:73.9-15,666-667. *One is impatience or sloth, because we bear our labour and our pain heavily. The other is despair or doubtful fear, as I shall say afterwards. He showed sin generally, in which all sin is comprehended; but he showed no sins in particular but these two, and it is these two which most belabour and assail us, by what our Lord showed me, of which he wants us to be amended.* 322.

<sup>29</sup> NSOED, 1319.

<sup>30</sup> NSOED, 2904.

Although Julian never specifically defines these conditions,<sup>31</sup> she identifies these sicknesses in her own life as *wretchydnesse, slowth and werynesse, þat my lykyd not to lyue and to traveyle as me felle to do.*<sup>32</sup> For her, impatience and sloth are the beginning of sin: *slouth and in lesyng of tyme. For þat is þe begynnyng of synne.*<sup>33</sup> While impatience could suggest a hurriedness that is the opposite to sloth, Julian treats these two conditions as one sickness. This implies that impatience leads to a meaninglessness characterized as indolence or apathy that is destructive of knowledge of human origin in God and the purpose of life to experience salvation in God.

Related to *vnpacyens* or *slouth*, *dispeyer* or *doughtfulle drede* is the deadliest of sins. Without making a distinction between the temptation to despair and actual despair, in the short text she associates a stirring to despair with an assault from *the fende*:

*After this the fende comm agayne with his heete and with his stynke, and made me fulle besye. The stynke was so vile and so*

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<sup>31</sup> For example Pelphrey points to the figure of the Glutton in *Piers Ploughman* as the personification of the sickness of *slouth* that leads to *despair*: Langland paints a vivid picture of his behaviour: "(T)his glutton had spattered his garments with great oaths, and drabbled them in the slime of deceitful talk, throwing the name of God about idly, and swearing till the sweat drenched his jacket ... Then he would fall into despair, and give up all hope of salvation – a sloth so deadly that no medicine can cure it, and even the mercy of God cannot help such a man on his death bed." LWHM, n.53, 283.

<sup>32</sup> 15:64.10-12,620. *wretchedness, sloth and weariness, so that I had no pleasure in living and labouring as was my duty.* 306.

<sup>33</sup> 16:76.35-36,688. *sloth and wasting of time, for that, as I see it, is the beginning of sin.* 329.



*paynfulle, and the bodely heete also dredfulle and trauaylous; and also I harde a bodely iangelynge and a speche, as it hadde bene of two bodyes, and bathe to my thynkynges iangled at ones, as zif thay had haldene a parliamente with grete besynes, and alle was softe mutterynges. And I vnderstode nouzt whate thay sayde, botte alle this was to stirre me to dispayre, as me thouzt.*<sup>34</sup>

Although it is difficult to say how literally Julian understood this assault from the devil, she expresses a belief in, and fear of the devil that permeated her era. In the long text she distinguishes her depiction of the fiend from the rest of the *showings* by pointing out that it occurs in her sleep.<sup>35</sup> The affront seems to be a type of nightmare that tempts her to despair. Julian's gruesome portrayal of the presence of the fiend engages all the bodily senses. There is a *heete* and a *stynke*, *bodely iangelynge and a speche*, *besynes*, and *softe mutterynges*. This links with the nothingness and meaninglessness of sin, for Julian *vnderstode nouzt whate thay sayde*. Reminiscent of the confusion that evil creates in the human ability to listen and to understand as illustrated in the tower of Babel myth (Genesis 11:1-9), despair creates an unsettling business that distorts understanding and leads to distrust in the constant presence of divine love.

At the end of the short text Julian distinguishes *doutefulle drede*:

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<sup>34</sup> xxiii:1-8, 270. *After this the devil returned with his heat and his stench, and kept me very busy. The stench was vile and painful, and the physical heat was fearful and oppressive; and I could also hear in my ears chattering and talking, as if between two speakers, and they seemed to be both chattering at once, as if they were conducting a confused debate, and it was all low muttering. And I did not understand what they said, but all this, it seemed, was to move me to despair.* 165.

<sup>35</sup> See 16:67.2,635.

*(F)or þowz it be litille in the selfe, and it ware knawenn, it is a spice of dispayre. For I am sekyr that alle doutefulle dredes god hates, and he wille þat we hafe thamm departed with trewe knawyng of lyfe.*<sup>36</sup>

The *spice of dispayre, doutefulle drede* creates uncertainty as to the continuing presence of divine love. It distorts truth or *trewe knawyng of lyfe*. In the long text Julian further characterizes *doutghtfulle drede, in as moch as it drawyth to dyspeyer, god wylle haue it turnyd in vs into loue by tru knowyng of loue.*<sup>37</sup>

*Doughtfulle drede* is destructive. It distorts reality and creates doubt that leads to uncertainty about the goodness of God. It is the opposite to true knowledge of love. Nuth suggests, given Julian's extreme emphasis on the constancy of the love of God that "it is logical that the most heinous sin in her eyes should be despair, which essentially denies God's love."<sup>38</sup> *Doughtfulle drede* was endemic in Julian's age due to suffering during the Black Death that led to an overwhelming fear and hopelessness.

The two sicknesses through which Julian understands all sin *vnpacyens* or *slouth*,

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<sup>36</sup> xxv:11-14,276. *(I)f it be recognized for what it is, however little it may be, it is a kind of despair. For I am certain that God hates all doubtful fear, and he wishes us to drive it out, knowing truly how we may live.* 169.

<sup>37</sup> 16:74.13-15,673. inasmuch as it induces to despair, turned in us into love by true knowledge of love. 324.

<sup>38</sup> Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, 128. In spiritual classics composed by men, pride is often considered the most deadly of sins. For example, *Scale*, 1:56-60.127-131. Hilton gives an extensive explanation of the sin of pride. Gluttony also seems to be a sin that did not interest Julian. In contrast see *Scale*, 1:72-82.144-152, where Hilton gives an extensive explanation of the sins of gluttony and lechery. He also considers the five senses as windows into sin.

*dyspeyer* or *doughtfulle drede* are inimical to personal and communal hope. They lead to an interpretation of suffering as evidence that non-being is more powerful than being, that *no dede* is more forceful than deeds and that God is not interested in or involved in human suffering. These feelings feed off the non-being of sin and overshadow the reality of human *oneing* with the divine.

For Julian, then, there is something indefinable about sin. It is an absurdity that seductively creates a distortion in our true humanity in God. While the exact nature of sin remains elusive, we can see its effects in the human condition as it causes destructive existential pain: *But I saw nott synne, for I beleue it had no maner of substannce, ne no part of beyng, ne it myght not be knowen but by the payne that is caused therof.*<sup>39</sup> Because sin has *no maner of substannce*, and therefore no ontological status, it is not grounded in God, nor does it share in the life of God. The non-being of sin has a devastating existential consequence. It impacts on our lives, inflicting pain: *For syn is so vyle and so mekylle for to hate that it may be lyconnyd to no payne whych payne is not synne.*<sup>40</sup> Sin creates existential pain.

We may criticize Julian for her lack of concern about violent sins, such as the

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<sup>39</sup> 13:27.26-28,406. *But I did not see sin, for I believe that it has no kind of substance, no share in being, nor can it be recognized except by the pain caused by it.* 225.

<sup>40</sup> 13:40.37-39,458. *For sin is so vile and so much to be hated that it can be compared with no pain which is not itself sin.* 247.

violence associated with war and larceny or the inhumanity that poverty brings.<sup>41</sup> Indirectly, we see her concern for violence, however, in her compassion for the brutality experienced by Christ in the passion. She connects sin to this violence by describing the scourges on Christ's body: *I saw beholdyng the body plentuous bledyng in semyng of the scoregyng.*<sup>42</sup> The image of scourging then becomes the descriptor of sin. Sin is the *sharpest scorge* that inflicts pain, so persistently and intrusively it *betyth man or woman, and alle to brekyth hym.*<sup>43</sup> Sin beats and breaks human nature.

Remarkably, as Julian confronts the non-being of sin, she comes to understand that *synne is behouely*. In the short text, she makes the statement that *synne is behouelye* without any qualifications.<sup>44</sup> In the long text she adds a significant qualifier: *Synne is behouely, but alle shalle be wele, and alle shalle be wele, and alle maner of thyng shalle be wele.*<sup>45</sup> Sin is necessary but *all shall be well*. A closer look at the etymology of the word *behouely* reveals Julian's meaning. *Behouely* evolves from its root word *bihoveth*<sup>46</sup> which signifies that something is

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<sup>41</sup> See Chapter 1, 15-21.

<sup>42</sup> 4:12.3-4,342. *as I watched, I saw the body bleeding copiously in representation of the scourging.* 199.

<sup>43</sup> 13:39.2-4,449. *the sharpest scourge ... belabours man or woman, and breaks a man.* 244.

<sup>44</sup> See xiii:52-60,244.

<sup>45</sup> 13:27.13-14,405. *Sin is necessary, but all will be well, and all will be well, and every kind of thing will be well.* 225.

<sup>46</sup> MED, 844. Cf. Baker, *From Vision to Book*, 70.

necessary or inescapable with respect to circumstances and destiny. Nuth points out, however, this is not an ontological necessity in the sense that God alone is necessary being.<sup>47</sup> Rather it suggests that though the origin of sin is unknown, sin is an inescapable part of human destiny. Paradoxically, however, just as sin is a fact of life, God's eternal plan for salvation is also a fact of life.<sup>48</sup> Despite sin, God will continue to bring this salvific plan to completion. *Behouely*, also has roots in *bihoveable*,<sup>49</sup> meaning helpful, useful and beneficial.<sup>50</sup> The long text makes this apparent. *Synne is behouely, (beneficial) but alle shalle be wele.* Thus, sin is a *felix culpa*.<sup>51</sup> We benefit from the effects of sin through experiencing the presence of divine love forgiving and healing in the midst of sin.

Essentially, in Julian's soteriology, humanity is saved from the meaningless

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<sup>47</sup> Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, 121.

<sup>48</sup> We will see that the meaning of *shall* in *all shall be well* emphasizes the necessity of human well-being, that cancels out the necessity of sin. See, Chapter 8, 324-325.

<sup>49</sup> MED, 842.

<sup>50</sup> This transformation of the negativity of sin by looking at the positive aspects of sin, aligns with *Piers Ploughman*: "And of nauzte madest auzte and man most liche to thi selue, and sithen sufferedest for to synne a sikernesse to vs alle, and al for the best, I bileue what eure the boke telleth, O felix culpa! O necessarium peccatum Ade!" BSAJN, n.52, 244.

<sup>51</sup> *Felix culpa, O happy fault* was an acclamation sung in Julian's day. Julian is not presenting a position that suggests that the torment and despair we feel because of sin is necessary for salvation. Rather sin is a *felix culpa*, a *happy fault*, because it cannot keep Love from continuing to love. This occurs singularly through the cross. Sin is a *felix culpa* because we come to understand more fully the all-encompassing love of God.

despair and life-denying pain that the non-being and non-doing of sin inflicts on the human condition. She emphasizes suffering that exists because of sin, rather than identifying sins or attributing blame for sin. In light of this approach to sin as the negation of all that is natural and loving, her version of redemption through the cross concentrates on a theology of the presence of divine love revealed through the cross. The cross makes sin nothing by continuing the work of *oneing* humanity to the divine. The cross reveals that in spite of sin *all shall be well*:

*It is tru that synne is cause of alle thys payne, but alle shalle be wele, and alle maner of thyng shalle be wele. Theyse wordes were shewde fulle tenderly, shewyng no maner of blame to me ne to none that shalle be safe. Than were it grett vnkyndnesse of me to blame or wonder on god of my synne, sythen he blamyth nott me for synne.*<sup>52</sup>

In contrast to the pain felt because of sin, Julian feels these words *fulle tenderly*. *Alle shalle be wele*. The non-being of sin is the cause of the life-denying pain in the universe. Nevertheless, the presence of divine love is more powerful than sin. Therefore, *all shall be well*. The solution to the problem of sin is not to be found in imputing blame. There is *no maner of blame to me ne to none that shalle be safe*.<sup>53</sup> Salvation is not about attributing blame to human beings or to God for the incomplete nature of the universe and the suffering within the human condition. The love expressed through Christ's redemptive death and resurrection

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<sup>52</sup> 13:27.33-38,407. *It is true that sin is the cause of all this pain, but all will be well, and every kind of thing will be well. These words were revealed most tenderly, showing no kind of blame to me or to anyone who will be saved. So it would be most unkind of me to blame God or marvel at him on account of my sins, since he does not blame me for sin.* 225-226.

<sup>53</sup> We will look at the phrase, *none that shalle be safe*, and its implications for universal salvation in Chapter 9, 386-387.

reveals that in spite of sin, *alle shalle be wele, and alle maner of thyng shalle be wele.*

#### IV. *ONEING* THROUGH THE CROSS

Julian *beholds*<sup>54</sup> the full expression of the words *alle maner of thyng shalle be wele* in the crucified Christ who meets humanity in suffering and *ones* humanity to himself in love. It is important to note at this stage, however, that while the suffering of Christ reveals how *all shall be well* because it has an effect on the incompleteness of human nature, the ultimate motive for Christ's suffering is love, not sin. Julian sees this *oneing* take place in three manners of *beholding* the cross that arise in her understanding: *beholding* suffering, *beholding* love and *beholding* joy.

We recall, *beholding* enables Julian to participate in what Christ's passion signifies, to become one with it, to be transformed by it, and to understand its meaning. She gives this seeing authority by associating the insights that emerge with the will of God:

*It is gods wylle, as to my vnderstandyng, that we haue iij maner of beholdyng of his blessyd passion. The furst is the harde payne that he sufferyd with a contriccion and compassion; and that shewde*

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<sup>54</sup> We noted that *beholding* is the activity which enables Julian to integrate bodily sight, words formed in her understanding and spiritual sight. See Chapter 2, 51-77.

*oure lorde in this tyme, and gauē me myght and grace to see it.*<sup>55</sup>

Later Julian continues:

*And heer saw I for the seconde beholding in his blessyde passion. The loue that made hym to suffer it passith as far alle his paynes as hevyn is aboue erth; for the payne was a noble precious and wurschypfulle dede done in a tyme by the workyng of loue. And loue was without begynnyng, is and shall be without ende.*<sup>56</sup>

Subsequently, she adds: *And heer saw I for the thyrde beholdyng in hys blessydfulle passion, that is to sey the joy and the blysse that makyth hym to lyke it.*<sup>57</sup> Essentially there are three inter-related experiences of *beholdyng*. The first *beholdyng* reveals *the harde payne that he sufferyd*. This shows how human beings are one with Christ in suffering. The second *beholdyng*, *(t)he loue that made hym to suffer*, discloses *oneing* in love. The third *beholding*, *the joy and the blysse that makyth hym to lyke it*, imparts *oneing* in joy.

Colledge and Walsh suggest that *beholdyng* the passion as suffering, love and joy reflects a progressive movement from suffering to love to joy. They identify this

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<sup>55</sup> 8:20,33-36.377-378. *It is God's will, as I understand it, that we contemplate his blessed Passion in three ways. Firstly, that we contemplate with contrition and compassion the cruel pain he suffered; and our Lord revealed that at this time, and gave me strength and grace to see it.* 214.

<sup>56</sup> 9:22.45-49,386-387. *And this I saw as the second way of contemplating his blessed Passion. The love which made him suffer it surpasses all his sufferings, as much as heaven is above earth; for the suffering was a noble, precious and honourable deed, performed once in time by the operation of love. And love was without beginning, it is and shall be without end.* 217.

<sup>57</sup> 9:23.6-8,389. *And here I saw the third way of contemplating his blessed Passion, that is to say the joy and the bliss which make him take delight in it.* 218.



as "the classical *ascensio mentis in deum* of the Western tradition."<sup>58</sup> In one sense there is a continuum in suffering, love and joy. In another sense, however, one experience of *beholdyng* cannot be isolated from the others. *Oneing* in suffering is never an end in itself. *Oneing* in suffering always includes *oneing* in love and joy. Therefore, although there is the movement of the paschal mystery in the cross as suffering transfigured through love becomes joy, Julian's theology of the cross is exceptional in its ability to express paradox. In *beholding* Christ suffering, Julian does not simply attach the resurrection to the passion and view it as another event in addition to the death of Christ. For her the death of Christ begins in the Incarnation. *(H)e dyed in our manhede, begynnyng at the swete incarnation, and lastyng to the blessyd vprysyng on Ester morow.*<sup>59</sup> Without collapsing the resurrection into the death of Jesus, or passing over the death in favour of the resurrection, Julian shows that Incarnation and suffering for love form a single context for the breakthrough of the joy of the resurrection. Love and joy are always manifest in suffering, and suffering for love is the underlying dynamic of joy. Though we may criticize Julian for giving no sense of the life and ministry of the Jesus of the gospels, what she does present in these *beholdings* of suffering, love and joy is a theology of the paschal mystery. She excels at interpreting the meaning of Christ's passion, death and resurrection. We will now examine each *beholdyng* in turn.

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<sup>58</sup> BSAJN, n.6, 389.

<sup>59</sup> 9:23.21-22,391. *(H)e died in our humanity, beginning at the sweet Incarnation and lasting until his blessed Resurrection on Easter morning.* 219.

## 1. *Oneing Through Suffering*

The first *beholdyng* is *the harde payne that he sufferyd with a contriccion and a compassion*. There is some discrepancy in the reference to a contrition and a compassion which makes a difference to Christ's response in suffering. Sloane<sup>1</sup> has a similar statement: *The first is the herd peyn that He suffrid with contrition and compassion*.<sup>60</sup> Note however that Colledge and Walsh shift the position of contrition and compassion in their translation: *(f)irstly, that we contemplate with contrition and compassion the cruel pain he suffered*. In this translation *contrition* and *compassion* describe how human beings should *behold* the passion. Yet, Walsh's earlier interpretation of the term is more in keeping with the Middle English: *the first of which is the severe pain that he suffered, with contrition and compassion*.<sup>61</sup> The confusion seems to have arisen because it is not usual in our contemporary use of the word *contriccion* to associate contrition with Christ.<sup>62</sup> The Middle English text is clear however. It is Christ's *contrition* and *compassion*, his sorrow for the incompleteness of humanity that Julian observes in

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<sup>60</sup> XXI:753-754.65.

<sup>61</sup> *The Revelations of Divine Love of Julian of Norwich*, trans. James Walsh (London: Burns and Oates, 1961), 81. Warrack, *Revelations of Divine Love*, 45, makes the same shift in interpretation. "The First is: the hard Pain that he suffered, - [beholding it] with contrition and compassion." It is noteworthy the Warrack's translation adds [beholding it] so that contrition and compassion refer to human beings.

<sup>62</sup> The Middle English Dictionary gives an example from *The Book of Margery Kempe*, where Margery associates contrition with a quality of Christ: *Owyr Lord, of hys hey goodnesse visited þis creatur wyth abundawnt teers of contricyon*. MED, 578. The tears of contrition are a gift that belong to Christ. Thus, in Middle English *contriccion* can be a quality associated with Christ.

her experience of *beholding*. Julian presents a description of Christ's sorrow, his contrition and compassion and shows how these emotions echo throughout the entire cosmos:

*Here saw I a grett onyng betwene Crist and vs, to my vnderstondyng; for when he was in payne we ware in payne, and alle creatures that myght suffer payne sufferyd with hym. That is to say, alle creatures that god hath made to oure servys, þe fyrmamente and erth, feylyd for sorow in ther kynd in the tyme of Cristes dyeng, for it longyth kyndly to ther properte to know hym for ther lorde, in whom alle ther vertuse stondyth. And whan he feylyd, then behovyd nedys to them for kyndnes to feyle with hym, in as moch as they myght, for sorow of hys paynes. And thus tho that were hys fryndes suffered payne for loue, and generally alle; that is to sey, they that knew hym nott sufferde for feylynge of all maner comfort, saue the myghty pryve kepyng of god.<sup>63</sup>*

Consistent with the image of the hazelnut, the event of the cross not only unites Christ with the pain of the human condition, but this *oneing* extends to all creatures, the earth and the cosmos. Julian sees that human beings are created in Christ. Bound to Christ by nature, we recognize him as Lord. Furthermore, creation in Christ unites humanity in the inter-being of all creation. This bond is such a *grett onyng* that as Christ experiences the pain of the passion, it reverberates over the entire cosmos.

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<sup>63</sup> 8:18.14-24,367. *Here I saw a great unity between Christ and us, as I understand it; for when he was in pain we were in pain, and all creatures able to suffer pain suffered with him. That is to say, all creatures which God has created for our service, the firmament and the earth, failed in their natural functions because of sorrow at the time of Christ's death, for it is their natural characteristic to recognize him as their Lord, in whom all their powers exist. And when he failed, their nature constrained them to fail with him, insofar as they could, because of the sorrow of his sufferings. And so those who were his friends suffered pain because of love, and all creation suffered in general; that is to say, those who did not recognize him suffered because the comfort of all creation failed them, except for God's powerful, secret preservation of them. 210-211.*

In the short text, Julian draws out the link between the cross and creation by identifying the suffering of the sun and the moon: *(the) sonne and the mone, with drewe thare seruyce, and so ware thaye alle lefte in sorowe for the tyme.*<sup>64</sup>

Possibly echoing apocalyptic imagery from Matthew 27:51b or Mark 13:24, Julian emphasizes the relationship between Christ and all creation by highlighting the withdrawal of light. The reference to the withdrawal of light from the sun and the moon accentuates the union between the pain of the cross and the pain of creation. In the long text, Julian extends her reference to this *grett onyng* mentioned in the short text. The *grett onyng* between Christ's experience of the passion and the cosmos is even more distinctive. She drops her reference to the sun and the moon. More inclusively, she refers to God as the maker of *planettes* and *elementes*. She presents *Pylate*, the traditional judge of Christ and *seynt Dyonisi of France, whych was that tyme a paynym*,<sup>65</sup> as examples which reveal

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<sup>64</sup> x:53-54,236. *(the) sun and moon, ceased to serve men, and so they were all abandoned in sorrow at that time.* 143. It is noteworthy that many illuminations of the passion have a sun and moon. See, 210, Crucifixion, where a distressed sun and moon are sketched into the gold background of the painting. The whole miniature is a merging of observed reality with decorative forms that convey the suffering of Christ and the consequential suffering of creation. This illumination was painted for the Lapworth Missal dated, 1398. Kathleen L. Scott. *A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles*, ed. J.J.G. Alexander (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 1996), Plate 4.

<sup>65</sup> 8:18.27-28,368. *the other was St. Denis of France, who at that time was a pagan.* 211. Known today as Pseudo-Dionysius, *Dyonisi* was originally thought to be Paul's convert Dionysius the Areopagite mentioned in Acts 17:34. BSAJN, n.27, 368. This theology was popular in England in her day and is the major source of the *Cloud of Unknowing*. Central to Pseudo-Dionysian theology is the transcendent unknowability of God. For this reason he is the perfect person to connect the unknown God to the suffering Christ.



that Christ's death influences all people, even non-believers:

*Eyther the worlde is now at an ende, or elles he that is maker of kyndes sufferyth. Wherfore he dyd wryte on an awter: Thys is an awter of the vnknowyn god. God of hys goodnes, that makyth planettes and the elementes to worke in ther kynde to the blessyd man and to þe cursyde, in that tyme it was withdraw fro both. Wher for it was þat they that knew hym nott were in sorow that tyme. Thus was oure lord Jhesu payned for vs; and we stonde alle in this maner of payne with hym, and shalle do tylle that we come to his blysse, as I shalle sey after.*<sup>66</sup>

In the tradition of interlacing her ideas with passages from scripture<sup>67</sup> Julian links together a number of images from Acts 17 where Paul has a discussion with Epicurean and Stoic philosophers about Christ's suffering, death and resurrection and the presence of God in creation. She makes direct reference to Acts 17:23-24: *Wherfore he dyd wryte on an awter: Thys is an awter of the vnknowyn god, and God of hys goodnes, that makyth planettes and the elementes to worke in ther kynde.*<sup>68</sup> Through these comments placed in the mouths of non-believers, Julian makes some significant theological points about the meaning of Christ's death. It

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<sup>66</sup> 8:18.29-38,368-369. *Either the world is coming to an end, or else he who is the creator of nature is suffering. Therefore he caused to be written on an altar: This is an altar of the unknown God. God in his goodness, who makes the planets and the elements to function according to their natures for the man who is blessed and the man who is accursed, in that time withdrew this from both. So it was that they who did not recognize him were in sorrow at that time. So was our Lord Jesus afflicted for us; and we all stand in this way of suffering with him, and shall till we come to his bliss, as I shall afterwards say.* 211.

<sup>67</sup> See Chapter 2, 77-80.

<sup>68</sup> Colledge and Walsh suggest that this reference finds its source in Peter Comestor's narrative that says that when philosophers inquired into the cause of the darkness on Good Friday and were unable to discover it, "Denis the Areopagite said that the god of nature was suffering. And they made an altar and wrote on it: "To the unknown God"." BSAJN n.27, 368; They refer to Acts 17:23. BSAJN, n.31, 369.

is not simply the humanity of Christ who suffers, but the second person of the Trinity, the *maker of kyndes*, is the one who suffers. This union between the suffering of the Creator and the suffering of creation confirms both ontological and existential *oneing* between God and creation. The relationship between Christ's passion and *an awter of the vnknowyn god*, suggests that in Christ we see the suffering of God. At another time, however, Julian points out that it is only Christ the second person of the Trinity who suffers, not the whole Trinity: *Alle the trinyte wrought in the passion of Crist, mynystryng habonndance of vertuse and plente of grace to vs by hym; but only the maydyns sonne sufferyd.*<sup>69</sup> Thus the imagery maintains paradox. From the point of view of God's transcendence, suffering cannot touch the being of God. From the point of view of God's immanence, God through Christ is present in suffering, feels what the cosmos suffers and suffers with the cosmos. In preserving both these perspectives, Julian can retain the Trinity's personal relationship with creation in suffering without the Trinity being limited to this relationship. As an altar to the *vnknown god* Christ's suffering makes the transcendent God immanent in the suffering of the cross.

Julian draws out the link between the cross and creation by dramatically identifying the crucified Christ with the response of God *that makyth planettes and the elementes to worke*. After twenty years of reflection she emphasizes that it is not the *elementes* in themselves (the sun and the moon) that withdraw their

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<sup>69</sup> 9:23.30-32,391-392. *All the Trinity worked in Christ's Passion, administering abundant virtues and plentiful grace to us by him; but only the virgin's Son suffered.* 219.

source, but the divine source that makes these *worke*. Julian accentuates the profound inter-relationship between God and creation. Whatever affects the body of Christ affects God. Conversely, whatever affects God affects the body of creation. Though there is room for ambiguity, the whole context of the passage indicates that her stress is not so much on the withdrawal of God from creation, but on the absolute loss suffered by creation in the death of Christ. Significantly, the death of Christ has a universal significance: *(w)her for it was þat they that knew hym nott were in sorow that tyme*. Not just Christians become one with Christ in the pain of the cross. The *grett onyng* occurs between all human beings whether they know Christ or not. Moreover, the suffering of Christ has an orientation towards the future. It continues in time in human experience: *oure lord Jhesu payned for vs; and we stonde alle in this maner of payne with hym*.<sup>70</sup> Human beings and creation remain in relationship with the suffering of the cross until all is transfigured, transformed and *increased* in the relationship of *oneing* and *come to his blysse*. The cross of Christ stands out as the *grett onyng* that embraces the suffering of creation.

## 2. *Oneing Through Love*

Within the context of Christ being *one* with all creation in suffering, Julian concentrates on humanity. The second *beholding* reveals *(t)he loue that made hym to suffer*. Although this love permeates each scene of the crucifixion, the most significant vision that Julian describes is Christ's wounded body and broken

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<sup>70</sup> See n.66, 211.



heart. Though Julian does not name it as such, this is a *ghostly sight*. She uses concrete imagery, but there is something ethereal, and intangible about the vision. In the short text, Julian places this icon of love in the centre, in the thirteenth of twenty-five chapters, so that it is the heart of the *showings*.<sup>71</sup> In the long text, although she continues to give the vision prominence, she draws our attention more to a theology of joy.

The vision leads Julian's understanding into the body of Christ:

*Wyth a good chereoure good lorde lokyd in to hys syde and behelde with joy, and with hys swete lokyng he led forth the vnderstandyng of hys creature by the same wound in to hys syd with in; and ther he shewyd a feyer and delectable place, and large jnow for alle mankynde that shalle be savyd and rest in pees and in loue.*<sup>72</sup>

At first this vision seems like a *bodily sight* of a painting of Christ's dying body hanging on a *rod tre* with a wound in his side.<sup>73</sup> Though graphic, the imagery is

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<sup>71</sup> Cf. xiii

<sup>72</sup> 10:24.3-7,394-395. *With a kindly countenance our good Lord looked into his side, and he gazed with joy, and with his sweet regard he drew his creature's understanding into his side by the same wound; and there he revealed a fair and delectable place, large enough for all mankind that will be saved and will rest in peace and in love.* 220.

<sup>73</sup> See Crucifixion, 210, where there is a wound in Christ's ribs near his heart. The wound in Christ's side that leads to his heart echoes the Johannine passion scene (John 19:34) and the last supper discourse, especially John 14:2 and John 15:4. It also reflects Bernard of Clairvaux's (1090-1153) allegorical exposition on *The Song of Songs* that connected the wounds of Christ to the clefts in the rock that become the home of the dove (Song of Songs 2:14), and the clefts or wounds that proved to Thomas that Christ was risen (John 20:27). See Bernard of Clairvaux, *St Bernard on the Song of Songs: Sermones in Cantica Cantorum*, trans. and ed. A Religious of C.S.M.V. (London: A.R. Mowbray & Co. Limited, 1952), 194.

not at all realistic. It reflects the contemplative imagination. In the vision, Christ looks into his side and leads Julian's understanding *by the same wound in to hys syd with in*. Julian's understanding enters the body of Christ. In this moment of insight she becomes one with Christ in suffering, and gains deeper understanding. She explains what comes to her mind in this *beholding* that she identifies as *swete*:

*And ther with he brought to mynde hys dere worthy blode and hys precious water whych he lett poure out for loue. And with the swete beholdyng he shwyd hys blessyd hart clovyn on two, and with hys enjoyng he shewyd to my vnderstandyng in part the blyssydfulle godhede as farforth as he wolde that tyme, strengthyng the pour soule for to vnderstande as it may be sayde, that is to mene the endlesse loue that was without begynnyng and is and shal be evyr.<sup>74</sup>*

First she thinks of Christ's blood and water poured out for love. Then she sees *hys blessyd hart clovyn on two*. The concrete images of blood, water and a broken heart become catalysts for deeper understanding. The cross *is to mene the endlesse loue that was without begynnyng and is and shal be evyr*. In this contemplative moment when Christ *led forth the vnderstandyng of hys creature* through his open wound, Julian understands that the cross reveals eternal love. The scene continues in a dream-like manner: *and ther he shewyd a feyer and delectable place, and large jnow for alle mankynde that shalle be savyd and rest in pees and in loue*. The body of the wounded Christ is a *feyer and delectable place*, a home for humankind. Significantly this is not a home for a select few.

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<sup>74</sup> 10:24.7-14,395. *And with that he brought to mind the dear and precious blood and water which he suffered to be shed for love. And in this sweet sight he showed his blessed heart split in two, and as he rejoiced he showed to my understanding a part of his blessed divinity, as much as was his will at that time, strengthening my poor soul to understand what can be said, that is the endless love which was without beginning and is and always shall be. 220-221.*

It is *large jnow for alle mankynde that shalle be savyd and rest in pees and in loue*. Love draws all humanity into the body of God through the wound of Christ and makes the heart of Christ the home for all humanity to rest in, in peace and love.

The out-pouring of blood and the broken heart reveal that the body of Christ is the home of all peoples. The images impart something of the mystery of eternity. Rahner's explanation of the word "heart" helps illuminate how the image extends Julian's understanding of divine love:

But there are human words which, because they mean human things, can properly be said only in a human way. And if they mean something human which belongs eternally to God himself, then such human words are words of eternity which men can never cease to utter, either here or in eternity. And to these words of earthly beginning and eternal ending belongs the word which God will still say to us men in all eternity: 'Behold this heart, which has so loved men'.<sup>75</sup>

The images unambiguously reveal that divine love is present to humanity in Christ. Yet, paradoxically, these physical, earthly images not only reveal the present reality of divine love active in human lives. They are words of eternity. They reveal eternal love. The images hold within them an eternity of divine loving and show how those who love as Julian loves Christ know something of eternity. The imagery reveals how suffering human beings are made one with Christ in woundedness, and consequently are drawn beyond suffering into the

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<sup>75</sup> Karl Rahner, "'Behold This Heart'! Preliminaries to a Theology of Devotion to the Sacred Heart," *Theological Investigations*, vol. 3, trans. Karl-H. and Boniface Kruger (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 1967), 330.

eternity of God. Christ's flowing blood and broken heart express the dynamic unity of charity unmade, charity made and charity given. They embody the fact that love is our beginning, love is our present and love is our end.

When Julian articulates her theology of the cross from the perspective of *love* she expands her understanding of the salvific task of *oneing* humanity to the divine. Although we may criticize Julian's romantic description of the imagery, she makes some significant points that add to her interpretation of salvation through the cross. First, the portrait of Christ's open side and broken heart gives an excellent example of the sharing of *charyte vnmade*, *charyte made* and *charyte gevyn*. The scene is an archetype of *charyte gevyn* through the cross. The imagery reveals the extremes to which divine love will go to in order to share love. Second, the image of Christ's body wounded and yet a place of comfort for all humankind reflects the totality of meaning only found in divine love. The imagery embraces the paradox expressed in the cross that through being wounded, Christ draws human beings beyond woundedness into the heart of God. Third, the imagery draws emphasis away from the suffering of the passion as merely being a response to human sin. The imagery presents unequivocally that the cross is about *oneing* in love.

### 3. *Oneing* in Joy

The experience of love revealed in Christ's broken heart inter-relates with the

third *beholding*: *that is to sey the joy and the blysse that makyth hym to lyke it.*<sup>76</sup>

Christ's death, which the dramatic pictures of Christ dying lead us to expect is actually a scene of joy:

*(S)odenly I beholdyng in the same crosse he channgyd in blesseydfulle chere. The channgyng of hys blesseyd chere channgyd myne, and I was as glad and mery as it was possible. Then brought oure lorde meryly to my mynd: Wher is now any poynt of thy payne or of thy anguysse? And I was fulle mery.*<sup>77</sup>

*Beholding* reveals that it is the resurrected Christ still *in the same crosse*. This suggests that the cross is intrinsically part of the resurrection. Christ is not dead but joyously alive with a countenance of *blesseydfulle chere*. The variety of spelling in *blisful cheer* and *blessefull chere*, *blesseydfulle chere* or *glad chere* in both the Paris<sup>78</sup> and Sloane<sup>1</sup> manuscripts give a sense of the meaning of this expression for Julian. Julian's use of the adjective *blesseydfulle* describes the supreme enjoyment of Christ. *Chere* points to the demeanour of Christ's face, the attitude expressed which communicates his intention for humanity. Thus *beholding blesseydfulle chere* discloses the joyfulness of Christ who suffered for love. This face-to-face recognition makes Julian *fulle mery*.

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<sup>76</sup> 9:23.7-8,389. *that is to sey the joy and the bliss which make him take delight in it.* 218.

<sup>77</sup> 9:21.6-11,379. *(S)uddenly, as I looked at the same cross, he changed to an appearance of joy. The change in his blessed appearance changed mine, and I was as glad and joyful as I could possibly be. And then cheerfully our Lord suggested to my mind: Where is there now any instant of your pain or of your grief? And I was very joyful.* 214-215.

<sup>78</sup> Note that Colledge and Walsh chose *glad chere* for their Middle English edition.

Continued contemplation of this cheer informs Julian's understanding:

*I vnderstode that we be now in our lordes menyng in his crosse with hym in our paynes and in our passion dyeng, and we willfully abydyng in the same crosse with his helpe and his grace in to the last poynt. Sodeynly he shalle channge hys chere to vs, and we shal be with hym in hevyn. Betwene that one and that other shalle alle be one tyme; and than shall alle be brought in to joy.*<sup>79</sup>

With startling clarity Julian expresses her understanding of why Christ radiates *blessydfulle chere*: *we be now in our lordes menyng in his crosse with hym.*

Completely drawn into *our lordes menyng*, we not only share in Christ's suffering *in our paynes and in our passion dyeing*, we also share in his joy. Julian points to the timeless nature of this sharing in joy by stating, *betwene that one and that other shalle alle be one tyme*. The cross places the eternal nature of God in time and draws time and eternity together in a single moment. This encounter with Christ's *blessydfulle chere* informs Julian that we already participate in Christ's joy and yet, as Nietzsche suggests, "every enjoyment seeks to be eternal".<sup>80</sup>

There is no doubt that Julian's theology of the cross is Christocentric. *Beholding* joy reveals conclusively, however, that the cross is ultimately *the blessydfulle*

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<sup>79</sup> 9:21.11-16,379-380. *I understood that in our Lord's intention we are now on his cross with him in our pains, and in our sufferings we are dying, and with his help and his grace we willingly endure on that same cross until the last moment of life. Suddenly he will change his appearance for us, and we shall be with him in heaven. Between the one and the other all will be a single era; and then all will be brought into joy.* 215.

<sup>80</sup> Dermot A. Lane, *Keeping Hope Alive: Stirrings in Christian Theology* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1996), 16.

*trinity of our saluacion*.<sup>81</sup> The self-giving of Christ in suffering, love and joy is the self-giving of the Trinity. As Julian continues to describe the joy revealed in the *blessydfulle trinity of our saluacion* her language becomes more mystical:

*In thys felyng my vnderstandyng was leftyd vppe in to hevyn, and ther I saw thre hevyns; of whych syght I was gretly merveyled, and thought: I see iij hevyns, and alle of the blyssedfulle manhed of Criste. And noone is more, noone is lesse, noone is hygher, noone is lower, but evyn lyke in blysse.*<sup>82</sup>

Julian characterizes the revelation of the Trinity in the humanity of Christ as *thre hevyns*,<sup>83</sup> which directly identify Christ's humanity with the three divine persons. The word *heavens* emphasizes the divine nature of the Trinity. It points to the absolute unity of the Trinity, as *noone is more, noone is lesse, noone is hygher, noone is lower, but evyn lyke in blysse*. The imagery also identifies Christ's humanity with the joy of heaven, for Julian describes heaven as the joy that is to come.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> 9:23.25-26,391. *our salvation which is in the blessed Trinity*. 219.

<sup>82</sup> 9:22.7-11,382-383. *In response to this my understanding was lifted up into heaven, and there I saw three heavens; and at this sight I was greatly astonished, and I thought: I see three heavens, and all are of the blessed humanity of Christ. And none is greater, none is less, none is higher, none is lower, but all are equal in their joy*. 216.

<sup>83</sup> Traditionally heavens describes the abode of God, regarded as beyond the sky. It identifies the state or condition of living with God after death. Medieval astronomers divided the celestial spheres into regions of space ranging from seven to eleven. NSOED, 1208. Three seems to be a deliberate association with the Trinity.

<sup>84</sup> See Julian's description of heaven: 14:42.55-56,473: *fulhed of joy that is for to come* (fulness of joy which is to come). 252.

Subsequently, Julian shows how the three heavens relate to each person of the Trinity:

*And in these thre wordes: It is a joy, a blysse and endlesse lykyng to me, were shewyd thre hevyns, as thus. For the joy, I vnderstode the plesannce of the father, and for the blysse the wurshyppe of the sonne, and for the endlesse lykyng the holy gost. The father is plesyd, the sonne is wurschyppe, the holy gost lykyth. And heer saw I for the thyrd beholding in hys blessydfulle passion, that is to sey the joy and the blysse that makyth hym to lyke it.<sup>85</sup>*

The *oneing* of the cross gives *joy, blysse and endlesse lykyng* to the Trinity. The scene reveals that there is in reality no gulf between humanity and God, suffering and joy, earth and heaven. The joy expressed by the Trinity of three heavens reinforces the eternal nature of joy. Joy is not limited by the constraints of temporal existence. Joy embraces the present and the future, this world and the transformation of creation in eternity.

Julian reaches a climax in *beholding* joy that is the *blessydfulle trinyte of our saluacion* when she presents a totally imageless vision of the glorified Christ:

*And after thys oure lord sh(ew)yd hym more gloryfyed as to my syght than I saw hym before, wher in I was lerned that oure soule shalle nevyr haue reste tylle it come into hym, knowyng that he is full of joye, homely and curteys and blessydfulle and very lyfe. Often tymes oure lorde Jhesu seyde: I it am, I it am. I it am that is hyghest. I it am that thou lovyest. I it am that thou lykyst. I it am that thou servyst. I it am that thou longest. I it am that thou*

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<sup>85</sup> 9:23.2-8,389. *And in these three sayings: It is a joy, a bliss and an endless delight to me, there were shown to me three heavens, and in this way. By 'joy' I understood that the Father was pleased, and by 'bliss' that the Son was honoured, and by 'endless delight' the Holy Spirit. The Father is pleased, the Son is honoured, the Holy Spirit takes delight. And here I saw the third way of contemplating his blessed Passion, that is to say the joy and the bliss which make him take delight in it. 218.*



*desyryst. I it am that thou menyte. I it am that is alle. I it am that holy church prechyth the and techeyth thee.*<sup>86</sup>

In this mystical description of Christ in his glory, Julian reveals conclusively that the theology of the cross is in essence not a theology of suffering but a theology of joy, trinitarian joy. We can see the significance she gives to joy when we compare this ineffable vision with the painting of the resurrected Christ, created around 1381, which was a panel in the retable at St. Luke's altar at Norwich Cathedral in Julian's day.<sup>87</sup> In this painting, a solemn triumphant Christ arises from his tomb, clad in a regal red cloak. He clasps a flag in his left hand while making a sign of victory with his right. There is an aura of fear in the picture, as two soldiers tumble to the ground in terror. A third soldier peers in amazement. The victorious Christ, oblivious to the suffering of the soldiers, places his foot on the neck of the soldier on the right. Though Christ has a crown of thorns on his head and the marks of the passion on his feet and hands, he dispassionately gives no sign that he has suffered for love. Rather, there is an air of violent triumphalism and callous indifference. Although Pelphrey places this picture on

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<sup>86</sup> 12:26.3-11,402-403. *And after this our Lord showed himself to me, and he appeared to me more glorified than I had seen him before, in which I was taught that our soul will never have rest till it comes into him, acknowledging that he is full of joy, familiar and courteous and blissful and true life. Again and again our Lord said: I am he, I am he, I am he who is highest. I am he whom you love. I am he in whom you delight. I am he whom you serve. I am he for whom you long. I am he whom you desire. I am he whom you intend. I am he who is all. I am he whom Holy Church preaches and teaches to you.* 223.

<sup>87</sup> The Retable (See 223), Monica Furlong, *The Wisdom of Julian of Norwich* (Oxford: Lion Publishing, 1996), 27.



the cover of his book, *Love Was His Meaning*,<sup>88</sup> and Monica Furlong in her book, *The Wisdom of Julian of Norwich* uses it a depiction of joy,<sup>89</sup> this is not Julian's understanding of love or joy. In fact it is quite the opposite. In absolute contrast to this portrait of the resurrection, Julian's mystical vision of the glorified Christ gives no hint of violent triumphalism and no hint of callous indifference. For Julian the resurrected Christ who imparts joy is the transcendent and immanent, *I it am, the allness* of God.

When Julian describes the resurrection, she attempts to portray its meaning beyond the partiality of visual imagery. Christ proclaims, *I it am*.<sup>90</sup> He then repeats *I it am* twelve times in the locution.<sup>91</sup> *I it am* gives an obvious allusion to the words of God to Moses: "I am who I am" in the story of the burning bush.<sup>92</sup> This identifies Christ with the great ineffable name for God, and designates his relationship with all that is. *I* identifies Christ as the the subject of all that is. *It* reinforces Christ's identity as the subject of thought, attention and inquiry of the only true reality for human beings. *Am* cements this identification and places this reality not only in the present but in eternity. The litany of attributes that describe Christ, *that is hyghest, that thou lovyst, that thou lykyst, that thou*

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<sup>88</sup> LWHM, Cover.

<sup>89</sup> Furlong, *The Wisdom of Julian of Norwich*, 27.

<sup>90</sup> Julian adds this threefold introduction to the long text.

<sup>91</sup> BSAJN, n.7, 402.

<sup>92</sup> These reflect Exodus 3:14 and the "I am" sayings of the gospel of John.

*servyst, that thou longest, that thou desyryst, that thou menyte, that is alle, that holy church prechyth the and techyth thee*, then echoes the unity of the Trinity described in the three heavens (*noone is more, noone is lesse, noone is hygher, noone is lower, but evyn lyke in blysse*). This reveals that Christ is the complete revelation of God. Christ is our true reality, all that we desire and long for, and all that will give meaning to our existence. Ultimately Christ is *alle*.

*Alle* echoes Julian's earlier images of God in *all things* and her refrain, *all shall be well*.<sup>93</sup> It contains an allusion to Ephesians 4:6, where the author identifies the divine as: "one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all." For Julian, the resurrected Christ communicates how trinitarian love permeates all reality. Through the cross Christ is simultaneously above all, through all and in all. *I it am that is hyghest* reminds us that in one sense Christ is a more than the *all*, transcends the *all*. At the same time Christ is through *all* in the teaching and preaching of Holy Church. He is in *all* as he compassionately shares in human suffering and draws us into the meaning of the cross. In the resurrection Julian sees *alle* in relation to Christ. Because Christ is *alle*, the *alpha* and the *omega* of all reality, all reality is directed to Christ. Awareness of this *allness* imparts joy.

Therefore, for Julian, the joy of the Trinity which the crucified and risen Christ imparts is not a momentary facile pleasure or happiness, or an optimism that is a

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<sup>93</sup> See Chapter 4, 137-138 and Chapter 7, 324-325.

kind of presumption that ignores the realities of pain, suffering and evil. Joy manifests a harmony that comes through struggling with the ambiguity of existence so powerfully reflected in the cross, and knowing that the presence of divine love through Christ transcends all reality. Joy expresses that darkness and light, tragedy and transformation, death and glory unite in a single moment in Christ. Joy, then, is not the opposite to suffering. Joy encompasses the deep darkness of the cross. Julian's understanding of joy resonates with what Tillich describes centuries later: "joy is the expression of our essential and central fulfilment."<sup>94</sup> In Julian's understanding we experience this essential and central fulfilment in Christ through the passion, death and resurrection. Joy is a sense of deep well-being that human beings come to when they know the love of Christ. Joy results when we see that all things come together in Christ. Joy comes because we are united to all that is, through Christ. Joy proliferates in the awareness that all creation exists in relation to the divine, through Christ, who is *I it am that is alle*. *I it am that is alle* draws us into the eternity of trinitarian joy.

When Julian articulates her theology of the cross from the perspective of *beholding joy*, the salvific task that increases human *oneing* to the divine becomes complete in joy. It reveals that salvation embraces the joy of Christ, the joy of the Trinity and the joy of humanity. The notion of joy completes Julian's theology of the cross and adds important aspects to her soteriology. First, *beholding joy* reunites the inseparable division between the suffering of the

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<sup>94</sup> Paul Tillich, *The New Being* (London: SCM Press, 1963), 149.

passion on one hand and the resurrection on the other. It balances Julian's preoccupation with suffering and shows how joy reveals that suffering is not more powerful than the presence of divine love. Second, the language Julian uses in her description of the resurrection, indicates that she does not speculate about the reality of the resurrection event or the nature of the empty tomb or resurrected body. Her only interest is in the salvific power and presence of the risen Christ. Third, Julian's consistent emphasis on the joy of Christ and the joy and bliss of the Trinity suggests that the work for human salvation is not a joyless task which an obedient Christ must endure. It presents human salvation as a joyous event that fulfills trinitarian desire and ultimately gives glory to the Trinity. Fourth, joy extends our understanding of resurrection beyond an experience that happened to Christ and defines it in terms of an ongoing process that draws human beings into the life of trinitarian joy. Finally, we see that Julian's reflection on the passion, death and resurrection is not a strange preoccupation with suffering. *Beholding* Christ's suffering, love and joy creates the ground for hope in the eschatological fulfilment of individuals and the world. The joy of Christ at the heart of all reality incites hope.

## V. A GLORIOUS ASSEETH

Thus Julian's theology of the cross is a theology of glory, a *glorious asseeth*, literally translated "glorious satisfaction". The *glorious asseeth* depicts all the aspects of *oneing* that are the glory of the cross. Although the translation of *glorious asseeth* (glorious satisfaction) resonates with satisfaction theology made

famous by Anselm of Canterbury, Julian differs from Anselm in her understanding of *asseeth making*.<sup>95</sup>

In *Cur Deus Homo*, (1090) Anselm composes an argument between a master, Anselm, and a disciple, Boso. Through question and answer Anselm describes the relationship between God and humanity in feudal terms as a bond of honour. He argues that in the fall, sin disturbed the order of the universe and offended God's honour. Because God is merciful and just, God must take into account the divine reality, the nature of creation, the essence of sin and do justice to all three. Consequently humanity cannot simply be the object of free divine mercy and compassion. Humanity must actively participate in the redemption process. Significantly, however, human beings are incapable of fulfilling this task. God requires something greater than that which humans can give in payment for sin, namely representative satisfaction (*satisfactio vacaria*). Anselm summarizes his argument in *Meditation on Redemption*:

Human nature alone could not do this, nor could it be reconciled without the satisfaction of a debt, nor could the justice of God pass over the disorder of sin in his kingdom. The goodness of God came to help, and the Son of God assumed manhood in his own

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<sup>95</sup> It is impossible to determine whether Julian was directly familiar with the source of Anselm of Canterbury's theory of satisfaction. Scholars generally agree, however, that the terminology was so embedded in fourteenth-century England that Julian would be familiar with the theology expressed by the explicit vocabulary. Colledge and Walsh show how this terminology was adopted by Wycliffe. BSAJN, n.1, 412. Bradley presents Hilton's adoption of this theology. See Bradley, "Everyone's Mystic," 149. Cf. LWHM, 142. For a general comparison between Anselm and Julian see Lillian Bozak-DeLeo, "The Soteriology of Julian of Norwich," 37- 46, and Nuth, "Two Medieval Soteriologies," 611-645.

person, so that God and man should be one and the same person. He had what are above all beings that are other than God, and he took on himself all the debt that sinners ought to pay, and this when he himself owed nothing, so that he could pay the debt for the others who owed it and could not pay.<sup>96</sup>

Because God loves humanity and does not want to see humanity abandoned, God takes the initiative and the goodness of God comes to help. This necessitates that God become human so that the infinite God can restore what became lost in the fall. At the same time God must remain human because a human reconciler must pay the debt of human offenders. Thus, Christ becomes a God-human who by his gift of self out of love and obedience restores the order of creation by paying the debt human beings accumulated through sin. In the God-human, Jesus Christ, both God and humankind become involved in the process of salvation. Although this work of restoring God's honour by paying a price for human sin emphasizes the divine initiative and the motive of love, it limits the Incarnation to the need for the forgiveness of sin. Moreover, there is a sense that redemption is a joyless necessity that human beings should rightly feel guilt for. In Anselm's view, while Christ's suffering has a positive outcome of restoring the God-human relationship, it also has the outcome of accentuating God's justice and creating an image of a mighty God removed from people burdened by enormous remorse and guilt. Furthermore, although payment occurs through Christ the God-human, Christ as the representative of humankind situates the activity of redemption on a supernatural plane that does not directly include the existential lives of people.

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<sup>96</sup> Anselm of Canterbury, "Meditation on Human Redemption" in B. Radice, ed. Benedicta Ward, trans. *The Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 103-111, 233.



In contrast to Anselm's vacarious satisfaction, Julian invites her readers to:

*(B)ehold the glorious asseeth, for thys asseeth makyng is more plesyng to the blessyd godhed and more wurschypfulle for mannys saluacion with oute comparyson than evyr was the synne of Adam harmfulle. Then menyth oure blessyd lorde thus, and in thys techyng that we shulde take hede to thys: For sythen that I haue made welle the most harm, than it is my wylle that thou know ther by that I shalle make wele alle that is lesse.<sup>97</sup>*

We must engage the hermeneutic of *beholding* to understand the meaning of the *glorious asseeth*. *Asseeth makyng* is more glorious than ever sin was harmful.

Julian states her teaching firmly, *asseeth makyng* is *wurschypfulle for mannys saluacion*.

Although Julian never specifically defines *asseeth*, her reference to the term in her theology of the cross gives it a dense theological meaning. It summarizes her interpretation of salvation through the cross. Her use of the qualifying term *glorious* suggests that *asseeth makyng* includes her whole theology of the cross – suffering, love and joy. The reference to *glorious* makes the *asseeth* eschatological.<sup>98</sup> *Glorious asseeth* sums up the whole of Christ's experience of Incarnation, death and resurrection. It reveals that Christ is present now in a new way, increasing and fulfilling. *Asseeth making* embraces transfiguration,

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<sup>97</sup> 13:29.11-17,412-413. *(C)ontemplate the glorious atonement, for this atoning is more pleasing to the blessed divinity and more honourable for man's salvation, without comparison, than ever Adam's sin was harmful. So then this is our blessed Lord's intention, and in this teaching we should pay heed to this: For since I have set right the greatest of harms, then it is my will that you should know through this that I shall set right everything which is less. 228.*

<sup>98</sup> See Chapter 9, 370-399.

exaltation, glorification, eschatological fullness and completion through the one who said: *I it am that is all*. In the *glorious asseeth* Christ draws us into this meaning with him into the fullness of glory. The *glorious asseeth* makes well all that is less. The *glorious asseeth* makes hope for salvation real.

Scholars disagree about the interpretation of *asseeth*. Colledge and Walsh translate *asseeth* as *atonement*, but this translation causes problems in interpretation. We recall Pelphry's reservations. Atonement includes too many connotations of humanity being separated from Christ. Furthermore, "the various 'theories' of atonement ... are as different from one another as they are as exclusive in their claims to be correct."<sup>99</sup> Logarbo translates *asseeth* literally as "that which makes sufficient" in the sense of making up for something which is lacking.<sup>100</sup> This concurs with Ronan Crampton's translation for *asseeth* as *reparation*.<sup>101</sup> Bradley in contrast refers to *asseeth* as satisfaction. This aligns with the scribbling of the word "satisfaction" in the margin of the Sloane<sup>1</sup> and the Cressy editions of the *showings*:<sup>102</sup> Bradley observes:

In Julian's meaning Christ makes 'satisfaction' in the sense of making up for the harm that has been done to humanity, but not in the sense of appeasing the one offended. This indicates the direction Julian's use of *asseeth* will take: reparation is made by overcoming the harm that sin has wrought, not in making amends

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<sup>99</sup> LWHM, 133.

<sup>100</sup> Logarbo, "Salvation Theology in Julian," 374.

<sup>101</sup> Ronan Crampton, *The Shewyngs of Julian of Norwich*, 74.

<sup>102</sup> BSAJN, n.1, 412.

to God.<sup>103</sup>

Although Bradley is correct in pointing to *asseeth makyng* as not appeasing an offended God, her translation still places Julian's soteriology within Anselm's framework of vicarious satisfaction. The translation loses the sense of *asseeth makyng* as the work of *oneing* humanity to the Trinity in suffering, love and joy. It obscures the sense of *asseeth makyng* increasing humanity. Therefore, because Julian's use of *asseeth* could easily be identified with Anselm's theory of satisfaction, I will use Julian's word *asseeth*, which enables the contemporary reader to be mindful of Julian's interpretation of satisfaction theology.<sup>104</sup>

*Asseeth makyng* includes responding to something that is lacking and overcoming the harm that sin has wrought. It encompasses all the aspects of *oneing* that are the glory of the cross.

Julian gives a clear indication of the purpose of *asseeth making* in a dialogue she has with the resurrected Christ still on the cross:

*Then seide oure good lorde askyng: Arte thou well apayd that I sufferyd for thee? I seyde: ze, good lorde, gramercy; ye, good lorde, blessyd moet þow be. Then seyde Jhesu our good lord: If thou arte apayde, I am apayde. It is a joy, a blysse, an endlesse lykyng to me that evyr I sufferd passion for the; and yf I myght*

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<sup>103</sup> Bradley, "Everyone's Mystic," 145.

<sup>104</sup> The word still features in the Oxford Dictionary. See NSOED, 134.

*suffer more, I wolde suffer more.*<sup>105</sup>

There is no sense in which this is a corporeal sight, yet the words have clear expression. Christ, through Julian, addresses an unanticipated question to all humanity: *Arte thou well apayd that I sufferyd for thee?* This is not God being *payd* through the cross. The payment is directed at humanity. Salvation revealed on the cross is a mutual exchange between Christ and humanity. Through adapting language associated with the theory of satisfaction, Julian creates a dramatic theological shift because the *oneing* between Christ and humanity is so great that if humanity is *apayde*, Christ is *apayde*. As far as I can ascertain, Julian's association of *payd* - *apayde* with humanity makes her soteriology unique.

By translating *apayde* as satisfied, Colledge and Walsh create the same problems of interpretation described above. Although *apayde* has its roots in the Latin *pacare*, to appease, to pacify, to satisfy, to please or to gratify, and *pac*, *pax*, to give peace,<sup>106</sup> Julian gives this term a particular theological thrust. It is directed towards humanity. Before she asks the question, *Arte thou well apayd?*, she explains that the reason Christ suffers is that we be made *the eyers with hym in*

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<sup>105</sup> 9:22.2-7,382. *Then our good Lord put a question to me: Are you well satisfied that I suffered for you? I said: Yes, good Lord, all my thanks to you; yes, good Lord, blessed may you be. Then Jesus our good Lord said: If you are satisfied, I am satisfied. It is a joy, a bliss, an endless delight to me that ever I suffered my Passion for you; and if I could suffer more, I should suffer more.* 216.

<sup>106</sup> NSOED, 2129.

*hys blysse*.<sup>107</sup> She goes on to explain: *And for this lytylle payne that we suffer heer we shalle haue an hygh endlesse knowyng in god, whych we myght nevyr haue without that*.<sup>108</sup> *Apayde* incorporates bringing pleasure and peace, but it also includes eschatological glory for humanity. Thus a more nuanced translation of *apayd* would integrate Julian's emphasis on the present and the eternal, the eternity of joy found in suffering. I would argue that *at peace* could capture the various nuances reasonably accurately. If human beings find peace through the *oneing* of the cross, Christ feels *joy, blysse* and *endlesse lykyng* in what he accomplishes for humanity through the cross. In keeping with Julian's use of paradox, however, the pleasure that comes from the joy that Christ initiates through the cross is not an absence of suffering, but peace found in the recognition of Christ's presence in suffering.

We gain further knowledge of how Julian uses the language of payment through the way she adopts the term *agayne byeng*:

*And nott withstanding this ryghtfull knyttyng and this endlesse oonyng, yett the redempcion and the agayne byeng of mannekynde is nedfull and spedfull in every thyng, as it is done for the same entent and the same ende that holy chyrch in oure feyth vs*

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<sup>107</sup> 9:21.24,381. *heirs with him of his joy*. 215.

<sup>108</sup> 9:21.24-26,381. *And for this little pain which we suffer here we shall have an exalted and eternal knowledge in God which we could never have without it*. 215.

*techyth*.<sup>109</sup>

The phrase *nott withstanding* is convoluted. It makes interpretation difficult. In Middle English, *nott withstanding*, suggests not standing in the way of, or not impeding.<sup>110</sup> Stated positively, as supporting, sustaining or upholding, Julian's meaning becomes clearer. *The redempcion* and *the agayne byeng* sustain the *ryghtfull knyttyng and this endlesse oonyng*. *Redempcion* or *agayne byeng* is integral to the process of *oneing*. *Redempcion* and *agayne byeng* do not mean that Christ buys humanity or pays a price for humanity. They describe the process of *ryghtfull knyttyng and this endlesse oonyng* that Christ achieves through the cross. Julian's alignment of herself with the teaching of the Church on this matter gives her statement more authority. The language of *agayne byeng* directly relates to Christ's work of *knitting* and *oneing*.

Further reference to the *glorious asseeth* affirms this interpretation:

*He gaue vnderstondyng of ij partyes.<sup>111</sup> That one party is oure saviour and oure saluacyon. Thys blessyd parte is opyn, clere, feyer and lyght and plentuous, for alle mankynde that is of good wylle and that shalle be is comprehendyd in this part. Here to we be bounde of god and drawyn and connceyld and lernyd inwardly by the holy gost, and outward by holy chyrch in the same grace. In this wylle oure lorde that we be occupied and joyeng in hym, for he enjoyth in vs. And the more plentuously that we take of thys with*

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<sup>109</sup> 14:53.23-26,556-557. *And despite this rightful joining and this endless uniting, still the redemption and the buying-back of mankind is needful and profitable in everything, as it is done with the same intention and for the same end as Holy Church teaches us in our faith.* 283.

<sup>110</sup> NSOED, 3706.

<sup>111</sup> We will look at the hidden party in Chapter 9, 388-398.

*reuerence and mekenesse, the more thanke we deserue of hym, and the more spede to oure selfe. And thus may we see and enjoye oure parte is oure lorde.*<sup>112</sup>

Although one *party*, side or portion, remains hidden, one *parte* is *opyn, clere, feyer, lyght and plentuous*. Significantly, in the open part we are *bound to god*. *Bound* interacts with the image of being *knit* to Christ, *oned* to Christ. Julian notes that it is by the will of Christ that we enjoy being bound to God and that God enjoys being bound to us. A teaching becomes clear: *oure parte is oure lorde*. The body of Christ and the body of humanity are one and the same. *Asseeth making* is not a joyless task directed towards a remote God, or reparation for sin, or a victory over death. It is a glorious, joyous *oneing* that makes the human *part* Christ's *part*.

Towards the end of the *showings* Julian concludes:

*We know in oure feyth that god aloone toke oure kynde, and none but he, and ferther more that Crist aloone dyd alle the grett werkes that longyth to oure saluation, and none but he; and ryghte so he aloone doth now in the last end, that is to sey he dwellyth here in vs, and rewlyth vs, and ge(m)yth vs in this lvyng, and brynggyth vs to his blesse. And thus shalle he do as long as any soule is in erth that shalle come to hevyn; and so farforth that yf ther were none such soule in erth but one, he shulle be with that alle aloone, tylle*

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<sup>112</sup> 13:30.2-11,414. *He gave understanding of two portions. One portion is our saviour and our salvation. This blessed portion is open, clear, fair and bright and plentiful, for all men who are of good will are comprehended in this portion. We are bound to this by God, and drawn and counselled and taught, inwardly by the Holy Spirit, and outwardly through the same grace by Holy Church. Our Lord wants us to be occupied in this, rejoicing in him, for he rejoices in us. And the more plentifully we accept from this with reverence and humility, the more do we deserve thanks from him, and the more profit do we win for ourselves. And so we may see and rejoice that our portion is our Lord. 228.*

*he had brought it vppe to his blesse.*<sup>113</sup>

Christ is gloriously risen and present. He dwells in us drawing us to bliss. He *shall* do this as long as we are on earth. The *oneing* will continue until he has brought us into his bliss and become one with him in glory.

In this chapter, *Oneing Through the Crucifixion*, I have examined Julian's understanding of how *in the seconde we haue oure encreasyng* through Christ's suffering, death and resurrection. Within the context of the problem of sin and the human need for redemption, we focused on the three *beholdings* of the passion that Julian distinguishes. The *beholdings* reveal how Christ draws us into the dynamic *encreasyng* of a *perichoresis* of love, *oneing* us in suffering, love and joy. There is no doubt that for Julian the cross marks the way of the joy that is to come. The *exitus reditus* is cruciform. Yet suffering is not an end in itself. Julian's theology of the cross is a theology of the paschal mystery, a theology of glory, a *glorious asseeth*. Through the cross Christ draws us into his experience of glory. We will now examine how Christ continues this dynamic *oneing* that increases us and draws us into trinitarian joy through his identity with us and his work as servant.

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<sup>113</sup> 16:80.13-21,708-709. *We know in our faith that God alone took our nature, and no one but he, and, furthermore, that Christ alone performed all the great works which belong to our salvation, and no one but he; and just so, he alone acts now in the last end, that is to say he dwells here in us, and rules us, and cares for us in this life, and brings us to his bliss. And so he will do as long as any soul is on earth who will come to heaven; and so much so that if there were no such soul on earth except one, he would be with it, all alone, until he had brought it up into his bliss.* 335-336.



## CHAPTER SIX

### ONEING THROUGH THE SERVANT

*For Jhesu is in all that shall be safe, and all that (shall) be sa(fe) is in Jhesu  
(14:51.265-266,538).*

The parable of the lord and the servant gives Julian deeper understanding into how *all shall be well*. Composed as an allegory, the story illustrates significant components of God's response to suffering humanity which Julian was unable to distinguish before. A condensation of the whole story of salvation, a vignette of the *exitus reditus*, it becomes the key that unlocks the most complex understanding about the nature of salvation for her. The aim of this chapter is to examine the key soteriological elements of how our *being*, our *encreasing* and our *fulfilling* occur through the servant. We see aspects of how *oneing* takes place through the servant in the experience of the fall, the relationship of the lord to the servant during the fall, the bestowal of grace, and the fulfilment of eternal *oneing* in the Trinity.

Julian adds the parable to the long text after twenty years' reflection on the meaning of the revelations. She identifies the parable as *a wonderful example*, an exemplum<sup>1</sup> that presents theological insights in the form of an allegorical narrative that unlocks the meaning of the revelations. The teaching is revealed within Julian's being, *wher by I may haue some vnderstondyng of oure lordys menyng, for the pryvytes of the reuelacion be hyd ther in, not withstondyng that*

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 2, n.66, 71.

*alle þe shewyng be full of prevytes.*<sup>2</sup> She distinguishes the parable from the bodily and ghostly sights of the rest of the *showings*, emphasizing that she sees doubly: *one perty was shewed gostly in bodely lyknesse*, the other *more gostly withoute bodely lyknes.*<sup>3</sup> Although the parable is *full mystely*, mysterious and mystical, it gives Julian perception into the significant aspects of salvation in three inter-related ways: the instruction that she understands immediately as she receives the vision, the inward learning that she gradually comes to after the event, and the condensation of the meaning of the whole revelation in the example. Julian notes that these are not separate levels of meaning, but inter-relate and ultimately produce one meaning. The integration of these three levels occurs as Julian presents the example of a description in bodily likeness, recapitulates her immediate response to the images, and adds her subsequent interpretation. She receives instruction *to take hede to alle þe propertes and the condescions that were shewed in the example.*<sup>4</sup> Each detail in the parable conveys insight into the meaning of salvation expressed in the revelations as a whole.

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<sup>2</sup> 14:51.269-272,539. *whereby I may have some understanding of our Lord's meaning, for the mysteries of the revelation are hidden in it, even though all the showings are full of mysteries.* 276.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 2, 71-74.

<sup>4</sup> 14:51.87-88,520. *to take heed to all the attributes, divine and human, which were revealed in the example.* 270.

## I. A SUMMARY OF THE PARABLE OF THE LORD AND THE SERVANT

The narrative unfolds in phases.<sup>5</sup> On a literal level Julian describes the vision as she sees it in the present tense. The parable features two characters described in bodily likeness, a courteous and dignified lord and a beloved servant, who dwell peacefully together in respectful intimacy. The lord sends the servant on a mission. In his eagerness to accomplish the lord's will, the servant falls into a dell, suffers grave injury (a metaphor for sin) and becomes powerless to fulfil the lord's wishes. His injuries are so severe that he cannot get himself out of the dell. The greatest pain is his inability to recognize the love of the lord. The lord watches this event with tender regard for the servant, assigning no blame to him for this unfortunate situation.

Towards the middle of the parable, Julian identifies the lord as God and the servant as Adam, the representative of humankind. Consequently, she turns her attention to the lord. She receives a teaching about how God looks on humanity in sin: *The lorde that satt solemply in rest and in peas, I vnderstonde that he is god. The seruannt that stode before hym, I vnderstode that he was shewed for Adam.*<sup>6</sup> She sees that the consequence of sin creates pain that does its own

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<sup>5</sup> 14:51.2-331,513-545. The text of the parable is too long to be included here. The summary presents significant aspects of the story that will aid comprehension of the theology.

<sup>6</sup> 14:51.99-101,521-522. *I understood that the lord who sat in state in rest and peace is God. I understood that the servant who stood before him was shown for Adam.* 270.

blaming and punishing, whereas the lord is kindly and loving, longing to bring human beings to bliss. The handsome, dignified lord clothed in luxurious azure blue waits patiently with loving regard for the servant because he wants to make the servant's soul his city and dwelling place.

Meanwhile, toil in the dell wears the servant's clothes.<sup>7</sup> Subsequently, Julian observes *a tresoure in the erth whych the lorde lovyd*.<sup>8</sup> The servant becomes a gardener who labours tirelessly to find the treasure that will become food for the lord. This leads to her comprehending the servant as human nature, both Adam and Christ. Adam falls into the dell and experiences sin in the fall. Christ, because of the eternal union with human nature, willingly falls into the womb of the maiden. The eternal union between Adam and Christ is so complete that *Jhesu is in all that shall be safe, and all that (shall) be sa(fe) is in Jhesu*.<sup>9</sup>

The parable closes as the scene transposes to a beatific vision of heaven. The lord is God the Father, the servant God the Son and the joy and delight that exudes from the relationship is the Holy Spirit. Because of this generous labour, the lord does not sit alone on the ground, nor does the servant stand before the lord partially clothed. To the delight of all in heaven, the lord has a rich and

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<sup>7</sup> 14:51.163-184,527-529.

<sup>8</sup> 14:51.185,529. *a treasure in the earth which the lord loved*. 273.

<sup>9</sup> 14:51.265-266, 538. *Jesus is in all who will be saved, and all who will be saved are in Jesus*. 276.

precious crown that Julian identifies as humankind: *we be his crowne, whych crowne is the faders joy.*<sup>10</sup> Now the servant sits joyfully at the lord's right hand.

With an overview of the parable in mind, and an awareness of the three levels of meaning in the parable, we are now in a position to follow Julian and to take *hede to alle þe properties and the condescions that were shewed in the example* and to see how the parable unlocks the mysteries of salvation.

## II. THE FALL

We saw in the previous chapter that as Julian *beholds* the suffering of the cross she confronts the problem of sin. When she tries to reduce the question of sin to the question of how sin can occur in a world governed by the saving power of God, she finds no solution. She simply observes that *synne is nouzt*,<sup>11</sup> *synne is no dede*,<sup>12</sup> *synne is vnkynde*.<sup>13</sup> In the parable Julian points to the nebulous yet destructive character of sin through the image of a slade, a bare open area of grassland or marsh between banks or woods which creates a valley or a dell.<sup>14</sup> The slade forms a dangerous chasm that the servant is unable to see. Julian does

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<sup>10</sup> 14:51.317-318,544. *we are his crown, which crown is the Father's joy.* 278.

<sup>11</sup> viii:9,226. *sin is nothing.* 137. See Chapter 4, 139-141.

<sup>12</sup> 3:11.22,338. *sin is no deed.* 198. See Chapter 5, 192-193.

<sup>13</sup> 14:63.16,615. *is sin unnatural.* 304. See Chapter 5, 193-194.

<sup>14</sup> NSOED, 2889.

not describe the slade itself in the parable, however. She concentrates on the painful effects which the fall in the slade has on the servant. She does not ask why the slade existed, why God allowed the fall to occur or why human suffering exists. Nor does she distinguish between suffering that results from sin and other suffering. While we can only speculate as to why Julian did not address these questions, what becomes obvious as the parable unfolds is her indifference to ultimate speculation and her concern to ground her insights about God's relationship with humankind in human experience.

In Julian's allegory of the fall of humankind the motive that leads to the fall is significant: *(t)he servannt nott onely he goyth, but sodenly he stertyth and rynnyth in grett hast for loue to do his lordes wyll.*<sup>15</sup> The fall occurs in spite of the servant's desire to do the will of the lord. The parable presents a poignant picture of the pain that ensues when the fall in the slade interrupts the servant's deepest longing to do the will of the lord:

*And anon he fallyth in a slade, and takyth ful grett sorow; and than he gronyth and monyth and wallowyth and wryeth, but he may nott ryse nor helpe hym selfe by no manner of weye. And of all this the most myschefe that I saw hym in was feylyng of comfort, for he culde nott turne his face to loke vppe on his lovyng lorde, whych was to hym full nere, in whom is full comfort; but as a man that was full febyll and vnwyse for the tyme, he entendyd to his feylyng*

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<sup>15</sup> 14:51.13-15,514-515. *Not only does the servant go, but he dashes off and runs at great speed, loving to do his lord's will.* 267.

*and enduring in woo, in which woo he sufferyd vij grett paynes.*<sup>16</sup>

We note how an aura of great sorrow permeates life in the slade. The servant *gronyth* and *monyth*, *wallowyth* and *wryeth*. Overcome by woe, he becomes unwise and blind to the comforting presence of the lord. Moreover, he is powerless to change the situation by turning to the lord, the only one who could change the situation. Further scrutiny reveals seven specific dimensions to the servant's suffering:

*The furst was the soore brosyng that he toke in his fallyng, which was to hym moch payne. The seconde was þe hevynesse of his body. The thyrde was fybylnesse that folowyth of theyse two. The iiij was that he was blyndyd in his reson and stonyd in his mynde so ferforth that allmost he had forgeten his owne loue. The v was þat he myght nott ryse. The vij was payne most mervelous to me, and that was that he leye aloone. I lokyd alle about and behelde, and ferre ne nere ne hye ne lowe I saw to hym no helpe. The vij<sup>th</sup> was that the place which he ley in was alang, harde and grevous.*<sup>17</sup>

Although the seven capital vices that give rise to sin – pride, avarice, lust, anger, envy, sloth and gluttony - dominated Medieval culture, Julian in contrast

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<sup>16</sup> 14:51.15-22,515. *And soon he falls into a dell and is greatly injured; and then he groans and moans and tosses about and writhes, but he cannot rise or help himself in any way. And of all this, the greatest hurt which I saw him in was lack of consolation, for he could not turn his face to look on his loving lord, who was very close to him, in whom is all consolation; but like a man who was for the time extremely feeble and foolish, he paid heed to his feelings and his continuing distress, in which distress he suffered seven great pains.* 267.

<sup>17</sup> 14:51.22-31,515-516. *The first was the severe bruising which he took in his fall, which gave him great pain. The second was the clumsiness of his body. The third was the weakness which followed these two. The fourth was that he was blinded in his reason and perplexed in his mind, so much so that he had almost forgotten his own love. The fifth was that he could not rise. The sixth was the pain most astonishing to me, and that was that he lay alone. I looked all around and searched, and far and near, high and low, I saw no help for him. The seventh was that the place in which he lay was narrow and comfortless and distressful.* 267-268.

concentrates on the seven specific dimensions of the servant's suffering that emerge: severe bruising, clumsiness of body, weakness, blindness in reason, an inability to rise from the slade, and an awareness that the place is narrow, comfortless and distressful. Most astonishing to Julian *was that he leye aloone*. Julian identifies both bodily and spiritual pains that indicate the effect which perceived isolation from the lord has on both the bodily and spiritual aspects of the human being. Because he is isolated and trapped in self pity, blindness becomes pervasive, preventing the servant from recognizing his *godly wylle*, which, made in the image of God, cannot be eradicated from human beings.

Julian's shift of emphasis from a wilful act of disobedience by the servant to a fall in the slade has significant implications for her soteriology. It distinguishes the fall as an accident and emphasizes the essential goodwill of the servant. Rather than stress the one act that condemned all humankind, she accentuates the great pains the servant experiences after the fall. Her perspective has biblical precedents in Romans 7:15, "For I do not understand what I do, for it is not what I wish to do, but what I hate to do." She creates a confronting depiction of the suffering caused by sin which leaves human beings prone to doing the very things they do not wish to do. Disorientated by sin, human beings forget their natural love for God and become blind to the experience of divine love.

### III. THE LORD

Julian then turns her attention to the lord who, in the suffering that ensues in the



slade, embodies how God is with human beings. The lord never abandons the servant. He experiences heartfelt compassion while waiting patiently for the servant to complete his task. He reacts to the sense of isolation that the servant experiences when he falls, and chooses to reward such faithfulness in wanting to do his will: *Is it nott reson that I reward hym his frey and his drede, his hurt and his mayme and alle his woo?*<sup>18</sup> Subsequently, Julian receives a spiritual insight about the lord's meaning:

*that his deerworthy servannt, whych he lovyd so moch, shulde be hyely and blessydfully rewardyd withoute end, aboue that he shulde haue be yf he had nott fallen, yea, and so ferforth that his fallyng and alle his wo that he hath takyn there by shalle be turnyd in to the hye ovyrpassyng wurschyppe and endlesse blesse.*<sup>19</sup>

The fall in the dell does not limit the love the lord has for the servant. Rather it initiates a loving response that exposes the endless patience, endless concern and endless resourcefulness of the lord, who gladly and generously showers plentiful grace which can restore the servant to more glory than he received before the fall. A teaching becomes clear: *oonly payne blamyth and ponyschyth, and oure curteyse lorde comfortyth and socurryth, and evyr he is to the soule in glad chere,*

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<sup>18</sup> 14:51.49-50,517. *Is it not reasonable that I should reward him for his fright and his fear, his hurt and his injuries and all his woe?* 268.

<sup>19</sup> 14:51.56-61,518. *that his beloved servant, whom he loved so much, should be highly and blessedly rewarded forever, above what he would have been if he had not fallen, yes, and so much that his falling and all the woe that he received from it will be turned into high, surpassing honour and endless bliss.* 269.

*lovyng and longyng to bryng vs to his blysse.*<sup>20</sup> The experience of sin creates its own punishment. Therefore in contrast to sin that can create only suffering, the lord who is all goodness never attributes blame for sin. The lord constantly offers healing love. The lord is a courteous lord exhibiting all the traditional qualities of graceful politeness and consideration towards others. Moreover, as we saw in chapter three,<sup>21</sup> courtesy characterizes love that is both majestic and noble, tender and intimate. The lord sits beside the servant, courteously inviting a loving relationship, leaving the servant free to respond to his offer of strength, comfort and hope. The courteous lord endows grace that can help the servant bear the consequences of sin and fend off despair. The lord affirms love where wrath was expected and offers the hope of a better future. Julian's choice of verbs, *comforyth* and *socurryth*, does not mean that God eliminates all pain, rather it reflects the *con-forto* (*fortis*),<sup>22</sup> meaning to strengthen much by standing beside those who need strength, enabling humanity to participate, freely, responsibly and meaningfully in life, confident of God's providential presence in life, death and destiny. The awareness of the courteous nature of the Father touches Julian deeply, as she has previously noted: *þe most fulhede of ioy that we shalle haue, as*

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<sup>20</sup> 14:51.117-119,523. *only pain blames and punishes, and our courteous Lord comforts and succours, and always he is kindly disposed to the soul, loving and longyng to bring us to his bliss.* 271.

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter 3, 105-108.

<sup>22</sup> LD, 416.

to my syght, ys thys marvelous curtesy and homelynesse of oure fader.<sup>23</sup>

Intrinsic to the courteous nature of the lord are the qualities of *rewth*, *pytty* and *mercy*, *joy* and *blysse*:

*The rewth and the pytty of the fader was of the fallyng of Adam, whych is his most lovyd creature. The joy and the blysse was of the fallyng of his deerworthy son, whych is evyn with the fader. The mercyfull beholdyng of his louely chere fulfyllyd all erth, and descendyd downe with Adam into helle, with whych contyn(u)ant pytte Adam was kepte fro endlesse deth. And this mercy and pytte dwellyth with mankynde in to the tyme that we come vppe in to hevyn.*<sup>24</sup>

It is noteworthy that these qualities reflect those which Julian saw on the crucified Christ in her *beholding* of suffering, love and joy. As in the *showings* of the passion, the qualities of *rewth*, *pytty* and *mercy* reaffirm the comforting presence of God as human beings labour through life. In her study of divine compassion, Palliser points out that Julian uses this statement of God's *rewth* and *pytty* nineteen times in connection with the parable.<sup>25</sup> The semantics and etymology of

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<sup>23</sup> 1:7.52-54,315. *the greatest abundance of joy which we shall have, as I see it, is this wonderful courtesy and familiarity of our Father.* 189.

<sup>24</sup> 14:51.134-140,524-525. *The compassion and the pity of the Father were for Adam, who is his most beloved creature. The joy and the bliss were for the falling of his dearly beloved Son, who is equal with the Father. The merciful regard of his lovely countenance filled all the earth, and went down with Adam into hell, and by this continuing pity Adam was kept from endless death. And this mercy and pity abides with mankind until the time that we come up to heaven.* 271-272.

<sup>25</sup> Palliser, *Christ, Our Mother of Mercy*, 167.

*compassion* lead back to the Hebrew *rahamin* (trembling womb),<sup>26</sup> the Greek *oiktirmos* (the feeling of compassion) and *splanchna* (the bowels or seat of the emotions),<sup>27</sup> and the Latin, *compassio* (denoting fellow sufferer, feeling sympathy and agreement).<sup>28</sup> In Middle English *compassion* (*rewth*) conveys a sharing of suffering with another, sympathy and feeling sorry for another's troubles and involvement in an infliction as in 1 Cor 12:26, "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it."<sup>29</sup> Like *compassion*, *pytty* expresses the tenderness or concern aroused by the misfortune of others.<sup>30</sup> *Mercy medlyd with plentuous pytte* denotes the forbearance and tolerance shown to powerless people who expect a severe response.<sup>31</sup> Julian defines mercy as *a pyttefull properte, whych longyth to moderhode in tender loue; ... Mercy werkyth kyping, sufferyng, quyckyng and helyng, and alle is of tendyrnesse of loue.*<sup>32</sup> *Rewth*, *pytty* and *mercy* carry with them elements of tenderness, graciousness, pathos, steadfastness and faithful love. They communicate the love metaphorically felt in the womb or the bowel of God that becomes tangible in acts of grace which comfort human beings in the midst of

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<sup>26</sup> Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 31-59.

<sup>27</sup> Palliser, *Christ Our Mother of Mercy*, 212.

<sup>28</sup> LD, 387.

<sup>29</sup> MED, 460.

<sup>30</sup> NSOED, 2228.

<sup>31</sup> NSOED, 1746.

<sup>32</sup> 14:48.28-32, 502-503. *a compassionate property, which belongs to motherhood in tender love; ... Mercy works, protecting, enduring, vivifying and healing, and it is all of the tenderness of love.* 262.

pain.

The greatest act of compassion, the sending of his Son, brings *joy* and *blysse* to the Father (*The joy and blysse was of the fallyng of his deerworthy son, whych is evyn with the fader*). Julian's description of the joy and bliss of the Father is consistent with her earlier descriptions of joy. As we observed in chapter five,<sup>33</sup> joy for Julian is not a momentary facile pleasure or happiness, or an optimism that is a kind of presumption that ignores the realities of pain, suffering and evil, especially the vulnerability of human beings. Joy manifests a harmony that transpires through struggling with the ambiguity of existence, and knowing the presence of divine love transcends all reality. Joy embodies darkness and light, tragedy and transformation, death and glory. It expresses hope for eternity in God. Thus the joy and bliss which the Father radiates come from knowledge that divine love is present to humanity, transforming suffering and drawing it into eternal bliss that exceeds all that has been lost through the fall.

During the time of transformation that occurs through the sending of the Son, the lord waits alone in the wilderness for the beloved servant to complete his task: *The place that the lorde satt on was symply on the erth, bareyn and deserte, aloone in wyldernesse.*<sup>34</sup> The aloneness of the lord and the barrenness of the

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<sup>33</sup> See Chapter 5, 218-227.

<sup>34</sup> 14:51.120-121,523. *The place which the lord sat on was unadorned, on the ground, barren and waste, alone in the wilderness.* 271.

wilderness bear a striking resemblance to the solitary servant in a lonely, hard, greivous place. The lord is experiencing the same pains as the fallen servant.

Julian then gives further meaning to these barren inhospitable images:

*But his syttyng on the erth, bareyn and desert, is thus to mene: he made mannes soule to be his owne cytte and his dwellyng place, whych is most pleasyng to hym of all his workes. And what tyme man was fallyn in to sorow and payne, he was not all semely to serve of þat noble offyce; and therefore oure kynde fader wolde haue dyght hym noon other place but to sytt vppon the erth, abydyng man kynde, whych is medlyd with erth, tyll what tyme by his grace hys deerwurthy sonne had brought agayne<sup>35</sup> hys cytte in to the nobyll feyernesse with his harde traveyle.<sup>36</sup>*

With memorable clarity Julian summarizes the Father's salvific plan. The Father created humankind, the most pleasing of all his works, to be his city and dwelling place. When human beings fell they were unable to fulfill this noble office. Consequently, a detailed image of the Father emerges from the misty, desert panorama and a teaching becomes clear. This is a kind Father who does not wish to choose another dwelling place. He sits on the earth, waiting for humankind who are *medlyd with erth*. The association with Julian's version of Genesis 2:7, that God fashioned human beings from the slime of the earth, seems apparent

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<sup>35</sup> LI.1920,105, says *bowte ageyn*.

<sup>36</sup> 14:51.144-152,525-526. *But his sitting on the ground, barren and waste, signifies this: He made man's soul to be his own city and his dwelling place, which is the most pleasing to him of all his works. And when man had fallen into sorrow and pain, he was not wholly proper to serve in that noble office, and therefore our kind Father did not wish to prepare any other place, but sat upon the ground, awaiting human nature, which is mixed with earth, until the time when by his grace his beloved Son had brought back his city into its noble place of beauty by his hard labour. 272.*

(*whan god schulde make mannes body, he toke the styme of the erth*).<sup>37</sup> This is not a distant Father who waits enthroned in heaven for the Son to complete his task. This is a Father who freely chooses earth to be his waiting place, earth that is a constituent of human nature. Though the fall has interrupted the Father's greatest longing to make humankind his dwelling place, in reality the Father has never separated himself from creation. Surrounded by desert that will only become fertile through union with human beings, he waits for the Son to bring the city (humankind) again into fairness worthy of the Father. Vulnerable to human experience in the desert, the Father waits patiently for the Son to complete his task.

Subsequently, Julian gives further details about the meaning of the Father sitting: *The syttyng of the fader betokynnyth the godhede, that is to sey for shewing of rest and pees, for in the godhede may be no traveyle*.<sup>38</sup> In contrast to the servant who *gronyth and monyth and wallowyth and wryeth in the dell, deluynge and dykyng, swetyng and turnyng the erth vp and down*<sup>39</sup> and the continuous *traveyle* of the servant as gardener, the Father presents the fullness of rest and peace of the Godhead. The *shewyng of rest and pees* suggests that in the Father we find natural repose and relief from a life of toil, freedom from distress and trouble,

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<sup>37</sup> 14:53.42-43,558. *When God was to make man's body, he took the slime of the earth.* 284.

<sup>38</sup> 51:14.273-274,539. *The sitting of the Father symbolizes the divinity, that is to say to reveal rest and peace, for in the divinity there can be no labour.* 276.

<sup>39</sup> See n.43, 254-255.

love, unity and support on which human beings can rely. Moreover, the word *traveyle* or *travel* in the Sloane<sup>1</sup> manuscript, has a double meaning in Middle English, namely travel - travail. While travel suggests to go forth from one place to another, travail describes distress, affliction, weariness or even an instrument of torture.<sup>40</sup> Thus in this context Colledge and Walsh's translation *labour* seems to be misleading, as it presents an image of an authoritative lord totally uninvolved in the experience of the servant. It is not that the Father does not labour or work that is the point here. Consistent with her emphasis on the compassion of the Father, Julian is suggesting that in the Father we see nothing that would afflict or distress or blame human beings. The rest and peace of the Godhead emanates from the Father. Furthermore, as Bradley points out, this text should not be translated in a way that obscures the trinitarian mystery of the inter-play – inter-circling between the Father and Son.<sup>41</sup> The image creates a dialectic between God who is all rest and peace and God who works tirelessly to restore a union that is greater than before the fall. It is not mutually exclusive, both are true. This image keeps before us that ultimately God is true rest and peace.

Julian is unwavering in her presentation of the lord as compassionate. As her understanding continues *into the lord*, she sees *in a touch* that even the physical details of the Father's clothing denote the consistency of his loving presence, and his compassion:

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<sup>40</sup> NSOED, 3377.

<sup>41</sup> Bradley, *Julian's Way*, 119; n.7, 122.



*The blewhed of the clothyng betokenyth his stedfastnesse, the brownhed of his feyer face with the semely blackhede of the eyen was most accordyng to shew his holy sobyrnesse, the largnesse of his clothyng, whych was feyer flammynge about, betokenyth þat he hath beclozyd in hym all hevyns and all endlesse joy and blysse; and this was shewed in a touch, wher I saw that my vnderstandyng was led in to the lorde. In whych I saw hym heyly enjoye for the worschypfull restoryng that he wyll and shall bryng hys servannt to by hys plentuous grace.<sup>42</sup>*

This is not a portrait of an impassible God, uninvolved in human affairs, but of a courteous God of pathos who is steadfast in love, sincere and empathetic, intimately involved in the restoration of human beings after the fall. The Father is joyful as he sees that human beings will become his dwelling place. The Father communicates endless joy and bliss in what the Son achieves for humankind through the abundance of grace.

#### IV. THE ROLE OF THE SERVANT

While the lord waits in the desert, the servant dressed for labour tills the garden:

*He shuld be a gardener, deluyng and dykyng and swetyng and turnyng the erth vp and down, and seke the depnesse and water the plantes in tyme. And in this he shulde contynue his traveyle, and make swete flodys to rynne and nobylle plentuousnesse fruyte to spryng, whych he shulde bryng before the lorde, and serve hym therwith to his lykynk. And he shulde nevyr turne ageyne, tyll he had dzyte this mett alle redy, as he knew that it lykyd to þe lorde; and than he shulde take thys mett with the dryngke, and bere it full*

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<sup>42</sup> 14:51.153-160,526-527. *The blueness of the clothing signifies his steadfastness; the brownness of his fair face with the lovely blackness of the eyes was most suitable to indicate his holy solemnity; the amplitude, billowing splendidly all about him, signifies that he has enclosed within himself all heavens and all endless joy and bliss; and this was shown in a brief moment, when I perceived that my understanding was directed to the lord. In this I saw him greatly rejoice over the honourable restoration to which he wants to bring and will bring his servant by his great and plentiful grace. 272.*

*wurschypplly before the lorde.*<sup>43</sup>

On a literal level, the servant is a gardener who carries out the task assigned to Adam (Gen 3:22) to till the soil. Although this work involves arduous labour there is also a sense that this work is pleasurable as the servant loves the earth. He devotedly tends it so that it may bear fruit. The earthiness of the gardener's labour speaks of the goodness of creation especially prevalent in the creation myth of Genesis 1, the garden of paradise in Genesis 2, and of holy ground in Exodus 3:5.<sup>44</sup> The gardener exemplifies the fact that the story of salvation is ultimately a story about giving life and nourishment to creation. It is not the story of the violation of creation.

Julian notes: *Ther was a tresoure in the erth whych the lorde lovyd.*<sup>45</sup> As she

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<sup>43</sup> 14:51.193-201,530-531. *He was to be a gardener, digging and ditching and sweating and turning the soil over and over, and to dig deep down, and to water the plants at the proper time. And he was to persevere in his work, and make sweet streams to run, and fine and plenteous fruit to grow, which he was to bring before the lord and serve him with to his liking. And he was never to come back again until he had made all this food ready as he knew was pleasing to the lord; and then he was to take this food, and drink, and carry it most reverently before the lord.* 273-274.

<sup>44</sup> The character of Christ as a gardener is familiar in the Mystery Plays, such as The Cornish Mystery Play of "The Three Maries." This depiction creatively expands the encounter of Mary of Magdala with Christ when she mistook him for the gardener (Jn 20:14-18). See Ernest Rhys, *Everyman and Other Interludes* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd, 1950), 120-127.

<sup>45</sup> 14:51.185,529. *There was a treasure in the earth which the lord loved.* 273. The metaphor of the treasure in the earth points to biblical metaphors such as (Matthew 6:21, Luke 12:34) "for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"; the treasure hidden in the field (Matthew 13:44); a merchant looking for fine pearls (Matthew 13:45-46) and (2 Corinthians 4:7), "But we have this treasure in clay jars."

wonders what the treasure in the earth might be, in her understanding she perceives: *It is a mete whych is louesom and plesyng to the lorde.*<sup>46</sup> The treasure in the earth is solid food and nourishment, the most significant meal for the lord. Metaphorically, Julian points out, the treasure describes human nature mixed with the earth, *man kynde, whych is medlyd with erth,*<sup>47</sup> which God's grace will restore through the Incarnation. Although Bradley suggests that the treasure hidden in the earth is eternal life,<sup>48</sup> the context seems more to intimate that the treasure is humankind fallen in the dell. The metaphor speaks of something absolute within humankind and creation that can unite with the divine, as the ground the servant cultivates represents human sensuality.<sup>49</sup> The treasure is the human soul *that was groundyd with in the lord in mervelous depnesse of endlesse loue.*<sup>50</sup> This metaphor of the human person as a garden has many biblical precedents, such as Isaiah 5:7, "the vineyard of the lord of hosts is the house of Israel", and, The Song of Songs 4:12, "You are an enclosed garden, my sister, my bride." The treasure of love in the earth is humankind made in the image of God at one with God. Grace, operative in Christ, enables human beings to be touched by Christ's

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<sup>46</sup> 14:51.187,530. *It is a food which is delicious and pleasing to the lord.* 273.

<sup>47</sup> 14:51.150, 526. *human nature, which is mixed with earth.* 272.

<sup>48</sup> Bradley, *Julian's Way*, 125.

<sup>49</sup> Julian makes a direct link between earth and sensuality after narrating the parable. See 14:53.41-50,558-559.

<sup>50</sup> 14:51.205-206,532. *that was founded in the lord in a marvellous depth of endless love.* 274. This theme is repeated after the depiction of the parable.

ground of love and to come to know themselves as created in the image and likeness of God. The effort and pain of this labour in the garden and the holiness of this life's toil have their rewards in uncovering the treasure. The servant engages in the work of caretaker of the human soul that is like a garden. He enables humankind to become co-creators in the work of creation and to continue God's labour of crafting creation into God.

The gardener is tenacious in his efforts to uncover the treasure in the earth. He penetrates the soil into the deepest darkness: *for then he went in to helle; and whan he was ther, than he reysyd vppe the grett root oute of the depe depnesse, whych ryghtfully was knyt to hym in hey hevyn.*<sup>51</sup> Colledge and Walsh<sup>52</sup> suggest that the image of the great root has precedents in both Old and New Testaments. The faithful are referred to as the remnant that will bring forth new roots below and fruits above in 2 Kings:30, and Isaiah 37:31, while in Romans 11:16-20 the root stands for the essential faith of believers. In the context of the parable, the root is the union with Christ *knyt to hym in hey hevyn* which, even if it is hidden in the deepest darkness through the fall can never be destroyed.<sup>53</sup> Though Julian

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<sup>51</sup> 14:51.299-302,542. *for then he went down into hell; and when he was there, he raised up the great root out of the deep depth, which rightly was joined to him in heaven.* 277.

<sup>52</sup> BSAJN, n.300, 542.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Karl Tamburr, "Mystic Transformation: Julian's Version of the Harrowing of Hell," *Mystics Quarterly* 20 (1994): 60- 67.

does not identify it as such, this image relates to the idea of the *godly will*.<sup>54</sup> The image of the root, pregnant with the promise of growth and life, presents a challenging picture that the cultivation of the garden includes even the depths of hell. It hints at universal salvation for humanity through the gardener who tends and gives life to all in the garden of redemption.<sup>55</sup>

After reflecting on the servant as garden dweller, Julian explains that *I vnderstode nott alle what this exampyll ment. And therefore I marveyld from wens the seruante came*.<sup>56</sup> Julian goes to some length to point to the unity of wills between the the lord and the servant. Outwardly Julian's servant looks like a labourer ready to perform a service:

*Outward he was clad symply, as a laborer whych was dysposyd to traveyle, and he stod full nere the lorde, nott evyn for anenst hym, but in perty a syde, and that on the lefte syde; hys clothyng was a whyt kyrtyll, syngell, olde and alle defautyd, dyed with swete of his body, streyte syttyng to hym and shorte, as it were an handfull beneth the knee, bare, semyng as it shuld sone be worne vppe, redy to be raggyd and rent.*<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> See Chapter 4, 166-170.

<sup>55</sup> We will look more closely at Julian's teaching about hell and universal salvation in Chapter 9, 370-388.

<sup>56</sup> 14:51.209-210,532. *I did not understand everything which this example meant. And therefore I wondered where the servant came from.* 274.

<sup>57</sup> 14:51.165-171,527-528. *Outwardly he was simply dressed like a labourer prepared to work, and he stood very close to the lord, not immediately in front of him but a little to one side, and that on the left; his clothing was a white tunic, scanty, old and all worn, dyed with the sweat of his body, tight fitting and short, as it were a hand's breadth below his knee, looking threadbare as if it would soon be worn out, ready to go to rags and to tear.* 272-273.

Inwardly, however, the servant reveals a bond of love:

*And inward in hym was shewed a ground of loue, whych loue he had to the lorde, that was evyn lyke to þe loue that þe lord had to hym. The wysdom of the seruannt sawe inwardly that ther was one thyng to do whych shuld be wurschyppe to the lord; and the servannt for loue, havynge no regarde to hym selfe nor to nothyng that myght fall of hym, hastely deed sterte and rynne at the sendyng of his lorde, to do that thyng whych was hys wyllle and his wurshyppe.<sup>58</sup>*

Inwardly the servant has *a ground of loue* which is *evyn lyke to the loue that þe lord had to hym*. The *ground of loue* indicates that love is the origin and source of divine life, the foundation of the trinitarian relationship. Love links the servant to the lord in such a way that there is a unity of wills between the two. This union in love manifests itself as divine wisdom. The wisdom of the servant<sup>59</sup> intrinsically knows what to do to bring pleasure and honour to the lord. Thus the bond of love that results in the union of wills for the servant reflects the eternal will of God enacted as love. The servant is the eternal Son of God, wisdom of God made flesh, who knows the divine plan for salvation. He enacts this by carrying out the ongoing work of crafting creation into God. There is a union of wills between the lord and the servant. This tempers any possibility that the lord sends the servant on a mission or the Father sends the Son to complete a task the

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<sup>58</sup> 14:51.173-180,528-529. *And, inwardly, there was shown in him a foundation of love, the love which he had for the lord, which was equal to the love which the lord had for him. The wisdom of the servant saw inwardly that there was one thing to do which would pay honour to the lord; and the servant, for love, having no regard for himself or for anything which might happen to him, went off in great haste and ran when his lord sent him, to do the thing which was his will and to his honour. 273.*

<sup>59</sup> We will examine this further in Chapter 7, 273-276.

Father is uninvolved in. It modifies any implications that the Father stands aloof and untouched by the suffering of the Son.

Julian blurs the boundaries between Christ and humankind: *In the servant is comprehendyd the seconde person of þe trynyte, and in the seruannt is comprehendyd Adam, that is to sey all men.*<sup>60</sup> She emphasizes the ontological union between Christ and humanity which implies that Christ not only represents humanity, but he is humanity. Yet Julian seems to struggle with this *oneing* between Christ and humanity as we see evidence of her comment *I vnderstode nott alle what this exampyll ment.* She continues to struggle with *from wens the servant came*, by returning to the theme of the fall that began the parable. She concentrates on the theological perspective that makes the fall central to the story of salvation:

*When Adam felle godes sonne fell; for the ryght onyng whych was made in hevyn, goddys sonne myght nott be seperath from Adam, for by Adam I vnderstond alle man. Adam fell fro lyfe to deth, in to the slade of this wrechyd worlde, and aftyr that in to hell. Goddys son fell with Adam in to the slade of the meydens wombe, whych was the feyerest doughter of Adam, and that for to excuse Adam from blame in hevyn and in erth; and myghtely he fechyd hym out of hell.*<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> 14:51.211-212,532. *In the servant is comprehended the second person of the Trinity, and in the servant is comprehended Adam, that is to say all men.* 274.

<sup>61</sup> 14:51.218-225,533-534. *When Adam fell, God's Son fell; because of the true union which was made in heaven, God's Son could not be separated from Adam, for by Adam I understand all mankind. Adam fell from life to death, into the valley of this wretched world, and after that into hell. God's Son fell with Adam, into the valley of the womb of the maiden who was the fairest daughter of Adam, and that was to excuse Adam from blame in heaven and on earth; and powerfully he brought him out of hell.* 274-275.

Julian's repetition of the word *fell* creates an echo that resounds throughout the text, and confronts her refrain *all shall be well*. While at first glance the multiple images of the fall present us with the opposite to the hope that *all shall be well* as *Adam fell fro lyfe to deth, in to the slade of this wrechyd worlde, and aftyr that in to hell*, there is a paradoxical counteracting image of the fall, *Goddys son fell with Adam in to the slade of the meydens wombe, he fechyd hym out of hell*. In the first image humanity feels estrangement in the fall in the slade. Although Baker suggests that the phrase *Adam fell fro lyfe to deth* suggests an ontological separation or distancing between humanity and God in the fall,<sup>62</sup> Julian falls short of establishing such a profound separation. When she concentrates on the fall, the darkest image that presents the separation between God and humanity that she can envisage is the root in hell that *krytt* to Christ in heaven, is never ontologically separate from the divine.

Furthermore, the *oneing* between Christ and humanity is so complete that when human beings fall Christ falls. Julian uses powerful imagery which emphasizes the life-denying pain experienced in the human condition in the slade. Christ falls into *the slade of the meydens wombe* in his birth and takes on *oure foule dedely flessch*.<sup>63</sup> His flesh falls in the pain of the passion, *(t)he flessch was rent fro the*

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<sup>62</sup> Baker suggests that there is a natural ontological separation between God and humanity which is increased by a moral separation that occurs as a result of sin. Baker, *From Vision to Book*, 94.

<sup>63</sup> 14:51.304-305,543. *our foul mortal flesh*. 278. Julian is not intimating here that all flesh is evil. *Dedely flessch* suggest that Christ took on all in humanity that causes demise, all that is life denying.



*head panne, fallyng on pecys vnto the tyme þe bledyng feylyd.*<sup>64</sup> Yet this scene of the complete humbling of Christ in the fall, where his flesh literally falls to pieces, paradoxically becomes an experience of glory:

*Adams olde kyrtyll, streyte, bare and shorte, then by oure savyoure was made feyer, new, whyt and bryght, and of endlesse clenness, wyde and seyde, feyer and rychar than was the clothyng whych I saw on the fader. For that clothyng was blew, and Crystes clothyng is now of feyer semely medolour, whych is so mervelous that I can it nott discryve, for it is all of very wurschyppe.*<sup>65</sup>

Time and eternity coalesce, as the fall that brings death confronts the fall that brings life, and Adam's old, dirty, tattered garment becomes *feyer, new, whyt and bryght, and of endlesse clenness, wyde and seyde, feyer and rychar than was the clothyng whych I saw on the fader*. While Julian has told us that *(t)he blewhed of the clothyng betokenyth his stedfastnesse*,<sup>66</sup> and Colledge and Walsh point out that blue represents constancy and unchangingness,<sup>67</sup> Christ clothes humanity in a garment even more steadfast or firmly fixed than the Father's. This implies that human transformation brought about through Christ's fall into the womb of the maiden can never be annulled.

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<sup>64</sup> 14:51.291-293,541. *The flesh was torn from the skull, falling in pieces until when the bleeding stopped.* 277.

<sup>65</sup> 14:51.305-311,543. *Adam's old tunic, tight-fitting, threadbare and short, was then made lovely by our saviour, new, white and bright and forever clean, wide and ample, fairer and richer than the clothing which I saw on the Father. For that clothing was blue, and Christ's clothing is now of a fair and seemly mixture, which is so marvellous that I cannot describe it, for it is all of true glory.* 278.

<sup>66</sup> See n.42, 254.

<sup>67</sup> BSAJN, n.153, 526.

Although I have argued that Julian's predominant understanding of the motive for the Incarnation is love,<sup>68</sup> in this passage, which concentrates heavily on the fall, she considers the Incarnation from the perspective of the fall. Interpretation is difficult because the expression *for the ryght onyng whych was made in hevyn, goddys sonne myght nott be seperath from Adam* is ambiguous. Baker interprets this to mean that the predestination of humanity in the second person of the Trinity from all eternity necessitates the Incarnation of Christ, when Adam falls from union with God into the region of unlikeliness.<sup>69</sup> Thus the emphasis is on Christ becoming human as a response to the fall. I would argue, however, that Julian is not fully convinced of this theological perspective, and that the reference connects to her comments about Christ *knyt* to humanity at creation. It is Christ the second person of the Trinity who becomes the concrete expression of divine love in the history that he shaped and moulded as the pre-existent member of the Trinity. In this theological perspective human nature was always intended for the Son, irrespective of the fall.<sup>70</sup> This maintains the perspective that the Incarnation was always part of the divine plan. When the fall occurs, Christ, eternally one with human nature, must remain one with human nature even in the experience of the fall.

Nevertheless, Julian's ensuing comments maintain the ambiguity:

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<sup>68</sup> See Chapter 4, 174-183.

<sup>69</sup> Baker, *From Vision to Book*, 97.

<sup>70</sup> See Chapter 4, 174-183.

*Thus was he the servant before hys comyng in to erth, stondyng redy before the father in purpos tyll what tyme he wolde sende hym to do the wurschypfull deede by whych mankynde was brought agayn in to hevyn. That is to sey, nott withstondyng that he is god, evyn with the fader as anenst the godhede, but in his forseying purpos, that he woulde be man to saue man in fulfylling of the wyll of his fader, so he stode before his fader as a servant, wyfully takyng vppon hym alle oure charge. And than he sterte full redely at the faders wyll, and anon he fell full lowe in the maydyns wombe, havyng no regard to hym selfe ne to his harde paynes.<sup>71</sup>*

Julian maintains the perspective that human nature was always intended for the Son in her comment: *(t)hus was he the servant before hys comyng in to erth*, but the following statement *that he woulde be man to saue man in fulfylling of the wyll of his fader* places emphasis on the fact that the fall instigates the Incarnation. It also emphasizes the humiliation of Christ becoming human. Christ fulfills the will of the Father and takes upon himself all human blame. But Julian also emphasizes our ontological *oneing* with Christ. Because Christ is in union with human beings, on looking on humanity God sees Christ: *oure fader may nor wyll no more blame assigne to vs than to hys owne derworthy son Jhesu Cryst.<sup>72</sup>* Human beings are not blameworthy, and the Father will not assign blame to us because he makes no distinction between humanity and Christ.

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<sup>71</sup> 14:51.234-243,535. *So he was the servant before he came on earth, standing ready in purpose before the Father until the time when he would send him to do the glorious deed by which mankind was brought back to heaven. That is to say, even though he is God, equal with the Father as regards his divinity, but with his prescient purpose that he would become man to save mankind in fulfillment of the will of his Father, so he stood before his Father as a servant, willingly taking upon him all our charge. And then he rushed off very readily at the Father's bidding, and soon he fell very low into the maiden's womb, having no regard for himself or for his cruel pains. 275.*

<sup>72</sup> 14:51.233-234,535. *our Father may not, does not wish to assign more blame to us than to his own beloved Son Jesus Christ. 275.*

Julian leaves aside her concentration on the fall and converges on the *oneing* between Christ and humanity. Echoing imagery from Colossians 1:15-19, she indicates that Christ is the one who communicates both the transcendence and relationality of God by conflating two significant Pauline images of Christ as *the wisdom of the fader*,<sup>73</sup> and Christ as head of the mystical body: *he is the heed, and we be his membrs*.<sup>74</sup> The wisdom motif<sup>75</sup> indicates that there is no separation between creation and redemption. Christ, as the Incarnation of the wisdom of God, manifests how creation and Incarnation are intrinsically connected in the one divine plan. Paradoxically, just as in 1 Corinthians 1:24-25, the falling of Christ reveals the wisdom of God.

The metaphor of the mystical body then reveals how the wisdom of God becomes embedded in humankind in the movement of creation, and recreation. With Christ as the head, humankind participates in the life of Christ so that the body of Christ becomes the body of the community.<sup>76</sup> The union is so complete that: *Jhesu is in all that shall be safe, and all that (shall) be sa(fe) is in Jhesu*.<sup>77</sup> These

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<sup>73</sup> Cf. 14:51.253,537. *wisdom of the Father*. Cf. 1 Cor 1:30a.

<sup>74</sup> 14:51.256-257,537. *he is the head, and we are his members*. 276. Cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12; 1 Corinthians 6:15a; 12:12-27; Romans 12:4-6; Ephesians 4:12-13.

<sup>75</sup> Julian expands this metaphor when she develops the theme of the deep wisdom of the Trinity our Mother.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 12; Galatians 3:28.

<sup>77</sup> See n.9, 241.

metaphors of Christ as the wisdom of God and the head of the mystical body of all who will be saved suggests to Julian that the whole story of salvation is about love. The love of God makes no distinction between Christ and humanity.

## V. ETERNAL ONEING IN THE TRINITY

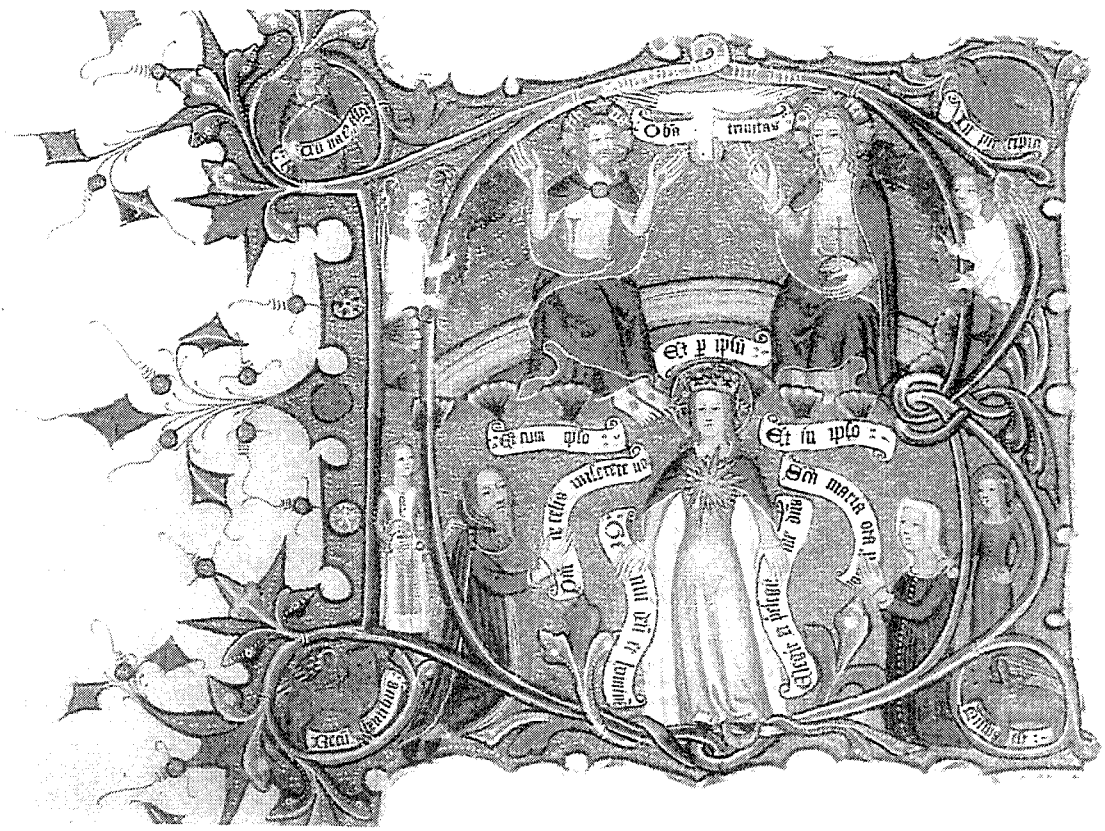
The parable concludes with a beatific vision that results from the gracious outreach of God attaining an irrevocable climax in the servant. In a tableau reminiscent of an image of the Trinity from a Breviary or Book of Hours, where Christ sits to the right of the Father, and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove unites them, the saved servant reflects an ambience of glory. Cloaked in splendour, he is adorned with a precious crown that he shares with the Father.<sup>78</sup> Julian describes the crown: *(f)or it was shewede that we be his crowne, whych crowne is the faders joy, þe sonnes wurshyppe, the holy gostys lykyng, and endlesse mervelous blysse to alle that be in hevyn.*<sup>79</sup> The crown of humankind founded in love rewards Christ for all the pain he endured in his labour of love. The image affirms that humankind is necessary for the joy, honour and delight of God.

The final scene of the parable presents hope for salvation. Reminiscent of the Canticle of Canticles, the image of the soul as a garden and Christ as the gardener

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<sup>78</sup> See 267, Initial B Introducing the Votive Mass of the Trinity, The Carmelite Missal, Marks and Morgan, *English Manuscript Painting*, 91.

<sup>79</sup> 14:51.317-320,544. *For it was revealed that we are his crown, which crown is the Father's joy, the Son's honour, the Holy Spirit's delight, and endless marvellous bliss to all who are in heaven.* 278.



is transposed: *Now is the spouse, goddys son, in pees with his lovyd wyfe, whych is the feyer maydyn of endlesse joy.*<sup>80</sup> Julian uses bridal imagery to show how the love of Christ enables humankind to approach final union with the divine. The exchange of love that transpires between Christ and human souls is a spiritual marriage between the heavenly bridegroom and human brides. Christ takes humankind as his bride, and being one with Christ, humanity experiences God's promise of final transformation. In the embrace of divine love we become one in joy.

The grace of the mystical marriage with Christ leads to a vision of the Trinity: *Now syttyth the son, very god and very man, in his cytte in rest and in pees, whych his fader hath dyzte to hym of endlesse purpose, and the fader in the son, and the holy gost in the fader and in þe son.*<sup>81</sup> The whole process of salvation rehearsed in the parable bears witness to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For union to be complete, the whole person and the triune God become one. The entire work of creation and redemption is the work of the triune God.

The parable teaches Julian that God's providential care will not cease. The imagery unveils the pain of the fall into blindness and the longing of believers

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<sup>80</sup> 14:51.326-328,545. *Now the spouse, God's Son, is at peace with his beloved wife, who is the fair maiden of endless joy.* 278.

<sup>81</sup> 14:51.328-331,545. *Now the Son, true God and true man, sits in his city in rest and in peace, which his Father has prepared for him by his endless purpose, and the Father in the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the Father and in the Son.* 278.

finally to see and to be open to experience God's love. Paradoxically the experience of having fallen, becomes an experience of grace. Human woundedness, occasioned in the fall, reveals the transforming power of God's healing love which is made tangible through the labour of Christ. In the parable, the pain of weariness of life disconnected from God gives way to a deep joy of being always in the presence of the merciful love of the triune God who is ever renewing and recreating human life in Christ. The example thus discloses that, while believers know sorrow and suffering, it is now experienced as part of the living out of truth of being one with Christ. Sustained by this union with Christ we can wait peacefully and live in hope-filled expectation that the union depicted in the parable is partially possible in a life centred on Christ and is a foretaste of the joy of heaven. Immediately after the parable the Christology of Christ the deep wisdom of the Trinity our mother brings Julian's understanding to a climax.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### **ONEING THROUGH CHRIST THE DEEP WISDOM OF THE TRINITY OUR MOTHER**

*Here may we see that we be all bounde to god for kynd, and we be bounde to god for grace. (14:62.22-23,612).*

Through the idea that *the depe wysdome of þe trynyte is our moder*, Julian's soteriology reaches a climax. The unfolding character of the continuum of Christ's dynamic role within the Trinity, his Incarnation, death and Resurrection, and his ongoing existential presence and care within history take on new meaning. The last two chapters of this thesis looked at the Christological/soteriological models that emerge from the saving work of Christ that occurred through the cross and through his role as servant. This chapter sets out to explore how the concept, *the depe wysdome of þe trynyte is our moder*, reveals that the redemptive nature of Christ's work cannot be found in any one event separated from the others. Only reflection on the meaning of the whole experience of the *depe wysdome of þe trynyte being our moder* will enable discernment of the fullness of the salvific reality that occurs through Christ. The Christology communicated in this statement draws together the ontological and existential dimensions of our being in God and our *agyn making* or re-creation in Christ. It places these experiences of *oneing* in dialectical relationship. The Christology expresses that Christ draws together, creation (*oure beyng*), re-creation (*oure encresyng*) and fulfilment (*oure fulfylling*). Although Christ's role as deep wisdom and mother is a soteriological unity, it is necessary to analyze the theology expressed in each aspect of the idea, in order for the dynamic quality of Julian's soteriology to

become clear. Three *beholdings* of Christ's motherhood are integral to our investigation: the motherhood of kind, the motherhood of grace and the motherhood of working. Christ deep wisdom and mother is now present in the Church, so that in the Church we see we are bound to God by nature and bound to God by grace.

### I. THE DEEP WISDOM OF THE TRINITY IS OUR MOTHER

In the long text, after the three *beholdings* of the passion and the parable of the lord and the servant, Julian makes a consequential soteriological statement:

*For the almyghty truth of the trynyte is oure fader, for he made vs and kepyth vs in hym. And the depe wysdome of þe trynyte is our moder, in whom we be closyd. And the hye goodnesse of the trynyte is our lord, and in hym we be closyd and he in vs. We be closyd in the fader, and we be closyd in the son, and we be closyd in the holy gost. And the fader is beclosyd in vs, the son is beclosyd in vs, and the holy gost is beclosyd in vs, all myght, alle wysdom and alle goodnesse, one god, one lorde.<sup>1</sup>*

Imbedded in a passage about the Trinity that emphasizes inter- and intra-trinitarian relationship, the statement *the depe wysdome of þe trynyte is our moder, ... and in hym we be closyd and he in vs* signals that salvation occurs within this trinitarian *perichoresis*.<sup>2</sup> Christ plays a vital role in creating an

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<sup>1</sup> 14:54.20-27,563. *For the almighty truth of the Trinity is our Father, for he made us and keeps us in him. And the deep wisdom of the Trinity is our Mother, in whom we are enclosed. And the high goodness of the Trinity is our Lord, and in him we are enclosed and he in us. We are enclosed in the Father, and we are enclosed in the Son, and we are enclosed in the Holy Spirit. And the Father is enclosed in us, the Son is enclosed in us, and the Holy Spirit is enclosed in us, almighty, all wisdom and all goodness, one God, one Lord.* 285.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 3, 116-120, where I used this passage as an example of *perichoresis*.

indissoluble unity between human beings and the Trinity because he belongs to the depth of the Trinity, and yet humanity is enclosed in him, and he is enclosed in humanity. The imagery of deep wisdom and mother enables Julian to locate *perichoresis* not only in the inner life of the Trinity, but also in the mystery of the one communion of love between the divine and the human. Each word in Julian's statement reveals how Christ maintains the one communion of love. Both *depe wysdome* and *moder* form a dialectic that struggles to condense the essence of how human beings experience ontological and existential *oneing* in Christ in the Trinity. Significantly, Julian never polarizes these perspectives by associating wisdom with the Godhead and mother with Christ's humanity. Rather, she utilizes the dynamic of this imagery to expose a dialectical tension that unites both aspects of how we are ontologically and existentially one in Christ.

Many authors note the significance of the theme of Christ's motherhood.

Pelphrey reminds us that: "the image of Christ as Mother is not simply a single vision, but recapitulates the whole relationship, in divine love, between humanity and God which Julian develops through the Revelations."<sup>3</sup> Nuth refers to the motherhood of Christ as: "the summary symbol of soteriology."<sup>4</sup> Palliser informs us that this imagery represents: "the very heart of Julian's mature theology."<sup>5</sup> I agree with these conclusions. The idea of Christ as mother does indeed epitomize

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<sup>3</sup> LWHM, 186.

<sup>4</sup> Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, 65.

<sup>5</sup> Palliser, *Christ, Our Mother of Mercy*, 110.

Julian's soteriology. However, as we can see from the passage in which the idea is formulated it is not simply Christ's role as mother that characterizes the Christology that informs Julian's soteriology. It is the dialectical unity created between Christ's role as deep wisdom of the Trinity *and* mother, and the reciprocal enclosure between humanity and each person of the Trinity that make Julian's soteriology so distinctive and unique.

### Deep Wisdom

Julian's theologically dense reference to Christ as *depe wysdome* discloses how salvation is assured because human beings experience ontological *oneing* in Christ. *Depe wysdome* echoes the image of the crucified Christ which *contained and specified the blessed trinitie*.<sup>6</sup> The qualifying term *depe* places Christ within the unfathomable abyss of the Trinity. It accentuates how profoundly Christ belongs to the Trinity. *Depe* marks the centrality of his role within the Trinity. It expounds how Christ reveals trinitarian love. *Depe* creates a sense of the incomprehensibility of the mystery of the Trinity. This protects the transcendence of the Trinity, the mysterious holy otherness of God. *Depe* points to the eternal nature of the Trinity, identifying Christ's role as the *alpha* and *omega*, the beginning and the end of all things. Through his function as deep wisdom, Christ brings all things together in the unfathomable depth of the Trinity. Christ plays a dynamic role in creating an ontological *oneing* between the Trinity and human beings.

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<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 2, 49-50.

Within the words *depe wisdom* there are possible allusions to Wisdom literature and *logos* theology that describe the role wisdom plays in creation.<sup>7</sup> The reference hooks into and brings to a climax the allusions to wisdom throughout the text. In the short text Julian points to the *endeles forluke of the wysdome of god*.<sup>8</sup> In the long text this becomes *the for(eseing) wysdom of god*.<sup>9</sup> This designates God's providential care<sup>10</sup> that leads humanity *to the best ende*.<sup>11</sup> We recall that Julian also presents the theme of divine wisdom in the parable of the lord and the servant where she specifically attributes the quality of wisdom to Christ. The wisdom of the servant knows what to do to bring honour to the lord.<sup>12</sup> Identified as the wisdom of the Father, he is the Incarnation of the wisdom of God. The wisdom of the servant knows and does what the Father wants done. Wisdom makes real the purposes of God.

After the parable, Julian identifies Christ, the wisdom of the Father, with the role of mother:

*Thus in oure very moder Jhesu oure lyfe is groundyd in the  
forseeing wysdom of hym selfe fro with out begynnyng, with þe hye*

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Bradley, *Julian's Way*, 135-137. Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, 65-66; Baker, *From Vision to Book*, 122-123.

<sup>8</sup> viii:7,226. *the endless providence of God's wisdom*. 137.

<sup>9</sup> 3:11.9-11,337.

<sup>10</sup> BSAJN, n.7, 226.

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter 3, 134-151.

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 6, 259.

*myght of the fader and þe souereyne goodnesse of the holy gost.*<sup>13</sup>

Mother Christ, the life of humanity, is *groundyd in the forseeyng wysdom of hym selfe* eternally in a trinitarian unity. In the strength of this connection Julian comes into her own. Colledge and Walsh express this well: "the tradition shows a persistent reluctance to make the connection which is Julian's audacious starting-point."<sup>14</sup> The tradition has identified Christ with wisdom. It has described the care of Christ as being like a mother's.<sup>15</sup> Julian's great contribution is that she links both these ideas together. Julian inter-relates the wisdom mother theme so that the roles they identify are fluid. In referring to Christ as mother grounded in the wisdom of himself eternally, she points to an ontological union between Christ's identity as wisdom and his role as mother. This creates a dialectic between our ontological *oneing* in Christ and *oneing* through his ongoing

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<sup>13</sup> 14:63.28-30,616. *So in our true Mother Jesus our life is founded in his own prescient wisdom from without beginning, with the great power of the Father and the supreme goodness of the Holy Spirit.* 304.

<sup>14</sup> BSAJN, 154. The idea of the salvific role of Christ as mother occurs in many schools of theological reflection in both Eastern and Western traditions. Cf. Ritamary Bradley, "The Motherhood Theme in Julian of Norwich," *Fourteenth Century English Mystics News Letter* 2 (1976): 25-38; Ritamary Bradley, "Patristic Background of the Motherhood Similitude in Julian of Norwich," *Christian Scholars Review* 8 (1978): 101-113; Jennifer P. Heimmel, *God is Our Mother: Julian of Norwich and the Medieval Image of Christian Feminine Divinity* (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1982), 1-33; Vinje, *An Understanding of Love According to the anchoress Julian of Norwich*, 153; Ritamary Bradley, "Mysticism in the Motherhood Similitude of Julian of Norwich," *Studia Mystica* 8 (1985): 4-14; Valery M. Lagorio, "Variations on the Theme of God's Motherhood in Medieval English Mystical and Devotional Writings," *Studia Mystica* 8 (1985): 15-37.

<sup>15</sup> See Kerrie Hide, "The Deep Wisdom of the Trinity Our Mother - Echoes in Augustine and Julian of Norwich," *The Australasian Catholic Record* 4 (1997): 432-444.

existential care. The juxtaposition of images of wisdom and mother shifts emphasis away from the gender of Christ. It accentuates Christ's all-encompassing humanity. This makes Christ's salvific role absolutely inclusive.<sup>16</sup> All distinctions between male and female are annulled.

### The Lovely Word Mother

In some ways Julian uses the image of mother in a traditional way. We see this when she relates Christ's role as saviour to humanity being born of Christ: *(O)ure savyoure is oure very moder, in whome we be endlesly borne and nevyr shall come out of hym.*<sup>17</sup> This is a unique birthing, however, because we are endlessly born. Christ continually re-creates us. Eternally enclosed in the body of Christ, we never leave the body of Christ. Julian further associates Christ's giving birth to the pain of Christ's death on the cross. The pain of the passion reflects the

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<sup>16</sup> Although it is impossible to say whether Julian was directly familiar with a plethora of texts from both Eastern and Western traditions that refer to Christ as wisdom or mother, she certainly would have known scriptural references that relate the work of wisdom to mothering, as in Wisdom 7:11-12 and Ecclesiasticus 24:24-29; and texts that emphasize the love of God as like the enduring love of a mother for the child of her womb in Isaiah 49:15. References to Christ as mother wisdom such as Matthew 11:19b and Christ as mother hen in Matthew 23:37 would also be commonplace. Sister Mary Francis Smith's study, *Wisdom and the Personification of Wisdom Occurring in Middle English Literature Before 1500*, Ph.D. diss. (The Catholic University of America, 1935), demonstrates how numerous Middle English texts include biblical concepts of wisdom. Bradley suggests, "It (the motherhood similitude), permeates exegesis, typology, sermons, and liturgy. She could scarcely have escaped its influence." Ritamary Bradley, "Mysticism in the Motherhood Similitude of Julian of Norwich," *Studia Mystica* 8 (1985): 11.

<sup>17</sup> 14:57.49-50,580. *(O)ur saviour is our true Mother, in whom we are endlessly born and out of whom we shall never come.* 292.

labour pains of our birth through Christ:

*But oure very moder Jhesu, he alone beryth vs to joye and to endlesse levying, blessyd mot he be. Thus he susteyneth vs with in hym in loue and traveyle, in to the full tyme þat he wolde suffer the sharpyst thornes and grevous paynes that evyr were or evyr shalle be, and dyed at the last. And whan he had done, and so borne vs to blysse, yet myght nott all thys make a seeth to his mervelous loue.*<sup>18</sup>

In the passion Christ *ones* us to himself. Drawn into the body of Christ, he *susteyneth vs with in hym in loue and traveyle*. But the dying is for life. Christ's pain and his dying become labour pains that give birth to us. Through Christ's passion we are born into *blysse*.<sup>19</sup>

The image of mother not only reflects traditional imagery of giving birth and nurturing. Julian defines the word theologically:

*Thys feyer louely worde: Moder, it is so swete and so kynde in it selfe that it may not verely be seyde of none ne to none but of hym and to hym that is very mother of lyfe and of alle. To the properte of moderhede longyth kynd, loue, wysdom and knowyng, and it is god.*<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> 14:60.19-24,595-596. *But our true Mother Jesus, he alone bears us for joy and for endless life, blessed may he be. So he carries us within him in love and travail, until the full time when he wanted to suffer the sharpest thorns and cruel pains that ever were or will be, and at the last he died. And when he had finished, and had borne us so for bliss, still all this could not satisfy his wonderful love.* 298.

<sup>19</sup> Note how this reflects the same theology expressed in the *beholding* of joy, Chapter5, 217-227.

<sup>20</sup> 14:60.45-48,598-599. *This fair lovely word 'mother' is so sweet and so kind in itself that it cannot truly be said of anyone or to anyone except of him and to him who is the true Mother of life and of all things. To the property of motherhood belong nature, love, wisdom and knowledge, and this is God.* 298-299.



The word "mother" is so sweet and natural that Christ is the only one who truly deserves the title. The properties of motherhood includes *kynd*, *loue*, *wysdom* and *knowyng*. Aers comments on Julian's use of the term:

Julian makes delicate qualifications in her text that mean that any attempt to visualize or elaborate the term mother down the track of familiar imagery will be catastrophic: Julian has in fact given us an example of the way theological language turns the familiar into the strange – and, so the theologian hopes, thus becomes an appropriate bridge to a disclosure of the divine.<sup>21</sup>

The properties of motherhood, *kynd*, *loue*, *wysdom* and *knowyng*, are properties that extend from the being of God. We recall that *kynd* has a number of associations which Julian integrates into her use of the word.<sup>22</sup> In this context *kynd* denotes authentic nature as well as distinguishing the quality of love (*kind love*). To say that a property of motherhood is *kynd* is to say that God is kind or good while also being the Mother or source of all nature. The property of *kynd* creates a bond in nature between the Godhead and humankind.<sup>23</sup> Along with *kynd*, love also denotes the being of God and the sharing of love through grace. Love reminds us of the nature of the Godhead as *charity unmade*, *charity made* and *charity given*.<sup>24</sup> Related to *kynd* and *love*, *wysdom* refers to the deep wisdom

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<sup>21</sup> David Aers, "The Humanity of Christ: Reflections on Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*," in David Aers and Lynn Staley, *The Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics and Gender in Late Medieval English Culture* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 98.

<sup>22</sup> See Chapter 4, 145-149.

<sup>23</sup> Even though the Sloane1 text leaves out the comma and states, *kinde love*, this integration of kindness, love and nature could still apply. See LX:2516,124.

<sup>24</sup> See Chapter 3, 95-100.

of the Trinity. We have noted, wisdom designates *for(eseing) wysdom* or divine foresight that is eternally involved in the providential care of creation. *Knowyng* then completes the list of properties. Julian specifically associates *knowyng* with a gift received through the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>25</sup> These four properties, *kynd*, *loue*, *wysdom* and *knowyng* identify the *oneing* in nature and grace that occurs through Christ being our mother. At the end of the explanation, Julian summarizes her definition: motherhood *is god*. Motherhood describes who God is and how God relates. Therefore, while Julian's definition of mother includes giving birth and nurturing, she does not limit mothering to a traditional parental role. Motherhood incorporates properties that belong to the trinitarian unity of the Godhead.

This definition of mother which associates motherhood with the Godhead seems clear enough in the Paris manuscript. A discrepancy in Sloane1 makes interpretation more problematic. The Sloane1 manuscript waters down the association of motherhood with the the Godhead:

*This fair, lovely word Modir, it is so swete and so kynd of the self that it may ne verily be seid of none but of Him and to hir that is very Moder of Hym and of all. To the properte of Moderhede longyth kinde love, wisdom, and knowing, and it is good.*<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> See Chapter 2, 74-77.

<sup>26</sup> LX:2514-2517.124. *This fair lovely word Mother, it is so sweet and so close in Nature of itself that it may not verily be said of none but of Him; and to her that is very Mother of Him and of all. To the property of Motherhood belongeth natural love, wisdom, and knowing; and it is good.* Warrack, *Revelations of Divine Love*, 151.

Though it is possible that the words, *it is good*, are simply the result of a lack of orthographical distinction between God and good,<sup>27</sup> or a scribal error, there are theological ramifications in its meaning if it is deliberate because the direct association of motherhood with the Trinity is lessened. This is in marked contrast to the Paris text which asserts that motherhood describes who God is: *and it is god*.<sup>28</sup> The Sloane1, as this example indicates, places more emphasis on Christ's motherhood occurring in Christ through the Incarnation. It gives more attention to the role of Mary (*and to hir that is very Moder of Hym and of all*).

Theologically, if motherhood relates to the Godhead, and is not simply a role limited to Jesus' humanity, it gives the role of mothering a profound theological value. It attributes equal theological status to the role of motherhood and to the role of fatherhood. The implications are that both masculine and feminine images are essential in describing who God is in relation to creatures. Without systematically arguing her point, the statement *and it is god*, undoubtably raises the status of feminine images of God. Indirectly, this validates the position of women and their experience of God. I suggest that the less controversial image of limiting motherhood to Christ's humanity in the Sloane1 text is consistent with not developing the theme of the body as a purse.<sup>29</sup> This is another piece of evidence that suggests that the scribe of the Sloane1 manuscript tried to restrain

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<sup>27</sup> See Chapter 4, 169-170.

<sup>28</sup> It is noteworthy that this remark in the Paris text is consistent with the three *beholdings* of *motherhed in god* which we will examine shortly.

<sup>29</sup> See Chapter 4, 154-155.

Julian's theology within more conventional bounds.<sup>30</sup> Yet, in spite of the possibility that a scribe played down the theological implications of relating motherhood to the Godhead in the Sloane1 manuscript, we can be assured that the motherhood of the Godhead revealed in Christ is a key soteriological principle for Julian.

*The depe wysdome of þe trynyte is our moder* is a theologically rich statement that defines Christ's salvific role. As a theological précis, it holds together the underlying trinitarian unity in the desire for human salvation and the specific revelation of divine love occurring through Christ. The inter-face between the imagery of *depe wysdome* and *moder* creates a dialectic between ontological *oneing* with the Trinity through Christ and his providential care that continues the task of *oneing*. The idea consolidates Christ's role in creation and redemption. Against this background of recognizing that the Christology contained in the whole expression, *the depe wysdome of þe trynyte is our moder* is important for Julian's soteriology, we are now ready to examine the three *beholdings* of motherhood that Julian distinguishes.

## II. THREE MANNERS OF *BEHOLDING* MOTHERHOOD IN GOD

Similar to the three manners of *beholding* the passion, Julian differentiates three manners of *beholding* the motherhood in God:

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<sup>30</sup> It is noteworthy that the entire theme of Christ's motherhood does not appear in the Westminster florilegium.

*I vnderstode thre manner of beholdynges of motherhed in god. The first is grounde of oure kynde makyng, the seconde is takyng of oure kynde, and ther begynnyth the moderhed of grace, the thurde is moderhed in werkyng. And therin is a forth sp(r)edyng by the same grace of lengt and brede, of hygh and of depnesse without ende; and alle is one loue.<sup>31</sup>*

We recall that *beholding* is a way of contemplative seeing. It is the expression of the inner eye of the soul with its ability to see spiritually. *Beholding* is seeing with a felt understanding of love. Thus *beholding* the motherhood in God expresses contemplative insight that extends Julian's understanding of salvation. *Beholding* reveals that, although motherhood occurs *in god*, we see the full expression of divine motherhood in and through Christ. The three manners of *beholding* motherhood draws together the complex Christological dimension of Julian's soteriology of *oneing*. The first *beholding* distinguishes the *oneing* that occurs through Christ being our mother of kind, the second points to *oneing* through Christ the mother of grace, while the third reveals *oneing* through Christ the mother of working.

### 1. Mother of Kind

In the first *beholding* of the motherhood in God, the *grounde of oure kynde makyng*, Julian emphasizes the significance of the beginning of the God/human relationship. We recall the *oneing* that distinguishes how in the first we have our

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<sup>31</sup> 14:59.43-48,593. *I understand three ways of contemplating motherhood in God. The first is the foundation of our nature's creation; the second is his taking of our nature, where the motherhood of grace begins; the third is the motherhood at work. And in that, by the same grace, everything is penetrated, in length and in breadth, in height and in depth without end; and it is all one love. 297.*

being.<sup>32</sup> At creation God is the Father and Mother of humankind or nature: *And thus in oure making god almyghty is oure kyndly fader, and god alle wysdom is oure kyndly mother, with the loue and the goodnes of the holy gost, whych is alle one god, onne lorde.*<sup>33</sup> God is the mother of kynds. The locus of this familial relationship occurs specifically in Christ: *þe myd person wolde be grounde and hed of this feyer kynde out of whom we be all come, in whom we be alle enclosyd, in to whom we shall all goo.*<sup>34</sup> The unique role that Christ plays as the ground and head of human nature occurs in the Incarnation:

*Oure kynde moder, oure gracious modyr, for he wolde alle hole become oure modyr in alle thyng, he toke þe grounde of his werke full lowe and full myldely in the maydyns wombe. And that shewde he in the furst, wher he broughte þat meke maydyn before the eye of my vnderstandyng, in þe sympyll stature as she was whan she conceyvyd; that is to sey oure hye god, the souereyn wysdom of all, in this lowe place he arayed hym and dyght hym all redy in oure poure flessch, hym selfe to do the servyce and the officie of moderhode in alle thyng.*<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> See Chapter 4, 129-184.

<sup>33</sup> 14:58.12-14,582-583. *And so in our making, God almighty is our loving Father, and God all wisdom is our loving Mother, with the love and the goodness of the Holy Spirit, which is all one God, one Lord.* 293.

<sup>34</sup> 14:53.32-34,557-558. *(T)he mediator wanted to be the foundation and the head of this fair nature, out of whom we have all come, in whom we are all enclosed, into whom we shall all go.* 283.

<sup>35</sup> 14:60.7-14,594-595. *Our Mother in nature, our Mother in grace, because he wanted altogether to become our Mother in all things, made the foundation of his work most humbly and most mildly in the maiden's womb. And he revealed that in the first revelation, when he brought that meek maiden before the eye of my understanding in the simple stature which she had when she conceived; that is to say that our great God, the supreme wisdom of all things, arrayed and prepared himself in this humble place, all ready in our poor flesh, himself to do the service and the office of motherhood in everything.* 297.

Through observing with the eye of her understanding, Julian sees that in the Incarnation Christ is both our mother of *kind* and our mother of grace. The reference to *he wolde alle hole become oure moder in alle thyng* relates to Julian's image of all things having being through the love of God in the vision of the hazelnut, and the resurrected Christ who is *I it am that is all*.<sup>36</sup> A significant aspect of sovereign wisdom becoming the mother of all things occurs when he takes the ground of his being into the womb of the maiden. In the Incarnation, Christ not only becomes our mother in substance (who we essentially are in God), but also becomes our mother in sensuality (in the more bodily aspect of our existence):

*And ferthere more I saw that the seconde person, whych is oure moder, substanncyally the same derewurthy person, is now become oure moder sensuall, for we be doubell of gods making, that is to sey substanciall and sensuall.*<sup>37</sup>

Thus in taking our *kind*, Christ becomes *oure moder sensuall*. Through this image of Christ as mother of our substance and sensuality, Julian shows how we are ontologically one with Christ in both substance and sensuality. She maintains

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<sup>36</sup> See Chapter 4, 132-143 and Chapter 5, 224-226. Christ as the ground and head of all things echoes the doctrine of recapitulation elaborated by Irenaeus (130-202). Cf. Colossians 1:13-20 and Ephesians 1:10. This found its way into monastic theology in the work of Richard of St Victor (d. ca. 1173). Colledge and Walsh, BSAJN, n.32, 557, cite Richard's exegesis on Apocalypse 1:17 as an example of how this idea was adopted. Although the writing of Irenaeus was not available in England in Julian's day, the authors consider it possible that Julian learnt the doctrine from authors such as Richard.

<sup>37</sup> 14:58.37-40,585. *And furthermore I saw that the second person, who is our Mother, substantially the same beloved person, has now become our mother sensually, because we are double by God's creating, that is to say substantial and sensual.* 294.

that God through Christ is intimately present in the flesh and spirit of humanity. God through Christ chooses flesh as an eternal personal reality.

This idea of becoming our mother substantially and sensually links with Julian's reference to *geyn making*: *(O)ur maker would þat we should be lyke to Jhesu Cryst oure sauour in hevyn withoute ende by the vertu of oure (geyn) making*.<sup>38</sup>

Through Christ being our mother not only in substance, but in sensuality, we are *doubell of gods making*. We experience *geyn making*. *Geyn* in Middle English means "another time", "once more", "repeated".<sup>39</sup> In Julian's theological usage of the term, *geyn making* refers to the Incarnation when Christ assumes sensuality. When God through Christ becomes human, human nature is made again or re-created. Significantly, re-creation does not occur once. *Geyn making* occurs again and again. *Geyn making* involves continual *oneing*. Julian observes, *we be endlesly borne and nevyr shall come out of hym*.<sup>40</sup> Endlessly born and created again through Christ, the mother of *kind*, all humanity both male and female, is drawn into continual *oneing* until we are the same *kynd* as mother

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<sup>38</sup> 2:10.54-56,330. *(O)ur Creator wished us to be like Jesus Christ our saviour in heaven forever, through the power of our making again*. 195. Colledge and Walsh note that Julian is contrasting our *first making* with our *again making*. BSAJN, n.55, 330. See Chapter 4, 131-132; 174-183 and Chapter 5, 187-190.

<sup>39</sup> NSOED, 38.

<sup>40</sup> See n.17, 276.



Christ, authentically human.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, when the deep wisdom of the Trinity our Mother chooses sensuality, grace begins to work and Christ, the mother of kind, becomes our Mother of grace.

## 2. Mother of Grace

The second *beholding* of motherhood that Julian points to is the *takyng of oure kynde, and ther begynnyth the moderhed of grace*.<sup>42</sup> The *beholding* of Christ as the mother of grace reveals that grace is God's self-communication to humankind. Grace is instantaneously present when Christ assumes our sensual nature in the Incarnation. In the Incarnation we not only become one with Christ in nature we also become one with Christ in grace. Christ's words make the connection between nature and grace lucid: *I it am, the myght and the goodnes of faderhode, I it am, the wysdom and the kyndnes of moderhode, I it am, the lyght and the grace that is all blessyd loue*.<sup>43</sup> Grace is God's presence in our humanity in

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<sup>41</sup> Though Julian does not use the term, this idea relates to the doctrine of divinization. Based on Galatians 2:19-20, 2 Peter 1:4 and 1 John 3:2, the idea was articulated by Cyril of Alexandria, "God became human that we humans might become divine." The idea is that believers are invited to participate in the divine reality. It was expressed in various forms from Irenaeus, Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, Leo the Great and many others. Because of its wide-spread popularity it could easily have been an idea that Julian was familiar with. Cf. NDCS, 285-286.

<sup>42</sup> 14:59.44-45,593. *taking of our nature, where the motherhood of grace begins*. 297.

<sup>43</sup> 14:59.14-16,590. *I am he, the power and goodness of fatherhood; I am he, the wisdom and the lovingness of motherhood; I am he, the light and the grace which is all blessed love*. 295-296.

Christ that is *all blessyd loue*, or *charyte gyven*.<sup>44</sup> It is important to remember, however, that as mother of grace in assuming our sensuality, there is an underlying trinitarian involvement in this sharing of the uncreated love that is the essence of the Trinity. Thus, grace flows from the uncreated love of the Trinity with a specific locale of revelation in Christ. The wisdom and kindness of Mother Christ communicate the tangible, personal response of divine love in history. Significantly, *beholding* the motherhood of grace reveals that grace is not an additional gift external to human nature added to assist salvation. Grace is a constituent of *kynde* or nature that begins to work when Christ *takes oure kynde*. In assuming our *kynde* Christ places grace within human nature.

Earlier in the text Julian describes what she means by grace. Again her insights emerge from *beholding*:

*For I behelde the properte of mercy, and I behelde the properte of grace, whych haue ij maner of workyng in one loue. Mercy is a pyttefull properte, whych longyth to moderhode in tender loue; and grace is a wurshypfull properte, whych longyth to ryall lordschyppe in the same loue. Mercy werkyth kypyng, sufferyng, quyckyng and helyng, and alle is of tendyrnesse of loue; and grace werkyth with mercy, reysyng, rewarding, endlesly ovyr passyng that oure lovyng and our traveyle deseruyth, spredyng abrode and shewyng the hye plentuousnesse, largesse of goddes ryall lordschyppe in his mervelouse curtesy. And this is of þe habundannce of loue, for grace werkyth oure dredfull faylyng in to plentuousse and endlesse solace; and grace werkyth oure shamefull fallyng in to hye wurschyppefull rysyng; and grace werkyth oure sorowfull dyeng in*

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<sup>44</sup> We will examine *charyte gyven* and grace in Chapter 8, 316-322.

*to holy blyssyd lyffe.*<sup>45</sup>

When Julian *beholds* the property of grace, she also *beholds* the property of mercy. This suggests that grace is intrinsically related to Christ's mercy. Mercy and grace are two properties which have two manners of working in one love. Grace is the *habundannce of loue*, the life within love that communicates love.<sup>46</sup> Julian's identification of grace as a *wurschyppefull properte* distinguishes the honourable quality of grace. Grace is identified with the lordship of God expressed in courteous love.<sup>47</sup> Grace is courteous love that is majestic and yet intimate. Linking with Julian's other descriptions of courteous love, grace is abundant, *reysyng, rewarding, endlesly ovyr passyng that oure lovyng and our traveyle deseruyth*. Grace is transformational, transfiguring *faylyng to plentuouse and endlesse solace; fallyng to rysyng; and dyeng to holy blyssyd lyffe*.

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<sup>45</sup> 14:48.26-39,502-503. *For I contemplated the property of mercy, and I contemplated the property of grace, which have two ways of operating in one love. Mercy is a compassionate property, which belongs to motherhood in tender love; and grace is an honourable property, which belongs to royal dominion in the same love. Mercy works, protecting, enduring, vivifying and healing, and it is all of the tenderness of love; and grace works with mercy, raising, rewarding, endlessly exceeding what our love and labour deserve, distributing and displaying the vast plenty and generosity of God's royal dominion in his wonderful courtesy. And this is from the abundance of love, for grace transforms our dreadful failing into plentiful and endless solace; and grace transforms our shameful falling into high and honourable rising; and grace transforms our sorrowful dying into holy, blessed life. 262-263.*

<sup>46</sup> This definition of grace which directly associates grace with Christ's role as mother seems unique to Julian. She gives no divisions of grace. This is in contrast to Aquinas who distinguishes six divisions of grace as sanctifying, gratuitous, operating, co-operating, prevenient and subsequent grace. See *Summa* 1-2.q.111.1-5.1135-1140.

<sup>47</sup> See Chapter 3, 105-108.

### Mother of Mercy

Although Julian does not distinguish mercy in her *beholdings* of motherhood, she refers to Christ as the mother of mercy. The gracious working of the *moder of mercy* supports the work of Christ as mother of grace. Christ becomes the mother of mercy when he assumes human sensuality in the Incarnation:

*(T)he seconde person of the trynyte is oure moder in kynd in oure substanncyall makyng, in whom we be groundyd and rotyd, and he is oure moder of mercy in oure sensualyte takyng. And thus oure moder is to vs dyverse manner werkyng, in whom oure pertys be kepte vndeptyd; for in oure moder Cryst we profyt and encrese, and in mercy he reformyth vs and restoryth, and by the vertu of his passion, his deth and his vprisynge onyd vs to oure substannce.<sup>48</sup>*

Mercy is the active quality of love, which has *a pyttfull properte*. It expresses the *tender love* of divine motherhood. The work of mercy is *kypyng, sufferynge, quyckyng* and *helyng*, responding to the condition of sin that caused a rift between substance and sensuality.<sup>49</sup> Perpetually embedded in love, the source of mercy is love and the work of mercy is to keep human beings in love. Ultimately mercy is *all loue in loue*. In mercy Christ restores and reforms us through his passion, death and resurrection and *ones* our sensual nature to our substance.

Julian also pictures human beings in relationship with the mother of mercy as

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<sup>48</sup> 14:58.42-48,586. *(T)he second person of the Trinity is our Mother in nature in our substantial creation, in whom we are founded and rooted, and he is our Mother of mercy in taking our sensuality. And so our Mother is working on us in various ways, in whom our parts are kept undivided; for in our Mother Christ we profit and increase, and in mercy he reforms and restores us, and by the power of his Passion, his death and his Resurrection he unites us to our substance. 294.*

<sup>49</sup> See Chapter 4, 178-179.

being like a crying child hurt from falling over:

*The moder may suffer þe chylde to fall some tyme and be dyssesed on dyuerse manner, for the one profyte, but she may nevyr suffer that ony manner of perell come to her chylde for loue. And though oure erthly moder may suffer hyr chylde to peryssch, oure hevynty moder Jhesu may nevyr suffer vs þat be his chyldren to peryssch, for he is almyghty, all wysdom and all loue, and so is none but he, blessyd motte he be.<sup>50</sup>*

The picture conveys a tension between security and abandonment. Though it seems on a human level that the fallen child, like the fallen servant in the parable, could perish, the heavenly mother will never allow the child to perish. Julian seems to try to solve the tension between human freedom and response to grace by suggesting that human beings need to take initiative when God reveals the need for grace. At the same time, however, there is a strange innocence about the child, who seems incapable of committing serious sin. Moreover, she places no emphasis on the readiness of the child, its preparation for grace, or moral responsibility. Leaving the problem of human freedom and capacity for denial of the mother's love unresolved, Julian creates a picture of a distressed child running to its mother and crying for help. From one perspective, the idea of *moder Jhesu* who is *almyghty, all wysdom and all loue*, does not limit human freedom by preventing human beings experiencing pain and distress caused through their choice to sin. Nevertheless the mother, always in control, offers a free and

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<sup>50</sup> 14:61.35-40,604-605. *The mother may sometimes suffer the child to fall and to be distressed in various ways, for its own benefit, but she can never suffer any kind of peril to come to her child, because of her love. And though our earthly mother may suffer her child to perish, our heavenly Mother Jesus may never suffer us who are his children to perish, for he is almighty, all wisdom and all love, and so is none but he, blessed may he be. 300-301.*

unmerited gift. In the tradition that sin is necessary,<sup>51</sup> human wretchedness becomes a *felix culpa*, because the mother transforms suffering children through this experience of frailty. The scene encourages an attitude of trust:

*But oft tymes when oure fallyng and oure wrechydnes is shewde vs, we be so sore adred and so gretly ashamyd of oure selfe that vnnethis we witt wher þat we may holde vs. But then wyll nott oure curtesse moder that we flee away, for hym were nothing lother; but he wyll than that we vse the condicion of a chylde. For when it is dissesyd and a feerd, it rynnyth hastely to þe moder; and if it may do no more, it cryeth on the mother for helpe with alle þe myghtes. So wyll he that we done as þe meke chylde, seyeng thus: My kynd moder, my gracyous moder, my deerworthy moder, haue mercy on me.*<sup>52</sup>

When we see clearly *oure fallyng and oure wrechydnes* by the sweet light of grace and feel shame and disgrace, the mother of mercy wishes that we take on the condition of a child and flee to the arms of the mother trusting in tender love and asking the mother to have mercy. Always consistent in love, the heavenly Mother gradually enables human beings to mature or *increase*, though often they make mistakes and feel reproach. Instead of a withdrawal of motherly tenderness and love, sinners receive more virtue and grace. In spite of sin, the Mother of mercy and grace ceaselessly works in human sensuality. This presence of mercy and grace in mother Christ, enabling us to see our wretchedness and ask for

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<sup>51</sup> See Chapter 5, 200-201.

<sup>52</sup> 14:61.41-49,605-606. *But often when our falling and our wretchedness are shown to us, we are so much afraid and so greatly ashamed of ourselves that we scarcely know where we can put ourselves. But then our courteous Mother does not wish us to flee away, for nothing would be less pleasing to him; but he then wants us to behave like a child. For when it is distressed and frightened, it runs quickly to its mother; and if it can do no more, it calls to the mother for help with all its might. So he wants us to act as a meek child, saying: My kind Mother, my gracious Mother, my beloved Mother, have mercy on me.* 301.

forgiveness, places mercy and grace in the midst of human sinfulness. When we encounter mother Christ in our sinfulness we encounter spiritual birth in our sensuality which heals us of sin and guilt, until we become one with our substance. Through the careful responsive nurturing of mother Christ we experience the sanctifying and divinizing effect of grace.

Paradoxically, then, rather than being a state of wretchedness, in reality the condition of childhood is a holy state:

*And I vnderstode none hygher stature in this lyfe than chyldehode in febylness and faylyng of myght and of wytte in to þe tyme þat oure gracious moder hath brought vs vpp to oure fadyrs blysse. And ther shall it verely be made knowen to vs, his menyng in the swete woordes wher he seyth: Alle shalle be welle, and thou shalt see it thy selfe, that alle manner thyng shall be welle. And than shalle þe blysse of oure moderheed in Crist be new to begynne in the joyes of oure fader god, whych new begynnyng shall last, without end new begynnyng.<sup>53</sup>*

There is no higher state in this life than childhood. In the feebleness and failing of our childhood we come to know that *alle shalle be welle*. The response of mother Christ to our wretchedness means that we will see ourselves in our personal lives *that alle manner thyng shall be welle*. The motherhood of Christ creates a new beginning or *geyn making*, in the joy of God which will last

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<sup>53</sup> 14:63.42-50, 617-618. *And I understood no greater stature in this life than childhood, with its feebleness and lack of power and intelligence, until the time that our gracious Mother has brought us up into our Father's bliss. And there it will truly be made known to us what he means in the sweet words when he says: All will be well and you will see it yourself, that every kind of thing will be well. And then will the bliss of our motherhood in Christ be to begin anew in the joys of our Father, God, which new beginning will last, newly beginning without end.* 305.

eternally.

Through *beholding* the motherhood in God assuming our *kynd* and becoming the mother of grace, Julian extends the Christological dimension of her soteriology of *oneing*. We are one with Christ our mother of *kynd* and are drawn into a relationship of further *oneing* through the work of mercy and grace. Within human nature mercy and grace work to respond to the effects of sin in the human condition, transforming the experience of feebleness and failing in childhood into an experience of grace.

### 3. Mother of Working

The third *beholding* that Julian distinguishes is the *moderhed in werkyng*. The *moderhed in werkyng* informs the other two *beholdings* by describing how grace continues the work of *oneing*. *Werkyng*, we recall, designates the action of sharing the ecstatic love within the Trinity. *Werkyng* acts like a transforming agent such as yeast causing dough to rise.<sup>54</sup> The working of grace brings to completion what human beings are by nature. The predominant task of the working of grace is to return us to God, to enable the *reditus* to come to fulfilment. Julian describes this action as: *a forth sp(r)edyng by the same grace of lengt and brede, of hygh and of depnesse without ende; and alle is one loue.*<sup>55</sup> This occurs personally in a bodily and spiritual sense, and communally through

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<sup>54</sup> See Chapter 3, 123-124.

<sup>55</sup> See n.31, 282.



the presence of mother Christ in the *sacramentys*, and in *holy church*.

### **The Forth Spreading of Grace**

Julian shows how *the motherhed of mercy and grace* works to return us to God through the *forth sp(r)edyng* by *grace*. Penned as two words in the Paris manuscript *forth sp(r)edyng*, and one in Sloane1 *forthspreadyng*, *forth* suggests a movement out from a place of origin following on immediately and continuously in one direction without deviation.<sup>56</sup> *Sp(r)edyng* implies diffusion and dispersion.<sup>57</sup> Colledge and Walsh relate *forth sp(r)edyng* to the technical theological concept of *circuminsessio*.<sup>58</sup> In their glossary they translate *forth sp(r)edyng* as "widening", whereas in their translation they render *forth sp(r)edyng* as "penetrating". Ronan Crampton defines *forthspreadyng* as "amplification".<sup>59</sup> Julian's qualification of the meaning of the term through her use of spatial imagery integrates all these ideas. The *forth sp(r)edyng* of grace expands, penetrates, amplifies, diffuses and disperses ubiquitously to the *lengt and brede, of hygh and of depnesse without ende*.<sup>60</sup> Julian says more about this *forth*

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<sup>56</sup> NSOED, 1010.

<sup>57</sup> NSOED, 3003.

<sup>58</sup> BSAJN, n.46, 593; Glossary, 752. Though Colledge and Walsh refer to *circumsessio*, I think they mean *circuminsessio*. See Chapter 3, n.76, 119. *Circuminsessio*, we noted, describes the circular, dynamic interrelationship in love expressed between the three persons of the Trinity.

<sup>59</sup> Ronan Crampton, *The Shewings of Julian of Norwich*, 123.

<sup>60</sup> An echo of Ephesians 3:18 seems obvious here.

*sp(r)edyng:*

*But now me behovyth to seye a lytyll more of this forth spredyng, as I vnderstode in þe menyng of oure lord: how that we be brought agayne by the motherhed of mercy and grace in to oure kyndly stede, where þat we ware in, made by þe moderhed of kynd loue, whych kynde loue nevyr leevyth vs.*<sup>61</sup>

The observation, *I undersode in þe menyng of oure lord*, gives weight to Julian's interpretation. It reflects the meaning she believes Christ wishes to communicate. Explicit theological interpretation of the term is complicated however by inconsistencies in the Paris and Sloane1 manuscripts. The Paris manuscript identifies this work as *how that we be brought agayne*.<sup>62</sup> Sloane1 refers to the *forthspredyng* of grace as *how that we be bowte agen*.<sup>63</sup> The Paris text conveys a sense of human beings returning to our natural place *oned* in our kindly mother, The Sloane1 text in contrast draws on the soteriological concept of *agayne byeng*. Although Julian describes redemption as *agayne byeng* in the Paris manuscript, it

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<sup>61</sup> 14:60.2-6,594. *But now I should say a little more about this penetration, as I understood our Lord to mean: How we are brought back by the motherhood of mercy and grace into our natural place, in which we were created by the motherhood of love, a mother's love which never leaves us.* 297.

<sup>62</sup> In Middle English *brought* means to come from, into, out of, to a state of condition, to cause to become. NSOED, 284.

<sup>63</sup> LX:2480.123. *Bought* includes connotations of paying a price for something. NSOED, 309. Ronan Crampton, *The Shewings of Julian of Norwich*, 213, translates *bowte* as, bought, purchased, redeemed. It is noteworthy however that Warrack, *Revelations of Divine Love*, 149, translates *how that we be bowte agen* as, *how that we be brought again*.

is more to qualify the significance of *knitting* and *oneing*.<sup>64</sup> *Byeng* does not become a major concept in the soteriology of the Paris text.<sup>65</sup> In contrast, the Sloane1 text's emphasis on *bowte agen* draws on Anselm's theory of redemption which stresses the need for Christ to buy or pay a price for humanity in order to redeem humanity.<sup>66</sup> I suggest that the Paris text *we be brought agayne by the motherhed of mercy and grace* is more consistent with the image of *forth sp(r)edyng* and the image of a mother bearing or nurturing a child. Nevertheless, even if we accept *bowte agen* as Julian's original phrase, both *brought agayne* and *bowte agen* convey a salvific sense of the constant presence of grace penetrating every aspect of human existence until human beings return to their home in Christ.

The result of this *forth sp(r)edyng* of grace is to return humanity *in oure kyndly stede*. *Stede* translates as place. It refers to a position occupied by custom or right, an appointed place.<sup>67</sup> *Stede* relates to the Middle English word *sede* which

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<sup>64</sup> We recall:14:53.23-25,556. *And nott withstanding this ryghtfull knyttyng and this endlesse oonyng, yett the redempcion and the agayne byeng of mannekynde is nedfull and spedfull.* And despite this rightful joining and this endless uniting, still the redemption and the buying-back of mankind is needful and profitable. 283.

<sup>65</sup> It is, however, significant in Sloane1. See Bradley, "Julian of Norwich: Everyone's Mystic," 145-146.

<sup>66</sup> See Chapter 5, 229-231.

<sup>67</sup> Crampton, *The Shewings of Julian of Norwich*, 217.

translates literally as seat.<sup>68</sup> In this sense, grace spreads to the length and the breadth, the height and depth to return us to our natural seat in Christ. In terms of mother imagery, *stede* could describe the womb of Christ. In Middle English *sede* also identifies the chair for the holder of authority or dignity such as the throne of a monarch, Bishop or the throne of God.<sup>69</sup> In this context, *oure kyndly stede* could inter-relate with Julian's references to the *wurschypfull properte* of grace that is identified with the lordship of God expressed in courteous love.<sup>70</sup> The *forth sp(r)edyng* of grace leads us to our natural home in mother Christ, where we will dwell with Christ in the throne of God.<sup>71</sup>

Julian creates a picture of the cyclical nature of the working of grace by inter-connecting the idea of the *forth sp(r)edyng* of grace with the *forth bryngyng* of grace. *Forth bryngyng* accentuates that we are *brought* into Christ rather than *bought* by Christ. Christ works for both our *bodley forth bryngyng* and our *gostly forth bryngyng*:

*For though it be so þat oure bodely forthbryngyng be but lytle, lowe and symple in regard of oure gostely forth brynggyng, yett it is he*

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<sup>68</sup> NSOED, 2747.

<sup>69</sup> NSOED, 2747.

<sup>70</sup> See 288.

<sup>71</sup> Warrack's translation makes this point clear, "how that we be brought again by the Motherhood of Mercy and Grace into our Nature's place, where that we were made by the motherhood of Nature-Love." Warrack, *Revelations of Divine Love*, 149.

*that doth it in the creaturys by whom that it is done.*<sup>72</sup>

The *forth bryngyng* of Christ must be considered in light of Julian's anthropology that emphasizes the importance of the whole human person, *substance* and *sensuality* becoming one in Christ.<sup>73</sup> Reflecting this idea, Christ's work involves our *bodley forth bryngyng* or the *oneing* of our sensuality, the more bodily aspect of our existence into its natural home in Christ. Though this may seem *lytle, lowe and symple*, Christ does this. Julian then portrays *gostly forth bryngyng* in some detail:

*Ande in oure gostly forth bryngyng he vsyth more tendernesse in kepyng without ony comparyson, by as moch as oure soule is of more pryce in his syght. He kyndelyth oure vnderstondyng, he prepareth oure weyes, he esyth oure consciens, he confortyth oure soule, he lyghteth oure harte and gevyth vs in party knowyng and louyng in his blessydfull godhede, with gracyous mynde in his swete manhode and his blessed passyon, with curtesse mervelyng in his hye ovyr passyng goodnesse, and makyth us to loue all that he louyth for his loue, and to be well apayde with hym and with alle his werkes. And whan we falle, hastely he reysyth vs by his louely beclepyng and his gracyous touchyng. And when we be strenthyd by his swete werkyng, than we wylfully chose hym by his grace to be his seruanntes and hys lovers, lestyngly without ende.*<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> 14:60.49-51,599. *For though it may be so that our bodily bringing to birth is only little, humble and simple in comparison with our spiritual bringing to birth, still it is he who does it in the creatures by whom it is done.* 299.

<sup>73</sup> See Chapter 4, 174-183.

<sup>74</sup> 14:61.2-14,601-602. *And in our spiritual bringing to birth he uses more tenderness, without any comparison, in protecting us. By so much as our soul is more precious in his sight, he kindles our understanding, he prepares our ways, he eases our conscience, he comforts our soul, he illumines our heart and gives us partial knowledge and love of his blessed divinity, with gracious memory of his sweet humanity and his blessed Passion, with courteous wonder over his great surpassing goodness, and makes us to love everything which he loves for love of him, and to be well satisfied with him and with all his works. And when we fall, quickly he raises us up with his loving embrace and his gracious touch. And*

Julian identifies the work of *forth bryngyng* with *kepyng* or the nurturing of our soul. *Kepyng increases* us by deepening our participation in the being of God. Distinguished by tenderness, this *kepyng* involves *gracyous touchyng* and *swete werkyng*. *Touchyng*, we recall, describes the physical and spiritual engagement between God and humanity, the common ground where understanding can be deepened.<sup>75</sup> *Swete werkyng* suggests that Christ's working is pleasant and delightful. It touches every aspect of our being, our understanding, our actions, our conscience, our soul and our heart. This *gracyous touchyng* gives us *party knowyng* and *louyng* of Christ's divinity and *gracyous mynde* of his humanity. Ultimately the work of *forth bryngyng*, makes us *loue all that he louyth for his loue*. When we fall he raises us with *gracyous touchyng* and strengthens us with *sweet werkyng* until we wilfully choose Christ. Thus grace is not something we can earn. Grace is always present and active within us. Furthermore, grace is not something that helps us act well, where our acting is our own. Rather the presence of grace means that God is involved in all that we do. The *forth bryngyng* of grace is Christ's working within us that enables us to be in harmony with our Christ-like nature, to align ourselves with Christ, to choose freely to fulfil our natural potential to be one in our *kyndly stede* in mother Christ.

It is noteworthy that Julian integrates the language of payment in her reference to

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*when we are strengthened by his sweet working, then we willingly choose him by his grace, that we shall be his servants and his lovers, constantly and forever.*  
299-300.

<sup>75</sup> See Chapter 2, 55-56.

the *forth bryngyng* of grace. *Oure soule is of more pryce in his syght.*<sup>76</sup> Again she uses this imagery in her own way. *Pryce* alludes to levels of soteriological meaning. In Middle English *pryce* designates a sum of money or goods for which a thing may be bought or sold. It can also designate value, worth honourableness or virtue.<sup>77</sup> Associated with prize, it can represent a reward as a symbol of victory in a contest or competition.<sup>78</sup> Also related to praise, it can be the expression of adulation and the ascription of glory as an act of worship.<sup>79</sup> Colledge and Walsh's translation *precious* conveys something of this meaning. In terms of other images in the *showings*, however, *pryce* links with the final scene in the parable of the lord and the servant where humankind is described as Christ's crown and his reward.<sup>80</sup> This word emphasizes what inestimable value humankind has for Christ. Julian's ability to give the language of satisfaction her own meaning continues when she points out that Christ's *forth bryngyng* is directed at humanity which is *to be well apayde with hym and with alle his werkes.*<sup>81</sup> The language reinforces Christ's words on the cross: *If thou arte apayde, I am apayde.*<sup>82</sup> Salvation revealed on the cross and through Christ's

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<sup>76</sup> See n.75, 298.

<sup>77</sup> NSOED, 2349-2350.

<sup>78</sup> NSEOD, 2360.

<sup>79</sup> NSEOD, 2319.

<sup>80</sup> See Chapter 6, 266-268.

<sup>81</sup> See n.75, 298.

<sup>82</sup> See Chapter 5, 233-234.

work as mother is a mutual exchange between Christ and humanity. Therefore, through Christ's identity as mother, and his work as mother, humanity finds pleasure or peace and is drawn into eschatological glory.

Julian's imagery that describes the motherhood of kind, the motherhood of grace and the motherhood of working is extravagant. It specifically links nature and grace to the *oneing* that occurs between Christ and humanity. The three *beholdings* reinforce the identity between Christ and humanity that Julian distinguished in the parable of the lord and the servant. Julian pushes the distinction between the otherness of Christ and the working of grace so far that the differentiation between Christ and humanity is almost dissolved. We may criticize Julian's Christology for its inability to maintain the distinction between who Christ is and the divinization of humanity that occurs through Christ. There seems to be no room for human resistance or even rebellion against the process of *oneing* that occurs through Christ. On the opposite side, however, this Christology negates any conception of God's not being intimately involved in human experience. The principle that Christ the deep wisdom of the Trinity our mother, is mother of kind, mother of grace and mother in working reinforces hope. It describes how the *exitus reditus* pattern is continuous. God loves humanity into existence, joins humanity in the Incarnation, surrounds human beings with love, and therefore grace, to consummate and to culminate what was already set in motion in and through the gift of creation.



### III. MOTHER CHRIST IN MOTHER CHURCH

This salvific *increasing* through Christ has a specific locus in the Church. Mother

Christ continues to be present and active in the Church through the sacraments:

*The moder may geue her chylde sucke hyr mylke, but oure precyous moder Jhesu, he may fede vs wyth hym selfe, and doth full curtesly and full tendyrly with the blessyd sacrament, that is precyous fode of very lyfe; and with all the swete sacramentes he systeynyth vs full mercyfully and graciously, and so ment he in theyse blessyd wordys, where he seyde: I it am that holy chyrch prechyth the and techyth the. That is to sey: All the helth and the lyfe of sacramentys, alle þe veruu and þe grace of my worde, alle the goodnesse that is ordeynyd in holy chyrch to the, I it am.*<sup>83</sup>

Though Julian does not develop an extensive sacramental theology, the importance of the sacraments seems to be something she takes for granted in the text.<sup>84</sup>

Earlier in chapter fifty-seven she refers to the seven sacraments: *Also in oure feyth come the vij sacramentes, eche folowyng other in order as god hath ordeyneth them to* vs.<sup>85</sup> In referring to Christ as mother, she singles out *the*

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<sup>83</sup> 14:60.29-37,596-597. *The mother can give her child to suck of her milk, but our precious Mother Jesus can feed us with himself, and does, most courteously and most tenderly, with the blessed sacrament, which is the precious food of true life; and with all the sweet sacraments he sustains us most mercifully and graciously, and so he meant in these blessed words, where he said: I am he whom Holy Church preaches and teaches to you. That is to say: All the health and the life of the sacraments, all the power and the grace of my word, all the goodness which is ordained in Holy Church for you, I am he.* 298.

<sup>84</sup> This is in contrast to the emphasis on the Eucharist in European mystics of the same period. See André Vauchez, "Eucharistic Devotion and Mystical Union in Late-medieval Female Saints," in André Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practices*, ed. Daniel E. Bornstein, trans. Margery J. Schneider (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 237-242.

<sup>85</sup> 14:57.36-39,579. *Also in our faith come the seven sacraments, one following another in the order God has ordained them in for us.* 292.

*blessyd sacrament* (Eucharist), as the locale of the ongoing presence of Christ as mother in the Church.<sup>86</sup> She creates a picture of a Mother feeding a child at her breast and presents a comparison between the nourishment of breast milk and the food that mother Jesus feeds us which is *precyous fode of very lyfe*. This meal that Jesus shares expresses the present reality of spiritual nourishment and the future hope of the feasting experienced in the beatific vision.<sup>87</sup> In contrast to earthly mothers, Jesus *fede vs wyth hym selfe* and we become one body with Christ. While this passage gives no indication of whether Julian is referring to communion under both species, earlier in the text she remarks: *We praie to god for his holie flesh and for his precious bloud*.<sup>88</sup> In the passage she makes the point that in feeding us with himself, Christ becomes the life and salvation of human beings. The image places Christ at the centre of the sacramental life of the Church.

In one sense Julian's description of being fed by the blessed sacrament emphasizes personal salvation enabled by the Eucharist. But her direct association of the *blessyd sacrament* with *holy chyrch* suggests that it is not just individuals who are

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<sup>86</sup> *Ancrene Wisse* advises the anchoress, "to take communion as often as our lay-brothers do, fifteen times in twelve months." It suggests suitable feast days. Savage and Watson, *Anchoritic Spirituality*, 199.

<sup>87</sup> We will examine Julian's image of fulfilment as the great feast in Chapter 8, 324-326.

<sup>88</sup> 1:6.12-13,304. *We pray to God for his holy flesh and for his precious blood*. 185. This is an interesting comment given that the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) restricted the reception of wine to the priest.

nourished by Christ, but the entire body of the Church. Her threefold statement that integrates the *helth and the lyfe of the sacramentys*, the *veruu and þe grace of my worde*, and *alle the goodnesse that is ordeynyd in holy church to the*, emphasizes the relationship between the sacraments, Christ's word and the Church. Julian maintains a profound identification between Christ and the Church. Earlier in both the short and long texts she has made this identification of Christ with the Church perfectly clear:

*God shewde fulle grett plesannce that he hath in alle men and women that myghtly and wysely take the prechyng and the techyng of holy chyrch, for he it is, holy chyrch. He is the grounde, he is the substannce, he is the techyng, he is the techer, he is the ende and he is the mede wherfore every kynde soule travelyth; and thys is knowen and shall be knowen to ech soule to whych the holy gost declaryth it.*<sup>89</sup>

We note how *I it am that holy chyrch prechyth the and techyth the*<sup>90</sup> summarizes Julian's statement that designates Christ as the *grounde, substannce, techyng, techer, the ende* and *the mede*.<sup>91</sup> Because the Church comes forth from the ground and substance of Christ, the body of Christ, Christ's labour for salvation is worked out in the Church. Thus the motherhood of Christ ontologically

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<sup>89</sup> 13:34.15-20,431. *God showed the very great delight that he has in all men and women who accept, firmly and wisely, the preaching and teaching of Holy Church, for he is that Holy Church. He is the foundation, he is the substance, he is the teacher, he is the end, he is the reward for which every loving soul labours; and this is known and will be known to every soul to whom the Holy Spirit declares this. 235-236. Cf. xvi:1-7, 252.*

<sup>90</sup> See n.84, 302.

<sup>91</sup> Colledge and Walsh suggest that this passage relates to Apocalypse 1:8, 21:6, 22.13. "I am the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end." BSAJN, n.17, 431.

extends to *oure moder holy Church*:

*And he wylle þat we take vs myghtly to the feyth of holy church, and fynd there oure deerworthy mother in solas and trew vnderstandyng with all þe blessyd comonn. For one singular person may oftyen tymes be broken, as it semyth to þe selfe, but the hole body of holy church was nevyr broken, nor nevyr shall be with out ende. And therefore a suer thyng it is, a good and a gracious to wylle mekly and myghtly be fastenyd and onyd to oure moder holy church, that is Crist Jhesu.*<sup>92</sup>

The Church, ontologically grounded in Christ, now carries out Christ's office of motherhood towards humanity. In the Church the faithful can find Christ *our deerworthy mother in solas and trew vnderstandyng*. Julian's image of the Church as *all þe blessyd comonn*, which Colledge and Walsh translate as "community", is an inclusive term which creates a sense of members of the Church in blessed communion with the Trinity and in a shared relationship with each other. The image possibly draws on the idea of a common, the area of land held jointly by all members of a community. In this sense it emphasizes the sharing of all persons and things, the sharing of ground that gives life and nourishes human beings. Though it could be argued that *common* refers to the common, ordinary people, Julian uses the phrase *all þe blessyd comonn* in the context of describing *the hole body of holy church*. The qualifying terms *all* and *blessyd* emphasize the *hole body* and the sacredness of this body. Furthermore, *all the blessyd comonn*

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<sup>92</sup> 14:61.57-64,607-608. *And he wants us to commit ourselves fervently to the faith of Holy Church, and find there our beloved Mother in consolation and true understanding, with all the company of the blessed. For one single person may often be broken, as it seems to him, but the entire body of Holy Church was never broken, nor ever will be without end. And therefore it is a certain thing, and good and gracious to will, meekly and fervently, to be fastened and united to our mother Holy Church, who is Christ Jesus.* 301-302.

resonates with her other term *evyn christen*<sup>93</sup> (even Christians), which accentuates equality and bondedness within the communion of believers.<sup>94</sup>

In a time of much upheaval in the Church, it is remarkable that the only allusion to official Church office is her reference to the clerical person, possibly a secular priest<sup>95</sup> who brings the crucifix to her bedside when she is ill.<sup>96</sup> She identifies him as *the personn, my curette*<sup>97</sup> in the short text, and as *my curate*<sup>98</sup> in the long text, and as a *relygyous person*<sup>99</sup> who comes later on the same day to ask how she is. There is no mention of Church hierarchy or discord in the Church. The only inkling she gives about dissension in the Church is her reference to *one singular person may oftyn tymes be broken*, which she passes over quickly.<sup>100</sup> She sees that ultimately the whole body of holy Church, which is Christ's body, will never be broken.

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<sup>93</sup> 1:8.22,33,319.

<sup>94</sup> Colledge and Walsh, BSAJN, n.59, 607, relate Julian's image of the Church to the vine and the branches of John 15:1, or the olive tree of Romans 11:16-24.

<sup>95</sup> BSAJN, n.23, 208.

<sup>96</sup> See Chapter 1, 3.

<sup>97</sup> ii.22-23,208.

<sup>98</sup> 1:3.20,290.

<sup>99</sup> xxi:7,266. 16:66.16,632.

<sup>100</sup> See Chapter 1, 115-119.

Julian's ecclesiology is intensely Christocentric. Significantly, the union between Christ and the Church does not occur *through* Christ or *in* Christ. The Church *is* Christ. There is an ontological identity between Christ and the Church. This identity is fundamental:

*Here may we see that we be all bounde to god for kynd, and we be bounde to god for grace. Her may we see that vs nedyth nott gretly to seke ferre out to know sondry kyndys, but to holy church into oure moders brest, that is to sey in to oure owne soule, wher oure lord dwellyth. And ther shulde we fynde alle, now in feyth and in vnderstandyng, and after verely in hym selfe clerely in blysse. But no man ne woman take this syngulary to hym selfe, for it is not so. It is generall, for it is oure precious moder Cryst.<sup>101</sup>*

Within the Church *we be all bounde to god for kynd, and we be bounde to god for grace*. Julian's reference to *bounde* presents another facet of Julian's concept of *oneing*. In common Middle English usage, *bounde* has a variety of associations that emphasize union. *Bounde* signifies tying or fastening a knot, attaching or binding in knitting. *Bounde* can mean to encircle. It also draws on the image of healing, putting dressings on a wound, winding cloth or bandages on a wound. *Bounde* can further denote being united in marriage. *Bounde* can specify a state of being obliged by covenant or contract, being compelled by legal authority or

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<sup>101</sup> 14:62.22-29,612-613. *Here we can see that we are all bound to God by nature, and we are bound to God by grace. Here we can see that we do not need to seek far afield so as to know various natures, but to go to Holy Church, into our Mother's breast, that is to say into our own soul, where our Lord dwells. And there we should find everything, now in faith and understanding, and afterwards truly, in himself, clearly, in bliss. But let no man or woman apply this particularly to himself, because it is not so. It is general, because it is our precious Mother Christ. 303.*

subject to legal contract.<sup>102</sup> Therefore, within Julian's text it is possible that the image has links with Julian's concept of *knitting* and *oneing*. The word *bounde* acts like a connecting thread that binds together multiple images of being bound, such as the image of mutual enclosure between the Trinity and humanity, the idea of Christ healing the wounds of humanity, and the scene from the parable of the lord and the servant where humanity becomes the spouse of Christ.

*All bounde to god for kynd* comes through Christ being the mother of *kynd*. This suggests that the Church is the body of Christ and it is our natural heritage to be part of this body. *Bounde to god for grace* draws on Christ's role as mother of grace and mother of working. This places the presence and working of grace within the Church. From a contemporary perspective we may criticize Julian because she does not extend the concept of being bound to Christ in nature and grace beyond the Church. For Julian in fourteenth-century England, all society is the Church. Yet as we have seen, Julian's definition of Church as *all þe blessyd comonn*, Christ's work on the cross for all creation, and her subtle doctrine of universal salvation which we will examine in chapter nine,<sup>103</sup> suggest that in reality this binding extends beyond the Church. *Bounde to God* denotes how there is an unbreakable salvific covenant between the Trinity and humanity.

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<sup>102</sup> NSOED, 229. Other images not in Julian's text include the sheets of a book being bound together or the coherence that occurs in mixing and cooking, or chemical bonding.

<sup>103</sup> See Chapter 9, 376-388.

Within the Church there is no sense of the priority of nature over grace, or grace over nature. Nature and grace both play a significant role in salvation. Julian then makes a significant leap in her ecclesiology by identifying *holy church* as *oure moders brest*, and equating this with *oure owne soule, wher oure lord dwellyth*. This identity between the body of mother Christ, the breast of mother Church and the indwelling of Christ within individuals creates a dialectic between the indwelling presence in the individual and the indwelling presence in the communal. Within the Church individuals now experience themselves as dwelling places of Christ woven into a mystical whole in the Church that is also the dwelling place of Christ.

Julian repeats the idea that we are bound to God by nature and bound to God by grace. Repetition suggests that it is an important concept for her. In each repetition she develops another aspect of its implications for our return to our natural home in God. Significantly, being bound to God in nature and grace affects our condition of sin:

*Here may we see that we haue verely of kynd to hate synne, and we haue verely of grace to hate synne, for kynde is all good and feyer in it selfe, and grace was sent oute to saue kynde and dystroy synne, and bryng agayne feyer kynde in to the blessyd poynt from thens it cam, that is god, with more noblynes and wurschyppe by the vertuse wurkyng of grace. For it shall be seen before god of all his holy in joy without end pat kynd hath ben assayde in the fyer of trybulation, and ther in founde no lack nor no defaute. Thus is kynd and grace of one accorde; for grace is god, as vnmade kynde is god. He is two in manner werkyng, and one in loue, and neyther*



*of them werkyth without other, ne none be depertyd.*<sup>104</sup>

Julian affirms the goodness of nature since it is natural for human nature to hate sin. Immersed in the fire of tribulation, nature has suffered and found not to be lacking. Grace is sent out to save nature and destroy sin.<sup>105</sup> There is a repetition of the idea of being brought into God rather than being bought for God (*and bryng agayne feyer kynde in to the blessyd poynt from thens it cam, that is god*).<sup>106</sup> *Agayne* reminds us of Christ's task of *geyn makyng*. The role of grace is to return humankind into the *blessyd poynt* from where we came. Julian leaves no doubt as to from where we came and where we will return: *that is god*.

Bradley emphasizes the distinction between nature and grace when she states:

"But *kynde* is in contrast to grace." She continues: "But though *kynde* is in contrast to grace, they are united in the end to which they draw us -- God's goodness." I would argue that Bradley's emphasis on "contrast" is misleading. In

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<sup>104</sup> 14:63.2-12,614-615. *Here we may see that truly it belongs to our nature to hate sin, and truly it belongs to us by grace to hate sin, for nature is all good and fair in itself, and grace was sent out to save nature and destroy sin, and bring fair nature back again to the blessed place from which it came, which is God, with more nobility and honour by the powerful operation of grace. For it will be seen before God by all his saints in joy without end that nature has been tried in the fire of tribulation, and that no lack or defect is found in it. So are nature and grace of one accord; for grace is God, as uncreated nature is God. He is two in his manner of operation, and one in love, and neither of these works without the other, and they are not separated.* 303-304.

<sup>105</sup> It is noteworthy that Julian never goes into an explanation of whether nature was created prior to grace. She does not make a comparison between nature and grace as Aquinas does. Cf. *Summa*, 1.q.95.1.482-483. Julian takes for granted the union in purpose between nature and grace.

<sup>106</sup> In this passage Sloane<sup>1</sup> also uses *bryngen ageyn*. LXIII:2619,128.

Julian's theology of grace the relationship between Christ our mother of *kynd* and our mother of grace means that there is no dichotomy between nature and grace. Nature and grace are not two separate ways in which divine love shares itself that interact as little as possible. Through mother Christ, nature and grace are intrinsically related, *neyther of them werkyth without other*. They are never dealt with in contrast. Julian avoids two extremes in her theology of grace when she concludes: *kynd and grace of one accorde; for grace is god, as vnmade kynd is god*. Grace is God, as uncreated nature is God. Without equating nature with grace or viewing nature as independent of grace, she presents nature and grace as *one accorde* in Christ.<sup>107</sup> Nature and grace both ensure that what comes from God returns to God.

Julian summarizes her understanding of salvation achieved through nature and grace: *Thus I vnderstode that all his blessyd chyldren whych be come out of hym by kynd shulde be brought agayne in to hym by grace*.<sup>108</sup> In the Paris manuscript this occurs at the beginning of chapter sixty-four where Julian suspends theologizing and returns to the experience of her illness. In the Sloane1 manuscript the scribe places the statement at the end of chapter sixty-three as a

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<sup>107</sup> Bradley, "Julian of Norwich on Prayer," 146. Bradley seems to be referring to "fallen" nature here. Julian, however, refers to *feyer kynde* in her discussion of grace.

<sup>108</sup> 15:64.3-4,619. *So I understood that all his blessed children who have come out of him by nature ought to be brought back into him by grace*. 305.

summary of all that has gone before.<sup>109</sup> We have seen in the *beholdings* of the motherhood in God that in being the ground of our kind and in taking our kind, *all his blessyd chyldren whych be come out of hym by kynd*.<sup>110</sup> Grace also begins to work in the Incarnation when Christ assumes human sensuality so that humanity *shulde be brought agayne in to hym by grace*, or as Sloane<sup>1</sup> states: (*shall be bowte ageyn into Him be grace*).<sup>111</sup> *Shulde*, like *shall*, emphasizes the promise, assurance and necessity of this return occurring.<sup>112</sup> There is no sense in which grace is supernatural, something imposed on human nature. Through mother Christ we naturally live the life of grace. Our nature is such that fulfilment of our potential for divine life with Christ naturally comes through grace. In spite of the discrepancy in the manuscripts as to whether grace returns us to Christ or buys our return to Christ, the final result is clear: human beings come from Christ in nature and will return to Christ through grace. Grace fulfils nature. *Oneyng* in nature and grace ensure that what comes from God returns to God.

The Christology expressed in the idea *the depe wysdome of þe trynyte is our moder* draws Julian's soteriology to a climax. The Christology of the fluid dialectical unity between Christ's identity as deep wisdom of the Trinity and

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<sup>109</sup> LXIII:2658-2660,129.

<sup>110</sup> See n.109, 311.

<sup>111</sup> LXIII:2658-2660,129.

<sup>112</sup> See Chapter 8, 324-325.

mother expresses how Christ undertakes a continuous role of *oneing* through nature and grace. This *oneing* that occurs through the mother of kind, the mother of grace, and the mother of working, ensures that human beings will be true to the potential of their nature and return to their source in God. Presently, Christ continues this task in the Church, so that in the Church we are bound to God by nature and bound to God by grace. Julian summarizes the soteriology expressed in this Christology. All Christ's children who come out of Christ by nature will return to Christ by grace. The Holy Spirit also plays a predominant role in this return by grace. The continual working of grace in human lives which continues through the Holy Spirit must now be addressed in the next chapter.

**PART FIVE**

**IN THE THIRD WE HAVE OUR FULFILMENT**

*in the thyrde we haue oure fulfyllyng* (14:58.31-32,585).

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### *ONEING THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT*

*he drawyth vs to hym by loue* (14:43.36-37,479).

Central to Julian's soteriology is the belief that human beings originate with God and will return to God. Love from the Godhead, conveyed in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, creates a divine presence in human lives, fulfills human beings, and substantiates God's salvific promise that *all shall be well*. The next two chapters examine how Julian creates a balance between the transcendence of God that leads to hope for final fulfilment in the eschaton and the immanence of God that gives her eschatology a this-world orientation. Julian unites these elements of the transcendence and immanence of God in her pneumatology. She shows how the Holy Spirit is present to humanity as *charyte given*, encloses humanity in love, renews humanity and leads humanity to God. In this chapter we will examine Julian's understanding of the role the Holy Spirit plays in the partially realized experience of our fulfilling. Fundamental to this fulfilling is engagement with human beings through inspiring three manners of knowing: to know God, to know ourselves in nature and grace, and to know ourselves as against sin. The Holy Spirit orientates us to the presence of divine love and invites a human response to this love through prayer.

## I. JULIAN'S THEOLOGY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Though Julian has difficulty in defining the reality meant by the Holy Spirit,<sup>1</sup> she grounds her understanding of the Holy Spirit in the triune symbol of God and identifies the Holy Spirit with the love within the Trinity. Apart from the title, Our Lord (*the grete loue of the trynyte is oure lorde*),<sup>2</sup> she never conceives of the Spirit in concrete symbols.<sup>3</sup> Most consistently, she associates the Holy Spirit with love through her doctrine of appropriations.<sup>4</sup> In the tradition of this doctrine, while maintaining that the Trinity is love, she also designates love as appropriate to the Holy Spirit:

*Truth seeth god, and wisdom beholdyth god, and of theyse two comyth the thurde, and that is a meruelous debyght in god which is loue. Where truth and wysedom is, verely there is loue, verely comyng of them both, and alle of goddes makyng. For god is endlesse souereyne truth, endelesse souereyne wysdom, endelesse souereyne loue vnmade.*<sup>5</sup>

The third person of the Trinity is love coming forth from the truth and wisdom of

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<sup>1</sup> The indefinable nature of pneumatology is an almost universal feature which Julian shares with all the great theologians.

<sup>2</sup> 14:58.36,585. *the great love of the Trinity is our Lord.* 294.

<sup>3</sup> It is noteworthy that in a text that has such concentrated visual imagery, there is no reference to a visual description of the Holy Spirit. There is no mention of the symbol of a dove common in paintings of the Trinity. (See *The Trinity*, 267). Neither is there a reference to the feast of Pentecost or the Johannine title of paraclete.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 3, n.23, 99.

<sup>5</sup> 14:44.8-12,483-484. *Truth sees God, and wisdom contemplates God, and of these two comes the third, and that is a marvellous delight in God, which is love. Where truth and wisdom are, truly there is love, truly coming from them both, and all are of God's making. For God is endless supreme truth, endless supreme wisdom, endless supreme love uncreated.* 256.

the Godhead. Julian distinguishes this divine love as *the merulous delight in god*. In the tradition of the *filioque* clause, which suggests that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son,<sup>6</sup> the Holy Spirit is *loue, comyng of them both*. Although this is similar to the Augustinian doctrine whereby the Holy Spirit originates from the love between the Father and the Son,<sup>7</sup> there is a subtle shift in Julian's understanding that emphasizes the one love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Spirit is not a passive product of the Father and the Son. Rather, in communion with the Father and the Son, the Spirit dynamically expresses the action of *loue vnmade* in human lives. This is the one love we saw expressed in the spiritual image of the hazelnut where Julian *beholds* that God is *verely, the maker, the keper and the louer*.<sup>8</sup>

Julian's identification of the Holy Spirit with love reaches its high point when she concentrates on the activity of the Holy Spirit as *charyty gevyn*.<sup>9</sup> We recall that *charyte gevyn is vertu, and þat is a gracious gyfte of wurkyng, in whych we loue*

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<sup>6</sup> *Filioque* means literally "from the Son." This is the traditional Latin formula that designates how the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son as a single principle. This was added to the Nicene-Constantinople creed at the end of the seventh century. See Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine. The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)*. vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 183-198.

<sup>7</sup> See Augustine, *The Trinity*, 15.17.27-31.491-496.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 3, 132-135.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter 3, 95-100.



*god for hym selfe, and oure selfe in god, and alle þat god loveth for god.*<sup>10</sup>

*Charyte gevyn* is not merely a gift of love superimposed on human nature.

*Charyte gevyn* is the free gift of the very self of God within human nature, drawing humanity into the life of trinitarian love. The freedom in giving love emphasizes the Spirit's desire to be oriented towards human beings.<sup>11</sup> *Charyte gevyn* is a *gracyous touchyng*,<sup>12</sup> or a *swete touchyng of grace*,<sup>13</sup> that is dynamic, personal, relational and intimate. *Charyte gevyn* is *vertu*, the gift of the theological virtues of faith, hope and love that enable human beings to respond to grace. The specific role of the Holy Spirit is to renew these virtues: *For the same vertuse þat we haue receyvyd of oure substannce gevyn to vs in kynd of the goodnes of god, the same vertuse by the werkyng of mercy be gevyn to vs in grace, throw the holy gost renewed.*<sup>14</sup> The Holy Spirit takes part in the task of *geyn making*<sup>15</sup> by revitalizing the theological virtues and making human beings spiritually renewed. The Holy Spirit participates in God's redemptive activity,

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<sup>10</sup> 16:84.13-15,727. *(G)iven charity is virtue, and that is a gift of grace in deeds, in which we love God for himself, and ourselves in God, and all that God loves for God.* 341.

<sup>11</sup> This idea reflects the Latin tradition of grace as *gratia* that associates grace with favour or free gift.

<sup>12</sup> 14:52.12,547. *the touching of his grace.* 279.

<sup>13</sup> 14:52.62,551. *the sweet touching of grace.* 281.

<sup>14</sup> 14:57.38-40,579. *For the same virtues which we have received from our substance, given to us in nature by the goodness of God, the same virtues by the operation of mercy are given to us in grace, renewed through the Holy Spirit.* 292.

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 4, 129-132, 174-183, Chapter 5, 187-190 and Chapter 7, 282-286.

through a personal, free, loving presence which enables humanity to respond in love of God, to love themselves in God and to love all that God loves. The Holy Spirit is love and the saving action of love given.

Julian presents the love of the Holy Spirit as ontologically grounded in the uncreated love of the Trinity, flowing from both the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of Christ. Though she never directly explains the association between the risen Christ, the sending of the Holy Spirit, Christ the mother of grace, or the working of grace through the Holy Spirit, there is an implicit connection between Christ's motherhood of grace and the grace of the Holy Spirit. The grace of Christ works within us and the grace of the Holy Spirit works within us:

*(F)or Cryst marcyfully is werkyng in vs, and we gracyously accordyng to hym thorow the yefte and the vertu of the holy gost. This werkyng makyth that we be Crystes chyldren and cristen in lyvyng.<sup>16</sup>*

There is a flexible inter-play between Christ's work and the sanctifying function of the Holy Spirit. Christ works within us (*Cryst marcyfully is werkyng in vs*). The Spirit, also working within us, accords us to Christ (*gracyously accordyng to hym*). Julian does not make a genuine theological distinction between Christ and the Spirit. Their roles are fluid. We see an example of this flexibility expressed in the words *good lorde*, which she uses as an address to Christ and also as a title

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<sup>16</sup> 14:55.34-37,564. *(F)or Christ is mercifully working in us, and we are by grace according with him, through the gift and the power of the Holy Spirit. This working makes it so that we are Christ's children and live Christian lives. 286.*

for the Holy Spirit.<sup>17</sup> Christ and the Spirit in communion express two integrated ways in which the Trinity accomplishes salvation through the presence of grace.

Mirroring our reciprocal enclosure in Christ, humanity participates in trinitarian indwelling in the Holy Spirit. We recall the references to the Holy Spirit in Julian's image of trinitarian enclosure: *And the hye goodnesse of the trynyte is our lord, and in hym we be cloyd and he in vs .... we are cloyd in the holy gost .... the holy gost is becloyd in vs, ... alle goodnesse, one god, one lorde.*<sup>18</sup> The Holy Spirit, the *hye goodnesse of the trynyte* is identified with the goodness of the Godhead, *hye goodnesse, alle goodnesse*, or the ultimate good.<sup>19</sup> The Holy Spirit is engaged in mutual enclosure, *perichoresis*,<sup>20</sup> a permanent exchange of goodness which freely flows between the persons of the Trinity and creatures. Thus, mutual enclosure in the goodness of the Holy Spirit enables human participation in the divine goodness of the Trinity.

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<sup>17</sup> E.g., 14:48.2,500. *our good Lord the Holy Spirit*. In, 1:5.34,301. *our good lord shewed*, refers to Christ.

<sup>18</sup> 14:54.22-23;24;25-27,563. *And the high goodnesse of the Trinity is our Lord, and in him we are enclosed and he in us .... we are enclosed in the Holy Spirit .... the Holy Spirit is enclosed in us ... all goodnesse, one God, one Lord.* 285. I have highlighted the sections that relate to the Holy Spirit to help emphasize the importance of this role.

<sup>19</sup> Julian's association of goodness with the Trinity has some similarities with Aquinas who associates God's being with goodness. See *Summa*, 1.q.6.1-4.28-30. Julian differs from Aquinas, however, as he does not directly link goodness with the Holy Spirit.

<sup>20</sup> See Chapter 3, 115-120.

Julian further portrays this indwelling presence as endless life dwelling in the soul:

*But oure good lorde the holy gost, whych is endlesse lyfe dwellyng in oure soule, full truly kepyth vs and werketh ther in a pees, and bryngyth it to ees by grace, and makyth it buxom and accordyth it to god. And this is the mercy and the wey that oure good lord contynually ledyth vs in, as longe as we be in this lyfe whych is channgeable.*<sup>21</sup>

The *good lorde*, the Holy Spirit is the permanent presence of divine love within human beings, *endlesse lyfe dwellyng in oure soule*.<sup>22</sup> This indwelling of the endless life of the Spirit ensures our *oneing* in the eternal life of the Trinity. The *endlesse lyfe* of the Spirit keeps us, works a peace in us, creates ease, makes us obedient and reconciles us to God. The Holy Spirit continues to lead us *as longe as we be in this lyfe whych is channgeable*. Although there is an implicit consequence that the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit means that the Spirit is present in the Church, Julian does not give the Holy Spirit a major role in her ecclesiology. As we have seen,<sup>23</sup> she develops an extensive ecclesiology based on the presence of the risen Christ in the Church.

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<sup>21</sup> 14:48.2-6,500. *But our good Lord the Holy Spirit, who is endless life dwelling in our soul, protects us most faithfully and produces in the soul a peace, and brings it to ease through grace, and makes it obedient and reconciles it to God. And this is the mercy and the way on which our good Lord constantly leads us, so long as we are in this changeable life.* 261-262.

<sup>22</sup> *(O)ur good lorde the holy gost, whych is endlesse lyfe dwellyng in oure soule* could relate to imagery in the Nicene Creed where the Holy Spirit is described as "the Lord and giver of life."

<sup>23</sup> See Chapter 7, 302-309.

Ubiquitously the Holy Spirit plays a role in expressing trinitarian joy in Christ's work for salvation:

*Whych gyfte and werkyng is joy to the fader and blysse to the son and lykyng to the holy gost, and of alle thyng that to vs longyth, it is most lykyng to oure lorde that we enjoye in this joy, whych is in the blessyd trynyte of oure saluacion.*<sup>24</sup>

Along with the joy of the Father and the bliss of the Son, the Holy Spirit expresses *lykyng*. *Lykyng* in Middle English designates the bent of the will, what one wishes or prefers, but also conveys the idea of pleasure, fondness or favourable regard of someone such as a beloved.<sup>25</sup> In the context of trinitarian joy, the *lykyng to the holy gost* in being part of the *blessyd trynyte of oure saluacion* designates the great pleasure the Spirit has in beloved humanity being saved. The Spirit plays a significant role in enabling humanity to participate in trinitarian joy, to *enjoye in this joy*.<sup>26</sup> The Spirit enables human beings to experience a sense of well-being, satisfaction, exaltation, gladness and delight in the *the blessyd trynyte of oure saluacion*.

## II. IN THE THIRD

The primary work of the Holy Spirit is the giving of grace to fulfil humanity (*by*

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<sup>24</sup> 14:55.6-10,565. *This gift and operation is joy to the Father and bliss to the Son and delight to the Holy Spirit, and of everything which is our duty, it is the greatest delight to our Lord that we rejoice in this joy which the blessed Trinity has over our salvation.* 286.

<sup>25</sup> NSOED, 1589.

<sup>26</sup> We will see further examples of this in Julian's teaching about prayer. See 354-368.

*yeldyng and gevyng in grace of the holy gost we be fulfyllde*).<sup>27</sup> Fulfilling brings the process of *oneing* to completion. We recollect Julian's trinitarian formula:

*(I)n the furst (we haue) oure beyng, and in the seconde we haue oure encresyng, and in the thyrde we haue oure fulfylling. The furst is kynde, the seconde is mercy, the thyrde is grace.*<sup>28</sup>

Without directly defining what she means by the phrase *in the thyrde we haue oure fulfylling*, Julian associates *fulfylling* with the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. *In the thyrde* further identifies the third moment in creation which establishes a link between origin in God and ending in God by grounding the present reality in eternity. Another expression of her trinitarian formula presents this linkage between past, present and future:

*Theyse be oure groundys, in which we haue oure beyng, oure encrese and oure fulfylling. For in kynde we haue oure lyfe and oure beyng, and in mercy and grace we haue oure encres and oure fulfylling. It be thre propertes in one goodnes, and where that one werkyth alle werkyn in the thynges whych be now longyng to vs.*<sup>29</sup>

The grounds of salvation, our being, our increase and our fulfilling are in our nature where our being is in God. They are in mercy and grace that act in our daily reality increasing and fulfilling us. What Julian makes clear in this version

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<sup>27</sup> 14:58.58-59,587. *through the rewards and the gifts of grace of the Holy Spirit we are fulfilled.* 295.

<sup>28</sup> 14:58.30-33,585. *In the first we have our being, and in the second we have our increasing, and in the third we have our fulfillment. The first is nature, the second is mercy, the third is grace.* 294.

<sup>29</sup> 14:56.41-46,574. *These are our foundations, in which we have our being, our increase and our fulfillment. For in nature we have our life and our being, and in mercy and grace we have our increase and our fulfillment. This is three propertes in one goodness, and where one operates all operate in the things which now pertain to us.* 290.

of the formula is that being, increase and fulfilling are *thre propertes in one goodnes*. Therefore, where one works all work. This suggests that salvation not only has a future dimension. Our being, our increasing and our fulfilling work *in the thynges whych be now longyng to* vs. Human *fulfyllyng* is not just a future hope, it exists now.

Julian's use of the word *fulfyllyng* reinforces this view. When used in a secular context in Middle English, *to fulfil* means to provide fully with what is wished for, to satisfy the appetite or desire. It can also designate bringing to an end, finishing, or completing.<sup>30</sup> Julian gives *fulfyllyng* a specifically theological meaning by associating it with the work of grace (*the thyrd is grace*). There is some interplay between the secular and theological usage because *fulfyllyng* refers to the action carried out by the Holy Spirit that completes the *exitus reditus* and satisfies the human desire for God. But Julian's theological meaning is more intricate. Her preference for the participle *fulfyllyng* creates an interplay between present and future. *Fulfyllyng* emphasizes a lack of distinction between historical time and eternity. *Fulfyllyng* relates to the partially fulfilled and yet to be fulfilled sense of the *all shall be well* motif (*but alle shalle be wele, and alle maner of thyng shalle be wele*).<sup>31</sup> Like *fulfyllyng*, *shall*, *shalle* or *shal* emphasizes the present and future dimension of salvation. Barratt points out that our

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<sup>30</sup> NSOED, 1039.

<sup>31</sup> 13:27.34,407. *but all will be well, and every kind of thing will be well.* 225.

contemporary usage of "shall" does not adequately represent the Middle English *shal* which indicates not primarily futurity, but rather obligation or necessity. She suggests a more accurate translation would be: "all things must inevitably come to good."<sup>32</sup> Unlike sin that has no ontological grounding in God, the idea that *all shall be well* is ontologically grounded in God.<sup>33</sup> *All shall be well* expresses God's desire that is being fulfilled and will inevitably be fulfilled. Thus the statement *all shall be well* does not simply reflect hope for the future. *All shall be well* is already partially realized in our present experience. *All shall be well* is founded in our present experience of divine love. In some ways *all is well*, we know the fullness of joy in the resurrected Christ and in the presence of God in all things: *I shuld nott by glad for any thyng in specialle, ne gretly dysseyd for any manner thyng, for alle shalle be wele; for the fulhed of joy is to beholde god in alle.*<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, in other ways, all is yet to be well. We are blocked to the presence of God in all things and the fullness of joy is not complete. For Julian, then, while *fulfilment* will only be completed in eternal life, *fulfyllyng* is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in human lives which makes salvation both a realized and at the same time a future reality, as *charyte given progressively ones* human beings into God. Theologically, *fulfyllyng* draws together the partially

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<sup>32</sup> Barratt, "How Many Children Had Julian of Norwich?," 36. Cf. NSOED, 2808.

<sup>33</sup> See Chapter 5, 200.

<sup>34</sup> 13:35.12-14,433. *I should not be glad because of any special thing or be greatly distressed by anything at all, for all will be well; for the fulness of joy is to contemplate God in everything.* 237.



realized and not yet complete experience of salvation.

Julian's understanding of past and future expressed now, anticipates the theology of Paul Tillich advanced this century in his concept of the "eternal now", where past and future meet in the present. "In this way," Tillich argues, "the eschaton becomes a matter of present experience without losing its futuristic dimension: we stand now in the face of the eternal."<sup>35</sup> For Julian, we stand now in the face of the eternal and experience something of the eternal in the presence of the Holy Spirit in human lives. The experience of our being, our increase and our fulfilling in the things which now pertain to us, give proleptic access to the eternal in the present.<sup>36</sup> They give us a sense of the "eternal now."

In light of Julian's doctrine of the Holy Spirit which describes the Spirit as *charyte gevyn* engaged in both the present and future realization of divine love, I now turn to three manners of knowing that the Spirit inspires in human lives: to know God, to know ourselves in nature and grace, and to know ourselves against sin and weakness.

### III. THREE MANNERS OF KNOWING

The Holy Spirit inspires three manners of knowing:

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<sup>35</sup> Paul Tillich, "The Eternal Now" in *The Eternal Now: Sermons* (London: SCM Press, 1963), 103-111.

<sup>36</sup> We will see a further example of this in Julian's understanding of prayer which gives a foretaste of the joy that is to come. See 363-368.

*It longyth to vs to haue thre manner of knowyng. The furst is þat we know oure lorde god. The seconde is that we know oure selfe, what we ar by him in kinde and in grace. The thyrde is þat we know mekely þat oure selfe is a gaynst oure synne and agaynst oure febylnes. And for these thre was alle this shewyng made, as to my vnderstandyng.*<sup>37</sup>

We recall that knowing for Julian is not discursive knowing, but knowledge that comes through *reason, memory, love, nature and grace*. It is knowing that transpires from seeing with the love of the Holy Spirit.<sup>38</sup> This emphasis on knowing reinforces the relationship between our experience of God in this life and the God we hope to be one with in the eschaton. Knowing makes us conscious of who we essentially are in God in nature and grace. Knowing enables us to come to an awareness that the God we meet after death is not a stranger to us, but a God we know in this life. T. S. Eliot's poem expresses the significance of knowing that Julian's theology implies:

and the end of all our exploration  
will be to arrive  
where we started  
and *know* the place for the first time.<sup>39</sup>

Through knowing God, knowing ourselves, what we are by nature and by grace, and knowing ourselves in respect to sin and weakness, we become familiar with

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<sup>37</sup> 16:72.54-58,665. *We ought to have three kinds of knowledge. The first is that we know our Lord God. The second is that we know ourselves, what we are through him in nature and in grace. The third is that we know humbly that our self is opposed to our sin and to our weakness. And all this revelation was made, as I understand it, for these three.* 321.

<sup>38</sup> See Chapter 2, 76.

<sup>39</sup> T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding," in *The Oxford Book of Twentieth-Century English Verse*, chosen by Philip Larkin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 257. Emphasis is mine.

what is already ours. All our exploration does not lead us to a distant God, but a God who is at home in human nature. The God we hope to be one with, is in a sense, already one with us. The work of the Holy Spirit is to help us truly know this *oneing*.

Julian emphasizes the reciprocal nature of knowledge of God and knowledge of self. The idea of a reciprocal relationship between knowledge of God and knowledge of self<sup>40</sup> is consistent with Julian's theology of *knytting* that points to a permanent intertwining of humanity with God that is so subtle it would be impossible to separate the two individual threads, her image of mutual enclosure between the Trinity and humanity, and her idea that we are bound to God by nature and bound to God by grace.<sup>41</sup> Knowledge of self she equates to knowledge of our soul, which in her vocabulary is our life-giving principle, the life of the whole person in a unity of mind and body grounded in God.<sup>42</sup> Our soul is so deeply grounded in God that she observes that it would be easier to know God

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<sup>40</sup> This idea has its source in Plotinian cosmology. It relates to the theology of *exitus reditus*. (See Chapter 3, 120-122.) Louth, *Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*, 40, summarizes this concept: "As the soul ascends to the One, it enters more and more deeply into itself; to find the One is to find itself. Self-knowledge and knowledge of the ultimate are bound up together, if not identified. Ascent to the One is a process of withdrawal into oneself." Augustine gave the relationship between knowledge of self and knowledge of God a Christian focus which Julian seems to have inherited in some way. Julian differs from Augustine, however, for whom this is a predominantly intellectual journey. Julian's anthropology enables her to have a much broader appreciation of the whole person journeying to God.

<sup>41</sup> See Chapter 3, 113-120, and Chapter 7, 308-313.

<sup>42</sup> See Chapter 4, 149-151; n.128, 176.

than it would be to know the human soul:

*And thus I saw full suerly that it is redyer to vs and more esy to come to þe knowyng of god then to know oure owne soule. For oure soule is so depe growndyd in god and so endlesly tresoryd that we may nott come to the knowyng ther of tylle we haue furst knowyng of god, whych is the maker to whome it is onyd.*<sup>43</sup>

Because we are *oned* in God, knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves is inherently related. We exist only in God and we can only truly know ourselves in relation to God:

*But not withstondyng I saw that we haue kyndly of fulhed to desyer wysely and truly to know oure owne soule, wherby we be lernyd to seke it ther it is, and that is in to god. And thus by the gracious ledyng of the holy gost we shall know hym both in oone; whether we be steryd to know god or oure soule, it is both good and trew.*<sup>44</sup>

The gracious leading of the Holy Spirit teaches us to recognize the intrinsic *oneing* that exists between the soul and God (*both in oone*). Because of this dialectical *oneing*, knowledge of self or knowledge of God lead us to God because in reality our soul is in God. The words: *by the gracious ledyng of the holy gost we shall know hym both in oone*, emphasize the surety of the soul and God being *one*.<sup>45</sup> Mindful of the reciprocal nature of knowledge that ensures when we see

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<sup>43</sup> 14:56.2-6,570. *And so I saw most surely that it is quicker for us and easier to come to the knowledge of God than it is to know our own soul. For our soul is so deeply grounded in God and so endlessly treasured that we cannot come to knowledge of it until we first have knowledge of God, who is the Creator to whom it is united.* 288.

<sup>44</sup> 14:56.6-11,570-571. *But nevertheless I saw that we have, naturally from our fulness, to desire wisely and truly to know our own soul, through which we are taught to seek it where it is, and that is in God. And so by the leading through grace of the Holy Spirit we shall know them both in one; whether we are moved to know God or our soul, either motion is good and true.* 288.

<sup>45</sup> See n.44, 329.

with the love of the Holy Spirit, we will now consider the effects of the salvific personal presence of the Spirit by examining each manner of knowing in turn.

### To Know God

Julian's description of the human heart, which she sees through her spiritual eye,<sup>46</sup> expresses the idea that self-knowledge received through contemplation of the human heart can lead us to know God. This appreciation of the indwelling presence of Christ must have been an understanding Julian came to early in her life, as she presents this same image in the short text.<sup>47</sup> In concrete imagery that points beyond itself, she portrays Christ in the midst of her heart:

*And then oure good lorde opynnyd my gostely eye and shewde me my soule in þe myddys of my harte. I saw þe soule so large as it were an endlesse warde, and also as it were a blessyd kyngdom; and by the condicions þat I saw there in I vnderstode þat it is a wurschypfulle cytte, in myddes of that cytte (sitts) oure lorde Jhesu, very god and very man, a feyer person and of large stature, hyghest bysschoppe, most solempne kynge, wurschypfullest lorde. And I saw hym clothyd solemply in wurschyppes. He syttyth in þe soule evyn ryghte in peas and rest, and he rulyth and ze(m)yth hevyn and erth and all that is. The manhode with the godhed syttyth in rest, the godhede rulyth and ze(m)eth withoutyn ony instrument or besynesse. And þe soule is alle occupyed with þe blessyd godhed, þat is souereyne myghte, souereyne wysdom and souereyn goodnesse. The place that Jhesu takyth in oure soule he shall nevyr remoue withouten ende, as to my syght, for in vs is his homelyest home and his endlesse dwellyng.<sup>48</sup>*

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<sup>46</sup> See Chapter 2, 70-71.

<sup>47</sup> See xxii:1-27, 268-269.

<sup>48</sup> 16:68.2-17,639-641. *And then our good Lord opened my spiritual eye, and showed me my soul in the midst of my heart. I saw the soul as wide as if it were an endless citadel, and also as if it were a blessed kingdom, and from the state which I saw in it, I understood that it is a fine city. In the midst of that city*

We note how Julian uses imagery that echoes John 15:4, "make your home in me as I make mine in you," to describe the mystery of the human heart that points beyond itself.<sup>49</sup> She envisages the unfathomable depths of the soul in the human heart as an endless citadel. Significantly, however, Julian made the point in an earlier chapter that the soul which is a city is not simply the spiritual dimension of the person, but the whole person's substance and sensuality.<sup>50</sup>

Within the heart, which is the reality of the mystery of our whole personhood, she pictures the soul as a exquisite city where Christ makes a home. Congruent with her emphasis on the whole human person as the city of God, the human soul is not only a home for the humanity of Christ, but the home for the union of Christ's humanity and divinity (*very god and very man*). There is no sense in which Christ feels alienated from the human soul. He is one with the soul: *He syttyth in þe soule evyn ryghte in peas and rest*. In the short text, Julian defines what Christ's sitting communicates to her: *for the behaldyng of this sittyng*

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*sits our Lord Jesus, true God and true man, a handsome person and tall, highest bishop, most awesome king, most honourable lord. And I saw him splendidly clad in honours. He sits erect there in the soul, in peace and rest, and he rules and guards heaven and earth and everything that is. The humanity and the divinity sit at rest, the divinity rules and guards, without instrument or effort. And the soul is wholly occupied by the blessed divinity, sovereign power, sovereign wisdom and sovereign goodness. The place which Jesus takes in our soul he will nevermore vacate, for in us is his home of homes and his everlasting dwelling. 312-313.*

<sup>49</sup> This image also reflects the teaching in the *Ancrene Wisse*, where the anchoress is advised to keep Christ in her nest, that is, in her heart. See Chapter 1, n.33, 12.

<sup>50</sup> See n.44, 329.

*schewed to me sikernes of his endelesse dwellynge.*<sup>51</sup> *Beholding* Christ sitting informs Julian that Christ dwells in the human heart forever. *Peas* and *rest* signify how harmonious this dwelling is in the soul. Portrayed as a bishop, king and lord of handsome stature, Christ is a just ruler of the city exhibiting qualities of *souereyne myghte*, *souereyne wysdom* and *souereyn goodnesse*. Although *souereyne myghte* could suggest a superior, imposing, demanding, power that exercises domination and control, *souereyne wysdom* and *souereyn goodnesse* balance *myghte*. The triad of qualities works as a whole and suggests that the power that Christ exercises is suffused in wisdom and goodness.<sup>52</sup> Julian's final remark leaves no doubt as to how Christ rules in the soul: *for in vs is his homelyest home and his endlesse dwellyng*. *Homelyest home* relates to Julian's idea of *homely loving*.<sup>53</sup> The human soul is the proper home for Christ who dwells there in intimate, tender love. Thus we can see from Julian's experience of being led by the Holy Spirit to journeying into her own heart that, as she becomes familiar with the soul in the midst of her heart, she comes to know Christ who is endlessly at home in her soul.

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<sup>51</sup> xxii:20-21, 268. *for the contemplation of this sitting revealed to me the certainty that he will dwell in us forever.* 164.

<sup>52</sup> Wisdom and goodness indirectly link with Christ's role as deep wisdom of the Trinity our mother and the goodness associated with the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is noteworthy that this description of Christ within the soul is very similar to the portrait of the lord in the parable of the lord and the servant. See Chapter 6, 246-254.

<sup>53</sup> See Chapter 3, 103-105.

### To Know Ourselves in Nature and Grace

The second manner of knowing that the Holy Spirit leads us to is to *is that we know oure selfe, what we ar by him in kinde and in grace.*<sup>54</sup> We recall that Julian sees that, through Christ the deep wisdom of the Trinity our mother, we are bound to God by nature and bound to God by grace. Through Christ, this has a specific locale in the Church.<sup>55</sup> A further dimension that knowledge of ourselves in nature and grace reveals is the theological virtues that the presence of grace generates:

*(B)y gracyous toucchyng of swete lyghtenyng of goostly lyfe, wher by that we ar kept in true feyth, hope and charite, with contrycion and devotion and also with contemplacion and alle manner of tru joyes and swete confortes. The blessydfull chere of oure lorde god werkyth it in vs by grace.*<sup>56</sup>

Through the *gracyous toucchyng of swete lyghtenyng of goostly lyfe* the Holy Spirit keeps us in the theological virtues. These virtues are gifts of grace, ways we are enlightened and touched by sweet illuminations. Grounded in God, these dispositions orientate us to our origin. They enable us to respond to God's *oneing* in us by facilitating our co-operation with the working of grace. *Feyth, hope* and *charite* are means by which we come to God with *contrycion, devotion* and *contemplacion*, and experience *tru joyes* and *swete confortes*. Later in the text

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<sup>54</sup> See n.37, 327.

<sup>55</sup> See Chapter 7, 302-309.

<sup>56</sup> 16:71.38-43,658. *(T)hrough grace we are touched by sweet illuminations of the life of the Spirit, through which we are kept in true faith, hope and love, with contrition and devotion and also with contemplation and every kind of true joys and sweet consolations. The blessed demeanour of our Lord God works this in us through grace.* 319.



Julian describes the relationship between these virtues: *Thus charite kepyth vs in feyth and in hope. And feyth and hope ledyth vs in charite, and at þe ende alle shalle be charite.*<sup>57</sup> Always giving priority to love, love keeps us in faith and hope, and conversely, faith and hope keep us in love.<sup>58</sup> *Faith is a byght, kyndly comyng of oure endlesse day that is oure fader, god, in whych lyght oure moder, Cryst, and oure good lorde the holy gost ledyth vs in this passyng lyfe.*<sup>59</sup> Faith is the divine disposition that enlightens us. Faith enables our Father, God, our Mother, Christ, and our good Lord, the Holy Spirit to lead us to our home in the Trinity. Hope, as we will see in the next chapter, sustains us as we look forward to the joy that is to come.<sup>60</sup> Through knowing that we possess the virtues of faith, hope and charity we become more like and influenced by what we know. These gifts of grace continue to *one* us in love to the Trinity until at the end *alle shalle be charite*.

Moreover, the *oneing* in love that the presence of grace creates binds us in love to God and to one another:

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<sup>57</sup> 16:84.8-9,727. *So charity keeps us in faith and in hope. And faith and hope lead us in charity, and in the end everything will be charity.* 340.

<sup>58</sup> This is in contrast to Augustine who allows for the separability of faith and love. See Roger Haight, NDCS, 461. The priority given to love aligns more with Aquinas. Cf. Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 288.

<sup>59</sup> 16:83.14-16,723-724. *is a light, coming in nature from our endless day, which is our Father, God; in which light our Mother, Christ, and our good Lord the Holy Spirit lead us in this passing life.* 340.

<sup>60</sup> See Chapter 9, 391-399.

*It is gods wyll that I see my selfe as much bound to hym in loue as if he had done for me all þat he hath done; and thus shuld everie sowle thynke in regard of his louer. That is to say, the charyte of god makyth in vs such a vnitie that when it is truly seen, no man can parte them self from other.*<sup>61</sup>

In this insight that Julian adds to the long text,<sup>62</sup> she draws out the innate communion human beings have with one another through being bound to Christ in love. This unity of individuality and relationality in Christ resembles what Ricoeur has identified in contemporary terms as a "dialectical tie between selfhood and otherness."<sup>63</sup> In this sense, union with Christ implies that our selfhood cannot be conceived of in isolation from all humanity. Self-knowledge implies that to exist means to be in relation, to co-exist and co-experience a relationality reaching back to our origins in God, in Christ, through the Holy Spirit. Significantly, Julian's comment: *no man can parte them self from other*, does not limit this *vnitie* to the Church. The words are inclusive.<sup>64</sup> No-one can become separated or detached from the binding in love between humanity and the Trinity. For Julian, the prompting of the Holy Spirit to know ourselves in nature

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<sup>61</sup> 15:65.16-20,628-629. *It is God's will that I see myself as much bound to him in love as if everything which he has done he had done for me; and so should every soul think with regard to his lover. That is to say, the love of God creates in us such a unity that when it is truly seen, no man can separate himself from another.* 308-309.

<sup>62</sup> BSAJN, n.16, 628-629. In the short text Julian concentrates more on isolating ourselves from others.

<sup>63</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 317.

<sup>64</sup> This comment is consistent with Julian's idea of universal salvation which we will examine in Chapter 9, 376-388.

and grace is an invitation to centre on the transcendent mystery at the core of our being and to accept this mystery of love that reveals the indwelling of the Spirit and the indwelling of Christ. Human nature is the natural dwelling place for God and the condition for the free communication of God's self dialogue in grace with creatures.

Nevertheless, although the Holy Spirit engages in the task of fulfilling by encouraging a gradual maturing self knowledge, full self-knowledge will finally become clear in eternal life:

*But we may nevyr fulle know oure selfe in to the last poynt, in which poynte thys passyng life and alle manner of woo and payne shalle haue ane ende. And therefore it longyth properly to vs both by kynde and by grace to long and desyer with alle oure myghtes to know oure selfe, in whych full knowyng we shall verely and clerely know oure god in fulhede of endlesse joy.<sup>65</sup>*

Knowledge of our true self in God is a continual process which reaches completion in the fullness of eternal life. Although human knowledge of the wonder and depth of the God-human relationship is limited by human knowing, human beings can actively trust God and confidently expect every good from God who promises not to fail human beings. Knowledge of who we are in nature and grace encourages a trusting surrender to God in Christ and hope that *all shall be well*.

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<sup>65</sup> 14:46.10-15,491. *But we may never fully know ourselves until the last moment, at which moment this passing life and every kind of woe and pain will have an end. And therefore this belongs to our properties, both by nature and by grace to long and desire with all our powers to know ourselves, in which full knowledge we shall truly and clearly know our God in the fulness of endless joy.* 258.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit inspires us to know ourselves, and to know what we are by nature and grace. Awareness of the self in nature and grace reveals our essential grounding in God, the presence of Christ in our humanity and our continual conformation to Christ. As human beings grow in knowledge of who they are in God, the Holy Spirit exposes the dimensions of the self which are not in harmony with divine love.

### **To Know Ourselves in Sin and Weakness**

Julian concentrates on the work of the Holy Spirit in revealing our true nature grounded in God in Christ. Yet she never abandons Church teaching that human beings are sinners. Essential to the human journey to fulfilment is knowledge of this sinfulness. For Julian, knowledge of the sinfulness of human nature only ever occurs in a sin-grace dialectic. In focusing on the human person in sin, she never isolates the sinner from the presence of the Holy Spirit:

*And this is a sovereyne frenschypp of oure curtesse lorde, that he kepyth vs so tenderly whyle we be in oure synne; and ferthermore he touchyth vs fulle prevely, and shewyth vs oure synne by the swet lyght of mercy and grace. But when we se oure selfe so fowle, then we wene that god were wroth with vs for oure synne. Than be we steryd of the holy gost by contriscion in to prayer, and desyer amendyng of oure selfe with alle oure myght to slake the wrath of god, vnto the tyme we fynde a rest in soule and softnes in consciens. And than hope we þat god hath forgevyn vs oure synne; and it is true. And than shewyth oure curtesse lorde hym selfe to the soule merely and of fulle glad chere, with frendfully wellcomyng, as if it had ben in payne and in preson, seyeng thus: My dere darlyng, I am glad thou arte come to me in alle thy woe. I haue evyr ben with the, and now seest thou me louyng, and we be*

*onyd in blysse.*<sup>66</sup>

In this extended reflection we can see how Julian can make seemingly contradictory statements and yet claim that both are true. Our selves are against sin and we see our selves so foul. The discrepancy arises because the lack of union between sensuality and substance leads to failure in acting out of our true self, our substance which is in God.<sup>67</sup> When we cease to act out of our true nature in God, the Holy Spirit *touchyth vs fulle prevely* and enables it to receive the assistance of mercy and grace so that we may recognize our true union with God and align both substance and sensuality with the selfhood of God. In contemporary terms, the Holy Spirit, as the source and animating principle of the human spirit, leads us towards life in God. This occurs through increasing the desire that belongs to our substantial nature to be conscious of ourselves in God. Yet, the limitations of our humanness, a dimension of our sensuality which houses our *bestly will*, the false self, our projections, false identifications and illusions,

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<sup>66</sup> 13:40.2-15,454-455. *And this is a supreme friendship of our courteous Lord, that he protects us so tenderly whilst we are in our sins; and furthermore he touches us most secretly, and shows us our sins by the sweet light of mercy and grace. But when we see ourselves so foul, then we believe that God may be angry with us because of our sins. Then we are moved by the Holy Spirit through contrition to prayer, and we desire with all our might an amendment of ourselves to appease God's anger, until the time that we find rest of soul and ease of conscience. And then we hope that God has forgiven us our sin; and this is true. And then our courteous Lord shows himself to the soul, happily and with the gladdest countenance, welcoming it as a friend, as if it had been in pain and in prison saying: My dear darling, I am glad that you have come to me in all your woe. I have always been with you, and now you see me loving, and we are made one in bliss. 246.*

<sup>67</sup> See Chapter 4, 178-179.

make it impossible to comprehend what our self is in God. From this perspective we see ourselves as estranged, incomplete and imprisoned by death. Hampered by such limitations we know only a glimpse of what the true self is by faith. We can know ourselves from a human perspective which only sees the repugnance of our sinful ways, or we can know ourselves from God's perspective. Through the courteous presence of the Holy Spirit, God always regards human beings as friends. Knowledge of ourselves in nature and grace leads us to the truth that our true self is against sin. It enables us to act out of that truth. Self-knowledge frees us from fear, and facilitates trust and movement in the direction of God.

Julian knows how difficult it is to live from the divine source within the true self. When the Holy Spirit deepens the awareness of the sight of our sin and the painful falling short of the bliss that we long for by our nature, we imagine ourselves as foul. The limitations of our human perception lead us to think that God would be angry with us because of our sin. Julian describes this human perception:

*(H)e thynkyth hym selfe he is nott wurthy but as it were to synke in to helle, tylle whan contriscion takyth hym by touchyng of the holy gost, and turnyth the bytternesse in to hope of goddes mercy. And than begynn his woundys to heele and the soule to quycken, turned in to the lyfe of holy church. The holy gost ledyth hym to confession, wylfully to shew hys synnes nakydly and trully with grett sorow and with grett shame that he hath so defowlyd the feyer ymage of god.<sup>68</sup>*

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<sup>68</sup> 13:39.5-11,449-450. *(H)e thinks himself that he is not fit for anything but as it were to sink into hell, until contrition seizes him by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and turns bitterness into hope of God's mercy. And then the wounds begin to heal and the soul to revive, restored to the life of Holy Church. The*

To be aware of human sinfulness causes us to lose sight of reality and to think that we might sink into an abyss of meaninglessness and into hell. In such times of despair, however, the Holy Spirit touches us and transforms despair into compunction that causes us to ask for God's forgiveness. The Holy Spirit then leads contrite sinners to align themselves with the customs of the Church in seeking confession. Although in maturing self-knowledge human beings become only too aware of shame at the human capacity to tarnish the image of God, from God's point of view the friendship between humanity and our courteous Lord is such that the Holy Spirit touches us tenderly. Awareness of sin deepens only through the *sweet light of mercy and grace*.

When we know our sinfulness through the light of grace, we know that sin is not powerful enough to erase the love of God. Grace enables us to perceive God's point of view that we should not burden ourselves with extensive self-reproach and blame. Grace facilitates a gentle, loving, acceptance of the human condition. Grace imparts an awareness of the love of God at work in the anguish of our lives:

*Accuse not thy selfe that thy trybulation and thy woo is alle thy defawght; for I wylle not þat thou be hevy ne sorowfulle vndiscretly. For I telle thee, how so evyr thou do, thou shalle haue woo. And therfore I wylle that thow wysely know thy pennannce whych thou arte in contynually, and that thou mekely take it for thy pennannce. And than schalt þou truly se that alle th(y) lyvyng is pennannce*

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*Holy Spirit leads him to confession, willing to reveal his sins, nakedly and truthfully, with great sorrow and great shame that he has so befouled God's fair image. 244.*

*profytable. This place is pryson, this lyfe is pennance, and in þe remedy he wyll that we enjoy. The remedy is þat oure lorde is with vs, kepyng vs and ledyng in to fulhed of joy. For this is an endlesse joy to vs in oure lordes menyng, that he that shalle be oure blesse when we are there, he is oure keper whyle we are here, oure wey and oure hevyn in tru loue and feythfulle trust.<sup>69</sup>*

Rather than producing self-recrimination, knowledge of our sinfulness through the touching of the Holy Spirit produces both solidarity and energy. Knowledge of our sinfulness awakens awareness that we are never in isolation from the presence of Christ and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. The disclosure of sinfulness, enabled by the gentle touch of mercy and grace, empowers us to make a response and seek forgiveness. The contradiction continues. We hope that our sin will be forgiven, and even fear God's wrath. God, however, has already forgiven us. Furthermore, God's endless love assigns no blame. Through the presence of the Holy Spirit, knowledge of our sinfulness reveals the constant presence of divine love. In this encounter people are only ever treated as a lover would treat a beloved. Mercy and grace are constantly available to human beings to forgive sin and give a foretaste of the joy of eternal life.

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<sup>69</sup> 16:77.34-46,692-694. *Do not accuse yourself that your tribulation and your woe is all your fault; for I do not want you to be immoderately depressed or sorrowful. For I tell you that whatever you do, you will have woe. And therefore I want you wisely to understand the penance which you are continually in, and to accept that meekly for your penance. And then you will truly see that all your life is profitable penance. This place is prison, this life is penance, and he wants us to rejoice in the remedy. The remedy is that our Lord is with us, protecting us and leading us into the fulness of joy; for our Lord intends this to be an endless joy, that he who will be our bliss when we are there is our protector whilst we are here, our way and our heaven in true love and faithful trust. 331.*



### **The Self in Suffering**

When the Holy Spirit inspires human beings to live consciously in the presence of God, this consciousness heightens an awareness of the shadow of sin that blinds human knowing of our grounding in God and the presence of Christ within the human heart. This confrontation with our sinful nature also exposes the enormous suffering of the human condition caused by sin. Julian's theology of suffering echoes her insights about sin. As with sin, we can only ever interpret suffering through the light of mercy and grace.

Julian asserts that all humanity inherits suffering through *Adam's sin*.<sup>70</sup> She emphasizes the negativity of suffering, the great pain it inflicts on human beings and the blindness it causes in the human ability to recognize the love of God for what it is. She points out that suffering is unwanted by God. God works tirelessly to eliminate its hold on human nature by being present to human beings in the midst of suffering. On the one hand, Julian admits the absurdity and meaninglessness of suffering, and on the other its salvific possibilities. She grapples with the reality of suffering in the world, not by clarifying its origins, but by trying to find some meaningful co-existence with suffering. In an extended theological reflection, Julian tries to describe what life is like as we progressively grow in knowledge of ourselves in God and of ourselves as sinners and the suffering that ensues. She presents life as a sin – grace dialectic, a medley of well and woe:

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<sup>70</sup> See Chapter 5, 194-195.

*(W)e haue in vs a mervelous medelur both of wele and of woo. We haue in vs oure lorde Jhesu Cryst vp resyn, and we haue in vs the wrechydnesse and the myschef of Adams fallyng. Dyeng by Cryst we be lastynly kept, and by hys gracyous touchyng we be reysed in to very trust of saluacyon. And by Adams fallyng we be so broken in oure felyng on dyverse manner by synne and by sondry paynes, in whych we be made derke and so blynde that vnnethys we can take any comforte. But in oure menyng we abyde god, and feythfully trust to haue mercy and grace; and this is his owne werkynge in vs, and of his goodnesse openyth the ey of oure vnderstanding, by whych we haue syght, some tyme more and somtyme lesse, after þat god gevyth abylyte to take. And now we be reysyde in to that one, and now we are sufferyd to fall in to that other. And thus is that medle so mervelous in vs þat vnnethis we knowe of oure selfe or of oure evyn crysten in what wey we stonde, for the mervelousnes of this sondrye felyng, but þat ech holy assent þat we assent to god when we fele hym, truly wylling to be with hym with all oure herte, with all oure soule and with all oure myghte. And than we hate and dyspise oure evyll steryng and all that myghte be occasion of synne, gostely and bodely. And yett nevyr thelesse whan this swetnesse is hyd, we fall ayeen in to blyndnesse, and so in to woo and trybulacion on dyuerse manners. But than is this oure comfort, that we knowe in oure feyth that by the vertu of Crist, whych is oure keper, we assent nevyr therto, but we groge ther azenst and endure in payne and in woo, prayeng in to that tyme that he shewede hym ayeen to vs. And thus we stonde in this medelur all the dayes of oure lyfe.<sup>71</sup>*

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<sup>71</sup> 14.52.9-34,547-549. *(W)e have in us a marvellous mixture of both well-being and woe. We have in us our risen Lord Jesus Christ, and we have in us the wretchedness and the harm of Adam's falling. Dying, we are constantly protected by Christ, and by the touching of his grace we are raised to true trust in salvation. And we are so afflicted in our feelings by Adam's falling in various ways, by sin and by different pains, and in this we are made dark and so blind that we can scarcely accept any comfort. But in our intention we wait for God, and trust faithfully to have mercy and grace; and this is his own working in us, and in his goodness he opens the eye of our understanding, by which we have sight, sometimes more and sometimes less, according to the ability God gives us to receive. And now we are raised to the one, and now we are permitted to fall to the other. And so that mixture is so marvellous in us that we scarcely know, about ourselves or about our fellow Christians, what condition we are in, these conflicting feelings are so extraordinary, except for each holy act of assent to God which we make when we feel him, truly willing with all our heart to be with him, and with all our soul and with all our might. And then we hate and despise our evil inclinations, and everything which could be an occasion of spiritual and*

In this long passage, Julian encompasses the whole of human life as a medley of *welē* and of *woō*. Though distinct, *welē* and *woō* are incapable of complete separation. *Welē* and *woō* exist in creative tension in what a contemporary theologian describes as: "a nondual reality in which both elements are not two but neither are they one."<sup>72</sup> Julian specifies two essential dynamics that exist in the medley. We exist within the tension and clash of opposites, in the misery of Adam's falling, and the joy of the risen Christ. When we view life within the context of Adam's falling we become aware of a brokenness in the human condition that produces a rift between substance and sensuality, the capacity for sin, a tendency to despair and an inability to receive any comfort. In this context, *woō* seems to have equal standing to *welē*. *Woo* almost has ontological status, as *woō* seems to exist within the essence of who we are. Julian never goes quite this far, however, because of the vigour of her theology of grace. In the face of all this *woō*, grace enables us to be mindful that we are not grounded in woe. We are grounded in divine love. We are the dwelling place for the risen Christ who facilitates the working of mercy and grace within us.

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*bodily sin. And even so, when this sweetness is hidden, we fall again into blindness, and so in various ways into woe and tribulation. But then this is our comfort, that we know in our faith that by the power of Christ who is our protector we never assent to that, but we complain about it, and endure in pain and in woe, praying until the time that he shows himself again to us. And so we remain in this mixture all the days of our life. 279-280.*

<sup>72</sup> Paul F. Knitter "Christian Salvation: Its Nature and Uniqueness - An Interreligious Proposal," *New Theology Review* 7 (1994): 34-35, adopts this terminology from the Hindu Advaitic tradition to describe a non-dual, not-two-but-not-one relationship between very different dynamics.

Mercy and grace support and comfort us when woe seems to overwhelm us and human perception limits our awareness of God's presence. In times of such perceived abandonment, the Holy Spirit opens the eye of our understanding so we may recognize God's love at work in our lives gracing us, healing us and transforming us so that we may live out of this love.<sup>73</sup> In her interpretation of life, God does not wish human beings to suffer. Yet, because God is in all things and does all things, God permits both to happen, the falling and the rising, and so we exist in the medley of a sin-grace dialectic. Significantly, however, in this medley, sin is not the centrifuge from which all reality finds its meaning. The love of God, in Christ, brought to completion in the Spirit, is what gives meaning to existence. In this medley of well-being and woe the Holy Spirit plays a predominant role in enabling a meaningful co-existence with the various forms of suffering. The Spirit draws human beings through suffering into fulfilment with God.

When Julian focuses on an exemplum of suffering which was obviously important to her,<sup>74</sup> she begins by stating her theological premise: *Thus I vnderstode that all his blessyd chyl dren whych be come out of hym by kynd shulde be brougt agayne*

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<sup>73</sup> See 13:38.3-4,445. *(F)or ryght as to every synne is answeyng a payne by truth, ryght so for every synne to the same soule is gevyn a blysse by loue. (F)or just as there is indeed a corresponding pain for every sin, just so love gives to the same soul a bliss for every sin. 242.*

<sup>74</sup> This is similar in genre to the parable of the lord and the servant.

*in to hym by grace.*<sup>75</sup> All creatures born of God should return to God through grace. She then presents the confronting exemplum<sup>76</sup> which she describes as a *blesfulle beholdyng.*<sup>77</sup> The qualifier *blesfulle* emphasizes the glorious nature of this *beholding*. She presents a frightful portrait: *And in thys tyme I sawe a body lyeng on þe erth, whych body shewde heuy and feerfulle and with oute shape and forme, as it were a swylge stynkyng myrre.*<sup>78</sup> The exemplum imparts contrasting pictures, one seen from a human perspective, and the other from God's perspective. The image of the dying body, Pelphrey rightly points out, is a scene that Julian could well have observed from her cell window.<sup>79</sup> The scene presents multiple forms of suffering. The mood is dark, heavy and fearful. The body lying in *a swylge stynkyng myrre* represents the wound sin causes in humanity that results in alienation, disorder and enormous pain in the human condition. The

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<sup>75</sup> 15:64.3-4,619. *So I understood that all his blessed children who have come out of him by nature ought to be brought back into him by grace.* 305. See Chapter 7, n.112, 312.

<sup>76</sup> Gayle Houston Miller, *Imagery and Design in Julian of Norwich's Revelations of Divine Love* (Ph.D. diss., University of Georgia Ann Arbor: UMI Dissertation Services, 1988), 88-89 and n.21-23, 105-106, suggests that the depiction of the child in the mud may have been inspired by an illuminated manuscript such as "The Soul and her Tabernacle" an illustration for vision four in Hildegards *Scivias*. It could also come from sermon literature that denotes the soul leaving the body. Colledge and Walsh, BSAJN, n.31, 622, propose that the earth without shape or form echoes Genesis 1:2.

<sup>77</sup> 15:64.50,625. *blissful contemplation.* 307.

<sup>78</sup> 15:64.31-33, 622-623. *And in this time I saw a body lying on the earth, which appeared oppressive and fearsome and without shape and form, as it were a devouring pit of stinking mud.* 306.

<sup>79</sup> LWHM, 286.

stress on the physicality of the scene with a description of sights and smells abhorrent to human beings conveys the immense physical suffering endured by the body. As well, the scene communicates spiritual suffering. The shapeless, formless, lifeless body evokes a sense of meaninglessness and absurdity. The scene is reminiscent of the passion scene of Christ's dehydrated body dying, the hazelnut that looked as if its smallness would cause it to disintegrate into nothing, and the servant fallen in the dell. The exemplum communicates a profound sense of the life-denying pain that occurs within the historical process.

Paradoxically, however, as Julian focuses on the milieu of suffering in which human beings exist, the scene transposes into a sin-grace dialectic, a medley of well-being and woe. No matter how it might seem on the surface, woe never has the power to destroy the love of God at work in every human situation. The conclusion of the exemplum illustrates the hope for human fulfilment in spite of suffering:

*(A)nd sodeynly oute of this body sprong a fulle feyer creature, a lyttlylle chyld, full shapyn and formyd, swyft and byfly and whytter then the lylye, whych sharpely glydyd vppe in to hevyn.<sup>80</sup>*

The contrast between the horror of the pit and the fairness of the child is stark.

Transfiguration occurs. This is not a stinking body, but *a fulle feyer creature*.

Though Julian does not explain the reference to the lily, traditionally the lily is a

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<sup>80</sup> 15:64.33-35,623. *(A)nd suddenly out of this body there sprang a most beautiful creature, a little child, fully shaped and formed, swift and lively and whiter than the lily, which quickly glided up to heaven. 306.*

symbol of light and can also represent purity, innocence and virginity.<sup>81</sup> Thus the image communicates the idea that in the lifeless, abandoned body, we do not find the absence of God, but the presence of divine life transforming the human experience of suffering. The scene is not one of the absence of God in suffering, but of divine presence in suffering. The exemplum becomes an icon of resurrection.

Julian then expounds the imagery in the exemplum:

*The swylge of the body betokenyth grette wretchydnesse of oure dedely flessch; and the lyttylnes of the chylde betokenyth the clenness and the puernesse of oure soule. And I thought: with thys body blyueth no feyernesse of thys chylde, ne of this chylde dwellyth no foulnes of the body. It is fulle blesfulle man to be taken fro payne, more than payne be taken fro man; for if payne be taken from vs, it may come agayne. Therefore this is a souereyne comfourt and a blesful beholdyng in a longyng soule, that we shall be taken fro payne. For in this behest I saw a mercyfulle compassion that oure lorde hath in vs for oure woo, and a curtesse behytyng of cleene delyuerance; for he wylle that we be comfo(r)tyd in þe ovyr passyng joy.<sup>82</sup>*

The body signifies the wretchedness of the human flesh, the littleness of the child

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<sup>81</sup> *The Herder Symbol Dictionary*, trans. Boris Matthews (Wilmette: Chiron Publications, 1978), 120.

<sup>82</sup> 15:64.36-46,623-624. *The pit which was the body signifies the great wretchedness of our mortal flesh; and the smallness of the child signifies the cleanness and purity of our soul. And I thought: In this body there remains none of this child's beauty, and in this child there remains none of the body's foulness. It is most blessed for man to be taken from pain, more than for pain to be taken from man; for if pain be taken from us, it may return. Therefore this is a supreme comfourt and a blessed contemplation for a longyng soul, that we shall be taken from pain. For in this promise I saw a merciful compassion which our Lord has for us because of our woe, and a courteous promise of a clean deliverance, for he wants us to be comforted in surpassing joy. 306-307.*

denotes the purity of the soul. A teaching becomes clear: the fairness of the child does not exist within the rotten flesh of the body, and the foulness of the body does not exist within the child. In order to understand what Julian is saying here, it is important that we look carefully at her language, particularly her use of *soul* and *flesh*. We have noted that both substance and sensuality can be called a soul. *Soule* in Julian's vocabulary is life, the life of the whole person in a unity of mind and body grounded in God.<sup>83</sup> It is not the intellectual or spiritual expression of the human being alone, but the whole human being, including the body. We see this in the body of the child fully shaped and formed. *Flessch* then is not the body as such, nor sexuality. The *dedely flessch*, like the *beastly will*, is the aspect of human beings not in harmony with God. Julian uses *dedely flessch* in a Pauline sense of the life-destroying capacity of the human beings alienated from God.<sup>84</sup> Therefore in Julian's interpretative framework the soul is the whole of human nature created by God, grounded in God. The deadly flesh is the aspect of human nature that has become alienated from God. The exemplum, then, is not about a conflict between body and soul. Rather, the exemplum is deliberately paradoxical. It reconciles the opposites of well-being and woe. The imagery acknowledges the darker side of the world, a world where Christ was brutally crucified and where pain resulting from illness, and pain as a consequence of sin, conflict with a view that the world is an image of God. Nevertheless, as the image of the hazelnut signifies, this is a world that only exists through the love of

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<sup>83</sup> See n.42, 329.

<sup>84</sup> Romans 8:1-18.



God. This exemplum is an icon of hope. It is *a blesful beholdyng* that teaches that *we shall be taken fro payne*. The exemplum testifies that even in a place saturated in the shapeless non-being of evil, human beings will finally be taken from pain and experience fulfilment through the Holy Spirit.

After the exemplum Julian expounds a long teaching about suffering. She gives weight to this teaching by stressing that it is God's will that we understand its teaching:

*It is goddys wylle that we sett þe poynt of oure thought in this blesfulle beholdyng, as of tyme as we may and as long tyme kepe vs ther in with his grace, for this is a blesfulle contemplacion to the soule that is ladde of god, and fulle moch to his wurschyppe for the tyme þat it lastyth.*<sup>85</sup>

In order to know how to cope in suffering we need to *sett þe poynt of oure thought* in this *beholding*. This exemplum is a model for us. Julian outlines the perspective on suffering that evolves from the exemplum:

*And whan we falle agayne to oure selfe by hevynes and gostely blynesse and felynge of paynes gostely and bodely by oure fragylyte, it is goddys wylle that we know that he hath nott forgett vs. And so menyth he in theys wordes and seyth for comferte: And thou shalt nevyr more haue payne in no manner nor no manner of sycknes, no manner of myslykyng, no wantyng of wyll, but evyr joy and blysse without ende. What shuld it than a greuyd the to suffer a whyle, sythen it is my wylle and my wurschyppe? It is goddys wylle that we take his behestes and his comfertyng as largely and as myghtly as we may take them; and also he wylle that we take oure abydynges and oure dyssesys as lyghtely as we may take them, and sett them at nought. For the lyghtlyer that we take them, and*

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<sup>85</sup> 15:64.49-53,624-625. *It is God's will that we focus our thought on this blissful contemplation, as often as we can and for as long as we can continue in it with his grace, for to the soul who is led by God, this contemplation is blissful and greatly to God's glory whilst it lasts. 307.*

*þe lesse pryce that we sett at them for loue, lesse payne shalle we haue in þe feelyng of them, and the more thanke and mede shalle we haue for them.*<sup>86</sup>

At this stage, from a contemporary perspective, we may feel frustrated by such passivity. We may want to align ourselves with the suffering of the dying child and cry out: "No! Suffering never again! We must do something about such destructive suffering." When we remember Julian's socialization as a woman who chose to be an anchoress we may have more patience with her perspective. From Julian's point of view, she accepts the reality that human beings will fail. We will *fall agayne to oure selfe*, experience *paynes gostely and bodely*. We will become dis-empowered through deadly dread.<sup>87</sup> Rather than allow despair to be the power that guides us, Julian advocates hope, reflected in God's promise: *thou shalt nevyr more haue payne in no manner nor no manner of sycknes, no manner of myslykyng, no wantyng of wyll, but evyr joy and blesse without ende*. Her rhetorical question is confronting: *What shuld it than a greuyd the to suffer a*

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<sup>86</sup> 15:64.53-67,625-626. *And when we fall back into ourselves, through depression and spiritual blindness and our experience of spiritual and bodily pains, because of our frailty, it is God's will that we know that he has not forgotten us. And this is what he means and says for comfort in these words: And you will never again have pain of any kind, any kind of sickness, any kind of displeasure, any lack of your will, but always joy and bliss without end. Why then should it have afflicted you to endure for awhile, since it is my will and to my glory? It is God's will that we accept his commands and his consolations as generously and as fully as we are able; and he also wants us to accept our tarrying and our sufferings as lightly as we are able, and to count them as nothing. For the more lightly that we accept them, the less importance we ascribe to them because of our love, the less pain shall we experience from them and the more thanks and reward shall we have for them.* 307.

<sup>87</sup> This reference to falling into the self reinforces the view that despair is the worst sin in Julian's eyes. See Chapter 5, 197-200.

*whyle, sythen it is my wylle and my wurschyppe?* Its meaning is ambiguous. In order to understand what Julian is saying we must recall that Julian never solves the dilemma of why sin and suffering occur. For Julian, although God does not create the non-being of sin that causes suffering, God allows suffering because nothing can transpire outside of the divine perspective.<sup>88</sup> Although the words, *it is my wylle and my wurschyppe*, suggest that God wills suffering and suffering brings honour to God, the context of the exemplum leaves room for another interpretation.<sup>89</sup> Julian is not saying that suffering brings pleasure to God. Rather, she is presenting another aspect of her theology of divine presence. God allows suffering, and as we saw in the crucified Christ, God through Christ is one with human beings in suffering until all suffering is transformed to honour. It is the transformation of suffering that brings God honour, not suffering in itself. It is God's will that we remember the transformation of the child in the exemplum. It is God's will that we remember that we are one with Christ not only in his suffering but in his resurrection. Therefore, in hopeful expectation that all suffering will be transformed to joy, Julian considers that we should hold suffering lightly. *Lyghtely* in Middle English can mean with agility, nimbly, quickly, promptly, but it can also suggest without depression, cheerfully, merrily, light-heartedly.<sup>90</sup> In the context of Julian's references to suffering,

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<sup>88</sup> See Chapter 4, 141-143.

<sup>89</sup> Taken literally, this comment reflects the belief that God sent the suffering of the plague as a punishment for sin. This is in absolute contrast to Julian's image of a God who does not blame human beings.

<sup>90</sup> NSOED, 1586.

*lyghtely* describes a disposition of hope. The more we know the truth contained in the exemplum and the more we view suffering through the lense of resurrection, the less pain we will feel. The more *thanke* and *mede* we will experience. This gratitude for all of life's experiences is not a glorification of suffering. It is a contemplative stance<sup>91</sup> that enables us always to live in openness to the presence of God in well-being and woe. This attitude enables us to see the whole of our lives, well-being and woe, as gift.

When the Holy Spirit inspires human beings to live consciously in the presence of God, this consciousness heightens an awareness of the shadow of sin that blinds human knowing of our grounding in God and the presence of grace.

Confrontation with our sinful nature exposes the enormous suffering of the human condition caused by sin. Yet, knowledge of our sinfulness need not lead to self-recrimination and guilt. Knowledge of our sinfulness reveals the unconditional love of God for humanity. Although God does not wish human beings to suffer, God permits woe and well-being, and so we exist in the medley of well-being and woe. Woe, however, does not have equal status to well-being, because we know the transformational experience of resurrection. Knowing ourselves in nature and grace, which are essentially opposed to sin and weakness, inspires hope that human beings will finally be taken from pain and experience fulfilment through the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>91</sup> See the prayer of *thankyng*, 359-361.

#### IV. CO-OPERATION WITH THE WORK OF *ONEING* THROUGH PRAYER

Throughout our lives, as we exist in the medley of well-being and woe, the three manners of knowing are nourished through prayer. While we wait in joyful expectation that all woe will be eliminated in the joy of heaven, the *oneing* presence of the Holy Spirit invites us to participate in God's desire for our fulfilling through prayer. In prayer we become true to our nature, respond to the working of grace, and realize our oneness with Christ and the truth of the conviction that *all shall be well*. In prayer, past and future meet in the present, and the joy that is to come becomes part of our conscious reality. In prayer we experience something of the eternal in the present. Although much has been written on Julian's teaching about prayer,<sup>92</sup> in this section by highlighting her three teachings about prayer, I wish to focus on how praying enables us to co-operate with the work of the Holy Spirit in fulfilling us.

All the revelations are prayer and teach about prayer. Julian's specific teaching on prayer occurs concisely in chapter nineteen of the short text, and in the long text, chapters forty-one to forty-three. She provides three main teachings about *rightful prayer* which she distinguishes by telling us that God wishes us to have true understanding:

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<sup>92</sup> Cf. Bradley, *Praying With Julian of Norwich*; Gloria Durka, *Praying With Julian of Norwich* (Winona: St. Mary's Press, 1989); Kerrie Hide, *A Woman's Healing Song: Prayers of Consolation for the Separated and Divorced* (Mystic: Twenty-third Publications, 1993); Llewelyn, *With Pity Not Blame*; Molinari, *Julian of Norwich*; Pelphrey, *Christ is Our Mother*.

*The first is by whom and howe that oure prayer spryngyth. By whom he shewyth whan he seyth: I am grounde; and how by hys goodnesse for he seyth: Furst it is my wylle. For þe seconde, in what maner and how þat we shulde vse oure prayers; and that is that oure wylle ne turned in to the wylle of oure lorde enjoyeng. And so menyth he whan he seyeth: I make the to wylle it. For the thurde, þat we know the fruyt and the ende of oure prayer, that is to be onyd and lyke to oure lorde in althyng.<sup>93</sup>*

The first teaching she identifies as the origin of prayer. The second explains in what manner and how we should pray while the third reveals that the fruit and end of prayer is to be one and like our Lord in all things. In essence the teachings communicate how our life is a journey from God to God. Prayer is the living expression of who we are with our being in God, our increasing in the Son, and our fulfilment through the Holy Spirit.

### **The Origin of Prayer**

Prayer originates in us because of who we are in nature and grace. We see how this occurs through Christ's words, *I am grounde*. Prayer arises from the ground of our being which is in God through Christ: *(O)ure lorde is grounde in whom that oure prayer spryngyth, and also that we know nott that it is gevyn vs by grace of hys loue.*<sup>94</sup> From this Christ-life grounded in us flows an insatiable desire to

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<sup>93</sup> 14:42.4-12,468. *The first is with whom and how our prayer originates. He reveals with whom when he says: I am the ground; and he reveals how by his goodness, because he says: First it is my will. As to the second, in what manner and how we should perform our prayers, that is that our will should be turned, rejoicing, into the will of our Lord. And he means this when he says : I make you to wish it. As to the third, it is that we know the fruit and the end of our prayer, which is to be united and like to our Lord in all things. 250-251.*

<sup>94</sup> 14:42.18-20,469. *(O)ur Lord is the ground from which our prayer springs, and also because we do not know that it is given to us by grace from his love.*

become totally one with divine love. Prayer supports and nourishes the process of *oneing* which continues until we finally return to the Trinity and all is *love*.

The desire for God that arises from Christ the ground of our being, creates a longing for God which continues all our lives. Julian calls this a *kynde yernyng*,<sup>95</sup> a natural desire which has an intense passion. She describes this yearning for God in language reminiscent of Augustine: *For till I am substantially vnyted to him I may never haue full reste ne verie blisse; þat is to say that I be so fastned to him that ther be right nought that is made betweene my god and me.*<sup>96</sup> This natural desire for God creates a restlessness and sense of incompleteness that encourages us to come before God with an attitude of openness:

*(A) sely sowle come to him naked, pleaynly and homly. For this is the kynde (yernyng) of the sowle by the touchyng of the holie ghost, as by the vnderstandyng that I haue in this schewyng: God of thy goodnes geue me thy selfe, for thou art inough to me, and I maie aske nothing that is lesse that maie be full worshippe to thee.*<sup>97</sup>

The touching of the Holy Spirit naturally present to us, creates an insatiable

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251.

<sup>95</sup> See Chapter 4, 145-147; 172-174. Colledge and Walsh's translation, *loving yearning*, misses the connection that *kynde* relates to our nature.

<sup>96</sup> 1:5.19-22,300. *For until I am substantially united to him, I can never have perfect rest or true happiness, until, that is, I am so attached to him that there can be no created thing between my God and me.* 183. Cf. *Confessions*, 1.1.1.

<sup>97</sup> 1:5.35-40,302. *(A) simple soul should come naked, openly and familiarly. For this is the loving yearning of the soul through the touch of the Holy Spirit, from the understanding which I have in this revelation: God, of your goodness give me yourself, for you are enough for me, and I can ask for nothing which is less which can pay you full worship.* 184.

hunger, an emptiness that longs to be filled. The touching of the Holy Spirit teaches us to know that only God is our fulfilment, only God is enough. Significantly, this active request that seeks deeper communion with God not only affects human beings. It creates a mutual experience of pleasure: *And this vision was a lernyng to my vnderstandyng that the contynually sekyng of the soule plesyth god moch.*<sup>98</sup> Seeking in prayer gives mutual pleasure to Christ and to us. This enables us to experience joy and delight in each other in our present reality.

Consequently, this natural, insatiable desire for God leads us to ask God for what we need. Julian refers to this as the prayer of *besekyng* or beseeching. The prefix *be* added to *seking* literally, "about seeking," reinforces the idea that this prayer, which arises from our origin in Christ, empowers our natural yearning to be one with God. All that we ask for in beseeching arises from Christ who reassures: *I am grounde of thy besekyng. Furst it is my wylle that thou haue it, and sythen I make the to wylle it, and sythen I make the to beseke it.*<sup>99</sup> The prayer of beseeching expresses our fundamental stance before God that arises at the intersection between human need and God's desire for human well-being.

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<sup>98</sup> 2:10.68-69,332. *And this vision taught me to understand that the soul's constant search pleases God greatly.* 195.

<sup>99</sup> 14:41.11-13,461. *I am the ground of your beseeching. First, it is my will that you should have it, and then I make you to wish it, and then I make you to besech it.* 248.



Julian gives two teachings about the prayer of beseeching:<sup>100</sup>

*(H)e shewyth full gret plesannce and endlesse mede that he wylle geue vs for oure besekyng. And in the (ij<sup>de</sup>) reson there he seyth: How schuld it than be? This was seyde for an vnpossible thyng; for it is the most vnpossible that may be that we shulde seke mercy and grace and nott haue it. For of alle thyng that oure good lord makyth vs to beseke, hym selfe he hath ordeyned it to vs from without begynnyng. Here may we than see that oure besechyng is nott cause of the goodnesse and grace that he doyth to vs, but his propyr goodnesse. And that shewed he verely in alle theyse swete wordes, ther he seyeth: I am ground. And our good lorde wylle that thys be knowen of his lovers in erth. And the more that we know, the more shalle we besech, if it be wysely take, and so is our lordes menyng.<sup>101</sup>*

First, Christ shows delight in our beseeching and will reward us for it. Second, it is impossible that we should not have what we ask for because everything we ask for, God ordains for us from eternity. Even before beseeching takes shape as prayers of petition, our desire for God is already called forth by the mystery of God's own love. Julian further describes beseeching as true and gracious:

*Besechyng is a trew and gracious lestyng wylle of the soule, onyd and fastenyd in*

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<sup>100</sup> Pelphrey, LWHM, n.29, 225, suggests that (ij<sup>de</sup>) second may be a scribal error as Julian makes more than two points about beseeching.

<sup>101</sup> 14:41.18-29,461-463. *(H)e shows his great delight, and the everlasting reward that he will give us for our beseeching. And in the second reason, where he says: How could it be? this was said as an impossibility; for it is the most impossible that that may be that we should seek mercy and grace and not have it. For everything which our good Lord makes us to besech he himself has ordained for us from all eternity. So here we may see that our beseeching is not the cause of the goodness and grace which he gives us, but his own goodness. And that he truly revealed in all these sweet words, where he says: I am the foundation. And our good Lord wants this to be known by his lovers on earth. And the more that we know this, the more shall we besech, if it be wisely accepted, and this is our Lord's intention. 248-249.*

*to the wyllle of oure lorde by the swet prevy werkynge of the holy gost.*<sup>102</sup>

Beseeching is grace working in us activating our will to be one and like Christ in all things. For Julian, beseeching is relational, an intimate communication between friends, where we ask to live in the presence of God and surrender our human situation to God. It is important to note that in Julian's understanding beseeching is not so much asking so that God will respond, or trying to change the course of events. Rather, beseeching arises from a response already given by God. For Julian petitions in prayer are the human face of God's hope for human beings.

### **The Manner of Prayer**

Julian's second teaching about prayer concentrates on *in what maner and how þat we schulde vse oure prayers*. In prayer *oure wyllle ne turned in to the wyllle of oure lorde enjoyeng*.<sup>103</sup> Thus prayer is our deliberate choice to conform our will to the will of God. Significantly, this choice occurs in an ambience of joy. We see an example of this wilful conversion in orientation in the prayer of *thankyng* which emanates from our true inward knowing of the presence of love and the continual work of the Holy Spirit. Through the human response of *thankyng* we progressively become one with God as we turn ourselves with all our might

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<sup>102</sup> 14:41.30-32,463. *Beseeching is a true and gracious, enduring will of the soul, united and joined to our Lord's will by the sweet, secret operation of the Holy Spirit.* 249.

<sup>103</sup> See n.93, 355.

towards God:

*Also to prayer longyth thankyng. Thankyng is a true inward knowyng, with grett reuerence and louely drede turnyng oure selfe with alle oure myghtes in to the werkyng that oure lorde steryd vs to, enjoyeng and thankyng inwardly. And some tyme for plenteousnes it brekyth ouzt with voyce and sey(th): Good lorde, grannt mercy, blessyd mott thou be.<sup>104</sup>*

Father John-Julian points out that *thankyng* for Julian is an act of the will and of the mind opening to God's own will (*turnyng oure selfe with alle oure myghtes in to the werkyng that oure lorde steryd vs to*). He rejects the idea that *thankyng* also includes some physical or prayerful expression of praise.<sup>105</sup> I would argue, however, that the final section of Julian's definition makes it clear that *thankyng* does include an expression of praise: *And some tyme for plenteousnes it brekyth ouzt with voyce and sey(th): Good lorde, grannt mercy, blessyd mott thou be.* *Thankyng* in Julian is both an external expression of praise and a deliberate act of graciously opening the mind and heart to God in loving awe. In the prayer of *thankyng* Julian views everything as grace. She sees God in all things. She lives her life as a gift from God and looks upon everything that happens in it as a manifestation of that gift.

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<sup>104</sup> 14:41.56-61,466-467. *Thanksgiving also belongs to prayer. Thanksgiving is a true inward acknowledgment, we applying ourselves with great reverence and loving fear and with all our powers to the work that our Lord moved us to, rejoicing and giving thanks inwardly. And sometimes the soul is so full of this that it breaks out in words and says: Good Lord, great thanks, blessed may you be.* 250.

<sup>105</sup> Father John Julian, "Thankyng in Julian," *Mystics Quarterly* 15 (1989):73.

Significantly, Julian not only describes the prayer of *thankyng* in this more traditional sense of favourable thought, the prayer of *thankyng* continues throughout times of woe:

*And some tyme whan the harte is dry and felyth nought, or ellys by temptacion of oure enemy, than it is drevyn by reson and by grace to cry vp on oure lorde with voyce, rehersyng his blessyd passion and his grett goodnes. And so the vertu of oure lordes worde turnyth in to the soule and quyckynnyth the hart and entryth by hys grace in to tru werkyng, and makyth it to pray fulle blessydfully, and truly to enioy in oure lorde. It is a fulle louely thangkynge in his syght.*<sup>106</sup>

This perspective gives the prayer of *thankyng* a new dimension. Although we may turn our will to the will of God in peaceful times and express gratitude, it is another thing to continue the commitment to relationship when we confront dryness, barrenness and hardship. *Thankyng* is not a superficial gratefulness for peaceful times in our lives, but an attitude that enables us to see the whole of our lives, well-being and woe as gift. *Thankyng* includes our faithful exercise, our attempts to pray when our hearts feel dry, barren or nothing at all. Thus *thankyng* is a contemplative attitude that enables us always to live in openness to the presence of God in well-being and woe.

Though the desire for God is grounded within us, and an attitude of *thankyng*

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<sup>106</sup> 14:41.61-67,467. *And sometimes the heart is dry and feels nothing, or else, by the temptation of our enemy, reason and grace drive the soul to implore our Lord with words, recounting his blessed Passion and his great goodness. And so the power of our Lord's word enters the soul and enlivens the heart and it begins by his grace faithful exercise, and makes the soul to pray most blessedly, and truly to rejoice in our Lord. This is a most loving thanksgiving in his sight.* 250.

belongs inherently to our nature, Julian knows how difficult it is to remain faithful to this desire in times of suffering and how easily this desire can become repressed. In one sense, in Julian's theology of prayer, the gift of our desire for God inherited from our being in God and the presence of grace in our lives mean that this orientation can never be completely abandoned. In another sense, however, she knows how easily human beings can become distracted from their life source. In times when we experience difficulty in our commitment to turn our wills to the will of God, Julian gives the following words of encouragement:

*Pray interly,<sup>107</sup> though the thyngke it savour the nott, zett it is profytable inowgh, though thou fele it nowgh(t). Pray interly, though thou fele nought, though thou se nought, yea, though thou thynk thou myght nott, for in drynesse and barnesse, in sicknesse and in febelnes, than is thy prayer fulle plesannt to me, though thou thynk it saver the nott but lytylle. And so is all thy byvyng prayer in my syght.<sup>108</sup>*

In the Sloane<sup>1</sup> manuscript, the scribe records *inderly*.<sup>109</sup> Scholars translate *interly* or *inderly*, variously as *interiorly* or *wholeheartedly*. Bradley argues that neither choice seems fully consistent with the context. She prefers "'from the heart' in the sense of sincerely, free of a mechanical use of words, real rather than

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<sup>107</sup> Colledge and Walsh chose not to go with the Paris manuscript here which records *pray inwardly always*. See BSAJN, n.42, 464.

<sup>108</sup> 14:41.42-47, 464-465. *Pray wholeheartedly, though it seems to you that this has no savour for you; still it is profitable enough, though you may not feel that. Pray wholeheartedly, though you may feel nothing, though you may see nothing, yes, though you think that you could not, for in dryness and in barrenness, in sickness and in weakness, then is your prayer most pleasing to me, though you think it almost tasteless to you. And so is all your living prayer in my sight.* 249.

<sup>109</sup> XLI:1422,89.

appearance only."<sup>110</sup> The Paris manuscript records *pray interly inwardly* which is dismissed by Colledge and Walsh as the scribe's caution in copying both the word in the text and a possible correction in the margin.<sup>111</sup> Yet, there is no evidence that this is so. It is just as possible that the scribe copied correctly *pray interly inwardly*. In this context *interly* suggests wholly, fully, entirely or intensively.<sup>112</sup> The rest of the statement places the directive in context, suggesting that we pray in well-being and woe. Julian knows that commitment to prayer involves pain, because prayer includes faithful exercise in dryness and in barrenness, in sickness and in weakness. She says encouragingly that this prayer is most pleasing to God. Although she does not say so explicitly, this implies that prayer in times of dryness has purgative elements. Prayer confirms our commitment to relationship. Prayer continues the work of *oneing* by bringing us into deeper participation in Christ. Ultimately *interly* relates to Julian's final statement: *all thy lyvyng is prayer in my syght*.

### **The Fruit of Prayer: To Be One With God in All Things**

The third teaching about prayer is *þat we know the fruyt and the ende of oure*

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<sup>110</sup> Bradley, *Julian's Way*, 40. The mechanical reciting of words can be helpful in times of dryness and lack of enthusiasm.

<sup>111</sup> BSAJN, n.42, 464.

<sup>112</sup> MED, 190, lists two meanings for *enterli (interly)*. It can mean sincerely, devoutly, wholeheartedly, carefully, assiduously or wholly, fully, thoroughly, entirely, intensively or most.

prayer (is) *that is to be onyd and lyke to oure lorde in althyng*.<sup>113</sup> In this teaching Julian emphasizes that the reason we pray is to be *one* and like Christ in all things. Although prayer includes times of desolation, we have from time to time a consoling experience of *oneing* that gives a foretaste of the eternal *oneing* and joy to come. She refers to this prayer as the prayer of *beholding*.

We have seen throughout the thesis that *beholding* is an important concept for Julian.<sup>114</sup> It is through *beholding* that she comes to the insights expressed in the *showings*. In the specific context of prayer, she gives a classic definition of her understanding of the prayer of *beholding*:

*But whan oure curtesse lorde of his speciall grace shewyth hym selfe to oure soule, we haue that we desyer, and then we se nott for the tyme what we shulde more pray, but all oure entent with alle oure myghtys is sett hoole in to the beholdyng of hym. And this is an hygh vnperceyvable prayer, as to my syghte; for alle the cause wherfore we pray is to be onyd in to the syght and the beholdyng of him to whom we pray, mervelously enjoyeng with reuerent drede, and so grett swetnesse and debyzte in hym that we can pray ryght nought but as he steryth vs for the tyme.*<sup>115</sup>

We note how Julian includes the reader in this experience. This is not the

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<sup>113</sup> See n.93, 355.

<sup>114</sup> See Chapter 2, 51-59.

<sup>115</sup> 14:43.18-26,477. *But when our courteous Lord of his special grace shows himself to our soul, we have what we desire, and then for that time we do not see what more we should pray for, but all our intention and all our powers are wholly directed to contemplating him. And as I see it, this is an exalted and imperceptible prayer; for the whole reason why we pray is to be united into the vision and contemplation of him to whom we pray, wonderfully rejoicing with reverent fear, and with so much sweetness and delight in him that we cannot pray at all except as he moves us at the time.* 254.

experience of a select few. *Beholding* is our inheritance as followers of Christ. In essence *beholding* is an experience of grace where Christ shows himself to our soul. *Beholding* involves contemplative seeing. *Beholding* is an imperceptible prayer where human beings become one with Christ and experience divine love. The fruits of *beholding* are joy, reverent fear, sweetness and delight. *Beholding* creates a spontaneous response to the presence of Christ.

Through her reference to *beholding*, Julian attempts to portray the mystery of divine presence in our lives. Her discernment suggests that the more nearly we approach God, the more the sense of the unknowable mystery of divine love abounds. All we can do with reverent fear and great sweetness is to savour and delight in God. Then our response is to pray as the love of God permeates our being and stirs us to pray:

*And whan we of his speciall grace pleyntly beholde hym, seyeng none other, nedys then we folowe hym, and he drawyth vs to hym by loue. For I saw and felt that his mervelous and his fulsom goodnesse fulfyllyth all oure myghtys; and ther with I saw that hys contynuall werkynge in alle maner thynges is done so godly, so wysely and so myghtely that it ovyrpassyth alle oure ymagynyng and alle that we can mene or thynke. And than we can do no more but beholde hym, and enjoye with an hygh myghty desyer to be alle onyd in to hym, and entende to his motion and enjoy in his louyng and delyzte in his goodnesse.<sup>116</sup>*

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<sup>116</sup> 14:43.35-44,479-480. *And when we by his special grace behold him plainly, seeing no other, we then necessarily follow him, and he draws us to him by love. For I saw and felt that his wonderful and total goodness fulfils all our powers; and with that I saw that his continual working in every kind of thing is done so divinely, so wisely and so powerfully that it surpasses all our imagining and everything that we can understand or think. And then we can do no more than contemplate him and rejoice, with a great and compelling desire to be wholly united into him, and attend to his motion and rejoice in his love and delight in his*



In prayer, *beholding* the Holy Spirit draws us to an ever deeper presence to divine love. We become more fully attentive, fully present, turning all our attention to the unlimited reality of Christ. We progressively become one with Christ as he draws us into himself in love. We enjoy and delight in Christ. Through experiencing Christ's presence we become Christ-like: *(T)he soule that thus beholdyth, it makyth it lyke to hym that is beholde, and ony(th) it in rest and in pease by hys grace.*<sup>117</sup> We are *oned* to Christ in rest and peace. This enables us to surrender trustingly to the mystery of God's plan for salvation and to our own unique call to union with God in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Consequently, prayer makes the hope for fulfilment a reality:

*For prayer is a ryztwys vnderstandyng of that fulhed of joy that is for to come, with tru longyng and very trust. Saworyng or seyng oure blysse that we be ordeyned to, kyndely makyth vs to longe; trew vnderstondyng and loue with swete menyng in oure savoure graciously makyth vs to trust. And thus haue we of kynde to long and of grace to t(ru)st. And in these two werkynges oure lord beholdyth vs continually.*<sup>118</sup>

Prayer gives a *ryztwys vnderstandyng of that fulhed of joy*. A *ryztwys vnderstandyng* seems to relate to *trew vnderstondyng and loue with swete menyng*

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goodness. 254-255.

<sup>117</sup> 16:68.48-50,644-645. *(T)he soul which so contemplates like to him who is contemplated, and unites it in rest and peace. 314.*

<sup>118</sup> 14:42.55-60,473. *For prayer is a right understanding of that fulness of joy which is to come, with true longing and trust. The savouring or seeing of our bliss, to which we are ordained, by nature makes us to long; true understanding and love, with a sweet recollection in our savour, by grace makes us to trust. And in these two operations our Lord constantly regards us. 252-253.*

*in oure savoure*. Prayer reveals the inter-relationship between yearning and trusting. The more we trust in God the more we yearn to become fully one with God. Prayer gives a sense of the eternal in the present, a glimpse of the transcendent mystery, and knowledge that the limitless depths of that mystery are forever being revealed. Christ *beholds* us in this interplay of longing and trusting during our lifetime.

There are various scholarly opinions about the meaning of *saworyng or seyng oure blysse that we be ordeyned to, makyth vs to longe*, because of a variation in the Sloane<sup>1</sup> and Paris manuscripts. Colledge and Walsh argue for the Paris rendition of the words: *Saworyng or seyng oure blysse that we be ordeyned to, makyth vs to longe*. Both Bradley<sup>119</sup> and Glascoe<sup>120</sup> accept the Sloane<sup>1</sup> version: *Faylyng of our bliss that we ben kyndly ordeynid to makyth us for to longen*.<sup>121</sup> Bradley creates a plausible argument that "failure to see our bliss" is the root of what makes us long all the more for God. Colledge and Walsh present the other side of the debate that *savouring and seeing our bliss* is a distillation of the traditional doctrine of the spiritual senses in contemplative prayer, in which we can savour or see now our heavenly bliss.<sup>122</sup> We saw in Julian's description of

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<sup>119</sup> Bradley, "Julian of Norwich on Prayer," 151.

<sup>120</sup> Glascoe, *English Medieval Mystics*, 243.

<sup>121</sup> XLII:1490-1491.91. *Failure to see the bliss that we are ordained for creates a longing in us*. This is a comment that could be made by a copyist not wanting to encourage mystical experience. See Chapter 1, 25.

<sup>122</sup> BSAJN, n.58, 473.

*beholding* that there are times in our lives in which we can savour and see our bliss. In these times: *we can do no more but beholde hym, and enjoye with an hygh myghty desyer to be alle onyd in to hym, and entende to his motion and enjoy in his lowyng and delyzte in his goodnesse.*<sup>123</sup> These times inspire trust. They give a foretaste of eschatological joy.<sup>124</sup> Therefore, I would argue, that in keeping with Julian's emphasis on *beholding*, it is a glimpse of the mystery of God that makes human beings long for fulfilment. Prayer imparts an understanding of the *fulhed of joy*. The *fulhed of joy* is not only finding meaning in Christ, it is having Christ: *whan we haue hym that we seke in fulhede of joy that is Jhesu.*<sup>125</sup> Moreover, *fulhed of joy* embraces all creation, it includes *beholding* God as all in all (*for the fulhed of joy is to beholde god in alle.*)<sup>126</sup> Prayer enables us to know joyfully that God is in all things. Prayer teaches us to live dynamic eternity in the present.

In contrast to many theologies that obscure the role of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit has a distinctive place in the *showings*. Julian's pneumatology plays a significant role in distinguishing how salvation is partially realized in the current experience of our fulfilling. Her pneumatology shows how eschatology is

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<sup>123</sup> See n.116, 365.

<sup>124</sup> See Chaper 9, n.60, 392.

<sup>125</sup> 14:41.53-54,466. *until we have in the fulness of joy him whom we seek, who is Jesus.* 250.

<sup>126</sup> 13:35.13-14,433. *for the fulness of joy is to contemplate God in everything.* 237.

grounded in our experience of God in this world. The Holy Spirit, *charyte gevyn*, shares divine love through the presence of grace in human lives. The Holy Spirit encloses us in goodness, and is reciprocally enclosed in us. The Holy Spirit animates us to enjoy the blessed Trinity of our salvation. Through inspiring knowledge of God, knowledge of ourselves in nature and grace, and knowledge that our true nature is against sin and weakness, Julian demonstrates how this knowledge enables us to appreciate the medley of well-being and woe.

Ultimately, no matter what our experience of woe, we exist one in God in nature and grace, drawn into the transformational experience of *oneing*. We experience this *oneing* partially now, and look forward to its completion in eternal life.

Knowledge of who God is, and who we are in this relationship, encourages hope that *all is well* and *shall be well*. The present reality of this *fulfilling*, brought to consciousness in prayer, gives us strength for our living. It imparts a foretaste of the final joy that is to come in the future. Therefore, for Julian, hope for eternal *oneing* in God is not based on idle speculation about an unknowable future. Hope for the fullness of salvation flows from grace we experience in the present. She attests to an underlying unity between living and dying and dying and living. We die into God the way we live in God. This leads us to the future dimension of Julian's soteriology, hope for heaven.

## CHAPTER NINE

### *ONEING IN THE ESCHATON*

*And ther shall we se god face to face, homely and fulsomly* (14:43.53-54,481).

Julian presents a theology of hope that has a strong eschatological focus. She expresses this hope as longing for the joy that is to come. All shall finally be well when the Trinity and creatures are one in the eschaton. Yet, each aspect of Julian's soteriology we have examined shows how salvation is not simply a future hope. Salvation is an eschatological process grounded in our being one with God in creation, increased in this *oneing* through the cross and the work of Christ as servant, wisdom and mother, and brought to fulfilment through the work of the Holy Spirit. Julian's eschatology expresses what Rahner observed this century: there is a hope that there will be a transposition of present experience of salvation from a mode of beginning into a mode of consummation,<sup>1</sup> or, as we have said, that the *exitus reditus* will reach fulfilment. The aim of the chapter is to examine Julian's eschatology in light of how it relates to her soteriology. Although Julian refers to the eschaton as an unknowable reality, she voices this hope in her famous phrase *all shall be well*. This expression of hope rests on an underlying dynamic of a belief in the universal salvific will of God. Julian's uses vibrant imagery to describe what it will be like in the eschaton, when hope in the joy that is to come reaches fulfilment in the beatific vision.

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1978), 431.

## I. AN UNKNOWABLE REALITY

Julian is not alone in asserting that ultimately the whole realm of eternity is an empirically unknowable reality, a mystery yet to be revealed:

*There is a deed the whych the blessydfulle trynyte shalle do in the last day, as to my syght, and what the deed shall be and how it shall be done, it is vnknown of alle creaturys whych are beneth Crist, and shall be tulle whan it shalle be done.<sup>2</sup>*

Although the deed the blessed Trinity will perform at the end of time is unknowable from a human perspective, it is possible to predict a hopeful future through extrapolation from what we have already experienced. Through drawing on her experience of grace, Julian responds to the question of death with hope because she connects our future in God with our present experience of grace. Therefore, for Julian, hope for eternal *oneing* in God is etiological. It is not based on idle speculation about an unknowable future. Hope for the fullness of salvation flows from grace we experience in the present. She attests to an underlying unity between living and dying and dying and living. We die into God the way we live in God. Thus, life in God after death is a fulfilment of this life, a completion.

## II. ALL SHALL BE WELL

Julian points the way to fulfilment in the eschaton through her famous words: *all shall be well*. At the end of time as we understand it, all the blessed will no

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<sup>2</sup> 13:32.23-26,423-424. *There is a deed which the blessed Trinity will perform on the last day, as I see it, and what the deed will be and how it will be performed is unknown to every creature who is inferior to Christ, and it will be until the deed is done. 232.*

longer ask the central question of the *showings*: *A, good lorde, how myght alle be wele for the gret harme that is come by synne to thy creatures?*<sup>3</sup> We will see ourselves the fulfilment of the promise: *it is wele*.<sup>4</sup> This statement of hope, which identifies the eschaton as the fulfilment of God's intention for the salvation of the world, flows from the deepest level of human being that comes from our ontological union with God in nature and grace and awareness of the constant working of grace in our lives.

Julian never gives a clear description of what it will be like when *all is well*. The ineffable nature of her language is probably deliberate, as the human experience of well-being in the eschaton can never be fully articulated. The ramifications of the expression *all shall be well* belong to the category of words Rahner identifies as primordial words:

Primordial words always remain like the brightly lit house which one must leave behind, "even when it is night." They are always as though filled with the soft music of infinity. No matter what it is they speak of, they always whisper something about everything. If one tries to pace out their boundary, one always becomes lost in the infinite. They are the children of God, who possess something of the luminous darkness of their Father.<sup>5</sup>

The melodic refrain *all shall be well* grasps us before we grasp its meaning. It

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<sup>3</sup> 13:29.3-5,412. *Ah, good Lord, how could all things be well, because of the great harm which has come through sin to your creatures?* 227.

<sup>4</sup> 16:85.15,729. *it is well*. 341.

<sup>5</sup> Karl Rahner, *The Content of Faith: The Best of Karl Rahner's Theological Writings*, ed. Karl Lehmann and Albert Raffelt, trans. Harvey D. Egan (New York: Crossroads, 1993), 161.

etches itself in the memory and suggests something about the present and something about eternal life in God. In trying to examine more carefully what Julian means by these words we confront human limitations to describe the infinite. Nevertheless, it is worth trying to probe the various nuances Julian gives to her famous phrase *all shall be well*.

Nuth argues that Julian's revelations strongly suggest that the *all* that will be well in God's promise includes every particular human being, although this is never stated absolutely.<sup>6</sup>

*Oone tyme oure good lorde seyde: Alle maner a thyng shalle be wele; and another tyme he seyde: Thou shalt se thy selfe that alle maner of thyng shalle be wele. And in theyse two the soule toke sundry maner of vnderstondyng.*<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, this vague statement, *alle maner of thyngs*, includes all reality including the smallest things, as the image of the hazelnut conveys.<sup>8</sup> *Alle maner of thyng* suggests that salvation extends beyond a personal mysticism, to encompass social and cosmic realities. Salvation includes *alle maner of thyng*, all that is. Julian outlines two meanings she perceives about *all shall be well* and *you will see yourself that all shall be well*:

*Oon was this: that he wylle we wytte that nott oonly he takyth heed*

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<sup>6</sup> Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, 165.

<sup>7</sup> 13:32.2-5,422. *On one occasion our good Lord said: Every kind of thing will be well; and on another occasion he said: You will see yourself that every kind of thing will be well. And from these two the soul gained different kinds of understanding.* 231.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 3, 132-139.



*to nobylle thynges and to grett, but also to lytylle and to small, to lowe and to symple, and to oone and to other. And so menyth he in that he seyth: all maner thyng shall be welle. For he wyll that we wytt that the lest thyng shall nott be forgeten. Another vnderstandyng is this: that ther be many dedys evyll done in oure syght and so gret harmes take that it semyth to vs that it were vnpossible that evyr it shuld com to a good end. And vp on thys we loke, sorow and morne therfore so that we can nott rest vs in the blyssedfulle beholding of god as we shuld do. And the cause is this: that the vse of oure reson is now so blynde, so lowe and so symple that we can nott know the hygh marvelous wysdom, the myght and the goodnes of the blyssedfull trynyte. And thus menyth he where he seyth: Thou shalt se thy selfe that alle manner thyng shall be wele; as yf he seyde, take now feythfully and trustely, and at the last end thou shalt se verely in fulhede of joye. And thus in the same v wordes before seyde: I may make all thyng wele, I vnderstonde a myghty comfort of alle workes of oure lorde god that are for to come.<sup>9</sup>*

*All manner of things* includes the whole of reality, not only great things, but little, seemingly insignificant, things. Although Colledge and Walsh translate *to oone and to other* as *this man and that man*, the phrase refers to *thynges*. *Thynges* conveys a sense of the totality of creation. In the second aspect of her

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<sup>9</sup> 13:32.5-22,422-423. *One was this: that he wants us to know that he takes heed not only of things which are noble and great, but also of those which are little and small, of humble men and simple, of this man and that man. And this is what he means when he says: Every kind of thing will be well. For he wants us to know that the smallest thing will not be forgotten. Another understanding is this: that there are many deeds which in our eyes are so evilly done and lead to such great harms that it seems to us impossible that any good result could ever come of them. And we contemplate this and sorrow and mourn for it so that we cannot rest in the blessed contemplation of God as we ought to do. And the cause is this: that the reason which we use is now so blind, so abject and so stupid that we cannot recognize God's exalted, wonderful wisdom, or the power and the goodness of the blessed Trinity. And this is his intention when he says: You will see yourself that every kind of thing will be well, as if he said: Accept it now in faith and trust, and in the very end you will see truly, in fullness of joy. And so in the same five words said before: I may make all things well, I understand a powerful comfort from all the works of our Lord God which are still to come. 231-232.*

interpretation of *all manner of things shall be well*, Julian isolates the problem of evil. Although there are many evil deeds that make it impossible to understand how all could be well from a human point of view, *all manner of things shall be well* means that good will come out of even the most evil of deeds. The wisdom, might and goodness of the Trinity will make this so in the time to come. Consequently, *all manner of things* embraces all of creation even evil.

*Well* conveys a sense of a dynamic synthesis of all qualities that give life. *Well* characterises a quality and fullness of life, depth, richness of being, health and wholeness, peace, happiness, joy and bliss.<sup>10</sup> In Middle English it conveys a meaning, lost today, of being on terms of intimate friendship or familiarity with a woman.<sup>11</sup> Thus *well* embraces the intimacy of *homely* loving, the experience of *oneing*.<sup>12</sup> Also related to Julian's use of the word *well* is the concept of *ryghtfulhed*:

*Ryghtfulhed is that thyng þat is so good þat may nott be better than it is, for god hym selfe is very ryghtfulhed, and all hys werkes be done ryghtfully, as they be ordeyned fro without begynnyng by hys hygh myght, hys hygh wysdom, hys hygh goodnesse. And ryght as he hath ordeyne(d) it to the best, ryght so he werkyth contynually, and ledyth it to the same ende. And he is evyr fulle plesyd with hym selfe and with alle hys workes. And the beholdyng of thys blessyd acord is full swete to the soule that seeth it by grace. Alle þe soules that shalle be savyd in hevyn without ende be made ryghtfulle in the syzt of god and by hys awne goodnesse, in which*

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<sup>10</sup> Note that *will*, meaning, pleasure, delight, and joy is the base word of *well*. NSOED, 3686.

<sup>11</sup> NSOED, 3654.

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 3, 103-105; 111-120.

*ryghtfullnes we be endlessly kepte and marvelously aboue all creatures.*<sup>13</sup>

*Ryghtfulhed* comes from the very being of God, flowing from God's might, wisdom and goodness. As Clark epitomizes it, *ryghtfulhed* characterizes the supreme goodness of God,<sup>14</sup> expressing everything that is just, wise, good, genuine, legitimate, desirable or favourable. Since *ryghtfulhed* or goodness by its very nature gives itself and communicates itself, this good will be the end and finality of all things. When all God's works are completed *ryghtfully*, what God planned in the beginning will be in a state of perfection, reflecting the perfect goodness of God. For Julian, because *ryghtfulhed* arises from God's being, it can never be better than it is. When *all is well*, all will be *ryghtfulle*, that is, it will reflect the perfect goodness of God.

### III. UNIVERSAL SALVATION

Since *all shall be well* indicates the inclusive nature of God's desire for human well-being when all that God ordained for creation will be *ryghtfulle*, we can situate Julian's soteriology within the parameters of *apocatastasis* or universal

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<sup>13</sup> 13:35.26-36,434-435. *Righteousness is that which is so good that it cannot be better than it is, for God himself is true righteousness, and all his works are righteously performed, as they are ordained from eternity by his exalted power, his exalted wisdom, his exalted goodness. And what he has ordained for the best he constantly brings to pass in the same way, and directs to the same end. And he is always fully pleased with himself and with all his works. And the contemplation of this blessed harmony is most sweet to the soul which sees it by grace. All the souls which will be saved in heaven without end are made righteous in the sight of God and by his own goodness, in which righteousness we are endlessly and marvellously protected, above all creatures.* 237.

<sup>14</sup> Clark, "Nature Grace and the Trinity," 204.

salvation.<sup>15</sup> *Apocatastasis* is grounded in a belief that the reality of human freedom to commit sin is never powerful enough to overcome the salvific will of God. Yet, as we have seen, Julian does take sin seriously.<sup>16</sup> Her understanding of universal salvation is not a pure doctrine of *apocatastasis* that naively ignores the reality of sin, trivializes human freedom, and devalues the human struggle to live a good life. On the contrary, for Julian, human beings constantly struggle in the medley of well and woe to orientate themselves to God. Nevertheless human freedom can never be isolated from grace. Human freedom is always modified and qualified by grace, until the deepest longing of the human heart for union with God and God's longing for union with us converge. In a Church that stressed the fear of damnation, Julian shifts emphasis away from God as the fierce arbitrator of salvation or damnation, towards seeing God as acting to make all things well.

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<sup>15</sup> *Apocatastasis* or universal salvation is the restoration of all creation at the end of time, and its most famous exponent was Origen. It was strongly attacked by Augustine. The doctrine holds that ultimately all free moral creatures, angels, human beings and even devils will share in eternal happiness and salvation. Although, *apocatastasis* was condemned by the provincial Council of Constantinople, 543, it remained accepted to a lesser degree by some of the Church Fathers. In more recent times Schleiermacher developed a version of this idea of universalism. Cf. John R. Sachs, S.J. "Apocatastasis in Patristic Theology," *Theological Studies* 54 (1993): 617-640. Julian's universalism is not a pure doctrine of *apocatastasis* because she never discounts Church teaching on the possibility of damnation for sinners and she considers the devil to be eternally damned.

<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 5, 192-204.

### The Work of the Trinity

When Julian first records the expression *all shall be well* in her text, it is Christ who communicates this promise of hope.<sup>17</sup> As the *showings* proceed, however, Julian highlights the common operation of the Trinity in making all things well:

*I may make alle thyng wele, and I can make alle thyng welle, and I shalle make alle thyng wele, and I wyllle make alle thyng welle; and thou shalt se thy selfe þat alle maner of thyng shall be welle. There he seyth: I may, I vnderstonde for the fater; and there he seyth: I can, I vnderstond for the sonne; and there he seyth: I wyllle, I vnderstonde for the holy gost; and ther he seyth: I shalle, I vnderstonde for the vnyte of the blessyd trinite, thre persons and oon truth; and there he seyth: Thou shalt se thy selfe, I vnderstond the (onyng) of alle man kynde that shalle be sauyd in to the blyssedfulle trynite.<sup>18</sup>*

Although it is Christ who discloses the promise for eternal well-being by saying *I may make alle thyng wele*, the repetition of the word *I* creates a litany with other melodic locutions,<sup>19</sup> such as *see, I am god*<sup>20</sup> and *I it am, I it am*.<sup>21</sup> The word *I* not only expresses the essence of Christ and the significant mediating role of

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<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 5, n.45, 201.

<sup>18</sup> 13:31.3-12,417. *I may make all things well, and I can make all things well, and I shall make all things well, and I will make all things well, and you will see yourself that every kind of thing will be well. When he says 'I may', I understand this to apply to the Father; and when he says 'I can', I understand it for the Son; and when he says 'I will', I understand it for the Holy Spirit; and when he says 'I shall', I understand it for the unity of the blessed Trinity, three persons and one truth; and when he says 'You will see yourself', I understand it for the union of all men who will be saved in the blessed Trinity. 229.*

<sup>19</sup> See Chapter 2, n.43, 62, for an explanation of how Julian's text needs to be taken together as a whole.

<sup>20</sup> 3:11.50-56,340-341. See Chapter 4, 141.

<sup>21</sup> 12:26.6-11,402-403. See Chapter 5, 221-222.

Christ in drawing humanity into the eternal well-being of the Trinity, it communicates a promise that Christ will be with us always. Furthermore, the repetition of the word *I* in relation to each person of the Trinity confers the reciprocal presence of the divine persons to one another. Julian reformulates the locution within the context of the union between past, present and future and distinguishes the participation of each person of the Trinity in making all things well. She illustrates how all things are well already, because of the continuing action of the Trinity. In another sense all things shall be well because of the faithfulness of the enduring activity of the Trinity. She explains: *I may* reveals the involvement of the Father.<sup>22</sup> *I can* designates the role of the Son.<sup>23</sup> *I wylle* identifies the presence of the Holy Spirit.<sup>24</sup> *I shall* then stresses the unity of the blessed Trinity.<sup>25</sup> The locution gives insight into what Julian means by *all shall be well*. *Shall* not only indicates the future, it discloses the obligation and necessity of the Father, Son and Spirit involved in the unfolding promise of human well-being from the beginning of creation into the present, until its ultimate fulfilment in the Trinity. Finally, *thou shalt se thyselfe* means that *all*

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<sup>22</sup> The Middle English use of *may* is lost in translation. In Middle English *may* means to be strong, or to have might, power or influence. NSOED, 1721. Therefore it is appropriate that *may* relates to the Father.

<sup>23</sup> *Can* in Middle English means to know, to be acquainted with, or to have learned. NSOED, 325. In this sense Christ knows what to do for human salvation.

<sup>24</sup> In Middle English *will* expresses desire that exudes pleasure, delight and joy. NSOED, 3686. This resonates with Julian's references to the joy and delight of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>25</sup> See Chapter 8, 325, for an explanation of *shall*.

*that shall be saved* will see themselves at one with the blessed Trinity. In the following chapter she concludes: *For ryght as the blessyd trinite made alle thyng of nought, ryght so the same blessyd trynyte shalle make wele alle that is nott welle.*<sup>26</sup> The whole Trinity is united in realizing our eschatological *oneing*.

In this eschatological statement Julian is pointing to the way our history unfolds in light of the Trinity's universal salvific will to save human beings. Furthermore, because of the Trinity's commitment to making all things well, she does not see that the human choice for salvation can be weighed up equally with the potential for eternal damnation.<sup>27</sup> The will of the Trinity for human well-being has the greater power.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the stress on the union of the Trinity in fulfilling the universal salvific will of the Godhead, as revealed in the words *I shalle make alle thyng wele*, presents a dilemma for Julian. On the one hand she wants to

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<sup>26</sup> 13:32.35-37,424. *For just as the blessed Trinity created all things from nothing, just so will the same blessed Trinity make everything well which is not well.* 233.

<sup>27</sup> Here Julian counters the Pelagian belief popular in her time that salvation is a reward for good works and the semi-Pelagian notion that her own effort to do her best initiates God's gift of justifying grace. See Baker, *From Vision to Book*, 74.

<sup>28</sup> This idea has some resemblance to the doctrine of predestination outlined by Aquinas, who believed that human beings are predestined to be children of God, to share in Sonship with Christ and thus predestined to eternal life. Because ultimately God governs all things, God is responsible for some people achieving this beatitude or eternal life. See Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 168. Julian, however, takes this idea further because she cannot conceive that God's responsibility would not include all people, as when she says: *See, I lede all thyng to the end þat I ordeyne it to, f(ro) without begynnyng, by the same myght, wysdom and loue that I made it with.* 3:11.53-55,340.

align herself with the teaching of the Church that stressed eternal punishment, and on the other she does not see salvation as simplistically dichotomised into a choice for heaven or hell:

*And one poynt of oure feyth is that many creatures shall be dampnyd, as angelis that felle ouzt of hevyn for pride, whych be now fendys, and meny in erth that dyeth out of the feyth of holy chyrch, that is to sey tho that be hethyn, and also many that hath receyvyd cristondom and lyvyth vncristen lyfe and so dyeth ougte of cheryte. All theyse shalle be dampnyd to helle without (e)nde, as holy chyrch techyth me to beleue. And stondyng alle thys, me thought it was vnpossible that alle maner of thyng shuld be wele, as oure lorde shewde in thys tyme.<sup>29</sup>*

In reiterating Church teaching that emphasizes the radical potential for human alienation from God, even after God's redemptive activity on our behalf, Julian entertains the possibility that all things can never be well. Christ, however, gives her a response:

*And as to thys I had no other answe in shewyng of oure lorde but thys: That þat is vnpossible to the is nott vnpossible to me. I shalle saue my worde in alle thyng, and I shalle make althyng wele. And in thys I was taught by the grace of god that I shuld stedfast(l)y holde me in the feyth as I had before vnderstond, and ther with þat I shulde stonde and sadly beleue that alle maner thyng shall be welle, as oure lorde shewde in that same tyme.<sup>30</sup>*

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<sup>29</sup> 32:13.40-48,425. *And one article of our faith is that many creatures will be damned, such as the angels who fell out of heaven because of pride, who now are devils, and many men upon earth who die out of the faith of Holy Church, that is to say those who are pagans and many who have received baptism and who live unchristian lives and so die out of God's love. All these will be eternally condemned to hell, as Holy Church teaches me to believe. And all this being so, it seemed to me that it was impossible that every kind of thing should be well, as our Lord revealed at this time. 233.*

<sup>30</sup> 32:13.48-55,425-426. *And to this I had no other answer as a revelation from our Lord except this: What is impossible to you is not impossible to me. I shall preserve my word in everything, and I shall make everything well. And in this I was taught by the grace of God that I ought to keep myself steadfastly in the*



Christ not only makes a declaration of our worthiness for salvation, but the Trinity through Christ and the Holy Spirit actually performs what looks like an impossibility from a human perspective. *I shalle saue my worde in alle thyng*e reveals that the *worde* of God remains in all things. The efficacious self-communication of the Trinity to creation and to humanity makes *all things well*. This *worde* is the spoken promise of salvation, in that it is the dynamic encounter with the power and dynamism of God's creative and redemptive activity.<sup>31</sup> The transforming *worde* makes *all manner of things well*. *All shall be well* etches in human memory the fact that the offer of salvation is not selective. The *worde* of God remains in all things. It is extended to every human being without exception. No-one is excluded *a priori*.<sup>32</sup>

## Hell

Yet, Julian does not dismiss the possible contradiction between universal salvation

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*faith, as I had understood before, and that at the same time I should stand firm and believe firmly that every kind of thing will be well, as our Lord revealed at that same time.* 233.

<sup>31</sup> Although Julian does not make any direct link, this idea connects with her references to Christ as wisdom. See Chapter 7, 273-276.

<sup>32</sup> This is in stark contrast to Augustine's doctrine of predestination. As Georg Kraus in HCT, 540-541, explains: "To safeguard the all effectiveness of grace he teaches that predestination is 'prior knowledge and prior preparation of God's good deeds by which we are most certainly saved' (*De dono persev.* 14.35). From the mass of those lost by original sin (*massa damnata*) only a few are singled out for eternal life. Predestination is also unmerited (its *gratuitousness*), infallible (its *infallibility*), and intended only for a small part of humankind (its *particularity*)." Cf. Baker, *Vision to Book*, 79-82.

and Church teaching about hell.<sup>33</sup> She places the teaching of the Church beside her own understanding of the salvific will of the Trinity. Both perspectives interact with each other. She asks to see hell and purgatory:

*And zitt in this I desyeryd as I durste that I myght haue had som syzt of hel and of purgatory; but it was nott my menyng to take pre(f)e of ony thyng that longyth to oure feyth, for I beleued sothfastly that hel and purgatory is for þe same ende þat holy chyrch techyth for. But my menyng was þat I myght haue seen for lernyng in alle thyng that longyth to my feyth, wher by I myzt lyue the more to goddes wurschyppe and to my profyzte. And for ought þat I culde desyer, I ne culde se of thys ryght nouzt but as it is before seyde in þe fyfte shewyng, wher that I saw þe devylle is reprovyd of god and endlessly dampned.<sup>34</sup>*

Even though Julian asks for a vision of hell<sup>35</sup> and purgatory,<sup>36</sup> she never sees

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<sup>33</sup> See Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, 162-169, who emphasizes Julian's orthodoxy in this matter.

<sup>34</sup> 13:33.2-10,427. *And yet in this I desired, so far as I dared, that I might have had some sight of hell and of purgatory; but it was not my intention to make trial of anything which belongs to our faith, for I believed steadfastly that hell and purgatory exist for the same ends as Holy Church teaches. But my intention was to have seen for instruction in everything which belongs to my faith, whereby I could live more to God's glory and to my profit. But for all that I could wish, I could see nothing at all of this except what has already been said in the fifth revelation, where I saw that the devil is reproved by God and endlessly condemned.* 234.

<sup>35</sup> The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) declared that at the resurrection of the dead those who have done evil will suffer eternal punishment along with the devil. The Second Council of Lyons (1274) alleged that immediately after death those who die in mortal sin or even original sin descend into hell, where they suffered different kinds of punishment. Nonetheless on the day of judgement all will appear in their bodies before the judgement seat of God to give an account of their deeds. See HCT, 327.

<sup>36</sup> The Second Council of Lyons taught that the souls of those who have died repentant and in a state of charity, but have not yet done appropriate penance for their sins, are cleansed by purifying punishments (*poenae purgatoriae*). These punishments can be mitigated by the intercessions of the living faithful in the form of mass, prayer, alms giving and other pious works that the faithful perform for

these: *I ne colde se of thys ryght nouzt*. If we take into account what seeing means to Julian, namely that it involves *beholding* through a synthesis of all the other senses,<sup>37</sup> it seems that the only realization she comes to about purgatory and hell is of the presence of the fiend which she describes in the fifth revelation. She summarizes her understanding as seeing three things: *game, scorne and earnest*:

*I see thre thynges, game, scorne and earnest. I see game, that the feend is ovrcome, and I se scorne, that god scorneth hym, and he shalle be scornyd, and I se earnest, þat he is overcome by the blessydfulle passion and deth of oure lorde Jhesu Crist, that was done in fulle grette earnest and with sad traveyle. And ther I seyde he is scornyd, I ment that god scornyth hym, that is to sey, for he seeth hym now as he shall do without ende. For in this god shewde that the feende is dampnyd. And this ment I ther I seide he schulde be scornyd; for I saw he schalle be scornede at domys day generally of all that schal be savyd, to whos saluacion he hath had grett envye. For then he shall see that all the woo and tribulacion that he hath done them shalle be turned in to encrese of ther joy without ende. And all the payne and the sorow that he wolde haue brought them to shalle for evyr goo with hym to helle.*<sup>38</sup>

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one another in accord with the institutions established by the Church. See HCT, 562. This was repeated in the Council of Florence, 1439, possibly after Julian's death. It seems that this teaching was well known in Julian's day.

<sup>37</sup> See Chapter 2, 51-59.

<sup>38</sup> 5:13.36-49,349-350. *I see three things: sport and scorn and seriousness. I see sport, that the devil is overcome; and I see scorn, that God scorns him and he will be scorned; and I see seriousness, that he is overcome by the blessed Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was accomplished in great earnest and with heavy labour. And when I said that he is scorned, I meant that God scorns him, that is, because he sees him now as he will forever. For in this God revealed that the devil is damned. And I meant this when I said that he ought to be scorned; for I saw that on Judgement Day he will be generally scorned by all who will be saved, of whose salvation he has had great envy. For then he will see that all the woe and tribulation which he has caused them will be changed into the increase of their eternal joy. And all the pain and the sorrow that he wanted to bring them into will go forever with him to hell. 202.*

Ultimately the fiend is damned. Glasscoe suggests that, although Julian uses,

the conventional word for 'hell', the formulation of the showing reveals it is a state of annihilation, in that what the fiend has done has been transfigured through suffering, and he has no reality but his own pain.<sup>39</sup>

Julian describes his annihilation as a game, suggesting that in comparison to Christ's power, the power of the fiend can never be taken seriously.

Paradoxically, this contest at play, which causes horrific suffering, results in laughter: *For this syght, I laght myghtely*.<sup>40</sup> Game indicates that the fiend is overcome, scorned, that God scorns him, while *ernest*<sup>41</sup> means that the fiend is overcome by the passion of Christ. Significantly, when Julian mentions hell, she does not mean that human beings are damned to hell, but the fiend who will go to hell with the sorrow and pain he would inflict on human beings. All the pain that the fiend can produce, Christ will transform to eternal joy.

In considering the possibility of eternal damnation, Julian questions a view-point assumed in her era about the collective damnation of the Jews:

*But I saw nott so properly specyfied the Jewes that dyd hym to deth; but nott withstondyng I knew in my feyth that they ware a cursyd and dampnyd without ende, savyng tho þat were convertyd*

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<sup>39</sup> Glasscoe, *English Medieval Mystics*, 232.

<sup>40</sup> 5:13.25,348. *Because of this sight I laughed greatly*. 201.

<sup>41</sup> See BSAJN, n.37, 349-350, for a list of possible scriptural allusions. Colledge and Walsh point out that *ernest* was also used in the context of Christ's pledge for human redemption.

*by grace.*<sup>42</sup>

Through this unfortunate example, Julian suggests that even in confronting the worst sin the Church could imagine, there is always a sin-grace dialectic that favours the more powerful grace of God. Julian can never discount the power of divine love, or the presence of grace and suggest that anyone is actually damned.<sup>43</sup> God in the end has the last word that has taken place in Christ: *I shall make all things well.*

Thus Julian can confidently say that *alle mankynd that shalle be savyd*, or, those *that shalle be safe*,<sup>44</sup> or *Jhesu is in all that shall be safe, and all that (shall) be sa(fe) is in Jhesu*.<sup>45</sup> She remarks: *I speke of them that shalle be savyd, for in this tyme god shewde me no nother*.<sup>46</sup> Julian comes to the conclusion that all humankind *shall* be saved. The various derivations of this phrase have an important theological meaning for Julian. *Alle*, as we have noted earlier,

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<sup>42</sup> 13:33.21-23,428. *But I saw nothing so exactly specified concerning the Jews who put him to death; and nonetheless I knew in my faith that they were eternally accursed and condemned, except those who were converted by grace.* 234.

<sup>43</sup> It is noteworthy that Julian does not state that eternal life is confined to creatures with intellect and will, and she makes no comment about animals.

<sup>44</sup> 13:27.36,407. *who will be saved.* 225.

<sup>45</sup> 14:51.265-266, 538. *Jesus is in all who will be saved, and all who will be saved are in Jesus.* 276. See Chapter 6, n.77, 265.

<sup>46</sup> 1:9.20-21,323. *I speak of those who will be saved, for at this time God showed me no one else.* 192. Cf. Chapter 4, n.31,138 and Chapter 5, n.53, 203.

conveys a universal sense of all human beings having being in God.<sup>47</sup> *Shalle* designates the necessity of salvation occurring.<sup>48</sup> *Shalle* implies that salvation will inevitably come to fruition. *Savyd* or *safe* integrates two theological perspectives that inform Julian's soteriology. Salvation means that human beings, created with being in God in a relationship of *oneing* with the Trinity, will return to God, and salvation is about deliverance from the non-being of sin. *Savyd* draws on the perception of being delivered, rescued, or protected from impending danger.<sup>49</sup> Thus the phrase, *alle mankynd that shalle be savyd*, integrates the theological perspective that human beings are being rescued or saved from the non-being of sin. It describes the salvific work experienced throughout life. From another perspective, *safe* in Middle English can designate a receptacle for safe storage, a secure place for protecting things.<sup>50</sup> In this sense, theologically, *safe* echoes Julian's images of being enclosed in the Trinity.<sup>51</sup> The journey of salvation is to find a secure dwelling place in God. *Safe* can also denote being uninjured, being whole, healthy, or well.<sup>52</sup> In this context *safe* relates to Julian's idea of salvation occurring when all is well. The phrase *all that shall be safe* discloses that salvation is about being safe in God, well, and one in God. Thus the variations

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<sup>47</sup> See n.8, 373, and Chapter 4, n.29, 137-138.

<sup>48</sup> See Chapter 8, n.32, 325.

<sup>49</sup> NSOED, 2695. *Saved*, however, is also related to *safe* through the Old French, *sauf*.

<sup>50</sup> NSOED, 2665.

<sup>51</sup> See Chapter 3, 115-120.

<sup>52</sup> NSOED, 2665.

on the phrases, *mankynd that shalle be savyd*, or, those *that shalle be safe* encapsulate Julian's idea of universal salvation.<sup>53</sup> The human journey is from God to God. Our destiny is to be saved from the non-being of sin, to be one in God, to be well.

#### IV. THE LAST THINGS

Julian presents a depiction of the last judgement, where she gives a glimpse of what it will be like when *all is well*. This vision reflects her understanding that what occurs in historical time is brought to completion in the eschaton:

*And therefore whan the dome is gevyn, and we be alle brough(t) vppe aboue, than shalle we clerely see in god the prevytees whych now be hyd to vs. And then shalle none of vs be steryd to sey in ony thyng: Lorde, yf it had ben thus, it had ben wele. But we shalle alle sey with one voyce: Lorde, blessyd mott thou be, for it is thus, it is wele; and now we see verely that alle thyng is done as it was thyn ordynawnce or ony thyng was made.*<sup>54</sup>

In referring to the *dome*, Julian is making reference to the final communal

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<sup>53</sup> 1:9.11,322. *all men ... who will be saved*. 191. Palliser, *Christ, Our Mother of Mercy*, n.5, 58-59, points out that Julian uses over thirty associated phrases that emphasize the salvation of all. Palliser suggests that Julian qualifies what she has to say about salvation by limiting its application to "those who are to be saved". This, she suggests, counteracts accusations of universalism. In the context of the sayings, however, *those* relates to *all*. The Middle English meaning of *shall* indicates a more universal interpretation.

<sup>54</sup> 16:85.11-17,729-730. *And therefore when the judgement is given, and we are all brought up above, we shall then clearly see in God the mysteries which are now hidden from us. And then shall none of us be moved to say in any matter: Lord, if it had been so, it would have been well. But we shall all say with one voice: Lord, blessed may you be, because it is so, it is well, and now we see truly that everything is done as it was ordained by you before anything was made.* 341.

judgement at the end of time.<sup>55</sup> The Fourth Lateran Council defined this as the time when all souls resume their bodies and appear in person before Christ for the last or general judgement.<sup>56</sup> At the judgement their happiness or misery is experienced in bodily aspect. We can see Julian's inability to envisage the last judgement as a day of retribution when we compare her reference to the *dome* to an illumination of the Last Judgement from The St. Omer Psalter, painted near Norwich in Julian's day.<sup>57</sup> Within the initial D, which begins Psalm 109, *Dixit Dominus*, Christ seated in judgement, raises his hands and shows his wounds from the passion, while graves lie in rows in front of Christ and the dead are rising ready for judgement. Although the imagery which emphasizes Christ's passion, even in his glory, is consistent with Julian's theology of the cross, her understanding of the last judgement is significantly different. In stark contrast to

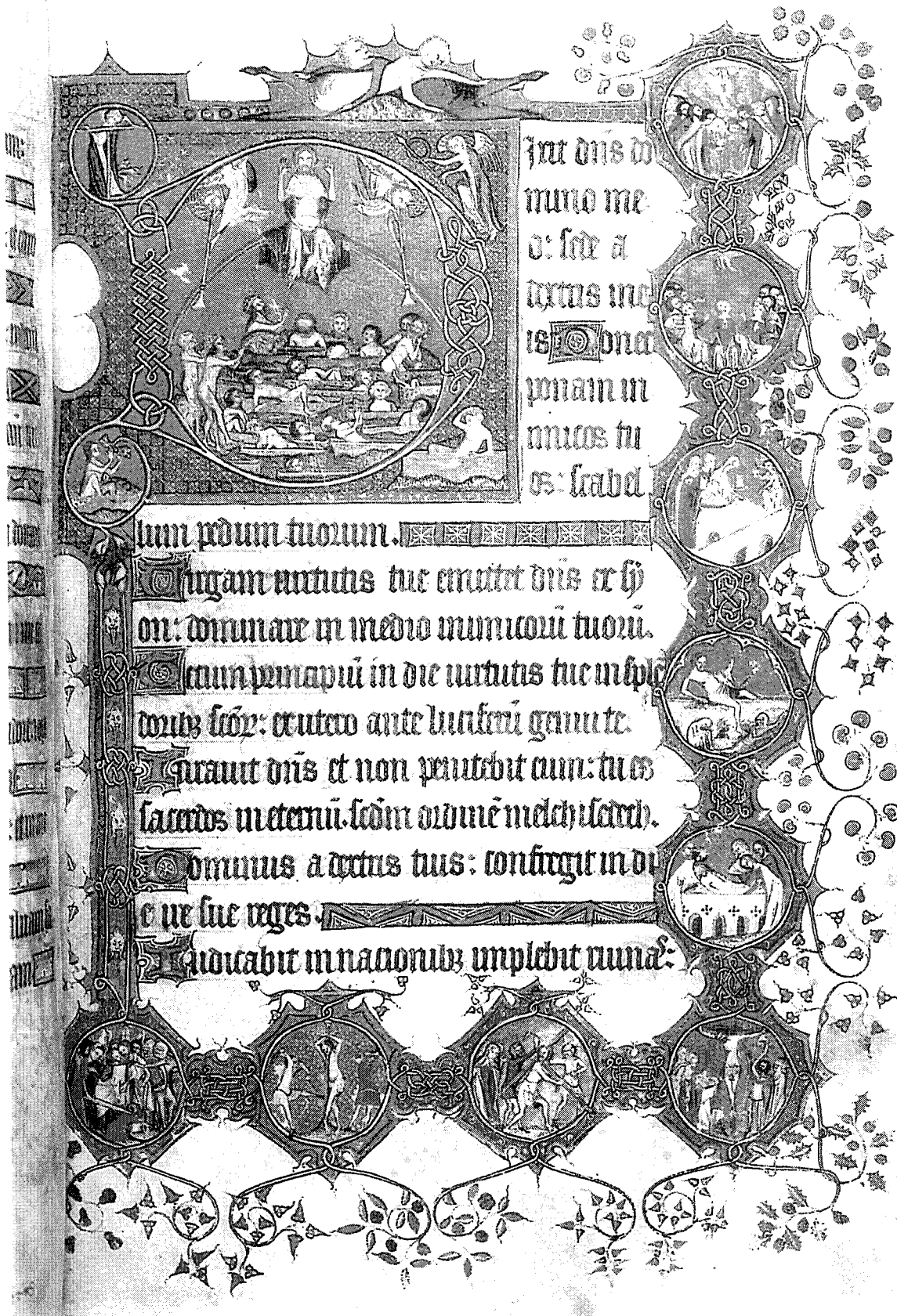
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<sup>55</sup> The last judgement was based on passages from scripture such as Matthew 24: 1-51 and Revelation 20:1-21:8.

<sup>56</sup> For a summary of the controversy that occurred as to whether the last judgement transpired before or after the beatific vision, see Paul Blinski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (London: The British Museum Press, 1996), 212-214. By Julian's day, Pope Benedict XII had issued a Bull, *Benedictus Deus* which asserted that the beatific vision occurred to the just before the last judgement. The last judgement is of less concern to Julian than the beatific vision.

<sup>57</sup> Psalm 109, The Last Judgement, from The St. Omer Psalter (See 390). Marks and Morgan, *English Manuscript Painting*, 81. This East Anglian illumination was commissioned by the St. Omer family who lived near Norwich. It was begun around 1330-40 and not finished until 1414-22. The nine roundels in the border tell the story of Christ's passion, death and resurrection. For other examples of public imagery that depicted the fearful nature of this event, see David Bevington and others, *Homo Memento Finis: The Iconography of Just Judgement in Medieval Art and Drama* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1985).





Et dñs do-  
mū me-  
o: sedē a  
dextis me-  
is. **Q**uia  
penam in-  
micos tu-  
os: scabel-

lum pedum tuorum.

**Q**uia virtutis tue erudit dñs et sy-  
on: dominare in medio inimicorū tuorū.

**C**um perapū in die virtutis tue in splē-  
dore scōr: erutero ante luciferū genu te.

**Q**uia dñs et non peutebit cum: tu es  
sacerdos in eternū. scdm ordinē melchisedech.

**D**ominus a dextis tuis: confregit in di-  
e ue sue reges.

**J**udicabit in nationibz implebit ciuitas:

Julian's comment, *than shalle we clerely see in god the prevytees whych now be hyd to vs*, the characters rising from the graves have their faces turned away from Christ. They cannot see clearly. Their body language and facial expression communicate an ambience of fear. In a time when most art and literature conveyed this Parousia of Christ as a terrible day at the end of the world when hidden sins would be revealed and punished with inescapable retribution, Julian does not mention either the pardoning or punishing of sin. Rather, she describes the end-time as a time when *all is well* and when all say with one voice, *all is well*. The last judgement evokes a song of praise expressed with pleasure and kindly courtesy: *blessyd mott thou be. It is wele* affirms undeniably that everything is as God intended it to be.

### Heaven

Julian also describes heaven in a more concrete way as a wonderful banquet.

This seems to be an intellectual vision where Julian's understanding transcends to heaven:

*And in thys my vnderstondyng was lyftyd vppe in to hevyn, wher I saw our lorde god as a lorde in his owne howse, whych lorde hayth callyd alle hys derewurthy frendes to a solempne fest. Than I saw the lorde takyng no place in hys awne howse; but I saw hym ryally reigne in hys howse, and all fulfyllyth it with joy and myrth, hym selfe endlesly to glad and solace hys derewurthy frendes fulle homely and fulle curtesy, with mervelous melody in endelesse loue in hys awne feyer blessydfulle chere, which glorious chere of the godhede fulfyllyth alle hevyn of ioy and blysse.<sup>58</sup>*

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<sup>58</sup> 6:14.4-12,351-352. *And in this my understanding was lifted up into heaven, where I saw our Lord God as a Lord in his own house, who has called all his friends to a splendid feast. Then I did not see him seated anywhere in his*

Through the metaphor of a banquet, Julian presents heaven as the fulfilment of the reign of God, the completion of this earthly life in eternity. Like the parable of the banquet in Luke 14:15-24, Julian envisages heaven as a great feast where God who is lord of the house calls all his friends to solemn festivity to celebrate the fulfilment of the reign of God. Unlike Luke's parable, however, Julian does not focus on those invited who do not respond. At the banquet Julian envisages, each has a *oneing* presence to the other.

The banquet gives a description of the *fulhed of joy*.<sup>59</sup> All at the banquet are immersed in limitless joy. They share the blessings of creation, engage in union and communion with each other and ultimately experience the fulfilment in God of who they really are. This eternal joy reflects the joy Julian saw in the crucified Christ,<sup>60</sup> that includes his union with all humanity, and the transformation of suffering. As the lord imparts eternal joy, praise wells up. The communion of saints become one with the *mervelous melody in endlesse loue*,

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*own house; but I saw him reign in his house as a king and fill it all full of joy and mirth, gladdening and consoling his dear friends with himself, very familiarly and courteously, with wonderful melody in endless love in his own fair blissful countenance, which glorious countenance fills all heaven full of the joy and bliss of the divinity.* 203.

<sup>59</sup> The *fulhed of joy* for Julian is to find meaning in Christ, to have Christ and to behold God in all. See Chapter 8, 366-368.

<sup>60</sup> 9:22.5-6,382. *It is a joy, a blysse, an endlesse lykyng to me that evyr I sufferd passion for the. It is a joy, a bliss, an endless delight to me that ever I suffered my Passion for you.* 216. See Chapter 5, 217-227.

which comes from *the feyer blessydfulle chere* of the lord.<sup>61</sup> The scene discloses a vision of a future ruled by the loving will of God, a future full of joy where we will live in peace with one another in a wholeness that can come only when human beings are one with God.

Further contemplation of the joyous community at the banquet reveals three degrees of bliss that human beings will receive in heaven:

*God shewde thre degrees of blysse that ech soule shalle haue in hevyn that wyllyngfully hayth servyd god in any degree in erth. The first is the wurshyppe (and) thangke of our lorde god that he shall receyve when he is delyverde of payne.*<sup>62</sup>

In concentrating on these degrees of bliss, Julian stresses the continuity between what is built up in history and what constitutes the kingdom of God at the end of time. She moves away from an image of a cataclysmic end of the world where individuals will be judged for what they have not done, towards the honour and thanks human beings will receive simply because they are who they are. The second degree of bliss reveals how the communion of saints will see God's honourable thanking: *alle the blessyd creatures that be in hevyn shalle se the wurschypfulle thangkyng.*<sup>63</sup> There is a communal dimension where individuals are

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<sup>61</sup> We will look at the meaning of *blessydfulle chere* shortly, 397-399.

<sup>62</sup> 6:14.13-16,352. *God showed three degrees of bliss that every soul will have in heaven who has voluntatily served God in any degree upon earth. The first is the honour and thanks from our Lord God which he will receive when he is delivered from pain.* 203.

<sup>63</sup> 6:14.21-22,352. *all the blessed in heaven will see the honour of the thanks.* 203.

bound in love to God and to one another. The "dialectical tie between selfhood and otherness" that the Holy Spirit activates in time comes to completion.<sup>64</sup> The third degree of bliss discloses how this glory lasts eternally: *ryght so schalle it laste without ende*.<sup>65</sup> The praise of the communion of saints which is in union with God lasts forever.

## V. THE BEATIFIC VISION

A second analogy that Julian uses to describe eternal life is the depiction of heaven as a continuation of the prayer of *beholdyng*, which we examined earlier.<sup>66</sup> This reflects the eschatology expressed in 1 Corinthians 13:12, "but now we see in a mirror dimly (glass darkly), but then face to face". She presents heaven not so much as something completely external to our present experience of God, but as anticipated and known in time through our *continuall prayer*:

*And thus shalle we with his swete grace in our owne meke continuall prayer come in to hym now in this lyfe by many prevy touchynges of swete gostly syghtes and felynges, mesuryd to vs as oure sympylhed may bere it. And this is wrought and shall be by the grace of the holy gost, so long tyll we shall dye in longyng for loue. And than shall we alle come in to oure lorde, oure selfe clerely knowyng and god fulsomy hauyng, and we endlesly be alle hyd in god, verely seyeng and fulsomy felyng, and hym gostely heryng, and hym delectably smellyng, and hym swety swelwyng. And ther shall we se god face to face, homely and fulsomy. The creature that is made shall see and endlesly beholde god whych is the maker; for thus may no man se god and leue aftyr, that is to sey in this dedely lyffe. But whan he of his speciall grace wyll shewe*

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<sup>64</sup> See Chapter 8, 335.

<sup>65</sup> 6:14.28,353. *will last forevermore*. 204.

<sup>66</sup> See Chapter 8, 363-368.

*hym here, he strengthyth the creature a bouyn the selfe, and he mesuryth þe shewyng aftyr his awne wylle, and it is profytable for þe tym.*<sup>67</sup>

In this vision of heaven we see another description of eternal *oneing* where we come to know ourselves in union with the fullness of divine life. Julian uses all the senses, *seyeng, felyng, gostely heryng, delectably smellyng* and *swetly swelwyyng*, to describe the quality of *oneing* experienced in eternal life.<sup>68</sup> The context suggests that she is elaborating on her personal experience of gradually becoming one with divine love in prayer. Through the use of vivid, sensual imagery, Julian suggests that the incomprehensibility of eternity can only be illustrated as a vision of love. Her concentration of sensual imagery points to an integration between spiritual and bodily knowing and loving. It also implies that paradoxically in death we finally become fully human. We attain the completion of every part of our being in God.

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<sup>67</sup> 14:43.45-59,480-482. *And so we shall by his sweet grace in our own meek continual prayer come into him now in this life by many secret touchings of sweet spiritual sights and feelings, measured out to us as our simplicity may bear it. And this is done and will be done by the grace of the Holy Spirit, until the day that we die, still longing for love. And then we shall all come into our Lord, knowing ourselves clearly and wholly possessing God, and we shall all be endlessly hidden in God, truly seeing and wholly feeling, and hearing him spiritually and delectably smelling him and sweetly tasting him. And there we shall see God face to face, familiarly and wholly. The creature which is made will see and endlessly contemplate God who is the maker; for so can no man see God and live afterwards, that is to say in this mortal life. But when he of his special grace wishes to show himself here, he gives the creature more than its own strength, and he measures the revelation according to his own will, and it is profitable for that time. 255.*

<sup>68</sup> See Chapter 2, 56-591.

Attention to each of the senses helps Julian convey the glorious, ineffable delight and enjoyment in God in eternal life. Each sense distinguishes the dynamism of the joy that ensues when love is central. *Oure selfe clerely knowyng* points to the merging of knowledge in the beatific vision as we see ourselves in God, and knower and the known become one. *Fulsomly hauyng* and *hyd in god* describes the transformation we experience as God carries us into the embrace of divine love. This enables us to become one with the meaningful whole, to possess God, to be in God,<sup>69</sup> and to know that God is all in all. Feeling is often used as a synonym for the perception of transcendental reality, for spiritual knowledge.<sup>70</sup> It conveys bodily-felt knowledge and also vision or insight. In this context, *fulsomly felyng* is similar to *saworyng*, which Julian uses in her definition of prayer.<sup>71</sup> It describes unrestrained freedom and love. *Gostly heryng* is the internalizing of God's communication with us that occurs when we listen with the ear of the heart. *Delectably smellyng* intimates the ultimate act of union with God. It alludes to scripture passages such as the lovers in the Song of Songs who drip with the scent of choice ointments and herbs,<sup>72</sup> or to the woman who anoints Jesus' feet with precious nard (Luke 7:46). *Swetly swelwyng* implies mystical

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<sup>69</sup> Riehl, *Middle English Mystics*, 128. This idea of possessing God dates back to Philo (died ca. 50) who connected the Old Testament idea of possessing God with the Greek concept of mystical possession of God.

<sup>70</sup> Riehl, *Middle English Mystics*, 110.

<sup>71</sup> See Chapter 8, 367-368.

<sup>72</sup> Riehl, *Middle English Mystics*, 115. See 115-119 for a further examples of this imagery in mystical literature.

enjoyment of God. Although often linked with the blessed sacrament, in this context, *swelwyng* denotes the eternal consuming of God.<sup>73</sup> Tasting as in "taste and see the goodness of God" (Ps 34:8), also denotes internalizing spiritual knowledge, receiving wisdom, or savouring divine love. Julian's use of the spiritual senses points to eternal *oneing* as the complete fulfilment of the human being. Nevertheless, the possible metaphorical nature of the senses leaves us with an inconclusive answer as to whether she conceives of union with God in a purely spiritual dimension or fulfilment in the physical dimension.

Reference to all these senses assists Julian in giving her own interpretation of the teaching on the beatific vision which was promulgated by Pope Benedict XII in 1336 in *Benedictus Deus*. The document describes the eternal seeing and *beholding* of God face-to-face after death. The promulgation prescribes that the souls of the elect:

(S)ee the divine essence with an intuitive vision and even face to face without the mediation of any creature by way of object of vision; rather the divine essence immediately manifests itself to them plainly, clearly and openly, and in this vision they enjoy the divine essence.<sup>74</sup>

De Ganck highlights the essential meaning behind the notion of the beatific vision:

(V)ision of God and union with him in the beyond are spoken of as

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<sup>73</sup> Riehl, *Middle English Mystics*, 107-108. Riehl points to translator's discomfort with this image and their choice to replace "swallowing" for the less vivid word "smelling" or even "following".

<sup>74</sup> Josef Neuner and Jacques Dupuis Collins, eds. *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, rev. ed. (London: Collins, 1983), 685.



being *multifariam multisque modis* in multiple and various ways, as for instance the vision of God face to face (1 Cor 13:12), to see God as he is (1 Jn 3:2), to be with Christ (Ph 2:23), expressions often – though not always – emphasizing the individual's final beatitude. What all these expressions attempt to convey is oneness with a God who, paradoxically remains incomprehensible.<sup>75</sup>

Although Julian never uses the words *beatific vision*, her description of *coming in to oure lorde* has a similar emphasis to this document on the intuitive vision and immediate face-to-face experience of God. In this perfect contemplation of God, which God gratuitously imparts, the blessed experience a transparency to the absolute nature of divine love and become one with God, who paradoxically remains incomprehensible.

By describing the face of God as *blessydfulle chere*, Julian alludes to the enjoyment of seeing the divine essence that becomes an experience of *oneing*:

*The hyghest blesse that is is to haue god in cleerte of endlessse lyght, hym verely seyng, hym swetly felyng, hym all peasable havyng in fullhede of joye; and thus was þe blessydfulle chere of oure lorde god shewde in perty.*<sup>76</sup>

*Beholding the blessydfulle chere* in the clarity of endless light is the highest beatitude that the blessed can experience. Through repeating the imagery used in her descriptions of *beholdyng*, Julian continues her description of the *oneing* experienced in the face to face vision of the *blessydfulle chere* of God as she

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<sup>75</sup> Roger De Ganck, *Towards Unification with God: Beatrice of Nazareth in Her Context*, pt. 3 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1991), 535.

<sup>76</sup> 16:72.6-9, 659-660. *The highest bliss there is, is to possess God in the clarity of endless light, truly seeing him, sweetly feeling him, peacefully possessing him in the fulness of joy; and a part of this blessed aspect of our Lord God was revealed.* 320.

tastes, feels and has God in the fullness of joy. She continues to describe this

*blessydfulle chere*:

*And evyr the more clerly that the soule seeyth the blyssefull chere by grace of lovyng, the mor it longyth to se it in fulhed, that is to sey in his owne lykenes. For notwithstanding that oure lorde god dwellyth now in vs, and is here with vs, and colleth vs and beclosyth vs for tendyr loue, that he may nevyr leue vs, and is more nere to vs than tonge may telle or harte may thyngke, yet maye we nevyr stynte of mornynge ne of wepyng nor of sekyng nor of longyng, tyll whan we se hym clere in his blessydfulle chere; for in þat precious syght ther may no woo abyde nor wele feyle.<sup>77</sup>*

The interplay of spelling between *bliss* and *blessed*,<sup>78</sup> *blyssefull chere* and *blessydfulle chere*, expresses a perception of the glory of God and the supreme gladness, delight, and joyfulness of the experience of *oneing*. It designates the sacredness and holiness of the face to face vision. The glimpses we have in this life through grace, of the *blessydfulle chere* of our Lord God who *dwellyth now in vs, and is here with vs, and colleth vs and beclosyth vs for tendyr loue*, make us long all the more for the face to face encounter with God's *blessydfulle chere*. In this *chere* woe will no longer exist. The *exitus reditus* will be complete when we see the fullness of God's *blessydfulle chere* and know in the fullness of joy that *all*

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<sup>77</sup> 16:72.23-31,661-662. (A)nd always, the more clearly that the soul sees the blessed face by the grace of loving, the more it longs to see it in fulness, that is to say in God's own likeness. For even though our Lord God dwells now in us, and is here with us, and embraces us and encloses us for his tender love, so that he can never leave us, and is nearer to us than tongue can tell or heart can think, still we can never cease from mourning and weeping, seeking and longing, until we see him clearly, face to his blessed face, for in that precious sight no woe can remain, no well-being can be lacking. 320.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. LXXII:2941-2949,139. The Sloane1 manuscript reads *blisfull chere*. This manuscript's translation, *our Lord God wonnyth in us and is here with us*, gives a dynamic sense of the ongoing experience of *oneing*.

*shall be well.*

Julian encapsulates her eschatology in her phrase *all shall be well*. The inclusive nature of the *all shall be well* statement that embraces the whole of reality gives Julian's eschatology a distinctive spirit. All are included in the fulfilment of *oneing*. Julian can never envisage that the love of God is less powerful than sin and the power of evil. Though Julian never goes against Church teaching on the possibility of damnation, ultimately she sees that the fiend is overcome for all time. This is a cause for laughter. Julian's images of heaven work together to create a dynamic sense of final *oneing* in the eschaton where humanity will finally see themselves, in the fullness of joy, that *all is well*. Thus we can see that Julian's eschatology focuses on elements of continuity and transformation. On one hand there is a line of continuity between the present and the future. There is a direct link between beginnings and endings. At the same time, however, there is an equally important dimension of discontinuity and transformation where the emphasis is on completion and fulfilment. There is an accent on consummation and the possibility of being surpassed by joy in seeing God's *blessydfulle chere* in eternity. In the third, we will finally have our fulfilling.

**PART SIX**  
**WHAT WAS THE MEANING?**  
*(What was our lords meaning (16:86.14,732).*

## CHAPTER TEN

### JULIAN'S SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING AND ITS RELEVANCE FOR SOTERIOLOGY TODAY

*I was answeyrd in gostly vnderstondyng* (16:86.14-15,732).

At the end of the *showings* Julian indicates her desire to know God's meaning: *And fro the tyme þat it was shewde, I desyerde oftyn tymes to wytt in what wasoure lords menyng. And xv yere after and mor, I was answeyrd in gostly vnderstondyng.*<sup>1</sup> This chapter draws together the spiritual understanding Julian comes to about the nature of salvation summarized in the word *love* and the celebrated song of hope: *I shall make all things well.* The preceding study has shown how, from Julian's perspective, we can see this ourselves because all our life is in three. In the first we have our being, in the second we have our increasing and in the third we have our fulfilling. The aim of this chapter is to collate the major aspects of Julian's soteriology. After pointing to the intrinsic relationship between theology and soteriology, and drawing out the implications of Julian's hermeneutic of *beholding*, I will focus on Julian's soteriology of *oneing*: *oneing* in being, *oneing* through the crucifixion, *oneing* through the servant, *oneing* through Christ the deep wisdom of the Trinity our mother, *oneing* through the Holy Spirit and *oneing* in the eschaton.

#### All Theology is Soteriological

Julian demonstrates how Christian theology is by its very nature soteriological.

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<sup>1</sup> 16:86.13-15,732. *And from the time that it was revealed, I desired many times to know in what was our Lord's meaning. And fifteen years after and more, I was answered in spiritual understanding.* 342.

All reality is set in a soteriological context from God to God. It is an *exitus reditus*. All the theology expressed in the *showings* relates to soteriology, from our *oneing* through the Trinity, our being in God, our increasing in Christ and our fulfilment through the Holy Spirit. There is no separate theology of the Trinity, Christology, theology of nature and grace, pneumatology, eschatology. Julian does not present doctrines that inform these theologies and then add insights revealed in the concrete events of salvation history. Theology and soteriology are intrinsically integrated. No theology of the Trinity, or creation, nature or grace is ever conducted in isolation. On the negative side, this integrated approach makes it difficult to interpret specific aspects of the theology that informs Julian's soteriology without placing an artificial structure on the text. On the positive side, however, this integration keeps before us the inter-relationship between all events in salvation history and the complexity involved in attempting to interpret the meaning of salvation.

#### A Hermeneutic of *Beholding*

Notably, Julian's soteriology begins and ends in *beholding*. *Beholding* is a connecting thread that runs through the entire *showings*. It unites themes and integrates meaning. It draws the reader into the language of the text, inviting understanding. *Beholding* makes the movement in understanding circular: from *beholding* our being in God, to *beholding* the passion, to *beholding* the motherhood in God, to *beholding* in existential experience through prayer, to the *beholding* experienced in the beatific vision. Yet this is not a tightly closed hermeneutical circle. The hermeneutic is dialectical. It embraces paradox and

invites dialogue between theory and experience. Interpreting the text is sacramental. It encourages participation in the meaning that unfolds. The way of interpretation that mystical literature invites can make an important contribution to the interpretative process. It gives another lens through which to understand the mystery of the divine. Julian's *showings* engage the interpreter in contemplative knowing. They enable the expression of ideas not readily communicated in other ways of doing theology.

Julian's way of *beholding* corporeal sights, words forming in her understanding and spiritual sights challenges those who consider that theology cannot be expressed in metaphorical language which creates such ethereal categories. A disadvantage is that Julian's soteriology is not highly structured. Themes and topics are not dealt with in logical order. Yet, I have argued throughout the thesis, the language that emerges through Julian's rigorous reflection of these ways of expressing mystery can inform other methods of theological reflection. Julian's method and use of metaphor present insights often lost in a more classically argued approach which prizes linear thinking as the only logical outcome of reflection of the meaning of existence. Julian's use of metaphor challenges the bias of the tradition towards predominantly left brain thinking. Julian gives us a contemplative way of interpretation that balances knowing and loving.

*The Revelations of Divine Love*, I have argued, deserve to be classified as public (dependent) revelation. Julian's writings are an important source of reflection on

how God has revealed God's self in the lives of women. They are a source of theological reflection that the tradition must embrace if it is to express with authenticity the story of the whole people of God. Yet, Julian's writings should not be confined to the corpus of women's literature. Julian has the depth of a great theologian. Her writing about salvation has an important contribution to make to men and women who wish to understand more about soteriology.

### **A Trinitarian Soteriology of Love**

In a time when Christian theology is rejuvenating the doctrine of the Trinity, Julian's trinitarian soteriology has a definite contribution to make. She creates a distinctive trinitarian soteriology that integrates God, Christ, Spirit and the world. Her doctrine of the Trinity affirms that the being of God is love. It belongs to God's nature to be in relationship with humanity and its history. Her theology of presence reveals that God's presence is reliable and constant. The sharing of divine love is irrevocable. The triune God's whole being and activity are involved in salvation. This deeply trinitarian soteriology provides a balance often lost in a soteriology that is confined to Christology. Julian's soteriology is a reminder that Christians believe in a triune God.

Julian's soteriology is a theology of love. Through identifying the essence of the Godhead as *charity unmade*, Julian makes a significant theological point about the being of God as love. This suggests that God is active from all eternity as love. Essential to what it means to love, is for love always to be in relation to creation. It is impossible to conceive of God's inner life, *charity unmade*, without seeing



how God relates to us as *charity made* and *charity given*. For Julian the doctrine of the Trinity is not simply a doctrine of received formulations about the inner life of God that do not inform Christian life. Her doctrine of the Trinity intrinsically includes the relationship of the Trinity to creation. A soteriology that unites God's being and God's doing can give our contemporary world a way of developing a dynamic theology of divine presence.

Julian's presentation of the divine-human relationship as a *perichoresis* not only in the mutual giving and receiving of divine love within the Trinity, but in the sharing of love with humanity implies that human beings exist within divine life. Human beings are an important, if not necessary, dimension of the loving of the Trinity. Thus there are not two sets of trinitarian relationships, one within the divine being and the other in history. The one mystery of communion encompasses God and humanity reciprocally enclosed in each other. If Julian's stress on the dynamic relational indwelling of the Trinity in humanity is taken seriously, it means that love is at the centre of all reality. Shared divine love is the fundamental source from which we have being. This creates an ontology of being-in-relationship. This means that the Trinity is bound to humanity and its history in an unalterable covenant initiated in love and destined to be upheld despite sin in the world. Human beings can only ever be understood in relation to the love within the Trinity. An awareness of this life of communion we exist in enables us to be more attentive to what this gift means and to respond to the gift. It creates a sense of wonder and awe. It humbles, frees and empowers. It calls us to participate fully in divine life.

Julian creates a soteriology of *oneing*. There is an ontological *oneing* when humanity is created *one* with the Trinity and an existential *oneing* as humanity continues to be *oned* through the working of the Son and Holy Spirit. The movement of this *oneing* reflects the Plotinian notion of *exodus reditus*. A soteriology of *oneing* creates an evolutionary sense of transforming union of ever deepening love. Human beings, created with the potential to be one with God, are continually drawn into the mystery of God's unfolding plan of salvation of further *oneing*. The idea of *oneing* leads to a soteriology that is not limited to salvation from sin or understood as a hierarchical ascension of steps to God. *Oneing* creates a soteriology of *koinonia*, total communion. This dynamic oneness between God and humanity undermines any inherent dualism that places the divine and human in opposition. *Oneing* describes the intrinsic participation of the life-giving love of God in human lives. *Oneing* designates the constancy of divine revelation.

The pattern of *exodus reditus* from being in God to fulfilment in God shifts emphasis away from a juridically fashioned soteriology. It creates a soteriology that focuses on the presence of trinitarian love in human beings and the dynamic sharing of this love that continues through history. The implications are that salvation is not an after thought to the divine plan initiated because human beings went astray. Salvation is an essential part of the divine providence from origin to fulfilment. A model of soteriology based on the cyclic flow of love from emanation to return creates a cosmic, universal, evolutionary, transformational soteriology that embraces historical time and eternity. This expands our

understanding of God's salvific will by shifting emphasis away from one act that saved humanity, towards expressing the whole of reality as salvific. This perspective that the whole of reality is cast in a salvific context responds more to a modern concern to find salvific meaning in the totality of life's experiences.

### **A Soteriology of *Oneing* in Being.**

Because all things have being through the love of God there is a fundamental unity between God and all things in creation. Julian understands creating as an organic process where God's work of creating is never isolated from keeping and loving. God is intimately present to all things. The strength of Julian's stress on the immanence of God in creation affirms that there is an indestructible continuing relationship between God and creation. This undercuts the dualism between God and nature. It stresses the innate affinity between God and creation. This suggests that creation is expressive of who God is as love. Creation is God's gift and promise. A soteriology that shows how creation has being in God can make an important contribution to contemporary creation theology. In a time when the future of creation is at risk, this perspective on the holiness of all things can teach reverence and care for creation. Creation is important in God's plan for salvation.

For oneness to be real between human beings and God there must be some affinity with God in our nature or *kynde*. Julian emphasizes that human beings are inherently orientated towards God because they are bound to God by nature. Our substance is kept whole and safe in God. Our soul is made in the image and

likeness of the Trinity. We gave a godly will and kindly will. These locales of *oneing* show how there is something in us that is God-like, something that resembles God's nature, something that longs to return to its source. These *oneings* restlessly draw us to deeper union with the divine, or, as the psalmist says, deep calls to deep (Psalm 42:7). The implications of the multiple *oneings* between human beings and God, established at creation for all time, affirm the inviolable value of human nature. Furthermore, because of ontological *oneing* in being theology is anthropology and anthropology is theology: to say something about God is to say something about human beings. Negatively, Julian could be accused of being almost pantheistic, of over stressing human likeness to God. Positively, her anthropology consistently reveals how it is possible that human beings will become divinized. In a world that often denies the inherent dignity of each human being, this perspective encourages belief in the innate goodness of human beings.

An anthropology based on substance and sensuality enables Julian to develop a unique anthropology that envisages salvation as the coming to wholeness of both the spiritual and bodily aspects of human nature in God. Though Julian's lack of clarity in defining exactly what she means by substance and sensuality is frustrating, there is enough evidence based on her usage of the terminology to conclude that these words express her attempt to overcome the body/spirit split and spiritualization of the human person that was so prevalent in her day. It still scars theological anthropology. Reframing our understanding of human beings as substance (who we are in God) and sensuality (how we exist in the world) enables

us to appreciate that our destiny is for divine life in God as spiritual/embodied beings. The journey to God is to participate in divine life by becoming fully Christ-like in the fullness of Christ's humanity. This does not mean an abandonment of the most human aspects of ourselves, our sensuality, but a full integration of our sensuality. Because we are sensual beings, enfleshed spirits, physical matter is our unique and special means of reaching spiritual perfection. Julian can inform contemporary society about the holiness of the body, sensual knowing and experiencing.

The multiple *oneings* between ourselves and Christ extend from the eternity of God and bridge the void between eternity and history to establish a union with Christ for all time. The *oneing* of human sensuality in Christ in the Incarnation reveals conclusively that God dwells in our humanity. Humanity is of value to God. Humanity is holy. This perspective encourages a respect and reverence for our deepest humanity by awakening us to the presence of Christ within each human being and the desire of God for each person to be whole. People sensitized to an awareness of their inherent goodness can be happy, peaceful people able to share that goodness with others. The implications of the *oneing* of Christ in sensuality is that we are not human people trying to be holy. We are holy people learning to be human. Salvation is salvation within human nature within the world, not escape from human nature and the world.

Julian makes love the motivating factor in the Incarnation by teaching that for love God creates and for love God becomes human. In this perspective, God did

not intend to create human beings and then become human in order to "fix up" what went astray in creation. Human nature was always intended for the Son. This emphasis on Christ's humanity shifts the archetype for what it is to be human away from Adam. It replaces it with Christ, the actualized, fully human being who unites substance and sensuality. Nevertheless, human beings are not always Christ-like. There is something incomplete within human nature that prevents total *oneing* with the divine. An important consequence of the Incarnation is that Christ reveals how this incompleteness can be transcended because Christ takes our sensual soul and unites it to our substance. In Christ, the work of creation continues. Julian can make a valuable contribution to the desire of contemporary theologians to relate Christology to anthropology more completely. She demonstrates that, if we want to know what authentic humanity is, we can discover this in Christ.

Within Julian's vision of our gifted origins humanity is never considered to be disconnected from the love of God. Negatively, though Julian has an image of the love of God grounding all things, present in all things, loving all things, we may wonder why God's love has not affected creation more completely. Though Julian never entertains the concept of what we would call process theology, her understanding of *charity unmade*, *charity made* and *charity given* presents a God deeply involved in the process of *oneing* and affected by what happens in this *oneing*. A soteriology of *oneing* gives a more adequate answer to the modern protest against soteriologies that emphasize the impassibility and immutability of God or present a God who intervenes in history in a spasmodic and inconsistent

manner. In Julian's soteriology God is constantly involved in the process of *oneing*.

### **A Soteriology of *Oneing* in the Crucifixion**

Julian's theology of the cross is expressed as *oneing* in suffering, *oneing* in love and *oneing* in joy. Her theology of the cross exposes suffering. It presents a stark reminder that the journey to God is cruciform. Suffering not only enters the body of God through Christ, suffering extends to the world. All creation is drawn into the meaning of Christ's suffering. Through her concentration on suffering, Julian reminds us that there is no sense in which the pain reflected on the tortured body of Christ or the pain of creation can be denied. She challenges us to confront existential suffering. Julian shows us how to face darkness, to enter the darkness of Christ's suffering and to find divine light. Significantly, the suffering of the cross is never an end in itself, or an excuse for glorifying and accepting suffering. Christ's passion marks a creative moment in salvation history that draws us into its meaning and enables us to know love and joy.

Julian's depictions of the suffering of Christ powerfully convey that in a time of great existential suffering only an image of a suffering compassionate God will address the pain of the world. Julian suggests that the pain reflected on the dying body of Christ is divine love suffering with us. This theological perspective that accentuates Christ's sharing in human suffering makes explicit that human beings are in relationship with a God who suffers. Christ reveals that the very nature of God is to suffer for love, to take the suffering of humanity to God's own being,

to be a saving God through *oneing* in suffering. Julian never conceives of a God unmoved by human suffering.

Julian's theology of the cross addresses the problem of sin in creation and the divine response to sin. Within the shadow of the cross she sees a creative tension. God is in all things and does all things, yet existential alienation, insecurity and meaninglessness confront the truth of salvation seen in God's universal love. Faced with this dichotomy, Julian is in no doubt that the passion exposes the effects of sin on the human condition. Significantly, however, in this model of redemption, Christ is divine love one with human suffering, in a relationship of *oneing*. Julian resists interpreting the meaning of the cross as a propitiatory sacrifice where Christ substitutes himself for sinners and becomes the passive victim who is sacrificed to God for the sins of the world so that humanity will not be eternally damned. Christ's death on the cross is a continuation of the work of *oneing*. Suffering on the cross is an act of love.

Redemption takes on a cosmic dimension which includes the individual, the Church, creation and all things. Sin is understood in a cosmic sense as the absence of good. This makes Julian's soteriology not as privatised as some soteriologies. It shifts emphasis away from a model of redemption that accentuates the guilt and blame attributed to Adam and inherited by humanity. It is not what humanity is saved from that is central. Rather, Julian's soteriology centres on what humanity is created and saved for. We are made to be in a relationship of *oneing* with the divine. Julian does not concentrate on a personal



mysticism that details the inner life of the individual alone. Rather she presents a theology of divine presence in the midst of the sin and suffering of the community, transforming suffering to joy. Although little attention is given to individual free choice and the ability to commit the most life denying sin, Julian is unable to separate divine love from human freedom or sin. This stress on the absolute inter-relationship between God and humanity gives a more adequate answer to a contemporary need to find communal meaning and hope in the midst of existential alienation and despair. It creates a paradigm shift away from attributing individual blame and punishment to sinners, towards hope. This enables the integration of an image of a suffering God who ceaselessly works to draw all reality into the meaning of love.

*Beholding* love comes to a climax in the wound in Christ's side and the out-pouring of water and Christ's blood. Through the cross Christ draws all humankind into the heart of God, a place large enough for all peoples to rest within, in peace and love. These images reveal the present reality of divine love active in human lives. They become images of eternity. The images communicate that those who love know something of eternity. Those who love experience a call beyond and know that love is our beginning, love is our present, and love is our end. We may criticize Julian for her lack of reference to the life and ministry of Christ and her sentimental, romantic imagery. Nevertheless, the imagery she uses makes the cross central and powerfully conveys that the story of the cross is a story of love. The inclusive nature of the invitation into the heart of God awakens universal hope. It reveals that love calls all peoples forth beyond

the temporal. Love cries out for fulfilment. Love gives a glimpse of human potential, a hint of who we are in Christ and the life of communion we are meant to live. Contemporary society can benefit from a poignant reminder of the unconditional love expressed by the crucified Christ.

Although profoundly Christocentric, Julian's theology of the cross is ultimately a theology of the blessed Trinity which is our salvation. The whole point of the Incarnation, passion, death and resurrection is to mediate the life of the Trinity to humanity. This is an occasion for trinitarian joy. The cross enables us to share in the fullness and communion of God's triune life incorporating past, present and future. The connection between the cross and Trinity is not always clearly drawn out in theology. Julian excels at making this bond explicit. She reminds us that the whole doctrine of the Trinity that includes God, Son and Spirit is essential for salvation. It is the triune God who saves. A theology of the cross that is *the blessed Trinity of our salvation* helps correct soteriologies that neglect the trinitarian dimensions of Christology.

Christ's *blessydfulle chere* reveals to Julian that we are completely drawn into the life of the Trinity. We have hope. In *beholding* Christ more glorified, Julian shows how Christ is *I it am that is all*. Christ communicates how trinitarian love permeates all things. Christ compassionately shares suffering and draws all things into trinitarian joy. In our lives we already participate in Christ's joy and have a glimpse of the joy that is to come. This theology of joy, that reveals how struggling with the ambiguity of existence so powerfully reflected in the cross

leads to an awareness of joy, is badly needed in a world that attempts to cover up and avoid facing the truth of the brokenness of human reality. Julian teaches us how to face our brokenness and to see the love of God in the midst of incompleteness. She instructs us how to find light in the midst of darkness, transformation and growth in chaos, and well-being in woe. She teaches us that the journey of the cross is the way of trinitarian joy.

A theology of *glorious asseeth* signifies that the journey of Christ through the cross is a journey of transformation, exaltation, glorification, eschatological fullness and completion. It is a journey of *oneing*. The *glorious asseeth* reveals the unequivocal solidarity of God with the cause of humanity, especially at the point in which humanity is most vulnerable and most at risk, namely death itself. This expression of divine love at the moment of the death of Christ, symbolized by the resurrection, reveals that there is a gratuitous offer of a radically new life for all humanity. The purpose of Christ's redemptive work is to make us *heirs with him in bliss*. When Julian recognizes Christ as *I it am that is all*, she gains a glimpse of how *all shall be well*. The glory of the cross gives a promise of human glory. In our world that cries out for hope, the *glorious asseeth* keeps the hope alive that *all shall be well*.

### **A Soteriology of *Oneing* Through the Servant**

Julian's depiction of parable of the lord and the servant reflects the condensation of her soteriology. The parable metaphorically presents the history of salvation from the experience of the fall, to transformation, to glory. The parable gives a

valuable vignette that can assist contemporary theologians in developing new models of redemption.

Julian examines the fall from two predominant perspectives: the good will of the servant who does not anticipate the fall, and the pain that the servant encounters after he endures loss of union with God after the fall. The servant's consistent desire to do the will of the lord affirms the essential goodness of humankind.

Although the fall intrudes and causes disharmony in the union between God and creatures, God's perseverance in total commitment to creation ensures that human beings are not abandoned because of the fall. Julian's shift of emphasis from a wilful act of disobedience by the servant, to the good will of the servant who accidentally falls in the slade, has significant theological implications for her soteriology. Rather than stress the one act that condemned all humankind, she accentuates the great pains the servant experiences after the fall. Her perspective has biblical precedents in Romans 7: 15, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." Disoriented by sin, human beings forget their natural love for God and become blind to the experience of divine love. Her concentration on the brokenness of the human condition separated from God deflects attention from an historical fall that was caused by sin towards considering the physical and spiritual pain of sin that becomes a consequence of seclusion from God.

The blindness of the servant and his inability to know himself enables Julian to interweave the essential goodness of humankind and the shadow side of human

nature. The metaphor of blindness synthesizes Church teaching that espouses sinners as blameworthy, with God's perspective, which identifies human incapacity to see the deepest truth that humanity has a *godly will*, made in the image and likeness of the Trinity. Julian's concentration on the *godly will* of creatures, rather than the perverse will of creatures, contributes to an appreciation of the fact that the definition of what it means to be human includes human beings as graced creatures.

Julian's image of a feudal lord holds together a respect for God's mystery and transcendence and the compassion of a responsive God to the pain of the human condition. Through her portrait of the lord, she indirectly critiques classical theism's model of an impassable God by presenting a biblical view of God who has a rich emotional life, who feels love, compassion, pity, mercy and concern for the suffering of the servant. This image of a compassionate God reveals how joy exists in the midst of suffering offering hope from despair. The fidelity of a compassionate God gives confidence that *all shall be well*. This enables human beings to withstand enormous hardship and to extend compassion to others.

Through the parable Julian shows how Christ the servant plays a central role in the work for human salvation. He endows creation with an abundance of grace through his work as gardener, through his union of will with the Father, through the double aspect of the servant as humanity and Christ, through his fall into the maiden's womb and his identification as the wisdom of the Father and the head of the body of Christ. Julian situates the work of Christ on earth making the work

of redemption creation-centred. As gardener, Christ displays a vulnerability to human experience that reflects solidarity with human well-being. He labours with human beings to restore harmony to the garden. The focus on human nature as the treasure in the earth that is essential to God's happiness entails an anthropology in which we can only comprehend human nature in relation to God. Conversely, we can only understand God in relation human beings.

The fall that brings life and the fall that brings death reveal the great paradox that the fall of Christ ultimately reveals his glory. The servant shows that God constantly cares for humankind because the moment human beings fall, the Son falls revealing that creation and Incarnation are intrinsically linked. In God's providential plan, creation could never be left separated from Christ. Christ is in all who will be saved and all who will be saved are in Christ. Because humanity is in Christ, the fall becomes a *felix culpa*. There is a new creation which recreates humankind even more fully in union with God than we were before the fall. The servant experiences all the pain and degradation of the human condition on the cross, even to the extent of journeying to hell. In meeting humankind in suffering, the Son offers a share in transformation to resurrection life.

The union found in the servant between Christ, Adam and all humankind points to an ontological union between Christ and humanity. When we relate this to Julian's understanding of Christ as the perfect human who models the complete *oneing* between substance and sensuality, the implication is that human beings, in the truth of who they are, are the *imago Christi*. Human beings are one with

Christ. We have the same identity as Christ. Therefore our destiny is to be fully Christ-like. We are called to be totally human, as Christ is human, one in substance and sensuality. The blurring of the boundaries between Christ and humanity affirms that Christ's story is the human journey of salvation. Some may say Julian has gone too far. We are not Christs. What Julian communicates, however, in this Christology is a profoundly Pauline concept – all things come together in Christ. The Incarnation means that human nature will be made whole in Christ.

Julian recognizes hope for salvation that is partially realized in this life and fully realized in eternity. The parable shows how God's whole existence is tied up with the redemption and liberation of human beings. In Julian's vision of heaven the servant takes humanity with him when he sits at the right hand of the Father. What is unique about Julian's interpretation of heaven is the stress on the joy which God experiences in our salvation. Humanity becomes the glory of God, the crown of Christ, and his reward. The parable facilitates a theology of hope and affirms that human beings can be sure about the constancy of God's love.

#### **A Soteriology of *Oneing* Through Christ the Deep Wisdom of the Trinity Our Mother**

The idea that the deep wisdom of the Trinity is our mother reveals to Julian how Christ continues the work of *oneing* from creation to fulfilment. The three inter-related *beholdings* of motherhood in God disclose ontological and existential *oneing*. They demonstrate how, in Christ, human beings come from God and return to God through the working of grace. As theologians search within the

Christian tradition for ways to give equal status to a complete humanity, embodied and spiritual, male and female, Julian's Christology has a significant contribution to make. Her Christology of the deep wisdom of the Trinity our Mother can serve as a prototype for how all human beings are one in Christ.

When Julian attributes motherhood to Christ's work in history, she finds its source in the very nature of God, the deep wisdom of the Trinity. This Christology provides an important interpretation of how creatures are born of God. With the ground of humankind founded in mother wisdom, we can only discover where we came from, who we are, our purpose and destiny in Christ who gives birth to humanity from all eternity. This revolutionizes soteriology in that Christ images a two-fold feminine manifestation of the divinity, wisdom and mother, in the male physical form of Jesus of Nazareth. Thereby, all individuals, both male and female, can see themselves reflected in the image of Christ. In Julian's soteriology, the mother/wisdom image works with the maleness of Christ to reveal that Christ gives birth to a complete humanity, male and female. Therefore, all humankind, regardless of gender, has the potential for participating in the divine nature by being *oned* to Christ.

Because mother wisdom is the paradigm of all wisdom and knowledge, yet also nurtures us as a mother would physically attend to a child, the value of being wise in mind and responsive to human needs also extends to both women and men. Because Christ is the divine exemplar, the image enables Julian to dissolve classic gender distinctions that equate the masculine principle with the intellect and the



feminine principle with affectivity. Through Christ, the possibility of reflecting the wisdom of God and of caring as Christ cares is available to all who are born in Christ.

The three *beholdings* of the motherhood of God demonstrate how human beings are bound to God by nature and bound to God by grace. This relationship between nature and grace is important for developing a soteriology that goes beyond the dualism of classical theology expressed in authors such as Aquinas, where nature and grace are viewed separately or even in opposition to each other.

Julian creates a unity within distinction between nature and grace. She maintains a balance between the significance of nature created in Christ the mother of *kind* and the presence and working of grace through Christ the mother of grace. For Julian, every human being comes into the world graced by God. Every human being is called by God into a relationship of *oneing*. This divine call has a real effect on the very being of humankind. This implies that the human person is intrinsically turned towards God. Grace is not an extrinsic supernatural reality endowed on humanity as a consequence of sin. Grace is the presence of Christ, the mother of grace, within human nature that is a free unmerited presence.

Julian creates a harmony between nature and grace.

A theology of grace needs to be reclaimed and given new vigour and energy in our contemporary theology. Julian's way of describing grace as grounded in our sensuality in the working of Christ the mother of grace, and the presence of the Holy Spirit in us, gives us fresh images and new ways of understanding grace.

This can assist in making us more attentive to this divine reality in human lives. Too often in Catholic theology grace has been intellectualized, systematized and categorized. Julian's way of describing grace draws attention to the intimacy of the presence and working of grace. Furthermore, in Julian's theology of grace human beings are not undeserving of grace, nor do they need to earn grace. Julian's more nuanced view of the nature/grace relationship retrieves an often neglected aspect of theology that grace is an intrinsic aspect of human nature.

Like grace, mercy contributes to the healing of human beings. In response to sin, the mother of mercy and grace meets human beings as children who need motherly care and love. Through this image of the mother responding to the needs of a child, Julian becomes confident that *all shall be well*. Salvation is grounded in the faithfulness of God actualized through Christ's work of mercy. The world needs mercy. The Church needs mercy. Julian's depiction of divine mercy can assist in reforming a Church too ready to condemn people who are different. Julian teaches that the only way God ever treats human beings is with mercy.

Although Julian does not develop an extensive sacramental theology, she relates the blessed sacrament to her soteriology. The gift of Christ's self as food is not viewed as a sacrifice, however, but as parental nourishment that brings life to humanity. Her image of Eucharist reinforces her theology of presence and the faithfulness of God in the ongoing care of humanity. This linking of the Eucharist to Christ's care for humanity as a mother gives the Eucharist a vital Christological

character.

Julian's ecclesiology creates a model of the Church imbued with the presence of Christ. Christ is the Church. She envisages Church not as an institution, but as a graced people, *all the blessyd comonn*, indwelt by Christ. This ecclesiology points to the Church as a salvific reality where divine love dwells and is expressed personally and communally. The implication of Julian viewing the Church as *all the blessyd comonn*, bound to God by nature and bound to God by grace, gives value to the whole people of God. She gives a pertinent reminder that it is a model of communion that marks the Church as blessed.

#### **A Soteriology of *Oneing* Through the Holy Spirit.**

Julian brings her theology of love to completion by associating *charyte given* with the Holy Spirit who is the divine gift, the active power of love and divine grace present in history. Through this relationship of love Julian completes her trinitarian perspective of God's presence and action for the sake of human beings. The significant role she gives to the Spirit in the sharing of grace gives her soteriology a vital, existential character. In our climate where theology is reclaiming the significance of the Holy Spirit in salvation history, Julian's theology of the Holy Spirit provides a significant missing link in reflection on soteriology by creating an important link between theology and spirituality. This responds to our contemporary consciousness that demands that theology be intrinsically connected to praxis.

Julian's theology of the Holy Spirit lays a foundation for an eschatology that embraces both this world and eternity. The role she gives the Holy Spirit in the present experience of fulfilment and the hope for its future realization in the eschaton provides a valuable example in how this unresolved tension between present and future may harmonize. It is not salvation in this world or salvation in eternity: the already and the not yet are in dialectical tension. Julian's pneumatology, which extends her theology of grace, has an important contribution to make to soteriology today. It awakens us to the presence of *charyte given* or (grace) in our humanness. It reminds us that we stand now in the face of the eternal and experience something of the eternal in the presence of the Holy Spirit in human lives. In other words, the presence of the Holy Spirit gives proleptic access to the eternal in the present. Julian's pneumatology leads the way for a radical unity between the mystical and the practical, contemplation and action, salvation now and salvation in the eschaton.

The Holy Spirit communicates the content of God's saving revelation by teaching us how to know. Julian's stress on knowledge of God, knowledge of self in nature and grace, and knowledge of self as against sin and weakness, affirms the intrinsic connection between God and human nature. Access to God occurs through human beings, not through outside human nature and experience. We have a basis for believing that human nature will be divinized. Although we may criticize Julian for an unbalanced interiority, the point to her idea of self-knowledge is that it makes us conscious of who we essentially are in God in nature and grace. Knowing enables us to come to an awareness that the God we

meet after death is not a stranger to us, but a God we know in this life. The God we hope to be one with is, in a sense, already one with us. The work of the Holy Spirit is to help us truly know this *oneing*. Our world can only benefit from people who are attentive to the work of the Holy Spirit in encouraging self-reflection. Ultimately the presence of the Spirit in teaching us to know ourselves does not lead to introspection. Rather, the Spirit teaches us to be true to our God-like nature, while at the same time teaching us about love and loving.

Julian's theology of the Holy Spirit adds another dimension to the involvement of the Trinity in the experience of suffering. Julian never conceives of divine power as separate to human freedom or placed in opposition to human freedom. Rather, the Spirit acts within all human experience, even the experience of sin and suffering. Through the divine presence, sin becomes a *felix culpa*. Suffering becomes an instigator of joy. Her teachings about grace being an intrinsic part being human counteract doctrines that stress the need to earn grace. This helps prevent an over- emphasis on the need to secure redemption. Negatively, Julian never solves the problem of human freedom and the human potential for wilful disconnection from God. For Julian, the presence of grace working within us means that we are already redeemed.

Julian's theology of prayer extends the link between theology and spirituality by giving primacy to human experience. It reinforces the inter-connection between our experience now and hope for eternal life. In her view, prayer gives an experience of *oneing*, a foretaste of the joy that is to come. Julian falls short,

however, in not presenting a spirituality that focuses on political dynamism within all aspects of life. Positively she excels at presenting how all humanity is in total relationship with God and can respond to God's presence in prayer. She develops a convincing theology that all our living is prayer. This appreciation of all of life as prayer assists our awareness of the potential holiness of all life-experience.

#### **A Soteriology of *Oneing* in the Eschaton.**

Julian's eschatology which arises from the consequence of the gracious Spirit of God in the creation, in the Church, and in individuals, gives images of hope for final *oneing* in the eschaton. Therefore the idea of *all shall be well* is not limited to life after death. *All shall be well* is something that begins in this life. Julian's eschatology can contribute to our contemporary understanding of eschatology which seeks to move away from the monism of salvation limited to this world and the dualism of salvation that will only be experienced in the next world. Julian's sense of the immanence of God in creation and in human nature balanced with her understanding of the transcendence of God expressed in her images of the beatific vision, can help us create a delicately nuanced eschatology that embraces past, present and future.

All aspects of Julian's theology are eschatological. Her trinitarian theology, Christology, pneumatology, anthropology and ecclesiology all express hope in final fulfilment. Through integrating the *reditus* or fulfilment with all aspects of her theology, Julian helps us move beyond the two extremes where salvation is viewed only from the perspective of present reality or only from the perspective

of life after death. While the *reditus* includes *oneing* in the eschaton *oneing* is not conceived of as a mystical union that bypasses life-experience or material creation. The hope for face to face vision of God flows out of our living. Julian always presents a theology of hope. Although she looks at hope for the individual in the context of a community of hope, she stresses the communal dimension of hope. Yet, there is a certain unresolved paradox. On the one hand there is the inter-dependence of human beings and communal redemption, and on the other, the individual care of God for each individual and individual salvation. This tension between the individual and the communal keeps before us the importance of not allowing the individual to be absorbed into some impersonal collective. It also monitors too great a stress on the personal relationship with God, as if all people and the wider created order do not enter intrinsically into the relationship. Julian provides a model of spirituality that balances the personal and the communal.

Within the tradition there are two polarized positions on the nature of salvation. One is expressed in the optimistic doctrine of *apocatastasis* that considers all creatures to be saved. The other, more pessimistic view inherited through Augustine, is that large numbers of people are predestined to be damned. Neither of these extreme positions seems appropriate today. Julian presents a moderate doctrine of universal salvation. She creates a bridge between a simplistic view of universal salvation that denies the power of evil and a cynical view that stresses the perverse, sinful nature of humankind. In keeping with orthodox Church teaching, the overwhelming weight of Julian's soteriology affirms the universal

salvific will of God as the context in which all questions about salvation must be examined. Though she deals with judgement and heaven and hell, her focus is always on the promise that *all shall be well* which embrace all things and all human experience, in all creation. Julian finds every reason to conclude that God wishes well-being for all. She interprets the event of Christ's passion, death and resurrection as having universal significance. She draws this out even more strongly in her interpretation of the parable of the lord and the servant in the identity she sees between Christ, Adam and the servant. She brings this to completion through her dynamic theology of grace. Julian helps us express a modified doctrine of universal salvation based on a theology of hope grounded in *the blessed Trinity of our salvation*. Julian attests to the inclusive nature of salvation. She sees all of history moving to a definite goal of *oneing* in God. Julian's ability to envisage universal salvation opens the way for Christians to develop an inclusive soteriology which embraces all peoples, religions, cultures and classes.

Relationality is central in Julian's soteriology. She always views salvation in terms of humanity's relationship of *oneing* with the Trinity. Salvation is a journey from God to God. Salvation is maturation, increasing, fulfilling. Julian's eschatology like all eschatology presents a special problem because we are not dealing with interpretation of past events, or present interpretation of experience. Negatively, Julian shares the limitations and possible futility of such an endeavour. Her analogies are culturally conditioned, they require additional meaning and connotations for a contemporary world. Julian does not confront the



tension between the immortality of the soul and the expectation of bodily resurrection. Her depiction of heaven and the beatific vision leaves some ambiguity. Nevertheless, rather than speculate about details in the unknown experience of the eschaton, Julian emphasizes hope for divine intimacy with individuals in such a way that the promise and fulfilment transcends all threats of the non-being of evil. Her analogies point to promise. They speak of final transformation, fulfilment and well-being. Julian's eschatology informs the meaning of human existence, the goals of human life. In short, as Julian understands the meaning of salvation, when we die and face God, it is not the brokenness of the human condition, or our feeble attempts to respond to divine love that will form our destiny. It is our gifted origins, our being in God, increased through Christ and brought to graced fulfilment through the Holy Spirit that ultimately saves.

A number of future directions for a study of Julian's soteriology emerge from this thesis. Julian's soteriology deserves to play a significant role in the articulation of a contemporary soteriology because it presents an approach often disregarded in a tradition biased against mystical literature and the expression of women. Julian integrates a wide range of important aspects of soteriology often overlooked in a tradition that has focused on the sinfulness of the human race. Her stress on a theology of love and her Christology of Christ, the deep wisdom of the Trinity our mother, can help reform our images of God and prevent problems with gender distinctions before theologizing begins. Julian's soteriology deserves a significant place in theological education for both its method and theology.

In a world that is in danger of losing sight of the fact that *all shall be well*, Julian's soteriology has something to contribute to a theology of hope. The aim of the thesis was to present the soteriology of Julian of Norwich expressed in her *Revelations of Divine Love*. Julian's reflections reveal how there is a fundamental unity between all things - God, creation and humanity. They reveal an integral unity between past, present and future. Her essentially trinitarian theology celebrates the presence of God in history. At the same time it generates hope that our present experience of divine love will come to eschatological fruition for all creation, all things in the fullness of God's time. Her *showings* reveal how we ourselves can see that *all manner of things shall be well*.

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