



1965

The Blood Motifs of the Fourteenth Century Yorkshire Mystics

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Recommended Citation

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THE BLOOD MOTIFS OF THE FOURTEENTH
CENTURY YORKSHIRE MYSTICS

by

Louis G. Gatto

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

June

1965

LIFE

Mr. Louis C. Gatto was born in Chicago, Illinois, July, 4, 1927. Following his February, 1945, graduation from St. Mel High School, he enlisted in the United States Army and served until October, 1946. After his discharge from the Armored Force, Mr. Gatto attended St. Mary's College, Winona, Minnesota, and graduated cum laude in June, 1950. During 1950-51, he studied linguistics at the University of Minnesota and acted as staff artist for the Minneapolis edition of T.V. Times.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION
Mysticism

By the time of the flourishing of the Yorkshire mystics in the fourteenth century, mysticism was an aged if not precisely delineated expression of man's faith in his ability to transcend his narrowly defined universe of physical phenomena. However, despite man's long established confidence in his power to approach the Godhead, there exists little unanimity in mysticism's referent. A Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey, the anonymous author of Mediaeval Mystical Tradition and St. John of the Cross, observes:

Mysticism is one of the most abused words in all civilized languages, and very many misunderstandings, both in the past and in the present, have been caused by failure to realize that not only do different "schools" use the same words in varying senses, but that even the "classical" meaning varies at different periods.¹

At various stages in man's development, the term has been employed to designate many divergent concepts. On occasion, it has been utilized to signify theosophy, Christian science, spiritualism, demonology, occultism, visions, and "other-worldliness, or even mere dreaminess and impracticability in the affairs of life."²

¹ A Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey, Mediaeval Mystical Tradition and St. John of the Cross (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1954), p. 1.

² Dom Cuthbert Butler, Western Mysticism (London: E.P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1951), p. 1.

The etymology of the word "mystic" has contributed to the aura of mystery enveloping the movement. For the Greeks, the mystic was "one who has been, or is being, initiated into some esoteric knowledge of Divine things, about which he must keep his mouth shut (Μῦθε(ν)); or, possibly, he is one whose eyes are still shut, one who is not yet an ΕΠΟΙΚΤΗΣ."³ Manifesting an increased tendency toward introspection, the classic mystic established the conviction that he deliberately closed his eyes to all external considerations, a conviction closely allied with the contemplative basis of medieval mysticism. Professor Baumgardt points out that the Latin mutus and the English "mute" have the same root as the Greek myein;⁴ hence, in a negative sense, mysticism seems to define a silent, secret, and seclusive involvement. These qualities are embodied in the secret cults of ancient Greece--those of Zeus, Dionysos, Demeter, and the famous Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries.

More positively, mysticism has its origin in the raw material of all religions--"namely, that dim consciousness of the beyond, which is part of our nature as human beings."⁵ It implies, as Miss Underhill notes, "the abolition of individuality; of that hard separateness, that 'I, Me, Mine' which makes of man

³W. R. Inge, Christian Mysticism (New York: Meridian Books Inc., 1960), p. 4.

⁴David Baumgardt, Great Western Mystics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 2.

⁵W. R. Inge, p. 5.

a finite isolated thing."⁶ In its purest form, mysticism is the science of man's union with the Absolute. Whether the mystic is a Greek philosopher, a Father of the Church, or a Yorkshire mystic his activity is best delineated as a direct personal ascent to God, an ascent implemented by meditation and contemplation.

Plato, "the first formulator of a mystical method,"⁷ is the author of the stages of mystical movement which provide the basis for those of medieval mysticism. The necessity of the initial stage of purging the soul permeates much of Platonic thought. In order to contemplate the Good and the Beautiful, man must remove the hindrances which are rooted in the body. In the Phaedo, Plato states:

In this present life, I reckon that we make the nearest approach to knowledge when we have the least possible concern or interest in the body, and are not saturated with the bodily nature, but remain pure until the hour when God himself is pleased to release us. And then the foolishness of the body will be cleared away and we shall be pure and hold converse with other pure souls For no impure thing is allowed to approach the pure.⁸

Clearly, the enjoyment of the Good, for Plato, requires the essential prelude of purging the soul of every taint of imperfection, a purgation that can be effected only by liberating the soul from the restrictions of the senses and the mundane aspects

⁶Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism (New York: Meridian Books Inc., 1960), p. 71.

⁷Joseph B. Collins, Christian Mysticism in the Elizabethan Age (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1940), p. 2.

⁸Plato, The Dialogues of Plato, trans. B. Jowett (New York: Random House, Inc., 1937), I, 450.

of physical existence.

The approaching of the Pure constitutes the second stage or step of mystical ascent, a step described in the Phaedrus as a "heavenward pilgrimage"⁹ accomplished, according to the Symposium, on the wings of contemplation.¹⁰ Continually emphasized in the increasing proximity to the Good, the Beautiful, and the Pure is the intellectual affinity for these concepts which were once known in a preexistent state, concepts now obscured by the veil of life. The greater the success of the Platonist in releasing his conscious self, which is "imprisoned in the body like an oyster in his shell,"¹¹ the closer he comes to the World of Ideas.

However, Plato never brings man "into full harmony with the contemplative union of the later mystics"¹²--the ultimate unitive stage of medieval mysticism. Divine rapture is as far as Plato progresses. "A clinging in recollection to those things in which God abides, and in beholding which He is what He is"¹³ never extends beyond an intellectual contemplation of the Idea of the Good with unclouded vision. For Plato, the Idea of the Good is the object of all knowledge; as a principle of unification, it

⁹Ibid., p. 260.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 335.

¹¹Ibid., p. 254.

¹²J. B. Collins, p. 8.

¹³Plato, p. 253.

transcends all the specific concepts of Beauty, Justice, and Truth. Just as light is the necessary condition of sight, within the Platonic perspective the illumination of the Idea of the Good is essential for any cognizance of the True.¹⁴

The contemplative temperament of the classic mystic is assimilated in modified form by his Christian counterpart. The former pursued only his own perfection; consequently, his contemplation affected merely his intellectual quest for a knowledgeable enrichment of the mind. Christian mysticism, however, evolves from an analysis of the love of God as the end for contemplation. "Hence it is not content to find fruit for the intelligence, but penetrates beyond to the will, that it may there enkindle love."¹⁵

"The fons et origo of all Christian mysticism is found in the Johannine writings and in the Epistles of St. Paul."¹⁶ St. John continually stresses the concept of divine love which is fundamental to all Christian mystics: "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him" (I John iv.16).¹⁷ The doctrine emphasized by St. Paul is that of a mystical identity with Christ: "And I live, now not I: but Christ liveth in me"

¹⁴See The Republic, Book VI, 502-509.

¹⁵Albertus Magnus, On Union with God (St. Louis: St. Louis University Press, 1913), p. 60.

¹⁶J. B. Collins, p. 21.

¹⁷See also I John iv.7-21; II John 5-6.

(Gal. 11.20).¹⁸

Although St. Augustine did not author a complete Christianized mystical system, the Bishop of Hippo is, nonetheless, of sufficient import to prompt Professor Baumgardt to discuss the possibility that he merits the epithet "Prince of Mystics."¹⁹ St. Augustine's mystical significance rests on his providing a Christian equivalent of Platonic contemplation and ascent to God, an equivalent that establishes the ever-present Augustinian influence in the Golden Age of Christian mysticism. Joseph Collins develops in detail the Saint's contemplative method replete with primary documentation. In brief, the method involves five steps: the consciousness of an intense, yet ill-defined longing for God; a search for the changeless Truth and immutable Light; a contemplation of the visible objects of nature terminating with the realization that they are without exception subject to change and decay; an introspective analysis of the faculties of one's own soul; and a final discovery of God both in and above the soul.²⁰

St. Augustine's most significant contribution to the explication of mystical experience is discerned in his famous discourse with his mother prior to her death at Ostia. Space pre-

¹⁸See also Rom. vi.11; xiii.14; II Cor. iii.18; iv.10; I Cor. xi.1; Gal. iii.27; Eph. iv.5.

¹⁹D. Baumgardt, pp. 21-24.

²⁰J. B. Collins, pp. 26-27.

cludes the inclusion of the entire tenth chapter of Book IX of the Confessions which defines the mystic's progress through the corporeal world to the "presence" of the Godhead. However, the essence of the quest is succinctly expressed prior to Augustine's elaboration of the procedure:

We then were conversing alone very pleasantly; and, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before," we were seeking between ourselves in the presence of Truth, which Thou art, of what nature the eternal life of the saints would be, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man.²¹

Later, Augustine stresses the mystery aspect of the unitive stage of mystical progress; he poetically describes the experience in a manner reminiscent of Dante's "Paradise" as he and St. Monica "leave" the physical world and reach for the spiritual existence:

We, lifting ourselves with a more ardent affection towards 'the Self-same,' did gradually pass through all corporeal things, and even the heaven itself, whence sun, and moon, and stars shine upon the earth; yea, we soared higher yet by inward musing, and discoursing, and admiring Thy works; and we came to our own minds, and went beyond them, that we might advance as high as that region of unfailing plenty, where Thou feedest Israel for ever with the food of truth, and where life is that Wisdom by whom all these things are made, both which have been, and which are to come; and she is not made, but is as she hath been, and so shall ever be; yea, rather, to 'have been,' and 'to be hereafter,' are not in her, but only 'to be,' seeing she is eternal, for to 'have been' and 'to be hereafter' are not eternal. And while we were thus speaking, and straining after her, we slightly touched her with the whole effort of our hearts; and we

²¹ St. Augustine, The Confessions of St. Augustine, trans. J. C. Pilkington (Cleveland: Fine Editions Press, 1952), p. 159.

sighed, and there left beyond 'the first-fruits of the Spirit;" and returned to the noise of our own mouth, where the word uttered has both beginning and end."²²

However, as Dom Butler indicates,²³ the claim of a unitive step that is consistently and unequivocally made by generations of mystics finds, perhaps, its simplest and most arresting expression in an earlier passage of the Confessions: "And thus, with the flash of a trembling glance, it [the mind] arrived at that which is. And then I saw Thy invisible things understood by the things that are made."²⁴ This quotation illustrates the visionary and symbolic aspects of mysticism.

Despite the obvious importance of St. Augustine to the consolidation of Christian mysticism, the great coryphaeus of the non-pagan mystics is the pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, an Alexandrian theologian, whose De Mystica Theologia in the Latin translation of John Scotus Erigena appears to be the only treatise confined exclusively to mystical principles prior to the appearance of the writings of St. Bernard and the Victorines. Although Joseph Collins illustrates Dionysius' lack of originality by cataloguing his dogmatic indebtedness,²⁵ this fifth century

²² Ibid., p. 160.

²³ Dom Butler, p. 4.

²⁴ St. Augustine, p. 119 (Book VII, Chapter xvii).

²⁵ J. B. Collins, pp. 30-31.

theologian is, nevertheless, the author of Christianity's initial formal system of mystical theology; in fact, Dom Butler designates the Areopagite, the "Father of scientific Mystical Theology."²⁶ Dionysius' influence extends from the translations of Erigena to Hugh of St. Victor's ten volume Commentary on the Heavenly Hierarchy of the Areopagite.

Chapter I of De Mystica Theologia establishes the three stages of Christian mystical ascent, stages predicted on the previously cited Platonic order:

For not without reason is the blessed Moses bidden first to undergo purification himself and then to separate himself from those who have not undergone it; and after all purification hears the many-voiced trumpets and sees many lights flash forth with pure and diverse-streaming rays, and then stands separate from the multitudes and with the chosen priests presses forward to the topmost pinnacle of the Divine Ascent.²⁷

Furthermore, Dionysius explains that the union after the "pressing forward" is not with God but, rather, with the place wherein God dwells.

Since the Creator is invisible, God's incomprehensible presence is demonstrated through the symbolic language of entities subordinate to God. The indispensability of symbols to mystical expression is logical and demands little explication.

²⁶ Dom Butler, p. 6.

²⁷ Dionysius the Areopagite, The Divine Names and The Mystical Theology, trans. C. E. Rolt (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1920), p. 193.

By the very nature of mystical experience, the mystic is compelled to communicate the inexpressible by the only means available. The symbol and image, inadequate though they may be in the delineation of the formless consciousness of the "beyond," are, nevertheless, "the flesh and bones of ideas"²⁸ and "the clothing which the spiritual borrows from the material plane."²⁹ The symbolic tendency is inherent with the sympathetic intuition by which mysticism strives to solve the "riddle of the universe."

The introductory chapter of De Mystica Theologia also develops the non-intellectualism of Christian mysticism, a quality already noted. The mystic, according to Dionysius,

renounces all the apprehensions of his understanding and is enwrapped in that which is wholly intangible and invisible . . . and being through the passive stillness of all his reasoning powers united by his highest faculty to Him that is wholly Unknowable, of whom thus by a rejection of all knowledge he possesses a knowledge that exceeds his understanding.³⁰

This mental state is defined further in Chapter II:

Unto this Darkness which is beyond Light we pray that we may come, and may attain unto vision through the loss of sight and knowledge, and that in ceasing thus to see or to know we may learn to know that which is beyond all perception and understanding (for this emptying of our faculties is true sight and knowledge)³¹

²⁸W. R. Inge, p. 5.

²⁹E. Underhill, p. 80.

³⁰Dionysius the Areopagite, p. 194.

³¹Ibid.

De Mystica Theologia partially exemplifies the extent to which Christian mysticism is both a continuation of Platonic mysticism--the stages of mystical ascent--and a departure--the negation of the traditional concept of intellectualism.

The Platonic attraction toward the Good and the Beautiful is a further assimilation into the Dionysian system; De Divinis Nominibus is the source for this instance of classic "borrowing." Again, the usurpation is mitigated by modification.

Yea, and the Divine Yearning is naught else than a Good Yearning towards the Good for the mere sake of the Good. For the Yearning which createth all the goodness of the world, being pre-existent abundantly in the Good Creator, allowed Him not to remain unfruitful in Himself, but moved Him to exert the abundance of His powers in the production of the universe.³²

In a sense, the Creator is more than a magnet of Goodness--as the Platonist might envision a Supreme Power--He has, for Dionysius, imparted some of the superabundant goodness of His nature to the "Good Yearning" of the mystic. Hence, the way is prepared for a more intimate unitive stage than had ever been contemplated by Plato. Earlier in De Divinis Nominibus, the author gives figurative expression to this fusion of the Christian mystic and the object of the mystical quest: "The soul, leaving all things and forgetting herself, is immersed in the ocean of Divine Splendour, and illuminated by the Sublime Abyss of the Unfathomable

³²Ibid., p. 102.

Finally, De Divinis Nominibus contains an adaptation of the Platonic concept of the pre-existent state:

Thus the Pre-existent is the Beginning and the End of all things: the Beginning as their Cause, and End as their final Purpose. He bounds all things and yet is their boundless Infinitude, in a manner that transcends all the opposition between the Finite and the Infinite. For, as hath been often said, He contains beforehand and did create all things in One Act, being present unto all and everywhere, both in the particular individual and in the Universal Whole, and going out unto all things while yet remaining in Himself. He is both at rest and in motion³⁴

Christian compatibility with the classic concept of pre-existence is achieved by transferring the quality to an all transcending God rather than by considering man as living a series of physical existences punctuated by periods of reward or punishment with corresponding periods of complete knowledge, knowledge that is clouded by Lethean draughts prior to each reincarnation.³⁵

For some inexplicable reason, Western mystical interest seems to have waned following Dionysius' writings. After a lapse of centuries, mysticism achieved a twelfth and thirteenth century renaissance with the flourishing school of St. Victor at Paris and the writings of St. Bernard of Clairvaux. One can only speculate as to reasons for the great revival of mystical in-

³³ Ibid., p. 152.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 143.

³⁵ See the vision of Er, The Republic, Book X.

terest during this period. G. G. Coulton somewhat cynically attributes the resurgence to the belief that the Church had become too strictly collectivist; consequently, the minds of strong individuality escaped into the mystic life, "where they could breathe freely apart from that all-controlling influence of the official clergy; a life strongly unsacerdotal, though not as yet antisacerdotal."³⁶ This theory could conceivably explain the mystical appeal for the layman; however, it is a difficult theory to substantiate when applied to the "official clergy" mystic. What G. G. Coulton might have had in mind is what Carl Horstman expresses less pyrotechnically as a possible cleavage between mysticism and scholasticism. For Horstman, medieval English mysticism was a reaction to

the excessive development of scholasticism in the hands of Duns Scotus. The very excess of ingenuity, subtlety, and definition, which distinguished the English schoolman, could not but call forth the re-action of the heart, which usually appears whenever the formula, the definition stifles the free flow of spiritual life.³⁷

A more pertinent explanation--from the perspective of this dissertation--is offered by Joseph B. Collins; he considers medieval mysticism as a "new and highly important branch of

³⁶G. G. Coulton, Medieval Panorama (New York: Meridian Books Inc., 1957), p. 524.

³⁷Richard Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, ed. Carl Horstman (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1895), I, xlii.

theology"³⁸ that derives its new found vitality from a shifting theological interest to the Incarnation and Passion of Christ. This view is ostensibly Dom Knowles' contention that the proto-Renaissance spirit of affective devotion to the humanity of Christ was one of the primary influences in the fourteenth century flowering of English mystics.³⁹

A third explanation centers on the fact that this theological emphasis upon the humanity and suffering of Christ appears to parallel the distress, turmoil, and suffering of the medieval period; hence, an empathy emerges, one fusing the medievalist's physical hardships with his contemplation of Christ's human agony. Father Pepler, eliciting the privation of the age as a major impetus for the renewed appearance of the mystic, observes:

The desert and thorns were a necessary part of the blooming of the rose. Only when the cross lies heavily does the spirit soar; these physical ills act as the purgation of the spirit and persecution calls forth the noblest in man. At a period of physical comfort and well-being, when prosperity fills purse and belly with the good things of the world, we do not look for mystics.⁴⁰

A final factor in the flourishing of the medieval English

³⁸J. B. Collins, p. 37.

³⁹Dom David Knowles, The English Mystics (London: Burns & Oates, 1927), p. 60.

⁴⁰Conrad Pepler, O.P., The English Religious Heritage London: Blackfriars Publications, 1958), p. 34.

mystics is seen in Carl Horstman's declaration that the English climate was conducive to their development: "Nowhere had Christianity been embraced with greater warmth than in England, and nowhere was there a more fertile soil for mysticism."⁴¹ This rather dogmatic generalization is at least partially verified by Anglo-Saxon fact and tradition. The general receptiveness of the early English to Christianity is a matter of history: Bede records the genial reception accorded St. Augustine and his forty monks by Aethelberht, who was already married to Bertha, a Frank Catholic.⁴² Moreover, there appears to be no known instance of any of the early missionaries suffering martyrdom. Professor Baugh believes "all England was permanently Christian"⁴³ a century after Augustine's arrival. Even England's subsequent invaders--the Danes in the ninth and tenth centuries and the Normans in 1066--were either Christians or responsive converts. The tradition of a much earlier Christian influence is matter for the next chapter.

Regardless of the difficulty in ascertaining one paramount reason for the rebirth of mystical interest in England following the Norman conquest--all of the aforementioned factors undoubtedly contributed in part to the renaissance--there can be

⁴¹R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, xi.

⁴²St. Bede the Venerable, Ecclesiastical History of the English People, ed. Philip Hereford (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1935), p. 37.

⁴³Albert C. Baugh, A History of the English Language (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1957), p. 96.

little serious question today concerning the influence of St. Bernard of Clairvaux and St. Bonaventure on English mysticism in general and the Yorkshire mystics in particular. An earlier controversy did exist as to St. Bernard's import. Edmund Gardner, in his 1910 introduction to The Cell of Self-Knowledge: Seven Early English Mystical Treatises, considers Bernard, as well as Bonaventure, as English mysticism's chief influence.⁴⁴ However, Dom Knowles, in 1927, declares, "Of St. Bernard . . . the English mystics make little use."⁴⁵ Thirteen years later, Etienne Gilson published a penetrating study, The Mystical Theology of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, which was intended to refute the misconception that Bernard's mysticism failed to exert significant influence owing to its lack of systematic form.⁴⁶ Gilson's scholarship provided the impetus for Sr. Mary Ignatius' Ph.D. dissertation, "The Tradition of St. Bernard of Clairvaux in English Literature during the Middle Ages," which establishes, among other considerations, not only correspondences between the deep imagination and speculative devotion of the Saint and the spirit

⁴⁴The Cell of Self-Knowledge: Seven Early English Mystical Treatises, ed. Edmund Gardner (London: Chatto & Windus, 1910), p. xii.

⁴⁵Dom Knowles, p. 59.

⁴⁶Etienne Gilson, The Mystical Theology of Saint Bernard, trans. A. H. C. Downes (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955), p. viii.

of the English mystics,⁴⁷ but also several positive relationships, including Richard Rolle's translation of the third chapter of the Pseudo-Bonaventure Meditations entitled The Rule of Life of Our Lady,⁴⁸ Rolle's paraphrasing of Bernard's Jesu Dulcis Memoria in his The Form of Perfect Living,⁴⁹ and Julian of Norwich's reliance on St. Bernard's concept of divine love in her Revelations.⁵⁰

The Bernardine influence is further substantiated by other pertinent studies. Carl Horstman indicates a number of Richard Rolle's indebtednesses, including the possible translation of De Adventu Sermo VI⁵¹ and the Yorkshire mystic's citing of St. Bernard on such subjects as the sweetness of Jesus' name;⁵² the "mynd of the passion";⁵³ the delights of prayer;⁵⁵ the "arrows of

⁴⁷Sr. Mary Ignatius Meany, "The Tradition of St. Bernard of Clairveux in English Literature during the Middle Ages" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of English, St. John's University, 1947), pp. 90-92.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 75-76.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 117-118.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 89.

⁵¹R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, II, 60. As is seen in the chapter of this dissertation devoted to Richard Rolle, his authorship of a number of works ascribed to him by Horstman is doubted by other scholars. This problem, however, is not pertinent at this point since the question of author identity is not germane to a consideration of Bernardine influence on the age.

⁵²Ibid., I, 35.

⁵³Ibid., p. 37.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 57 and 114.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 146 and 333.

the foe[the devil]";⁵⁶ the signs by which the soul can recognize the visitation of divine grace;⁵⁷ the opposition of the spirit of the world to that of Christ;⁵⁸ and the colloquy in heaven that preceded the Redemption.⁵⁹ Helen Gardner focuses attention on Walter Hilton's documenting his Scale of Perfection with quotations from Bernard's sermons on the Canticles.⁶⁰ Earlier proof of Bernard's importance is apparent in the Ancren Riwe; Part VI of the Penance section exhorts the reader: "Now pay good attention, for it is nearly all from the Sentences of St. Bernard."⁶¹ Since meditation and contemplation of death are common with the mystics, another indication of Bernardine mystical influence is suggested by G. R. Owst's claim:

From the so-called Meditations or Sayings of St. Bernard, in particular, a very favorite medieval source-book for sermons,

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 150.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 148.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 150.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 349 ff.

⁶⁰ Helen Gardner, "Walter Hilton and the Mystical Tradition in England," English Association Essays and Studies, XXII (1936), 118.

⁶¹ The Nuns Rule being the Ancren Riwe, ed. Francis A. Gasquet (London: Burns & Oates, 1926), p. 263.

our English homilists seemed to have derived their conception of Death as a skulking, ghostly tyrant, who flits through all lands from place to place, sparing none, be he rich or poor, high or low, king or emperor, pope or prelate, religious or secular, a dread visitor whose coming is sudden, privy and unannounced.⁶²

Although the Medytacions was first published in 1496 by Wynken de Worde, it is possible that an earlier English translation existed. Sister Ignatius notes that in the colophon to the 1531 edition, "Richard Whitford, the 'editor,' expressly mentions an older English version which he felt himself called upon to prove."⁶³ Naturally, the existence of an earlier edition would be of greater import as a Yorkshire influence than the later 1496 or 1531 edition. Carl Horstman supplies further evidence of St. Bernard's impact on the era; he cites several early fourteenth century verse dialogues between St. Bernard and the Blessed Virgin Mary written in the northern dialect of the Yorkshire area. One such poem, "St. Mary's Lamentation to St. Bernard on the Passion of Christ," is credited by Horstman to William Nassyngton, a Yorkshire contemporary and follower of Richard Rolle.⁶⁴ Not only is Bernard the inquisitor of the Blessed Virgin, but also Bernard's treat-

⁶²G. R. Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961), p. 531.

⁶³Sr. Mary Ignatius Meany, p. 73.

⁶⁴Richard Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, II, 274. See pp. 274-282 for the text of the poem.

ment of the Passion is the apparent source of Mary's narration of her Son's crucifixion. Under St. Bernard, the story of the Passion had acquired greater sensibility and vividness. As Sr. Ignatius observes:

St. Bernard had not been content with presenting the Passion as a philosophical motive for contrition and amendment of life, but had dwelt with tender insistence upon the sheer weight of human pain which it involved. Not only the awful anger of the Father, but the nails, the cross, the spear, became under St. Bernard's pen the objects of imaginative and emotional realization. The figure of Christ upon the cross is no 'objet d'art' in ivory or bronze, but a bleeding, quivering human form whose sufferings speak to the most indifferent heart.⁶⁵

This growing preoccupation with the suffering humanity aspect of the Passion becomes almost "a 'photographic' devotion,"⁶⁶ one very evident in the works of the Yorkshire mystics.

The channel by which St. Bernard's works reached England and the Yorkshire area is clearly traced by Frances Comper:

It is not surprising that we should meet with St. Bernard's writings in Latin, as well as in English translation, in so large a number of MSS. in our libraries, when we remember that St. Bernard had in 1131 sent his secretary William with twelve monks from Clairvaux to establish houses of the Order in England. He fixed upon Yorkshire, always a refuge for hermits and monks because of its vast spaces of uncultivated and waste land. Within twenty years, five of the great Cistercian Abbeys were founded: Rievaulx, Kirkstall, Fountains, Byland, and Roche.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Sr. Mary Ignatius Meany, p. 75.

⁶⁶ Rev. Pepler, p. 32.

⁶⁷ Frances Comper, The Life and Lyrics of Richard Rolle (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1928), p. 147.

Allen R. Benham catalogues the known works of St. Bernard in the monastery library of Rievaulx.⁶⁸

However, the distinction of being the most universally cited source of Yorkshire mysticism falls to St. Bonaventure, a great favorite of the English. In fact, the Seraphic Doctor had been nominated in 1265 to the Archbishopric of York by Clement IV, an honor he declined in order to remain Minister General of the Friars Minor. Carl Horstman considers the Bonaventure influence on Rolle so pronounced that he labels the leader of the Yorkshire mystics the "English Bonaventure" since his writings cover basically "the same ground of mystic, moral and popular theology as those of that great writer."⁶⁹ Still further, Horstman attributes the entire development of English mysticism to St. Bonaventure's influence.⁷⁰ Even, Geraldine Hodgson, who is somewhat reluctant to admit that Rolle regularly read anyone's writings, concedes that he probably was a frequent student of Bonaventure's works.⁷¹

Knowledge of the Saint's mystical treatises--Itinerarium Mentis

⁶⁸ Allen R. Benham, English Literature from Widsith to the Death of Chaucer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916), pp. 432-441.

⁶⁹ R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, xiv.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. xiii.

⁷¹ Richard Rolle, Some Minor Works of Richard Rolle, ed. Geraldine Hodgson (London: J. M. Watkins, 1923), p. 38.

in Deum, De Triplici Via, Lignum Vitae, Vitis Mystica seu Tractatus de Passione Domini, De Perfectione Vitae ad Sorores--verifies the degree to which the English mystics were indebted not only for Bonaventure's contribution in preserving and continuing the general nomenclature of mystical ascent inherited from the Platonists and the early Church Fathers, but also for his insistence on a grimly realistic delineation of the physical features of Christ's Passion.

The link between Bonaventure and Rolle appears to be John Hoveden, chaplain to Queen Eleanor and one of the first prebendaries of the Collegiate Church of Hoveden, Yorkshire. Although Hoveden died about 1275--twenty-five years before the birth of Richard Rolle--he left a poetic legacy in the style of Bonaventure. Hoveden's major creative effort was "Philomela sive meditatio de nativitate, passione et resurrectione Jesu Christi," a 4000 line, rhyming couplet poem in imitation of one bearing the same title and commonly ascribed to Bonaventure.⁷² Frances Comper cites this poem as one of Rolle's early influences.⁷³

Though Saints Bernard and Bonaventure constitute the major direct influences on the Yorkshire mystics, other figures cast long shadows across the lonely path traversed by Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, Dame Julian, and the mysterious author of The Cloud

⁷²R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, xlii.

⁷³Frances Comper, p. 159.

of Unknowing. The writings of John Cassian, whose Collationes was used from earliest days in England as a powerful factor in the development of mystical doctrine;⁷⁴ of Bede, who was advanced in the contemplative life extolled by every mystic; of the Augustinian canons of St. Victor; and of Meister Eckhart, whose mysticism rested on a scholastic terminology which he translated as best he could into the language of the people;⁷⁵ all these, as well as a multitude of secondary authors, contributed to the mystical heritage of the fourteenth century. From these elements, Rolle's literary mystics created their brilliant mosaic of "a journey of the soul to God on the wings of contemplation."⁷⁶

Clearly, the medieval mystic shares much with his Greek counterpart. He sees, as did his classical brother centuries prior, a greater unity in the universe than is commonly recognized in ordinary experience. For both, the individual soul strives to attain a self-proposed object, one conceived as apart from itself in terms of the absolute reality. This quest originates where conscious, coherent thought terminates and is achieved "by focusing the entire mental horizon into one single vision in which all detail is lost, and the solitary impression left upon the mental retina is a vague, but overpoweringly real and harmonious, image

⁷⁴Eric Colledge, The Mediaeval Mystics of England (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), p. 14.

⁷⁵G. G. Coulton, p. 522.

⁷⁶J. B. Collins, p. 2.

of the Infinite One and All."⁷⁷ Both thrill, if successful, with the communion or intimate union with the object of mystical ascent; and, for both, the union--although transient, if not momentary in character--brings the soul "to further longing, to greater purification, and to deeper contemplation."⁷⁸

These similitudes are, however, balanced by several telling differences. The non-Christian mystics generally maintain the immanence theory of the transcendental world. According to this doctrine, the created universe is perceived as the self-revelation of an indwelling deity: the world is not projected from the Absolute but immersed in the creating force. To the proponents of the immanence theory, the quest for the Absolute is not really an ascent, but merely a realization of some facet of self. The concept is explicit in Plotinus' observation:

God--we read--is outside of none, present unperceived to all; we break away from Him, or rather from ourselves; what we turn from we cannot reach; astray ourselves, we cannot go in search of another; a child distraught will not recognise its father; to find ourselves is to know our source.⁷⁹

The contrary belief, one supported by most of the Christian mystics, is the emanation theory. Evelyn Underhill best explicates this thesis:

⁷⁷G. Coulton, p. 519.

⁷⁸J. B. Collins, p. 1.

⁷⁹Plotinus, Enneads of Plotinus, trans. Stephen Mackenna (Boston: Charles T. Branford Co., 1949), II, 247.

The solar system is an almost perfect symbol of this concept of Reality; which finds at once its most rigid and most beautiful expression in Dante's "Paradiso." The Absolute Godhead is conceived as removed by a vast distance from the material world of sense; the last or lowest of that system of dependent worlds or states which, generated by or emanating from the Unity or Central Sun, become less in spirituality and splendour, greater in multiplicity, the further they recede from their source.⁸⁰

For the Christian, the emanation theory--which achieves its most complete literary expression in the Cloud of Unknowing--precludes the possibility of the Pantheistic heresy.

A second contrast is discerned in Christocentric contemplation. Prior to the medieval era, mystical contemplation was fundamentally Theocentric in that some type of deity was the object of reflection. However, during the Middle Ages, a growing preoccupation with the humanity of Christ establishes contemplation of the Lord's physical suffering as a conventional phase in effecting the second and third stages of mystical ascent.⁸¹ The agony stress is fused with the divine love concept--the concept already cited as the essence of Christian mysticism--so that the two are inextricably coupled. H. C. Graef notes:

The mystic contemplates the Godman stretched out in torments on the cross, and in his burning desire to give Him love for Love he tortures himself to show forth this love and to have something to give that costs him dear, to say not only in

⁸⁰E. Underhill, p. 97.

⁸¹As is illustrated in Chapter II, Richard Rolle's Ego Dormio et Cor Meum Vigilat exemplifies this aspect of Christocentric contemplation.

words but in deeds "I love You."⁸²

The desire of the mystic to give "love for Love," to repay in kind, should not be construed as implying an essential asceticism in the mystical method. Dr. Inge states:

We shall find reason to conclude that, while a certain degree of austere simplicity characterises the outward life of nearly all the mystics, and while an almost morbid desire to suffer is found in many of them, there is nothing in the system itself to encourage men to maltreat their bodies.⁸³

This conclusion is especially true in regard to the Yorkshire mystics. For example, Richard Rolle, in the Form of Living, advises Margaret, an anchoress and the Hermit's disciple, to "pynsche þi body, skilwisely & wisely, in wakyns, fastyngs, & in prayers, & meditacions"⁸⁴ Strict asceticism tends to isolate man by concentrating attention on the separate individual, an effect that is obviously contrary to the spirit of the true mystic.

As a consequence of Christocentric contemplation, Christian mysticism in the medieval era alters the Platonic formula of man-God to one of man-Christ-God. This latter species of mysticism derives its hallmark from its predication on the doctrine of the Mediatorship of Christ. "We here touch on a point of the utmost significance. There is no profounder mark of the originality

⁸²H. C. Graef, The Way of the Mystics (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1948), p. 59.

⁸³W. R. Inge, p. 11.

⁸⁴R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 41.

of Christianity than its conception of the Logos as becoming a Mediator between two natures instead of existing as an intermediary between two natures."⁸⁵ As is delineated in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation, the Mediatorship of Christ is frequently expressed in terms of His sacrifice on the cross.

The Christian attitude toward sin--an attitude that achieves vivid artistic enunciation during the medieval period--further differentiates classic and Christian mysticism. For the medieval mystic, purification is more than the conditioning initial step in mystical ascent; it acquires infinitely greater significance in that purification is a requisite for salvation.

Finally, building on the Bernardine view that the story of the Prodigal Son is an allegory of man's desertion of the Paradise of Good Conscience, the medieval mystics evolve the Allegory of the Pilgrimage of Life. Walter Hilton's "Parable of the Pilgrim"⁸⁶ must be acknowledged as the most detailed account of this allegory to be found in fourteenth century mystical writings. When one considers the import of The Scale of Perfection, it becomes "indisputably clear that the principles of Christian mysticism enter vitally into the concept of the Christian as a pilgrim on the road of life, bent toward his heavenly home."⁸⁷ However,

⁸⁵Paul Elmer More, Christ the Word (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1927), p. 76.

⁸⁶The Scale of Perfection, Book II, Chapter xxi.

⁸⁷J. B. Collins, p. 69.

the "road of life" travelled by the pilgrim often appears to be closer to the Way of the Cross when observed within the context of the medieval mystic's meditative emphasis upon the blood sacrifice of Christ for both the active and contemplative modes of life.

This brief summary of mysticism from its scriptural and classical genesis to its medieval renaissance has accentuated only the most fundamental elements necessary for a consideration of the Yorkshire school of mysticism, whose leaders--Richard Rolle and Walter Hilton--were an essential ingredient in the intellectual and spiritual movement of the fourteenth century. Raised in an area dotted with numerous abbeys, priories, friaries, collegiate churches, and in some instances educated at Merton College, Oxford--the center of the century's intellectualism--the Yorkshire mystics were exposed to every cultural and theological current that swept through England during the revival of learning that followed the Norman occupation.

In the contemporary renewal of interest in the mystical movement, a controversy has arisen regarding the degree to which the mystics of any period adhere to the dogmatic principles of their age. There is, as the Benedictine author of Mediaeval Mystical Tradition and St. John of the Cross states:

a tendency in some circles to draw a sharp differentiating line between the "great mystics" who, it is implied, held loosely to dogma, and soared aloft above "institutional religion," and the ordinary, flat-footed rank and file who obediently trudged along, accepting whatever theologians

imposed upon them.⁸⁸

Since the Yorkshire writers can hardly be categorized with the "ordinary, flat-footed rank and file" mystics, a study of their literary accomplishments should in some manner contribute to a resolution of the controversy. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the English writings of Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, Dame Julian, as well as the Cloud of Unknowing, in an effort to determine whether these works evidence a "'pure' mysticism free, of every taint . . . of affective devotion, or philosophy, or psychology"⁸⁹ or indicate the use of the multiple Blood Motifs of blood theology that appear to permeate other works of the Middle English period. In the case of Richard Rolle, the restriction to the English writings is extended to include two Latin treatises--Incendium Amoris and Emendatio Vitae--that were translated into English early in the fifteenth century. This inclusion permits a complete analysis of Rolle's most mature literary period. The Blood Motifs include the primitive, classical, and Christian concepts of blood vengeance and sacrifice; the Old Testament prefigures of Christ; considerations of blood ransom involving the questions of devil's rights and the abuse of power theory; and the various symbols of the Passion and the Eucharist. Finally, it must be noted that conformity to the tenets of blood

⁸⁸ A Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey, p. 1.

⁸⁹ E. Colledge, p. 14.

theology is also considered within the analytical scope of this dissertation's proposal.

Blood Theology

That the history of mankind is written in blood is evident upon any scrutiny of human development. However, it is not the blood of conquest to which this writer refers; rather it is the blood of religious sacrifice and ritualism that has recorded man's progress through the ages. From the Paleolithic period through the modern era, evidence of the intimate relationship existing between blood and man's gradual enlightenment crowds the pages of history.

The ceremonial interments of primitive man included covering the body with a red ochreous powder, which through the centuries left an indelible stain on the skeletal remains. Furthermore, the sites of prehistoric cave paintings indicate that the primitive artist smeared blood on his representations, probably in an effort to give vitality to the images that he prayed would materialize on the next day's hunt. The secluded locations of these paintings, often reached only after crawling long distances through rock fissures, attest to the reverence which early man associated with these areas. Studies of primitive and prehistoric rites reveal that blood was considered to be the essence of life; and that by the primitive law of association any substance resembling blood, like red ochre, had a similar significance and potency. Therefore, blood, or its equivalent, being the vehicle of life and consciousness, was employed as a reviving agent--hence the custom of burying ochre with the dead. Finally, since blood and its surrogates were regarded as life-giving agents, they

readily became the means of establishing a vital alliance of soul-substance between those thus united in a blood-bond. This association explains blood's emergence as one of the most important and potent vehicles in effecting inter-communion between the sacred and human order and in consolidating tribal relationships.⁹⁰

The employing of blood as the unifying element of the sacred and human orders is observed in classical literature. For example, blood being utilized in this fashion, as well as to renew vitality and to restore health, is apparent in Odysseus' visit to the Kingdom of the Dead to question Teiresias. Homer's wanderer must first prepare a suitable sacrifice:

Perimedes and Eurylochos held fast the victims, while I drew my sword and dug the pit, a cubit's length along and across. I poured out the drink-offering for All Souls, first with honey and milk, then with fine wine, and the third time with water, and I sprinkled white barley-meal over it. Earnestly I prayed to the empty shells of the dead, and promised that when I came to Ithaca, I would sacrifice to them in my own house a farrow cow, the best I had, and heap fine things on the blazing pile; to Teiresias alone in a different place I would dedicate the best ram among my flocks.

When I had made prayer and supplication to the company of the dead, I cut the victims' throats over the pit, and the red blood poured out. Then the souls of the dead who had passed away came up in a crowd from Erebus: young men and brides, old men who had suffered much, and tender maidens to whom sorrow was a new thing; others killed in battle, warriors clad in blood-stained armour. All this crowd gathered about the pit from every side, with a dreadful great noise, which made me pale with fear.

Then I told my men to take the victims which lay there

⁹⁰ E. O. James, Origins of Sacrifice (London: John Murray, 1933), p. 33.

slaughtered, to flay them and burn them, and to pray to mighty Hades and awful Persephoneia; I myself with drawn sword sat still, and would not let the empty shells of the dead come near the blood until I had asked my questions of Teiresias.⁹¹

However, before Odysseus can interrogate Teiresias, the Theban prophet orders:

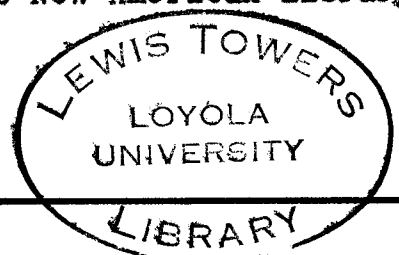
"Move back from the pit, hold off your sharp sword, that I may drink of the blood and tell you the truth." As he spoke, I stepped from the pit, and pushed my sword into the scabbard. He drank of the blood, and only then spoke as the prophet without reproach.⁹²

This section of The Odyssey is interesting not only for the use of blood as an elixir but also for the details of the sacrifice which closely parallel procedures of primitive human and non-human sacrifices, in particular those of the American Indian. Another significant feature of Homer's narration is the sprinkling of white barley-meal over the libation of honey, milk, wine, and water. A prefigure of the Eucharist is not too remote in this allusion when one is aware that other pagan rites contained Eucharist-like devotions. For example, the Aztecs, in addition to their calendrical system of human sacrifice, twice a year in May and December, ate sacramentally a dough image of their god Uitzilopochtli in order to secure health and strength.

Other examples of the posited alliance between blood and

⁹¹Homer, The Odyssey (New York: The New American Library, 1949), p. 116.

⁹²Ibid., p. 117.



life are found in ancient writings. It was often noted that the blood flowing from a mortally wounded person seemed to carry with it, or actually seemed to be, the life of the dying person. Records of the Egyptians, the Akkadians, the Arabs, the Hebrews, the Romans, and the Greeks, all witness the widespread conviction of the importance of blood.⁹³

Typical is Virgil's Aeneid, a work saturated with instances of blood significance. There is the oracle's foreboding answer to Eurypylos' question as to what the Greeks can do to appease the gods during the terrifying storm that follows the completion of the wooden horse:

Blood, O Greeks, and a slain virgin
Appeased the winds when first you came
here; blood
Must pay for your return, a life be given,
An Argive life.⁹⁴

Just as Homer speaks interchangeably of the psyche and of blood escaping through various wounds, Virgil records Priam's life "going out with the cruel wound";⁹⁵ Mettus' shedding "his life-blood over the brambles";⁹⁶ Rhoetus' "red life spurting / Out of the mouth";⁹⁷ Pallas' pulling Turnus' spear out of his breast

⁹³Edward F. Siegman, C.P.P.S., "Blood in the Old Testament," Proceedings of the First Precious Blood Study Week (Rensselaer, Indiana: St. Joseph's College Press, 1959), p. 35.

⁹⁴Virgil, The Aeneid of Virgil, trans. Rolfe Humphries (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. 36.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 51.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 229.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 245.

only to have "his blood, his life, come with it";⁹⁸ and Mezentius' pouring "his life in crimson over the armor."⁹⁹ In addition, sacrificial blood is used to rest Polydorus' spirit.¹⁰⁰ Blood is equated to strength by Entellus.¹⁰¹ Lavinia's dowry is blood.¹⁰² The Sabine army is delineated as "a great host of Sabine blood."¹⁰³ Finally, in the last battle, "the life and blood of Turnus / Go to the winner."¹⁰⁴

The epic genre is not unique in its manifestations of the blood import. A study of primitive dramatic ritual indicates the proximity of the resurrection cycles of Osiris and Dionysus to the advent of tragedy. In Literature and the Irrational, Wayne Schumaker presents a synthesis of contemporary scholarship regarding the anthropological views of Greek tragedy. Particularly interesting is George Thomson's explanation of the dithyramb, which he believes

to have belonged originally to a Dionysian thiasos, or band--actually, a secret society which had grown out of a totemic

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 281.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 297.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 127.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 188.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 202.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 363.

clan and preserved something of the clan's structure and functions. In the beginning, except for a male priest, the society was composed of women only. Its principal rite, derived from initiation ceremonies, comprised three parts: an orgiastic sortie into the fields, a sacrament which consisted in dismembering a victim and eating it raw, and a triumphant return. The ritual was projected as a myth of Dionysus' passion, but its function was to make the soil fertile.¹⁰⁵

The previously mentioned Aztec calendrical sacrifice exemplifies the fertility facet of human sacrifice since it was the result of the desire to appease the gods and thereby assure a bountiful maize crop. Chapters III and IV of E. O. James' Origins of Sacrifice contain a comprehensive history of the relationship existing between all variations of human sacrifice--including head-hunting and cannibalism--and the productivity of the soil.

Gradually, as man's capacity for refinement increased, human sacrifice was supplanted by that of a substitute victim. Judaism, with its scapegoat and paschal lamb, presents ample Old Testament illustrations of the humanization of the sacrificial process. Specifically noteworthy are the Biblical accounts of Abraham and Isaac, and Melchisedech.

Another incident, that of Cain and Abel, is similar to these two since a prefigure of Christ's sacrifice is presented; however, the accounts differ in that a real victim has been offered in this latter case. Abel has been killed, not a substitute

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Wayne Schumaker, Literature and the Irrational (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall Inc., 1960), p. 160.

figure; hence, the account is in the older blood tradition. In fact, the significance of Yaweh's remark to Cain concerning the calling out of Abel's blood is not fully realized unless one is cognizant of the convention of blood revenge--an ancient tradition continuing today in the vendetta, especially in areas of the Mediterranean where relatives of the murdered are obligated to take vengeance on the responsible individuals.

The most nearly complete literary manifesto of primitive blood vengeance is discerned in Greek drama's only extant unified trilogy--Aeschylus' Oresteia, consisting of the Agamemnon, The Choephoroi, and The Eumenides. Each component of the trilogy must be viewed not as an individual play, but rather as a single act of the whole tragedy of a curse upon a house, a curse whose machinations clearly delineate the ancient blood vendetta. Naturally, the pertinent allusions do not equally permeate the three dramas. Since Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon constitutes the action of the initial drama and since the vendetta of Orestes is not operative until after the murder, significant references are with one exception non-existent in the Agamemnon. The exception is found toward the end of the Cassandra scene when the unfortunate prophetess previews the action of The Choephoroi:

He, to avenge his father's blood outpoured
Shall smite and slay with matricidal hand.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Whitney Oates and Eugene O'Neill (edd.), The Complete Greek Drama (New York: Random House, 1938), I, 210.

The Choephoroi abounds with obvious evidence that Aeschylus was well aware of the details of blood vengeance. In the recognition scene of Orestes and Electra, the duty of kin to avenge the wronged is stated by Orestes, who has been plagued

By spirits of the murdered dead who call
Unto their kin for vengeance . . . 107

The playwright has already prepared his audience for the blood vengeance theme in the third strophe of the parados:

On the life-giving lap of Earth
Blood hath flowed forth;
And now, the seeds of vengeance, clot the
plain--
Unmelting, uneffaced the stain. 108

According to the code of the blood vendetta, it is specifically the spilled blood upon the ground that cries for revenge, a revenge that requires additional bloodshed. This facet of the creed is expressly defined by the Chorus:

Nay the law is sternly set--
Blood-drops shed upon the ground
Plead for other bloodshed yet;
Loud the call of death doth sound,
Calling guilt of olden time,
A Fury, crowning crime with crime. 109

The earlier quotation which had identified the cause of Orestes' troubled mind as the spirits of the murdered calling for vengeance does not contradict this emphasis upon blood pleading for retaliation. One must remember that for primitive man the

107 Ibid., I, 239.

108 Ibid., I, 231.

109 Ibid., I, 243.

spirit, the soul, the life principle was equated to the blood: blood was the "seat" of the spirit. Furthermore, any atonement other than a second bloodshedding involving blood of the offender is useless; as Orestes observes, a substitute will not suffice:

Be blood once spilled, an idle strife he
strives
Who seeks with other wealth or wine outpoured
To atone the deed . . .¹¹⁰

Blood alone "will repay / The price of the blood of the slain, that was shed in the bygone day."¹¹¹ Both this concept of "blood for blood" and the one regarding blood being the seat of the spirit parallel the principle of Leviticus 17,11: "Since the life of a living body is in its blood, I have made you put it on the altar so that atonement may thereby be made for your own lives, because it is the blood, as the seat of life, that makes atonement."

The Eumenides, the terminal act of the Oresteia, contains reinforcing allusions to the requirements of the vendetta; but, more particularly, Aeschylus, in this drama, utilizes the primitive blood vengeance code to solve the paradox of Orestes' vengeance. By fulfilling his obligations to the first vendetta--represented in the drama by Apollo--Orestes, in typical classic irony, is immediately transformed from the agent of one vendetta to the object of another, this one being represented by the

¹¹⁰ Ibid., I, 248.

¹¹¹ Ibid., I, 251.

Furies. The paradox is resolved and Orestes is relieved of the consequences of the second vendetta when the Chorus Leader's argument that Clytemnestra had been innocent of blood guilt because "she was not kin by blood to him she slew"¹¹² is turned in Orestes' behalf. Apollo, the defense counsel in the trial before Athena, argues that by the same logic Agamemnon's son is free of any blood guilt associated with the killing of his mother since the blood line is carried by the male; hence, the father is the only legitimate parent:

Not the true parent is the woman's womb
That bears the child; she doth but nurse
the seed
New-sown: the male is parent; she for him,
As stranger for a stranger, hoards the germ
Of life, unless the god its promise blight.¹¹³

The final act of this tragedy of blood vengeance concludes with Athena's casting the tie-breaking vote in Orestes' favor and with the appeasement of the Furies, thereby terminating any possible continuation of the blood vendetta.

Vestiges of this creed of blood vengeance are present in various medieval romances. Prof. Roger Sherman Loomis, in his recently published work, The Grail: From Celtic Myth to Christian Symbol, devotes Chapter VIII to the revenge motif of the Conte del Grael and its sequels. In short, this phase of Dr. Loomis' study continues an earlier one by Alfred Nutt, which established

¹¹²Ibid., I, 292.

¹¹³Ibid., I, 294.

a parallel between an Irish saga, Boyhood Deeds of Finn, and the enfances of Perceval. Nutt points out that the tradition of Finn, still current in Ireland and Gaelic Scotland as late as the nineteenth century, stressed the young hero's obligation to avenge his father's murder; and that this blood-feud bore a significant resemblance to the vendetta in certain versions of the Grail quest.¹¹⁴ Going further, Loomis constructs a case for the Finn saga's being the ultimate source of the responsibility which rests on Perceval to avenge a murdered relative--his father in Sir Percyvelle and Tristan, his uncle in the Manessier sequel, and his male cousin in Peredur and Perlesvaus.¹¹⁵

While the unknown architects of Stonehenge could conceivably have offered human sacrifice to some pagan god--possibly a sun deity--later Anglo-Saxon culture is more directly linked not to the blood of human sacrifice but to that of Christ's atonement. Centuries prior to the Teutonic invasions of 449 A.D. and the mission of Saint Augustine in 597 A.D., tradition places Saint Joseph of Arimathea in England converting Evalac, the king of the nebulous and legendary Avalon.¹¹⁶ The same tradition attributes

¹¹⁴ Alfred Nutt, Studies on the History of the Holy Grail (London, 1888), p. 189.

¹¹⁵ Roger Sherman Loomis, The Grail: From Celtic Myth to Christian Symbol (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 84.

¹¹⁶ John Hardyng, Cronicle (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1812), p. 48.

to the befriender of Christ the designing of the Red Cross shield of Saint George, the shield that was originally intended for the Christianized Evalac; then, according to Arthurian lore, the property of Sir Galahad; and only later the possession of Saint George when he became patron of England. The subsequent rulers of England, according to John Hardyng's Cronicle, chose this shield with its "crosses of goules [in] signification of the bloode of Christe bleede on ye crosse"¹¹⁷ as their standard. Later, it became England's official ensign and is still to be seen in the Union Jack.¹¹⁸

Joseph of Arimathea is further associated with English Christian lore via the Glastonbury legends of the Grail--Glastonbury on occasion being identified as the long sought Avalon. It is alleged that the Saint used the Grail, which is traditionally perceived as the dish of the Last Supper, to catch drops of Christ's blood as they fell from the cross. The legend declares that Joseph brought two cruets filled with the blood and sweat of the Lord to England and that these were buried with him at the time of his death.¹¹⁹

An excellent summary of the growth of the Glastonbury legends is found in J. Armitage Robinson's treatment of the sub-

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ William W. Skeat (ed.), Joseph of Arimathea (London: Trubner, 1871), p. xliiii.

¹¹⁹ J. Armitage Robinson, Two Glastonbury Legends (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1926), p. 39.

ject, a summary certainly meriting inclusion at this point.

We are now in a position to trace from the outset the successive stages of its development.

(1) Isidore of Seville (c. 638) says that St. Philip preached Christ to the Gauls, and led the barbarous peoples, near neighbours of darkness and bordering on the tempestuous Ocean, to light of knowledge and the harbour of faith.

(2) This is repeated (c. 830) by Freulfus, bishop of Lisieux (Bk. II, c. 4.).

(3) The anonymous biographer of St. Dunstan (writing c. 1000) records the legend that the first preachers of Christ in Britain found at Glastonbury a church built by no skill of man, and consecrated by our Lord Himself to the honour of His Virgin Mary.

(4) William of Malmesbury (c. 1130), though he knows this story, will not commit himself further than to say that, if St. Philip preached in Gaul as Freulfus said, then it was not incredible that he should have sent disciples into Britain.

(5) The charter of St. Patrick (c. 1220) marks a further development of the legend. The new points are that we now have twelve disciples of St. Philip and St. James; that they build the church at the bidding of the archangel Gabriel; and that three pagan kings give them twelve portions of land.

(6) This is again developed shortly before 1250, by the final reviser of William of Malmesbury's book, in an introductory chapter which says that the leader of St. Philip's disciples was Joseph of Arimathea, and that he arrived A.D. 63, in the fifteenth year after the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

(7) To this final edition of the De Antiquitate two marginal notes have been added, perhaps before the end of the thirteenth century. One tells us (p. 7) that Joseph was accompanied by his son Josephes and many others, and that he died on the island. The other (p. 45) gives us names of the three kings as Arviragus, Marius and Coillus, adding that the only son of the last of these was Lucius, the first Christian king of Britain. The former note mentions the Grail Legend as its source; the latter is derived from Geoffrey of Monmouth.

All this lay before John of Glastonbury, when at the end of the fourteenth century he recast the earlier history of the abbey. By him we are now given for the first time an orderly account of the full legend of Joseph of Arimathea as it was told at Glastonbury:

(1) The simplest form of the St. Joseph early story--taken over word for word from the Gospel of Nicodemus.

(2) His attendance on the Blessed Virgin and his presence at her Assumption--from the Transitus Mariae.

(3) His connexion with St. Philip who sends missionaries to Britain--an addition to the story which had been told in St. Patrick's charter.

(4) The voyage to Britain on the miraculous shirt of his son Josephes; his imprisonment by the king of North Wales, and his release by King Mordrains--from 'the book which is called The Holy Grail.'

(5) His arrival at Glastonbury, his work and his burial there--Glastonbury additions to the legend of the Grail.¹²⁰

By the fourteenth century, then, the Joseph of Arimathea legend is renowned enough to merit serious attention.

The Glastonbury abbey's relationship with the crucifixion is not limited to Joseph's cruets. As Prof. Loomis states, "the abbey must have had an extraordinary interest in relics of the Passion."¹²¹ The Chronica of John of Glastonbury catalogues the following purported relics: part of the Last Supper table; pieces of the pillar to which Christ was bound during the scourging, the scourge, the garment Herod gave Christ, the sponge from which Christ drank the wine mixed with myrrh, the other sponge from which He was offered vinegar and gall; many splinters of the cross; eight portions of Mount Calvary; some of the earth and a stone where the cross had stood; a spike of the crown of thorns; and six fragments of the Holy Sepulchre.¹²²

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 37.

¹²¹ R. S. Loomis, p. 250.

¹²² Johannes Glastoniensis, Chronica, ed. T. Hearne (Oxford, 1726), pp. 23 f.

These "relics" were all to be found in the abbey's sacristy during the fourteenth century. Whether the fraud perpetrated at Glastonbury was malicious or merely the result of misguided piety is of little import from the perspective of this dissertation. However, the obvious folk interest in the Passion--an interest that would make such a collection conceivable--is of paramount significance. This interest in Christ's blood and the Passion is not confined to one isolated area. Its religious art manifestations are geographically widespread. For example, Edward Dorling's Heraldry of the Church records a shield of old stained glass in the vestry of Saint Nicholas' Church, Sidmouth, Devonshire. The shield contains a small crown placed above each of Christ's wounds with the following inscriptions: under the hands, "Wel of wisdom" and "Wel of mercy"; under the heart, "Wel of everlasting life"; under the feet, "Wel of grace" and "Wel of gostly comfort."¹²³ Similar devices portraying the Lord's wounds are to be found in Cobham Church, Kent; in a mural at Gawsorth Church, Cheshire;¹²⁴ and in the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin, Canterbury.¹²⁵ It is significant to note that the designations of the

¹²³ Edward Dorling, Heraldry of the Church (London: Mowbray, 1911), p. 99.

¹²⁴ Frederick Husenbeth, Emblems of the Saints (Norwich: A. H. Goose, 1882), p. 6.

¹²⁵ Thomas Willement, Heraldic Notices of Canterbury Cathedral (London: Hardin and Lepard, 1827), p. 61.

wounds in these inscriptions are partially assimilated into the dialogue of some of the English cycles. As an example, in "The Burial of Christ" mystery of the Digby Plays, Mavdleyne, horrified at the appearance of Jesus' body, addresses the bloody wounds as "ye welles of mercy / dyggide so depe."¹²⁶

Furthermore, as a consequence of the crusades, or of a growing devotion to the blood of Christ, or even of an embryonic rivalry developing between various areas--possibly provoked by the alleged presence of the two cruets of Joseph of Arimathea near Glastonbury--the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries witnessed a number of purported relics of Christ's blood appearing throughout England. As early as 1171, such a relic was supposedly being venerated at the Cathedral of Winchester.¹²⁷ In 1257, Richard of Cornwall, brother of Henry III, was credited with bringing two relics from the Holy Land, depositing one at Ashridge and the other at Gloucester; later, in 1352, another relic at Edington was attributed to Richard's generosity.¹²⁸ Still another specimen, supposedly on exhibit for a time at Westminster Abbey, was said to have been obtained by Henry III from the Patriarch of

¹²⁶ Frederick J. Furnivall (ed.), The Digby Plays (London: Trubner, 1896), p. 183.

¹²⁷ Xavier Barbier de Montault, Oeuvres (Poitiers, 1899), VII, 537.

¹²⁸ Abbe Caillaud, Notice sur le Precieux Sang de Neuvy-Saint Sepulcre (Bourges: Pigelet, 1865), p. 146.

Jerusalem.¹²⁹ Finally, the Hailes relic, alluded to by Chaucer's Pardoner, was a gift of Edmund, Count of Cornwall, who presumably sent it, along with a history of Pope Urban IV, to the monastery at Gloucestershire in 1270.¹³⁰

These examples, by no means, constitute the extent of English association with conjectured blood relics--either of the crucifixion or of later "host miracles." Certainly, the transplanting of Norman culture on English soil following the 1066 Conquest would be expected to add to the English awareness of presumed Continental relics. The action of the famous Croxton Play of the Sacrament, the only complete and typical miracle drama preserved in English, is an amalgamation not of incidents related to English relics, but of events surrounding rumored blood relics resulting from supposed host miracles that occurred in such Continental locations as Buren, Belitz, Brussels, and Paris.

The last nineteen pages of this chapter have developed the folk aspect of blood theology. Primarily, this phase of the blood creed contains elements gleaned from the mist of primitivism the Golden Age of classicism, and the triumph of Christianity. Occasionally, a later emergence of some Blood Motif is merely the modification of some earlier motif or attitude. For example, the

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 144.

¹³⁰Frederick W. Faber, The Precious Blood (Philadelphia: Peter Reilly, 1959), p. 257.

regenerative features of the Eucharist in a spiritual sense parallel the physical rejuvenation attributed, by primitives, to cannibalism or to the drinking of human or animal blood. The supernatural vitality acquired from partaking of Christ's body and blood, in a folk sense, is not too far removed from the earthly vitality associated with blood and its surrogates by early man. Finally, the recording of so many blood "relics" and the reputed occurrence of numerous "host miracles" are mute evidence that the primitive attitude linking magical powers with blood became mixed with Christian superstition, well-meaning though it may be.

However, the folk aspect presents only one side of blood theology; there is the other side--the world of the formal theologian, the complex universe of Christianity's schoolmaster. At times, the two facets merge, meeting in a nebulous "no-man's land." This fusion is illustrated by the reference that has been made to scripture's use of the primitive blood vengeance code. Since periodic and detailed allusions will be made to formal medieval theology in explication of the various blood motifs as they appear in the writings of the Yorkshire mystics, it is sufficient to terminate this chapter with a brief synthetic view of the theological background of the medieval era and the formal theology available to Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, Dame Julian, and the anonymous author of The Cloud of Unknowing. To a degree, this theological panorama has been previewed in the "Mysticism" section of this chapter. However, as will be seen, chronological continuity requires a second look at certain men who have figured

prominently in the mainstream of medieval theology as well as in its mystical backwash.

As intimately fused as are the body and blood of Christ in the doctrine of the Eucharist so too is formal medieval theology a part of the tradition of blood sacrifice from which it also evolved. The sacred science is beyond question the intellectual mode of the medieval world; in fact, it probably is not exaggeration to claim that the history of the Middle Ages is in reality the growth and development of theology.

The overmastering strength of theology, of a clergy which as a rule absorbed all the functions of a literary class, gave its shape to everything with which it came into contact. Society was treated as though it were actually a theocracy; politics, philosophy, education, were brought under its control and adjusted to a technical theological terminology.¹³¹

Its subject matter--"the conception of man's divinely mediated salvation, and of the elements of human being which might be carried on, and realized in a state of everlasting beatitude"¹³² constituted, according to most authorities, the scope of ultimate intellectual interests for the medieval period. As the age progressed, theology, "Madame la Haute Science" of the thirteenth century,¹³³ emerged supreme over all other disciplines. It was

¹³¹Reginald Lane Poole, Illustrations of the History of Medieval Thought and Learning (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1960), p. 2.

¹³²Henry O. Taylor, The Mediaeval Mind (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919), I, 318.

¹³³Charles H. Haskins, Studies in Medieval Culture (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), p. 46.

the crown jewel of university curricula; a study of the Arts was merely the apprenticeship for the infinitely more serious contemplation of God and the relations between God and His created universe.

Christopher Dawson speaks of the medieval period as consisting of "three phases of religious development which are in point of time as far from one another as we ourselves are from the Reformation."¹³⁴

First, there is the religion of the later Roman Empire, which we may call Patristic Catholicism. Secondly, there is the religion of the Dark Ages, the age of the conversion of the barbarians. Thirdly, there is the religion of the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, which are often regarded as the central period of the Middle Ages but which were also, as Pere Mandonnet and Prof. Haskins have pointed out, essentially an age of the renaissance of European culture.¹³⁵

Later in his study, Dawson returns to the three phases to label the Patristic age the "creative period of Western theology,"¹³⁶ which found its expression in the work of St. Augustine; to designate the second phase "the age of traditionalism par excellence";¹³⁷ and to declare the third stage "the age of scholastic-

¹³⁴ Christopher Dawson, Medieval Essays (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1959), p. 88.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 89.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

ism--of the systematic dialectical reorganization of the whole traditional material."¹³⁸ The exhaustiveness of this reorganization can be appreciated only upon realization that

All the materials that lie scattered in the writings of the Fathers--in sermons and commentaries and controversial treatises--are to be found again built up into the imposing and symmetrical edifice of thirteenth-century scholastic theology.¹³⁹

The writings of St. Augustine loomed as a fundamental consideration for medieval theologians, much in the same fashion as certain of his works were essential reading for some of the medieval mystics. Prof. H. O. Taylor writes, "For all the Middle Ages the master in theology was Augustine. Either he was studied directly in his own writings, or his views descended through the more turbid channels of the works of men he influenced."¹⁴⁰ With the apparent emphasis, at least in Western theology, on the sacraments as a means of grace and the Christian existence as a life of grace, it is only logical to accept Taylor's view and to agree with Prof. Dawson's statement: "Thus the tendency of Western theology finds its representative and embodiment in St. Augustine, the Doctor of Grace."¹⁴¹ Above all, Augustinian dogma was basic, thereby appealing to both mystic and theologian.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 90.

¹⁴⁰ H. O. Taylor, II, 433.

¹⁴¹ C. Dawson, p. 91.

It was conservative; it appealed to authority and to the past. The concept of God was most fundamental, penetrating all speculation. The pattern of all things was in the divine ideas. God governs all things and lovingly cares for all. Men approach Him through creatures which share in the perfection of the Divine Pattern. Affective union with God involves something of the vision of God and may be termed mystical. Grace rules the whole moral life. The lines between philosophy and theology, nature and supernature, speculative thought and practical living, are not too clearly drawn. Appeal is made to the will, emotion and affection rather than to intellect.¹⁴²

What better recommendation for the subjective mystic and the objective theologian is there than these qualities elicited by Father Kaiser?

One of the men most influenced by the author of De Civitate Dei and Confessiones was the so-called "Father of Scholasticism," St Anselm of Canterbury. While the doctrines of other saints appear to dominate the era, it is Anselm that is of prime importance to any consideration of blood theology. His Cur Deus Homo, written in 1096, inaugurated a new epoch in atonement literature by denying the controversial theory that, in the sacrifice of the cross, Christ was offered to the devil as a ransom of blood for fallen man. The argument of Anselm's theory is found succinctly summarized in Part II, Chapter 7:

God will not do it i.e. make satisfaction for sin because He ought not and man will not, because he cannot; therefore that God and man may do this, it is needful that the same person

¹⁴² Edwin G. Kaiser, C.P.P.S., Sacred Doctrine (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1958), p. 180.

shall be perfect God and perfect man, who shall make this satisfaction; since he cannot do it unless he be very God, nor ought, unless he be very man.¹⁴³

The ransom concept--so strong in medieval literature, especially in the English cycles--had degraded the view of the redemption in the eyes of many of Anselm's contemporaries because they interpreted the crucifixion as either a concession to the devil or a trick played on Satan, a trick baited with the blood of Christ.¹⁴⁴ The logic of Cur Deus Homo precluded these possibilities; nevertheless, medieval literature indicates that the controversy continued little affecting the average layman who was content to accept the ransom concept at face value, shorn of ingenious theological implications.

The medieval theologian who earned the distinction of being called a "second Augustine" by his colleagues was Hugh of St. Victor. For the purpose of this brief survey of medieval theology, it is sufficient to note that the recurring theme of his major works--De Vanitate Mundi, De Laude Caritatis, De Modo Orandi and De Meditatione--is love, both the love that man owes God and the love that God manifests for man.

However, "of all medieval saints, Bernard and Francis im-

¹⁴³ St. Anselm, Proslogium; Monologium; An Appendix in Behalf of the Fool by Gaunilon; and Cur Deus Homo, trans. S. N. Deane (Chicago: The Open Court Co., 1935), p. 246.

¹⁴⁴ A detailed discussion of the "devil's rights" and "abuse of power" facets of the ransom motif appears in the next chapter when the ransom motif is analyzed.

pressed themselves most strongly upon their times."¹⁴⁵ These two heroes of the Church were the transitional figures from the first epoch of medieval theology to the second. They were also vital exponents of the love theme that permeated the writings of Hugh of St. Victor.

A catalogue of St. Bernard's accomplishments and an account of his career would constitute a representative chronicle of the first half of the twelfth century. Reformer, religious superior, crusader, humanitarian, Bernard was so influential that Prof. Taylor believes he "for a quarter of a century swayed Christendom as never a holy man before or after him."¹⁴⁶ That Bernard was, in addition, a significant mystical force has already been indicated. For this saint, love was better than knowledge since love extends beyond knowledge and is its own cause and end.¹⁴⁷ Whether Bernard's preoccupation with the love theme arose from his meditations on the humanity of Christ or whether the former led to the latter is difficult to ascertain and a moot theological point. What is of more importance is that in his instruction, Bernard replaced the severe figure of the Byzantine Christ, majestically enthroned as the awful Judge of Doomsday, with the human and humane Jesus, the infant of the manger, the lost child of the temple

¹⁴⁵H. O. Taylor, I, 431.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., I, 408.

¹⁴⁷In Cantica, lxxxiii, 4.

and the willing victim of the crucifixion. As Dawson observes, the theologian of Clairvaux preferred "to dwell on the human likeness of Jesus, the human suffering of His Passion and the human weakness of His Infancy."¹⁴⁸

The thirteenth century witnessed the flowering of theology in Scholasticism. It was the era of Duns Scotus and the great doctor of theology, Thomas Aquinas, as well as a number of secondary figures. Challenging these theologians and the century were the continued explorations into the humanity of Christ, on one hand, and the latent controversy about to be triggered by the crystallization of Eucharistic dogma, on the other hand. While the figure of Thomas Aquinas and his unprecedented and unsurpassed works on the Eucharist engaged the intellectuals of the period, the figures of Francis--the second of the transitional figures--and Bonaventure--already delineated as the most universally cited source of Yorkshire mysticism--with their considerations of the humanity of Christ probably appealed more to the typical layman, if the following observation by C. Dawson is valid.

The movement which had the greatest influence on medieval religion and medieval culture was not the speculative mysticism of the Dominicans but the evangelical piety and the devotion to the Humanity of Jesus that found its supreme expression in the life of St. Francis. This movement has far less connection with the scientific theology of the schools than the other, though one of its most notable representatives, St. Bonaventure, was also one of the greatest scholastic theologians. It was pre-eminently practical, emotional and hu-

¹⁴⁸
C. Dawson, p. 100.

man, owing nothing to learned tradition or metaphysical ideas, but springing directly from the heart and from personal experience.¹⁴⁹

While some question may exist as to whether the devotion to the humanity of Christ owed "nothing to learned tradition," anyone familiar with the details of St. Francis' life will attest to the correctness of the observation that the devotion found its ultimate manifestation in the life of this humble man.

The stories and legends regarding the Assisi saint's love for not only God and man but also animals and inanimate objects as well are legion. Apparently, isolated from the turmoil of the medieval period, Francis' entire existence was Christ-orientated. His life of sacrifice, obedience, humility, and piety was the logical culmination of a fervent desire to imitate the Lamb of Calvary. This patron saint of the humble best personifies the change from the Augustinian tradition to the more human religious conventions of the thirteenth century. As the late Pierre Rousselot recorded:

St. Augustine had considered the struggle for truth and holiness, before all, as a personal affair between the individual soul and God; it is by that that he had so to speak 'interiorized God.' But he had not in the same way interiorized Jesus. The humanity of Christ remains with him rather in the background. The great novelty of the Middle Ages, their incomparable religious merit, was understanding and love, or rather one might say, the passion of the humanity of Christ. The Incarnate Word, homo Christus Jesus, is

¹⁴⁹
Ibid., p. 99.

no longer only the model to be imitated, the guide to be followed, and on the other hand, the uncreated light that enlightens the interior of the soul; He is interior, even in respect of His Humanity; He is the spouse of the soul, who acts with it and in it; He is the friend.¹⁵⁰

Amidst this commentary lauding the new current of intimacy flowing from speculations of Christ's humanity, it might be well to observe that at least one student of the era considers the thirteenth century as having, to a degree, over-emphasized the suffering humanity of the Lord. Father Louis Bouyer, writing in Liturgical Piety, laments:

And, finally, the idea of the Mass as an absorbing contemplation of Our Lord in His Passion only, to the total exclusion of any thought of His Resurrection and of His final glory in His Whole Mystical Body, together with the reduction of the liturgical mystery to a mere memorial of the Passion, --all this is nothing but the final development of the medieval over-emphasis on the suffering Humanity of Christ, combined with the effects of the gradual disappearance of the true idea of the liturgy as sacramental, this idea having already been buried under a merely sentimental and allegorical remembrance of the past, in the Expositiones Missae.¹⁵¹

The death in 1308 of a somewhat controversial personality ended the Golden Age of Scholasticism. It is to Dun Scotus' eternal glory that he was the great defender of the Immaculate Conception doctrine in a period of skepticism, skepticism which even

¹⁵⁰ Pierre Rousselot, S.J., The Life of the Church (New York: Lincoln Mac Veagh, 1932), p. 181.

¹⁵¹ Louis Bouyer, Liturgical Piety (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1955), p. 42.

St. Thomas Aquinas seemed to share.¹⁵² However, what is of moment to this study is not his defense of this doctrine nor his stress on the love of God as the end of man, but rather his "relaxation of the bonds uniting the sacraments with the humanity of Christ, his explanation of transubstantiation as an adductive substitution."¹⁵³ As Father Kaiser explains, "The doctrine of Scotus that transubstantiation is an annihilation of the bread and an adducing of the substance of the Body and Blood is hard to sustain in light of the teaching of Trent and all subsequent theology."¹⁵⁴

Scotus' theory of transubstantiation fed the fever of Eucharistic controversy that appeared as early as 831 with the writing of The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ by Paschasius Radbertus, monk and later abbot of Corbey. This work, eventually presented in 844 to Charles the Bald, solidified opinion and focused attention on Eucharistic thought by stressing the spiritual character of the transformation. According to Cecilia Cutts, who has done considerable research on the matter for her dissertation on the Play of the Sacrament, Radbertus taught that "the elements are wholly and substantially converted into the body and blood of Christ and after the consecration do not truly and

¹⁵²E. Kaiser, Sacred Doctrine, p. 206.

¹⁵³"Theology," Catholic Encyclopedia, 1st edition, IV, 590.

¹⁵⁴E. Kaiser, Sacred Doctrine, p. 206.

properly continue to exist as bread and wine."¹⁵⁵

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the medieval scene witnessed the rise of dissenters, men such as Tanchelin, who in 1126 persuaded nearly the entire populace of Anvers that the Eucharist was not essential for salvation, and Pierre de Erius, who denied that the priest could change the Host into the body and blood of Christ. Immediately questions arose: whether the body of Christ is present in reality or as a figure; whether the Host is subject to corruption; what happens to the Host if received by the wicked; what happens if the consecrated Host is eaten by an animal or burnt; whether the body of Christ is broken with the species; and whether the Host undergoes the ordinary process of digestion.¹⁵⁶

By 1381, Wyclif was laboring unceasingly in an effort to corrupt the people's faith. Gradually, the Lollard heresy spread, gaining adherents and widening its sphere of influence. As late as the end of the fifteenth century, Lollard beliefs and activities were sufficiently troublesome to warrant frequent and sometimes desperate efforts by the clergy to counteract them. The principal teachings of the Lollards were aimed at the entire structure of medieval Catholicism. For the Wycliffites, the seven sa-

¹⁵⁵Cecilia Cutts, "The Background of the 'Play of the Sacrament'" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of English, Washington University, 1938), p. 418.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., p. 432.

craments were dead symbols of a corrupt Church; the vows of celibacy could be renounced; marriage was valid without the sanction of the Church; the Church was the Synagogue of Satan, with the Mass the topstone of the Antichrist; new-born infants were considered innocent, hence no need for baptism; no day was holy; Purgatory did not exist; and the only penance for sin was repentance. But above all, the doctrine of transubstantiation was the central target of the Lollards.

Positive Catholic reaction was in the form of "stimulating an increased devotion through processions, offering indulgences to those who visited certain shrines such as the Blood of Hales, to all who adored the Host, etc.; through the founding of Chentries; possibly through the presentation of religious plays."¹⁵⁷ In regard to this last point, the Chester plays are believed to have been revived in 1447 for the purpose of reinforcing waning laity devotion. In addition, Miss Cutts' dissertation proposes that the Play of the Sacrament was composed as part of the Catholic reaction to the Lollard heresy. Another positive Catholic answer was the authorization by Archbishop Arundel in 1410 of a prose translation of Bonaventure's Meditationes Vitae Christi, a translation that Miss Cutts believes was intended expressly to combat Lollardism.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 128.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 68.

Probably the best analysis of the medieval Eucharistic controversy that this writer has seen is Father Francis Clark's Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation. While the text is meant primarily as a discussion of the post-medieval era, the author's presentation of the medieval background to the Reformation disputes concerning the Eucharist is excellent. It is not this writer's intent to dwell on Father Clark's forthright acknowledgement of the various abuses and popular superstitions that were instrumental in advancing and prolonging the controversy, nor on the chronology of reform literature devoted to the debate; however, worthy of inclusion at this point is the Jesuit's pertinent summary of the medieval Eucharistic theology inherited by the Reformation epoch.

- (i) 'In the Mass there is offered to God a true and proper sacrifice', the highest act of Christian worship.
- (ii) The sacrifice of Christ's redemptive passion is all-sufficient to atone for all the sins of all men: 'through the shedding of his blood he redeemed us and rescued us from the power of darkness and brought us into his kingdom'. The Eucharistic oblation in no way implies that anything is wanting in the sacrifice of the cross, nor does it 'in any way detract from that sacrifice'.
- (iii) Christ, 'since his priesthood was not to be terminated with his death', established in his Church an order of priests 'the Apostles and their successors in the priesthood', through whom he would continue his sacrifice for all time.
- (iv) The Mass is not an absolute sacrifice, independent of the unique sacrifice by which Christ 'wrought our eternal redemption'; but it was instituted at the Last Supper as a relative sacrifice, by which that 'sacrifice in blood, accomplished but once on the cross, was to be represented, so that the memory thereof should remain till the world's end'.
- (v) Nevertheless 'the sacrifice of the Mass is not a mere commemoration', nor 'only a sacrifice of praise and thanks'; in it, really present, 'Christ himself is contained', and in

very truth 'his body and blood are offered to the Father under the appearances of bread and wine'.

(vi) The sacrifice of the altar is in a true sense one with the sacrifice of the cross. 'The victim is one and the same, and he who now offers through the ministry of priests is the selfsame as he who then offered himself on the cross'.

(vii) The newness of the Mass-sacrifice, and its difference from the sacrifice of Calvary, 'is only in the manner of offering'. For the Mass is 'an unbloody immolation', a mystical sacrifice, in which 'the Church through her priests immolates Christ under visible signs'. Hence Christ, who 'offered himself only once by way of death', does not in any way suffer death, pain, or change in the sacrifice of the altar.

(viii) All the efficacy of the Mass flows from the sacrifice of Calvary; 'the fruits of the bloody oblation are received in superabundance by means of the unbloody oblation'.

Through the latter men are enabled to participate in all the graces and benefits won for them by Christ. It 'applies the saving force of the sacrifice of the cross for the remission of the sins which we daily commit'; it is 'offered for the sins, penalties, satisfactions and needs of the faithful'. Thus 'the Mass is in truth a propitiatory sacrifice.

(ix) This propitiatory application of Christ's sacrifice through its liturgical re-enactment is not to be understood in the sense that the Mass justifies the wicked without their repenting; but rather, 'appeased by this offering, the Lord granting grace and the gift of repentance, forgives sins, even the greatest crimes'.

(x) The effects of the Mass-sacrifice do not extend to the welfare of the living alone; 'but it is also offered for the faithful departed in Christ who are not yet fully cleansed'.¹⁵⁵

The relevancy of certain points of this concise summary will become apparent in the survey of Yorkshire mysticism that is to follow. Furthermore, the findings of this dissertation will per-

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Francis Clark, S.J., Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1960), pp. 93-95.

mit some evaluation of Father Clark's concluding statement:

In the summary just given can be seen a body of doctrine about the Eucharistic sacrifice which is neither confused nor unorthodox by Catholic standards. Far from it being the case that by the end of the middle ages the whole concept of the sacrifice was wrapped in confusion and error, the theologians of the time handed on a coherent and traditional teaching. Whatever their other defects and domestic disputes may have been, here they presented a united front.¹⁵⁶

To complete an appreciation of the theological atmosphere of this turbulent era, one must be cognizant of the various religious customs and practices that evolved during the period. As early as the end of the eighth century, Friday was observed liturgically by votive Masses which priests were allowed to use to commemorate the Passion whenever no higher feast occurred.¹⁵⁷

The observance of Passion Sunday developed in the ninth century.¹⁵⁸ The weekly memory of the Last Supper with special veneration to the Blessed Sacrament on Thursdays can be traced to a custom originating in the early centuries of the second millennium.¹⁵⁹ St. Julian, a Belgian nun, was the first to suggest a special feast in honor of the Blessed Sacrament to be celebrated

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 95.

¹⁵⁷ Francis X. Weiser, S. J., Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1958), p. 25.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 179.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 29.

on a day other than Maundy Thursday. From this suggestion, the Corpus Christi feast and processions arose with St. Thomas Aquinas composing hymns and texts of the Mass and Divine Office for the new feast.¹⁶⁰ St. Bernard's composition of the hymn Jesu Dulce Memoria--already cited as one of Richard Rolle's sources--evidences Bernard's--and the age's--promotion of the veneration of the sacred name of Jesus.¹⁶¹ To combat the decline in the laity's partaking of the Communion service,¹⁶² the fourth Council of the Lateran in 1215 established the Easter Communion regulation. "The law was not made to inaugurate a new practice but to safeguard the minimum demands of an old tradition."¹⁶³ Two additional venerations very essential to this study developed during the period. Originating at the time of the Crusades when knights and pilgrims began to follow, in prayerful meditation, Christ's route to Calvary was the reverence of the suffering Lord with special meditation on His Passion. This institution--the Stations of the Cross--owes its promulgation to the zealous efforts of the Franciscan friars.¹⁶⁴ The other very popular and widely practiced de-

¹⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 260-261.

¹⁶¹Ibid., p. 139.

¹⁶²The emphasis placed on the divinity of Christ appears to have been responsible for the decline as well as the germination of the then embryonic transubstantiation controversy.

¹⁶³F. X. Weiser, p. 213.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., p. 180.

votion was that to the sufferings of Mary--the Feast of the Seven Sorrows.¹⁶⁵

No more fitting conclusion to this section on the sacred science of the Middle Ages can be written than can be found in the words of Henry Osborn Taylor, who with a few strokes of the scholar's quill captures the mood of this formative chapter in the exploration of man's relationship with his Creator. One side of the medieval theological cliff was the soft limestone of emotionalism, which under the heat and pressure of sorrowful meditation could become the beautiful marble of Christian mysticism.

As generation after generation clung to this system as to the stay of their salvation, the intellectual consideration of it became instinct with the emotions of desire and aversion, and with love and gratitude toward the suffering means and instruments which made salvation possible--the Crucified, the Weeping Mother, and the martyred or self-torturing saints. All these suffered; they were sublime objects for human compassion. Who could think upon them without tears? Thus medieval religious thought became a well of emotion.¹⁶⁶

The other side of the promontory contained the adamant granite of authority, destined to survive the eroding effects of the heretical elements.

Here all was authority. Scripture was the primary source; next came the creed, and the dogmas established by councils; and then the expositions of the Fathers. Thus the meaning of the authoritative then authoritatively systematized. The process had been intellectual and rational, yet with the driven rationality of Church Fathers struggling to formulate and express the accepted import of the Faith delivered to the saints. Authority, faith, held the primacy, and in two sen-

¹⁶⁵Ibid.

¹⁶⁶H. O. Taylor, I, 19.

ses, for not only was it supreme and final, but it was also prior in initiative efficiency.¹⁶⁷

Without an appreciation of both the emotional and authoritative facets of medieval theology, one cannot begin to understand the era.

The purpose of this chapter has been twofold. First, it has been an introductory chapter establishing the necessary perspective for an analysis of the Yorkshire mystics. This point of vantage has been achieved by providing two background syntheses: one of mysticism and the other of medieval theology. In both the emphasis has been on those individuals necessary for sketching a brief history of the movement as well as affording the reader fundamental knowledge of those mystical and theological currents most proximate to the intended analysis. Secondly, this chapter has attempted to delineate the formative elements of blood theology, that mosaic of the Christian sacrificial heritage so inextricably coupled with the entire panorama of primitive and classical concepts of blood import and sacrifice.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., II, 327.

CHAPTER II
RICHARD ROLLE
Life

"The true Father of English Literature"¹--this title, first bestowed on Richard Rolle by Carl Horstman in 1895, has since assumed, in modified forms, the proportions of a classical epithet among medieval scholars devoted to the promulgation of either Rolle's works or his reputation. Characteristic of this adulation are the following comments. First to restrict the title of "Father" to the field of prose is Geraldine Hodgson, who considers Rolle to be "this forgotten man, the true Father of English Prose"² who "stands the test of genius."³ Following Miss Hodgson's limitation, G. C. Heseltine believes Rolle merits the title because he was the first to write with originality and enthusiasm in English since the Conquest--" that is, he was the first to write in that amalgam of Old English, Norman-French, and Latin which was the basis of modern English."⁴ Returning to Horstman's designation, G. R. Owst observes: "As the outstanding figure of

¹Richard Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, II, ii.

²Richard Rolle, Some Minor Works, p. 16.

³Ibid.

⁴Richard Rolle, Selected Works of Richard Rolle Hermit, ed. G. C. Heseltine (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1930), p. viii.

this movement [the translation into English of Latin homilies and treatises as well as the popularization of them among medieval English laymen], if for no other reason, Richard Rolle, the hermit of Hampole, deserves the title bestowed on him by Horstman, that of 'the true Father of English Literature.'⁵ Finally, for Conrad Pepler, Rolle is at least the "Father of English Mysticism."⁶ And so the praise contracts and expands with each subsequent writing. Of general praise, there is generally no dearth; only the extensiveness of genre is in question.

However, this recent praise notwithstanding, Richard Rolle is still fundamentally what Miss Hodgson designated him--a "forgotten man." Little of a definitive nature is known of him. Ironically, Rolle's pioneering in literature of the vernacular following the Conquest--the very basis for the aforementioned praise--is apparently the cause of six centuries of relative neglect. G. C. Heseltine best expresses the traditional explanation for Rolle's virtual anonymity:

When Wyclif began his translation of the Bible he found ready to hand Richard Rolle's translation and commentary upon the Psalter and the Canticles, and there is reason to believe that he based his English version upon these. The nuns of Hampole Priory, fearful of the way in which Rolle's work was being appropriated and interpolated by the Lollards, hid away genuine copies of his works for posterity, but posterity never found them.

⁵G. R. Owst, p. 7.

⁶Conrad Pepler, O.P., "Richard Rolle," English Spiritual Writers, ed. Charles Davis (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), p. 18.

Hence Rolle holds a position in English literature largely usurped by his more spectacular fellow-countryman and successor, John Wyclif. Wyclif was born in Rolle's neighbourhood; he was a young man of twenty-five, at Oxford, when Rolle died. Like everybody else, he knew of Rolle's work and fame; he had a good deal of Rolle's Yorkshire energy and pioneering spirit; he had, in addition, the environment of learning, and was ostensibly at least a scholar. So he opportunely followed up the work Rolle had begun in his Psalter. The contempt which Rolle had for wranglers and disputers he did not share. Rolle's disgust with unworthy religious he shared in full. Unfortunately he lacked Rolle's humility--the essential virtue in a wise man and the indispensable one to a holy man. He fell into grave errors, assumed the oracle, and gained the notoriety which was magnified a hundredfold after the Reformation when his errors and others became widespread and culminated in Schism. His humility and wisdom came with age, but in the blaze of publicity he had overshadowed Rolle, and Rolle has been left in the shadow ever since.⁷

While the action of the Hampole Priory nuns appears to have been responsible for denying researchers Rolle's original manuscripts--thereby relegating any study of his works to manuscripts written at the earliest a generation after his death⁸--these Cistercian sisters may have instigated the preparation of the Office of St. Richard Hermit in an effort to effect his canonization. If so, they are instrumental in at least providing literary and religious students with the major source of Rolle's biographical data. Miss Allen suggests two reasons for the nuns'

⁷R. Rolle, Selected Works of Richard Rolle Hermit, pp. viii-ix.

⁸Hope Emily Allen, Writings Ascribed to Richard Rolle Hermit of Hampole and Materials for His Biography (New York: D. C. Heath and Company, 1927), p. 46. Subsequent references to this monumental work will be shortened to Writings Ascribed.

interest in the cause of Rolle's sainthood: "In addition to the personal veneration which they doubtless had for his memory [he was probably their spiritual advisor prior to his death], they had a practical stake in the cult that brought pilgrims to their little house."⁹

The Office consists of nine lessons, secret and post-communion prayers, and descriptions of twenty-seven miracles attributed to Rolle. One of the miracles involving the raising from the dead of a Yorkshire man named John after money had been placed on his body as an offering to Rolle is dated on the Feast of the Epiphany, 1381.¹⁰ Another miracle of a similar nature is dated on the Feast of the Assumption, 1383.¹¹ Consequently, Miss Allen conjectures that the Office was composed a short time after the 1383 date.¹² However, since the miracles would logically be arranged chronologically and since the 1383 miracle is only the sixth in a catalogue of twenty-seven, the Office might have been prepared closer to 1400, the approximate date of the Bodl. e Musaeo 193 and Upsala Univ. C. 621 MSS., the earliest of the Office manuscripts.

⁹Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁰Frances Comper, The Life and Lyrics of Richard Rolle, p. 311. All subsequent references to the Office will be to Miss Comper's translation of the Office, Appendix I, The Life and Lyrics of Richard Rolle, pp. 301-14.

¹¹Ibid., p. 312.

¹²H. E. Allen, Writings Ascribed, p. 51.

Unfortunately, the Office does not contain the dates of Rolle's life. Nevertheless, Rolle scholarship is generally agreed that the Hermit lived from approximately 1300 to 1349. Horstman is the first to point out that Rolle's writings contain no reference to his own old age though his early Latin works do allude frequently to his youth.¹³ A study of Rolle's associates--Archdeacon Neville, John Dalton, and Margaret Kirkeby--as well as a pre-1322 dating of Rolle's Judica, a work presumably written when its author was twenty-one, leads Hope Allen to conclude: "Rolle's birth would then be fixed at c. 1300, that is, possibly a year or two before 1300, but, hardly later."¹⁴ The death date of 1349 is, according to Miss Allen, "the only absolutely sure date that we have in tracing his life."¹⁵ The certainty of this biographical fact is established by agreement of such early English bibliographers as John Leland and John Bale in addition to a number of manuscript references. This abundance of evidence is explained by Miss Allen:

The extraordinary frequency of notes and colophons giving this information probably arises from the agitation occasioned by Lollardy; our extant copies of Rolle's works all belong to the Lollard period, when it was probably safe, where possible, to fix the date of a religious author before the rise of heresy.¹⁶

¹³R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, II, v n.

¹⁴H. E. Allen, Works Ascribed, p. 113.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 430.

¹⁶Ibid.

In absence of a better explanation, Miss Allen's will have to suffice. In further support of the 1349 date, Miss Comper writes:

There is certainly no mention of him after that date, and early in that year the Black Death raged in Yorkshire with unusual violence for several months. It was the worst outbreak in the north of which we have records. In the city of York three-fourths of the inhabitants died, and out of ninety parish priests in the East Riding only thirty were left. It is thought that Richard was one of the many victims and it was probably owing to the depletion of the monasteries by this terrible devastation that his name never appeared among the roll of canonised saints.¹⁷

The "negative" evidence aspect of this quotation is obviously more noteworthy than is Miss Comper's speculation regarding the failure to canonize Rolle. As previously indicated, the Office was composed at least thirty-four--possibly even fifty--years after Rolle's death. By this time, one would expect that the Church had recovered sufficiently to have pursued Rolle's sainthood if it deemed the Hermit worthy of the honor. It is more likely that Rolle's reputation--aside from the Cistercian sisters' opinion of him--was somewhat tainted by that of his Yorkshire contemporary Wyclif, just as later Erasmus was to suffer because of his proximity to Luther, thereby precluding canonization at that time.¹⁸

Lesson I of the Office establishes Rolle's birthplace as "the village of Thornton, near Pickering, in the diocese of

¹⁷F. M. Comper, The Life and Lyrics of Richard Rolle, p. 3.

¹⁸It is interesting to note that Blessed Richard of Ham-pole was among the names included in Newman's prospectus for The Lives of the English Saints. Unfortunately, Rolle was one of a hundred and eighty-three whose lives were never written.

York."¹⁹ At the proper age, Richard was sent to the University of Oxford, where he was maintained by Thomas Neville, who was later to become Archdeacon of Durham. "At Oxford . . . Richard had access to the cream of medieval culture. Scholars from all over Europe were there to learn, to teach and to dispute."²⁰ The first lesson indicates that Rolle "desired rather to be more fully and perfectly instructed in the theological doctrine of Holy Scripture than in physics or the study of secular knowledge."²¹ However, at the age of eighteen, Rolle, "considering that the time of mortal life is uncertain and its end greatly to be dreaded,"²² decides to leave Oxford in order to pursue a more spiritual existence at home. The initial lesson concludes with the often quoted story of Rolle's assumption of the hermit's role. The narration has prompted G. G. Coulton to suggest a certain "eccentricity" in Rolle's character,²³ a charge not seriously considered by more objective medieval scholars. Since the tale is so characteristic of the Hermit's individuality, it deserves full quotation. Rolle, a short time following his return from Oxford, addresses his sister:

¹⁹Office, p. 301.

²⁰R. Rolle, Selected Works of Richard Rolle, p. x.

²¹Office, p. 301.

²²Ibid.

²³G. G. Coulton, p. 524.

"My beloved sister, thou hast two tunics which I greatly covet, one white and the other grey. Therefore I ask thee if thou wilt kindly give them to me and bring them to me tomorrow to the wood near by, together with my father's rain-hood." She agreed willingly, and the next day, according to her promise, carried them to the said wood, being quite ignorant of what was in her brother's mind. And when he had received them he straightway cut off the sleeves from the grey tunic and the buttons from the white, and as best he could he fitted the sleeves to the white tunic, so that they might in some manner be suited to his purpose. Then he took off his own clothes with which he was clad and put on his sister's white tunic next his skin, but the grey, with the sleeves cut out, he put on over it, and put his arms through the holes which had been cut; and he covered his head with the rain-hood aforesaid, so that thus in some measure, as far as was then in his power, he might present a certain likeness to a hermit. But when his sister saw this she was astounded and cried: "My brother is mad! My brother is mad!" Whereupon he drove her from him with threats, and fled himself at once without delay, lest he should be seized by his friends and acquaintances.²⁴

The second lesson records Rolle's actions pursuant to his affecting the hermit's habit. He goes to church on the vigil of the Assumption, takes the place assigned to the wife of John Dalton, a wealthy squire, and prays. "And when she entered the church to hear vespers, the servants of the squire's house wished to remove him from their lady's place. But she from humility would not permit them, lest he should be disturbed in his devotions."²⁵ After vespers, the lady's sons recognize Richard as the son of William Rolle. Furthermore, they had studied at Oxford together. On the feast of the Assumption, Rolle returns to the

²⁴Office, p. 302.

²⁵Ibid.

church;

and without bidding from any one, he put on a surplice and sang matins and the office of mass with the others. And when the gospel had been read in the mass, having first besought the blessing of the priest, he went to the preacher's pulpit and gave the people a sermon of wonderful edification, inso-much that the multitude which heard it was so moved by his preaching that they could not refrain from tears; and they all said that they had never before heard a sermon of such virtue and power.²⁶

Following the conclusion of Mass, Rolle is invited, according to Lesson III, to dinner at Dalton's manor. Upon being questioned as to his identity, Richard is reluctant to acknowledge that he is the son of William Rolle. Dalton is a friend of his father, and Richard is "newly made a hermit without his father's knowledge and against his wish" ²⁷

Lessons IV-VI are concerned with Rolle's residence at the Dalton estate, where he is supported as a hermit by the squire for a period of approximately four years. Lesson IV relates that Richard "began with all diligence, by day and night, to seek how to perfect his life, and to take every opportunity he could to advance in contemplative life and to be fervent in divine love."²⁸ The fifth lesson traces briefly Rolle's ascetic practices--mortification of the flesh by numerous fasts, frequent vigils, repeated sobs and sighings, use of a hard bench for a bed, and a desire for death in order to be united with Christ. Lesson VI alludes to his

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., p. 303.

²⁸Ibid.

writings which were intended for the edification and conversion of his neighbors. Later in his life, Rolle's "personal reputation for wisdom and sanctity drew thousands of visitors to him, it is said, from all Christian countries."²⁹ In addition, Lesson VI stresses Rolle's own "busyness" and intense concentration, qualities that the Hermit recommends frequently to his readers.

In Lesson VII, the compilers of the Office insert an incident in Rolle's life that is of sufficient import to warrant complete citation.

"When I had perceived my especial vocation, and laying aside my worldly dress had determined to serve God rather than man, it befell that on a certain night in the beginning of my conversion there appeared to me, while resting on my bed, a very beautiful young woman, whom I had seen before and who loved me--in honorable love--not a little. And when I looked on her and was marvelling why she had come to me in solitude and at night, suddenly, without delay or speech, she placed herself beside me. When I felt this, fearing lest she should entice me to evil, I said I would arise and, with the sign of the cross, invoke the blessing of the Holy Trinity upon us. But she held me so strongly that I could neither speak nor move my hand. Whereupon I perceived that not a woman, but the devil in the form of a woman, was tempting me. So I turned me to God, and when I had said in my mind: 'O Jesu, how precious is Thy blood!' and made the sign of the cross on my breast with my finger, which had now begun in some measure to be capable of movement, behold, suddenly all disappeared, and I gave thanks to God who had delivered me. From that time therefore I sought to love Jesus, and the more I advanced in His love the sweeter and more pleasant did the Name of Jesus savour to me; and even to this day It has not left me. Therefore blessed be the Name of Jesus for ever and ever. Amen."³⁰

Indications are discerned in this passage, quoted by the composers

²⁹R. Rolle, Selected Works of Richard Rolle, p. viii.

³⁰Office, p. 305.

of the Office from Rolle's writing, of two possible devotions: one to the blood of Christ and the other to the name of Jesus. Whether this quotation truly represents Rolle and his mysticism is, of course, material for the last section of this chapter.

The few facts that are known regarding Rolle's later years are revealed in Lesson VIII. The Hermit is credited with exorcising "a certain lady . . . drawing nigh to death--in whose manor Richard had a cell" ³¹ Following the exorcism--possibly of Lady Dalton--the demons "went forthwith to his cell and disturbed him so much that for the time they made the place unfitted for his contemplation." ³² Subsequently, Rolle left his Dalton residence, identified as near Topcliffe, "so that dwelling in many places he might benefit many unto salvation, and sometimes also that he might escape impediment to contemplation" ³³ A curious "defense" of Rolle's movements follows at this point in the Office. As a result, scholars such as Horstman, Comper, and Allen have been led to speculate as to possible disagreements between Rolle and Dalton, persecutions by Church hierarchy that Rolle might have criticized or challenged, and false accusations by detractors. Often, these writers substantiate their theories with evidence in form of Rolle's personal allusions in the Melum

³¹Ibid., p. 306.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

Contemplativorum and the Incendium Amoris.³⁴ Despite these elaborate conjectures, the apology in the Office reads simply:

For frequent change of place does not always come from inconstancy; as is the accusation of certain who are given to quick and perverse judgment of their neighbours, but whose crooked interpretations and habits of detraction ought not to make a sensible person neglect those things which he has found by experience to be good and conducive to virtue. For in the canon and decrees of the Church many causes sometimes are assigned for which change of place may be made; of which the first is when pressure of persecution makes a place dangerous; secondly, when some local difficulties exist; and thirdly, when the saints are harassed by the society of evil men.³⁵

The vague generalities of this passage would naturally entice the Rolle scholar. Lesson VIII next traces Rolle to Richmondshire, from which he travels twelve miles to cure Lady Margaret, a recluse at Anderby, of an illness that had deprived her of the power of speech for thirteen days. This woman is presumably the Margaret for whom Rolle wrote the Form of Living.³⁶ Several years later, Lady Margaret is again ill. By this time, Rolle has again moved and has been serving as spiritual advisor to the sisters of Hampole. When Margaret's messenger arrives at Hampole to summon Rolle, he learns that the Hermit has died and that the illness of Lady Margaret "had returned to the recluse shortly after the hour

³⁴See C. Horstman's introduction to his second volume; Miss Allen's Works Ascribed, pp. 470-488; and Chapter IX of F. M. Comper's The Life and Lyrics of Richard Rolle.

³⁵Office, pp. 306-307.

³⁶The Rawl. C. 285 MS. is addressed to "Cecil"; however, this variation is attributed to a scribe's substitution.

of Richard's departure."³⁷ Margaret, after visiting Rolle's grave, is never again afflicted.

The vita of the Office terminates in Lesson IX with a long passage from Chapter XIII of the Fire of Love, which describes "how and by what means that blessed zealot of God, the hermit Richard, reached the stage of perfect love and charity" ³⁸ The passage is a narration of Rolle's own mystical ascent.

In addition to providing the aforementioned 1381 and 1383 dates, the miracula of the Office indicates that Rolle's tomb was constructed in the church of the Hampole nuns. According to the account of the first miracle, "a certain householder called Roger,"³⁹ after experiencing several visions of Rolle, is inspired to erect a tomb in the church for the Hampole hermit. During the transporting of the necessary stone, Roger's cart

collided with the side-post of the gate and cast the said stones with great force upon Roger himself. Yet he was in no wise hurt by this, nor felt any shaking or pain of body; and though his foot was very tightly jammed by the stones, he was able to get it out without injury to foot or leg.⁴⁰

This miracle is commemorated by Roger's placing one of the stones at the gate of the churchyard and another on the tomb of the Hermit.

³⁷Office, p. 308.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid., p. 310.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 311.

Aside from the scant data preserved in the Office of St. Richard Hermit, nothing additional is known with any degree of certainty. A tradition does exist that Rolle, following his Topcliffe stay with the Daltons, pursued a doctorate at the Sorbonne. Most Rolle scholars, while conceding the possibility of this additional study, refuse to accept it as readily and definitely as does G. C. Heseltine, who states:

But there is no reason to doubt the records in Paris--early eighteenth-century copies of the lists of alumni and writers at the Sorbonne--wherein he is said to have lived there at least from 1320 to 1326 . . . It is very likely that he went to Paris and took his Doctorate there [The English Martyrologie by "A Catholick Priest," published in 1608, lists Rolle as a doctor]. The University of Paris had long been popular with the English since its first charter had been obtained from the Pope and by an Englishman, Robert, Cardinal Curzon of Kidleston, in 1211. Rolle refers in his writings to the translation of St. Maglorius which took place in Paris when, according to the Sorbonne records, he would have been there.⁴¹

Logic appears to support the Heseltine deduction that there is no reason to question the early eighteenth century copies of the Sorbonne records. Rolle has enjoyed two periods of popularity: once during his own lifetime and again, to a much lesser degree, during recent years. Evidence of Rolle's own contemporary fame is discerned in the numerous works, including the Pricke of Conscience, incorrectly ascribed to him by manuscripts of his age. Nevertheless, by the eighteenth century, Rolle's position, owing to the Reformation and the stigma of the Wyclif association, would

⁴¹R. Rolle, Selected Works of Richard Rolle Hermit, pp. x-xi.

hardly have warranted his name being falsely appended to the Sorbonne lists.

These few facts, while not delineating clearly the image of Richard Rolle, at least establish a hazy outline of this lonely, well-educated hermit. This contemplative shadow achieves the proportion of "Father" as his true greatness gradually emerges with each subsequent study of the writings attributed to him.

Authenticated Works

Regrettably, the Office contains references to only one work, the Incendium Amoris or the Fire of Love. As Previously indicated, none of Rolle's own manuscripts is extant. As a result, the problem of authenticating the authorship of the many works ascribed to Rolle remains matter for scholarly conjecture. Until the publication of Carl Horstman's two volume edition of Richard Rolle's English writings in 1895, there had been no sustained effort to determine the extent of the Hermit's literary prolificacy in the vernacular. Since then, this monumental publication has provided the Rolle researcher with copies of all pertinent English manuscripts known to Horstman--with the exception of the previously published Bramley edition of the English Psalter--as well as descriptions of the Latin editions and manuscripts. True, this eminent German scholar has since been proven erroneous in some of his ascriptions; nevertheless, as Dundas Harford states:

Horstman's work may have many faults, but at least his industry and accuracy as a copyist are worthy of all admiration, and readers of Rolle owe him ungrudging thanks for rendering accessible to them so many of his writings, and for setting them on the track of so many more.⁴²

The following outline represents an abridgment of Horstman's classification of Rolle's writings. The list comprises those works that Horstman was able to trace in the libraries of

⁴²Richard Rolle, The Mending of Life, ed. Dundas Harford (London: H. R. Allenson, 1913), pp. x-xi.

Oxford, Cambridge, and London.

I. Latin Works

A. Definite Authorship

1. Hymn to the Virgin
2. Melum contemplativorum ardentium in amore dei
3. Capitulum de Iudicio dei sec. Hampole
4. Exhortatio quaedam bona
5. Quomodo apparebit dominus in iudicio
6. Regula heremitarum
7. Liber de amore dei contra amatores mundi
8. Postillae ejusdem super Cantica
9. Postillae ejusdem heremitaie super novem lectiones mortuorum (Job)
10. Moralia in Job
11. Postilla ejusdem super Threnos sive lamentationes Jeremiae
12. Tractatus super psalmum 20
13. Expositio psalterii
14. Magnificat
15. Incendium amoris (Melodia amoris)
16. De emendatione peccatoris (Emendatio vitae, Vehiculum vitae, Duodecim capitula)
17. Tractatus super oratione dominica
18. Expositio symboli apostolici
19. Expositio symboli Athanasii (Quicumque vult)
20. Super "Mulierem fortem quis inveniet"
21. De dei misericordia, sive de VIII viridariis

22. Miscellanies in MS. Valiol 224

23. Prayers, hymns, epigrams, sentences, and short notes dispersed in various manuscripts and collections

B. Doubtful Works Ascribed to Rolle

1. Consilia Isidori
2. "Memento miser homo quod cinis es," a meditation
3. Meditatio divinae laudis et spei veniae sec. Ricardum heremitam
4. Bonum notabile sec. Ricardum Hampol heremitam, quod temptationes spirituales multum prosunt animae peccatrici
5. Aliud notabile dictum per eundem Ricardum de cautelis diaboli contra timidam conscientiam
6. Meditatio S. Augustini
7. Meditatio: "Domine deus spiritus sancte, timeo et desidero loqui de te pro me"
8. Matutinae in veneratione nominis Jesu editae a b. Ricardo de Hampule
9. Missa de eodem et ab eodem ut creditur edita: "In nomine Jesu omne genu"
10. Liber de arte moriendi
11. Novem virtutes

C. Works Wrongly Ascribed to Rolle

1. De XII utilitatibus tribulationis
2. Speculum peccatoris
3. Scala coeli, or Scala claustralium
4. Cantus philomenae

II. English Works

A. Works Bearing His Name

1. The form of living--an epistle to Margaret Kirkby
 2. "Ego dormio et cor meum vigilat," epistle to a nun of Yeddingham
 3. "Pe commandment," epistle to a nun of Hampole
 4. Cantica divini amoris, and another poem, of the same kind: "Thy ioy be ilka dele"
 5. "A grete clerk þat men cals Ricard of Saynt Victor"
 6. Meditatio Ric. heremite de passione domini, in two MSS.
 7. Minor pieces in MS. Thornton
 - a. Encomium nominis Jesu
 - b. De imperfecta contritione, two tales from Caesarius
 - c. Moralia Richardi heremite de natura apis
 - d. De vita cuiusdam puelle incluse propter amorem Christi, a tale from Heraclides
 - e. A notabill tretys of the ten comandementys
 - f. De 7 donis Spiritus sancti
 - g. De dilectatione in deo
 8. Commentary on the Psalter
 9. The Prick of Conscience
- B. Anonymous Works in Northern MSS., Probably Written by Rolle
1. Meditation on the Passion, and of three arrows on Doomsday
 2. 9 points
 3. St. Anselm's Admonitio morienti
 4. On grace
 5. On prayer

6. Our daily work
 7. The Mirror of St. Edmund, a translation
 8. Poems in MS. Thornton
- C. Pieces in the West Midland MS. Reg. 17 B XVII
1. Lay-Folks Mass-Book
 2. A Poem on Hell, Purgatory, Heaven, World, Man, Sin, Grace, Virtue, Good works, God's Mercy, God's Justice
 3. The twelve profits of tribulation
 4. Of the double coming of Christ, a translation of St. Bernard De adventu Domini sermo VI
 5. Miscellanies in Latin and English, including two poems on themes of the Prick of Conscience
- D. Minor Poems of MS. Vernon
- E. Doubtful Works
1. Psalter in verse
 2. St. Mary's lamentation on the passion of Christ
 3. Minor pieces in the West Midland MS. Ashm. 751
 4. Short pieces in MS. Harl. 1022
- F. Works Wrongly Ascribed to Rolle
1. Contemplatyons of the drede and love of God
 2. The remedy ayenst the troubles of temptacyons
 3. 2 epistles "maad of Richard Hampul as some men supposen, but whoeuer made it, myche deuout þinge is þerinne"
 4. Speculum vitae
 5. And many of the pieces in the lists of Tanner and Pits
 - a. Orologium Sapientiae
 - b. Consilia Isidori "O man knowe þiselfe"

- c. Meditatio S. Augustini "Seynt Austyne the holy doctour techeth"
- d. Pety Iob
- e. The seven penitential psalms in verse
- f. The profits of tribulation
- g. The boke of the craft of dying, a translation of De arte moriendi
- h. A trefyse of gostly batayle
- i. The Myrror of synneres, a translation of the Speculum peccatoris
- j. Of three arrows on Doomsday⁴³

As a preface to his list of Rolle's English works, Horstman includes a fairly comprehensive summary of the problem involved in authenticating the Hermit's vernacular writings. First, Rolle's name had apparently become so intimately fused with the religious and mystical literature of his age that all works of this character found in such collections as the MS. Harl. 1706 were readily credited to him. On the other hand, his works were frequently confused with those of his followers--particularly Hilton and Wyclif--who freely borrowed from him. Horstman elicits a similarity of style between Hilton and Rolle as a contributing factor. To illustrate further this confusion of master and disciple, Horstman alludes to Wyclif's appropriation of Rolle's original work in the Lollard's Commentary on the Psalms and Canticles.

⁴³ R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, II, xxxvi-xliii.

Moreover, translations and imitations of Rolle's works often assumed his name. Finally, some of the Hermit's writings were divided only to be integrated later with someone else's work; frequently, the entire combination then became attributed to Rolle. "So confusion soon commenced to set in; it begins in the Mss., appears in the early prints, was magnified by Tanner [an early bibliographer], and has since invaded the modern catalogues of Mss."⁴⁴

The principal test in determining Rolle's authorship of English writings is, according to Horstman, one of dialect. Since Rolle resided primarily in the precincts of Yorkshire, the German philologist states:

It is obvious that he can only have written in the northern dialect--unlike Wicliffe who, though a northerner, from his long residence in the South adopted the southern speech, and W. Hilton who, though originally writing in northern English, gradually admitted the mixed forms of the neighbourhood where he resided (Thurgarton in Notts). Indeed, all the genuine works of R. Rolle have been traced in northern texts, exhibiting the same pure northern forms, the same vocabulary. It follows that works which on closer examination are found to be of Midland or Southern origin, cannot be his; hence many works in Tanner's list must be rejected. Nor can even northern texts which give translations of his Latin works, be accepted as his, if they are found to seriously misunderstand the meaning--for it is impossible that he himself should have mistaken the sense of his words; such is the case in several of the pieces of Ms. Thornton, though here given with his name. On the other side, we may safely ascribe to him those northern texts which in the Mss. are found mixed up with works of his and contain the same peculiarities of language and style, the same cadenced prose &c., though not bearing his name. The only possible means of approximately arriving at the truth is, therefore, to follow up the northern Mss.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. xxxix.

which contain, or may contain his works.⁴⁵

In spite of more recent proposals, Horstman's test of dialect must remain fundamental to any investigation of Rolle's English works. Equally basic to this facet of Rolle scholarship is Horstman's catalogue of the Hermit's characteristic vocabulary which is included as an extended footnote to this quoted passage.

The second colossus of Rolle scholarship appeared in 1927 with the publication of Hope Emily Allen's greatly anticipated Writings Ascribed to Richard Rolle Hermit of Hampole and Materials for His Biography. In regard to number of works considered genuinely Rolle's, Miss Allen's text represents the opposite pole from Horstman's rather liberal accreditation. For example, Allen accepts only eleven English commentaries, epistles, and short prose pieces as well as a handful of lyrics as definitely having been written by the Hampole Hermit. These constitute less than a third of those validated by Horstman. The nature of Miss Allen's work is correctly revealed in her introductory paragraphs:

The present volume will supply lists of all the manuscripts of the works of Richard Rolle, hermit of Hampole, and of writings ascribed to him falsely or doubtfully which have come to light during a long investigation of manuscript collections. All information of assistance for determining his canon that can be derived from medieval sources will be quoted, whether in the form of scribe's notes and colophons appended to manuscripts and early editions of the works, or of references in early compilations and bibliographies. The evidence will be given for disproving false ascriptions, and the authenticity of true and doubtful works will be discussed.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. xl.

The most salient features of each piece will be described, but their structure is so informal that no summaries are attempted. Since the bulk of Rolle's work is either unprinted or only accessible in rare early editions, the present descriptive catalogue of the writings may be useful for its quotations. On that account works which have never been printed will be quoted more at length than those easily accessible. . . . To collect the materials for an understanding of Rolle's place in literary and religious history may be called the primary purpose of the present study; but since materials have been up to now in confusion, the principal enterprise has actually been that of determining the canon. To this purpose other considerations have when necessary been sacrificed, for other studies can follow the determination of the canon better than they can precede it. Whatever material brings any evidence as to the authorship of the writings has primarily been given in that connexion, in order that the canon may so far as possible be settled once for all.⁴⁶

In spite of the obvious merit of Allen's important contribution to the establishment of Rolle's canon, it is impossible to agree with statements such as that of Effie Mackinnon: "Happily Miss Allen's work is unimpeachable. The canon has been settled once for all. It remains merely to accept her conclusions as a foundation for further study."⁴⁷ Just as Allen challenges Horstman's deductions, other Rolle devotees have stepped forth to question her judgments. Representative is Miss Hodgson's reluctance to surrender four works attributed to Rolle by Horstman but rejected by Allen:

There are perhaps only four of the Writings which Miss Hope has excluded, at any rate tentatively if not positively, which Rolle's lovers will decline to give up save on incon-

⁴⁶H. E. Allen, Works Ascribed, p. 1.

⁴⁷Effie Mackinnon, "Studies in Fourteenth Century English Mysticism" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of English, University of Illinois, 1934), p. 45.

trovertible evidence that he cannot have written them. These are, Our Daily Work; Meditation on the Passion and of Three Arrows on Doomsday, and the two little tracts, On Grace and On Prayer.⁴⁸

Apparent in this quotation is the indication that Miss Allen is not as universally positive in her conclusions as a superficial scanning of her text or a reading of Miss Mackinnon's treatment of the Allen canon might imply. Actually, while Miss Allen is somewhat dogmatic as to the works she accepts without reservation, by her own testimony she indicates that the final word has not been recorded in regard to other works.

As a result, the attitude of this writer corresponds to that of G. C. Heseltine, who writes:

There has been some discussion amongst scholars as to what works are Rolle's and what are not. But such discussions are of no more than academic value. To us who seek to know Rolle and understand his works it will not matter very much if we innocently regard as his the works, to quote an old joke, of "another man of the same name." On the whole, authorities are fairly well agreed on the principal works attributed to him, and if in accepting the majority opinion we mistakenly attribute to Rolle a work which, though certainly like his, was written by a disciple or imitator, there will be no great harm done."⁴⁹

Heseltine's point is not necessarily the academic heresy that it might appear to be; at least it is not from the perspective of this dissertation. The primary purpose of this study is to anal-

⁴⁸ G. Hodgson (ed.), Rolle and "Our Daily Work" (London: The Faith Press, Ltd., 1929), p. 102.

⁴⁹ R. Rolle, Selected Works of Richard Rolle Hermit, pp. xxv-xxvi.

alyze English mystical literature of the fourteenth century in order to determine the extent of its Blood Motifs. The Yorkshire school provides a convenient limitation to the project as well as obviously providing the most significant mystical literature of the age. If, then, the analysis of Rolle's works includes investigations of works about which there is reasonable contemporary doubt as to authorship, and even if later scholarship proves conclusively that Rolle is not the author of one or more of them, there will, nevertheless, in Heseltine's words, "be no great harm done." The study will merely have provided a little more research than had originally been envisioned.

The disagreement with Miss Mackinnon's blind acceptance of Miss Allen's canon notwithstanding, Miss Mackinnon's dissertation has provided this writer with a table of Rolle's accepted writings, a table which permits the chronology and grouping of the Latin and English works to be seen at a glance. This synthesis in tabular form is the result of a very careful reading of the materials provided in Miss Allen's text. Since the analysis of the Blood Motifs in Rolle's writings will concentrate first on those works universally accepted as genuine, Miss Mackinnon's chronology is both an apt conclusion to this segment of the Rolle chapter and a proper transition to the next section.

CHRONOLOGY OF ROLLE'S WRITINGS

LATIN WORKS

ENGLISH WORKS

I
1320-1330

Poem to Virgin:
Canticum Amoris
Soon after conversion
at 18

Manual:
Judica Me Deus
Before 1322

Treatise:
Melum Contemplativorum
C. 1326-7

Commentaries:
Super Lectiones Job in
Officio Mortuorum

De Dei Misericordia
Perhaps in Paris

II
1330-1340

Commentaries:
Comment on the Canticles
Possibly first period,
contemporaneous with Job

Super Threnos
Possibly first period

Super Orationem Dominicam

Super Symbolum Apostolorum

Super Mulierem Fortem

Latin Psalter
Early in period

LATIN WORKS

ENGLISH WORKS

II
1330-1340

Commentaries:

Super Magnificat

Super Psalmum XXm

Commentaries:

Super Magnificat

English Psalter
After 1337

Treatise:

Liber de amore Dei contra
amatores mundi
Precedes Incendium

III
1340-1349

Treatises:

Incendium Amoris
Before 1343

Emendatio Vitae
Period of English
epistles

Epistles:

Ego Dormio
C. 1343--Earliest of epis-
tles

The Commandment

Form of Living
1348-9

Short Prose Pieces:

The Bee and the Stork

Desyre and Delit

Gastly Gladnesse
C. 1343

Seven Gifts of the Holy
Spirit

Commentary on the Ten Com-
mandments

Meditations on the Passion

English Lyrics⁵⁰

⁵⁰E. Mackinnon, pp. 42-43.

English Psalter

As is discerned in the preceding table, the English Psalter is dated after 1337. The basis for this deduction is Miss Allen's conjecture that the war alluded to in the Psalm XXI commentary is the war with France that was declared in 1337 and continued throughout the remainder of Rolle's life.⁵¹ Using the same approach--that of utilizing internal evidence--Rev. H. R. Bramley, the editor of the 1884 edition of the English Psalter, places the date of composition between 1316 and 1326. Rev. Bramley reasons that the description of the pestilence in the explanation of Psalm I may have been suggested by the plague of 1316. As for the 1326 date:

Allusion is made to 'ill pryncys,' to 'oure pryncys now that ledis thaire life in filth of syn,' and to the strife which is poured out on them; to the perplexities of the prelates, and to their being slain. There can be little doubt that these expressions refer to the 'evil times' and character of Edward II, to his wars with the nobles, to the entanglement of the bishops in the contending factions, and specially to the death of Walter de Stapledon, bishop of Exeter and Lord Treasurer, who having been left by the king as governor of the city of London was murdered in Cheapside, Oct. 14, 1326. It might perhaps be conjectured from the absence of any clear allusion to the murder of the King, which took place Sept. 21, 1337, that the completion of this commentary is to be assigned to the period between those two events.⁵²

Regardless of the exact date, the consensus is that in two respects "this work opened a new period in Rolle's production,

⁵¹H. E. Allen, Works Ascribed, p. 186.

⁵²Richard Rolle, The Psalter or Psalms of David and Certain Canticles with a Translation and Exposition, ed. Rev. H. R. Bramley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1884), pp. xv-xvi. Subsequent references will be to Psalter.

which was to be the last: it was written in English, and for a friend."⁵³ According to a verse prologue included in the Bramley edition, Rolle

Closed the sauter that sues here; in
englysch tong sykerly,
At a worthy recluse prayer; cald dame
Merget kyrkby.⁵⁴

Once having inaugurated his English writings, Rolle appears to have returned to Latin only twice: once to write the Incendium Amoris and the other time to compose the Emendatio Vitae.

On initial observation, a work such as a Psalter might seem to be an unlikely source of original thought. Rolle states in his prologue:

In expounynge. i. fologh haly doctours. for it may come in some enuyous man hand that knawes nocht what he sould say, that will say that. i. wist nocht what. i. sayd. and swa doe harme til hym. and til othere. if he dispise the werke that is profytable for hym and othere.⁵⁵

However, to anyone conversant with Rolle's writings, it becomes immediately apparent that the Hermit's "touch" is ever-present in the commentaries. For example, Miss Allen observes that Rolle's "whole mystical doctrine could be expounded from his Psalters."⁵⁶ In support of her thesis, she cites the English Psalter several

⁵³H. E. Allen, Works Ascribed, p. 187.

⁵⁴Psalter, p. 1.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 5.

⁵⁶H. E. Allen, Works Ascribed, p. 178.

times: once for Rolle's statement that the fire of love is more than a metaphor [Ps. XXXVIII. 4] and four times for Rolle's insistence that mystic joy is an actual foretaste of heaven [Ps. XXXII. 3; Ps. LXVII. 27; Ps. XXVI. 11; Ps. XXXIX. 4].⁵⁷ Additional English previews of Rolle's mysticism are discerned in references to the mystical song of heaven that is heard by only a few;⁵⁸ the "perfit men. that ere brennand with the flaumme of godis luf, and passis in till contemplatife life";⁵⁹ the mystical wounding of men by God's love;⁶⁰ "gastly steghyng [ascending]";⁶¹ Scripture's help in the mystical ascent;⁶² the importance of "busyness" to mystical love;⁶³ contemplation as the "goed zernynge [that] liftis vs til heuen";⁶⁴ and the Christocentric gathering, "thare is thi rest and thi sikirnes [security]".⁶⁵

In addition to the mystical character of the English Psalter, there are non-mystical illustrations of the Rolle imprint.

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 180-181.

⁵⁸ Psalter, Ps. XXXIX. 4, p. 146.

⁵⁹ Ibid., Ps. XLI. 1, p. 153.

⁶⁰ Ibid., Ps. LXXVI. 17, p. 276.

⁶¹ Ibid., Ps. CXIX. 1, p. 437.

⁶² Ibid., Ps. CXX. 1, p. 438.

⁶³ Ibid., Ps. CXXI. 1, p. 439.

⁶⁴ Ibid., Ps. CXXII. 1, p. 440.

⁶⁵ Ibid., Ps. CXLV. 1, p. 481.

The explication of Psalm XXI contains a distinction between the poor and the rich, a distinction that is one of Rolle's favorite themes:

The pore ere meke men and despisers of this world. thai sall ete gastly mete in swetnes of luf and gladnes of heuen: and thai sall be fild foluand ihu crist, and louand in brennand deuocioun: & swa thai sall nother couaite the plente of this world, ne dred the hungere, bot seke god. Pore men louys god. riche men thaim self: for thi thof the bodis of pore men dye, thaire hertis lifes with outen end. and riche men lifes in this world in ioy, and sythen thai dye in endles pyne.⁶⁶

There are also the typical Rolle denunciations of "flaterers and bakbiters"⁶⁷ and the "enuyous men [who] thynkis how thai mught fordo the goed fame of a haly man."⁶⁸ Finally, and most significantly, the English Psalter reveals the Rolle stamp with its numerous indications of blood import, indications that will be shown to consistently permeate Rolle's other English writings.

The English Psalter establishes in the vernacular Rolle's association with the various facets of Christ as a ransom figure. Rolle's theological studies at Oxford and possibly the Sorbonne appear to have thoroughly prepared him in the field of redemptive thought. From the early Church Fathers up to Rolle's own era, a major consideration of the theologians had been the exact nature of Christ's role as a sacrificial victim. Against a background of

⁶⁶ Ibid., Ps. XXI. 27, p. 82.

⁶⁷ Ibid., Ps. XIV. 4, p. 51.

⁶⁸ Ibid., Ps. XL. 8, p. 152.

the contention between God and Satan for the possession of mankind the giants of theology projected the so-called theory of "devil's rights." This concept consists of three forms: the legal or ransom theory; the political or abuse of power theory; and the poetical or metaphoric theory. The ransom theory, proposed by St. Ambrose and St. Jerome, states that by sinning mankind had become the captive or slave of the devil. By his own efforts, man could not buy his freedom. As a result, it became necessary for Christ to liberate man by offering His blood as a ransom to the devil. The second form, the abuse of power theory, considers a compact to have existed between God and the devil, one limiting their respective sovereignties. By agreement, Satan received from God the power to subject all men to death as a consequence of their sins. However, by slaying the innocent Christ, the devil had violated the compact; God was, therefore, justified in depriving Satan of his captives as a result of his having abused his rights. This theory, supported by St. Augustine and St. Leo the Great, eliminates any possibility of a ransom being given to the devil, who is merely being punished for his compact violation. God's success in manipulating this violation is sometimes conceived as having resulted from a hiding of the divine nature of the Savior from Satan. "In this trickery the Fathers saw another proof of God's wisdom, who by His cleverness was able to inveigle even the Father of Lies in order to overcome him."⁶⁹ Furthermore, since Adam was seduced

⁶⁹J. Riviere, The Doctrine of the Atonement, tr. Luigi Cappadelta (London, 1909), p. 162.

by deception, it was only fitting that the devil be deceived.⁷⁰

The role of Christ's blood in the two theories is explained by Father Rohling:

In the one it is paid to the devil as a ransom for mankind, in the other it is shed unjustly by the devil, who abuses his power in doing so. In the one case the Blood is paid to the devil, in the other it is not paid to the devil; he is merely permitted to shed it, that he might overstep the rights which God had given him, and thus forfeit the power which he had received over the rest of mankind.⁷¹

Finally, the poetical form may be either the ransom theory or the abuse of power theory expressed allegorically.

Of the two major theories, the ransom theory appears to have been decidedly less prominent than the abuse of power theory since it is beset with a number of inconsistencies. The major obstacle to an acceptance of the ransom theory is that the blood of Christ is traditionally considered as fulfilling the typical bloody sacrifice of the Old Testament, sacrifices that certainly were not offered to the devil. By the year 1000, theologians such as St. Leo, the Venerable Bede, Alcuin, Sedulius Scotus, and Atto of Vercelli had labored to establish that Christ's blood was not paid as a ransom to the devil but rather was offered by Christ as a blood sacrifice to God the Father.⁷² Nevertheless, as already noted in

⁷⁰ Joseph H. Rohling, C.P.P.S., The Blood of Christ in Christian Literature before the Year 1000 (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America, 1932), p. 107.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 41.

⁷² Ibid., p. 109.

regard to Cur Deus Homo,⁷³ the ransom theory, possibly because of its psychological appeal, continued to exert significant influence on medieval religious and secular literature.

Excluding the commentaries prompted by the appearance of "deliverer" and "redeemer" in the context of the Psalms themselves, one discovers that Rolle's utilization of the redemptive motif runs the gamut of the "devil's rights" theory. However, the overwhelming majority of instances involves three facets of the legal or ransom form: man's captivity, man's inability to effect his own ransom, and man's subsequent reliance on God's purchase from the devil.

Man's slavery is the concern of six of Rolle's explanations. Early in the English Psalter--the explanation of Psalm II. 3 and 4--the Hermit stresses the need to break the "bandis of couatis & ill dred, that byndes men in synne."⁷⁴ In Psalm VI. 4, it is specifically man's "saule [that is] bondyn in synn, and lettid [hindered] with many enmys in turnynge."⁷⁵ The commentary on Psalm LVI. 5 establishes the intimate connection between God's mercy and the freeing of man's soul:

God sent his mercy til my saule, forgifand my syn, and his sothfastnes, punysand me mercyfully. and swa he toke out my saule, that was bunden in bandis of syn, fra the myddis of

⁷³ See p. 53.

⁷⁴ Psalter, Ps. II. 3 and 4, p. 9.

⁷⁵ Ibid., Ps. VI. 4, p. 22.

whelpis of lyouns, that is, fra the comun life of warldis lufers, that ere the whelpis of deuels.⁷⁶

Two references depict man's captivity as servitude in the "prison of the deucl."⁷⁷ In the sixth and final passage, a slightly modified form of the slavery theme is presented: "The saules of pore men he sal by out of okeringe [usury] of the devil, that askes mare in paynes than was done in synnes."⁷⁸

Man's redemptive impotence is the subject of Psalm XLVIII. 7 and 8 and Rolle's interpretation of these verses.

7. Frater non redimet. redimet homo: & non dabit deo placacionem suam. (Brothere sall not bye, sall man bye; and he sall noght gif til god his quemynge [appeasement]. (Brothere crist sall not bye swilke. for thai trayst noght in him. bot in thaire vertu. Wha sa trayst in this brother he sall not drede in ill day. sall man bye thaim. nay, thof he be neuer swa myghty. aswha say, thai ere in prison of the deucl. and nane is to bye thaim oute. for crist will noght, thare frend mey noght, than ere thai lost: and swa he sall noght gif til god. his quemynge. that is, he wil noght gif til god luf of his hert. that myght queme him.

8. Et precium redempcionis anime sue: & laborabit in eternum & viuet adhuc in finem. (And the prise of the biynge of his saule: and he sall trauaile withouten ende, and he sall lif 3it in the ende. (That is, he sall not doe verray penaunce and almusede, thurgh the whilke he myght bye his saule fra hell. and therfor he sall trauaile withouten ende in pynes⁷⁹

Despite the fact that the text necessitates Rolle's concentration on this particular element of the ransom theory, the Hampole my-

⁷⁶Ibid., Ps. LVI. 5, p. 202.

⁷⁷Ibid., Ps. XLVIII. 7, p. 175; Ps. LVI. 4, p. 202.

⁷⁸Ibid., Ps. LXXI. 14, p. 255.

⁷⁹Ibid., Ps. XLVIII. 7 and 8, p. 175.

stic does expand significantly upon the bare Scriptural statement. According to Rolle, whoever trusts in his own "vertu" is excluded from Christ's buying. This idea appears later, slightly modified, in the reference to "synful men that ere noight boght."⁸⁰ Furthermore the wholly self-reliant cannot be ransomed by a friend nor can he "gif til god his quemynges." More specifically, such a person is incapable of any penance or "almusedede" that will allow him to "bye his saule fra hell." Certainly, in this citation, Rolle's concept of this feature of the ransom theory is considerably more extensive than its Scriptural suggestion.

No less than thirteen other references are made to the third part of the ransom theory--the divine agency essential for redemption. Four of the allusions are simply statements of God's or Christ's buying man,⁸¹ "His folke,"⁸² or man's soul "fra the seruys of the deuel and of syn."⁸³ In a fifth instance, man, in addition to being bought, is made "rightwis."⁸⁴ A sixth reference credits the buying from the devil to "crist criand in the cross!"⁸⁵ By a variety of expressions, the remaining ascriptions elicit the blood of Christ as the price of the ransom. One is a dramatic

⁸⁰ Ibid., Ps. LXXXI. 7, p. 302.

⁸¹ Ibid., Ps. VIII. 1, p. 28; Ps. LXXX. 9, p. 299.

⁸² Ibid., Ps. XCIX. 4, p. 350.

⁸³ Ibid., Ps. LXX. 25, p. 252.

⁸⁴ Ibid., Ps. LXXXVIII. 6, p. 320.

⁸⁵ Ibid., Ps. XXX. 6, p. 106.

statement by Christ: "With my blode man kynd be delyuerd fra the deuel."⁸⁶ A second instance involves an address to the Father: "Thou boght in thin arme. that is, in thi sun, with his blode. thi folke."⁸⁷ A third passage identifies the "preciouse blode" as the device for breaking "the pouste [power] of the deuel."⁸⁸ Another statement links the price of blood to Christ's mercy: "With the pryse of his blode he boght the fra hell. and if thou will ouercum thi fas, he corouns the in heuen. that is nocht bot of his mercy."⁸⁹ A fifth reference to the blood as the price paid for the ransom establishes metaphorically the Red Sea of Christ's bloodshedding. In explicating the verse, "And he sau'd thaim of the hand of hatand: and he boght thaim of the hand of enmy," Rolle states, "That is, he sau'd thaim of the myght of pharao, and of his men, that hatid thaim. and that bitakyns baptem. in the whilke we ere boght fra the deuyll with the blode of crist that was likynd by the rede see."⁹⁰ The basis for this simile is elucidated in Father Rohling's The Blood of Christ:

Another figure employed to describe its [the blood's] effects

⁸⁶Ibid., Ps. XXI. 2, p. 77.

⁸⁷Ibid., Ps. LXXVI. 14, p. 275.

⁸⁸Ibid., Ps. LXXVII. 47, p. 284.

⁸⁹Ibid., Ps. CII. 4, p. 357.

⁹⁰Ibid., Ps. CV. 10, p. 374.

is that of the Red Sea. In the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea the writers [theologians] discern a figure of the sacrament of baptism. The waters of the Sea signify the waters of baptism, and the redness of the waters the Blood of Christ, which consecrates the waters of baptism and empowers them to cleanse from sin.⁹¹

As this example of Rolle previews, the medieval mystics employ a variety of figures to express the belief that the Passion of Christ was markedly bloody in order to vividly illustrate the Redemption as an infinite source of grace and forgiveness. Unification of Christians is presented as an adjunct of their purchase from the devil in a sixth passage: "Crist with his blode boght cristen men fra the deuyll. and gedird thaim tobe a folk of god, that bifore was scatird in sere errorrs."⁹² The final statement interprets "plentevous bying" as meaning that Christ's blood "bougt all the worlde."⁹³ The obvious theological implication expressed here is the universality of the Redemption. As Father Rohling explains:

This Blood was shed not only for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles; it redeems all who are willing to believe. Not only have all men been redeemed, but there is no sin which Christ cannot cleanse away with His Blood, and no scars of transgression are so deep that they cannot be effaced by the remedy which He supplies.⁹⁴

⁹¹J. H. Rohling, p. 111.

⁹²Psalter, Ps. CVI. 2, p. 380.

⁹³Ibid., Ps. CXXIX. 7, p. 448.

⁹⁴J. H. Rohling, pp. 47-48. Father Rohling cites a number of references for this theological point, including St. Jerome and St. Augustine; see p. 48 and p. 61.

The blood of Christ was given once, but it was shed for all men, for all time, for all sins; hence, as Rolle states, Christ's blood "bouzt all the warlde."

Decidedly less frequent and less positive are the English Psalter's revelations of the abuse of power theory. One clear reference is made to the innocent victim motif:

Crist was withouten syn. forthi the reprofe that thai sayd that he had the deuel in him. and that thai spittid in his face, that semes gret shame bifor men to thole [suffer], he suffird all for godis luf. we suffire mykil for oure synn.⁹⁵

Somewhat less definite is a statement that nevertheless can be interpreted as echoing Satan's loss. Rolle addresses the Savior:

Thou out takis the helples, that is mannys kinde, fra the pouste of the deuel, that was stalworthere: for he ouercome him, and robbid the nedy and the pore: that ware we, for oure syn: bot now he lesis vs of his hand, thorgh his passion.⁹⁶

In a sense, the "ruse" involved in duping the devil can result in the act being depicted as a robbing of captive mankind from Satan. Finally, a curious reversal of the roles of Christ and Satan is expressed by Rolle when he says, ".i. preche the myght of ihū [Jesus]. that crucified the deuel and sloghe syn . . ." ⁹⁷ This comment can be accepted as revealing an awareness of the abuse of power theme in that the devil's hold on man is finally destroyed by Christ. According to the tenets of the abuse of power concept,

⁹⁵Psalter, Ps. LXVIII. 10, p. 239.

⁹⁶Ibid., Ps. XXXIV. 12, p. 124.

⁹⁷Ibid., Ps. LXX. 20, p. 251.

Satan lost his right to mankind when he subjected Christ to death; therefore, the act resulted in the inversion of authority whereby the crucified was transposed into the crucifier.

Closely allied with this consideration of a broken compact between God and Satan is a relatively minor class of medieval allegory--the Charter of Christ, This literary type develops its theme under the figure of a legal charter or grant; "essentially, this document purports to be a grant of Heaven's bliss, made to mankind by the Saviour, upon condition that man give, in return, his love to God and to his neighbor."⁹⁸ The Charter's structure is generally predicated on that of its legal prototype even to the formulae that mark the various divisions of the medieval charter.

As is sometimes the case with medieval literature, Scripture appears to provide the impetus for literary creativity. Two such Biblical suggestions are

And this is why he is mediator of a new covenant, that whereas a death has taken place for redemption from the transgressions committed under the former covenant, they who have been called may receive eternal inheritance according to the promise. For where there is a testament, the death of the testator must intervene; for a testament is valid only when men are dead, otherwise it has as yet no force as long as the testator is alive.⁹⁹

and

And you, when you were dead by reason of your sins and the

⁹⁸ Mary Caroline Spalding, The Middle English Charters of Christ ("Bryn Mawr College Monograph Series," Vol. XV, 1914), p. 1.

⁹⁹ Epistle to the Hebrews IX, 15-18.

uncircumcision of your flesh, he brought to life along with him, forgiving you all your sins, cancelling the decree against us, which was hostile to us. Indeed he has taken it completely away, nailing it to the cross.¹⁰⁰

The Colossians' allusion to the cancelled, hostile decree clearly substantiates the similarity existing between the Charter motif and the abuse of power theme.

The Charter has survived in five distinct forms: the Carta Domini Nostri Iesu Christi, a fifteenth century Latin prose charter of twenty-one lines; the Carta Libera d. n. Ihesu Christi--also titled Carta Redempcionis humane--a fourteenth century Latin poem of thirty-eight lines; the Carta Dei, a fourteenth century Middle English poem of forty-two verses; the so-called Short Charter,¹⁰¹ a Middle English poem of thirty-two lines which manifests probable fourteenth century origins; and the Long Charter, another fourteenth-fifteenth century Middle English poem extant in three versions of 234, 418, and 618 lines.¹⁰²

Genre characteristics gleaned from the various Charter forms include the legal externals of a medieval charter; the grant of heaven to man as his heritage; the day of the crucifixion as the date of the sealing or bestowal of the deed; the Reddendo clause specifying the requirement of love to God; a number of

¹⁰⁰Colossians II,13-14.

¹⁰¹Some of the Short Charter manuscripts contain interesting, though crude, drawings of such items as Christ's wounds being depicted as suns giving forth rays of blood, a pelican picking her breast, and various instruments of the Passion. See Spalding, pp. xx-xvi for complete descriptions.

¹⁰²M. C. Spalding, pp. xiii-xvi.

witnesses ranging from the phenomena of nature to the evangelists, St. John, the Virgin Mary, the Holy Ghost, and God the Father; the writing of the deed in Christ's blood; Christ's promise of mercy to the repentant; either Christ's wounds or the instruments of the Passion as seals of the deed; the stretching of Christ's body on the cross, as parchment on a harrow, so that His bones can be numbered; and the numbering of Christ's wounds at 5460.

Apart from the Charter form proper, manifestations of its characteristics are discernible in a few isolated instances. The Digby "Burial of Christ" mystery is one example:

Mawdley--

'Cum hithere, Ioseph, beholde & looke,
How many bludy letters ben wreten in pis
buke,
Small margente her is.'

Ioseph--

'Ye, this parchement is stritchit owt of
syse.'¹⁰³

Another allusion occurs in Chaucer's A B C. Interestingly, the reference is not to be found in Chaucer's apparent source for this short poem--the prayer in Deguilleville's Pelerinage de la Vie Humaine.

He vouched sauf, tel him, as was his wille,
Bicome a man, to have our alliaunce,
And with his precious blood he wroot the
bille
Upon the crois, as general acquitaunce,

¹⁰³Frederick J. Furnivall (ed.), The Digby Plays (London: Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1896), p. 194.

To every penitent in ful creauce;¹⁰⁴

A meditacion of be fyue woundes of Ihesu Crist, a work no longer ascribed to Rolle, contains a third echo:

oure blessed fadir of heuene spared not his owen sone but suffrede hym to be streyned on the harde cros, moore dispitously & greuously þan euer was schepys skyn streyned on the wal or vp-on þe parchemyn-makeris narowe azens þe sonne to drye.¹⁰⁵

Usually, the appearances of the Charter elements in other genres are infrequent and singular. However, the English Psalter constitutes a noteworthy exclusion to the rule in that it contains a variety of the Charter ingredients. As was previously the case with the "deliverer" references, caution must be employed so as not to attach too much importance, if any, to the numerous appearances of "heritage" and "testament" in Rolle's commentaries. In most cases, the Scriptural text contains the terms.

Nevertheless, several of the Psalter's allusions to the words are significant. For example, in referring to "hale heritage in blisse. when for the goed werke that here did he sall resaiþe his body glorifide,"¹⁰⁶ Rolle stresses the obligation of meriting the heritage. In other passages, the Hermit expresses other modes of the obligation. In one case, the testament is a "couaunte that we made with the in baptem," one that continues as

¹⁰⁴ Geoffrey Chaucer, The Poetical Works of Chaucer, ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1933), p. 618.

¹⁰⁵ R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, II, 440.

¹⁰⁶ Psalter, Ps. XXIV. 14, p. 90.

long as "we kep id thi biddyngis."¹⁰⁷ In another statement, man is given the testament of an endless heritage as long as he obey's God's commandment to "lif rightwisly."¹⁰⁸ Later in the same commentary, the endless heritage is given "til anly tha that ere takyne with the strenge of predestinacioun of god."¹⁰⁹ In other words, the heritage belongs to only those who submit to the force of God's plan. Finally, the Reddendo clause is, at least, implied in Rolle's observation that "This kinge is worthy to be loved, for he sal deliver the pore that trustes haly in him, fra the diuel, whaim mens synns maks mighty."¹¹⁰ From a negative viewpoint, the testament is violated when men "dispend the godes of thaire lord falsly"¹¹¹ or when "men zeldis til god ill for goed, despisand his woundis and his biddyngis."¹¹² As for punishment, "the wicked men, that filed thi testament, thou sall brynge thaim in til the pit of hell. thare ded and myrknes is that lastis ay."¹¹³

In addition to one reference which assigns both the mercy

¹⁰⁷Ibid., Ps. XLIII. 19, p. 161.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., Ps. CIV. 7, p. 367.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., Ps. CIV. 10, p. 367.

¹¹⁰Ibid., Ps. LXXI. 12, p. 254.

¹¹¹Ibid., Ps. LXXVII. 41, p. 283.

¹¹²Ibid., Ps. CXV. 3, p. 405.

¹¹³Ibid., Ps. LIV. 26, p. 199.

of God and His testament to all who love Him,¹¹⁴ a second combines the mercy with other references to the Charter form such as a direct allusion to the will and to the witnesses of the testament:

Mercy he gifis, forgifand syn. Sothfastnes [truthfulness], demand merits. he leris mercy thurgh the whilke he is quemed [pleased], and sothfastnes thurgh the whilke he is vntamed [invincible]. and thof that be nocht knawn til all, it is knawn til the sekand his witword [will], that is, his passion, and his ded, when he made his testament, and hight [promised] vs life, and zeldis it. and sekand his witnessynges, that is, bihaldis that he sayd in prophetis, and witnessid in the euangelistis: for thai ere witnes of his hightyng [promising].¹¹⁵

Of course, the sublime witness of Charter literature is God Himself. Although not specifying the Charter figure, Rolle does use the Father as a witness to man's spiritual inheritance: "In heritage. that is, in lastand possession .i. gat of god, whas ayre .i. am, forto be his trew witnes. and that is til me withouten end."¹¹⁶

One reverberation of the metaphor of Christ's body being the stretched parchment upon which is written God's grant appears in the English Psalter. In elucidating the verse, "Thai grof [dug] my hend and my fete; thai noumbird all my banes," Rolle states:

He says thai grof, forto shew the mykilnes of his pyne. vgly grauyng in hend and fete. and as the erth that is grauen

¹¹⁴ Ibid., Ps. LXXXVIII. 28, p. 323.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., Ps. XXIV. 11, p. 90.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., Ps. CXVIII. 111, p. 427.

gifis froit, als wa crist grauen, that is wondid with nayles,
gaf the froit of life: and thai noumbird. that is, thai made
noumberabile all my banes. in there wordis propirly the
pyne of the crosse is discryued, and the strekyng of his
body in the tre myght nought haf ben bettere discryued.¹¹⁷

This explication demonstrates rather graphically Rolle's imaginative faculty, for he fuses the simile of the body as the medium of communication--in this case the recording of pain instead of the delineating of the charter--with that of a fruitful tilling of the soil.¹¹⁸ In considering the numbered bones as the "wordis," Rolle follows closely the Charter tradition even though he does alter the convention to correspond to the sense of the Scriptural text.

Probably the most consequential passage involving the Charter form is the following:

This is the day of grace in the whilke god gafe hele, and we ere boght out of syn. and endles heritage restorid. be we glade & fayne. for than the deuyl lost his right. and man qwykynd agayn. and for it is day of hele.¹¹⁹

The "day of grace" is, of course, the day of the crucifixion--hence, a dating reminiscent of the Charter's dating. The other elements discerned in the quotation--the ransom, the restoration of the heritage, and the loss of the devil's right--clearly evidence the passage's importance by establishing the proximity of

¹¹⁷Ibid., Ps. XXI. 17, p. 17.

¹¹⁸In the sermon "De Quarta Feria," St. Augustine views the Church as the Lord's field which is irrigated by the precious blood.

¹¹⁹Psalter, Ps. CXVII. 23, p. 409.

the Charter and the devil's rights motifs.

Additional examples of the testament,¹²⁰ the heritage and heir theme,¹²¹ Christ's promise not to fordo His "cuuaunt,"¹²² and the spending of the precious blood¹²³ could be evoked to further illustrate the ransom motif and its corollary the Charter; but these would merely be repetitious.

A refinement of the blood sacrifice concept is seen in the use of blood as spiritual medicine and the identification of Christ as a physician or some other agent of convalescence. The basis for the motif is probably rooted in the primitive association between blood and vitality or blood as the life factor itself. As a student of Scripture, Rolle would be expected to be aware of this ancient correlation--an expectation that is justified by the Hermit's observation that "a manys saule is in the blode."¹²⁴ Father Rohling calls attention to St. Augustine's¹²⁵ employment of the metaphors:

One of the most beautiful figures concerning the precious Blood is that in which he [Augustine] calls it Christ's medicine. Especially in his sermons he likes to refer to Christ

¹²⁰Ibid., Ps. LXXIII. 21, p. 267.

¹²¹Ibid., Ps. XXXII. 12, p. 116; Ps. LXXIII. 3, p. 263; Ps. LXXXI. 6 and 8, p. 302.

¹²²Ibid., Ps. LXXXVIII. 34, p. 324.

¹²³Ibid., Ps. XX. 1, p. 74.

¹²⁴Ibid., Ps. XIII. 6, p. 48.

¹²⁵St. Augustine is the first of the "haly doctours" referred to by Rolle in the Psalter, Ps. I. 1, p. 5.

as our Physician who uses this remedy in our behalf.¹²⁶

In several ways, Rolle utilizes these figures. He addresses God as "my hele. that salues the wounde of my syn."¹²⁷ In another passage, the Lord is termed a "leche":

Doe mercy on that manere, that thou hele my saule in this world with pyne: for .i. accuse my syn, and opynd my wounde, and says, .i. haf synned til the. thou ert leche, hele it.¹²⁸

Still later in the English Psalter, the Hampole mystic repeats the "leche" identification:

Contryte of hert ere thai that offirs til him the sacrifice of sorouful gast. perfit hele sall be when we ryse glorifyde in body and saule. bot now as a leche he byndis oure brekyngis of oure krokid hertis. that thai be rightid til his luf. his byndyngis is the sacramentis, in the whilke we hafe comforth til we perfytyly be hale.¹²⁹

The last illustration of these figurative equations is observed in Rolle's perception of God's mercy being symbolized by the blood of Christ's sacrifice and that, in turn, being labeled "gastly medysyn."¹³⁰

Another figure of Christ's blood, wine, was anticipated first by the primitive law of association. Later, the blood was prefigured in the Old Testament by Isaias' vision of the man whose

¹²⁶J. H. Rohling, p. 63.

¹²⁷Psalter, Ps. XXVI. 15, p. 97.

¹²⁸Ibid., Ps. XL. 4, p. 151.

¹²⁹Ibid., Ps. CXLVI. 3, pp. 484-485.

¹³⁰Ibid., Ps. LXXII. 4, p. 257.

garments were "like theirs that tread in the wine press,"¹³¹ the wine drunk by Noe, the wine offered by Melchisedech, and Jacob's foretelling that Juda would wash his robe in wine and his garment in the blood of the grape.

The indication in Psalm XXII. 7 of the inebriating quality of the chalice prompts an elaboration by Rolle that defines the intoxication as a spiritual rejuvenation that seems to parallel the primitive and classical concepts of a physical reinvigoration:

That is, thou made glad my thoght in gastly ioy, and my chal-
ice. that is, the wyne of thi luf, hetand and strenghtand me
withinen. myn, for i. take it of the: and drunkynand. that
is, gerand [causing] me forgete all vayn delites of this
world. what it is bright. for it gifes me the brightness of
lif withouten end.¹³²

The effect of the acquired wisdom in the forgetting of "all vayn delites of this world" recalls Teiresias' speaking as a true prophet following his drink of blood. Furthermore, the reference to "the wyne of thi luf"--repeated later in the Psalter as "wyne, that is, the hote drynk of cristis luf"¹³³ continues the echo of primitive blood consumption; for, theologically, there is no more suitable evidence of God's love for man than the blood sacrifice of His Son.

The chalice of this quotation--as well as the "chalis of

¹³¹Isaias LXIII.

¹³²Psalter, Ps. XXII. 7, p. 84.

¹³³Ibid., Ps. CIII. 16, p. 362.

clere wyn"¹³⁴ and "the chalice. that is, pyne and passion"¹³⁵ of other passages--establishes the twofold symbolism of the chalice. F. R. Webber, including the chalice as one of the major symbols of Christ's Passion, observes that it receives its identity from the Savior's prayer concerning the cup of suffering in Gethsemane.¹³⁶ Moreover, the chalice's Eucharistic significance is apparent to any Christian. This duality, however, poses no problem when one considers the interconnection of the Passion and the Eucharist--the bloody and the unbloody sacrifice.

Strangely, Evelyn Underhill notes in Rolle what she believes to be the "curiously marked aloofness of the English medieval mystics from Eucharistic devotion and references."¹³⁷ Miss Underhill's deduction is supported by Hope Allen.¹³⁸ As indicated the duality of symbolism does permit the chalice to be interpreted as both a Passion and Eucharist figure. Furthermore, there exists in the English Psalter and throughout Rolle's other writings a number of references to "brede of aungels," which, according to

¹³⁴Ibid., Ps. LXXIV. 7, p. 269.

¹³⁵Ibid., Ps. CXV. 4, p. 405.

¹³⁶F. R. Webber, Church Symbolism (Cleveland: J. H. Jansen 1937), p. 136.

¹³⁷Evelyn Underhill, "Ricardus Heremita," Dublin Review, Oct. 1928, p. 187.

¹³⁸Richard Rolle, English Writings of Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole, ed. Hope Emily Allen (Oxford: University Press, 1931), p. xxiii.

H. Flanders Dunbar's Symbolism in Medieval Thought, is a gift that can be "both the Eucharist and knowledge in theology and philosophy."¹³⁹ The Eucharistic symbolism is advanced by St. Thomas Aquinas' use of panem angelorum in his communion prayer;¹⁴⁰ Dante's employment of pan de li angeli in the Divine Comedy, when only those who have fed on it are permitted to sail on the sea of Paradise;¹⁴¹ and the reference to the Bread of angels becoming the Bread of men in the Hymns of the Breviary and Missal.¹⁴²

Rolle distinctly demonstrates his awareness of the Eucharistic motif in his definition of the term as it appears in Psalm LXXVII. 29:

Brede of aungels is crist. for in his sight thai hafe that thaim list. and him etis man in the sacrament. and in luf. and that is fode that he sendis in haboundance. for when all the folke has etyn him jit he is hale. he is mete of the whilke the mare we ete the mare we may. the mare we hafe the mare vs list.¹⁴³

Although not applied to "brede of aungels," the twofold symbolism of the Eucharist and knowledge is utilized in Rolle's explication of the verse, "And he fede thaim of the grese of whete: and of the

¹³⁹H. Flanders Dunbar, Symbolism in Medieval Thought (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), p. 314.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 322.

¹⁴¹Paradiso, Canto II, lines 10-15.

¹⁴²Mathew Britt (ed.), The Hymns of the Breviary and Missal (New York: Benziger Co., 1922), p. 187.

¹⁴³Psalter, Ps. LXXVIII. 29, p. 281.

huny stane he thaim fild." The Hermit explains:

That is, he fed thaim with the body of crist. and gastly vndirstandyge. and of huny that ran of the stane. that is, of wisdom that is swete till the hert, he fild thaim. and 3it thai leghid til him.¹⁴⁴

While these two explanations do not manifest a major interest in Eucharistic devotion and references, they are the foundation for an interpretation of Eucharistic allusions in other writings of the Hampole hermit which, in turn, will support further a rejection of the Underhill-Allen thesis of "marked aloofness."

There are several other references to "mete of crist"¹⁴⁵ that is given to those who live well, ghostly food that is the gift of those who dread God,¹⁴⁶ and "brede of aungels [that is the] syght of the trinyte."¹⁴⁷ Admittedly, these examples develop the knowledge theme. And, in the last case--since the "syght of the trinyte" comes to those in the "perfyte pes, that all sall have that ere withinen ierusalem"¹⁴⁸ the reference is most probably to the divine wisdom of the beatific vision rather than to the mystical union.

The Psalms prompt several commentaries by Rolle that de-

¹⁴⁴Ibid., Ps. LXXX. 15, p. 300.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., Ps. CIII. 28, p. 365.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., Ps. CX. 4, p. 395.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., Ps. CXLVII. 3, p. 486.

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

fine clearly a Christian adaptation of primitive blood vengeance.

In elucidating the twelfth verse of Psalm IX, Rolle teaches:

If we suffire persecucioun & the ded of ill men for sothfastnes, we sall nocht tharfor lef to say and to doe godis will. for he is sekand with vengauce the blode of thaim that ere wrangwisly slane or harmed. in his dome, whare ioy is til him that has suffred wrange. and pyne till him that did wrange. and he has vmthoght [remembered] him to glorifie his seruantes and to punysch thaire mysdoers, and he has nocht forgetyn the cry of pore men. that is, gret desire of thaim that ere in anguys, and says till god.¹⁴⁹

Man's kinship with God is apperent in this passage since in accordance with blood vengeance only a relative would seek "with vengauce the blode of thaim that ere wrangwisly slane or harmed."

In another quotation, Rolle resolves the paradox existing between blood vengeance and the new law of Christian charity:

Leswhen [lest at some time] we faile of louynge. and then genge [nations] say, whare is thaire god. that is, whi helpis he thaim nocht. if thai hafe swilke a god as thai say. and knawn be in naciouns: that is, in ill men. that we may see vengauce. that is, endles pyne, of the blode of haly martirs that tirantis sloghe. Alswa the ded of sugetis [subjects] sall be socht of prelatis, for thai dye thorgh thaire defaut. and the sorow of fettird. that is, of haly pore men, bunden in charite, & sorowand for the malice of riche men. inga [enter]. that is, queme in thi sight. 3e sall wit that a rightwisman has no delite of the pyne of his enmy. here whaim he hatis nocht. bot in the rightwisnes of god whaim he lufis.¹⁵⁰

Undoubtedly, primitives took some form of pleasure in being cognizant of their fulfillment of the obligations of the blood ven-

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., Ps. IX. 12, p. 33.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., Ps. LXXVIII. 11, pp. 292-293.

detta. However, this gratification is not consistent with the lesson of love first taught by Christ and later reaffirmed by the medieval theologians and mystics. Rolle presents his solution to this enigma of justice by transferring the "delite" to a pleasure accruing from a realization that the "rightwisness of god" prevails.

The villains of the ancient revenge code are the "men of blood" whose blood guilt merits the terrible retribution of additional bloodshed. Within the Christian context, the Hampole mystic defines "men of blodis" as the lost men, "tho that hatis thair neyghburs. & that lifis fleshly as blode askis,"¹⁵¹ "tha that slas thaire aghen saule. or othere mennys bodis,"¹⁵² and those doomed "til endles fire. that is thaire slaghtire."¹⁵³

The most infamous of the "men of blood" is Judas, to whom Rolle devotes a considerable portion of his commentary on Psalm CVIII. In this explication, Judas becomes representative of all "men of blood": "nouzt onely of iudas may all that is seyde in this psalme be takyn, bot of all cristes enemys. fals iewis & fals cristen men."¹⁵⁴ Judas' role as a blood figure is best defined by his betrayal of innocent blood, his "sellyng of crist."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹Ibid., Ps. XXV. 9, p. 94.

¹⁵²Ibid., Ps. LIV. 27, p. 199.

¹⁵³Ibid., Ps. CXXXVIII. 18, p. 466.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., Ps. CVIII. 8, p. 389.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., Ps. CVIII. 30, p. 393.

Although Christ's law does not necessitate the blood retaliation required by primitive justice, some form of retribution is, nevertheless, necessary. Judas, despairing of this betrayal, chose the more primitive form of restitution rather than avail himself of Christ's unlimited mercy. As Rolle expresses it, "for he, iudas, vmtouzt him not to do mercy til his owne soul."¹⁵⁶ Cardinal Piazza clearly relates the older mode of satisfaction to Judas' situation when, in his Meditations on the Blood of Christ, he, first, elucidates the fact that in God's scheme of redemption "only blood suffices for the expiation of sin"¹⁵⁷ "Like the voice of Abel's blood, the voice of men's sins and crimes continues to cry to heaven for vengeance"¹⁵⁸ and, secondly, correlates Judas' suicide to the demand for and a fulfillment of a sanguine expiation:

Meanwhile the traitor, feeling the full weight of that same Blood on his conscience, rushes into the Temple and angrily casts the thirty pieces of silver onto the floor, shouting to his seducers, 'I have sinned in betraying innocent blood' (Mt 27,4). He then disappears and hangs himself from a tree in the field of blood. But, the rope being incapable of supporting his weight for long, the dead traitor falls to the ground. As he strikes the earth, his body bursts, spilling his entrails over the ground. Blood for blood.¹⁵⁹

Another divulgence of Richard Rolle's rather comprehensive

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., Ps. CVIII. 14, p. 390.

¹⁵⁷ Cardinal Piazza, Meditations on the Blood of Christ (Rensselaer, Ind.: Precious Blood Institute, 1962), p. 11.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 27.

command of the fundamentals of blood theology and its various motifs is seen in his analysis of the thorn symbol:

Rammyn. that thai call thefthorne. has swilke akynd. that is first soft, and sithen turnys it til thornes. swa syn is swete, and delites men now. bot eftere this life it prikkis thaim fulsare. forthi he says, are 3oure thornes. that is, 3oure synnes, vndirstode the rammyn, that is, sharp dampnacioun in the last ende.¹⁶⁰

During the medieval era, thorns came to signify grief, tribulation and sin. The symbolism undoubtedly evolved from Christ's having been crowned with thorns before the crucifixion as a parody of the Roman emperor's festal crown of roses. According to Christian folk tradition, the rose is supposed to have grown in Paradise without thorns, which it acquired only after Adam's fall to remind man of the sins he had committed.¹⁶¹ The symbolic thorn has deep English roots, for St. Joseph of Arimathea is credited with having planted a thornwood staff at Glastonbury in commemoration of Christ's Passion.¹⁶² In addition, the correlation between man's folly and the crown of thorns is expressed in a fourteenth century English poem, "A Devotion on the Symbols of the Passion."

The thorn analysis does not exhaust Rolle's reliance on the thorn symbolism. Speaking of his own love for God, the Hermit attributes to it a perfection of heart that permits him to "lepe

¹⁶⁰Psalter, Ps. LVII. 9, p. 206.

¹⁶¹George Ferguson, Signs and Symbols in Christian Art (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 48.

¹⁶²F. R. Webber, p. 71.

ouer all the 'thorny and the lairy [miry] besynes' of this
warld."¹⁶³ Later, Rolle explains that only those come to God that
"be nocht full of thornes and brers of synnes."¹⁶⁴

Three additional Christian adaptations of ancient blood
conventions appear in the English Psalter. The first interprets
primitive human sacrifice in terms of the medieval scene: the
verse, "And thai spilt blode innocent. the blode of thaire sunnys
and of thaire doghtirs: the whilke thai offird til ydols of
chanaan," is explicated as meaning "Thus do thai that goed willis
and thoghtis turnys in til warldis likyng or fleysly luf."¹⁶⁵
In another instance, Rolle explains the hyssop, a plant used in
ancient blood purification rites, as being allegorically applica-
ble to his contemporaries:

Ysope is a medicynall erbe, whos rote drawis nere the stone.
& it purges the longes of inflacioun. & clenys the breste fro
stoppynge of ill humores. & it betokyns medenes. whorwith
who so is strenkild [sprinkled] in penaunce. it purges him
fro bolnyng of pride & makis him buxsum & lawe to god. &
clenys his hert of all synnes, that before stoppid grace fro
the saule, and makes him to drawe to criste. thorgh whos
sheddyng of blode. he sall be clenst of the lepire of
synn.¹⁶⁶

The third modification involves two statements which indicate that
under the new law God requires not the "sacrifice of bestis [and]

¹⁶³Psalter, Ps. XVII. 36, p. 65.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., Ps. XXXII. 12, p. 116.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., Ps. CV. 35, p. 378.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., Ps. L. 8, p. 185.

offrynge of other thyngis"¹⁶⁷ but simply love in general or the specific love expressed in "thi vowes that thou hight when thou toke baptem."¹⁶⁸

Finally, several miscellaneous references demonstrate further Rolle's theological orthodoxy. Christ's Passion is a source of protection for the righteous.¹⁶⁹ Melchisedech¹⁷⁰ and John the Baptist¹⁷¹ are established as prefigures of Christ. And the breaking of the stone alluded to in Psalm LXXVII. 18 is explained as God's permitting "crist to be woundid on the cross" in order that the water of grace could flow "in till the hertis of trew men."¹⁷²

These foregoing Blood Motifs have been the salient ones discernible in the English Psalter. As indicated, the appearance of such terms as "deliverer," "redeemer," "heritage," and "testament" directed merely by the Scriptural text does not justify discussion unless Rolle expands upon the Scriptural suggestion. In the interest of space conservation, only the most essential por-

¹⁶⁷Ibid., Ps. XXXIX. 9, p. 147.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., Ps. XLIX. 15, p. 181.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., Ps. XXVI. 9, p. 96.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., Ps. CIX. 5, p. 394.

¹⁷¹Ibid., Ps. CXXXI. 18, p. 452.

¹⁷²Ibid., Ps. LXXVII. 18, p. 279.

tions of the commentaries have been utilized even though it would have been frequently legitimate to quote much more extensively. For example, in the case of Psalm XXI, which is interpreted as "the voice of crist in his passion,"¹⁷³ the entire explication might have been cited instead of merely those segments devoted explicitly to the distinction between the poor and the rich, to Christ's blood as the price of the redemption, and to the Charter motif.

However, the positive import of the English Psalter is not its preview of Rolle's mysticism nor its revelation of some of the Blood Motifs; rather its true value rests in its being a reliable indication of Rolle's conscious utilization of the era's blood heritage. The Hermit's explications leave little question, if any, of the extensiveness of his knowledge of the various facets of blood theology. This comprehensiveness, coupled with the invariable attribution of the work to Rolle,¹⁷⁴ establishes the English Psalter as an essential element in determining the blood-orientation of Richard Rolle's mysticism.

¹⁷³Ibid., Ps. XXI. 1, p. 76.

¹⁷⁴H. E. Allen, Works Ascribed, pp. 171-176.

Super Magnificat

Mackinnon's chronological table places the Super Magnificat--also titled Canticum Marie--prior in composition to the English Psalter. Actually, the English Magnificat circulated with the English Psalter so that it is really impossible to date one earlier than the other. As previously cited, the English Psalter is traditionally believed to have initiated Rolle's English period.

Miss Allen's study reveals that the English version of the Magnificat differs from its Latin counterpart:

The English piece interprets the texts in the person of the Virgin Mary, and thus gives what is perhaps to be designated as the 'historical' interpretation. The Latin, on the other hand, makes the piece into a drama of the individual soul, and thus gives what should perhaps be called the 'moral' interpretation.¹⁷⁵

The "historical" interpretation is certainly evident throughout this brief commentary which expounds carefully the doctrine of the Incarnation and terminates with a definite deliverance statement:

He receyfyd israel in kynde. in grace. in defens. in gouernyng: thoro takyng in kynde. he ri3ttyd vs out of deth. and out of the ire of god. thoro takyng in grace; he drogh vs out of synne. thoro takyng in defense he delyuers vs; that our enemy hafe not the maystry of vs. thoro takyng in gouernyng, he ledes vs out of the perils of this way: thoro takyng in blisfulhed, he brynges vs out of all wrechidnes of synne. and sorrow, and settys vs in the loy of heuen. Amen.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵Ibid., p. 192.

¹⁷⁶Psalter, p. 526.

Obviously, the Incarnation was but the first step which led ultimately to the Passion and mankind's reconciliation with God. The necessity of the God-Man has already been documented by St. Anselm's Cur Deus Homo.

Robert Benson's A Book of the Love of Jesus, which is a collection of ancient English devotions in prose and poetry, speaks of three distinct marks of medieval English piety: an intimate familiarity with Christ, a great reverence and love for the Blessed Virgin Mary, and a deep love for the details of the Passion.¹⁷⁷ Actually, the reverence for Christ's mother assumed such magnitude during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that Mary's role as the source of the precious blood elevated her to the position of co-redeemer of mankind. The sublimity of the Blessed Virgin is expressed mystically--"this blessed mayden, before all in pryuelege of brennand luf, sho louyd god. and in syn-guler ioy shae was glad in cryst. the songis of louyng. er swetest in hur mouth"¹⁷⁸ and theologically--"in wombe he made perfit hir haloghing"¹⁷⁹ in the Magnificat. Although the Hermit does not reveal in his explication any positive suggestion of the co-redeemer function, he does in the Psalter proper imply the co-impor-

¹⁷⁷Robert H. Benson (ed.), A Book of the Love of Jesus (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons Ltd., 1904), pp. xxi-xxiii.

¹⁷⁸Psalter, p. 523.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., p. 524.

tance of the Incarnation and the Passion: "He [God] heldid [inclined] his ere [in answer to man's prayer for assistance] in his incarnacioun, & in his passion."¹⁸⁰

To disassociate the Blessed Virgin from the redemptive facet of Blood Motifs is virtually impossible. Christ's mother must remain more than simply a fringe, historical figure. She is, in a very real sense, the vehicle of Christ's ultimate blood sacrifice; and her sorrow punctuates with poignancy the human tragedy of the crucifixion. In medieval literature, she figures prominently in the mystery dramas devoted to Christ's Passion and is one of the witnesses of the Charter genre. Consequently, within the perspective of this dissertation, the English Magnificat cannot be consigned to a position of relative unimportance even though it contains but one pertinent allusion. Finally, the fact that Rolle shifted the emphasis in the English version to the Blessed Virgin may conceivably reflect an increasing correspondence with those qualities of medieval English piety elicited by Robert Benson.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., Ps. CXIV. 2, p. 403.

Incendium Amoris

Although the Incendium Amoris and the Emendatio Vitae are Richard Rolle's terminal Latin works, their 1435 translation into English by Richard Misyn warrants their inclusion within the limitations of this dissertation's proposal. The Misyn translation is fortunate in that it permits this study to analyze completely Rolle's works from the English Psalter to his English lyrics, a period acknowledged to be his greatest. The authenticity of these two works is relatively unquestioned owing to the numerous manuscript ascriptions to the Hampole hermit.

The Incendium Amoris may contain several autobiographical allusions: revelations of persecutions and slander, of reproaches from various women, and of personal involvement in the treatment of the poor by the wealthy.¹⁸¹ This possibility has led to the conclusion of a fairly late composition. Furthermore, a note in the Hereford Cathedral MS. O. viii. 1, presumably a copy of a memorandum found in a lost autograph manuscript, claims that in 1343 Rolle experienced a supernatural intimation that he would live twelve additional years.¹⁸² Since the Incendium Amoris stresses, among other considerations, Rolle's passionate desire for imminent death, Miss Allen reasons that this concentration

¹⁸¹H. E. Allen, Works Ascribed, pp. 226-227.

¹⁸²Ibid., p. 27.

would not have been included if the author had already had his "revelation"; hence, a late date but one prior to 1343 is assigned to the Incendium Amoris.¹⁸³

Until the appearance of the 1898 definitive edition of the works of St. Bonaventura, the prologue and title of the Incendium had been ascribed to the Saint. Now they are considered spurious by Bonaventura scholars. As a result, F. M. Comper observes:

This is interesting as freeing Rolle--at any rate in this case--from the charge of incorporating the writings of others in his works. Not that the charge was a serious one in those days, when the pride of authorship was unknown. Rolle's aim was to kindle men's hearts to love God; by his own words if he could, or if he found his thoughts better expressed by another, he would gladly use what that other had written or said.¹⁸⁴

In addition, the Comper edition of The Fire of Love and The Mending of Life contains an introduction by Evelyn Underhill which discounts any correlation between Rolle's Incendium and the Stimulus Amoris, "probably composed by James of Milan,"¹⁸⁵ on the grounds that while the Stimulus is an ordered didactic treatise, the Incendium is highly subjective, the "work of original genius."¹⁸⁶

Little is really known of the Richard Misyn who translated

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 228.

¹⁸⁴ Richard Rolle, The Fire of Love and the Mending of Life, ed. F. M. Comper (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1920), p. 243.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. xxiii.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. xxiv.

Rolle's last two Latin treatises for "edificacyon of many saules."¹⁸⁷ The English manuscript contains two colophons, one at the end of each book of the Incendium. In the explicit to Book I, the translator is identified by name as a hermit, a member of the Carmelite order, and a bachelor of sacred theology:

Explicit liber primus Incendij Amoris Ricardi Hampole heremite, translatus a latino in Anglicum per fratrem Ricardum Misyn heremitam & ordinis carmelitarum Ac sacre theologie bachalareum, Anno domini Millesimo ccccxxxvto.¹⁸⁸

The second explicit establishes Misyn as "Priorem Lyncolniensem."¹⁸⁹ Rev. Ralph Harvey, the editor of the Misyn translation, includes in his edition a summary of additional references that may refer to Rolle's translator:

Beyond what we find in the colophons at the end of the books of these MSS., nothing can be found with any certainty concerning this Richard Misyn. No record of him exists at Lincoln; and the furthest we can go, is to say that he was possibly the Ricardus Mysyn mentioned in 1461-2 in 'The Register of the Guild of Corpus Christi in the City of York.' Surtees Soc. 1872, p. 62:--

'Nomina Fratrum et Sororum admissorum per Dominum Johannem Burton, Rectorem ecclesiae Sancti Martini in Mikelgate, et suos consortes, Anno Domini millesimo CCC^mOLX^o [1461-2].

Per dominum Johannem Burton, secundum magistrum nostrae gildae.

In primis, frater Ricardus Mysyn, suffragenus, ordinis Fratrum Carmelitarum'

An earlier bishop of the same name is mentioned on the

¹⁸⁷Richard Rolle, The Fire of Love and the Mending of Life, ed. Ralph Harvey (London: Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1896), p. 1. Subsequent references will be to Misyn Translation.

¹⁸⁸Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., p. 104.

rim of Archbp. Scrope's Indulgence Cup, *ib.* 291 n, 292 n. See Poole and Hugall's Hist. and Descriptive Guide to York Cathedral, p. 197:

'+Recharde arche beschope Scrope grantes on to all tho that drinkis of this cope xlti dayes to pardun. Robert Gulsun. Beschope Musin grantes to same forme afore saide xlti dayis to pardun. Robert Stensall.'

'Beschope Musin' was probably Richard Messing, who, according to Cotton (Fasti Eccl. Hib., iii. 277) was bishop of Dromore from 1408 to 1410. Another bishop of the same name was admitted into the Guild in 1461-2, as 'Frater Ric, Mysyn, suffragenus, ordinis Fratrum Carmelitarum.'¹⁹⁰

Miss Comper, concurring with Rev. Harvey's conclusion that nothing beyond the information of the colophons is definite, does add:

In the Carmelite records preserved in a manuscript in the British Museum [Harl. MS. 3838], the death is noted of a Richard Mesin, Bishop of Dromore, under the year 1462, who was buried with other Fathers of the order in their monastery at York, *i.e.* in the same year as Richard Mysyn was admitted a member of the Corpus Christi Guild. But at present it must remain a matter merely of conjecture if these references relate to the Richard Misyn to whom we owe our translation.¹⁹¹

The Incendium Amoris is a mystical treatise dedicated primarily to the purpose of "firing" men to the love of Christ, a love which Rolle indicates consists of heat, sweetness and song.¹⁹² Book I, Chapter XX of the Misyn version¹⁹³ provides the Rolle student with a concise summary of the stages in the Hermit's mystical ascent. Instead of the three definite steps customarily asso-

¹⁹⁰Ibid., pp. xiii-xiv.

¹⁹¹Richard Rolle, The Fire of Love and the Mending of Life, ed. F. M. Comper, p. xlii.

¹⁹²Misyn Translation, p. 33.

¹⁹³Chapter XIX in other editions since only the Misyn translation counts the prologue as a chapter.

ciated with Christian mysticism since the time of Dionysius the Areopagite, Richard Rolle develops a more complex system of ascent. For the Hampole mystic, conversion--man's turning to Christ in disdain of all transitory things--is a fundamental prerequisite for the traditional first mystical step of purgation. Following the cleansing stage is the opening-of-the-heavenly-door step, the ordinary illuminative period of more conventional systems. Finally, the unitive step comprises a threefold development: the fire of love--as revealed in the English Psalter, this fire or heat involves a quasi-physical impression--the sweetness, which always accompanies the fire or heat; and the final experience of jubilant song. At this last step in the ascent, thoughts and meditations are converted into heavenly music.¹⁹⁴

Another important mystical denotation of the Incendium Amoris concerns the wound of love. As disclosed in Chapter I of this dissertation, asceticism is not essential to mysticism; nonetheless, a number of mystics, possibly even the majority, view asceticism favorably as an inducement to mystical ascent, at least an inducement to the purgation step. The Incendium manifestation of this attitude appears to involve an analogous relationship between Christ's wounds and Rolle's sense reaction to the divine love symbolized by the wounds of the crucifixion. This Christocentric wound of love is diversely expressed. Rolle relates the

¹⁹⁴Dundas Harford, an editor of The Mending of Life (London: H. R. Allenson, 1913), suggests on page xxix of his edition that Rolle may have borrowed this concept from Bede.

motif to the purgation step in the statement: "To hym in lufe euerlastynge þat longis, lufe is enoght to chastys [chastise], þer is no wounde grettar ne sweeter þen of lufe."¹⁹⁵ In another passage, it is correlated more directly to the title theme of the

Incendium:

Of þe flaume þerfore of godis lufe it is, þe mynde þat it takis to wond, þat it say: 'wondyd with charite I am,' & longinge I am made for my lufe--wher of it is sayd: Amore languo, 'for lufe I long.'¹⁹⁶

On occasion the wound motif is incorporated with other motifs; this fusion will be demonstrated in the analysis of the motifs in question.

Dominating the Incendium Amoris is a Passion symbol modified to harmonize with the Hermit's divine love affirmation. Its basis is discovered in the rope figure which is considered one of the symbols of Judas' betrayal of Jesus; for, according to John 18:12, "Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away to Annas first" "According to tradition, it was with a rope that Judas hanged himself after the betrayal, in desperate repentance for his awful deed."¹⁹⁷ Another implication of the rope symbol is revealed in "A Devotion on the Symbols of the Passion"; this medieval devotional lyric refers

¹⁹⁵Misyn Translation, pp. 97-98.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., p. 40.

¹⁹⁷G. Ferguson, p. 320.

To the pillar, Lord, also
With a rope they bound thee too;
The sinews from the bones did burst
So hard 'twas drawn and strained fast;
That bond release me and unbind
Of that I've trespassed and been unkind!¹⁹⁸

The binding of Christ which releases man from his bond is plainly a reference to the captivity facet of the devil's rights discussion. The inference of the Incendium is that man is now bound in love to God; whereas, formerly, he was bound to Satan.

Again, Richard Rolle employs a variety of expressions to convey his thought. Some are simple averments that "ilke man treuly pat lufyse god is fre, nor to bondage of synne byndes nozt hym-self, bot to pe seruys of rightwisnes stedfastly standys,"¹⁹⁹ or that "lufe neuer-pe-lesse, god & man cuppyls."²⁰⁰ Other more graphic delineations of the motif emphasize the permanence of this new bond, apparently in contradistinction to the impermanence of mankind's previous binding to Satan. One passage proclaims that the soul "rauischyd be godis gras" is tied to God "with pe bande of lufe vnabyt to be lausyd."²⁰¹ Earlier in the Incendium Amoris, Rolle utilizes the bond-unable-to-be-loosened theme in defining the reward of the blissful after the general judgment: "Of pis it is scheuyd pat swetnes euerlastyng mostis per myndes, pe whilk

¹⁹⁸R. H. Benson, p. 94.

¹⁹⁹Misyn Translation, p. 9.

²⁰⁰Ibid., p. 98.

²⁰¹Ibid., p. 86.

vnablylly to be lousyd, þe bande of trew charite byndis."²⁰² Book II, Chapter VIII begins with an allusion to this bond concept: "O swete Ihesu, þi lufe in me I bynde with a knot vnabyll to be lowsyd, sekand þe tresure þat I desire, and longynge I fynde, for in the I cese not to thyrst."²⁰³ The entire eleventh chapter of Book II is devoted to the theme "that parfite lufe to god byndis withoute lowsynge & makis man myndy of his god" ²⁰⁴

A ramification of this modified bond motif emerges in a reference to a saint's mind which "to lufe endles, vnabyll to be lowsyd, is knyttyd."²⁰⁵ This variation is more attuned to mystical expression since, for example, the unitive stage is best envisioned as a knitting, an intimate intertwining of the mystic and his Creator. This knitting metaphor is not restricted by the Hampole mystic to spiritual intelligences: man's mind must "to cristefully be knytt . . . ellys sothely heuenly sounde he takis nott, nor in gostely songe Ihesu, nor his praysynge he sall not synge in mynde or mouth."²⁰⁶ Lastly, just as those who love earthly pursuits are excluded from God's grace, "no man treuly to god parfitevely is knyttid qwhils he in desyre to any creature warldly is

²⁰²Ibid., p. 13.

²⁰³Ibid., p. 88.

²⁰⁴Ibid., p. 98.

²⁰⁵Ibid., p. 55.

²⁰⁶Ibid., p. 56.

bune."207

Despite the emphasis of the bond of love motif, visages of the Satanic slavery theme are perceptible in the Incendium Amoris. Those who are not partners "of cristis gaynbyinge [ransom] . . . be per wyckyd & vnclene warkis pa despys & frely to be fendis pam-self zeldis."²⁰⁸ Also, whoever "put hys mynde in womans lufe & hir desyr als blistful rest" is

strongly bun with a foull bande of febyl vanite. Bot for he to god with all his hart wald not turn, his wrechidnes he knew not to tyme he felt it. & perfore he fell to be pytt of bondage, for to be seytt of ioy he beheld not.²⁰⁹

Finally, the devil "be vnclennes worpi sawls to bondage of foly makis sogett."²¹⁰

Various allusions to the ransom motif are evident in the Incendium, whose basic theme of reciprocal love is naturally predicated on Christ's sacrifice. Usually, however, the ransom references are discerned in explanations of other points of dogma. In one case, Richard Rolle indicates that charitable works performed in sin or for the wrong purpose may actually provoke man's Redeemer to vengeance:

Thay gif more-ouer brede to be pore, clethyng parauntyr [perchance] to be cold, bot whils bare almus is done in dedely synne or for vaynglory, or sekyrly of pinges vntreuly

²⁰⁷Ibid., p. 23.

²⁰⁸Ibid., p. 49.

²⁰⁹Ibid., p. 53.

²¹⁰Ibid., p. 79.

gettyn, no meruayl if þai plesse noȝt our gaynbyer, bot vnto vengeance prouoke ovr Iuge.²¹¹

A second instance explicates the purchase from the devil's power within a more extensive explanation touching upon the Trinity and the Incarnation:

Þe sone treuly euyrlastyng of þe fader is be-kume man in tyme, borne of a maydyn, þat he mankynd fro þe fendes power myȝt gaynby. Þis is our lorde ihesu criste, þe whilk only be festynd in oure mynde, þe whilke onely for vs was tyde to þe crosse.²¹²

In a third passage, Rolle instructs that Christ is mankind's Lord only if man hates wickedness and gives his heart to its Purchaser:

Truly if þou criste lufe with all þi wil & all fylth of wyckednes þou hatis & þi hart þou gifis to hym it boght, þer he þi lorde be begrace, not þe feynd be syn.²¹³

The Reddendo clause of the Charter motif implied in this last example is more directly stated in the following quotation:

Therefore to all þat ar in þis exil, þis dar I schewe, þat all þai þe maker of all þinge þat wil not lufe, in-yo dyrknes endles þai sall be kest, & þer sall fele with-uten ende byrnyng of þe fyer of hell, þat here with lufe of þer gaynbyar wald noȝt be lyghtynd.²¹⁴

If one considers the "exil" reference in this foregoing passage as a temporary exclusion from the heritage guaranteed by the crucifixion, the theme is properly one of the Blood Motifs.

²¹¹Ibid., p. 5.

²¹²Ibid., p. 16.

²¹³Ibid., p. 100.

²¹⁴Ibid., pp. 11-12.

Rolle, who seems rather partial to the exile concept, explains the theme in the English Psalter:

That is, .i. am in exile . . . my hert is in heuen; of my body be here. this may naman say verraly bot rightwismen. for thaire heritage is in heuen. and here thai ere as cum-lyngis [foreigners].²¹⁵

In another Psalter quotation, life is defined as an "exil fra heuen."²¹⁶ The Incendium Amoris employs the exile designation no less than seven times.²¹⁷ The most noteworthy of these identifications occurs in an early explanation of the incomparable mystical heat of love. The Hampole mystic states that after this "comfortabil heet, & in all deuocion swettyst in me wer sched, playnly I troued [believed] slyke hete to no man happyn in pis exill."²¹⁸

One section of the Incendium contains a very concise summary of many ransom elements:

All hole truly or noght he takys, ffor hole he be gayn boght. Pi body forsoth & pi saule, in be syn of pi Fadyr Adame was dampned: Qwharfor god into be maydyns body is cume downe. & man be-cum, be pris has gyfyn of pi delyuerans, pat not onely pi saull fro be fendis power he suld delyuir. bot also pi body with pi saull, in be ende of be world, he myght make blissyd. Pe comamentis perfore pou has of lyfe euerlastyng; if pou will entyr to be kyngdome lost & eft reparayld with cristis blode, be behouys godis comamentis to kepe.²¹⁹

In this brief passage, Rolle economically indicates the complete-

²¹⁵Psalter, Ps. CXVIII. 19, p. 413.

²¹⁶Ibid., Ps. CI. 24, p. 356.

²¹⁷Misyn Translation, pp. 2, 4, 11, 39, 97, 99.

²¹⁸Ibid., p. 2.

²¹⁹Ibid., p. 52.

ness of the deliverance, the price given for the voiding of Satan's power, the lost heritage motif, the use of Christ's blood to reestablish mankind's inheritance, and a rather strong implication of man's obligation to keep the commandments in order to warrant the true effect of Christ's act of blood sacrifice. Toward the end of the Incendium, Rolle delineates the eagerness with which Christ approached His sacrifice: the Lord "with so greet heet to þe cros hyde [hastened]."220

Chapters XXVII and XXVIII accentuate the importance of meditation to the fire of love. In addition to some unspecified meditative recommendations in these chapters and elsewhere in the Incendium Amoris, the Hermit includes in Chapter XXVII a catalogue of spiritual gifts designed to anoint and make fair the soul. In climactic fashion, the list concludes with "woundys & cristis cros in mynde to paynte,"221 a rather poetic expression of meditative import. Chapter XXVIII terminates with a fairly detailed meditation on the Passion which is intended for a quasiclassical renewal of the soul:

'Egredimini filee syon & videte regem salomonem in diademate'
pat is to say: "go forth 3e sawlys renwd, & vnderstand cristes
truly putt to deed for 3our heell; behald in hym & 3e sall
see his godly hede with þornes crownyd, his face be-spittyd,
hys full fayr eyn be payns wan, hys bak scourgyd, his breste
hurtt, hys worpi hands þirlyd, hys swetyst syde with a spere

220 Ibid., p. 102.

221 Ibid., p. 59.

woundyd, hys feytt porow naylyd, & woundis sett porow al hys soft flesch, Als it is writtyn: fro þe sool of þe foyt to þe croune of þe heed in hym is no hele. Go forth perfore fro 3our vnleful desyrs & see what crist for 3ow has suffyrd, þat syns playnly be outcast and to byrnyng of lufe 3our hartis be taght."²²²

To fully appreciate the significance of meditations within Rollean mysticism, one must be cognizant that meditation "agayns þe fendis dartes has redy defens";²²³ furthermore, one must remember that meditation is converted into heavenly song at the ultimate stage of the Hermit's unitive step.

There are several positive references to the medicine motif, the first of which appears quite early in a mystical "Prayer of Endless Love":

O honely hete, all delite swettar all riches more delectable!
O my god, o my lufe! in-to me scrith [glide] with þi charite þirlyd, with þi bewte wounded; slyde doune & comforth me heuy; medecyn, to me wrech, to þi lufer schew þi-self; behald, in þe is all my desyre, & all my hert sekis.
To þe my hert desyres; to þe my flesch is þirsty: and þou to me opyns not, bot turns þi face.
Þou spars þi dore & hydes þi-self, & of an innocentis payns þou laghys.²²⁴

Although the content of this prayer is fundamentally mystical--the heat of love, the "thirsting" of the flesh for Christ, the door reference--the prayer contains echoes of the Passion other than simply an isolated medicine allusion. The pierced charity and the

²²²Ibid., pp. 60-61.

²²³Ibid., p. 70.

²²⁴Ibid., p. 7.

wounded beauty phrases demonstrate the permeation of Passion overtones within the mystical frame that frequently distinguishes Rolle's writings. As previously noted in regard to the bond of love motif, the Hermit occasionally modifies or adapts conventional symbols or themes to better express his thought. In one instance, Rolle equates meditation to the "gostly medcyn" of God's love:

Pis lufe bryngis vs gostly medcyn, & I hope no pinge emonge all oper þat may be nowmbyrde [numbered] of clarkis þat may vs socur so mikyll & clenys & fro all dreggis of wykydnes vs clere als feruent lufe of þe godhede & contynuall þoght of owr makar.²²⁵

Another passage elicits the mystic's wounding by his longing for his "lemmon"; however, the "medcyn of wrechis" that would heal the wound is delayed by continued living.²²⁶ And, in a fourth example, Rolle evokes Jesus to provide spiritual health so that he "be not lost with þe chyldre of dampnacion."²²⁷

An interesting contrast appears in the Incendium involving the inebriation of wine motif. One statement describes the drunkenness of sinners' wine:

Swetnes of heuenly lyffe vs moyste & to vs be not lefull [lawful] bittyr swetnes of þis lyfe to lufe; ffor gall of dragons, þat is to say, cursidyst wykkydnes, & bittyrnes of falshede is wyen of synnars, for þai it drynkand ar so maddyd þat þa see nott to þam qwhat is to cum; and venum of neddyrs [adders]; þat is schrewdnes killand, to þam is dedely drynk, & vnabyl to be helyd, for þer males is incorigibyll.²²⁸

²²⁵Ibid., p. 97.

²²⁶Ibid., p. 88.

²²⁷Ibid., p. 102.

²²⁸Ibid., p. 89.

Eleven pages later, Rolle delineates the elation and edification of love's spiritual wine:

Luf is gostly syne, myndis of chosyn moystand, & makes pame bolde & manly, pat þe venemus likvng of þe world þa ha forgetyn nor þerof has no care bot rather grete scorne.²²⁹

One other ramification of the wine motif discovered in the Incendium Amoris expounds the reciprocation involved when a "sawlfro þe world synnes departyd" gives to Christ "a drynke full likandly made of hoot lufe." Christ is pleased that the soul "of þe well of penans in þis lyfe dranke."²³⁰ Since Christ's crucifixion instituted the wells of wisdom, mercy, everlasting life, grace, and gostly comfort²³¹--in short, penance--from which the soul could drink, Rolle is stating that after availing itself of the means of salvation the departed soul is now capable of returning love for love, a concept which is basic to mystical thought. This reciprocation is plainly couched in terms of blood sacrifice: primitive in regard to the drink of hot love, and Christian in regard to the well of penance.

The final Incendium reference of note is an explanation of "Panem angelorum manducauit homo," which Rolle interprets as

Aungell breed man has ettyn: & so kynde is renwyd & now sal pas in-to a godly Ioy & happy lyknes, so þat it sall be happye, swett, godly & soundly & in þe selff, sall feyll luste

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 100.

²³⁰ Ibid., p. 66.

²³¹ See p. 45.

of euerlastynge lufe & with greet swetnes continually it sal
synge.²³²

The Eucharistic identification with its supernatural rejuvenation is apparently intended by Rolle in this explication. The salutary effects of the consumption of angel's bread closely correspond to the devotional response that one envisions accompanying a mystic's partaking of the Eucharist. Any evidence of the intellectualism of spiritual wisdom--the other possible symbolism--seems rather conclusively absent.

There is one other reference of possible Eucharistic import, a reference to "gostly fode." Unfortunately, the allusion is brief and somewhat nebulous; all that can be said with certitude is the fact that this food "to byrnyng lufars holy is ordand in heuen."²³³

The importance of the Incendium Amoris is the possibility that it reveals a significant mystical reliance on the tenets of blood theology and its Blood Motifs. The bond of love motif indicates Rolle's faculty for altering stock Passion figures to suit his purpose. Attention has also been called to the blood overtones that seem to punctuate Richard Rolle's particular pattern of mysticism. Furthermore, meditation on the Passion appears to enjoy some prominence in the Hermit's mystical scheme. However,

²³²Misyn Translation, p. 72.

²³³Ibid., p. 10.

whether or not the Incendium provides a valid perspective for appraisal of Rolle's mysticism can be ascertained only after analyses of the other mystical treatises.

Ego Dormio

The Ego Dormio et Cor Meum Vigilat is probably the earliest of Richard Rolle's three English epistles. Although the epistles, as well as the Emendatio Vitae, share the development of three grades of mystical love, only the Ego Dormio does not identify them by the titles "insuperable," "inseparable," and "singular" that appear in the Emendatio Vitae, the Commandment, and the Form of Living. Miss Mackinnon believes that this absence in the Ego Dormio suggests "that titles had not been evolved and that this is the first use of the three grades."²³⁴ Hope Allen also accepts the work as the progenitor of this group, but she thinks that the unspecified grades of love indicate that Rolle had not yet borrowed the titles from Richard of St. Victor. Furthermore, she suggests that the "bare classification might have been found by Rolle in his favourite St. Gregory."²³⁵

One manuscript of the Ego Dormio, MS Cambr. Dd. V. 64, contains a dedication to a nun of Yedingham,²³⁶ a small nunnery a few miles southeast of Pickering. Until 1322, John Dalton, Rolle's early patron, maintained a manor, Foulbridge, which was located a mile from Pickering. Presumably, as a novice hermit,

²³⁴E. Mackinnon, p. 59.

²³⁵Richard Rolle, English Writings of Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole, ed. H. E. Allen (Oxford: University Press, 1931), p. 60.

²³⁶R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 61.

Richard Rolle was entertained at the manor.²³⁷ He may also have returned to the area later in his career during a period of itinerant preaching.²³⁸

Actually, all three English epistles are written for women; consequently, Miss Allen deduces, "It seems likely that Rolle's women friends were the means of bringing him to write English."²³⁹ Attention has already been called to the Hermit's composing the English Psalter for Margaret Kirkeby, the same woman who later inspired the Form of Living.

The Ego Dormio is a relatively short didactic statement of Rolle's mystical way; therefore, it allows little opportunity for the employment of the various Blood Motifs. Significantly, however, this English epistle does substantiate further the disclosure in the Incendium Amoris that Passion meditation might be quite fundamental to the Hermit's mystical system. Moreover, the meditative import is decidedly increased in this work by Rolle's insertion of a very complete and vivid meditation on the Passion at the most critical point in his mystical hierarchy of love--the effecting of the third degree of love.

After representing the mystical way by the "neyn orders of aungels, pat er contened in thre ierarchies . . . Pe lawest es

²³⁷H. E. Allen, Works Ascribed, pp. 458-460.

²³⁸Ibid., pp. 501-502.

²³⁹Ibid., p. 246.

aungels, þe heest es seraphyn,"²⁴⁰ Rolle succinctly defines the first and second degrees of love. "Þe fyrst degre of lufe es when a man haldes þe ten commandements, and kepes hym fra þe seven dedely synnes, & es stabyl in þe trowth of hali kyrke."²⁴¹ "Þan enters þou in to þe toþer degre of lufe, þat es, to forsake al þe worlde, þi fader & þi moder, & al þi kyn, & folow Criste in poverte."²⁴² Then before delineating the foremost degree, Rolle recommends that in preparation man avoid idleness, engage in some worthy endeavor, and think often of the Passion. At this point, the Hampole mystic inserts the graphic Meditatio de passione Criste:

My keyng þat water grette, and blode swette; sythen ful sare bette, so þat hys blode hys blode hym wette, when þair scowrges mette,
 Ful fast þai gan hym dyng, and at þe pyler swyng, & his fayre face defowlyng with spittyng.
 Þe thorne crownes þe keyng, ful sare es þat prickyng. Alas my ioy and my swetyng es demed to hyng!
 Nayled was his handes, nayled was hys fete, & thyrlid was hys syde so semely & so swete.
 Naked es his whit breste, & rede es his bloody syde; wan was his fayre hew, his wowndes depe & wyde. In fyue stedes of his flesch þe blode gan downe glyde, als stremes of þe strande, hys pyne es noght to hyde.
 Þis to see es grete pyte, how he es demed to þe dede, and nayled on þe rode-tre, þe bryght aungels brede.
 Dryuen he was to dole þat es owre gastly gude, and also in þe blys of heuen es al þe aungels fude. A wonder it es to se, wha sa vnderstude, how god of mageste was dyand on þe rude.

²⁴⁰R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 50.

²⁴¹Ibid., p. 52.

²⁴²Ibid., pp. 53-54.

Bot suth þan es it sayde þat lufe ledes þe ryng; þat hym sa
law hase layde, bot lufe is was na thyng.

Ihesu, receyue my hert & to þi lufe me bryng: al my desyre
þou ert, bot I couete þi comyng.

Pow make me clene of synne, & lat vs neuer twyn; kyndel me
fire with-in, þat I þi lufe may wyn, and se þi face Ihesu
in ioy þat neuer sal blyn.

Ihesu, my saule þou mend, þi lufe in to me send, þat I may
with þe lend, in ioy with-owten end.

In lufe þow wownde my thoght, and lyft my hert to þe; my saw-
le þou dere hase boght, þi lufer make it to be. Þe I
couete, þis worlde nocht, & for it I fle; þou ert þat I
haue soght: þi face when may I see?

Pow make my sawle clere, for lufe chawnges my chere: how lang
sal I be here? [when mai I negh þe nere, þi melody to
here,]

Oft to here sang, þat es lastand so lang? Þou be my lufyng,
þat I [þi] lufe may syng.²⁴³

Following this meditation, man is ready for the third degree of
love.

And þan enters þow in to þe thirde degre of lufe. In þe
whilk þou sal haue grete delyte & comforth: if þow may get
grace to com partill. For I say nocht þat þou or a nother
þat redes þis, sal do it all: for it es at goddes will to
chese wham he will, to do þat here es sayde, Or els a nother
thyng on a nother maner, als he gifes men grace til haue
paire hele. For sere men takes seer grace of oure lorde
Ihesu Criste: and al sal be sett in þe ioy of heuen, þat end-
es in charite. Wha sa es in þis degre, wisdom he hase, &
discrecion, to luf at goddes will.

Þis degre es called contemplatife lyfe; þat lufes to be
anely, with-owten ryngyng or dyn, or syngyng or cryng. At
þe begynyng, when þou comes partil, þi gastly egh es taken
vp in til þe blysse of heuen, & þar lyghtned with grace &
kyndelde with fyre of Cristes lufe . . . & þan for heghnesse
of þi hert þi prayers turnes in til ioyful sange, and þi
thoghtes to melody.²⁴⁴

The possibility exists, of course, that sections of the

²⁴³ Ibid., pp. 57-58.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 58.

Meditatio de passione Criste are not original: Carleton Brown, for example, includes several early fourteenth century lyrics that are quite similar in imagery and phraseology in his anthology, Religious Lyrics of the Fourteenth Century.²⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the totality of the meditation bears the Rollean imprint. In the beginning, the Meditatio is a realistic description of the Passion, a description that chronologically enumerates the various features of Christ's suffering--the bloody sweat, the scourging at the pillar, the indignities, the crowning with thorns, and the actual crucifixion. Projected against these events are the grisly details of the Passion: the piercing by the thorns and nails; the livid face; the deep and wide wounds from which the crimson tide flows; and the pain impossible to mask.

However, all these gruesome events and details are but a prelude or, better yet, a conditioning for the kindling of love's fire--the subject of the Incendium Amoris. It is not death that conquered Christ but love for mankind. Recognition of this fact aids Rolle's mystical ascent, his progress to the unitive stage. The Meditatio terminates with a variety of the Hermit's special themes: the ransom of the soul and its subsequent love surrender to Christ, the wound of love, the disdain of the world, the intense seeking of Christ, the impatience with life, and the ulti-

²⁴⁵Carleton Brown (ed.), Religious Lyrics of the Fourteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), pp. 1-2.

mate mystical song.

The true import of the Ego Dormio, then, is compressed into this meditation; for, in orderly fashion, Richard Rolle presents by juxtaposition the relationship existing between contemplation of the Passion and the unitive step of mystical ascent. True, the epistle concludes with another lyric, the Cantus Amoris. However, this "Song of Love" is little more than a detailed amplification of the mystical longing for death and the all consuming desire for Christ. In addition, there are definite revelations in the Ego Dormio of basic tenets of Rolle's mysticism; but these are discerned elsewhere as well. Only in the Meditatio de passione Criste is there a positive indication of the importance of Passion meditation to the Hampole mystic's system. The implication is perceptible in the Incendium Amoris and other writings; but here, in the Ego Dormio et Cor Meum Vigilat, the dependence of Rollean mysticism on Passion-oriented meditation is inescapably evident.

The Commandment

True to the tradition of Rolle's English works established by the English Psalter and continued by the Ego Dormio, the explicit of the MS. Cambr. Dd. V. 64 reveals that the Commandment was written for a friend: "Explicit tractatus Ricardi Hampole scriptus cuidam sorori de Hampole."²⁴⁶ Although Margaret Kirkeby had been a nun of Hampole before being enclosed as a recluse, Miss Allen doubts that she is the "sorori de Hampole." Since the Form of Living is addressed to Margaret Kirkeby by name and since each of the English epistles is a complete compendium of mystical piety, Hope Allen reasons that "it is natural to suppose that each was directed to a different person."²⁴⁷

The emphasis of the Commandment on the purgative aspect of religious development seems to imply that the epistle was composed for a woman just initiating a religious vocation. Moreover, the nunnery at Hampole appears to have had a reputation as a house of lax discipline: it was cited in 1320 by Archbishop Melton for its "new-fashioned narrow-cut tunics and rochets."²⁴⁸ The admonition against rich clothing in the Commandment suggests that the convent's reputation for worldliness had persevered until the last years of Rolle's life:

²⁴⁶R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 71.

²⁴⁷H. E. Allen, Works Ascribed, p. 256.

²⁴⁸R. Rolle, English Writings of Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole, p. 73.

Þe sterne led þe thre keynges in til Bedlem: þar þai fand
Criste swedeld in clowtes sympely, as a pore barne. Þarby
vnderstand: whils þou ert in pryde & vanyte, þou fyndes hym
nocht. How may þou for schame, þat es bot seruand, with many
clathes & riche folow þi spowse & þi lorde, þat yhede in a
kyrtel: and þou trayles als mykel behynd þe, as al þat he had
on? For-þi I rede þat þou parte with hym, ar þou and he mete
þat he reprove þe nocht of outrage; for he wil þat þow haue
þat þou hase mister of, & na mare.²⁴⁹

Mystically, the Commandment briefly describes the three
stages of love introduced in the Ego Dormio and labels them as
"insuperabel," "inseparabel," and "singuler."²⁵⁰ The discussion
of the second degree of love terminates with an implied devotion
to the name of Jesus, a devotional implication that permeates a
number of Rolle's works, but more particularly the English Psalter
and the Form of Living:

Þi lufe es Inseparabel: when al þi thoghtes & þi willes er
gederd to-geder & festend haly in Ihesu Criste, swa þat þou
may na tyme forgete hym, bot ay þou thynkes on hym. And for-
þi it es called Inseparabel; for it may nocht be departed fra
þe thocht of Ihesu Criste.²⁵¹

Miss Allen observes that by the time of the Reformation, "the cult
of the Holy Name was one of the outstanding features of English
religion."²⁵² She attributes this cult to the interest generated
by Richard Rolle in the contemplation of the name.

The value of the Passion to Rolle's mystical system is ad-

²⁴⁹R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 65-66.

²⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 62-63.

²⁵¹Ibid., p. 63.

²⁵²R. Rolle, English Writings of Richard Rolle, Hermit of
Hampole, p. xi.

vanced further in the Commandment. First, in urging the sister of Hampole not to surrender to idleness, the late fourteenth century MS Cambr. Dd. V. 64 encourages her--and mankind in general--"to do som gode pat myght be lykand til god, as in praying, or in wirkyng profitabel thynges, or in spekyng of Cristes passyon."²⁵³ For some inexplicable reason, the fifteenth century MS. Rawl. A. 389 reads simply "as in praying, or in worching profitable thinge, or in spekyng of Ihesu Crist."²⁵⁴ As a result, the earlier blood import is lost in Geraldine E. Hodgson's modernization, Some Minor Works of Richard Rolle, which uses the later manuscript.

A second indication of the mystical significance of Passion thought occurs in a passage that elicits delight and sweetness as its dual effects:

Als-sa festen in pi hert be mynd of his passyon & of woundes: grete delyte and swetnes sal pou fele, if pou halde pi thoght in mynde of be pyne pat Cryst sufferd for be. If pou trau- eyle right in hys lufe, & desyre hym brennandly: all tempta- cyons & dredes of ill pou sall ouercom.²⁵⁵

This "swetnes" might well be the experience that accompanies the heat stage and precedes the song stage of the Hermit's unitive step. Also, the conquest of temptation is reminiscent of the Office's narration of Rolle's personal victory over temptation

²⁵³ R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 67.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 69.

early in his own religious career.²⁵⁶

The Hampole mystic returns to the contemplation of Christ's wounds almost immediately as if in a redoubled effort to dispel once and for all any question as to the true importance of this meditation:

I wate no thyng þat swa inwardly sal take þi hert to couayte goddes lufe and to desyre þe ioy of heuen & to despyse þe vanitees of þis worlde, as stedfast thynkyng of þe myscheues [&] greuous woundes & of þe dede of Ihesu Criste. It wil rayse þi thought abouen erthly lykyng, & make þi hert brennand in Cristes lufe, & pur[ch]es in þi sawle delitabelte and sauoure of heuen.²⁵⁷

This quotation is an echo of one appearing in the Ego Dormio:

And I wil þat þou haue it [thynkyng of his passyon] mykel in mynde, for it wyll kyndel þi hert to sett at nocht al þe gudes of þis worlde, & þe ioy þarof, & to desyre byrnandly [ardently] þe lyght of heuen, with aungels & halowes.²⁵⁸

Both indicate the elevation of thought, the disdain of materialism and the heart's kindling or burning that attend the meditation of the Passion or more specifically the wounds.

The Commandment ends with a notable exhortation to love and honor the name of Jesus:

A thyng I rede þe: þat þou forgete nocht þis name IHESU, bot thynk it in þi hert, nyght & day, as þi speciall, & þi dere tresowre. Lufe it mare þan þi lyfe, rute it in þi mynde. Lufe Ihesu, for he made þe, and boght þe ful dere. Gyf þi hert till hym: for it es his dette. For-þi set þi lufe on

²⁵⁶See p. 76.

²⁵⁷R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 69.

²⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 54-55.

hys name Ihesu, pat es hele.²⁵⁹

This dictation again discloses the basicity of the Blood Motifs to Rolle's entire theology. The Reddendo clause of the Charter emerges anew. Man, as a consequence of the debt accruing from his ransom by Christ, owes a love-laden heart to his Redeemer; it is His claim for destroying Satan's claim.

In this brief terminating counsel, Richard Rolle vividly demonstrates once more the inexorable bond that cements his fundamental tenets to a Passion-impregnated foundation. There is no more eloquent summation to this analysis of the Commandment than this illustration of Rolle's continued reliance on the concepts of blood theology. For, whether the Hampole hermit is defining the grades of divine love or their corresponding steps of mystical ascent; is advising a young religious novice in the modes of combating the world, the flesh, and the devil; or is extolling a devotion to the name of his Savior, Richard Rolle inevitably resorts to Passion-punctuated diction.

²⁵⁹Ibid., p. 70.

Emendatio Vitae

While the titling of the three grades of love dates the Emendatio Vitae later than the Ego Dormio, the stylistic maturity of the Form of Living implies an earlier composition of the Emendatio Vitae. Hence, the Latin explication of the ordered scale of love is chronologically placed with the Commandment between the Ego Dormio and the Form of Living.

However, of all Rolle's manuals of love-oriented mysticism, the Emendatio Vitae was probably the most celebrated. Under such diverse titles as the Emendatio peccatoris, Regula vivendi, xxi capitula, and Duodecim capitula Ricardi hampole heremite, the Emendatio Vitae has survived in over eighty complete or fragmentary Latin manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In addition, at least fifteen English manuscripts of fifteenth century translations are extant.²⁶⁰ The testimony of these copies of the Emendatio Vitae has prompted Dundas Harford to state, "In the fifteenth century he was probably the most popular and widely-read of all English religious writers."²⁶¹

In addition to sharing the delineation of the three degrees of love²⁶² with the English epistles, the Emendatio Vitae

²⁶⁰H. E. Allen, Works Ascribed, pp. 230-242.

²⁶¹R. Rolle, The Mending of Life, p. vii.

²⁶²Misyn Translation, p. 123.

appears to partake of Rolle's English practice of inscribing the work to a friend. The "William" referred to in the conclusions of two manuscripts has been tentatively identified as William Stopes, an educated companion to whom the original copy of the Emendatio Vitae was apparently sent. Miss Allen speculates, "The fact that he was learned would account for this manual being written in Latin."²⁶³

By providing an introductory statement of the work's content, Richard Rolle displays in the Emendatio an orderliness not usually revealed in his other works, which evidence more spontaneity than systematization:

Pis boke is of mendynge of lyfe, or ellis of þe rewl of lyfyng, destinct in-to xij chapters: The fyrst, of conuersyon or holy turnynge. þe secunde, of þe despisyng of þis warlde. þe þirde, of pouerte. þe fowrte, of þe settinge of mans lyfe. þe fyft, of tribulacioun. þe sext, of paciens. þe sevynt, of prayer. þe aght, of meditacioun. þe ix, of redynge. þe x of clerenes of mynde. þe xj, of þe lufe of god. þe xij, of godis contemplacioun. Of þis, als god wil graunt, we salle pursw.²⁶⁴

The treatise divides conveniently into four sections of three chapters each. The initial division, Chapters I-III, concerns the conversion and purgation aspects of the Hermit's mystical progress--actually, the negativeness of renouncing the world. Chapters IV-VI develop the illuminative phase of a positive ordering of the convert's life with an emphasis upon patience and ortho-

²⁶³H. E. Allen, Works Ascribed, p. 231.

²⁶⁴Misyn Translation, p. 105.

doxy. The next three chapters, devoted to prayer, meditation, and reading, are characteristically Rollean in their conditioning for the unitive step which follows as the clear contemplation of God and His love, the material of Chapters X-XII.

Verification of the importance of Passion meditation is again offered by Richard Rolle, who in Chapter VIII, "Of Meditation," writes

It is gude meditacion of cristis passion & his deed, & oft to recorde qwhatt payns & wrechidnes frely he toke for our hele in goynge & prechyng, hongyr, pirst, cold, heet, repreuys & cursyngs, suffyryngis, so pat it be not greuous to an [vn] profetabyll seruand to felo his lorde & emprour. He truly pat says he dwels in criste aw to go als he dyd. Criste truly says be Ieremy: 'ha mynde of my pouerte & of my passage, of wormwod & gall, pat it is say of sorow & bitternes, be pe qwhilk fro pe warld to pe fadyr I went.' Pis mynde truly & meditacion pe fend ouercoms & his gwnys [traps], ffleschly temptacions it slokyns & pe sawle to cristis lufe kyndillis, pe mynde it raisys and ciensis & also purgis. I trow pis poght of all oper is moste profetabyll to pame pat nwly ar turnyd to criste. Perfore truly is schewyd pe manhede of Ihesu criste, in pe qwhilk emong man suld be glad, in qwhilk he has mater of Ioy & also mournyng. Ioy for sikyrnes of owr gaynbiyng, heuynes for filth of owr synyng, for pe qwhilk it is to heuy pat so worpi a offiryng is offyrd.²⁶⁵

The recurrent benefits afforded by meditation on the Passion are stated: aid in overcoming the devil, in subduing temptations, in kindling the fire of love in man's soul, in elevating the mind, and in purging the mind. Interspersed are the allusions to the sufferings of Christ, His "gaynbiyng," and the priceless Victim of the crucifixion's blood sacrifice--allusions that acquire a

²⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 119.

formulaic significance with the Hermit's considerations of Passion meditation. Lastly, Rolle's testimony that "I trow þis þoght of all oper is moste profetabyll to þame þat nwly ar turnyd to criste" recalls the anecdote in the Office concerning the Hampole mystic's use of meditation in face of Satan's challenges.

Frequently, it is difficult to definitely ascertain what distinction, if any, Rolle makes between contemplation and meditation. In an effort to synthesize what might be termed Rolle's contemplative vicissitude, Dundas Harford, in his edition of the Mending of Life, summarizes the three principal concepts of contemplation that he has discerned in Rolle's writings:

(1) It covers the whole life of those who have reached a stage in which the eyes are opened to see God, and the heart is attuned to walk with Him. (2) It may be narrowed down to definite seasons of devotion, and divided into reading, prayer, and meditation. (3) It consists specifically in those moments or times in such seasons of meditation when the soul is filled with enthusiastic songs of joy in the Lord, and lifted up into immediate consciousness of God in Jesus Christ.²⁶⁶

Later, editor Harford simply equates the contemplative life to the unitive life.²⁶⁷

In the last chapter of the Emendatio Vitae, Rolle divulges a contemplative attitude that obviously induced Rev. Harford's second observation:

Contemplatyfe lyfe or contemplacion has thre partys: Redyng, Prayer, & Meditacion. In redyng, god spekis to vs; In prayer, we speke to god; In meditacion, awngels to vs cum

²⁶⁶R. Rolle, The Mending of Life, p. xxxvii.

²⁶⁷Ibid., p. xxxviii.

down & techis vs, pat we erre nott. In prayer þa go vp & offyrs owr prayers to god, Ioyand of owr profett, þat ar mes-syngers be-twix god & vs. Prayer certan is a meyk desire of mynde dressyd in god, of þe qwhilk he is plesyd qwhen it cums to hym. Meditacion in god & godly þingis, aftyr prayer and redyng is to be takyn, qwher is þe halsyng [embrace] of rachell. To redyng, longis reson & inquisicion of treuyth, þat is a gudely lightte markyd apon vs. To prayer, longis louyng sange, passyng in beheldyng and meruayll: and so in prayer standis contemplatyfe lyfe or contemplanacion. To medi-tacione, longis inspiracion of godd, vndirstandyng, wysdome & syghyng.²⁶⁸

As is revealed by this quotation, Rolle's statement is extensively more complex than the portion of the Harford synthesis in question denotes. Clearly, meditation is, at least in the Emendatio Vitae, the climax of contemplation; for it is to be taken after prayer and reading, the two other components of "contemplatyfe lyfe or contemplanacion." Moreover, meditation is the teaching vehicle of the angels, the inspiration of god, understanding, wisdom, and mystical sighing. In contrast to the conventional view of mysticism, the Hermit's system accentuates intellectuality. The cornerstone of this intellectualism is manifestly meditation of the Passion, for it is this specific reflection that is consistently signified by Rolle.

In addition to its orderly didacticism and explication of the degrees of love, the Emendatio Vitae contains several of the Blood Motifs, none of which can be said to prevail since they generally appear singularly. Chapter XI, "Of þe lufe of god," provides another example of the mystical wound motif:

²⁶⁸ Misyn Translation, p. 127.

O euer-lastynge swetnes & fayrnes, my hart pou has woundyd,
& now ouercomyn & woundyd I fall, vnnepis [scarcely] for Ioy
I life & nehand [nearly] I dy, for I may nott suffyr swetnes
of so grete a maieste in flesch pat wyll royte.²⁶⁹

Earlier in the chapter, Rolle petitions his Creator to "Byrn my
renys with pi fyre, & my hart pat in pin awter [altar] sal byrn
endlesly."²⁷⁰ In both instances, the heart has been the recipient
of the mystic's bittersweet ascetical desires. The heart's meta-
phorical identity has evolved from primitive times when it shared
the life equation with the blood. Theologically, Christ's heart
wound is the most significant--if such a superlative is valid--
because from it flowed the most symbolic blood. It was "shed
mixed with water, a sign of the two more directly regenerative sa-
craments, Baptism and Eucharist. It [the heart] is the Fountain
par excellence from which flow the four rivers of Paradise."²⁷¹

Closely associated with the fountain figure just alluded
to is the mystic bath motif. In the following quotation, Rolle
appears to imply the bath metaphor as he evokes Christ: "Moyst
my mynde with hote wyne of pi sweet lufe, pat all yllis & all
scornfull visions & ymaginacions forgetill &, pe onely hauand, I
may be glad, & Ioy in Ihesu my god."²⁷² The bath figure is en-

²⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 124-125.

²⁷⁰Ibid., p. 123.

²⁷¹Charles Banet, C.P.P.S., "The Precious Blood in Art,"
Proceedings of the First Precious Blood Study Week (Rensselaer,
Indiana: St. Joseph's College Press, 1959), p. 123.

²⁷²Misyn Translation, p. 123.

grossing in that it combines the blood tradition of primitive man with that of the Christian. In the latter frame of reference, the bath is an extension of the fountain of life motif since the fountain provides a perpetual source of Christ's blood, which cleanses refreshes, and heals the faithful. The mystic bath theme quite obviously has its origin in the Apocalyptic theme of "Those who wash their robes in the blood of the lamb." Father Siebeneck, in an article "The Precious Blood and Saint John," states the Church's teaching in regard to the bath concept:

The Precious Blood, then, in which the Christian habitually bathes, purifies the soul, cleanses it from sin. The washing in the Blood not only brings supernatural life to the soul for the first time, but it also restores that life if lost and removes all those obstacles which stand in the way of the growth of that life. Once more we see how the Precious Blood is a means to life insofar as the soul is completely purified through it at every turn. It confers life not only on the individual, but it is likewise the source of that community of life between Christ and His members. The passages which contain the imagery of washing and cleansing in blood announce a "fellowship with one another" (I Jn 1,7) and "the kingdom and priests to God" (Ap 1,6) through the Blood of Christ.²⁷³

The spiritual restoration which Father Siebeneck cites parallels the regenerative powers attributed to blood or its equivalent by both primitive and classical cultures.

The recuperative power of Christ's blood--just discussed in the bath analysis but already examined in regard to the physician and leech figure--is probably the basis for an early plea for

²⁷³Robert T. Siebeneck, C.P.P.S., "The Precious Blood and Saint John," Proceedings of the First Precious Blood Study Week (Rensselaer, Indiana: St. Joseph's College Press, 1959), p. 78.

healing in Chapter I, "ffirst, of conuersion":

Lorde, perfore turne vs & we sall be turnyd; heyl vs & we sall be helyd. Many truly ar not helyd, bot rotis & per wondys festyr, for today to god turnyd to-morne fro hym, [pai ar turnand], today doand penance, to-morne, to per ill turnand. [Of slike it is seid]: we haue curyd babilon & it is not helyd, for to criste it is not truly turnyd.²⁷⁴

Later, in Chapter XI, Rolle begs, "Perfore, o goyd Ihesu, haue mercy of a wrech, schew þe to me þat longis, gyfe medcyne to me hurt."²⁷⁵

The rope figure is used in the initial chapter of the Emendatio Vitae to represent mankind's continued affinity for worldliness even though the actual bond of man's servitude to the Prince of Materialism has been severed by Christ's blood sacrifice:

And þat owre eyn of hart be not fixyd in god, ar many lett- yngis, of whilk put we sum. Abundance of Riches, flaterynge of wymmen, ffayrnes or bewte of 3outhē: þis is þe threfold rope þat vnnethis [with difficulty] may be brokyn, & 3it it bus be brokynne & despisyd, þat criste may be louyd.²⁷⁶

Ever-present is the shadow of the Charter's requirement of love. For to be truly liberated, man must love God to the exclusion of everything else; to do so, he must renounce all visages of his former slavery to the devil, visages represented by attraction to the things of the world. As previously indicated, if man is successful in turning to God, he becomes bound in love to his Creator;

²⁷⁴Misyn Translation, p. 106.

²⁷⁵Ibid., p. 125.

²⁷⁶Ibid., p. 107.

whereas, formerly, he was tied to Satan and transitory material objects. In describing the second degree of inseparable love, Rolle relies again on the love bond motif:

Luf truly is indepartyd qwhen with grete lufe þe mynde is kyndyld and to criste with þoght vndeþartyd draws, forsoth a minwt it suffyrs hym not pas fro mynde, bot als he were bun in hart hym it þinkis, to hym it syghis, it cryes with his lufe to be haldyn, to lawes [loosen] þe fettyr of dedelynes & to hym þat he onely to se desires may leed.²⁷⁷

Later, charity partially assumes the identity of blood. Among other effects, "O haly charite . . . makis [hole] þat was brokyn, fale þou restoris, bond þou delyuers" ²⁷⁸ As a result of these ransom and rejuvenation appositivenesses, it becomes increasingly evident that charity or mercy or any other synonym for divine love acquires, within the Rollean perspective, the various metaphorical identities of the Blood Motifs. Again, God's love, expressed in the blood of His Son, is defined in terms given denotation by man's heritage of blood import.

Finally, Chapter VI, "Of Paciens," begins with a probable allusion to the Eucharist. In speaking of those who despise all lusts and solace of the world for Christ's love, Rolle states: "He truly þat with þe brede is fed þat come fro heuyn, his desire enclines not to þe þat of þe deuyll ar meuyd [stirred]." ²⁷⁹ True, within the context of the chapter and the format of the entire

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 123.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 125.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 116.

work, it is somewhat difficult to determine whether the Hermit intends the Eucharist identification or the wisdom symbol discerned as the alternate meaning of angel's bread. However, at this stage of the Emendatio Vitae, its author is concluding the section devoted to the positive ordering of the faithful Christian's life--an ordering that has catalogued, in Chapter IV, the sins of mankind and has stressed, throughout Chapters IV-VI, the necessity of contrition, confession, and satisfaction for transgressions. Consequently, presumption should favor the Eucharist symbol.

If the assumption of an educated audience is correct, the Emendatio Vitae evidences Rolle's universal espousal of Passion meditation for both the bilingual scholar and the simple recluse or nun who was probably limited to her native tongue. But, regardless of the education of his reader, Richard Rolle provides in the Emendatio Vitae continued substantiation of his reliance on blood-documentation for his mysticism.

Form of Living

Presumably written late in Rolle's career--possibly in the last year of his life--the Form of Living, second in medieval popularity to the Emendatio Vitae, is addressed to his favorite disciple Margaret Kirkeby. It is generally conceded to be the most mature of the Hermit's English works and certainly the best of the mystical manuals. Miss Mackinnon justly observes: "Far more comprehensive and on a far higher level than either the Ego Dormio or The Commandment we feel that this is written con amore."²⁸⁰ The explanation for the work's superiority is evident to any student of the Hampole mystic. As a recluse, Margaret Kirkeby more than the anonymous nun of Yedingham, the unknown sister of Hampole, or the learned William Stopes shared with Rolle his love for the solitary existence in the service of God, an existence perpetually bordering on mystical experience. As Rolle tells Margaret, "Pe state þat þou ert in, þat es solitude, es maste abyll of all oþyr til revelacion of þe haly gaste."²⁸¹ Undoubtedly, the Form of Living was written con amore, the dual love of a mystic and a spiritual advisor.

To a considerable extent, the Form of Living resembles the Emendatio Vitae. In addition to the obvious similarity of delineating the three grades of love, the MS. Cambr. Dd. V. 64 version

²⁸⁰E. Mackinnon, p. 183.

²⁸¹R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 11.

of the Form--written in Rolle's Northern dialect--is divided into twelve chapters, as is the Emendatio Vitae, with the first half being devoted to general admonition and the last half to the love of God and divine contemplation. Moreover, the catalogue of sins; the need for contrition, confession, and satisfaction; and the discussion of the contemplative life are quite alike in both works. However, the Form of Living tends to be more personal than the carefully composed Emendatio Vitae. Rolle's characteristic moderation is revealed in several protestations against extreme asceticism or excessive indulgence.²⁸² Furthermore, the Hermit draws from his own experience to warn Margaret of the temptations of the solitary and the meaning of dreams. In his exemplum, Rolle does make one change--the ejaculatory "Aue maria"²⁸³ is recommended instead of the formula "O Jesu, how precious is Thy blood!"²⁸⁴ which Rolle used to combat nocturnal temptation. Miss Mackinnon speculates that Rolle's original exclamation was the result of intense personal involvement. In warning his disciple, she believes, "Rolle is now sufficiently removed from the temptation to speak of it dispassionately and to realize that it was an experience not peculiar to himself."²⁸⁵

²⁸² Ibid., pp. 6, 24, 25.

²⁸³ Ibid., p. 11.

²⁸⁴ Office, p. 305.

²⁸⁵ E. Mackinnon, p. 186.

A less ingenious explanation might be that Rolle was simply adapting the situation to feminine psychology: as a woman, Margaret Kirkeby would probably have a deeper devotion to the Blessed Virgin than to the blood of Christ. At this point in the dissertation, one can state with reasonable confidence that Richard Rolle was quite sensitive to various devotional currents of his age. Repeatedly, his writings evidence his own deep rooted consecration to the name of Jesus and the complete nomenclature of the Passion. If any real question exists regarding the Hermit's attitude toward the entire subject of devotions, it is, at least, partially answered in the Form of Living. In "Capitulum sextum," Rolle begins:

Wharfore, þat þou be ryght disposed, bath for þi saule & þi body, þou sall vnderstande fowre thynges: Þe fyrst thyng es: what thyng fyles a man. Þe toþer thyng: what makys hym clene. Þe thyrd: what haldes hym in clenens. Þe ferth: what thyng drawes hym for to ordayne his will all at goddes will.²⁸⁶

Then, in cataloguing "Þe synnes of þe hert," as part of the explanation of "what thyng fyles a man," Rolle starts with "Ill thoght. ill. delyte. assent till synne. desyre of ill. wikked will. Ill suspecion. vndeucion."²⁸⁷ Comparison with the other sins of the heart discloses the great importance that Rolle must have placed on devotion to include lack of devotion in the same list as

²⁸⁶ R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 21.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

"assent till synne" and such other transgressions appearing later in the catalogue as "Ioy in any mans ill-fare,"²⁸⁸ "ypocrisy,"²⁸⁹ and "ioy of ill dede."²⁹⁰

Later, in the seventh chapter, Rolle prescribes a meditation before meals which includes the ransom theme:

Loued be pou keyng, & thanked be pou keyng, & blyssed be pou keyng, Ihesu all my ioying, of all pi giftes gude: pat for me spylt pi blude, & died on pe rude; pou gyf me grace to syng, pe sang of pi louyng.²⁹¹

In the instruction that follows this prayer, the Hermit illustrates again the importance of devotion; for, he suggests to his reader that any other meditation "pat pou has mare swetnes in & deuocion, pan in pase pat I lere pe"²⁹² should be utilized. In this substitution of meditation, there is some support for this writer's contention that Rolle was merely adapting to the situation in his advocacy of the "Aue maria" supplication for Margaret's use in time of temptation.

The convergence of Richard Rolle's own major devotions to the name and Passion of Jesus is exemplified in the short "Capitulum nonum" of the Form of Living:

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid., p. 30.

²⁹² Ibid.

If pou wil be wele with god, & haue grace to rewle pi lyf, & com til pe ioy of luf: pis name IHESU fest it swa fast in pi hert, pat it com neuer owt of pi thocht. And when pou spekes til hym & says Ihesu thurgh custom, it sal be in pi ere ioy, in pi mouth hony, & in pi hert melody: For pe sall thynk ioy to here pat name be neuend, swetnes to speke it, myrth & sang to thynk it. If pou thynk Ihesu contynuly, & halde it stably, it purges pi syn, & kyndels pi hert; it clarifies pi sawle; it remoues anger, & dose away slawnes. It woundes in lufe, & fulfills of charite. It chaces pe deuel, & puttes oute drede. It opens heuen & makes a contemplatif man. Haue in mynde Ihesu: for al vices & fantomes it puttes owte fra pe louer. And haylce oft Mary, bath day and nyght. Mikel lufe & ioy sal pou fele, if pou wil do aftyr pis lare. Pe thare nocht couayte gretely many bokes: halde lufe in hert, & in werke, and pou hase al pat we may say or wryte: for fulnes of pe law es charite; in pat hynges all.²⁹³

The entire chapter is evidence of Rolle's mystical devotion to the name of "IHESU"; for, as Rolle states, the name will be melody in the speaker's heart. Nevertheless, many of the attributes that had previously been assigned to meditations on the various facets of the Passion are discerned in this chapter as being applicable to meditation on Jesus' name: the purging of sin, the kindling of the heart, the mystical wounding of the soul, and the chasing of the devil and temptation. Is the speculation that Rolle's devotion to the name of Jesus is actually an outgrowth of his fundamental devotion to the Passion too untenable? This writer thinks not: after all, Rolle's devotion to the name of Jesus is a devotion to the name of his Redeemer.

The notability of devotion in Rolle's Form of Living is presented once again in the tenth chapter's protracted exploration

²⁹³ Ibid., p. 35.

of the nature of love. After an examination of the questions, "What es lufe, An [d] whar es lufe,"²⁹⁴ Rolle poses as an answer to the inquiry, "How sal I verrayli lufe god," the reply: "to lufe hym in al pi myght, stalwortly; In al pi hert, wysely; In al pi sawle, deuowtely & swetely."²⁹⁵ Then, the Hermit elaborates upon each point. Of devout love, he says:

Deuowte lufe es: when pou offers pi prayers & pi thoghtes til god with gastly ioy, & byrnand hert in pe hete of pe haly gaste, swa pat pe thynk pat pi saule es als it war drunken for delyte & solace of pe swetnes of Ihesu, and pi hert conceyues sa mykel of goddes helpe, pat pe thynk pat pou may neuer be fra hym departyd; and pan pou comes in til swilk rest & pees in sawle, & quiete, with-owten thoghtes of vanities [or] of vices, als pou war in sylence & slepe, & sette in Noe schyppe, pat na thyng may lette pe of deuocion & byrnyng of sete lufe. Fra pou haue getyn pis lufe: all pi lyf, til dede come, es ioy & comforth, and verrayli Cristes lufer, and he restes in pe, whas stede es maked in pees.²⁹⁶

The devout life as Rolle defines it has the distinct imprint of the illuminative and unitive ways of mystical progress.

Also, throughout the tenth chapter are indicia of blood theology. For example, as a segment of his answer to "What es lufe?" Rolle replies:

Verray luf clenses pe saule, & delyuers it fra pe pyne of hell, & of pe foule seruys of syn, & of pe vgly felyschip of pe deuels; and of pe fendes son makes god son, & parcener of pe heritage of heuen.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁴Ibid., pp. 35-39.

²⁹⁵Ibid., p. 39.

²⁹⁶Ibid., p. 42.

²⁹⁷Ibid., p. 37.

In partial response to "Whare es lufe?" the Hampole mystic states that although love is in the heart and will of man, it has external manifestations, one of which is "al þe gude dedes þat he may do, he dose þam in entent forto pay Ihesu Criste"298 In analyzing "stalworth," Rolle mirrors the mystic's desire for reciprocal pain by explicating the term as the quality that permits the tormented man to delight "þat he war worthy forto suffer torment & payne for Crystes lufe."299 Even the reference to Noah's ark in the definition of devout love is of some blood import. In being mocked by Ham, Noah is a figure of Christ who was mocked by the Jews.³⁰⁰ As already indicated, the wine drunk by Noah is a symbol of Christ's blood. And, finally, Noah's ark is a medieval symbol of the Church, the sacraments, and safety from the devil.³⁰¹

The principal contribution of the Form of Living to a comprehension of Richard Rolle's mysticism is perceived in the weight that he assigns to the devotional aspect. There can be little doubt that the Hampole mystic fully intends devotionalism to function as a tributary for his mystical current. Of secondary importance is the ninth chapter's disclosure that Richard Rolle's salient devotional interests in the name and Passion of Christ might well be convergent.

²⁹⁸Ibid., p. 38.

²⁹⁹Ibid., p. 40.

³⁰⁰F. R. Webber, p. 249.

³⁰¹Ibid., p. 236; G. Ferguson, pp. 75-76.

Short Prose Pieces

Owing to the brevity and nature of Richard Rolle's remaining authenticated prose, it is expedient to discuss the works as a unit. Later, it will be equally feasible to analyze the English lyrics in a similar fashion. Four of the short prose pieces--The Bee and the Stork, Desyre and Delit, Gastly Gladnes, and the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit--are comparatively insignificant from the point of view of this dissertation. Generally, they are appended to or incorporated in manuscripts of Rolle's more important works. With rare exception, they are not of a mystical nature and are almost impossible to date.

The Bee and the Stork utilizes the popular medieval imagery of the bestiaries to expound the virtues of contemplative men. The "wondyrfull, pure, haly, and faste"³⁰² delight of Christ is the subject of Desyre and Delit. Gastly Gladnes--termed a prose lyric by Miss Allen because of its alliteration³⁰³ contains a sentence that appears to relate it to Rolle's 1343 vision of an additional period of life: "It war na wonder if dede war dere, pat I myght se hym pat I seke. Bot now it es lenthed fra me, & me behoues lyf here, til he wil me lese."³⁰⁴ As Miss Mackinnon ob-

³⁰²R. Rolle, English Writings of Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole, p. 58.

³⁰³Ibid., p. 51.

³⁰⁴R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 81.

serves, "It seems likely that the piece was written soon after the revelation, for the 'now' would indicate that the date appointed for his death had been recently revealed."³⁰⁵ Finally, The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, incorporated in the MS. Cambr. Dd. V. 64 as the eleventh chapter of the Form of Living, consists of little more than an annotated catalogue of "Wysdom, Vnderstandyng, Cownsayle, Strength, Connyng, Pyte, & þe Drede of god."³⁰⁶

A notabill Tretys off the Comandementys: Drawene by Richerde the hermyte off Hampull--shortened simply to On the Ten Commandments--exists in both a short and long version, the Thornton MS. and Hatton MS. respectively. Since some question remains regarding the Hatton version, the short Thornton version will be analyzed.

Mystically, On the Ten Commandments contains, in the discussion of the third commandment, an echo of Rolle's three grades of love:

This commandement may be takyne in thre maneres: Firste generally þat we sesse of all vyces. [Sithen speciali, þat we cesse of alle bodili werkis] þat lettys deuocyone to god in prayenge and thynkyng. The thyrde es specyall, als in contemplatyfe mene þat departis payme fra all werldly thynges swa þat þey hally gyfe payme till god. The fyrste manere es nedfull vs to do. The tothire we awe to do. The thirde es perfeccyone.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁵E. Mackinnon, p. 61.

³⁰⁶R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 45.

³⁰⁷Ibid., p. 195.

One notes again a clear statement to devotion of God in "prayenge and thynkyng." "

However, more significantly, this piece provides two interesting comments related to the topic of this dissertation. One, a pronouncement that crosses as images of Christ should be worshipped, occurs in the explication of the first commandment: "Haly crosses mene sall lowte [worship] ffor thay are in syngne of Cryste crucyfiede: To ymages es þe louyng þat es till theyme of whaym þai are þe ymagez, ffor þat Entent anely þai are for to lowte."³⁰⁸ The second appears in the analysis of the second commandment:

In thre maners mane may syne in swerynge: That es, if he swere agayne his concyence, Or if he swere þe Cryste wondes or blude--That es euermare gret syne þofe it be sothe þat he sweris, ffor it sounes in irreuerlence of Ihesu Cryste; Also if he come agaynes his athe nocht fulfilland þat he has sworne.³⁰⁹

This condemnation of swearing by Christ's wounds or His blood is a good indication of the extent to which the terminology and nomenclature of Christ's sacrifice of blood had infiltrated the everyday, casual conversation of the medieval Englishman.³¹⁰

If Richard Rolle had not written meditations on the Passion, one would be greatly surprised. As his writings frequently

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ See the Pardoner's denunciation of such oaths in the Canterbury Tales, p. 183 of the Robinson edition.

illustrate, such reflection is often the necessary impetus to the steps of mystical ascent. Of the various Passion meditations periodically ascribed to the Hampole hermit, Miss Allen accepts two as genuine: the I and II versions of Meditation on the Passion.³¹¹ It is doubtful that the two texts are descended from a common original. True, at times both forms follow a regular structure: gratitude is expressed to man's Redeemer for some facet of the Passion; a few words of prayer, generally penitential, follow, after which some Latin prayers are prescribed. However, Richard Rolle frequently reiterated himself--as is evidenced by his repetitive treatment of the three levels of love--or completely rewrote a previous work--as in the case of the English versions of the Super Magnificat and the Psalter. Consequently, Meditation I and Meditation II might well be two separate and distinct meditations.

Despite this possibility, the meditations do evidence some mutual motifs. Both contain the Charter figure. Meditation I illustrates the incorporation of some vivid details of Christ's suffering with the motif:

A, lord, þe pyte I now se: þi woundys in þi streynge reche so wyde, þi lymes and þi nayles are so tendre. Þou lyst rowyd and reed streyned on þe cros, þe kene crowne on þin hed þat sytteth þe so sore, þi face is so bolnyd þat fyrst was so faire; þi synwes & þi bonys styrten owt so starke, þat þi bonys may be nowmbryd; þe stremys of þi reede blood rennyr

³¹¹H. E. Allen, Works Ascribed, pp. 278-287.

as þe flood, þi woundys are for-bled and grysly on to se.³¹²
Meditation II contains basically the same material but also refers specifically to Christ's skin "streyned as a parchemynskyn upon þe harowe."³¹³

In contrast to references in these aforementioned quotations to "þe stremys of þi reede blood rennyn as þe flood" and wounds that are "for-bled," as well as other allusions in the meditations to baths of precious blood,³¹⁴ both versions present the opposite extreme in blood letting: the desire for "a drope of hys reed blod to make blody my soule, a drope of þat watur to waschyn it with."³¹⁵ The theological implications of the copiousness of Christ's blood shedding and the shedding of blood and water have already been cited. Theologically, these references to a single drop of blood and water reflect the contention that the slightest blood sacrifice by Christ would have been sufficient for everlasting atonement and cleansing.

Singularly, the meditations embody a number of motifs discovered in Rolle's other works. Meditation I includes references to the sweat of blood,³¹⁶ the ransom theme of Christ's allowing

³¹²R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 87.

³¹³Ibid., p. 100.

³¹⁴Ibid., pp. 90, 97, 102, and 103. Miss Allen sees in these references a likeness to "the ancient motif of folk-lore, the 'bath of blood,'" English Writings of Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole, p. 134.

³¹⁵R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 86 and 99.

³¹⁶Ibid., p. 83.

Himself to be bound in order that man be unbound from Satan,³¹⁷ the blood vengeance motif involving the Jews and their children,³¹⁸ the desire for the mystical wound,³¹⁹ and the "heuenelyche leche"³²⁰ figure. Allusions to Christ's "souereyn medicyn"³²¹ and the innocent victim motif³²² are contained in Meditation II.

As the Charter quotations illustrated, both of the meditations elicit the grim details of the crucifixion. These reflections share the specific detail that "pei grauyd pine handys & pi feet al with pe blonte nayles, for pe more peyne."³²³ Meditation I concludes with Rolle's imaginative presence at Christ's moment of sacrifice:

I se pi blood laue owt of handys and of feet, pi sydes thyrled with pe spere, pi woundes dryed and al to-ran, pi body al be-bled, pi chyn hangyd doun, & pi teth bare; pe whyte of pin eyen is cast vp-ward, pi skyn pat was so louely is become al pale, pe crowne in pin hed grysyth in my syst, pe heer is clemyd with pe blod and blowith al a-bowte.³²⁴

The Hermit continues as an "eye-witness" to all of the subsequent events following Christ's death: the casting of lots for His robe,

³¹⁷Ibid.

³¹⁸Ibid., p. 85.

³¹⁹Ibid., p. 86.

³²⁰Ibid., p. 90.

³²¹Ibid., p. 93.

³²²Ibid., p. 98.

³²³Ibid., pp. 86 and 100.

³²⁴Ibid., p. 91.

the descent from the cross, the preparation of the body, and the burial. The corresponding passage in Meditation II is curtailed--hence, less detailed--and omits the events following the death on the cross. However, while Meditation I makes a passing reference to the Blessed Virgin's sorrow as she stands at the foot of the cross, Meditation II gives greater emphasis to the sorrow by making it the terminal and climactic experience in Rolle's "vision" of the crucifixion.³²⁵

In several other respects, the meditations differ. Meditation I contains a possible reference to the Eucharistic motif of the mystic winepress. Theologians have interpreted the winepress allusion in Isaias LXIII,2 to mean Christ's Passion. For example, in Sermo de Exodi lectione secundus, Gaudentius of Brescia speaks of the wine of the blood of Christ being pressed out in the winepress of the cross.³²⁶ Father Banet's study of "The Precious Blood in Art" analyzes the theme, as it is reflected in religious art, in some detail:

The theme is surely derived from the Fountain of Life. The Man of Sorrows is placed under a press, and His Blood, represented as pressed from the grapes, flows into a tub and fills it to overflowing. It shows that the Savior poured out His Blood even to the last drop that our redemption might be complete. The metaphor of the winepress was suggested since earliest times in the commentators on the Bible.³²⁷

³²⁵ Ibid., p. 103.

³²⁶ J. H. Rohling, p. 27.

³²⁷ C. Banet, p. 124.

Later in this article, variations of the motif are presented:

The position of Jesus offers some variation: sometimes He is on His knees or standing or bent under the press that crushes Him. The formula of Christ standing comes closest to that of the Fountain of Life. The cross becomes the press and serves to crush the body of Christ, whose Blood flows from every part into a basin. Sometimes God the Father works the press The theme of the Winepress . . . held some vogue until the 17th century.³²⁸

While representations of the mystic winepress are fairly common in religious art from the early twelfth century--when it appears in a miniature of the Hortus Deliciarum of Herrad of Landsberg--until, as Father Banet notes, into the seventeenth century, literature does not afford the ample opportunity that art does for the development of so pictorial a theme.

Nevertheless, Richard Rolle's reference to "þe prees of þe peple was wonderly strong; þei hurled þe and haryed þe so shamefully"³²⁹ in his description of Christ's journey to Calvary might be one of the motif's rare literary manifestations. Certainly, the image of Christ's being "hurled" and "haryed" is not too remote from that of grapes' being dashed about in a winepress. Moreover, the Hermit continues his meditation with a blood-splattered description that seems to further the winepress figure: "þi body is so bloody, so rowed and so bledderyd . . . þi heere meuyth with þe wynde clemyd with þe blood . . . þe blood ran pere-with, þat

³²⁸ Ibid., p. 127.

³²⁹ R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 85.

grysyth in my syst."³³⁰ Later, Rolle refers to Mary following Jesus "among þe gret prees."³³¹ "Prees" is an unusual word with the Hampole mystic: he simply does not use it as a synonym for "throng" or "crowd." Yet, here, it appears twice within a relatively short space. In addition, rarely does Rolle deviate from concrete phraseology unless he intends some definite metaphorical implication. It is difficult to believe that the frequently didactic and orthodox Hermit would have employed "prees" if he meant merely "throng" or "crowd."

Meditation II has several motifs not found in Meditation I. In one of his apostrophes to Christ, Rolle presents two modifications of the rope symbol not previously discerned in his writings. The Hampole mystic speaks of Christ's being bound "to a þee";³³² then he asks his Savior to bind him in "bileeue, hope, & charite."³³³ In explicating the "hope" binding, Rolle writes, "binde me to þee in hope: so þat al myn hope & trist be oonli in þee; late neuere myn hope be to streite: lest I falle in wanhope [despair]."³³⁴ Possibly, the Hermit was thinking of another person who was actually bound in "wanhope"--Judas.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Ibid., p. 94.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Ibid.

Another passage in Meditation II refers to the most sacred and symbolic of Christ's blood: "O, swete Ihesu, þei 3auen þee poisoun to kele þi prist wip: & þou 3aue hem þin herte blood to quenche her synnes, & to hele her soulis."³³⁵ As already implied in the discussion of the importance of the side wound, the blood from Christ's heart is the most sacred because this blood, mingled with water, flowed from the side when it was opened by the lance; in so doing, the "herte blood" instituted the two principal sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist.

But, foremost in imagination is the catalogue of similes that appear in Meditation II for Christ's wound-punctured body:

Panne [after the scourging] was þi bodi lijk to heuene: for as heuene is ful of sterris, so is þi bodi ful of woundis. But, lord, þi woundis ben betere þan sterris: for sterris schinen not but bi nyztis, & þi woundis ben ful of vertu nyzt & day; alle þe sterris bi nyzte ne li3ten but a lital, & o cloude may hide hem alle: but oon of þi woundis, swete Ihesu, was & is Inou3 to do away cloudis of synne, & to clere þe conscience of alle sinful men . . . þe sterris ben cause in erpe of ech þing þat is grene, or growip, or berip fruyzt: now, swete Ihesu, make me grene in my bileeue, growinge in grace, & beringe fruyzt of gode werkis. Also sterris ben cause of mynes of metals & of precious stonys: now, swete lord Ihesu, make me tou3 as metal azens temptaciouns, & precious as perre in to þe hi3 degre of charite . . .

And 3it, lord swete Ihesu, þi bodi is lijk a nett: for as a nett is ful of holis, so is þi bodi ful of woundis. Here, swete lord Ihesu, I biseche þee, catche me in þe nett of þi scourginge, þat al myn herte & loue be to þee; & drawe me euere to þee & wip þee as a net drawip fisch, til I come to þe bank of deep: þat neuere temptacioun, tribulacioun ne prosperite pulle me fro þee; and as a net drawip fisch to londe, so, swete Ihesu, brynge me to þi blis. Catche me, lord, in

³³⁵ Ibid., p. 101.

þe net of holi chirche; & kepe me, lord, þat I neuere breke
out of þe bondis of charite . . .

3it, swete Ihesu, þi bodi is lijk a dufhous: for as a dufhous
is ful of dowue holis, so is þi bodi ful of woundis: & as a
dowue pursued of an hauke, if sche mai a-reche to an hole of
hir hous, sche is sikir I-now³: so, swete Ihesu, in tempta-
cioun þi woundis ben best refute. Now, swete Ihesu, I bi-
seche þee in ech temptacioun graunte me grace of sum hole of
þi woundis, & likinge to abide in mynde of þi passioun.

Also, swete Ihesu, þi bodi is lijk an hony-comb: for þat is
ech weies ful of cellis, & ech celle ful of hony, so þat it
may not be touchid wipouten 3eldinge of swetnes: so, swete
Ihesu, þi bodi is ful of cellis of deuocioun, þat it may not
be touchid of a clene soule wipoute swetnes & likinge . . .

More 3it, swete Ihesu, þi bodi is lijk a book writen wip reed
enke: so is þi bodi al writen wip rede woundis. Now, swete
Ihesu, graunte me grace often to rede upon þis book, & sum-
what to vndirstonde þe swetnes of þat writinge . . . graunte
me þat stodie in ech tide of þe day, & graunte me grace þat
I may haue upon þis book matyns, pryme houris, euesong & com-
plin, my meditacioun, my speche, & my daliaunce . . .

Swete Ihesu, 3it þi bodi is lijk to a mede ful of swete
flouris & holsum herbis: so is þi bodi ful of woundis, swete
saueringe to a deuout soule, & holsum as eerbis to ech sinful
man.³³⁶

Consistent with his instructive penchant, which was revealed ini-
tially in the English Psalter, Richard Rolle concisely explains
the appropriateness of his heaven, net, dove-cot, honeycomb, book,
and meadow similes for Christ's body. As guiding stars, places of
refuge, centers of sweetness, the alphabet of spiritual communica-
tion, sweet flowers, and healing herbs, the wound figures are no
less fitting nor important. The extent to which Richard Rolle's
life is Passion-oriented is best illustrated in the requests ap-

³³⁶ Ibid., pp. 96-97.

pended to the explication of the book simile; the Hampole mystic clearly states that Christ's blood sacrifice is the focal point of his entire existence--prayer, meditation, speech, and recreation.

Of Rolle's short prose pieces, these meditations are beyond question of the greatest consequence owing to the fact that such meditation is fundamental to the Hermit's mystical method. To fully appreciate the range of the Blood Motifs in the two forms of Meditation on the Passion is really impossible without an unabridged insertion of Meditation I and Meditation II, an insertion obviously precluded by practicality. Nevertheless, the quotations and citations that have been presented from these reflections should illustrate the degree of blood permeation in these meditations, permeation either by reference to a litany-like recitation of Passion events and instruments or by explanations of these items in the context of divine love.

English Lyrics

Although Miss Comper's study, The Life and Lyrics of Richard Rolle, claims that no less than three Northern and five Southern manuscripts must be examined to determine Rolle's authorship of lyrics,³³⁷ Hope Allen's later study narrows the consideration to the only two manuscripts which actually attribute English lyrics to the Hampole mystic: MS. Dd. V. 64 and the Longleat MS. 29.³³⁸ The latter text, apparently not known to Miss Comper, is a fifteenth century miscellaneous collection of Latin and English theology which includes all of Richard Rolle's English works with the exception of the English Psalter.³³⁹ Some of the lyrics in this miscellany are dedicated to Margaret Kirkeby.³⁴⁰

Without much explanation, Miss Allen contends, "The question of the authenticity of the English lyrics ascribed to the hermit of Hampole is one of the most complicated and interesting involved in the study of his canon."³⁴¹ To guard against unwarranted ascription of lyrics, Hope Allen initiates her study of this phase of Rolle's production by considering those lyrics whose authenticity may be taken for granted--the four lyrics appearing

³³⁷F. M. Comper, The Life and Lyrics of Richard Rolle, pp. 206-207.

³³⁸H. E. Allen, Works Ascribed, p. 294.

³³⁹Ibid., p. 34.

³⁴⁰Ibid., p. 294.

³⁴¹Ibid., p. 287.

in Rolle's English epistles. Two poems each are incorporated in the Ego Dormio and the Form of Living. The formlessness of these interspersed lyrics, Miss Allen believes, may almost be termed indicative of his authorship.³⁴²

Both lyrics of the Ego Dormio have already been discussed. The first, "My keyng pat water grette," has been inserted and analyzed as the Meditatio de passione Criste.³⁴³ The second lyric, "My sange es in syhtyng," was briefly mentioned as the Cantus Amoris.³⁴⁴

"Loued be pou keyng" occurs in Chapter VII of the Form of Living. Again, owing to its pertinence as a meditation, the text has been reproduced in the analysis of the epistle.³⁴⁵ This lyric, containing Rollean devotion to Jesus and His blood as well as a concluding reference to canor or mystical song, also appears in the Lay Folks Mass-Book, a work which Horstman ascribes to Rolle but Allen rejects "since no other signs appear of his authorship."³⁴⁶ The second lyric of the Form of Living is found in the eighth chapter's explication of the third and highest degree of love. Aside from calling attention to the mystic's longing for

³⁴²Ibid., 288.

³⁴³See pp. 149-151.

³⁴⁴See p. 152.

³⁴⁵See p. 171.

³⁴⁶H. E. Allen, Works Ascribed, p. 88.

death, "When will þow com to comforth me" is of little importance to this dissertation.

On the basis of a verse analysis of these works and a knowledge of Rolle's prose subject matter, criteria can be established by which to evaluate the other lyrics credited to the Hermit. Rolle's characteristic themes are so apparent at this stage of the dissertation that no need exists to review them. Metrically, Rolle's lyrics evidence frequent alliteration, quatrains based on a single rhyme, the greatest ornamentation of rhyme and rhythm possible, and some irregular verse structure including the aforementioned formlessness. Applying these characteristics as a standard, Miss Allen judges Rolle to be the author of the last eight lyrics of the fourteen included in the MS. Cambr. Dd. V. 64;³⁴⁷ some of the eight are also found in the Longleat MS. 29. One of these lyrics is the prose lyric Gastly Gladnes, which has been briefly alluded to in the previous section devoted to the short prose pieces.³⁴⁸

"All synnes sal þou hate thorow castyng of skylle"³⁴⁹ is the only lyric of the seven remaining poems authenticated by Miss Allen that does not evidence some motif of blood import. Primarily, this verse exhortation concerns the proximity of Doomsday and

³⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 297-301.

³⁴⁸ See pp. 175-176.

³⁴⁹ R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I. 74.

the assignment of celestial seats on the basis of the degrees of love.

In the lyric "Mercy es maste in my mynde,"³⁵⁰ Rolle equates mercy to love, a point strangely missed by Miss Allen, who finds Rolle merely extolling mercy instead of love.³⁵¹ Substantiation of this equation is seen in mercy's becoming the agent of man's ransom; in Rolle's works, love is the conventional vehicle of man's redemption:

Mercy es syght of al my hele,
perfore I haue it mast in thoght;
Mercy likes me sa wele,
for thorough mercy was I boght.
Ine wate what I may do or say til mercy,
pat es ay sa gode;
Pou graunte mercy pat mercy may
pat es my solace & my fode.³⁵²

Mercy as the poet's health or salvation, the predominance of mercy in his mind, and mercy as solace and food all support the mercy-love equation. Finally, based on what Miss Comper sees as a greater mastery of rhyme,³⁵³ the lyric might be placed toward the end of Rolle's career.

The next lyric to appear in the MS. Cambr. Dd. V. 64 is "Ihesu god son, lord of mageste,"³⁵⁴ a poem containing several of

³⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 74-75.

³⁵¹H. E. Allen, Works Ascribed, p. 297.

³⁵²R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 74.

³⁵³F. M. Comper, The Life and Lyrics of Richard Rolle, p. 296.

³⁵⁴R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 75-76.

the Blood Motifs. First, there are two definite references to Christ's purchase of mankind: "Ihesu þe mayden son, þat wyth þi blode me boght,"³⁵⁵ and "On hym þat þe boght, hafe al þi thoght, & lede þe in his lare."³⁵⁶ Early in the lyric, Rolle asks for the mystical wound: "Thyri my sawule wyth þi spere, þat mykel luf in men hase wrought."³⁵⁷ The "spere" might well be the lance of the Passion. A later reference to the mystical wound is viewed by Miss Comper as revealing the Charter motif: "Wounde my hert within, & welde it at þi wille."³⁵⁸ Probably, Miss Comper is interpreting "welde it at þi wille" as the Reddendo requirement of the "wille" or charter. The Eucharist theme is conceivable in the designation of Christ as "þe faire aungels fode."³⁵⁹ Lastly, the grim details of the Passion of "aungels brede" are present:

His bak was in betyng,
 & spylt hys blissed blode.
 Þe thorn corond þe keyng,
 þat nayled was on þe rode.
 Whyte was his naked breste,
 & rede his bloody syde,
 Wan was his faire face,
 his woundes depe & wyde;
 Þe iewþis wald not wande [hesitate]
 to pyne hym in þat tyde:
 Als streme dose of þe strande,

³⁵⁵Ibid., p. 75.

³⁵⁶Ibid., p. 76.

³⁵⁷Ibid., p. 75.

³⁵⁸Ibid.

³⁵⁹Ibid., p. 76.

his blode gan downe glyde.
 Blynded was his faire ene,
 his flesch bloody for-bette;
 His lufsum lyf was layde ful low,
 & saryful vmbesette.
 Dede & lyf began to stryf
 wheper myght maystre mare,
 When aungels brede was dampned
 to dede to safe oure sauls sare.³⁶⁰

Generally, this passage relates lyrics such as this one to the entire medieval tradition of pulpit declamation heavily documented with grisly specifications of Christ's blood sacrifice; specifically, this portion of the lyric is akin to the corresponding prose segments that conclude the two authenticated versions of Rolle's Meditation on the Passion.

The first sixty lines of "Luf es lyf pat lastes ay"³⁶¹ are, as Miss Allen states, "a close translation of scattered sentences from chapters 40-1 of the Incendium."³⁶² In fact, the entire poem of ninety-six lines is a verse paraphrase of the Incendium Amoris.³⁶³ Line six, "Lufe I lyken til a fyre pat sloken may na thyng,"³⁶⁴ demonstrates the proximity of themes. Similarity of Blood Motifs in the two works is graphically illustrated by the wine inebriation theme: "Lufe es a gastly wynne, pat makes men

³⁶⁰Ibid.

³⁶¹Ibid., pp. 76-78.

³⁶²H. E. Allen, Works Ascribed, p. 299.

³⁶³See F. M. Comper's The Life and Lyrics of Richard Rolle pp. 248-257, for a complete analysis of corresponding passages and concepts.

³⁶⁴R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 76.

bygge & balde."³⁶⁵ The definitive phraseology is identical with that of the Incendium Amoris.³⁶⁶ Again, the ransom motif is the focal point of Christ's love. The poet exhorts man to give his Savior his "sawle pat it boght, pat he be dwell with-in."³⁶⁷ Moreover, the price of the purchase elicited in this lyric is Christ's bloody hands and feet: "Ful dere me thynk he hase me boght, with blodi hende & fete."³⁶⁸ Before the terminating proclamation of divine love, the Hermit appeals to man's compassion via the image of a tormented Christ:

Na wonder gyf I syghand be
 & sithen in sorow be sette:
 Ihesu was nayled apon þe tre,
 & al bloody for-bette;
 To thynk on hym es grete pyte,
 how tenderly he grette--
 Pis hase he sufferde, man, for þe,
 if þat þou syn wyll lette.³⁶⁹

The last quatrain of "Luf es lyf þat lastes ay" is a suitable transition to the next lyric. Every line of the concluding quatrain begins with "Ihesu" just as every line of the introductory quatrain of "Heyle Ihesu, my creatowre"³⁷⁰ starts with "Heyle Ihesu." After the first quatrain, each initial line of subsequent

³⁶⁵Ibid., p. 77.

³⁶⁶See p. 144.

³⁶⁷R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 77.

³⁶⁸Ibid., p. 78.

³⁶⁹Ibid.

³⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 78-79.

quatrains begins with either "Heyle Ihesu" or simply "Ihesu." Following the pattern of "Luf es lyf pat lastes ay," this lyrical devotion to Jesus' name develops eight lines on the ransom motif prior to its final expounding of divine love:

Ihesu to lufe ay be me lefe,
pat es my gastly gode.
Allas, my god es als a thefe
nayled til þe rode!
Hys tender vayns begyns to brest,
al rennes of blode,
Handes & fete with nayles er fest:
pat chawnges mi mode.
Ihesu mi keyng es me ful dere,
pat with his blode me boght,
Of spittingyng spred es al pat clere,
to dede with betyng broght.
For me he tholed pies payns sere,
þe whilk wreche he wroght:
For-þi þai sitt my hert ful nere,
pat I forgete þam nocht.³⁷¹

The twelfth lyric of the MS. Cambr. Dd. V. 64 is "All van-
itese forsake,"³⁷² another of the exhortations to ecstatic love
of Jesus. While lacking the realistic Passion details of the last
two lyrics, this poem does contain a typically Rollean request for
the mystical wound, a request coupled with a metonymic allusion to
Christ's blood sacrifice:

Wyth lufe wounde me within,
and til þi lyght me lede.
Pou make me clene of synne,
pat I þe ded nocht drede.
Als þou to save mankyn
sufferd þi sydes blede,
Gyf me wytt to wyn

³⁷¹Ibid., p. 79.

³⁷²Ibid., pp. 79-81.

þe syght of þe to mede.³⁷³

The aptness of the metonymy is apparent when the significance of the side wound is remembered. Mystically, this quatrain discloses the Hermit's desire for the unitive "syght." Later in the lyric, the permanent unitive experience of the beatific vision is fused with the mystic's concepts of imminent death and assigned celestial seats:

Ful sone he wil þe call,--
þi setell es made for þe,--
And haue þe in his hall,
euer his face to se.³⁷⁴

The last lyric, "Thy ioy be ilk a dele to serue þi god to pay,"³⁷⁵ bears the scribe's attribution: "Item secundum eundem Ricardum."³⁷⁶ Just prior to this inscription, another appears in the manuscript appended to the thirteenth lyric, the Gastly Gladnes: "Expliciunt cantica diuini amoris secundum Ricardum Hampole."³⁷⁷ Again, the verse reveals the definite ecstatic nature of the previous lyrics. Again, as is the case with most of Rolle's verse, the ransom motif is evident; in this instance, it is disclosed in an exhortation to meditate on the wounds:

³⁷³ Ibid., p. 80.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 81-82.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 81.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

In Cryst pou cast pi thoght,
pou hate all wreth and pryde,
And thynk how he þe boght
with woundes depe and wyde.³⁷⁸

In recommending another meditation--one on Christ's meekness--Rolle strives to motivate man with the image of Christ's "bloody flesh . . . prikked wit thorne."³⁷⁹ Finally, there are two possible Eucharist references, both to Christ's love feeding of mankind: "Pow dwel ay with pi kyng, & in hys lufe be fede,"³⁸⁰ and the lyric's final line, "Pi sawle þan has he fedde in swete lufe brennand."³⁸¹

The English lyrics provide an appropriate culmination to this examination of Rolle's fully authenticated works. As components of the English epistles, a verse paraphrase of a Latin mystical treatise, or songs of love longing, the lyrics complete the spectrum of Rolle's dependence on the tenets of blood theology and the Blood Motifs, a spectrum ranging from the Scriptural magnitude of the English Psalter to the terseness of the most Lilliputian of the lyrics. Regardless of length or genre, the mystical message of divine love is almost without exception inscribed in the blood of Christ's sacrifice by instruments of the Passion manipulated in the devout hands of Richard Rolle of Hampole.

³⁷⁸Ibid.

³⁷⁹Ibid., p. 82.

³⁸⁰Ibid.

³⁸¹Ibid.

Probable Works

There exists, of course, a strong temptation at this point in the dissertation to pyramid questionable works upon fully authenticated writings in order to substantiate further Richard Rolle's employment of the Blood Motifs. Almost any additional prose work selected at random from Carl Horstman's canon of Rolle's works would further the case for the Hermit's unrelenting dependence upon the tenets of blood theology. Furthermore, a number of additional lyrics rich in the Blood Motifs and ascribed to Rolle by Horstman are also printed by Carleton Brown, who at least assigns them to the "School of Richard Rolle."³⁸² Generally, the list of fourteenth century works periodically thought to be Rolle's is practically inexhaustible. However, since the purpose of this dissertation does not involve becoming actively concerned with problems of mystical authorship, the Rolle chapter will conclude with only a brief treatment of the works enumerated by Geraldine Hodgson as the four writings "which Rolle's lovers will decline to give up save on incontrovertible evidence that he cannot have written them."³⁸³ These works are Our Daily Work,³⁸⁴ Meditation on the Passion and of Three Arrows on Doomsday, On Grace, and On

³⁸²C. Brown, pp. 93-96.

³⁸³G. Hodgson (ed.), Rolle and "Our Daily Work", p. 102.

³⁸⁴This is the title of the shorter version which appears in the Thornton MS. The title found in the Arund. MS. 507 is On Daily Work.

Prayer.

Miss Hope Allen dismisses these works, which appear together in the Holy Book Gratia Dei,³⁸⁵ without any valid reason that modern scholarship would support. She merely ascertains that the Meditation on the Passion and of Three Arrows on Doomsday "is more colourless than the Meditations which bear his name"³⁸⁶ and objects to one passage in Our Daily Work which she admits is lacking in the Northern Thornton MS.³⁸⁷ To confuse the issue, Miss Allen concedes that On Grace, On Prayer, and Our Daily Work suggest Rolle and that there is nothing in the Meditation "that makes his authorship impossible."³⁸⁸ Consequently, this nebulous rejection countered by the authority of Miss G. Hodgson's study "The Authorship"³⁸⁹ and C. Horstman's conviction that the works "can safely be ascribed to Richard Rolle"³⁹⁰ seems sufficient to warrant acceptance of the four writings as probable works of the Hampole mystic. In addition, there is a rather curious comment in Miss Allen's own anthology, English Writings of Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole. To support her contention that Rolle seems to have

³⁸⁵H. Allen, Works Ascribed, p. 286.

³⁸⁶Ibid.

³⁸⁷Ibid., p. 287.

³⁸⁸Ibid.

³⁸⁹G. Hodgson (ed.), Rolle and "Our Daily Work", pp. 101-117.

³⁹⁰R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I. 104.

been "stiffer in his insistance on early rising than on any other form of physical asceticism,"³⁹¹ Miss Allen alludes to a cock reference in Our Daily Work. Possibly at this later date, 1931, the Rolle scholar had partially recanted and was willing to accept at least this work.

³⁹¹R. Rolle, English Writings of Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole, p. 151.

Our Daily Work

Devoted to those active in mundane pursuits, Our Daily Work prescribes a theology of labor predicated on a constant awareness of Christ's blood sacrifice. Early in the treatise, the author elicits four reasons for man's toil; the first two involve the Passion. Primarily, God provides man with the foremost example of work by the illustration of the Passion:

Firste, ensample god sett hym-selfe pat we suld lufe to wyrke als þe apostille by hyme sayse . . . "[He], this es goddes sone of heuene, with trauelle hase wastede hym-selfe, he tuke þe body of thralles, made to lyknes of mane, in clethyng fondene as mane; he mekid hym-selfe [&] boxome by-come to þe dede, þare to dy on þe croyse; for-thi god hase heghede hyme & gyffene hym name pat es abowne al pat name beres, so pat in þe name of Ihesu all spyrites sall knele of helle, of heuene & erthe, & all sall witnesse bere patoure lorde Ihesu Cryste dwelles with his fadir in Ioye."³⁹²

The second reason for mankind's worldly employment is to pay the debt of the Passion:

The toper skylle es why we sulde wyrke now in þis tyme of grace: for we are goddes boghte thralles, with þe pryce of his dere-worthy blode, noghte to sytt ydill, bot for to wyrke in his vyne-þarde, and 3itt he hyghtess vs mede if we do with gud wyll pat we thurgh dett awe for to do.³⁹³

Charter and ransom motifs are obviously the source of this motive for work. Also, this secondary reason is adapted by the author to explain the nature of prayer: "For prayere es a sacrafyce pat mekill payes gode if it [be] made one þe maner pat it awe to be;

³⁹²R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 314-315.

³⁹³Ibid., p. 315.

for-thi god askes it of vs als dette þat we it to hym
paye³⁹⁴

Our Daily Work continues with various prayers, meditations, and suggestions for man's conscious hours. Upon awaking, man is to

prai for þe saulis þat are in pyne of purgatorie
After; þou grete oure leuedi with Salve regina; on þi knees.
Wend þen to þe kirk; & bid þi vayn thoghtis & bisynes of þe
werld; hald þaim þer oute . . . fal doune bifore þe croice,
& anoure him þat for þe was done on þe croice And haf
þen, or þou vp rise, in mynde how hate luf him brente: þat
deied for þe on þe crosse. After: bigyn þi matyns
After cast þin lee on sum-what: & hald it þer-on til þou
makis þi praiers: for þis helpis mikil til stabelyng of þe
hert; & paynt þare þi lord: as he was on þe croice; think on
his fete & handes þat ware nailid to þe tree, & on þe wide
wounde in his side, thorough þe whilk: wai is made to þe til
wyn til his herte; thank þi lorde þerof: & luf him þerfore;
for þare þai fynde tresour of lufe: þat þider mai wyn. Think
þou sees his woundes stremand of blode: & falland doune on
þe erth, & fal þou doune & lik vp þat blode sweteli with
teres kissand þe erth; with mynde of þat riche tresour þat
for þi synnes was sched: & sai þus with hert: "Whi liggis þis
blode here as lost & I perisch for thirst? Whi drink I noght
of þis riche pyment þat mi lorde to me birlis, & cole mi
tonge³⁹⁵

The vividness of this last meditation with its primitive blood consumption echo attests to the degree to which the author of Our Daily Work is attuned to man's blood heritage.

At meal time, man is to

make bifore þe a crosse on þe borde with .v. cromes, to sterve
þe to think on him: þat for þe deied on crosse; & think,

³⁹⁴Ibid., p. 320. These first three citations from Our Daily Work have been from the shorter but more detailed Thornton MS. With the exception of the Cain reference, subsequent quotations are from the longer Arund. MS. 507 text.

³⁹⁵Ibid., p. 146.

"here liggis his heued: pat corond was with thornes; pare his handes pare his fete: pat nailid was fulfast; pare was his swete side pat oppenid was with þe spere, fra whilk come bathe blode and water to hele mi wari woundes".³⁹⁶

This practice and meditation stress the medieval period's devotion to the five wounds of Christ by the unique fashion of converting common dinner table items--in this case bread crumbs--into symbols of those wounds. Theologically, the implication of the blood and water as spiritual healing agents is quite clear in this passage.

At rest, the author recommends that his reader:

biteche þe & al þi frendes in til goddes handes þat for vs ware nailid to þe tree, & biseke him for his merci: he 3eme þe fra all perils of bodi & saule, & arme þe with þe takenyng of þe crosse: for whare þe fend sees þis merke: sone he flees.³⁹⁷

Later in Our Daily Work, a meditation on the Passion is suggested as a remedy for lustful temptations in bed:

If fandying of licheri stere þe in bed: think þat þi gode lord for þe hyngis on rode; think on his .v. wondes þat stremid downe of blode; think þat his bed: was þe hard knotti tree,³⁹⁸ & in stede of a cod: he had a croune of thornis. And sai þen with sighing sare: til cole þi lust: "Mi dere-worthi lord for me hinged on rode & I lig in þis soft bed & weltris me in syn: as a foule swyne þat loues bot filth". Rise þen tide: & halde with praiers & loue-sighings teris.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 151.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 152.

³⁹⁸ According to Roger Loomis, the concept of Christ's cross as a bed figures substantially in the evolution of the Grail legend. The Grail, p. 187.

³⁹⁹ R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 152.

The similarity of this advice to counsel found in Rolle's fully accepted writings is apparent; as a result, the case for the Hermit's authorship appears somewhat strengthened.

To complete his suggestions for daily Christian activity, the author of Our Daily Work advocates reliance upon the name of Jesus, the Redeemer of mankind: "Perfore when pou nedis to ga forthe: croice be with þe hali name of IHESU Mari son þat deied on þe rode, for þen art pou mare siker."⁴⁰⁰ Again the Rollean imprint is evident, this time in the obvious indication of the author's devotion to the holy name of Jesus in time of travel.

Throughout these aforementioned passages, the ransom figure is plainly discerned. Two additional references to the motif are observed in the treatise. One is to man as a thrall who, in an effort to avoid unjust judgment of others, should pray for himself "& all oper til Ihesu Crist Mari son þat for vs was nailid on rode, þat wha-so is bonden in dedli syn: he louse þaim"401 This admonition is the third "of .iii. poyntis be warre."⁴⁰² The other two involve a proper attitude toward devotions. The second example delineates the ransom as one of the spirit only, effected by God's blood: "Pofoure bodi be in þis world as a clote of erth: it nedis oure spirit þat is boght with þe dere-worthi blode of god

⁴⁰⁰Ibid., p. 155.

⁴⁰¹Ibid., p. 153.

⁴⁰²Ibid.

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With the rural environment so conducive to a mystic's existence, one would expect to discern an occasional allusion to such a locale. Therefore, the cock reference, seen by Miss Allen as indicative of Rolle's ascetical attitude, at first glance is not unusual. However, as any devotee of medievalism is aware, the cock is sometimes included in the series of Passion symbols, recalling the words of Christ to St. Peter: ". . . this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."⁴⁰⁴ In medieval lore, cocks surmounting church steeples are representative of faithful preachers, watchful and ever-turning to meet the rebellious with rebuke and refutation. The Venerable Bede observed that the cock is similar to the souls of the just, who await the dawn after the darkness of a worldly night.⁴⁰⁵ Evidence that an intellect as astute as Richard Rolle's would not be remiss in this knowledge is, this writer believes, apparent in the cock reference of Our Daily Work:

When pou has gederid hame pi hert with his wittis, & has fordone pas thinges pat might let pe to prai, & won til deuocion pat god to pe sendis thorough his dereworthi grace: quykli rise of pi bed at pe bel ryngynge. & if na bel be pare: cok be pi bel; if pare be noiper cok ne bel: goddis luf wakyn pe,

⁴⁰³ Ibid., p. 156.

⁴⁰⁴ Matthew 26, 34.

⁴⁰⁵ Leroy H. Appleton and Stephen Bridges, Symbolism in Liturgical Art (New York: Charles Scribner Co., 1959), p. 21.

for pat paes mast to god.⁴⁰⁶

The allusion to God's love recalls, within the frame of Rolle's canon, the blood sacrifice of Christ; for the Hermit repeatedly expresses this love in the context of the crucifixion. The cock appears to be the transitional device by which the literal bell of physical wakefulness is linked to a cognizance of divine love. Therefore, the cock can be viewed as a dual symbol for both the physical vigilance and moral fortitude found momentarily wanting in St. Peter that fateful night. Additionally, man's being won to devotion can be considered as an emergence from a worldly night. Symbolically, the cock reference seems to have greater significance than even Miss Allen is willing to attribute to it on the literal plane.

Finally, Our Daily Work contains two allusions to personages who figure rather prominently in Old Testament previews of Christ's blood sacrifice. Abraham's care in keeping his sacrifice undefiled is praised as exemplifying the correct treatment of thoughts improper to prayerful meditation:

Abraham when he made sacrificse to god: foulis lightid per-on
& wold haf filde it, & he chasid be foules awai, pat nane
durst it negh: to al þe tyme ware passid & þe sacrifice made.
Do we swa with þis fleand thoughtis: pat filis þe sacrifice
of oure praier. Þis sacrifice is ful queme to god: when it
comes of a clene & a louand hert.⁴⁰⁷

On the other hand, Cain's sacrifice, an example of "wykkednes of

⁴⁰⁶R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 144.

⁴⁰⁷Ibid., p. 143.

pe wyrkande,"⁴⁰⁸ is rejected by God because Cain's "handes are full of blode, that by-takyns syne."⁴⁰⁹

Since Our Daily Work is a treatise for the practical man rather than for the contemplative man and since mystical ascent in its simplest terms is equated to contemplation, opportunity for mystical theory is greatly suppressed. There are a number of references to mystical love sighs and love tears as well as an infrequent allusion to the mystical wound, but the work avoids the systematized mystical experience--especially the illuminative and unitive stages of ascent. Because it is possible for the active man to be partially purified by the various meditations prescribed by Our Daily Work, a case could be advanced for the treatise's delineation of the initial stage of ascent--the purgative way.

However, Our Daily Work primarily emphasizes the devotional aspect of active life. In fact, it is this quality of devotionism that leads Miss Geraldine Hodgson to observe the great importance of this work.⁴¹⁰ If, then, the writing is Rolle's, further evidence is provided for the Hermit's consistent and almost ubiquitous use of the Blood Motifs and blood theology dogma to give substance to his enlightenment of both the active and contemplative personalities.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 318.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 319.

⁴¹⁰ G. Hodgson (ed.), Rolle and "Our Daily Work," p. 104.

Meditation on the Passion and of Three Arrows of Doomsday⁴¹¹

Carl Horstman notes that the Meditation on the Passion and of Three Arrows of Doomsday--extant in two manuscripts, the MS. Rawl. and MS. Arund. 507--"is certainly a work of Rich. Rolle."⁴¹² In the MS. Arund. 507, the Meditation is in the midst of Rolle's works. According to Miss G. Hodgson, this work "is undoubtedly Rolle's, is one of his most characteristic writings, a great example of his rhythmical prose."⁴¹³ Whether it is or not will continue to plague the Rolle scholar. However, a reading of the work should convince anyone that the Meditation is not "colourless" as Miss Allen claims.

This reflection continues the tradition of vivid imagery that is so pronounced in the crucifixion descriptions found in Rolle's Meditation I and II:

Now open þi hert wyde to thynk on þase paynes þat Cryst for
þe thoolede, and thynke þaim in þi hert rygth als he þaim
thoolede, How þai his lufly face all with spyttyng fyeled,
How þai buffeted þe fayrest face of al mankynde. How þai
his swete hend with coordis band so fast, þat of all þe fyn-
gers þe blod oute brast. How þai bette hym with knotty
skourges, þat neuer did amisse with worde ne with deid . . .
Yhete thynke how he was streekeþe oþon þe croyce þat layd was
on þe erthe, and draghene out with rapis, to mak fote and
hande accoord to þe boores þat mad war In þe tree. So fer he
was draghen on þe croyce þat he on lay, þat all his baanes
men mygth telle, als haly wrytte tellis. And to þe tree he

⁴¹¹A work by the same title, appearing in Southern manuscripts, has been ascribed to Wyclif.

⁴¹²R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 112.

⁴¹³R. Rolle, Some Minor Works of Richard Rolle, p. 161n.

on lay, þai fest hym with Irene nayles. Thynk after how his body was lift vp with þe croyce and smyten in þe erth, als men duse with a staake of tree to make it fast in þe erth to stande; with þat swete body þat hanged was þare-on. At þis smytyng in to þe erthe all his vaynes brast, þat of all his lyms þe blod out stremede . . . Thynke on þat scharpe coroun of thorne þai [had] corouned hym with, þat made his lufly face streeme all on blod. And of þat bitter aysel menged with galle, þai gaf hym to drynke whene he pleyned hym of threst, als he þat mykel had blede.⁴¹⁴

The Charter motif is apparent in the stretching of the body on the cross. The detail, "fyngers þe blod oute brast," is quite similar to Chaucer's line, "his blood brast,"⁴¹⁵ which occurs logically enough in the Parson's tale.

The two manuscripts in which this Meditation appears have some content variances. The MS. Arund. 507 contains a detail consistent with the general optimistic tone of Rolle's mysticism, a detail, however, absent in the MS. Rawl. In the harrowing of hell, Christ "bande Sathan so þat he might neuer harme ne fande þe folke after as bifore."⁴¹⁶ This reversal of fortune recalls the theological consequence of Satan's abuse of power.

The second disparity involves the conclusions of the two texts. The MS. Rawl. ends with the reward of the ransom theme:

Bot goddis childir, þat here haf done his wille, with aun-
gells sal be lede tile heeuene, In Ioy and blysse to dwelle
eeuer withoutene ende. To þe whilk Ioy he btynge vs þat

⁴¹⁴R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 112-113. Unless specified the MS. Rawl. is used since it contains more of Rolle's characteristic rhyme.

⁴¹⁵F. Robinson edition, p. 279.

⁴¹⁶R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 116.

bogth vs. Amen. Amen. Amen.⁴¹⁷

On the other hand, the MS. Arund. 507 terminates with a positive appeal to man's compassion via Christ's numerous wounds:

Pus mani wounes suffird god for man kynde: ffyue thousand & foure hundreth & sexti & fiftene. And if pou sai ilk dai of be 3ere fiftene: pou sal sai als many pater nostres in be hale 3ere.⁴¹⁸

This conceit of numbering the wounds of Christ has been elicited as one of the Charter's characteristics.

The testimony of the wounds occurs earlier in the Meditation with the explication of the second arrow revelation: "Pan sal be domes-man schew his woundes til al man folke, pat pai may southely se what he vngilty for paire synnes tholed"419

Addressing humanity on Doomsday, Christ calls attention to Judas' betrayal of blood and to His own shedding of heart's blood; then, the Savior presents His wounds as mute witnesses of His love for mankind:

Now vndirstand pou vnkynd man, lift vp pi heeued & loke to me, bihald my syd, fote & hand, how I am dighth for pe. Pus am I dighth nogth for my gylt bot to heele pi wondis pat war so sare, and pi gilt on me I toke pat pou suld luf me pe mare.⁴²⁰

This passage bears a close resemblance to a lyric, "Vnkynde man,

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., p. 121.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., p. 118.

⁴²⁰ Ibid., p. 119.

gif kepe til me,"⁴²¹ appearing in MS. Cambr. Dd. V. 64. Dr. Horstman accepts it as Rolle's, but Miss Allen rejects it.

The innocent victim reference occurs twice in the quotations of the previous paragraph. Near the beginning of this Meditation, its author documents the theme with the authority of St. Bernard, one of Richard Rolle's favorite sources:

Thynke þan on þe wordes þat Bernarde to Ihesu sayd: "A, god, my loouerd, swete Ihesu, whate haf's þou don þat þou so blodye hanges on þe rode, þat neeuer dide amysse bot eeuer dide þe gude? Sackles þai do þe to þe dede, woo es me so: ffor I am gyilty of þi dede, for-[þi] þai suld me sla and late hym passe with-uten harme, þat no cheesoun[occasion] es of dede. For þi, yhe wrytches þat wrange has done, takis me for hym and duse me to dede: for I am þe synfull þat ille haf's wrogth, thurgth þat I haf folwed þe fendes rede; ffor-þi lat þis innocent passe þat neeuer man couth say ille by, bot til all has done þe gude, for-þi I pray 3ow I may for hym dye".⁴²²

If any objection is raised to Rolle's authorship on the basis of this meditation's incorporation of Blood Motifs not discerned in the fully authenticated reflections, note must be taken of the variances existing in Meditation I and II. Actually, there is nothing in the Meditation on the Passion and of Three Arrows of Doomsday to preclude the Hermit's authorship. To the contrary, this Meditation follows the pattern established by the first two: it shares some of the Blood Motifs and details of blood theology with Meditation I and II; and, in a consistent manner, it provides fresh ones as well. Finally, in the mystical system of the Hampole hermit, this third Meditation would function, as do the other two,

⁴²¹Ibid., p. 71.

⁴²²Ibid., p. 114.

in the capacity of an implementing factor of heavenly ascent.

On Prayer and On Grace

Little more than extended definitions, the remaining two treatises salvaged by Miss Geraldine Hodgson from those rejected by Miss Hope Allen appear capable of being better analyzed as a unit rather than as individual entities. In the MS. Thornton, On Prayer immediately precedes On Grace; this order seems to be more than simply a textual accident since prayer, "a gracyous gyfte of owre lorde godd,"⁴²³ permits man "to gett goddes grace."⁴²⁴

Basically, On Prayer is void of the Blood Motifs. True, in this treatise, certain qualities are attributed to prayer that have been ascribed to the Passion in Rolle's writings. For example,

Prayere puttes at pe fende and haldes hyme obake and makes hyme to faile and flee Prayere slakes and slaas and stiffly brynges vndir pe luste and pe lykyng of pe freele flesche Prayere wesches of vs all wykkid werkes and all sare synns; apone all wyse it dystruyes syne and puttes it vndire, and brynnes insundir pe bannde of all bale with a ferly fyre festened in lufe⁴²⁵

Aside from apparent equations, nowhere in the work is there a positive exemplification of any of the motifs or tenets of blood theology.

However, On Grace, appearing in both the MS. Thornton and

⁴²³ Ibid., p. 295.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., p. 299.

MS. Arund. 507, defines its subject in the legalistic language of the Charter genre. Grace is the "harls [earnest-money] of pat lastand Ioye pat is to come."⁴²⁶ Furthermore, God "settis grace by-fore as waye pat ledis to be lastande lyfe & Ioye, & als a wedde [pledge], if we it wele zeme, to make in it sekirnes of Endles Ioy to wedde"⁴²⁷ Grace, then, is a surety of God's good will and a guaranty of His bequest to mankind that was sealed in the charter of His Son's crucified body.

One other manifestation of man's blood heritage, observed in On Grace, is a facet of the ransom motif. Being bound to Satan by sin, man "may thurgh na myghte of hyme-selfe wyne owte of his bandes."⁴²⁸ Only God's grace permits an extrication from the doom of eternal damnation: "bot gyffe hym grace to ryse owte of his synne, he sall be lefte in syne till his lyfes end; and efter he sall be loste bathe lyfe & saule, and dampned till endles pynne."⁴²⁹

As presented in this work, grace is clearly an abstract equation for the more concrete and vivid blood of Christ. For it is the blood of the Savior that is the theological and perpetual source of God's grace, just as it is His blood that the Father

⁴²⁶Ibid., p. 310. The Northern MS. Thornton text is used in this analysis.

⁴²⁷Ibid.

⁴²⁸Ibid., p. 307.

⁴²⁹Ibid.

gives in the Charter as a pledge of man's supernatural heritage. Fused with its companion piece, On Grace continues the blood heritage strain that has been discerned running through Our Daily Work and the Meditation on the Passion and of Three Arrows of Doomsday. Supplementing and complementing Rolle's fully authenticated works, these additional writings fit naturally into the mosaic of the Hermit's canon. And even if later scholarship should definitely ascribe them to some other writer, these four works will remain significant within the perspective of this dissertation in that they illustrate conformance to the Christocentric pattern of one segment of medieval religious literature, a pattern steeped in the tradition of man's blood heritage.

CHAPTER III

CLOUD OF UNKNOWING

"After nearly six centuries the authorship of The Cloud of Unknowing is still an outstanding problem."¹ So begins one of the more recent considerations of the vexing problem of who wrote the Cloud of Unknowing. As its authoress, Miss Phyllis Hodgson, points out, "the problem of origin has been repeatedly discussed since 1924 when Dom Noetinger argued against and Dom McCann in favour of the single authorship of the Cloud and the Scale."² Following these initial articles, Walter Hilton has figured most prominently in the controversy of authorship.

In addition to some minor considerations such as the one of the author's priesthood, Dom Noetinger's argument centers around three fundamental points. First, in the Epistle of Privy Counsel--a work attributed to the author of the Cloud--reference is made to some of the writer's other compositions: the Epistle of Prayer, the Cloud, and Denis Hid. No allusion occurs to any work which has been ascribed to Walter Hilton. Dom Noetinger discounts the possibility that all of the works credited to Hilton could have been written subsequent to the Epistle of Privy Counsel since this

¹Phyllis Hodgson, "Walter Hilton and 'The Cloud of Unknowing': A Problem of Authorship Reconsidered," Modern Language Review, L (October, 1955), p. 395.

²Ibid.

work is presumably by a man advanced in age as well as in wisdom. Secondly, Hilton's subjective involvement in the denunciation of heresy is absent in the Cloud. This absence suggests, according to Noetinger, that the Cloud comes between the work of Rolle and that of Hilton when the consideration of current heresy was gradually being transformed from an academic question to an acknowledgment of its serious reality. Finally, "the style of the two works is different, and the Scale shows a less philosophical mind than does the Cloud."³

Arguing in favor of Hilton's authorship, Dom Justin McCann cites several facts. The most significant appears to be the annotation of the fifteenth century MS. Douce 262 by either the scribe-editor James Greenhalgh of Sheen Charterhouse⁴ or William Tregoose, the scribe of the manuscript.⁵ This annotation consistently alludes to parallel passages in Hilton's Scale of Perfection and assumes the single authorship. As further evidence Dom McCann points to the similarities of scholarship and dialect.⁶ Speculating as to the addressing of the Cloud to a special friend and its stated restrictive audience, Dom McCann suggests that Hilton may

³Dom Noetinger, "Authorship of the Cloud of Unknowing," Blackfriars, IV (March, 1924), p. 1458.

⁴E. Colledge, p. 64.

⁵Dom Justin McCann (ed.), The Cloud of Unknowing (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1947), p. 25.

⁶The dialect of the Scale and the Cloud is Midland with some Northern characteristics.

have varied his teaching in these works--the Scale is intended for a wide audience--in order to describe and propagate a type of mysticism not suitable for all men.⁷

"No more able than her predecessors to solve the mystery,"⁸ Miss Dorothy Jones, nevertheless, entered the lists in 1929 with several supplementary points to support Walter Hilton's candidacy. Recalling Dom Noetinger's observation that the author of the Epistle of Privy Counsel did not mention works ascribed to Hilton, Miss Jones proposes that since the Epistle is addressed to an individual disciple, it might be argued that the author is listing only those works addressed to the same person.⁹ Next, she elicits source similarities of the Cloud and the Scale--the works of St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great, Richard of St. Victor, St. Bonaventura, and Dionysius the Areopagite--and cites parallel passages.¹⁰ Lastly, Miss Jones mentions the reference in the 1498 MS. Marseilles 729 to Hilton as a doctor of the University of Paris to answer one of Dom Noetinger's minor contentions that the crown description given in the Epistle of Discretion, another of the works ascribed to the Cloud author, is not applicable to the Eng-

⁷Dom Justin McCann, "The Cloud of Unknowing," Ampleforth Journal, XXIX (July, 1924), pp. 1457-1464.

⁸Walter Hilton, Minor Works of Walter Hilton, ed. Dorothy Jones (London: Broadwater Press Ltd., 1929), p. xlvii.

⁹Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁰Ibid., p. li.

lish crown of the fourteenth century. According to Noetinger, the passage is descriptive of the crown of France or Scotland; consequently, the Cloud author appears to have lived in one of these countries. Noetinger reasons a Scotland residence is probable since it is not likely that a man living in France would have written in English.¹¹ The reference in the MS. Marseilles 729, Miss Jones believes, establishes a possible explanation for the crown description and advances Walter Hilton as the author of the Cloud of Unknowing.¹²

In her 1933 article, "Walter Hilton and the Authorship of the Cloud of Unknowing," Miss Helen L. Gardner, erecting on the studies of Noetinger, McCann, and Jones, provides additional support in the preclusion of Walter Hilton as the Cloud author. Miss Gardner emphasizes that the external evidence for Hilton's authorship is predicated on the notations of only one manuscript--MS. Douce 262--notations which demonstrate only that somewhere around 1500 an anonymous monk of the London Charterhouse thought Hilton to be the author of both works. Continuing, Miss Gardner shows that the value of this ascription is at best questionable because the London Charterhouse at the beginning of the sixteenth century was the source of several erroneous traditions regarding Hilton.¹³

¹¹Dom Noetinger, p. 1457.

¹²W. Hilton, Minor Works of Walter Hilton, p. lviii.

¹³Helen L. Gardner, "Walter Hilton and the Authorship of the Cloud of Unknowing," Review of English Studies, IX (April, 1933), p. 133.

Moreover, Miss Gardner calls attention to the fact that in no extant manuscript are the works of Walter Hilton juxtaposed with the Cloud.¹⁴ In answer to the argument that the background scholarship of the Scale and the Cloud is similar, Miss Gardner, after analyzing several so-called parallel passages, arrives at the conclusion that Hilton is merely utilizing scholasticism as a framework for his own teaching, whereas the author of the Cloud is pursuing the scholastic system for its own sake.¹⁵ Finally, in reply to Dom McCann's suggestion that since the Cloud was written for a special disciple Hilton may have adapted the work to his friend, Helen Gardner argues that such a supposition is improbable. An examination of the known works of Hilton demonstrates that they are not confined to any one type of reader and that in none of the ascribed works does Hilton attempt any adjustment to his reading audience.¹⁶

Based on a conviction that Miss Gardner's 1947 Medium Aevum review of the Cloud indicates that she "has partly recanted,"¹⁷ Phyllis Hodgson initiates her reexamination of the problem of authorship. After a somewhat repetitious examination of

¹⁴Ibid., p. 135.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 136.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 143.

¹⁷Phyllis Hodgson, p. 395.

sources, further comparisons of additional "parallel" sections, and some analysis of sentence structure and word patterns, Miss Hodgson concludes only:

Homogeneity has already been claimed for the treatises in the Cloud group; it still remains, however, to analyse and describe an obvious but a different homogeneity among the works attributed to Walter Hilton. Once the two groups have been thus established, the difficulty of fitting both groups into the canon of a single writer's works might well prove insuperable. It is always to be hoped that some reliable evidence will be discovered to point convincingly to the identity of the author of the Cloud. Meanwhile it is far easier to demonstrate fundamental differences between him and Walter Hilton, than it is to prove single authorship.¹⁸

And so, after some forty years of academic controversy, the question of the authorship of the Cloud of Unknowing remains a challenge to a few dedicated students of fourteenth century English mysticism.

Actually, while Walter Hilton is the mystic most frequently suggested as the creator of the Cloud--even by those who seriously doubt his authorship--he is not the only one to whom the honor has periodically been extended. Dom McCann recalls that the Cloud had been credited "with plain error, to the sixteenth-century Carthusians, Blessed William Exmew and Maurice Chauncey."¹⁹ Also,

The Rev. D. M. M'Intyre (Expositor, October, 1907) argued for the authorship of a certain Lewis, monk of Fountains; but his argument is no more than a weak conjecture based on the men-

¹⁸Ibid., p. 406.

¹⁹Dom J. McCann (ed.), The Cloud of Unknowing, p. vi.

tion of this "Maister Lewis de Fontibus" in Lambeth MS. 472 as the author of a Latin treatise on perfection which was "turned into English by Maister Walter Hilton"; and the conjecture is supported by a serious error. The writer misread the date (1436), attached to his version of Dionysius by the Camaldolese Ambrosius Traversari, as 1346, and interpreted the place indication "in monasterio Fontis boni" as referring to Fountains, thus obtaining a fourteenth-century translator of Dionysius at the same monastery as "Master Lewis."²⁰

The possibility that the Cloud author was a Carthusian is generally discounted today. Miss Evelyn Underhill claims that he could not have been because

the rule of that austere order, whose members live in hermit-like seclusion and scarcely meet except for the purpose of divine worship, can hardly have afforded him opportunity of observing and enduring all those tiresome tricks and absurd mannerisms of which he gives so amusing and realistic a description in the lighter passages of the Cloud.²¹

Supporting this contention, Miss Jones cites an unpublished work by a Parkminster monk which opines that since the Cloud appeared originally in the vernacular, it is highly unlikely that the author was a Carthusian. The Parkminster monk states that

Latin was then, and is still, the official language of the Carthusian Order; that up to the end of the fifteenth century there is no trace in the Order of any writing in the vernacular; that, with the exception of the Kalendar, books are forbidden to the lay-brothers by the Rule; and that a Carthusian would have rather translated a book from the vernacular into Latin than from Latin into the vernacular.²²

Both Dom Noetinger²³ and Dom McCann²⁴ go so far as to doubt that

²⁰Ibid., pp. vi-vii.

²¹Evelyn Underhill (ed.), The Cloud of Unknowing (London: J. M. Watkins, 1922), p. 8.

²²W. Hilton, Minor Works of Walter Hilton, p. xliii.

²³Dom Noetinger, p. 1461.

²⁴Dom McCann (ed.), The Cloud of Unknowing, p. vii.

he was even a religious.

From time to time, commentators on the medieval English mystics have conjectured as to the type of person the Cloud author must have been. These suppositions are quite diversified and in at least one case flagrantly in error. Father Augustine Baker, the author of a 1629 commentary on the Cloud entitled Secretum Sive Mysticum, knew the Cloud of Unknowing only in the sixteenth recension; consequently, he envisions the author as an early Renaissance writer whose "humility would not permit him to put his name to it."²⁵ If Hilton is not the author, Dom McCann speculates that he was

a University man--Cambridge is perhaps more likely than Oxford--who became incumbent of a parish in East Anglia, and there pursued the study and practice of the contemplative life . . . his writings reveal the background of the normal learned clerk of his day.²⁶

Eric Colledge sees him as

a quizzical and humorous observer of his fellowmen, vivacious to the point of eccentricity, deeply engrossed with the psychological processes involved in speculation and the attainment of mystical illumination: and this man is as different as well can be from Walter Hilton, as we know him in his works.²⁷

Possibly remembering Dom Noetinger's observation that the author of the Cloud was probably a priest--at the end of the Cloud he

²⁵ Ibid., p. 151.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. viii-ix.

²⁷ E. Colledge, p. 65.

gives the reader his blessing--Father Conrad Pepler envisions the author as a fourteenth century cleric who knows

nothing of the later analytical precisions of mystical writers who would divide and subdivide to the nth degree to discover exactly when the soul ceases to be active and when God takes over full control. He knows nothing of the discussion about acquired and infused contemplation which is largely due to too great a speculative precision.²⁸

Father Gerard Sitwell conceives him to have been "a successful and popular lecturer at a high academic level, one who was capable of handling abstruse and difficult matter without sinking into mere abstractions, and who never loses touch with the world of real men and women."²⁹ Lastly, Miss Underhill argues that from his writing he appears to have been "a cloistered monk devoted to the contemplative life."³⁰ Yes, in the frustrated words of Miss Mackinnon, "The upshot of the matter is that we really know practically nothing about the author of the Cloud of Unknowing."³¹

Although the Cloud is generally conceded to be a product of the first half of the fourteenth century, Dom McCann, on the basis of the following passage found in the fifty-sixth chapter of the Cloud, speculates as to a later date of composition:

Somme per ben pat, pof al bei be not disceyued wip pis errour

²⁸C. Pepler, O.P., The English Religious Heritage, pp. 233-234.

²⁹Gerard Sitwell, O.S.B., "The Cloud of Unknowing," English Spiritual Writers, ed. Charles Davis (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), p. 41.

³⁰E. Underhill (ed.), The Cloud of Unknowing, p. 7.

³¹E. Mackinnon, p. 213.

as it is sette here, 3it for pride & coriouste of kyndely witte & letterly kunnyng leuip be comoun doctrine & be counsel of Holy Chirche. & pees, with alle here fautours, lenyn ouer moche to peire owne knowyng. & for pei were neuer grounded in bis meek blynde felyng & vertuouus leuyng, perfore pei deserue to haue a fals felyng, feynid & wrouzt by be goostly enmye; in so moche pat at pe last pei brestyn up & blasphemyn alle be seyntes, sacramentes, statutes & ordenaunces of Holy Chirche. Fleschly leuyng men of pe woreld, be whiche pinkyn be statutes of Holy Chirche ouer harde to be amendid by, pei lenen to pees heretikes ful sone & ful lytly, & stalworply meynteine hem, & al is for hem pink pei lede hem a softer wey pen is ordeyned of Holy Chirche.³²

The Cloud modernizer notes that the Lollard movement was characterized by an alliance of its preachers with the anti-clerical nobility. However, Lollardry appears to belong, at least in its open manifestations, to the last quarter of the fourteenth and the first half of the fifteenth century. The supposition is, then, that either the Cloud was written later than is generally thought, or that the writer knew the movement before it achieved notoriety.³³ It is worthwhile noting that in McCann's earlier advocacy of Hilton as the Cloud author, he ventured an opinion regarding this precise point of a possible later composition date:

The generally accepted view puts the author of the Cloud between these two writers [Rolle and Hilton], as (in some sense) a disciple of Rolle and the master of Hilton. After Rolle he certainly is, but we may question whether there is any good reason for putting him definitely before Hilton. It is true that the latter's Scale contains "reminiscences" of the Cloud; but we dare the opinion that the relationship of the Cloud and Scale might easily be reversed, and the Cloud considered as the successor of the Scale. There is nothing,

³² Phyllis Hodgson (ed.), The Cloud of Unknowing (ETS; London: Oxford University Press, 1944), p. 104.

³³ Dom J. McCann (ed.), The Cloud of Unknowing, p. 72n.

that is, which definitely rules this supposition out of court.³⁴

Dom McCann's study of the Cloud manuscripts--in part the foundation for Miss Hodgson's Early English Text Society edition of the Cloud--reveals that they are "abundant and good."³⁵ However, with the exception of the MS. Cambr. II. vi. 39 which is a late fourteenth century text, they date from the fifteenth century and later. One manuscript, the MS. Bodleian 856, is a late fifteenth century Latin version probably made by Richard Methley, a Carthusian of Mount Grace in Yorkshire. This text and the MS. Ampleforth 42, which Father Baker traces to the exiled Carthusians³⁶ of the Low Countries,³⁷ were undoubtedly instrumental in perpetuating the tradition of Carthusian authorship.

The Cloud of Unknowing, addressed to a young man of twenty-four,³⁸ is a treatise of seventy-five comparatively brief chapters whose subject matter consists of a special work or spiritual exercise conducive to the cultivation of complete contemplation. Its source, according to chapter 70, is Dionysius the Areopagite:³⁹

³⁴Dom J. McCann, "The Cloud of Unknowing," pp. 193-194.

³⁵Dom J. McCann, (ed.), The Cloud of Unknowing, p. x.

³⁶On May 4, 1535, three Carthusian Priors were hanged at Tyburn. Some of their brethren fled abroad and founded an English Charterhouse at Bruges and Nieuport.

³⁷Dom J. McCann (ed.), The Cloud of Unknowing, p. 152.

³⁸P. Hodgson (ed.), The Cloud of Unknowing, p. 20.

³⁹E. Underhill indicates in the Cambridge Mediaeval History, VII, 806, her belief that the Cloud introduced Dionysian writings into English literature.

"& trewly, who-so wil loke Denis bookes, he schal fynde pat his wordes wilen cleerly aferme al pat I haue seyde or schal sey, fro þe biginnyng of þis tretis to þe ende."⁴⁰ The unique contemplative nature of the Cloud prompts its author to caution in his prologue that the work should not be read, written, or spoken "of any or to any, bot 3it it be of soche one or to soche one þat hap (bi þi supposing) in a trewe wille & by an hole entent, purposed him to be a parfite folower of Criste."⁴¹ This warning is repeated in the seventy-fourth chapter with greater definition:

& I prey þee for Godes loue þat þou late none see þis book, bot if it be soche one þat þee þink is liche to þe book . . . Fleschly iangelers, glosers & blamers, roukers & rouners, & alle maner of pynchers, kept I neuer þat þei sawe þis book; for myn entent was neuer to write soche þing to hem. & þefore I wolde not þat þei herde it, neiþer þei ne none of þees corious lettrid ne lewid men, 3e! alþof þei be ful good men in actyue leuyng; for it acordeþ not to hem.⁴²

Mystically, the Cloud of Unknowing stands in sharp antithesis to the works of Richard Rolle. Miss Mackinnon observes, "When one recalls that Rolle and the author of the Cloud of Unknowing lived in the same century and presumably were sharers in the same literary inheritance, the difference in their writing is amazing."⁴³ In explanation of this disparity, Eric Colledge suggests that the Cloud author "found Rolle immature and his influence

⁴⁰P. Hodgson (ed.), The Cloud of Unknowing, p. 125.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 1-2.

⁴²Ibid., p. 130.

⁴³E. Mackinnon, p. 216.

in some ways harmful."⁴⁴ This observation is especially cogent in regard to one of the salient features of the Hermit's mystical system--the physical phenomena of heat generated by the fire of love. Warning against the sensation of unnatural heat in the breast generated by an unwise straining in the pursuit of contemplation, the mystery author of the Cloud writes:

& 3it, paraenture, þei wene it be þe fiir of loue, getyn & kyndelid by þe grace & þe goodnes of þe Holy Goost. Treuly of þis disceite, & of þe braunches þer-of, spryngyn many mescheues: moche ypocrisie, moche heresye, & moche errour. For as fast after soche a fals felyng comeþ a fals knowyng in þe feendes scole, riȝt as after a trewe felyng comeþ a trewe knowyng in Gods scole. For I telle þee trewly þat þe deuill hap his contemplatyues, as God hap his.⁴⁵

A second point of contrast does not involve any "harmful" feature of Rolle's mysticism; nevertheless, it illustrates a fundamental variance in the two systems. The Hermit's mysticism is Christocentric. The Cloud of Unknowing and Denis Hid Divinity, an English translation of Dionysius the Areopagite presumably by the Cloud author, are the two English pieces that Dr. J. E. Collins considers excellent illustrations of "the sole use of the Theocentric type of contemplation, i.e., without detailed meditation upon Christ."⁴⁶ This quality of the Cloud is exemplified in an early discussion of the core of the treatise's mystical order.

⁴⁴E. Colledge, p. 60.

⁴⁵P. Hodgson (ed.), The Cloud of Unknowing, p. 86.

⁴⁶J. B. Collins, p. 55.

Fundamental to the work is the distinction between the cloud of unknowing and the cloud of forgetting. The former masks God from man and is defined as a lack of knowledge:

as alle þat þing þat þou knowest not, or elles þat þou hast for etyn, it is derk to þee, for þou seest it not wip þi goostly ize. & for þis skile it is not clepid a cloude of þe eire, bot a cloude of vnknowyng, þat is bitwix þee & þi God.⁴⁷

The latter is the cloud that must be put between man and the world if man is to achieve any mystical progression. Since the Cloud's mystical theology requires that "alle schuld be hid vnder þe cloude of forþetyng"⁴⁸ even thought of God's kindness or worthiness the Blessed Virgin, the saints or angels in heaven or the joys of heaven--man must "þink apon þe nakid beyng of him [God], & loue him & preise him for him-self."⁴⁹ Later, the Cloud author speaks of a naked intent directed unto God for Himself. In explanation of "naked intent," he states:

A nakid entente I clepe it, for whi in þis werke a parfite prentis askip neiþer relesing of peyne, ne encresing of mede, ne (schortly to sey) nouzt bot himself; in-so-moche þat nouþer he rechip ne lokip after wheþer þat he be in peyne or in blisse, elles þat his wille be fulfyllid þat he louep. & þus it semip þat in þis werke God is parfiteþly loued for hymself, & þat abouen alle creatures. For in þis werke a parfite worcher may not suffre þe mynde of þe holiest creature þat euer God maad comoun wip hym.⁵⁰

⁴⁷P. Hodgson (ed.), The Cloud of Unknowing, p. 23.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 24.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 25.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 58-59.

This uncompromising, deliberate reduction of intellectual activity to almost a state of suspended mental animation in the contemplation of God is the essence of the Cloud's Theocentric ascent.

As a consequence of this intellectual inactivity, the Cloud of Unknowing develops a philosophy of meditation irreconcilably opposed to that of the Hampole mystic. Whereas Passion meditation is practically the quintessence of Rollean mysticism, such reflection is specifically to be eschewed by the spiritual apprentice for whom the Cloud was written. In the seventh chapter, the author cautions his reader to guard against any thought that intervenes between him and the darkness of the cloud of unknowing, even if the thoughts assume the status of holy inquiries:

For paraenture he wil bryng to þi minde diuerse ful feire & wonderful pointes of his kyndnes, & sey þat he is ful swete & ful louyng, ful gracious & ful mercyful. & 3if pou wilt here him, he coueiteþ no beter; for at þe last he wil þus jangle euer more & more til he bring þee lower to þe mynde of his Passion.⁵¹

Such reflection, the Cloud author indicates, is in itself good and necessary for the initial approach to contemplation:

3e, & so holy, þat what man or womman þat wenip to come to contemplacion wip-outyn many soche swete meditacions of þeire owne wrechidnes, þe Passion, þe kyndenes & þe grete goodnes & þe worþines of God comyng before, sekirly he schal erre & faile of his purpos.⁵²

Nevertheless, if the cloud of unknowing which exists between man and God is to be penetrated, the inherent distraction of such med-

⁵¹Ibid., p. 27.

⁵²Ibid.

itation must now be avoided:

& 3it, neuerpeles, it behouep a man or a womman, pat hap longe tyme ben usid in peese meditacions, algates leue hem, & put hem & holde hem fer down vnder pe cloude of forzetyng, 3if euer schal he peerse pe cloude of vnknowyng bitwix him & his God.⁵³

The explanation for this attitude is the subject of the eighth chapter. By permitting his disciple's "wel mouid questyon"⁵⁴ as to the piety of Passion meditation, the Cloud author acknowledges "pat it behouep algates be good in his kynde, for whi it is a beme of pe liches of God."⁵⁵ However, the use of such thought may be both good and evil:

Good, when it is openid bi grace for to see pi wrechidnes, pe Passion, pe kyndnes, & pe wonderful werkes of God in his creatures bodily & goostly; & pan it is no wonder pof it encrees pi deuocion so mochel as pou seist. Bot pen is pe vse iuel, when it is swollen wip pride & wip coriouste of moche clergie & letterly conning as in clerkes, & makep hem prees for to be holden not meek scolers & maystres of deuinite or of deuocion, bot proude scolers of pe deuel & maysters of vanite & of falsheed. & in oper men or wommen, what-so pei be, religious or seculers, pe vse & pe worching of bis kyndely witte is pan iuel, whan it is swollen wip proude & corious skyles of wordely pinges & fleschely conceites, in couetyng of wordly worships & hauyng of riches & veyne plesaunce & flateringes of oper.⁵⁶

Continuing his elucidation, the author answers the question why man should suppress or put meditation under the cloud of forgetting if its nature is always good and its use good whenever it in-

⁵³Ibid., pp. 27-28.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 29.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 30.

⁵⁶Ibid.

creases devotion. He explains that there are two types of life in the Church: the active and the contemplative. "Actyue is þe lower, & contemplatiue is þe hier. Actiue liif hap two degrees, a hier & a lower; & also contemplatiue liif hap two degrees, a lower & a hier."⁵⁷ In addition, there is a certain overlapping of the two modes of existence: the part that is the higher form of the active life is also the lower part of the contemplative life. Passion meditation, as well as other reflections, is proper, if not essential, to the realm of the higher part of active life and the lower segment of the contemplative; but it becomes a hindrance to man's approach of the higher level of contemplation. The eighth chapter concludes:

& for þis skile it is þat I bid þee put down soche a scharp sotil þou3t, & keuer him wip a picke cloude of forþetyng, þe he neuer so holy, ne hote he þee neuer so weel for to help þee in þi purpos. For whi loue may reche to God in þis liif, bot not knowing. & al þe whiles þat þe soule wonip in þis deedly body, euermore is þe scharpnes of cure vnderstanding in beholding of alle goostly þinges, bot most specialy of God, medelid wip sum maner of fantasie; for þe whiche cure werk schuld be vnclene, & bot if more wonder were, it schuld lede us into moche errour.⁵⁸

The negation of meditation and devotions at the summit of contemplation is repeated in various ways throughout the Cloud. In explicating the Biblical story of the two sisters Martha and Mary,⁵⁹ the Cloud author interprets Martha as representing the

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 31.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 33.

⁵⁹Luke X, 38-41.

active mode of life and Mary the contemplative. Their lives have three parts: the lower active, the higher active-lower contemplative, and the higher contemplative. "Pe secound partye of pees two lyues ligged in good goostly meditacions of a mans owne wrechidnes, pe Passion of Criste, & of pe loyes of heuen."⁶⁰ These meditations and the works of mercy and charity which the author indicates are proper to the lower level of the active life do not concern the higher contemplative plane. The Cloud author explains

Pe first partye & pe secoude, pof al pi ben bope good & holy zit pei eende wip his liif. For in pe toper liif, as now, schal be no nede to use pe werkes of mercy, ne to wepe for oure wrechidnes, ne for pe Passion of Criste.⁶¹

The use of Mary Magdalen in this section of the Cloud is given by J. B. Collins as an excellent illustration of the medieval mystics' custom of giving prominence to her conversion and tears whenever they "treated in detail the life of Christ, particularly the passion and resurrection."⁶² Furthermore, it should be noted that Mary Magdalen is frequently in the dramatis personae of the crucifixion mysteries of cycle drama.

In chapter 35, lesson, meditation, and orison are established as proper for the contemplative prentice. However, as in the explanation of the Martha and Mary episode, these spiritual

⁶⁰P. Hodgson (ed.), The Cloud of Unknowing, p. 53.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 54.

⁶²J. B. Collins, p. 150.

exercises are not suited to those who aspire beyond the initial stage to the level of perfect contemplation.⁶³

Elsewhere, the Cloud writer states that while devotion certainly is not an evil, "it letteþ more þen it profiteþ"⁶⁴ the true mystic. Also, weeping for the Passion results in "moche good, moche helpe, moche profite, & moche grace";⁶⁵ but it is nothing compared with the "blinde steryng of loue"⁶⁶ of the perfect contemplative.

A third distinction between the mysticism of Rolle and that of the Cloud of Unknowing is discerned in the latter's avowal of indiscretion in the pursuit of the higher form of contemplation. In all other activities--eating, sleeping, praying, speaking--the author of the Cloud urges discretion. "Bot in þis werk schalt þou holde no nesure; for I wolde þat þou schuldest neuer seese of þis werk þe whiles þou leuyst."⁶⁷ In contradistinction, the hallmark of Richard Rolle's mysticism is moderation in all facets of existence.

Another dissimilarity is seen in the degrees of Christian life expounded by each. Whereas Rolle writes repeatedly of three

⁶³P. Hodgson (ed.), The Cloud of Unknowing, p. 71.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 35.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 39.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 80.

grades of love, the Cloud author speaks of four degrees of Christian men's living: common, special, singular, and perfect. Unfortunately, the first chapter of the Cloud which introduces the levels is not too specific as to the limits of each level. About all that can be determined from the actual text is that the common level constitutes those living in the company of worldly friends, that the special degree is a more spiritual existence in the service of the special servants of God, that the singular form involves a more solitary life, and that the perfect stage is naturally the best and last state. The attaining of this perfect level is, of course, the subject of the Cloud.

Significantly, it is the love of God expressed in terms of His ransom of mankind with the price of Christ's precious blood that kindles man's desire and leads him to the special state.⁶⁸ Father Baker interprets this second level as "the form or degree of them who, forsaking the state of the world, do betake themselves to a religious state"⁶⁹

As already previewed by the blackness of the two clouds of forgetting and unknowing, the dominant motifs of the Cloud are those of darkness and lightness. For example, the unitive stage of mystical ascent is depicted as "a beme of goostly list, peer-syng pis cloude of vnknowing pat is bitwix pee & hym."⁷⁰ This

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 14.

⁶⁹Dom McCann (ed.), The Cloud of Unknowing, p. 182.

⁷⁰P. Hodgson (ed.), The Cloud of Unknowing, p. 62.

beam reveals "sum of his priuete, þe whiche man may not, ne kan not, speke."⁷¹ In his analysis of the Dionysian influence in the formation of Patristic mysticism, J. B. Collins cites the Cloud as continuing the popular mystical concept found in Dante of a divine existence "either in super-essential Light or in a luminous cloud-like darkness."⁷²

This emphasis on the "divine darkness"⁷³ of the Pseudo-Dionysius and the basic Theocentric orientation of the Cloud appreciably reduces the opportunity for the Blood Motifs, which appear to be alien to a mystical system that is not Christocentric. Nevertheless, there are some isolated instances of the motifs. Reference has been made to the ransom theme's influencing man to ascend to the special level of Christian life. In this early "meek steryng of loue"⁷⁴ to God, the Cloud author suggests that man define God in terms of the ransom: "& mene God þat maad þee, & bouzt þee, & þat graciousli hap clepid þee to þis werk: & res-seiue none oper þouzt of God."⁷⁵ Earlier in the seventh chapter, the same answer is proposed to the direct question "What is þat God?"⁷⁶ In the second chapter, an allusion is made to the Char-

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²J. B. Collins, p. 31.

⁷³The Divine Names, VII.3, II.

⁷⁴P. Hodgson (ed.), The Cloud of Unknowing, p. 28.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 26.

ter's heritage motif.⁷⁷ Several citations of the knit modification of the rope symbol are also discovered in the Cloud: man is knit to God by love⁷⁸ or in spirit;⁷⁹ or he is helped by the Cloud's teaching "to knit þe goostly knot of brennyng loue"⁸⁰ between himself and God. Finally, in regard to the Blood Motifs, the Cloud fuses instruction of the universality of the Passion's effects with the will concept of the Charter genre:

alle men weren lost in Adam, & alle men, þat wip werke wil witnes þeire wille of saluacion, þen sauid, & scholen be, by vertewe of þe Passion of only Criste oure Lorde did his body on þe cros . . . not for his freendes & his sib & his homely louers, bot generaly for alle man-kynde, wip-outer any special beholdyng more to one þen to anoper. For alle þat wylen leue sinne & axe mercy scholen be sauid þorow þe vertewe of his Passion.⁸¹

The pagination of these motifs indicates that with a single exception they occur relatively early in the Cloud. This fact coincides with the Cloud's mystical pattern. For the higher active-lower contemplative stage, meditation on the Passion is sanctioned; but a prohibition against such meditation exists for anyone seeking to ascend to the perfect level of life. This proximate ambivalence is mirrored in the instance of the Blood Motifs.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 15.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 21.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 32.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 88.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 66-71.

Rare though they may be, they are evident early in the Cloud; later the cloud of forgetting has literally descended leaving the reader to await God's gift--the infrequent and mementary piercing of the "divine darkness."

Another explanation for the relatively few Blood Motifs is discerned in the psychological character of the Cloud. In pre-Romantic fashion, the anonymous writer analyzes the principal powers of the soul--mind, reason, will--as well as its secondary powers--imagination and sensuality.⁸² The imagination is defined as "a miȝt þorow þe whiche we portray alle ymages of absent & present þinges. & þoþe it, & þe þing þat it worcheþ in, ben contened in þe mynde."⁸³ Prior to man's fall, the imagination was obedient to reason. Now various distracting "þouȝtes, fantasies & ymages"⁸⁴ originate as a result of the disobedience of the imagination, which is a consequence of original sin. Certainly, if the cloud of forgetting tolerates no legitimate meditation or devotion, it could hardly be compatible with any profusion of figures or symbols that through the curiosity of a fallen imagination might effect digressions into such considerations as their bases or their aptness.

However, the fundamental fact remains that there really is

⁸²Ibid., pp. 114-118.

⁸³Ibid., p. 117.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 118.

no firm foundation in a Theocentric mystical system for the images, symbols, figures, and themes of a Christocentric system. How does one express the inexpressible aside from the convenient Dionysian equations of obscuring brilliance or darkness? The Cloud author acknowledges in the sixth chapter that he does not know what God is: "But now pou askest me & seiest: 'How schal I pink on him-self, & what is hee?' & to þis I cannot answere þee bot þus: 'I wote neuer.'"⁸⁵ Intellectualism simply cannot delineate God for the Cloud author: "By loue may he be getyn & holden; bot bi þouzt neiper."⁸⁶ Therefore, the bases for prefigures, for symbolic representations, for primitive and classical associations, and for vivid imagery are simply nonexistent on this non-intellectual plane. Christ's humanity affords ample opportunity for the Blood Motifs; but the unintelligibility of the Cloud's object of mystical ascent precludes the figurative, symbolic, and descriptive advantages of Richard Rolle's Christocentric ascent. Being an expositor of the via negativa--the mystical ascent to God predicated on an acknowledgment that man with his finite limitations cannot know the Infinite--the Cloud of Unknowing is beyond the finite relationships of the Blood Motifs.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 25.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 26.

CHAPTER IV
WALTER HILTON

Life

Despite indications in medieval wills of a vernacular popularity second only to that of Richard Rolle,¹ only one date of Walter Hilton's life is known with any certainty. General manuscript evidence reveals that Walter Hilton, an Augustinian canon of Thurgarton, Nottinghamshire, died on the vigil of the Annunciation, 1395-96, or March 24, 1396 by modern calculation. However, John Greenhalgh, in a colophon dated 1499 in the MS. Cambr. 354, gives the vigil of the Assumption, 1395-96 as the date of his death. "But it looks as though Assumption here was an error for Annunciation."² The date of Hilton's birth is unknown.

A tradition exists that he may have been in some way associated with Richard Rolle. The known dates of their respective lives would not preclude such a possibility if Walter Hilton had lived to be relatively old. Moreover, Southwell, the location of the Thurgarton Priory, is only thirty miles from Hampole. Finally, Miss Hope Allen's study of medieval and Renaissance cata-

¹ Margaret Deanesley, "Vernacular Books in England in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," Modern Language Review, XV (1920), p. 355.

² Walter Hilton, The Scale of Perfection, ed. Dom Gerard Sitwell (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1953), p. ix.

logue references to Richard Rolle reveals a citation that seems to link the two mystics. MS. 206 of Henry Savile's library, which contained many volumes from the Yorkshire monastic houses, is described in a seventeenth century catalogue as

Litera missa a magistro Waltero Hilton ad dominam sacerdotissam quandam ordinis sancti Gilberti in qua ordo et regula vivendi est descripta quam Ricardus de Hampull rogatu ejusdem dominae a Latino in Anglicum idioma transtulit.³

Miss Allen observes:

The heading seems to say that it was an exposition sent by Hilton of a rule of life which had been translated by Hampole from Latin into English: the lady to whom Hilton sent the exposition was the same for whom Hampole made the translation. Thus it is implied that one of Richard's disciples lived to become a disciple of Hilton's. There is nothing impossible in such a supposition. Though Rolle died in 1349 and Hilton in 1395-6, as many manuscripts state, we shall see that Rolle must have died in middle life. Hilton may have lived to a good old age, and in early years known Margaret Kirkeby and other friends of Richard, as well as Richard himself.⁴

Unfortunately, there is no current clue to the identity of this "mystery" exposition. Indeed, if it is ever discovered, it might well conclusively link the two most popular of the medieval English mystics.

Although Walter Hilton died an Augustinian canon, he probably spent his earlier years as a free-lance hermit, much in the Rollean tradition. Miss Helen Gardner, in an illuminating arti-

³ H. E. Allen, Works Ascribed, p. 410.

⁴ Ibid.

cle,⁵ contends that Hilton was a hermit who found his personality unsuited to the solitary existence. Her hypothesis is predicated on evidence from Hilton's Latin epistles, De Imagine Peccati and Epistola Aurea, written to a friend, Adam Horsley. Horsley, Controller of the Great Roll in 1375, became a Carthusian at Beauvale shortly after his high appointment in the service of the King's Exchequer. Hilton, in De Imagine Peccati, encourages his friend to adopt his new vocation. In the Epistola Aurea, the Augustinian answers Horsley's question as to why he, Hilton, does not enter the religious life by indicating his feeling of unworthiness and his belief that he is following God's will in his present solitary life.⁶ If Miss Gardner's conjecture is correct, Walter Hilton spent only the last twenty years of his existence in community life. This surmise receives some corroboration from the MS. Digby 115 version of De Imagine Peccati which refers to its author as a hermit, as does the MS. Harley 2397 text of the Scale of Perfection. Eric Colledge points out that canon law would have prevented one vowed to the harder, stricter life of a hermit from joining the less demanding Augustinian canons regular. However, Prof. Colledge notes:

we have an exact parallel in the case of Ruysbroek and his companions, who abandoned their secular benefices in Brus-

⁵Helen L. Gardner, "Walter Hilton and the English Mystical Tradition," Essays and Studies of the English Association, XXII (1937), pp. 103-127.

⁶Ibid., pp. 111-112.

sels, retired to a "desert" outside the city, but finally also became Austin canons, and, like them, Hilton was probably never professed as a solitary but merely tried, unsuccessfully, his vocation.⁷

Regardless of the question regarding Hilton's earlier station in life, there can be little doubt as to his formal education. Although Effie Mackinnon claims "Hilton obviously had only the equipment of the average medieval clerk,"⁸ it is generally accepted that he was a Magister, "which at this time was reserved for doctors of theology."⁹ The MS. Marseilles 729 refers to him as Parisius, implying that he had studied at the University of Paris. He appears particularly well-read in the Scriptures, the Fathers, St. Augustine, the pseudo-Dionysius, and the Victorines. Testimony to his theological soundness is expressed by Father Pepler, who believes, "it is as a guide from the first steps to the final goal of the way of perfection that we can rely upon him without fail."¹⁰

Lastly, it might be noticed that as an Augustinian canon, Walter Hilton would have led a life more conventional than Richard Rolle or Julian of Norwich, a life effecting a golden mean between the life of the contemplative and that of the active. Further-

⁷E. Colledge, p. 63.

⁸E. Mackinnon, p. 256.

⁹Walter Hilton, The Scale of Perfection, ed. Dom Gerard Sitwell, p. ix.

¹⁰C. Pepler, O.P., The English Religious Heritage, p. 376.

more, "duties as canon would tie Hilton to many more exacting demands than would restrict the life of Rolle or Julian, hermit and anchorite."¹¹ This biographic fact, coupled with the turmoil generated by intensified Lollard activity, might help to explain Hilton's somewhat limited range of literary endeavors, limited at least by comparison with the works of Richard Rolle.

¹¹E. Mackinnon, p. 245.

Works

Although not as prolific as Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton has figured periodically in several authorship controversies. The question of Hilton's being the Cloud author has already been analyzed in some detail, and further germane observations will be made in the course of this chapter. In addition, the Augustinian was for a time credited with being the author of Thomas a Kempis' De Imitatione Christi. A Middle English paraphrase of Richard of St. Victor's Benjamin Minor has been tentatively ascribed to Hilton. With greater probability, a Middle English translation of the religious classic Stimulus Amoris has also been attributed to him. Two other translations are frequently listed as Hilton's: "tretes necessarye for men þat zeuen hem unto perfeccion, whiche was foundyn in maister Lowys de Fontibus boke at Cambrigge, and tordned into Englysshe be maister Water Hilton, chanon of Thorgortone"¹² and "A deuoute matier be þe drawyng of M. Waltere hylton."¹³

Carl Horstman identifies two English treatises--Of Angels' Song¹⁴ and the Epistle on Mixed Life¹⁵ as works of the Augustinian mystic. Although Dorothy Jones' volume, Minor Works of Walter

¹²H. Allen, Works Ascribed, p. 342.

¹³Ibid., p. 343.

¹⁴R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 175.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 264.

Hilton, adds Qui Habitat, a commentary on Psalm XC; Bonum Est, a commentary on Psalm XCI; and Benedictus to the aforementioned "trete necessarye . . ." and Epistle on Mixed Life, Miss Jones contributes much supposition and little fact in her effort to extend Hilton's canon. Even Bjorn Wallner, building on Miss Jones' study with his An Exposition of Qui Habitat and Bonum Est in English, succeeds only in demonstrating that the two works share with Hilton the common medieval English mystical tradition. "The external evidence for attributing these treatises to Hilton is slight,"¹⁶ concedes Dr. Wallner. Significantly, external evidence is usually abundant even in erroneous ascriptions of medieval English mystical treatises.

Consequently, only three original English works can be safely credited to Walter Hilton: Of Angels' Song, Epistle on Mixed Life, and, of course, the Middle English classic, the Scale of Perfection.¹⁷ Unfortunately, there is at present little hope of dating these works with any certainty. The somewhat tranquil didacticism of the treatises implies late composition, at least composition later than Hilton's supposed period of hermitic discontent. Dom Sitwell agrees with Helen Gardner that the Scale of

¹⁶ Bjorn Wallner (ed.), An Exposition of Qui Habitat and Bonum Est in English (Kopenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1954), p. xliii.

¹⁷ E. Mackinnon, p. 249; E. Gardner, p. xxii; Dom Gerard Sitwell, "Walter Hilton," English Spiritual Writers, ed. Charles Davis (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), p. 30.

Perfection might have been written after the 1382 condemnation of Wyclif. This inference is predicated on remarks concerning pride and the heretic found in Book I, chapters 20 and 58; and Book II, chapter 3.¹⁸

¹⁸W. Hilton, The Scale of Perfection, ed. Dom Gerard Sitwell, p. 91.

Of Angels' Song

Father Conrad Pepler observes that Walter Hilton was content to utilize his intellect not so much in the combatting of the Lollards but rather in the correction of misunderstanding stemming from Richard Rolle's teaching.¹⁹ The truth of this observation is graphically illustrated in Hilton's Of Angels' Song, a brief treatise devoted almost exclusively to an analysis of the heavenly sound or music of which the Hampole mystic repeatedly wrote.

The Augustinian canon speaks first of mystical union or, as he phrases it, "a verrey anehede of godde and of manes saule by perfyte charyte."²⁰ Consistent with doctrine of the Scale of Perfection, this condition is approximated only after the "saule er refourmed by grace."²¹ The term "approximated" must be used because this union in its pure state cannot be fully achieved in this world:

Bot þis wondirfull anehede may noghte be fulfillede perfyte-ly, contenually, ne hally in þis lyfe for corrupcyone of þe flesche, bot anely in þe blysse of heuene. Neuer-þe-lattere þe nerre þat a saule in þis presente lyfe may come to þis anehede, þe mare perfite it es, ffor þat it es refourmede by grace till þe ymage and þe lyknes of his creatoure here, one þis manere-wyse þe more ioy and blysse sall it hafe in heuene.²²

¹⁹C. Pepler, O.P., The English Religious Heritage, p. 376.

²⁰R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 175. The MS. Thornton text is used for this analysis.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., p. 176.

As a result of this relative perfection of the soul, it may be comforted by angels' song. However, Hilton is quick to note the nebulous nature of this phenomenon:

Bot what þat sange es it may noghte [be] dyscryuede be no bodyly lyknes, for it es gastely and abowne all manere of ymagynacyone and mans resone. It may be perceyuede and felide in a saule, bot it may noghte be spokene.²³

Then, in contradistinction to Rolle, who equates canor to the highest joy of the unitive stage, Hilton is explicit in relegating angels' song to a position of secondary import: "For þe souerayne and þe Escencyalle ioy es in þe lufe of godde by hyme-selfe and for hyme-selfe, and þe secundarye es in comonyng and byhaldyng of aungells and gastely creaturs."²⁴

The remainder of this treatise concerns the possibility of man's being deceived into believing that he has experienced the song of angels. Various reasons are proposed for such error. Some men are duped by "þaire awenne ymagynacyone, or by illucyone of þe Enemy in þis matere."²⁵ Others who have "lange trauelde bodyly and gastely in dystroyng of synnes and getyng of vertus"²⁶ confuse a peaceful conscience with angels' song. The "febilnes of þe brayne"²⁷ causes still more to believe that they are recipients

²³Ibid., p. 177.

²⁴Ibid., p. 178.

²⁵Ibid., p. 179.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

of heavenly sound. Those devoted as Rolle was to the name of Jesus often mistake the sweetness of the name with the mystical music. Finally, men who concentrate on the "nakede mynde of godde"²⁸ are capable of being deceived if this "nakede mynde" exists void of love or reason.

This last point, for this writer at least, seems to preclude Hilton's authorship of the Cloud of Unknowing. For just as the Augustinian canon is undoubtedly correcting "errors" in Rolle's mystical dogma, he is also apparently criticizing the Cloud's unqualified emphasis on the naked intent of God. It does not seem likely that Hilton would juxtapose criticism of the Hampole mystic with self-criticism when all he would have to have done--if he were the Cloud author--would have been to insert whatever qualification he deemed essential into the Cloud manuscript. Moreover, the slight alteration of terms--"nakede mynde" for "nakid entente"--seems to verify Miss Mackinnon's contention that on occasion Hilton probably "quoted from memory or used one of the many defective manuscripts in circulation at that time."²⁹

The Blood Motifs are decidedly absent in Of Angels' Song. This void is, in part, the result of a rather scientific appraisal of contemplation's by-product as well as the consequence of a repeatedly indicated distrust of the imagination that is so essen-

²⁸Ibid., p. 181.

²⁹E. Mackinnon, p. 255.

tial to the figures and symbols of blood theology. In fact, the entire work contains only one pertinent reference--an allusion to the "medytacions of be passione of Cryste"³⁰ that are abandoned by those confusing "a somedele ryste and a clerete in concyence"³¹ with the song of angels. Lastly, the nature of this treatise--an explication of a mystical component rather than a system--probably reduces the possibility of the Blood Motifs and the tenets of blood theology.

³⁰R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 179.

³¹Ibid.

Epistle on Mixed Life

Probably as a result of a format conformance of the Epistle on Mixed Life to that of the English epistles of Richard Rolle, Rev. G. G. Perry included the work in his 1866 Early English Text Society edition, English Prose Treatises of Richard Rolle of Hampole. However, as early as the 1494 Wynkyn de Worde edition of the Scale of Perfection, the Epistle on Mixed Life has circulated with Hilton's most extensive and well-known treatise and, in fact, is described in Lord Aldenham's copy of the edition as "the thyerde booke of Water hylton named Vita mixta or scala perfeccionis."³² Strangely, in a majority of extant copies of the 1494 de Worde edition, the epistle is not to be found. This oddity has led to Miss Jones' speculation:

it is probable that Mixed Life was originally printed as a separate pamphlet, which may have been bound up with certain copies only of the Scala Perfectionis: this would account for the inclusion of Mixed Life in so few of the extant copies of the 1494 Scala Perfectionis.³³

With the exception of the Perry attribution to Rolle, the Epistle on Mixed Life has, since the de Worde edition, been repeatedly identified as the work of the Augustinian canon.

The early printed de Worde and Notary editions of the epistle address the work to "Dere brother in Cryst,"³⁴ a man who

³²W. Hilton, Minor Works of Walter Hilton, p. xxi.

³³Ibid., p. xxiii.

³⁴R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 264.

aspired to the contemplative life. However, this unknown individual could not devote himself to the more rewarding "gostli occupacion"³⁵ because he had family and social obligations:

Pou schalt not vturli folwe pi desyre for to leue ocupacions & bisynes of þe world w3uch are nedeful to vse in rulyng of pi-self & of al opur þat are vnder pi keping, & zeue þe holi to gostly occupacion in preyers & meditacions as hit were a Monk or a frere or eny opur mon þat were not bounde to þe world be children & seruauns as þou art: for hit falleþ not to þe; 3if þou do so, þou kepest not þe ordre of charite.³⁶

Charity, an all important consideration for Hilton,³⁷ requires that the man suppress his desire for the contemplative existence. Later in the text, Hilton explains that the way of contemplation is "best & most medeful, most feir & most spedeful, & most worpi"³⁸ for those "þat are fre & not bounde to temporal ministracion ne to spiritual."³⁹

To compensate his acquaintance for his apparent disappointment, Hilton delineates his concept of the mixed life. The man must learn to live both the life of Martha and that of Mary Magdalen:

³⁵Ibid., p. 267. Owing to the defective condition of the MS. Thornton, the MS. Vernon is cited.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Charity is essential to Hilton's doctrine of conforming to the image of Christ which is discerned in the Scale of Perfection, Book I, chapters 61, 68, and 92.

³⁸R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 270.

³⁹Ibid.

For þou schalt o tyme wip Martha be bisy ffor to ruile & gouerne þin houshold, þi children, þi seruauns, þi neiȝebors, and þi tenauntes;--3if þei do wel, cumforte hem þerin & help hem; 3if þei don vuel, tech hem to amende hem, & chastise hem. And þou schalt also loke & knowe wysli þat þi þinges & worldly godes be riȝtly kept be þi seruauntes, gouerned & trewely dispendet: þat þou miȝt be more plenteuousli wip hem fulfille þe dedes of merci to þin euencristen. A nopur tyme þou schalt wip Marie leue þe bisynes of þe world & sitte doun at þe feet of vr lord be mekenes in preyers & holy pouȝtes & in contemplacion of him as he ȝeueþ þe grace.⁴⁰

Later, Hilton uses the example of Jacob's taking both Lia and Rachel as representative of the mixed life.⁴¹ In this dual existence, man actually follows the example of Christ, Who "comuned & medled wip men"⁴² but also "went alone in to þe desert vpon þe hulles, & contynued al þe niȝt in preyers."⁴³

Worldly responsibility for the person in the "medled lyf" is so basic that should he turn to Passion meditation and devotion and, in so doing, neglect his children and servants, Hilton warns, "þou plesest him [God] nouȝt, þou dost no worschipe to him."⁴⁴ Work is always to be completed before meditation: "ffurst do þi werkes and go þen al-[one] to þi preyers & þi meditacions, and lift vp þin herte to god and prei him of his godnes þat he wole

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 267.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 274-275.

⁴² Ibid., p. 269.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 272.

accepte þi werkes þat þou dost to his plesaunce."⁴⁵

Despite mundane obligations, however, man should cultivate his desire for God, which "is not propurli loue, but hit is a begynnyng & a tastyng of loue."⁴⁶ This desire is enhanced by various prayers and thoughts, including meditation on the Passion. Man is advised: "fede þi þouzt wip gostly ymaginacion of hit, for to sture þin affeccion to more loue of him."⁴⁷ However, should devotion fail to accompany this meditation, man is cautioned, "strive not ouer-muche þer-aftur; tac esyli þat wol come, & go forþ to sum opur þouzt."⁴⁸ Apparently, devotion is more important in Hilton's mind than meditation.

The Augustinian concludes his epistle with several warnings in regard to Passion meditation. One is not to force a meditation that is passing, "for þenne hit schal turne þe to pyne & to bitternesse."⁴⁹ Another is the caution to cease Passion meditation if it prevents sleep or good deeds or harms the body. However, should "a mynde of þe passion of vr lord"⁵⁰ be a rare experience, loss of several nights' sleep should be endured. Finally,

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 277.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 280.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 285.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 290.

⁵⁰Ibid.

if God does not "sende vs of his gostly li3t [& open] vre gostli e3en for to seo & knowe more of him þen we haue had bifore be com- on trauayle,"⁵¹ we should, nevertheless, be content "wip þe disyre þat we haue to him, & wip vre comon þou3tes þat may li3tli falle vnder vre ymaginacions, as . . . of Cristes passion" ⁵² Any other attitude Hilton considers presumptuous.

As was the case with Of Angels' Song, the Epistle on Mixed Life is a didactic treatise. Once again the Blood Motifs are suppressed. Nevertheless, references to meditation on the Passion-- or Hilton's equivalent, meditation on Christ's "monhede"⁵³ permeate the entire doctrine of the mixed life. Contrary to Rollean dogma, however, such meditation and devotion are expendable whenever moderation or worldly responsibility dictates. This practical attitude appears to further eliminate the Augustinian canon as the Cloud author; for, it will be remembered, the Cloud of Unknowing teaches indiscretion in the pursuit of the contemplative life.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 291.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 291-292.

⁵³Ibid., p. 290.

Scale of Perfection

Extant in about fifty manuscripts, the two books of Walter Hilton's Scale of Perfection were first printed in 1494 by Wynkyn de Worde. This famous edition was reprinted four times prior to 1533;⁵⁴ furthermore, it has been the basis for nine subsequent editions. But not until the appearance of Evelyn Underhill's 1923 edition has there been any suggestion that the two books were originally written as separate works.⁵⁵ Now, consensus supports the Underhill observation.

Contributing to the contemporary appraisal of the Scale, Miss Helen Gardner indicates that the present title is actually inappropriate to the unit formed by Book I and II.⁵⁶ Joy Russell-Smith shows that in two manuscripts the complete work is titled De Nobilitate Anima.⁵⁷ Actually, nowhere in the Scale is the traditional designation directly stated; at best a title implication occurs in Book II:

For refourmyng in fayth is the lowest state of all chosen soules / for byneth that myghte they not well be / But refourmyng in felynge is the hiest state in this lyfe that the soule

⁵⁴Walter Hilton, The Scale of Perfection, ed. Dom Gerard Sitwell, p. v.

⁵⁵Walter Hilton, The Scale of Perfection, ed. Evelyn Underhill (London: John M. Watkins, 1923), pp. xliii-xlv.

⁵⁶Helen Gardner, "The Text of 'The Scale of Perfection,'" Medium Aevum, V (1936), p. 15.

⁵⁷Joy Russell-Smith, "Walter Hilton and a Tract in Defence of the Veneration of Images," Dominican Studies, VII (1954), p. 192.

may come to / But fro the lowest to the hiest maye not a soule
sodenly styrte. nomore than a man that woll clymbe vpon a
ladder hie & setteth his fote vpon the lowest stele may at
the nexte flee vp to the hieste / But hym behoueth goo by
processe one after a nother tyll he maye come to the ouerest
/ Right soo it is ghostly. no mā is made sodely souereyn in
grace: but through long exercyse and slye werkyng of a soule
may com therto / namly whan he helpyth & techyth a wretchyd
soule in whom al grace lyeth / For wythout specyall halpe &
Inwardly techyng of hym maye noo soule come therto.⁵⁸

This allusion to a ladder of spiritual levels is the only passage
to establish any justification for the title Scale of Perfection.

Book I is addressed to "Ghosti suster in Ihesu,"⁵⁹ a woman
further identified as one that "arte encloos."⁶⁰ The purpose of
the treatise is to provide direction in enabling the recluse to
turn "thy hert with thy body pryncipally to god / & shape the with-
in to his lycknes by mekenes & charyte."⁶¹ Aside from the initial
fourteen chapters which primarily concern the three degrees of
contemplation, Book I is devoted completely to the preparation of
the individual for the end of mankind--union with God in contempla-
tion.

Walter Hilton's dissatisfaction with Richard Rolle's my-
stical teachings continues to punctuate the Augustinian's prose.
Early in the Scale, visions and physical mystical sensations are

⁵⁸Walter Hilton, Scala Perfeconis, ed. Wynkyn de Worde
(London: no publisher given, 1494), [p. 78]. Subsequent refer-
ences are documented as the "Wynkyn de Worde edition."

⁵⁹Ibid., [p. 4].

⁶⁰Ibid., [p. 52 verso].

⁶¹Ibid., [p. 4].

somewhat depreciated:

By this that I haue sayd may y^u sōwhat vndstōde that visyōs or reuelacons of ony maner of spiryte in bodely asperyng. or in ymaginyng slepyng or wakyng / or els ony other felyng in y^e bodely wytt made as it were ghostly. other in sownyng of ere: or sauering in the mouth: or smellyng at y^e nose: or els ony sēsible hete as it were fyre glowyng & warmyng y^e breste or ony other parte of y^e body / or ony other thyng y^e may be felyd by bodely wytte though it be neuer soo cōfortable & lykylng / they ben not very contēplacon.⁶²

In fact, "wyte y^u wel that the deuyll may whā he hath leue feyne in bodely felyng the lykenes of the same thynges the whiche a good angel may werke."⁶³ Later, Hilton observes, "All men y^e spekē of the fire of loue knowē not wel what it is."⁶⁴ Continuing his explication, Hilton stresses that the fire of love "is neyther bodily. ne bodily felyd . . . y^e fyre of loue is not bodily. for it is only in y^e ghostly desire of y^e soule."⁶⁵ In Book II, the Augustinian writes, "Our lorde is fyre wastyng / That is for to saye: God is not fyre elementare that heteth a body and breñeth it / but god is loue & charyte."⁶⁶

Not content to restrict his "correction" of possible misunderstandings arising from Rollean doctrine to the visionary and

⁶²Ibid., [p. 7 verso].

⁶³Ibid., [p. 8].

⁶⁴Ibid., [p. 16 verso].

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid., [p. 106].

the impressionable, Hilton also indirectly attacks the Hermit's devotion to the name of Jesus. Rolle implies in his writings that a devotion to the holy name is essential to eternal reward. Hilton devotes the forty-fourth chapter of Book I to his contention that while the name Jesus means "heler or hele"⁶⁷ and betokens salvation, nevertheless man is saved only "through the mercy of our lorde Ihū & by the merites of his passōn."⁶⁸ Man, therefore, can be saved without a devotion to the name of Jesus. However, Hilton does concede, "he that can not loue this blessid name Ihū wyth ghostly myrth ne encrease in it with heuenly melodie here / he shall neuer haue ne fele in heuen y^t fulhede of souereyne Ioye."⁶⁹

The Scale of Perfection embodies the stock Passion attributes. The Passion is an aid for those afflicted by temptations of the devil: "Remedie to suche men & eyymen that am thus trau-eyled. or any other wyse. may be this / Fyrst that they wyll put all her trust in our lorde Ihū cryst / and bryng to mynde often his passiō: and the peynes that he suffred for vs."⁷⁰ Man is reminded of the importance of the Passion to redemption and restoration:

And wyte thou wel thouz thou had neuer done syne wyth thy

⁶⁷Ibid., [p. 28 verso].

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid., [p. 29].

⁷⁰Ibid., [p. 23].

body dedely ne venyal but oonly this that is called origynall for it is the fyrst syne / and that is not elles but lesyng of thy rightfulness whiche y^u was made in shold thou neuer haue ben saued yf our lord Ihū cryste by his precyous passion had not delyuerde the and restored the ayen.⁷¹

Also, man is didactically informed of the universality of the Passion's effects:

And fro this origynal syne & al other thou shalt be saaf. ye and thou shalbe saaf as an anker incluse / And not oonly thou but all crysten soules whiche trusten vpon this passion: and meden hemself / knowlegynge her wretchidnes: asking mercy & foryeuenes and the fruyt of this precyous passon̄ only. lowenge hemself to the sacramentes of holy chyrche. though it be so that thei haue ben encombred wyth synne all her lyf tyme / and neuer had felyng of ghostly sauour or swetnes / or ghostly knowynge of god. they shallen in this faythe & in her good wyll by vertue of this precyous passyon̄ of our lorde Ihū cryst be saaf & come to the blysse of heuen.⁷²

In addition to these foregoing qualities of the Passion, Book I of the Scale includes an expression of hope in being restored "by the passion of our lord to the dignyte & the blysse whiche we had lost by adams syne."⁷³

However, one of Hilton's attributes of the Passion is quite disputable. In discussing pride--"loue of thyn owne excellence"⁷⁴--the Augustinian states:

I saye thus that the felyng of thyse stirynges of pryde or of any other the whiche spryngen out eyther of the corrupcōn of this fowle ymage [sin] or by incastyng of the enmye. it is noo synne in as moche as thou felyst hem / and that is a

⁷¹Ibid., [p. 27 verso].

⁷²Ibid., [pp. 27 verso-28].

⁷³Ibid., [p. 29 verso].

⁷⁴Ibid., [p. 35].

grace & a pryuylege by vertue of the passion of Ihesu cryste graūted to all crystē men baptized in water & in the holy ghost / For sothly to Iewes & sarrazyns whiche trowe not in Ihesu cryst. all suche stirynges are dedely synnes.⁷⁵

Dom Sitwell notes:

Hilton could have found this opinion in St. Anselm (Tract. de conc. praesc. Dei cum lib. arb., q. III, chap. 7; P.L., CLVIII, col. 530), and perhaps in St. Augustine (De Nuptiis et concupiscentia, Bk. I, chaps. 25-6; P.L., XLIV, col. 429-30, and Contra duas Epistolas Pelag., Bk. I, chap. 13, n. 27; P.L., XLIV, col. 563). St. Thomas formally rejected it (Summa, Ia IIae, q. LXXXIX, art. 5), and it is not admitted by theologians today. In any case the acts of the unbaptized ex hypothesi without grace, cannot be meritorious of heaven.⁷⁶

However, Hilton seems to mitigate his pronouncement by declaring, "Theñe the stiryng of pryde is receyued & tourned in to lykyng somoche that the herte cheseth it for a full rest & a full delyte. and secheth none other ende but oonly likyng therin / theñe is this pryde dedely syñe."⁷⁷

Passion meditation is quite important in the Augustinian's mystical scheme. As already indicated, the unitive stage is, for Hilton, simply the contemplation of God. To effect this contemplation, man has three means which he may employ: "redyng of holy writte & of holy teching: ghostly meditaciō: & besie prayer wyth deuocōn."⁷⁸

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Walter Hilton, The Scale of Perfection, ed. Dom Gerard Sitwell, p. 89n.

⁷⁷Wynkyn de Worde edition, [p. 35 verso].

⁷⁸Ibid., [p. 10].

Meditation, according to Walter Hilton, has a purgative effect:

Bi meditacōn shall thou see as I sayd thy wretchidnes / thy
synes. & thy wyckidnes / As pryde: couetise: gloteny: slouth:
& lecherye wickyd stirynges of enuye / yre: hatred. &
malecolye: angrines: bitternes: and vnskilfull heuynes / Thou
shalte also see thy herte full of vayneshames and dredes of
thy flesshe and of the worlde / Alle thyse stirynges wyllen
all waye boylle out of thi hert a water will rene out of y^e
spring of a stinkīg well. & let y^e sizte of thy soule that
y^u maist neuer see ne fele clerely y^e loue of Ihū cryst. For
wite y^u wel tyll thi hert be moche clēsid thruz stable trowth
& besie beholdig of cryst māhede fro suche synes. y^u may not
haue ghostly knowyng of god.⁷⁹

Despite its edification, meditation is not to be pursued too early
in mystical conversion, for those who embrace meditation too soon
imagine that they have spiritual experiences for which they have
not in fact received the necessary grace. Then they may "fall in
to fantasies & syngler cōceytes or in opyn errorrs."⁸⁰ However,
once man is conditioned by purgative introspection, God comforts
him with "grete deuocōn of his passion or of some other as he
wylle yeue it."⁸¹ Then and only then "our lorde yeuith a medita-
cōn of his mandede / as of his birth or his passōn. and of the
compassyon of our lady saynt mary."⁸² This gift which may be
withdrawn at any time for any reason--pride, sin, temptation--al-
lows man to see Jesus in his heart as He appeared on earth. This
internal vision is sketched with the details of Christ's suffer-

⁷⁹Ibid., [pp. 10-10 verso].

⁸⁰Ibid., [p. 17 verso].

⁸¹Ibid., [p. 21].

⁸²Ibid., [p. 21 verso].

ings:

thou seest in thy soule thy lorde Ihū in a bodily lyknes as he was in erthe / and how he was taken of the Iewes and bounden as a theyf / beten & dispysed. scourged & demid to deth / How lowely he bare the crosse vpon his backe and how cruelly he was neyled therupon / Also of the crowne of thornes vpon his hede / and of the sharpe spere that stykked hym to the hert.⁸³

The result of this vision is twofold: to instill great confidence in the Passion's ability to effect mankind's salvation and to open "the ghostly eye in to crystis manhede."⁸⁴

This latter point is most basic to Hilton's mystical system. He explains, "a man shall not come to ghostly lyghte in contemplacyon of crystis godhede / but yf he come fyrst in ymagynacōn bi bitternes and bi compassion and by stedfast thynkyng of his manhede."⁸⁵ To substantiate this statement, Hilton quotes the Scriptures--I Cor. ii. 2; Gal. vi. 14; and I Cor. i. 23, 24. These passages illustrate that all man really knows of Christ is rooted in His blood sacrifice. In fact, the first book of the Scale of Perfection culminates at the door of contemplation with a remembrance of the humanity and Passion of Christ; and "Who so weneth for to come to the werching & to the full vse of contemplacōn and not by this waye [meditation of the Lord's manhood and sufferings] . . . he comyth not by the doore and therefore as a

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid., [p. 22].

theyf he shall be caste oute."⁸⁶

Actually, the Scale's first concentration on the humanity of Christ is transitional to Book I's emphasis on the need for man to be conformed to the image of Jesus if he hopes to attain contemplative union with God. Initially, this conformance requires an all-consuming desire for and seeking of mankind's Redeemer. And although meditation on the Passion is ordinarily specified by Hilton, he does qualify the usual recommendation in the Jesus quest: "Thenne by what maner prayer or meditacon or occupacon that thou maye haue grettest and clenest desyre to hym. and haue moost felynge of hym / by that ocupacyon thou sechest hym best and beste fyndest hym."⁸⁷ This desire for Christ is superior to "all bodily penaunce of all men liuyng / all vysions or reuelacons of angels apperyng / songes and sownynges. sauours and smelles. brenynges. and ony likynges or bodily felynges,"⁸⁸ if these mortifications or experiences occur without a true and pure desire for Jesus. In climactic order, Hilton establishes Jesus as man's lost fortune as well as the legacy of the Charter motif: "he is peny. he is thyne heritage."⁸⁹ To elevate his thought in the search for his Lord, man must ultimately "Thynke styfly on the pas-

⁸⁶ Ibid., [p. 56 verso].

⁸⁷ Ibid., [p. 30 verso].

⁸⁸ Ibid., [p. 31].

⁸⁹ Ibid., [p. 32].

syon and on his mekenes and thorough myghte of hym thou shalt
aryse."⁹⁰

In the mystical equating of man's image and that of Jesus, the image of sin must be crucified as was Christ's physical nature; man is ordered, "Take thou this body of synne & doo hym on y^e crosse / That is for to saye / Breke down this ymage & slee the false loue of synne in thyself / as cristis body was slayne for our synne & our trespaas."⁹¹ This decree has overtones of the vendetta code. The blood sacrifice of Christ, who theologically was slain by sin, now necessitates the death of sin's image--actually, blood for blood!

So far in this analysis of Book I of the Scale of Perfection, the Blood Motifs have been eclipsed by the elements of blood theology. Despite the didactic nature of the Augustinian's writing--a quality that tends to restrict the Blood Motifs--several of the figures discerned in the more imaginative work of Richard Rolle are evident. Two prominent blood personages appear in Book I. In warning against Rollean sensible impressions, Hilton concedes the possibility that Mary Magdalene may have experienced such a phenomenon:

I wote not whether there be ony suche man liuyng in erth /
This preuylege had mary mawdeleyne as it semith to my sight
in y^e tyme wha she was alone in y^e caue xxx wynter / & euery

⁹⁰Ibid., [pp. 33 verso-34].

⁹¹Ibid., [p. 53 verso].

day was borne vp wyth angels & was fed both bodi & soule by
y^e presece of hem.⁹²

Hilton's reference is to an event that supposedly occurred in a
cave near Marseilles.⁹³ Later, Hilton utilizes Magdalene as the
traditional mystical symbol for the contemplative life.⁹⁴

Judas also appears twice in the first book of the Scale.
Indirectly, he is involved in an illustration of the detachment of
contemplation:

our lorde in his last sower wyth his discyples at the preuy
stiryng of saynt peter to saith Iohn tolde saynt Iohn how
Iudas sholde bitraye hym / saynt Iohn tolde it not to saynt
peter as he askid / but he turned hym & layed his hede vpon
cristis brest. and was rauysshid by loue in to conteplacon
of goddis priuitees. And soo medefully to him / that he for-
gate both Iudas & sainte peter.⁹⁵

Directly, the lost apostle is presented as an example of love for
one's enemy:

Loke & bethynke the how cryst loued Iudas whiche was bothe
his dedely enmye and a synfull caytyf how goodly cryst was to
hym. How benygne. how curteyes / & how lowly to hym that he
knewe dampnable / and neuertheles he chase hym to his apos-
tle: & sent hym for to preche wyth other apostles / He yaaf
hym power for to werche myracles. he shewed the same to him
gode chere in worde & in dede as he dyde to other apostles /
He wysse his fete & fedde hym wyth his precyous body / and
prechid to hym as he dyde to other apostles / he wryed

⁹² Ibid., [p. 9].

⁹³ Walter Hilton, The Scale of Perfection, ed. Dom Gerard
Sitwell, p. 18n.

⁹⁴ Wynkyn de Worde edition, [p. 30].

⁹⁵ Ibid., [p. 12].

[turned away] not openly for it was prey / ne myssaied hym not. ne dispysed hym not. ne spake neuer euyll of hym / & yet though he had done all thise. he had sayd but soth / And ouermore when Iudas toke hym. he kyssed hym & called hym his frende / All this charyte shewed cryst vnto Iudas the whyche he knewe for dampnable.⁹⁶

The remarkableness of this exemplification of Christ's love is evident only within the perspective of blood vengeance. What better example can be advanced for Christian charity than one involving the betrayal of the Redeemer's innocent blood? Blood for blood is replaced by love for blood!

There are two other secluded instances of Blood Motifs. One is the knit figure which is included in Hilton's exploration of God-inspired physical impressions and visions:

Neuertheles yf a spiryte or a felyng or a reuelacōn make this desire [of Jesus] more. knytte the knottes of loue & deuocōn to ihu faster: & open the eye of y^e soule in to ghostly knowyng more clerly: & makith it more meke in it self this spiryte is of god.⁹⁷

The other is discerned in Hilton's advice to those who are distracted in their prayers: "For wite thou wel that thou art excused of thy dette: & thou shalte haue mede for it as for an other good dede y^e thou doost in charite though thyn hert were not therupon in the doying."⁹⁸ Apparent in this consolation is a clear indication of the debt which accrues to man from Christ's ransom of

⁹⁶ Ibid., [pp. 43 verso-44].

⁹⁷ Ibid., [p. 9].

⁹⁸ Ibid., [p. 20].

blood.

Dominant in Book I of the Scale of Perfection, then, is the dogma of blood theology rather than the Blood Motifs themselves. The mystical system expounded is Christocentric, but it is a Christocentric mysticism that is preached rather than demonstrated by flights of the artistic imagination. Once again evidence is presented to illustrate that didacticism tends to blunt imaginative sharpness.

In two respects, Book II is probably the most typically mystical of the works discussed in this dissertation. First, Hilton explicitly defines the mediatorship of Christ concept, a concept basic to medieval Christian mysticism: "For cryste god and man is bothe waye and ende / And he is medyatour betwyx god & man / And wythoute hym maye noo soule be reconsyled / ne come to the blysse of heuen."⁹⁹

Secondly, Book II contains the famous Parable of the Pilgrim, which Eric Colledge considers superior "to most of the heavy-handed uses of that device found in Piers Plowman."¹⁰⁰ This comparison of the spiritual life with a pilgrimage is previewed in the forty-seventh chapter of Book I--the desire for Jesus. In the allegory, Hilton stresses two major points: the necessity for absolute determination in achieving the goal of the pilgrimage,

⁹⁹Ibid., [p. 62 verso].

¹⁰⁰E. Colledge, p. 69.

Jesus, and the need to acquire the characteristics of humility and charity to effect the successful quest. In warning the pilgrim that although he will be robbed and beaten he must, nevertheless, persevere to his goal, the Augustinian mystic is actually instructing his anchoress in the contemplative way. She must in her search for an unitive experience with Jesus beware the false day which appears to terminate the nocturnal pilgrimage. Furthermore, she must sustain herself until the legitimate day or light dawns; for "The fals lyghte is the loue of this worlde that a man hath in hymself of corrupcion of hys flesshe / The true light is the perfyte loue of Ihesu felyd thorough grace in a manes soule."¹⁰¹ As

Dom Sitwell explains:

For Hilton the night is the whole spiritual life of a man after he has turned seriously from the love of the world and set his heart on the love of God. Sometimes the night will be distressing, for the world will still exercise an attraction, but gradually the soul will come to rest in it, for the grace of God is drawing it, and from time to time it will see glints and gleams of the true day.¹⁰²

The darkness of the night is a "deyenge to the worlde"¹⁰³ and "the gate of contemplancon"¹⁰⁴ while the "glints and gleams of the true day," of which Dom Sitwell writes, are the momentary unitive insights for which every mystic strives.

¹⁰¹ Wynkyn de Worde edition, [p. 87 verso].

¹⁰² Dom G. Sitwell, "Walter Hilton," p. 38.

¹⁰³ Wynkyn de Worde edition, [p. 94 verso].

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Book II of the Scale begins with a discussion of the disfigurement and transformation of the soul by Adam's sin. This consideration naturally necessitates an exposition of redemptive theory. Predicating his explication on St. Anselm's Cur Deus Homo,¹⁰⁵ Hilton develops an argument to illustrate the impossibility of any mere descendant of Adam making satisfaction, "for the trespasse and vnworshyppe was endles grete / and therefore it passyd mannys myghte for to make amendes for it."¹⁰⁶ Therefore, it was necessary that Christ "became man / and thorough his precyous deth that he suffred made amendes to the fader of heuen for mannys gylte."¹⁰⁷ As a result of this sacrifice, the "passion of our lorde and this precyous dethe is the grounde of all the refourmyng of mannes soule."¹⁰⁸ This reformation of man's soul is not completed until the Last Day. At this point, Hilton demonstrates a metaphoric nature unrevealed to any great extent in his other works: "Now is it soo that thorough the vertue of his precyous passion the brennyng swerde of Cherubyn that droue adam oute of paradyce is now put awaye, and the endles gates of heuen arn open to euery man that wylle entre in therto."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵Book II, chapter 2 of the Scale parallels Cur Deus Homo, Book I, chapter 20; and Book II, chapters 8 and 11.

¹⁰⁶Wynkyn de Worde edition, [p. 60 verso].

¹⁰⁷Ibid., [p. 61].

¹⁰⁸Ibid., [p. 61 verso].

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

Continuing his explanation of redemption and reformation, Hilton elicits two groups not transformed by virtue of the Passion:

Iewes and paynems haue not the benefyce of this passyon / for they trowe it not / Iewes trow not that Ihu the sone of the virgyn mary is goddis sone of heuen / Also the paynems trowe not that the souereyne wisdom of god wold become the sone of man. and in manede wolde suffre the paynes of deth / And therefore the Iewes helde the prechynge of the crosse and of the passyon of cryste noughte but sclauder and blasphemye / and the paynems helde it noughte but fantome and folye.¹¹⁰

But to true Christians, the Passion is "the souereyne wysdom of god and his grete myghte."¹¹¹ However, even Christians can be denied the benefits of the Passion:

thise men arne fals crysten men the whiche arne oute of charytee / and lyuen and deyen in dedely synne / Thyse men trowen well as it semyth that Ihesu is goddis sone / And that his passyon suffysyth to saluacion of mannes soule / And they trowe also all the other artycles of the fayth / But it is an vnshaply trouthe and a dede: for they loue hym not. ne they chese not the frute of his passyon / but they lyen style in her synne and in the false loue of this worlde vnto her laste ende / And soo they ben not reformed to the lyckenesse of god. but goon to the paynes of helle endelesly. as Iewes and sarrasyns done.¹¹²

As a result of their voluntary exclusion, these Christians suffer infinitely more than the Jews and pagans "In as moche as they had the trouthe and kepte it not."¹¹³

Although Passion dogma appears concentrated in the initial three chapters of Book II, further espousals of it are discerned

¹¹⁰Ibid., [p. 62].

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Ibid., [pp. 62 verso-63].

¹¹³Ibid., [p. 63].

throughout the text. The merits of the Passion extend a privilege of immediate entry into heaven of all those who die immediately following baptism.¹¹⁴ The greatest sinner if he "torne his will thorough grace fro dedely synne wyth sothfaste repentaunce to the seruyse of god . . . shall be saaf."¹¹⁵ The Church "geteth hem [her spiritual children] hele of soule thorough vertue of his passyon."¹¹⁶ Christ's willingness to offer "himselpe to the fader of heuen vpon the awter of the crosse"¹¹⁷ is defined as the "mooste token of loue shewed to vs."¹¹⁸ Finally, the universality of advantages accruing from Christ's blood sacrifice is expressed late in Book II:

Also the byenge is comen to vs and to all resonable soules / as to Iewes & sarracyns and to fals crysten men / For he deyed for al soules ylyke / and bought hem. yf thei woll haue the perfyte loue of it / And also it suffyceth for the bienge of all though it be soo that all haue it not / And this werke was moost of wysdome not moost of loue.¹¹⁹

In one respect, Book II is less Christocentric than Book I. While there are a number of references to meditation as being outside the province of those who are merely reformed in faith,¹²⁰

¹¹⁴Ibid., [p. 65 verso].

¹¹⁵Ibid., [p. 68 verso].

¹¹⁶Ibid., [p. 69].

¹¹⁷Ibid., [p. 107 verso].

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹Ibid., [p. 108].

¹²⁰Ibid., [p. 78 verso].

as being conducive to virtue,¹²¹ as being an impetus to love of Jesus,¹²² as fluctuating with man's disposition,¹²³ as being an aid in following the teachings of Christ,¹²⁴ as being excluded from supernaturalism,¹²⁵ as being a shield against the arrow of pride,¹²⁶ and as being a source of pleasure,¹²⁷ the emphasis on Passion meditation is noticeably absent. A clue to this deviation is discerned in Hilton's equating grace, love, Jesus, and God: "Thū is loue: Ihū is grace: Ihū is god / And for he worcheth all in vs by his grace for loue as god. therefore maye I vse what worde of thise iiii. y^t me lyst after my stiryng in this writyng."¹²⁸ This equalization minimizes the Christocentric focus established in Book I. It should be noted, however, that Miss Underhill considers some of the Christocentric passages of Book I to be interpolations by the author. She suggests that Hilton had been originally influenced by the Theocentric mysticism found in

¹²¹ Ibid., [p. 79 verso].

¹²² Ibid., [p. 83 verso].

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid., [p. 91 verso].

¹²⁵ Ibid., [p. 110].

¹²⁶ Ibid., [p. 114].

¹²⁷ Ibid., [p. 118].

¹²⁸ Ibid., [p. 126].

the Cloud of Unknowing and in the doctrines of Dionysius the Areopagite. Later, Miss Underhill speculates, Hilton was converted to Christocentric mysticism; at which time he interpolated Book I of the Scale.¹²⁹ On the other hand, Miss Helen Gardner discounts the significance of any textual additions since she considers the entire Scale as essentially Christocentric.¹³⁰ Moreover, it must be observed that Book II devotes itself more to the nature of contemplation and its results than to the individual transformation of soul that must be effected prior to any union with God in contemplation; hence, Book II logically concentrates more on the inexpressible divinity of Christ than the expressible humanity of the Savior.

Like Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton writes of three degrees of love:

The fyrste comyth only thruh fayth wythout gracyous ymagynacon or ghostly knowynge of god / This loue is in the leest soule that is reformed in faith in the lowest degree of charyte / And it is good: for it sufficeth to saluacion / The secode loue is that a soule felyth thruh fayth & ymagynacon of Ihu in his manhede. This loue is better than the fyrste whan the ymagynacyon is styred by grace: for why the ghostly eye is opened in beholdinge of our lordes manhede / The thyrde loue that the soule feleth thruh ghostly syght of the godhede in the manhede as it maye be seen here / that is beste and mooste worthy / and that is perfyte loue. this loue a soule felyth not vnto it be reformed in felynge.¹³¹

¹²⁹Walter Hilton, The Scale of Perfection, ed. Evelyn Underhill, pp. xliv-xlv.

¹³⁰H. Gardner, "The Text of 'The Scale of Perfection,'" p. 23.

¹³¹Wynkyn de Worde edition, [pp. 100-100 verso].

The Passion, however, does not figure as prominently in Hilton's stages as it did in Rolle's hierarchy of love. Only "soules begynnyng" ¹³² in the love ascent reverence God in Christ's Passion. At this initial stage, God is loved "as a man. not yet as god in man . . . and in that beholdyng they [the beginners] fele her hertes moche stired to y^e loue of god." ¹³³ Nevertheless, as Hilton's delineation of the three degrees of love states, Christ must be loved in His humanity before He can be loved in His divinity. This latter love "is the ende & the full blysse of the soule." ¹³⁴ To illustrate his point, the Augustinian utilizes an example involving Mary Magdalene:

Thus taughte our lorde mary mawdeleyne that sholde be contem-
platyfe. whan he sayd thus / Noli me tangere non dū enim
ascendi ad patrem meu / Towche me not I am not yet styed vp
to my fader / That is to saye: Mary magdalene loued well our
lorde Ihu before the tyme of his passyon / but her loue was
moche bodily & lityl ghostly / She trowed well that he was
god but she loued hym lityll as god / for she kouth not thene
/ & therefore she suffred al her affeccō & al her thought
falle in hym as he was in fourme of man / And our lorde
blamed her not thene but praysed it moche / But after whan he
was rysen fro dethe and appered to her she wolde haue wor-
shypped hym wyth suche maner loue as she dyde before / and
thene our lorde forbode her & sayd thus / Towche me not: That
is. Sette not thy reste ne the loue of thyn herte in that
fourme of ma that thou seest wyth thy flesshly eye only for
to reste therin. For in that fourme I am not stied vp to my
fader. That is I am not euen to the fader: for in that fourme

¹³² Ibid., [p. 100 verso].

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid., [p. 101 verso].

of man I am lesse than he: Towche me not soo. but sette thy
thoughte & thy loue in that fourme in whiche I am euen to the
fader / that is the fourme of the godhede / and loue me:
knowe me. & worship me as god & man godly / not as a man
maly.¹³⁵

Once again the blood figure of Mary Magdalene has demonstrated its
importance to the explication of medieval English mysticism.

Just as man is capable of three levels of love, so is God.
First, there is the love of creation: "He loued vs moche whan he
made vs to his liknes";¹³⁶ secondly, the love of the ransom: "but
he loued vs more whan he bouzte with his precyous blode thurgh
wylful takinge of dethe in his māhede fro the power of the fende &
fro the payne of helle";¹³⁷ finally, the love of spiritual wisdom:
"but he loued vs moost whan he yeueth vs the yefte of the holy
goost that is loue by the whiche we knowe hym & loue hym. & are
made syker that we are his sones chosen to saluacion."¹³⁸ Mysti-
cally, it is clear that the unitive insight is the superlative
level of love, superior to both the love manifested in the crea-
tion and that demonstrated in the redemption:

For this loue are we more to hym boude than any other loue
that euer shewed he for vs. eyther in our makyng or in our
ayebyenge / For though he had made vs and boughte vs: but yf
he saue vs wyth all what profyteth it elles to vs our makyng
or our byenge / Sothly ryght noughte / Therefore the mooste
token of loue shewed to vs as me thynketh is this / That he

¹³⁵Ibid.

¹³⁶Ibid., [p. 107 verso].

¹³⁷Ibid.

¹³⁸Ibid.

yeueth hymselfe in his godhede to our soules.¹³⁹

The bound figure of this quotation is one of the few instances of the Blood Motifs in Book II. There is a second reference involving this figure: the soul is considered as "bounden wyth loue of the worlde."¹⁴⁰

Three allusions are also made to the heritage theme. The soul, after its disfigurement by the sin of Adam, became an exile and an outcast from the heritage of heaven that would have belonged to it if it had remained firm:

This ymage made to the ymage of god in the fyrst shapyng was wonderly fayr and bryghte full of brennyng loue and ghostly lyghte. but thorough synne of y^e fyrst man adam it was disfigured and forshapen in to a nother lyknes as I haue before sayd. For it fell fro y^t ghostly lyzte & that heuenly fode in to paynfull derknes and lust of this wretchyd lyfe / exyled and flemyd [put to flight] oute fro the herytage of heuen that it sholde haue had yf it had stonde styll in to y^e wretchydnes of this erthe: and afterwarde in to the prison of helle there to haue be wythoute ende.¹⁴¹

However, God's love saves the soul "fro dampnacōn: & makyth it goddis sone perceyuer of heuenly herytage."¹⁴² Finally, the mystical union "conceyueth a full grete boldnes of saluacyon by this accorde makynge / For it heryth a preuy wytnessynge in conscyence of the holy ghost that he is a chosen sone to heuenly heritage."¹⁴³

¹³⁹Ibid.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., [p. 119].

¹⁴¹Ibid., [p. 60].

¹⁴²Ibid., [p. 109 verso].

¹⁴³Ibid., [p. 119].

Walter Hilton expounds a doctrine of penance punctuated with one of the Blood Motifs. He defines the sacrament in terms of the Charter figure: penance is man's "charter & his token of foryeuesse."¹⁴⁴ Theologically, Hilton's concept of penance at this point might be unorthodox; for, according to the Augustinian, this document of penance is man's "warraunte"¹⁴⁵ that "bothe the syne and the payne maye be done away or he passe hens."¹⁴⁶ Dom Sitwell sees in this passage an implication that Hilton believed that penance makes complete satisfaction for sin. As Sitwell notes, this belief has never been the teaching of the Church, which holds that the debt of temporal punishment may remain.¹⁴⁷ However, this writer feels that nowhere in his explication of penance does Hilton venture beyond simply indicating that it is possible to effect full satisfaction for sin on earth.

Fundamental to the entire Scale of Perfection is the distinction between reforming man's woul in faith and reforming it in both faith and feeling. Dom Sitwell succinctly summarizes Hilton's basic theory as follows:

Reform . . . means the re-formation of the soul in the image of God, and this is achieved essentially by the infusion of

¹⁴⁴Ibid., [p. 66].

¹⁴⁵Ibid., [p. 65 verso].

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

¹⁴⁷Walter Hilton, The Scale of Perfection, ed. Dom Gerard Sitwell, p. 157n.

sanctifying grace at baptism. When this process takes place (as it generally does) with no further knowledge of God than that which is to be had through faith, Hilton calls it reform in faith. But when the restoration of the image of God in us has advanced so far as to be accompanied by some sort of experimental knowledge of God beyond that of faith, he calls it reform in feeling, or in faith and feeling . . . This is, of course, a purely mystical state in which the soul achieves the highest degree of contemplation.¹⁴⁸

Reform in faith is, according to Hilton, "lyghtly . . . had."¹⁴⁹

However, reform in faith and feeling implies a state of spiritual perfection. In illustrating this more exalted stage, Walter Hilton develops an extended metaphor:

For soth it is. right as a man y^t is brouzt nye to deth through bodily siknes though he receyue a medicyne by the whiche he is restored & siker of his lyfe / he maye not therefore anone rise vp & goo to werke as an hole maye for the feblenes of his body holdeth hym downe that he muste abyde a good whyle & kepe hym well wyth medicyues & dyete hym by mesure after y^e techynge of a leche tyll he maye fully recouer bodily hele. Righte soo ghostly he that is broughte to ghostly dethe through dedely syne though he through medicyne of the sacrament of penaunce be restored to lyfe that he shall not be dapned / neuertheles he is not anone hole of all his passions & of all his fleshly desyres. ne able to contemplacon / but hym behoueth abyde a grete whyle. & take good kepe of hymself / and rule hym so that he myghte recouer full hele of soule. for he shall langern a grete whyle or that he be fully hole / Neuertheles yf that he take medicynes of a good leche. & vse hem intyme with mesure & discrecon he shall moche the sooner be restored to hys ghostly strength. & come to refourmyng in felynge.¹⁵⁰

This medicine figure revives the primitive concept of blood's re-

¹⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 153-154, n. 1.

¹⁴⁹Wynkyn de Worde edition, [pp. 77 verso-78].

¹⁵⁰Ibid., [p. 78].

cuperative quality, a concept adapted to the tenets of Christian theology and mysticism. To evidence complete association with the motif, the Augustinian later identifies Christ as the "specyall leche of ghostly syknes,"¹⁵¹ who "yeueth to dyuers soules sere . . . dyuers medycynes after the felynge of her syknes."¹⁵²

The situation discerned in Hilton's Of Angels' Song, the Epistle on Mixed Life, and Book I of the Scale is sustained in the Scale's second book. While there is a definite permeation by the tenets of blood theology, the Blood Motifs are quite restricted in range and instance. The restraining influence of the dominant didactic element cannot, this writer believes, be over-estimated. More of a teacher than a creative artist, Walter Hilton, nevertheless, demonstrates the obvious importance of Christ's blood sacrifice to a mystical system that is basically Christ-oriented even though it occasionally appears unstable on its Christocentric foundations. But, regardless of any wavering in its Christocentricity, the Scale of Perfection never approaches the imaginative ineptitude inherent in a Theocentric mystical system.

¹⁵¹Ibid., [p. 81].

¹⁵²Ibid.

CHAPTER V
JULIAN OF NORWICH

Life

"This reuelation was made to a Symple creature vnlettyrde leving in deadly flesh the yer of our lord a thousaunde and thre hundered and lxxij the xij Daie of may."¹ In such a fashion, Julian of Norwich, early in the long version of her Revelations of Divine Love, introduces herself to readers of medieval English mysticism. Aside from a few facts of biography revealed in her one work and several external references, little is known of this "Symple creature vnlettyrde." Since she was "xxxth yere old and a halfe"² when God sent the illness that was to serve as a prelude to the Revelations, her birth year is set as 1342. About 1410, Julian, then a recluse in the anchorhold adjoining St. Julian's Church, Norwich, was visited by Margery Kempe, who gave her the title of Dame, "which then as now was usual for Benedictine nuns."³ The Church of St. Julian belonged to the Benedictine nunnery of Carrow.⁴ Naturally, these facts have led to the assumption that

¹Library of Congress MLA microfilm 315, Paris MS, Anglais 40, fol. 3a. The reasons for the selection of this manuscript are explained later in the chapter.

²Ibid., fol. 5a.

³A Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey, "Dame Julian of Norwich," English Spiritual Writers, ed. Charles Davis (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), p. 54.

⁴Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love, ed. Dom Roger Hudson (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1952), p. x.

Julian was a Benedictine. A copyist of the short form of her book identifies the authoress as "a devout woman, and her name is Julian, that is recluse at Norwich, and yet is on life, anno domini mccccxiij."⁵ The last known date for Julian is established by a notation in Archbishop Chichele's register for 1416 of a twenty shilling legacy to "Julian, recluse, at Norwich."⁶

The remainder of Dame Julian's biography is drawn entirely from her Revelations of Divine Love. This faithful daughter of the Church--first "enformyd and groundyd" in "the comyn techyng of holy chyrch"⁷--tells her readers that prior to her visions she desired "thre gyftes by the grace of god. The first was mynd of the passion. The secund was bodilie sicknes. The thurde was to haue of godes gyfte thre woundys."⁸ Explaining her aspirations, Julian indicates that she craved bodily sight of the Passion such as Magdalen and others that were Christ's lovers experienced. True to Christocentric mystical tradition, Julian wanted this "eye-witness" knowledge of the bodily sufferings of Christ so that she might

⁵Julian of Norwich, The Shewings of Lady Julian, ed. Dundas Harford (London: H. R. Allenson, Ltd., 1925), p. 16.

⁶Julian of Norwich, The Revelations of Divine Love, ed. James Walsh, S.J. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), p. 1.

⁷Library of Congress MLA microfilm 315, Paris MS, Anglais 40, fol. 84a.

⁸Ibid., fol. 3a.

suffer as those did who were actually present. The second of her desires is defined as a requesting of "all maner of paynes bodily and ghostly that I should haue if I should haue died. all the dredys and temptations of fiendes and all maner of other paynes, saue the outpassing of the sowle."⁹ This physical illness, Julian believes, will serve as her real, bodily purgation and purification. The third gift of three wounds the Norwich mystic delineates as "the wound of verie contricion, the wound of kynd compassion, and the wound of willfull longing to god."¹⁰ In the short version of the Revelations, the three wounds are specifically related to St. Cecilia's three neck wounds.¹¹

As already cited, the bodily sickness was sent in Julian's thirty-first year. On the fourth night of her illness, she "toke all rightes of holie church and went not to haue leued tyll Day."¹² Three days later, paralysis from the waist down contributes to Julian's pain. At this time, her curate, who had been summoned to be with her at the moment of death, brings a crucifix to her bedside. As her sight begins to fail, darkness fills the chamber with the exception of the area adjacent to the cross.

⁹Ibid., fol. 4a.

¹⁰Ibid., fol. 4b.

¹¹Julian of Norwich, The Shewings of Lady Julian, p. 20.

¹²Library of Congress MLA microfilm 315, Paris MS, Anglais 40, fol. 5a.

Julian describes her experience prior to the actual revelations:

After this the over part of my bodie began to die, so farforth that vnneth I had anie feeling. my most payne was shortnes of breth and faielyng of life. Then went I verily to haue passed. And in this sodenly all my paine was taken fro me. and I was as hole and namely in y^e over parte of my bodie as ever I was befor. I mervelled of this Sodeyn change, for my thought that it was a previe werking of god. and not of kynd. and yet by feeling of this ease I trusted never the more to haue liued. ne the feeling of this ease was no full ease to me. for me thought I had leuer haue ben deliured of this world for my hart was wilfully set ther to. Then cam sodenly to my mynd that I should desyer the second wound of our lordes gifte and his grace that my bodie might be fulfilled w^t mynd and feeling of his blessed passion as I had be-fore praied. ffor I would that his paynes were my paynes w^t compassion and afterward langyng to god. This thought me that I might w^t his grace haue the woundes that I had before Desyred. But in this I desyred never no bodily sight, ne no maner schewing of god. but compassion as me thought that a kynd sowle might haue w^t our lord Iesu. that for loue would become a deadly man. with him I Desyred to suffer liuyng in my deadly bodie, as god would giue me grace.¹³

At this point begins Julian's narration of the revelations, "of whych xv shewyng y^e furst beganne erly in y^e mornynge aboute the oure of iiij."¹⁴ The visions continued until late afternoon. The sixteenth revelation--the "conclusyon and confirmation to all the xv"¹⁵--occured the following night.

Prior to this concluding vision, the Norwich mystic experiences a nocturnal visitation from the devil. The face of a young man, "longe and wonder leen,"¹⁶ appears close to that of the re-

¹³Ibid., fol. 6b-7a.

¹⁴Ibid., fol. 140b-141a.

¹⁵Ibid., fol. 141a.

¹⁶Ibid., fol. 142b.

cluse:

the coloure was reed lyke y^e tylle stone whan it is new brent w^t blacke spottes there in lyke frakylles fouler than y^e tyle stone. his here was rede as rust not scoryd afore. w^t syde lockes hangyng on y^e thonwonges [cheeks]. he grynnyd vpon me w^t a shrewde loke shewde me whyt teth. And so mekylle me thought it the more vgly. Body ne handes had he none shaply but w^t hys pawes he helde me in the throte and woulde a stoppyd my breth and kylde me. but he myght not.¹⁷

"Smoke . . . greete heet and a foule stynch"¹⁸ accompany this "vgly shewing."¹⁹ When Julian realizes that those at her bedside are unaware of the man's presence, she recognizes her experience as the devil's temptation. An ejaculatory "blessyd be god"²⁰ dispels the satanic specter and brings "grete reste and peas w^tout sycknesse of body or drede of conscience."²¹

This tranquillity is accompanied by the sixteenth revelation by which Julian is instructed "w^tout voyce and w^tout opening of lypes":²²

Wytt it now wele it was no ravyng that thou saw to day. but take it and beleve it. and kepe thee there in and comfort thee therw^t and trust ther to and thou shalt not be ovyr-come.²³

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., fol. 143a.

¹⁹Ibid., fol. 142b.

²⁰Ibid., fol. 143a.

²¹Ibid., fol. 143b.

²²Ibid., fol. 145b.

²³Ibid.

A second appearance of Satan then occurs--this time a long temptation to despair. Fixing her eyes on the crucifix, the Norwich recluse, in a fashion reminiscent of Richard Rolle's combating of nocturnal temptation, meditates on the Passion. Throughout the night until nine the next morning, the devil "occupied"²⁴ Julian. Then, with only a stench remaining, the specter departs, leaving the mystic to muse: "I scornede hym. and thus was I delyured of hym by y^e vertu of crystes passion."²⁵

Years of introspection and gradual enlightenment follow as Julian seeks an understanding of her strange experience. Finally, "xv yere after and more,"²⁶ she is given a meaning to her revelations:

I was answeryd in gostly vnderstondyng seying thus. What woldest thou wytt thy lordes menyng. in this thyng wytt it wele. loue was his menyng. who shewyth it the. loue. wherfore shewyth he it the. for loue. holde the therin. thou shalt wytt more in the same. But thou schalt nevyr witt therin other w^toutyn ende.²⁷

So concludes one of the more intriguing works of the medieval English period, a work that is both an autobiography and a mystical treatise; for, as Father Pepler points out, Mother Julian is placed firmly in the unitive way because her "knowledge and sight

²⁴Ibid., fol. 147b.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., fol. 173a.

²⁷Ibid., fol. 173a-173b.

come, as her own title informs us, from the touch of love, from affinity with divine things . . . she has been led to see things in their highest causes."²⁸

Germane to the topic of this dissertation is the degree of intellectuality of the individual mystic; for, frequently, the conscious utilization of the tenets of blood theology and the Blood Motifs is dependent on the mystic's educational background and intellectual capacity. Hence, Julian's self-characterization as a "Symple creature vnlettyrde" requires some analysis. With the exception of Evelyn Underhill who includes Julian with the illiterate St. Catherine of Siena as "some of the least lettered"²⁹ of mystics and Effie Mackinnon who judges the Norwich recluse to be primarily emotional, the weight of critical commentary tends to discount Julian's subjective designation. For example, D. S. H., the anonymous Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey, observes:

Neither her thought nor its expression is that of an uneducated person. Perhaps she knew neither French nor Latin and no more theology than any other woman of her day. This would be in no way surprising, nor would it necessarily imply illiteracy. The knowledge of Latin seems not to have been common even among nuns, and although some acquaintance with French was more usual, fourteenth-century Norfolk notoriously set no great store by that language. It had its own vigorous vernacular culture and was briskly leading a nation-wide return to the official use of English in civil affairs. Certainly Julian was not ignorant of her native language, which she handled with remarkable ease and ability; nor, apparent-

²⁸C. Pepler, O.P., The English Religious Heritage, p. 305.

²⁹E. Underhill, Mysticism, p. 101.

ly, was she unable to read an English Bible, for her book is studded with biblical quotations and allusions. It may originally have been dictated, but the method of its revision rather suggests careful personal application.³⁰

Humility is the impetus for Julian's self-evaluation according to Father Pepler, who envisions her as a "well-instructed woman and of some culture."³¹ But it is Eric Colledge who provides the most coherent comments regarding Julian's literacy. He first explains that medieval art stressed the realistic--often grisly--details of the Passion "for the benefit of those to whom most of our aids to devotion were denied, since, whether laity or religious, they could read neither in Latin nor the vernacular."³² As Colledge notes, bloodshed and violent death were then commonplace. Moreover, vivid details of the Revelations of Divine Love are in the tradition of the sacred art of Norwich, whose "many churches were crowded with art objects such as the pieta which produced such transports of grief in Margery Kempe."³³ A possible conjecture is, of course, that Julian consciously or subconsciously might have amassed her imagery, symbolism, Scriptural knowledge, and theological familiarity from her environment; then, she could have dictated her material as apparently did St. Catherine of Siena and Margery Kempe.

³⁰A Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey, "Dame Julian of Norwich," p. 52.

³¹C. Pepler, O.P., The English Religious Heritage, p. 308n.

³²E. Colledge, p. 35.

³³Ibid., p. 85.

However, Professor Colledge also explains that "unlettered" was "commonly used by medieval writers to mean 'knowing no Latin'" ³⁴ Finally, this writer must, in face of this controversy, agree with Colledge's concluding statement that "we shall never be sure what she meant by her statement that at the time of her revelations she 'knew no letter,'" ³⁵ although--as the following analysis of the Revelations of Divine Love indicates--her writing suggests that Julian was more than a "Symple creature vnlettyrde."

³⁴ Ibid., p. 84.

³⁵ Ibid.

Revelations of Divine Love

The Revelations of Divine Love exists in both an early short version and a later amplified version which is approximately triple the length of the shorter form. The short text is extant in one manuscript--the MS. Brit. Mus. Add. 37790, dated 1413 and called the "Amherst Manuscript" since it was purchased from Lord Amherst's library in 1909. The expanded version survives in four manuscripts of much later date: the sixteenth-century Paris MS. Anglais 40, the seventeenth-century MS. Brit. Mus. Sloane 2499, the eighteenth-century MS. Brit. Mus. Sloane 3705, and the fifteenth-century MS. Westminster Cathedral Library. This last text is an anthology containing extracts from the Revelations as well as from other mystical works such as the Scale of Perfection.

In face of Julian's positive declaration in the longer version that "twenty yere after y^s tyme of the shewyng saue thre monthys I had techyng inwardly,"³⁶ the supposition that the short text is an abbreviation of the long text has been discarded in favor of the theory that the long form represents a process of development highlighted by the gradual enlightenment of its author-ess as she contemplated the meaning of her visions. Furthermore, the heading of the last chapter in the Brit. Mus. MS. Sloane 3705 reveals Julian's displeasure with what appears to have been her earlier effort: "The good Lord shewed y^t y^s Book should be other-

³⁶Library of Congress MLA microfilm 315, Paris MS, Anglais 40, fol. 96b.

wise performed yⁿ at y^e first writeing."³⁷ Consequently, the amplified version is analyzed in this dissertation. Superior manuscript condition and greatest proximity to Julian's Middle English dictate the selection of the Paris MS. for analysis.

Father Pepler calls attention to the fact that the original text of the Revelations seems to have been written in a combination of the East Anglian and Northern dialects, which he believes suggests a definite Yorkshire connection. Moreover, this dialect fusion, according to Father Pepler, "lends colour to the hypothesis that this stream of mysticism was carried back and forth in the traffic of merchants."³⁸ Yorkshire wool was apparently shipped with regularity to Norwich, "then the second city in the kingdom."³⁹

Some disagreement exists among the manuscripts as to the exact date of Julian's revelations: the Paris MS. gives a May 13, 1373 date; whereas, the other texts establish a May 8, 1373 date. Generally, the latter date is accepted owing to the predominance of manuscript citation. In addition, May 7 was the medieval feast of St. John Beverley, a popular saint whose intercession, according to Henry V, was responsible for the English victory at Agin-

³⁷Library of Congress MLA facsimile, British Museum, Sloane MS, 3705, fol. 272.

³⁸C. Pepler, O.P., The English Religious Heritage, pp. 307-308.

³⁹A Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey, "Dame Julian of Norwich," p. 53.

court.⁴⁰ Julian includes the saint with "magdaleyne. Peter and paule. thomas and Jude"⁴¹ as examples of those whose sins were "no shame but wurshype to man."⁴² The Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey speculates that the May 3 feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross might have been Providence's immediate preparation for the visions.⁴³ Therefore, logic seems to presume the early date in order to make the revelations as proximate as possible to these significant feasts. Moreover, this writer suggests the possibility that a misreading of a poorly written "viii" could have resulted in the "xiii" variance. This conjecture should be especially plausible to anyone acquainted with the inferior script of the Brit. Mus. MS. Sloane 2499 which makes deciphering the date almost impossible.⁴⁴

Actually, any date appearing in a work that contains so little positive biographical or environmental information seems paradoxical. Julian, in an apparent effort to remain anonymous, repeatedly designates herself only as "creature." She omits any reference whatsoever to convent life. This void leads the Bene-

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 54.

⁴¹Library of Congress MLA microfilm 315, Paris MS, Anglais 40, fol. 68a.

⁴²Ibid., fol. 67b.

⁴³A Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey, "Dame Julian of Norwich," p. 57.

⁴⁴Library of Congress MLA microfilm 312, British Museum, Sloane MS, 2499, fol. 2.

dictine of Stanbrook Abbey to question whether Julian was a religious at the time of her revelations.⁴⁵ Father Walsh attempts a resolution of the paradox by considering the date a reflection of Julian's desire to establish historicity for her work.⁴⁶

The first chapter of the long version of the Revelations provides an excellent preview of Julian's visions and their integration with Church dogma:

This is a reuelacion of loue that Ihu Christ our endles blisse made in .xvi. shewynges. of which, The first is of his precious crownyng of thornes. And ther in was contened & specified the blessed trinitie w^t the incarnation. and the vnithing betweene god and mans sowle w^t manie fayer schewynges and techynges of endelesse wisdom and loue, in which all the shewynges that foloweth be grovndide and ioyned. The secunde is of y^e Discoloring of his fayer face, in tokenyng of his Deerworthie passion. The third is that our lord god almightie all wisdom and all loue. right also verily as he hath made all thinges that is. right also verilie he Doeth and Worketh all thinges that is Done. The iiijth is skorgyng of his tender bodie with plenteuous shedding of his precious bloud. The vth is that the feende is overcome by the precious passion of Christ. The vith is the worschippfull thangking of our lord god in which he rewardyth all his blessed seruanntes in heauen. The vijth is often tymes feeling of wele and of wooe. feeling of wele is gracious touching and lightnyng w^t true Sekernes of endlesse ioy the feeling of woo is of temptation by heauenes and werines of our fleshely liuyng w^t ghostely vnderstanding y^t we be kept also verily in loue in woo as in wele by the goodnes of god. The viij is

⁴⁵ A Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey, "Dame Julian of Norwich," pp. 55-56.

⁴⁶ Julian of Norwich, The Revelations of Divine Love, ed. James Walsh, S.J., p. 3.

the last paynes of Christ and his cruel Drying.⁴⁷ The ixth is of y^e lykyng which is in the blessed trinitie of y^e hard passion of Christ after his ruwfull Dying, in which ioy and lykyng he will y^t we be in solace and myrth w^t hym tylle that we come to the glorie in heauen. The x is our lord Ihu shewyth by loue his blessed hart evyn clouen on two. The xi is an high ghostly shewing of his deer worthy mother. The xij is that our lord god is all souereyn being. The xiiijth is that our lord god will that we haue great regarde to all the deed which he hath done in the great noblete of all thyng making and of the excellence of manes making y^e which is aboue all his workes. and of y^e precious amendes that he hath made for mans synne, turnyng all our blame in to endlesse worshippe. Than menneth 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 all that is not well. and thou shall see it. and in this he will that we kepe vs in the fayth. and truth of holie church. not willing to wite his priveties not but as it longyth to vs in this life. The xiiij is that our lord god is grownd of our beseking. heer in was seen two fayer properties. that one is rightfull preaier. that other is verie trust. which he will both be one lyke large. and thus our praier liketh him. and he of his goodnes fullfillyth it. The xv is that we shuld sodeynly be takyn from all our payne. and from all our woo. and of his goodnes we shall come vppe aboue wher we shall haue our lord Iesu to our meed and for to be fulfilled w^t ioy and blisse in heauen. The xvi is that the blessed trinitie our maker in Christ Iesu our sauour endlessly Dwelleth in our sowle worschippfully rewlyng and comannding all thing & vs mightly and wisely sauynge and keepyng for loue. and we shall not be overcome of our enemy.⁴⁸

As this passage clearly indicates, the Revelations of Divine Love are dominated by various facets of blood theology. In fact, Jul-

⁴⁷For some unexplained reason, Father Walsh and Dom Hudleston translate "drying" as "dying." As is demonstrated later in this analysis, the scribe obviously meant what he wrote. In partial defence of these two editors, it should be noted that in the Paris MS., the basis for Father Walsh's edition and a collateral text for Dom Hudleston's edition, the "r" is inserted between the "d" and the "y."

⁴⁸Library of Congress MLA microfilm 315, Paris MS, Anglais 40, fol. 1a-3a.

ian's work might well be judged the most nearly complete manual of blood redemption produced by the Yorkshire mystics if not by the entire medieval period.

The work runs the gamut of the numerous attributes of the Passion. Foremost is the ability of the Passion to effect victory over Satan. In addition to the aforementioned reference to Julian's use of Passion meditation to overcome her temptation by the devil, three other allusions to this quality are discerned in the Revelations. It is revealed to Julian that the Passion has "strenght inough"⁴⁹ so that "all creaturs liuyng . . . sould be saued against all the fiendes of hell and against all ghostely enemies."⁵⁰ She is also instructed that "here w^t is the feende ovyrcome. This worde sayde our lorde menyng his blessyd passyon as he shewed before."⁵¹ Again, "oure good lorde shewde menyng his blessyd passyon here w^t is the fende ovyr come."⁵²

Furthermore, the Passion "restored vs . . . and euer kepeth vs in his blessed loue";⁵³ it is an aid against temptation⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Ibid., fol. 8a.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., fol. 27a.

⁵² Ibid., fol. 146a.

⁵³ Ibid., fol. 10b.

⁵⁴ Ibid., fol. 75b.

as well as a comfort against the pain of sin.⁵⁵ Lastly, the Passion is responsible for mankind's knowledge and love of Christ's blissful Godhead:

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 w^t gracyous mynde in his swete manhode and his blessed passyon w^t curtesse mervelyng in his hye ovyr passyng goodnesse.⁵⁶

Of the Blood Motifs discerned in Julian's vivid imagery, one of the more frequently and clearly defined motifs is that of the abundant bloodshedding. In the first revelation, the Norwich mystic sees "reed bloud rynnyng Downe from vnder the garlande [crown of thorns] hote and freyshely plentuously and liuely."⁵⁷ Later in the narration of the initial vision, Julian resumes her description of the blood:

I saw the bodely syght lastyng of the plenous bledyng of the hede. the grett Droppes of blode felle Downe fro vnder the garlonde lyke pelottes semyng as it had comyn ouzte of the veynes. And in the comyng ouzte they were bromme rede. for the blode was full thycke. And in the spredyng abrode they were bryght rede. And whan it came at the browes. ther they vanysschyd.⁵⁸

But the most imaginative expression of the bleeding which continues throughout the first vision is observed in the following sim-

⁵⁵Ibid., fol. 50b.

⁵⁶Ibid., fol. 131a.

⁵⁷Ibid., fol. 7a-7b.

⁵⁸Ibid., fol. 14a.

ile: "The plentuousshede is lyke to the droppes of water that falle of the evesyng[eaves] of an howse after a grete shower of reyne that falle so thycke that no man may nomber them w^t no bodely wyt."⁵⁹

The fourth revelation also stresses the copiousness of Christ's bloodletting. After the scourging, Dame Julian "sees":

all about the sweete body the hote blode ranne out so plentuously that ther was neyther seen skyn ne wounde but as it were all blode. And when it cam wher it shulde haue falle Downe ther it varysschyd. not w^t standyng the bledyng contynued a whyle tyll it myght be seen w^t avysement. And this was so plentuous to my syght that me thought if it had ben so in kynde and in substance for that tyme it shulde haue made the bedde all on bloude and haue passyde over all about.⁶⁰

The Norwich recluse, then, explains the vision:

Than cam to my mynde that god hath made waters plentuous in erth to our servys. And to our bodely eese for tendyr loue that he hath to vs. But yet lykyth hym better that we take fullholosomly hys blessyd blode to wassch vs of synne. ffor ther is no lycour that is made that lykyth hym so wele to yeue vs. ffor it is most plentuous as it is most precious. And that by the vertu of the blessyd godhead. And it is our owne kynde. and blessyd fully ovyr flowyth vs by the vertu of his precious loue. The dere worthy bloude of our lorde Ihu crist. also verely as it is most precious. as verely it is most plentuous. Beholde and see the vertu of this precious plenty of hys dere worthy blode. it Descendyd Downe in to helle and brak her bondes and delyuerd them all that were there which belongeth to the courte of hevyn. The precious plenty of his dere worthy blode ovyr flowyth all erth and is redy to wash all creatures of synne. which be of good wyll. haue ben. and shall be. The precious plenty of his dere worthy blode. ascendyth vp in to hevyn in the blessed body of our lorde Iesu crist. And ther is in hym bledyng. preyeng for vs to the father and is. and shalbe. as long as vs ned-

⁵⁹Ibid., fol. 14b.

⁶⁰Ibid., fol. 25a-25b.

yth. And ovyr more it flowyth in all heauen en Joying the saluacion of all mankynd that be ther. and shall be fulfyll- yng the nubur that faylyth.⁶¹

Interestingly, this explication demonstrates an interdependence and fusion of motifs; for, in addition to the plenteous blood motif, two other motifs are apparent. The theme of the blood ransom is revealed in the personification of the blood's flowing into hell to deliver the imprisoned by breaking their bonds. Secondly, the perpetual mystical bath figure is evident in the readiness of the blood "to wash all creatures of synne. which be of good wyll. haue ben. and shall be."

In a rather grisly manner, the sixteenth chapter describes Julian's eighth revelation which most graphically delineates Christ's consummate bloodshedding:

After thys crist shewde a parte of hys passyon nere his dyeng. I saw the swete face. as it were drye and blodeles w^t pale dyeng. and deede pale langhuryng and than turned more deede in to blew. And after in browne blew. as the flessch turned more depe dede. ffor his passion shewde to me most properly in his blessyd face. And namely in hys lypes. ther in saw I these iiij colours. tho y^t were be fore fressch and rody lyuely and lykyng to my syght. This was a petufulle chaungyng to se this depe dyeng. And also hys nose cloggeran to geder and dryed to my syght. And the swete body waxid browne and blacke alle chaungyd and turned ouzte of y^e feyer fressch and lyuely coloure of hy selfe. in to drye dyeng. ffor that same tyme that oure blessyd sauour dyed vppon the rode. it was a dry sharp wynd. wonder colde as to my syght. And what tyme that y^e precyous blode was bled out of the swete body that myght passe ther fro yet ther was a moyster in the swete flessch of crist as it was shewde. Blodlessched and payne dryed w^t in. and blowyng of the wynde and colde comyng from w^t out. And thesse iiij dryed the

⁶¹ Ibid., fol. 25b-26b.

flessch of crist by prosses of tyme.⁶²

The significance of "drying" in the catalogue of Julian's revelations becomes evident in this passage. The Norwich mystic views the drying of Christ's flesh as the most severe pain of the Passion. This surmise is only appropriate, for the complete expulsion of moisture is the biological culmination of Christ's absolute blood sacrifice.

In the seventeenth chapter, Julian considers Christ's cross comment "I thirst"⁶³ as a double ramification of this total drying: a bodily and ghostly thirst. The chapter then concentrates on the physical aspect of Christ's exhaustive blood surrender:

And I vnderstode by the bodyly thurste. that the body had feylyng of moyster, for the blessyde flessch and bonys was lefte alle alone w^tout blode and moyster. the blessyd body dried alle a loon long tyme w^t wryngyng of the nayles and weyght of the body. ffor I vnderstode that for tendyrnes of the swete handes and the swete feet by the grete hardnes and grevous of the naylys the woundys waxid wyde and the body satylde for weyght by long tyme hangyng and persyng and rausyng of y^e heed and byndyng of the crowne alle bakyn w^t drye blode w^t the swet here clyngyng the drye flessch to the thornys. and the thornys to the flessch dryeng. And in the begynnyng whyle the flessch was fressch and bledyng the contynualle syttyng of the thornes made the woundes wyde. And ferthermore I saw that the swet skyne and the tendyr flessch w^t the here and w^t the blode was alle rasyd and losyde abone w^t the thornes and brokyn in many pecis. And were hangyng as they wolde hastely haue fallen downe whyle it had kynde moyster. how it was doone I saw nott. But I vnderstode that it was w^t the sharpe thornes. And the boys-touris grevous syttyng on. of the garlonde not sparyng and

⁶²Ibid., fol. 32a-32b.

⁶³Ibid., fol. 33b.

w^tout pytte. that alle tho brake the swet skynne w^t the flessch. and y^e here losyd it from the boone wher thorow it was brokyn on pecys as a cloth and saggyng downwarde as it wolde hastely haue fallen for heuynes and for lowsenes. And that was grete sorow and drede to me. ffor me thought that I wolde nott for my life haue seene it fall. This contynued a whyle. And after it began to chaunge. And I behelde and marveyld how it myght be. And than I saw it was. for it beganne to dry. and stynt a parte of the weyght. that was rownd about the garland and so it was enuyroned all about as it were garland vpon garland. the garlonde of thornes was deyde w^t the blode. and that other garlond and the hede all was one coloure as cloteryd blode when it was dryed. the skynne and the flesshe that semyd of the face and of the body. was smalle rympylde w^t a tawny coloure lyke a drye bord whan it is agyd. And the face more browne than the body.⁶⁴

The spiritual thirst of Christ is not adequately defined until the thirty-first chapter:

ffor thys is the gostly thyrst of cryst the loue longyng y^t lastyth and evyr shall tylle we se that syght at domys day . . . therefore this is hys thurste and loue longyng of vs all to geder here in hym to oure endlesse blysse.⁶⁵

This unitive concept is repeated toward the end of the Revelations:

I saw that god may do alle that vs nedyth. and theyse thre y^t I shall say. nede. loue. longyng. Pytte and loue kep- yth vs in the tyme of oure nede. And longyng in y^e same loue drawyth vs in to hevyn for y^e thurst of god is to haue the generalle man in to hym. in whych thurst he hath drawn his holy soules y^t be now in blysse. and so gettyng his lyvely mebris. evyr he drawyth and dryngkyth. and yett hym thurst- yth and longyth.⁶⁶

A final instance of the plenteous blood motif is discerned

⁶⁴ Ibid., fol. 33b-34b.

⁶⁵ Ibid., fol. 55a-55b.

⁶⁶ Ibid., fol. 157a.

late in the Revelations. The sixty-first chapter contains a hyperbolic reference to the mixture of blood and water that flowed from Christ's side: "for the flode of mercy that is his deerworthy blode and precious water is plentuous to make vs feyer and clene."⁶⁷ Again, the mystic bath figure is evident as an integral component of the copious blood theme.

Closely correlated to the plenteous blood motif is a haven image of the tenth vision that is quite remindful of Richard Rolle's dove-cot figure of Meditation II. The side wound from which flows the "flode of mercy" of the previous paragraph is viewed by Julian as "a feyer and delectable place. and large Inow for alle mankynde that shalle be savyd and rest in pees and in loue."⁶⁸ This vision recalls for Julian "hys dere worthy blode and hys precious water whych he lett poure out for loue."⁶⁹ Theologically, the great expanse of the side wound corresponds to the infinite source of grace which is represented by the abundant blood sacrifice.

One section of the Revelations of Divine Love causing some critical controversy involves Julian's attitude toward sin. In chapter thirty-seven, the Norwich recluse reveals an inward revelation that she would sin; nevertheless, God with great love and

⁶⁷Ibid., fol. 133a.

⁶⁸Ibid., fol. 46a.

⁶⁹Ibid., fol. 46b.

assurance consoles Julian by informing her, "I kepe the fulle
suerly."⁷⁰ The next chapter begins with Julian's problematical
interpretation of this phase of her experience: "And god shewed
that synne shall be no shame. but wurshype to man ffor ryght as
to every synne is asweryng a payne by truth. Ryght so for every
synne to the same soule is gevyn a blysse by loue."⁷¹ Julian do-
cuments her opinion that "the soule that shalle come to hevyn. is
so precyous to god. and the place so wurshypfulle that the good-
nes of god sufferyth nevr that soule to synne fynally"⁷² by re-
calling such personages of the Old and New Testament such as Mary
Magdalen, Peter, Paul, Thomas, and Jude who "be knowen in the
chyrch on erth. w^t ther synes and it is to them no shame. but
alle is turned them to worshype."⁷³ In the fortieth chapter,
God reveals to Julian that the mystical love union--being "onyd in
blysse"⁷⁴--is responsible for the forgiveness of sins by the grace
and mercy effected by the "werkynge of the holy gost. and the ver-
tu of cristes passion."⁷⁵

To illustrate the nature of His judgment regarding man and

⁷⁰Ibid., fol. 67a.

⁷¹Ibid., fol. 67b.

⁷²Ibid., fol. 68a.

⁷³Ibid., fol. 68b.

⁷⁴Ibid., fol. 71b.

⁷⁵Ibid.

his transgressions, God presents to Julian "a marvelous example of a lorde and of a seruannt."⁷⁶ At first, the parable teaches that there is "no manner of wrath in god. neyther for shorte tyme nor for long."⁷⁷ Then, the narrative centers around a servant who anxious to perform the will of his lord, nevertheless, falls into a ravine while on a mission for his lord. Consequently, he suffers seven great pains:

The furst was the soore brosyng that he toke in his fallyng whych was to hym moch payne. The seconde was y^e hevynesse of his body. The thyrde was fybyllesse that folowyth of theyse two. The iij was that he was blyndyd in his reson. and stonyd in his mynde so ferforth that all most he had forgotten his owne loue. The v was y^e he myght nott ryse. The vi was payne most marvelous to me. And that was that he leye aloone. I lokyd alle about and behelde and ferre ne nere. ne hys ne lowe. I saw to hym no helpe. The vijth was that the place whych he ley in. was along harde and grevous.⁷⁸

Julian marvels that "this seruannt myght mekely suffer all this woo."⁷⁹ Furthermore, no fault or blame is attributed to the servant, "ffor oonly hys good wyll and his grett desyer was cause of his fallyng."⁸⁰ The servant's unquestioning endurance of his fallen state prompts the lord to grant him everlasting reward. At this point the vision of the parable terminates. "Twenty yere af-

⁷⁶Ibid., fol. 82b.

⁷⁷Ibid., fol. 89b-90a.

⁷⁸Ibid., fol. 94a.

⁷⁹Ibid., fol. 94b.

⁸⁰Ibid.

ter y^e tyme of the shewyng saue thre monthys,"⁸¹ the parable is explained in detail to Julian by inward teaching: "The lorde that satt solemly in rest and in peas. I vnderstode that he is god. The seruannt that stode before hym. I vnderstode that he was shewed for Adam."⁸² Further enlightenment establishes: "In the servant is comprehendyd the seconde person of y^e trynyte. And in the seruant is comprehendyd Adam that is to sey all men."⁸³ Man's power and goodness are his legacy from Christ; his feebleness and blindness come from Adam. This oneness of dual natures results in Christ's assuming all of mankind's responsibility for sin; hence, Julian establishes validity for her predominantly optimistic tone--"alle shalle be wele."⁸⁴

Although Miss Mackinnon, a non-Catholic, attributes what she believes to be teaching contrary to the Church to the recluse's fundamental optimism,⁸⁵ most Catholic commentators on the Revelations consider Julian's attitude toward sin to be compatible with Catholic dogma. Eric Colledge discerns in the controversy an inherent difficulty in reconciling immeasurable divine love with the concept of eternal damnation; nevertheless, he finds no real

⁸¹ Ibid., fol. 96b.

⁸² Ibid., fol. 97a.

⁸³ Ibid., fol. 101b.

⁸⁴ Ibid., fol. 62b. Similar statements appear on fol. 59b and fol. 136b.

⁸⁵ E. Mackinnon, p. 297.

deviation from Church theology in Julian's attitude.⁸⁶ Dom Roger Hudleston sees Julian's concept of sin as a combining of two theological truths: the immutability of God's love and Scripture's revelation that the elect of God are those "Blessed . . . to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin (Rom. iv.8)."⁸⁷ The Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey finds the view of the Norwich mystic to be completely orthodox⁸⁸ as do Father Pepler⁸⁹ and Father Molinari,⁹⁰ who have, in considerable detail, synthesized the Revelations to exhibit the profundity and indefectible orthodoxy of Julian's entire mystical theology.

Julian's use of the Adam figure, one of the more significant entities of blood theology, merits some investigation. As a type of Christ, Adam enjoys several parallels with mankind's Redeemer. For example, Julian explains, "Adam fell fro lyfe to deth in to the slade [depths] of this wrechyd worlde. And after that in to hell. Goddys son fell w^t Adam in to the slade of the mey-

⁸⁶E. Colledge, p. 87.

⁸⁷Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love, ed. Dom Roger Hudleston, p. xxiv.

⁸⁸A Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey, "Dame Julian of Norwich," p. 56.

⁸⁹C. Pepler, O.P., The English Religious Heritage, pp. 329-339.

⁹⁰Paul Molinari, S.J., Julian of Norwich: the Teaching of a Fourteenth-Century Mystic (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1957).

dens wombe."⁹¹ Moreover, both were created humanly perfect; and both were tempted--Adam in Eden and Christ in the desert. Adam's side was the source of Eve, man's physical helpmate, just as Christ's side wound is the source of the regenerative sacraments that are man's spiritual helpmates. In addition, there are legendary connections. After Adam's death, the Archangel Michael is supposed to have instructed Eve to plant a branch from the Tree of Knowledge on Adam's grave. When the branch had matured into a tree, legend records that Solomon moved it into the temple garden. Later, it was discarded and thrown into the pool of Bethesda, where it remained until timber was needed to fashion Christ's cross.⁹² At the crucifixion, a skull--presumably Adam's--was unearthed as the supporting hole for the cross was dug. Cast aside, it rested near the foot of the cross to be "washed" as Christ's blood flowed down the cross's upright.⁹³ Finally, the sacrifice of Adam's son Abel is traditionally viewed as a foretelling of the crucifixion.⁹⁴

The incorporation of Adam into Julian's probable adapta-

⁹¹Library of Congress MLA microfilm 315, Paris MS, Anglaise 40, fol. 101b-102a.

⁹²G. Ferguson, p. 50.

⁹³F. Webber, p. 28.

⁹⁴G. Ferguson, p. 74.

tion of the suffering servant allegory of Isaias⁹⁵ is symptomatic of Julian's blood emphasis. For at every turn, the Norwich recluse delineates her revelations in graphic terms of blood theology. Even as the servant stands before his lord, he is clad in Adam's kirtle, a kirtle stained with the "swete of Adams trav-eyle"⁹⁶ and tattered. However, as Julian interprets the scene, the kirtle becomes representative of Christ's crucified body:

by that his kertyll was at the poynt to be ragged and rent. is vnderstond the roddys and scorgys. the thornes and the naylys. the drawyng and the draggyng his tendyr flessch rentyng as I saw in some party the flessch was rent fro the head panne fallyng on pecys vnto the tyme y^e bledyng feylyd. And than it beganne to dry agayne clevyng to the bone.⁹⁷

Clearly, the designation of the Revelations as a "prolonged meditation upon the Passion of Christ"⁹⁸ is appreciably advanced by Julian's Adam-Christ characterization.

The degree to which the Norwich mystic is imbued with man's blood heritage is disclosed in the deductive reasoning of her retrospective glance at the Passion dominated revelations:

I had syght of y^e passion of crist in dyuerse shewyng. In the furst. In the secunde. In y^e iijth. in y^e viijth. as it is before seyde wher in I had in part felyng of y^e sorow

⁹⁵Isaias 52.13; 53.4-7.

⁹⁶Library of Congress MLA microfilm 315, Paris MS, Anglais 40, fol. 103a.

⁹⁷Ibid., fol. 104b-105a.

⁹⁸A Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey, "Dame Julian of Norwich," p. 58.

of oure lady. And of hys tru frendys that saw hys paynes.
but I saw nott so properly specyfyed the Jewes that dyd hym
to deth. but nott w^t stondyng I knew in my feyth that they
ware a cursyd and dampnyd w^tout ende. sayng who y^t were
convertyd by grace.⁹⁹

The blood vengeance concept is apparently so pronounced in Julian's concept of the Passion that she assumes the vendetta code even though in four distinct visions this facet of Christ's blood sacrifice is consistently and conspicuously omitted.

Various of the Blood Motifs that have become rather commonplace since the Richard Rolle analysis dot the Revelations of Divine Love. The purchase "from endlesse paynes of helle,"¹⁰⁰ effected by the "same loue y^t . . . made vs and . . . bouzte vs"¹⁰¹ and coupled with the Savior's making "vs the eyers w^t hym in hys blysse,"¹⁰² recalls the devil's rights and Charter themes. Furthermore, the Reddendo clause is implied in the debt that our soul owes God for His mercy and forgiveness: "Two poyntes longyng to our soule by dett. One is that we reverently marveyle. That othyr is that we meekly suffer evyr enloyeng in god."¹⁰³

The unbinding from slavery motif occurs¹⁰⁴ as well as se-

⁹⁹Library of Congress MLA microfilm 315, Paris MS, Anglals
40, fol. 60a-60b.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., fol. 46a.

¹⁰¹Ibid., fol. 119a.

¹⁰²Ibid., fol. 41b.

¹⁰³Ibid., fol. 85a.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., fol. 38a.

veral instances of the knit figure. In the unitive way, "all his [God's] membris be knytt"¹⁰⁵ in the body of Christ. Also, the unitive life is indicated as a creation consequence by which man's soul is "knyte to god";¹⁰⁶ and God "in oure making he knytt vs and onyd vs to hym selfe."¹⁰⁷ In another passage, "god knytt hym to oure body in the meydens wombe."¹⁰⁸ In another and concluding variation, the mystical marriage theme is fused with the knit motif: "And in the knyttyng and in the onyng he [God] is oure very tru spouse. And we his lovyd syfe. and his feyer meydyn."¹⁰⁹

The medicine motif appears several times. Christ, the glorious Asseeth [remedy]¹¹⁰ to Adam's sin, teaches: "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."¹¹¹ Contrition, compassion, and true longing for God--effects of Christ's Passion--are the "medycins"¹¹² by which "every synnfulle

¹⁰⁵Ibid., fol. 56a.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., fol. 112b.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., fol. 123a.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., fol. 122a.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., fol. 123a.

¹¹⁰Ibid., fol. 53b.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Ibid., fol. 70a.

soule be helyd."¹¹³ Elsewhere in the Revelations, reference is made to the wounds as healing agents: "the blessed woundes of oure sauour be opyn and enjoye to hele vs."¹¹⁴ In the tradition of ancient blood purification, God also "shall all besprynkyl vs in his precious blode and make oure soule full softe and full mylde and heele vs fulle feyer by processe of tyme."¹¹⁵ Finally, Christ is simply defined as "oure medycyne."¹¹⁶

Miscellaneous elements of blood dogma permeate the Revelations. The first vision of Christ's bleeding head is "a ghostly sight of his homely louyng."¹¹⁷ In the sixth chapter, which is devoted to prayer, man is entreated to pray "to god for his holie flesh. and for his precious bloud. his holie passion. his dere worthy Death and worshipfull woundes . . . his sweete mothers loue . . . his holie crosse that he died on."¹¹⁸ Later in the Revelations, man is informed that "the sufferance of oure lorde god is wurschypfulle."¹¹⁹ "A fygur and a lyknes of our fowle blacke

¹¹³ Ibid., fol. 70a-70b.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., fol. 133a.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., fol. 135b.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., fol. 169a.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., fol. 9a.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., fol. 11a-11b.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., fol. 63a.

dede. which that our feyre bryght blessed lord bare for our synne"¹²⁰ is the explication of the discolored, battered countenance of Christ, the subject of the second revelation. "Surenesse fro drede of fendes"¹²¹ is assured by visual viewing of the cross. The generosity of the victim of the blood sacrifice of the cross is matter for several passages. In one, Christ is characterized as one "that wyllyngfully . . . chose it [the Passion] w^t grett Desyer. And myldely . . . sufferyd it w^t grett Ioy."¹²² In the ninth vision, Christ "settyth at naught hys traveyle and his passion and his cruelle and shamfulle deth."¹²³ With the words "if I myght suffer more, I wolde Suffer more,"¹²⁴ the Redeemer demonstrates to Julian "y^t as often as he myght dye. as often he wolde. and loue shulde nevyr lett hym haue rest, till he hath done it."¹²⁵ Lastly, Christ is the "gladde geauer"¹²⁶ who "takyth but lytylle hede at the thyng that he geavyth. but alle hys desyr. and alle hys intent is to plese hym. and solace hym to

¹²⁰ Ibid., fol. 21a.

¹²¹ Ibid., fol. 37b.

¹²² Ibid., fol. 40b.

¹²³ Ibid., fol. 42b.

¹²⁴ Ibid., fol. 42b-43a.

¹²⁵ Ibid., fol. 43a.

¹²⁶ Ibid., fol. 45b.

whome he geavyth it."¹²⁷

The most unusual figure in the Revelations of Divine Love is that of Jesus as mankind's mother. This identification is missing in the short version of the work. Although primarily an Eucharist motif in that "moder Ihu he may fede vs w^t hym selfe and doth full curtesly and full tendyrly w^t the blessed sacrament, that is precyous fode of very lyfe,"¹²⁸ the motherhood of Christ is also linked to various features of the Passion. For example, Christ's side wound figures in Julian's analogous delineation:

the moder may ley hyr chyldre tenderly to hyr brest. But oure tender mother Ihu he may homely lede vs in to his blessyd brest. by his swet opyn syde and shewe vs there in perty of the godhed and y^e Ioyes of hevyn w^t gostely suernesse of endlesse blysse.¹²⁹

Secondly, juxtaposition establishes a correspondence between the medicine motif and the Christ-Mother figure: "the blessed woundes of oure sauour be opyn and enloye to hele vs. The swet gracious handes of oure moder be redy and diligent a bout vs."¹³⁰ And, thirdly, Christ's sacrifice upon the cross is compared with the birth process: "and in the takyng of oure kynd he quyckyd vs. And in his blessyd dyeng vppon the crosse he bare vs to endlesse

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid., fol. 129a-129b.

¹²⁹ Ibid., fol. 129b.

¹³⁰ Ibid., fol. 133a.

lyfe."¹³¹

The suitability of the motherhood of Christ theme has been matter for some evaluation. Again, Miss Mackinnon's Protestantism prevents her being cognizant of the Catholic implication of the symbolism--in this case, both the Eucharistic and Mystical Body significance. Miss Mackinnon attempts to develop a case, predicated on erotic symbolism and the regression of child-mysticism, for her contention that the maternal identification is the result of Julian's latent sexual instincts: "Julian obtains a sublimated relationship very natural in her situation and altogether necessary for her emotional needs. Christ is Man and Mother; consequently he is the object of her love and the protector of her weakness."¹³² In an effort to illustrate that the identification of Christ as mankind's mother was well-known and actually a familiar theme in medieval devotions, the Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey observes:

This idea, said to be derived from St. Anselm, is actually to be found, at least in germ, in St. Augustine and St. Ambrose; indeed it goes back to the prophet Isaias. It appears no fewer than three times under different guises in the Ancrene Riwe and is met with again in the fifteenth-century Quia Amore Languet; in other words it is a familiar theme in medieval devotion.¹³³

¹³¹ Ibid., fol. 136a.

¹³² E. Mackinnon, p. 294.

¹³³ A Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey, "Dame Julian of Norwich," p. 62.

The propriety of the figure within the contexts of the Eucharist, the Passion, and the mystical union is indicated by Father Pepler:

This motherhood is appropriated to the Second person of the blessed Trinity because he is the Word in which all things are made; he is thus the womb constantly bearing us, constantly nourishing us. The Word gives us our substance as a mother gives substance to her child; and therefore merely in the order of Nature the Word bears us as our mother. In the order of Mercy and Grace far more so because he took our nature, died for us in mercy and restored us to the life of grace. Again all grace is his grace, the grace of the God-man, so that we are enclosed in the gracious womb of the Word made flesh by grace. This is the work of the Trinity begetting each individual in being and in grace, but the Son is the Mother in whom we are given life. Without going into the doctrine more deeply we may see from this how God's eternal decree can be seen as a maternal conceiving, nurturing, rearing of each individual, for it is the Mother who has that individual, concrete, possessive interest in the child where the father is more objective and abstract in his attitude.¹³⁴

Later in his analysis of the mother metaphor, the author of The English Religious Heritage states:

In all this Julian's concentration on the motherhood of Christ and the unitive oneness we are reminded of the fundamental teaching of St. Thomas on the Mystical Body and the Eucharistic Body of Christ. Having explained that the Eucharist is the sacrament of unity, that its effect is the union of the mystical body, he goes on to show that this is identical with the union of actual love of God in the soul. "When the sacrament itself is received, grace is increased, and the spiritual life perfected . . . so that man may stand perfect in himself by union with God" (III, 79, I ad I). The perfect union of the soul with God in Christ is the reality of the sacrament--this is the Real Presence and this is the Church. No wonder, then, that St. Thomas turns to some of the great mystical writers to declare the truths herein contained. St. Augustine, he reminds us, heard Christ speaking to him "Nor shalt thou change me into thyself, as food of thy flesh, but thou shalt be changed into me" (Confessions

363. ¹³⁴C. Pepler, O.P., The English Religious Heritage, p.

7: III, 73, 2 ad 2). And again it is Dionysius who said that the Eucharist was the end and consummation of all the sacraments (Eccl. Hier., 3, III, 63, 6). The Eucharist is necessary for the consummation of the spiritual life (III, 73, 2) and that indeed is the goal.¹³⁵

Obviously, there is no need to be as ingenious as Miss Mackinnon chose to be in her explication of the mother figure; for the motherhood of Christ is completely congruous with fundamental Catholic doctrine.

The Revelations of Divine Love follows the pattern discerned in Richard Rolle's mystical writings: a direct ratio appears between Christocentric mysticism and the incident of the Blood Motifs. Julian speaks of five manners of the Passion being revealed to her:

ffor oure curteyse lorde. Shewyd his passyon to me in fyue manners. Of whych the furst is. y^e bledyng of the hede. The seconde Dyscolowryng of his blessyd face. The thyrde is. the plentuous bledyng of the body in semyng of scorgyng. The iiijth is. the depe drying. theyse iiij as it is before seyde. for the paynes of the passion. And the fyfte is. thys that was shewyth for the Ioy and the blysse of the passion. for it is goddes wylle that we haue true lykyng w^t hym in oure saluacion and ther in he wylle that we be myghtly comfortyd and strengthyd and thus wylle he meryly w^t hys grace that oure soule be occupied. for we be his blysse, for in vs he lykyth w^t out end. And so schall we in hym w^t hys grace. Alle that he doyth for vs. and hath Done. and evyr shalle was nevyr cost ne charge to hym ne myght be. but only that he dyed in our manhede. begynnyng at the swete incarnation and lastyng to the blessyd vpryfyng on ester morow. so long duryd the cost and the charge. about our redempcion in deed. of whych dede. he evyr Ioyeth endlesly as it is befor seyde.¹³⁶

¹³⁵Ibid., pp. 365-366.

¹³⁶Library of Congress MLA microfilm 315, Paris MS, Anglais 40, fol. 44b-45a.

However, as evidenced in this chapter, the threefold teaching modes of the revelations--"by bodely syght. and by worde formyd in myne vnderstodyng. and by gostely syghte"¹³⁷ are clearly more extensive in their theology of blood foundation than these five manners would imply. Constantly, the Norwich mystic resorts to the vivid appeal of Christ's blood sacrifice to give voice to the unqualified and unbounded love extended to man by his Creator. Again the Christocentric mystical system is rooted in an unitive experience effected by the sacrificial drama of Calvary. Finally, it must be noted that the unitive insight attained by Dame Julian's long reflection on her May 8, 1373 experience is completely consistent with Catholic dogma and not as Effie Mackinnon implies the consequence of theological recalcitrance or subliminal sexual desires.

¹³⁷Ibid., fol. 153a. Dom Hudleston relates the types of Julian's revelations to St. Augustine's categories of visions: corporeal, imaginative, and intellectual. Revelations of Divine Love, p. xvi.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this dissertation has been to analyze a segment of English mystical literature--the English writings of the fourteenth century Yorkshire mystics--in an effort to determine whether the mysticism of this school evidences a so-called spiritual purity void of any then current theological or devotional strains. Moreover, the scope of the analysis has been restricted to the specific theology of blood: its dogma as elicited by this writer from primitive, classical and Christian elements; and its Blood Motifs--those multiple figures, images, and symbols associated with man's blood heritage. Selection of the blood theology and Blood Motif theme was prompted by the obvious importance of Christ's Passion to the fundamental religious nature of medieval English literature.

Most important of the deductions that can be made from this study is the positive reliance of Yorkshire mysticism on the tenets and motifs of blood theology revealed in the works of Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, Julian of Norwich and in the anonymous Cloud of Unknowing. Each of the writers studied illustrates some degree of dependence on the dogma of blood import and sacrifice. Moreover, the qualities consistently attributed to the Passion by the Yorkshire mystics substantiate Father Clark's contention that the body of Passion and Eucharistic doctrine during the medieval

epoch "presented a united front."¹ Nowhere is there any significant deviation from the orthodox view of the Passion and the Eucharist discerned in the Yorkshire mystical writings. Several points enumerated in the Jesuit's summary of the sacrificial theology inherited from the medieval period are repeatedly indicated in the works of the Yorkshire group. For example, the redemption by blood is cited by all as is the universality of Christ's blood ransom. Also, various of the Blood Motifs attest to the superabundant blood shedding of the crucifixion, which in itself metaphorically establishes that Christ's blood sacrifice is "all-sufficient to atone for all the sins of all men."²

However, the blood theology reliance is tempered by the focus of the mystical system advocated by each author. The mysticism expounded by Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, and Julian of Norwich is Christocentric while that of the Cloud of Unknowing is Theocentric. Christ-oriented mysticism obviously affords greater opportunity for the Blood Motifs of blood theology since its nucleus is the humanity of the Savior--the humanity that was effected for the ultimate sacrifice of blood on Calvary. This type of heavenly ascent is steeped in the prefigures, symbols, images, figures, and details of Christ's Passion. Furthermore, as the Richard Rolle and Dame Julian analyses indicate, vividness of ex-

¹F. Clark, S.J., p. 95.

²Ibid., p. 93.

pression is often the hallmark of Christocentric mysticism. With the master's touch, Richard Rolle can, within the compass of several pages, graphically delineate Christ's wound-pierced body as a heaven full of stars, a net, a dove-cot, a honeycomb, a book, and a meadow; at the same time, he defines the wounds as guiding stars, as places of refuge, as centers of sweetness, as the alphabet of spiritual communication, as sweet flowers, and as healing herbs.³ Whether the Hermit is penning a lyric, a meditation, or an extended mystical treatise, his genius--spurred by the potential of Christocentric mysticism--creates radiant images as well as apt metaphors and similes. To a lesser degree, Julian of Norwich shares this hallmark with Richard Rolle. Julian--although having written only the Revelations of Divine Love--nevertheless, by keen compassion and feminine sensitivity establishes her position as a noted and graphic expounder of the Christ-oriented ascent. The gushing rain falling from the eaves as a simile for the Savior's copious blood sacrifice⁴ is testimony to Julian's vividness of expression.

Theocentric mysticism, on the other hand, centers its attention on the inexpressible Godhead. Nonetheless, within the Christian perspective, it also relies on the human concreteness of Christ and His sacrifice. The humanity and Passion of the Redeemer

³ R. Rolle, Richard Rolle of Hampole, I, 96-97.

⁴ Library of Congress MLA microfilm 315, Paris MS, Anglais 40, fol. 14b.

are an impetus to achieving the highest object of mystical ascent even though at the summit of Theocentric ascent the cloud of unknowing masks all except the naked intent or mind of God, just as earlier in the mystical experience the cloud of forgetting isolates man from his worldly connections.

The best illustration that can be elicited to demonstrate the fundamental difference between Christocentric and Theocentric Yorkshire focus involves the place accorded Passion meditation and devotion by each writer. For Richard Rolle, meditation on Christ's sufferings is essential in effecting the highest level of love and its corresponding unitive experience. This dissertation has repeatedly exhibited the Hermit's dependence on such reflections. His various meditations--lyrical and prose--are irrefutable indications of the import that Rolle attaches to these detailed--oftentimes protracted--prayerful considerations of Christ's sacrificial act. The ever-present crucifix that served as Dame Julian's link with the physical world as well as a spiritual catalyst certifies to her reliance on Passion-centered thought. Throughout her visionary experience Julian's cross bridged her two worlds. Also, her subsequent years of enlightenment were in truth what the Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey termed them--"a prolonged meditation upon the Passion of Christ."⁵ Never is the Revelations of Divine Love far removed from the fact of Christ's love for man-

⁵A Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey, "Dame Julian of Norwich," p. 58.

kind--His Passion and death. On the other hand, Walter Hilton, in prescribing Passion meditation primarily for mystical novices, appears to lessen its importance. Whether the Augustinian was at the time of his writing Book II of the Scale under the influence of Theocentric mysticism--as Miss Underhill believes⁶--or whether he was simply reacting further to the writings of Richard Rolle is matter for conjecture. However, for a proper perspective of Hilton's mysticism and the importance of Passion meditation to it, cognizance must be taken of the necessity ascribed by Hilton to the loving of Christ in His humanity prior to the loving of Him in His divinity. Also, it must be remembered that in Book I of the Scale of Perfection, Hilton explains that Passion meditation and devotion are gifts of God to those who have conditioned themselves by purgative introspection. Moreover, Hilton states that meditation of Christ's humanity and Passion constitutes the door of contemplation; he that "comyth not by the doore . . . shall be caste oute."⁷ Therefore, Walter Hilton's mysticism, which is basically Christocentric, really conforms to rather than deviates from the pattern ascertained by a study of the relationship existing between Passion meditation and the mysticism of Richard Rolle and Julian of Norwich. Only the Cloud of Unknowing breaks the mold; only this work places a definite prohibition against Passion medi-

⁶Walter Hilton, The Scale of Perfection, ed. Evelyn Underhill, pp. xliv-xlv.

⁷Wynkyn de Worde edition, [p. 56 verso].

tation. Although the Cloud author concedes that such reflection has some initial usefulness--to bring man to the fringe of contemplation--he considers it an encumbrance to further mystical experience; for it both disperses the cloud of forgetting and distracts man from his concentration on the cloud of unknowing by centering attention on the details and circumstances of Christ's blood sacrifice rather than on the inexplicable Godhead. Clearly, the Theocentric mystical system of the Cloud of Unknowing limits, with its preclusion of Passion meditation, the numerous figurative, symbolic, and descriptive advantages of Christocentric mysticism. In addition, by being beyond the finite relationships of the Passion-induced Blood Motifs, Theocentric mysticism restricts greatly the variety and occasion of these themes.

A second impediment to the Blood Motifs--although not to the doctrine of blood theology--is the degree of didacticism evidenced by the various Yorkshire authors. For example, the fundamental instructional nature of Richard Rolle's Emendatio Vitae, in general, reduces its Blood Motifs to single appearances. The various blood figures, symbols, and images are scarce in the expository Cloud of Unknowing. Didacticism is certainly a significant, if not the dominant, characteristic of Walter Hilton's Scale of Perfection; in addition, it figures prominently in the Augustinian's Of Angels' Song and the Epistle on Mixed Life. And, again, as in the case of Rolle's Emendatio Vitae and the Cloud of Unknowing, there is limited employment of the Blood Motifs. Conversely, whenever the writer is uninhibited by an intent that is

primarily tutorial, the result is a literary presentation of a mystical experience rich in the Blood Motifs. This inversion is clearly demonstrated by the majority of Richard Rolle's works and Julian's highly personal Revelations of Divine Love in which the Blood Motifs are appreciably more varied and numerous than they are in the Cloud of Unknowing or in the works of Walter Hilton.

A number of secondary observations emerge as a consequence of this dissertation. For instance, this writer believes that several objections raised in regard to Miss Effie Mackinnon's unpublished dissertation "Studies in Fourteenth Century Mysticism"--her refusal to consider any work not included in Miss Hope Allen's canon of Richard Rolle as well as her inadvertent misinterpretation of some of Dame Julian's comments--have been sustained by this study. This writer has also focused attention on Richard Rolle's utilization of the Eucharist motif, partially within the perspective of the dissertation's purpose and partially to refute the belief advanced by Miss Evelyn Underhill and Miss Hope Allen that the Hermit remained aloof from Eucharistic devotion and references. Furthermore, this writer has suggested the possibility that Richard Rolle's fundamental devotions to the Passion and to the name of Jesus converge. Finally, not properly within the compass of this dissertation, some parenthetical statements have been made regarding Walter Hilton and the authorship of the Cloud of Unknowing.

Despite the definite relevancy of these secondary considerations, the primary finding of this dissertation is, naturally,

most significant. Yorkshire mysticism has been found to exemplify an universal reliance on the dogma of blood theology and its Blood Motifs, a reliance that is tempered only by mystical focus or didactic degree. The favorable Yorkshire location made Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, Dame Julian, and the author of the Cloud of Unknowing heirs to the cultural current of the fourteenth century. Inexorably fused by this current were the medieval artistic, folk, literary, and theological elements that proved to be so conducive to the establishment of an ordered theology of blood, a theology of blood generally consistent with Catholic orthodoxy. The Yorkshire mystics reveal in their writings an intimate and uniform familiarity with man's blood heritage: their mystical endeavors are delineated in terms of blood theology and forcibly illustrated by the Blood Motifs.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Louis C. Gatto has been read and approved by the members of the Department of English.

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

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Aug 5, 1965
Date

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Signature of Adviser