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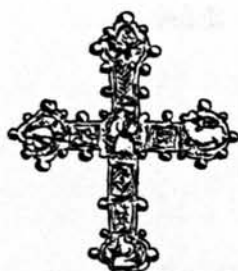
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*Private Devotion in England
on the Eve of the Reformation*

J. Rhodes



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

Advent 1974

PRIVATE DEVOTION IN ENGLAND
ON THE EVE OF THE REFORMATION

illustrated from works printed or reprinted

in the period 1530-40

J . R H O D E S

vol.I.

Ph.D. Thesis

Advent 1974

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ABSTRACT

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

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PREFACE

The prose literature of the first half of the sixteenth century has been unduly neglected by scholars, falling as it does between 1500, when the Middle English period is usually deemed to have ended, and the age of Elizabeth. Little of the material used in this study has been edited or reprinted over the last hundred years, and despite references to a number of items by bibliographers including H.S.Bennett and F.A.Gasquet¹ or by historians, such as A.G.Dickens, P.Heath, P.Janelle, J.K.McConica and W.A.Pantin,² there are few critical studies or articles on specific works.³ Because so little work has been done on the literature of the period it seemed better to begin with a detailed study of a limited period than with a more general survey of thirty or fifty years. I have chosen to make a detailed study of the decade 1530 - 40, which covers some of the most decisive legislation of the Reformation, including the abolition of "the usurped power of the Pope" and the dissolution of the monasteries which marks the official end of one tradition of English spirituality. During these ten years the traditional catholic devotional literature, including Latin service-books and Horae, continued to be written and printed, but the new Protestant writings also began to circulate more widely, supported towards the end of the decade by translations of the Bible, numerous biblical expositions and official Primers in English. In the discussion that follows the word Catholic is used to denote the traditional religious views and practices of the English Church before the Reformation, and later maintained by the English Recusants - Roman Catholic would have suggested a degree of centralized control which did not really exist until after the Council of Trent. The words Protestant and Reformed are used interchangeably

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION

The years 1530 - 40 saw two decisive events of the English Reformation: the break with Rome and the abolition of the religious orders. The Submission of the Clergy 1532, followed by the Restraint of Annates and of Appeals¹ and, in 1534, the final abolition of "the usurped power of the Pope"² effected ~~by~~ the transfer of clerical jurisdiction from Rome to the King. Although individual religious houses had been sequestered and suppressed before 1536,³ systematic dissolution of all houses whose annual income was less than £200⁴ did not begin until after the compilation of the Valor Ecclesiasticus 1535 - 6.⁵ Opposition to the closure of the religious houses was one of the grievances of the Northern Rising⁶ which, according to Dickens, "formed the major crisis of the dynasty".⁷ A number of houses implicated in the Rising surrendered 1536 - 7.⁸ Two years later the Act for the Dissolution of the Greater Monasteries was passed and March 1540 saw the surrender of the last religious houses in England.⁹

The first official pronouncement of the English Church's doctrine was contained in the Ten Articles of 1536.¹⁰ By the ambiguity of their wording and their omissions these went some way towards accommodating the Lollard and Lutheran views of some clergy, but their very vagueness made them unsatisfactory.¹¹ The Bishops' Book of 1537 was a shade more conservative in its exposition, but was still capable of being claimed by both parties as "the fulfilment of their programme".¹² However, the Six Articles¹³ of 1539 reverted to an unambiguous statement of traditional Catholic beliefs. The minority of higher clergy who favoured reform saw this as a defeat; bishops Latimer and Shaxton resigned their sees in protest. Yet it is probably true that "this Statute reflected the religion of the vast majority of people in this country at the time".¹⁴ Such official legislation on doctrinal matters would have had little immediate effect at parish level beyond producing

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

Some of the items in the Royal Injunctions, drawn up by Cromwell and issued in 1536 and 1538,¹⁵ had a more immediate impact on the general public. Veneration of images and pilgrimages were both criticized. The public exposure of popular objects of pilgrimage such as the Boxley Rood, the holy blood of Hailes and the Welsh image Darvell Gadarn was the practical implementation of such criticism.¹⁶ Such examples encouraged individuals to take the law into their own hands, but the destructive zeal of some¹⁷ was probably balanced by those who lamented the damage done to the traditional fabric and decoration of their churches.¹⁸ Dislike of images and pilgrimages together with criticism of the traditional doctrine of the mass, attacks on the prerogatives of the clerical hierarchy and demands for the Scriptures in English, were of course characteristic of Lollard views.¹⁹ Although by the early sixteenth century the movement was scattered and mainly confined to tradesmen and labourers, it continued to trouble the authorities.²⁰ Actual contact between Lollards and early Protestants, whose background tended to be more academic,²¹ was probably not so important as the broad similarity of their views on ceremonies, superstitions and the Eucharist, their tendency towards anti-clericalism and their desire for a biblical religion.²² In several instances Lollard works anticipated the arguments of the Reformers and a few were printed during the 1530's. It has been argued²³ that Lollard books and teaching helped to give the Reformation cause the authority of historical support and a distinctively English ancestry; almost certainly there would have been support for practical measures of reform in areas of previous Lollard activity.

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

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

Since Arundel's legislation of 1407, possession of the English Bible, except in special cases, had been regarded as virtual proof of Lollard sympathies.²⁵ The publication of Tyndale's translation of the New Testament in 1526 was followed by several others between 1535 and the appearance of the officially sanctioned Great Bible of 1539.²⁶ Although 1543 saw some limitation of public access to the Scriptures, the English Bible could not be banished by legislation and it exerted an increasingly powerful influence on religious literature.²⁷ The establishment of the English Bible was in a large measure due to the efforts of Thomas Cromwell.²⁸ An apparent supporter of moderate reform,²⁹ he was responsible for much official legislation on religious matters, and he seems to have encouraged a number of authors whose writings were sympathetic to his policies.³⁰ But Cromwell was not alone in realizing the importance of the press and in attempting to use it to influence public opinion and further policies.

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

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

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

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

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

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

During the decade both Church and Crown sought to exercise some form of control over the press in England and over the importation of English books printed abroad. Hirsch suggests that as early as the 1520s authority over post-publication censorship was vested in town mayors⁴³ and that by 1529 nearly all legislation concerning the control of the press was issued by or for the Crown.⁴⁴ One of the earliest lists of heretical books, possession of which would bring a person under suspicion of heresy, was issued in 1527 and included Tyndale's New Testament and his Obedience of a Christian Man and Parable of the Wicked Mammon as well as Simon Fish's Supplicacyon of the Beggars.⁴⁵ The following year Sir Thomas More was licensed to read the heretical books that were circulating in England in order to refute their errors.⁴⁶ A much longer list of proscribed books was issued in 1530.⁴⁷ In addition to Tyndale the names of the continental reformers Luther, Oecolampadius, Zwingli, Melanchthon and Francis Lambert figured prominently as well as English authors like Fish and William Roy. It was made an offence to print, publish, buy, sell, handle, translate or edit any of the books named, unless licensed to do so by the bishop. That same year

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a list of errors and heresies contained in Tyndale's Obedience and Wicked Mammon and in other English books including the Primer⁴⁸ was published by Archbishop Warham and Cuthbert Tunstal.⁴⁹ It seems to have been on the King's initiative that the prelates were called together to discuss these books. Certainly the next list of heretical books was published by the King's authority.⁵⁰ As well as the spiritual dangers of heresy, the civil repercussions of sedition and the threat to England's peace are mentioned, and mayors, bailiffs and constables are to join the clergy in enforcing the King's will. But the Crown was as incapable as the Church of exercising any efficient control over the ever increasing number of books printed in England and abroad.⁵¹ The circulation of proscribed books was probably somewhat restricted but they remained available to those who had suitable contacts and who were prepared to take the risk of being found in possession of them.

English printers of the 1530s do not, on the whole, seem to have restricted their religious publications to one particular shade of religious opinion. Thomas Godfray, for instance, printed the Imitatio Christi, St. Bernard's Golden Epistle and extracts from St. Bridget's Revelations, all highly traditional works; Erasmus' Epystell...concernyng the forbedynge of eatynge of flesshe; the collection of biblical extracts called The fountayne or well of lyfe and Tyndale's Pathway into Scripture which are both reformed works. Robert Redman, whose main business seems to have been printing law books, also ranged from the traditional devotional works of Simon, Anker of London Wall, the Carthusian author of The Pomander of Prayer, works by Whitford and John Fewterer of Syon Abbey, to works by Erasmus,⁵² an old Lollard book The lanterne of lyght⁵³ and reformed works such as Prayers of the Byble⁵⁴ and The summe of the holy scripture.⁵⁵ However, a few printers seem to have shown a preference for particular types of devotional literature.

Thus Thomas Berthelet, royal printer from 1530 to 1547, seems during the 1530s⁵⁶ to have concentrated particularly on humanist authors including Erasmus, Elyot, Lupset and Vives, whose work was congenial to the type of reform being encouraged by the government.⁵⁷ Wynkyn de Worde, whose activities span the period 1493 - 1535, and whose output of devotional books 1530 -34 was substantial, shows an exclusive preference for traditional works.⁵⁸ A number of these, such as Hilton's Scala perfectionis, the Speculum Vitae Christi attributed to St. Bonaventura, Mirk's Festial, The abbaye of the holy Ghost and The.xii.profytes of tribulacyon, circulated widely in manuscript during the fifteenth century and all were printed by de Worde before 1500. They were re-printed by de Worde, often for the last time (before the 19th century), during the 1530s. Indeed, few of the devotional works - or for that matter the school books by Whittinton and Stanbridge - printed by him reappeared let alone sustained any popularity after 1534: Erasmus' De Civilitate Morum Puerilium and his Enchiridion⁵⁹ are the only obvious exceptions. Do De Worde's publications then distort the balance between traditional and reformed devotion during the 1530s, by giving undue weight to the former? I think not. De Worde was an experienced business man, and it is unlikely that he would have printed so many of the books he obviously preferred,⁶⁰ if he could not have sold them. Several of them went through a number of editions between 1500 and the 1530s, which argues a fairly steady market.⁶¹ Robert Copland, who was closely associated with De Worde,⁶² also produced exclusively traditional devotional works under his own imprint.⁶³ De Worde's publications seem to high-light a general change which occurred about the middle of the decade, with more traditional works tending to be produced in greater quantities before about 1535 and reformed literature becoming more frequent in the last few years of the decade. The increasing popularity of biblical-reformed devotion also helps to justify the movement towards political conservatism in the last few years of the decade which Lacey Baldwin Smith

sees as the government's reaction to the probable consequences of its encouragement of religious reformation.^{63A}

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

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

I

"De Vita Christiana".

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

Devotional literature, which included lives of Christ and of the saints, sets of meditations and prayers, was a comparatively small section of what might broadly be called religious literature. Liturgical books, polemical pieces and works of general instruction, edification and exhortation accounted for a much larger proportion of the religious press than the strictly devotional.¹ Private prayer and meditation was only one part of the Christian life: another part involved the more active duties of church-going, almsgiving and good works. The Christian also needed instruction in the beliefs and practices of his faith, and the teaching he received would help to shape the pattern of his life and to determine the form and content of his private devotions. Many of the instructional treatises were of a composite character and their contents sometimes included actual prayers or meditations, or else provided material which could be used as the basis for meditation. Instruction was rarely divorced entirely from some devotional application. On occasion it seems as though compilers, translators and publishers tried to cram as much as possible, in both quantity and variety, between the covers of one volume², and books of mixed contents seem to have been very popular.³ For those who were literate such volumes offered teaching wider in scope, more varied and lasting than the

verbal instruction to be derived from sermons or the conscientious priest in confession, or from the very elementary instruction supplied by ~~the~~ church decorations - murals, stained glass and carvings - and in some places from performances of morality, creed and paternoster plays⁴. Books of general instruction and spiritual guidance are important, not only for what they have to say about prayer, beliefs, sins and virtues, but also for the attitudes they reveal towards various aspects of the Christian life. They help to illuminate the wider spiritual background against which particular devotions developed.

The type of instruction given and its extent was governed by the training and intellectual capacity of the teacher and his audience. Those who gave instruction on religious matters from the pulpit and in confession were either in holy orders or professed religious, and the majority of catholic treatises printed during the 1530s whose authors are known seem to have been religious⁵. Although it is much less obvious because of the greater range of their teaching and their interest in academic matters, it is worth noting that most of the humanist authors were ordained or had taken religious vows⁶ and most of the earlier Protestant authors too seem to have been ordained.⁷ Thus, for those who taught and wrote about specifically religious topics, Christianity was likely to have been their principal means of support and full-time occupation. Their profession set them apart from the life of lay-people. The authors of devout treatises were separated from the occupations and worries of daily life by the walls of their cloister and the Catholic parish

priest was also distinguished from his parishioners by his celibacy and by the possession of a special mysterious power, seen especially in relation to the sacraments.⁸ Until the 1530s most works of spiritual guidance were intended for religious readers - a particular nun⁹ or convent¹⁰ or more generally for those who lived under vows¹¹ - although many seem to have circulated among lay-people connected with religious houses.¹² Even where a work was addressed to an audience outside the cloister, such as The abbaye of the holy Ghost, the superiority of the religious life was generally assumed and the religious virtues extolled. But the events of the Reformation altered this religious dominance. The last religious houses were dissolved in 1540 and two years earlier the public had officially been given access to the Scriptures in their own language - an end for which the Lollards had long campaigned.¹³ This availability of the Bible opened to all much of the secret knowledge hitherto held by the clergy and the power and privilege of the priest was further weakened by Protestant "memorialist" doctrines of the Eucharist.¹⁴ The literature of general religious instruction available in print during the 1530s was largely traditional in outlook but a substantial number of works were printed which gave clear warning of the changes to come.

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

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

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

He warns against having confidence in unreasonable dispensations and forbids exemptions and liberties based on accustomed usage.¹⁶ He is critical of the way in which men "runne he^dlonge in to holy orders without any reuerence or consideratyon". Men are made priests in whom avarice, ambition, desire for an easy life and especially lechery are the dominant motives¹⁷. The author accordingly devotes considerable attention to the virtue of chastity¹⁸ and to the regulation of contact and conduct between clerks or regulars and women.¹⁹ He has also much to say about the evils of priestly avarice²⁰ and the need to live within the allotted stipend, reminding his readers that "the ecclesiastical goodes be the patrymonye and heritage of the poore people":

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

The Protestant reformers were not alone in their criticism of clergy and regulars. Again, the reformers' criticisms about the church service are echoed in this author's condemnation of vain, warbling descants²² and he comments on the rash, careless singing of their services by many religious who would show even a worldly king or prelate far more reverence than they offer to God.

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

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

In view of the inadequacy of the majority of the parochial clergy's learning on the eve of the reformation²⁴ it is not surprising to find that a number of handbooks were printed during the early sixteenth-century offering them instruction on their duties and assistance with their teaching:

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

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

his duties, what to do if various difficulties arise during the celebration of mass, and how to conduct a confession and impose penance. The Cura Clericalis, printed twice during the 1530s²⁶, was a brief Latin work providing very rudimentary instruction on the four duties of a priest, about the seven sacraments and four ways of making satisfaction. Like Mirk's Instructions it devotes a comparatively large space to distinguishing various types of sin and it then goes on to list the cardinal and theological virtues, the seven spiritual and bodily works of mercy, the eight beatitudes and the seven spiritual gifts, before giving the three creeds: the Apostles', the Nicene and the Athanasian. As if to emphasize the practical nature of the book it concludes with instructions on how to calculate the cycles of the days and the moon. The Exornatorium Curatorum, of which there were three editions in 1530 and 1532,²⁷ was intended to enable the parish priest to fulfil the duties laid on him by Archbishop Peckham's Constitutions of 1281:²⁸ to "declare vnto his parysshens. Four tymes in ye yere/the .xiii. Artycles of the faythe. The .x. commaundmentes of our lorde god. The .vii. werkes of mercy. The .vii. deedly synnes with braunches therof. The .vii. pryncypall vertues. And the .vii. sacramentes of holy chyrche/with other thynges necessary".²⁹ Again the analysis of the seven deadly sins takes up considerable space and the work concludes with a brief ars moriendi.

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

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

On the whole religious seem to have been better served, although the picture is distorted by the prominence of Syon Abbey, whose standards of spirituality and learning were much above the average³⁰.

Bonde, Fewterer and Whitford for instance were all at some time fellows of Pembroke or Queens' Colleges, Cambridge³¹. In addition Richard Whitford was chaplain to William Blount, Lord Mountjoy and accompanied him to Paris, and was later a chaplain to Richard Foxe, bishop of Winchester; two posts which brought him into contact with the greatest scholars of the day, including Erasmus and Sir Thomas More.³² It is appropriate that the three most learned and substantial devotional books to be printed during the 1530s should have been written by brethren of Syon: Bonde's Pilgrymage of Perfeccyon, Fewterer's Myrrour or Glasse of Christes Passion, and Whitford's Pype or Tonne of the lyfe of perfection. Whitford's work was addressed particularly to a nun of Syon and her religious sisters, and it suggests that in Syon at least there were women of sufficient intellectual capacity to persevere with a work as lengthy and demanding as this.³³ Syon is known to have possessed a library for the sisters and to have laid unusual stress on the importance of devotional reading,³⁴ but individual nuns of other convents seem not infrequently to have possessed books³⁵. However, by the early sixteenth century, few if any religious sisters or anchorites, and possibly only a minority of literate lay people, were able to read Latin with any degree of fluency:³⁶ the great need was for translations and original works in the vernacular.

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

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

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

Those authors, especially those who were themselves fluent in Latin, (who chose to write in English) faced the problem of translation, and especially the lack of suitable theological terminology in the vernacular; "þese teermes han oþer sentence in latyn þanne I can shewe in ynglisshe".³⁸ Bonde declares that "The mater is spirytually/ & requyreth moche declaracion in englysshe",³⁹ while the author of The Myrroure of Oure Lady points out the difficulty of translation from Latin into English and the lack of cognate terminology.⁴⁰ Most translators chose to translate according to the sense of the original, not verbatim.⁴¹ Whitford illustrates the practical difficulty of translation by translating one sentence twenty ways, and states that in the interest of clarity and ready comprehension "I haue chosen here a playne style/without ynkehorne termes".⁴² But clearly the demand for translations was such that a great many people - religious like Whitford and Paynell,⁴³ courtiers like Sir Thomas Elyot⁴⁴ and Sir Thomas More, and printers like Caxton⁴⁵ and Robert Copland⁴⁶ - turned their hand to it, and a large proportion of the devotional works discussed in the course of this thesis are translations from

Latin, or sometimes French.⁴⁷

Treatises for religious

During the early sixteenth century considerable effort was made to provide religious with the sort of literature that would assist them in their profession and deepen their spiritual life. At least ~~two~~^{three} rules were printed in English, probably about 1510: the Franciscan Rule of the lyuyng of the bretherne and systers of the order of penytentes⁴⁸ and the Rule of our holy fader.s.Austen⁴⁹: the rule of St. Benedict had been included in Caxton's Boke of diuerse maters. The ~~latter~~^{second} may have been the translation described by Whitford as "olde/scabrouse/rough/& not of the englysshe comynly vsed in these partyes".⁵⁰ The Franciscan rule is prefaced by an official proclamation of Pope Nicholas V dated 1449 (the second year of his reign), and after the official conclusion it is noted: "This bull and Rule is vnder lede in the grayfreers in London besyde Newgate". The twenty-four chapters of the rule are brief orders detailing the duties and conduct required of the brethren and sisters. Beyond the general obligation to hold "the ryght & true fayth" maintained by the Church of Rome there is no reference to belief; the rule is concerned with matters such as the clothing, abstinence and fasting required, the obligation to "say euery daye there seruyce" or some acceptable substitute, and to give alms, and the need to avoid swearing and debate and to keep

the peace.

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

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

Yet despite the existence of these translations Whitford in his introduction to the English version of Saynt Augustyns Rule⁵³ says he has "herde of som parsones yt haue ben yeres professed/& neuer knewe theyr rule/neuer sawe or herde/ony rule redde/but onely dyd folowe ye custome of ye place",⁵⁴ and in the course of his expositions on the Latin-English version of the Rule he blames the Superiors for neglect of the rule.⁵⁵ The earliest works of Whitford to appear in print were all translations designed to remedy the ignorance of religious, particularly the nuns of Syon.⁵⁶ On the title page of the Latin-English Rule he indulges in a characteristic piece of advertising,⁵⁷ recommending "all ye disciples of this rule to bere alway one of these bokes vpon them syth they ben so portatyue/& may be had for so small a pryce": the rule is to be referred to constantly. By means of the exposition of Hugh of St. Victor and his own comments on the Rule Whitford is able to draw out the implications of the Rule still further,

so that the individual may the better understand it and govern not only his behaviour but his whole attitude of mind accordingly. He frequently dwells upon the meaning of some important word in the Latin of the rule and attempts to explain the significance to the reader⁵⁸. Or he may use some homely, physical example - like the man who for fear of "cuttynge" kept secret a sore in his body; his friend should show this, just as he should show any known spiritual offences, and Whitford emphasizes that correction or punishment of an offence is an act of mercy not of malice. Again small details of the rule, like the washing of clothes and bathing, are related to the principal rules, in this case obedience, and finally, like Sir Thomas More, Whitford makes use of sayings with a proverbial ring to them in order to emphasize or sum up a point.⁵⁹

Among the other topics dealt with by the Rule was the problem of the straying mind in church.⁶⁰ Since much of the day was occupied by the choir offices the behaviour and devotion of the nuns in church⁶¹ was a matter of considerable importance, and the nuns of Syon were provided with a substantial guide to the conduct and content of their services in The Myrroure of Oure Lady printed by Richard Fawkes in 1530.⁶² The bulk of the book, nearly all part II and part III, is concerned to give a rationale of the services for each day of the week and the masses. But it is far more than a guide to the content of the services, what the priest does and what all the hymns, anthems, lessons, prayers, offices and sequences mean. In addition to translating them the author interprets and

comments. For instance, on the Magnificat he gives four reasons why it is said daily at evensong, and he places it in its biblical context. He then takes it sentence by sentence, following the translation with detailed explanatory comment, as when he concludes his remarks on "Esurientes implevit bonis: et divites dimisit inanes" with the promise that those who are "wylfully poure from worldely welthes and confortes. and honger and desyre goddes grace. and heuenly confortes" will be satisfied, whereas those who at present enjoy riches and worldly prosperity "shall be lefte voyde"⁶³ - an obvious example of the characteristic religious bias found in so many devout treatises. In his interpretation of Psalm XCII the author provides a fairly detailed summary of contemporary cosmography,⁶⁴ while he again reflects contemporary traditions in his explication of the Friday service as he describes the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin⁶⁵ and Christ's sufferings during the Passion. Although there is much legendary material and the author shows a fondness for allegorical interpretation, he does attempt an explanation of a number of theological concepts, for instance in his exposition of the creed⁶⁶. Without ever losing sight of his primary task, to explain the services, the author provides a variety of information and instruction which must have made the services more comprehensible and more interesting to any nun who followed the service with The Myrroure.

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

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

Although private prayers and devotions are not to be substituted for or mingled with divine service,⁷¹ the author is emphatic about the importance of "inwarde gostly study" and sets a high value on "Deuoute redyng of holy Bokes".^{71A} Books must always be selected for edification, not for idle pleasure, for private interest^{or} in order to seem wise, and they are to be read ~~re~~^ceptively and attentively. Particular attention must be given to understanding what is read, and if necessary a passage should be read over several times. Those who read aloud to the convent should go through the piece beforehand to see they understand it. Those who read on their own must avoid reading too much at once and over~~s~~kiping passages. This author encourages the nuns to ask advice if they do not understand anything. William Bonde⁷² allows advice to be sought in matters of understanding "of them onely whome ye suppose to be perfyte & goostly", but he forbids any idle or curious speculation or any such questioning, "specyally of seculars".⁷³ The author of The Myrroure goes on to analyse the difference between two main types of devotional literature, its purpose and the way each should be approached. The distinction is between works of instruction and spiritual counsel, and works of affective piety. Under the first he classes books which "enforme the vnderstondynge.& tel how spiritual

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

Richard Whitford's Pype/or Tonne/of the lyfe of perfection,⁷⁶ addressed to a "Good deuout religious daughter" and the other sisters, presumably of Syon, falls into the first class of devotional literature distinguished by the author of The Myrroure. It requires understanding and considerable application, and it is both a defence and a detailed exposition of the religious life. The reason for the work was the attack of "these newe fangle persones", heretics who advocated the view of Luther; they denounced the religious life and even challenged "the newe testament of Christe". Criticism of monastic life, not unknown before 1530,⁷⁷ certainly gathered momentum during that decade.⁷⁸ The foundacyon and the summe of the holy scripture⁷⁹ contains considerable criticism of contemporary monasticism, especially when ~~the~~^{its} present state is measured against the past. The author shows that "the lyfe of monkes as it is nowe vused in the worlde is none other thing but a secte", and that the householder may live as godly a life as the monk.⁸⁰ Men enter religion for the wrong reasons, to have an easy life where all their wants are supplied⁸¹ and to be reputed holy. Parents too are guilty of making their children enter religion in order to remove the charge of their upkeep or to have the honour of a priest or prelate for a son.⁸² In the past there had been none holier than monks,⁸³ but their holiness, virtues and good works attracted noble patronage, and their possessions and wealth increased: "then their good discipline and lyf is by lytel and littel brought to nought & corrupted by rychesse".⁸⁴ Monasticism has been corrupted by riches and by involvement in the world.⁸⁵ The rule is kept outwardly, not in spirit, and holiness

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

Whitford himself was not blind to the decay of contemporary monasticism,⁸⁹ but rather than banishing it as worthless he sought to revive and purify it. The first part of The Pye or Tonne of the lyfe of perfection, which is concerned to refute Lutheran criticisms of the practice and theory of the religious life, admits that all is not well, but Whitford refuses to condemn all because some go astray⁹⁰ or to relinquish his belief in the superiority of the religious life.⁹¹ Like the author of The foundacyon and the summe of the holy scripture Whitford is aware of the corruption of riches, particularly the opportunity given to individuals to receive or earn money which contradicts their vow of poverty:

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

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

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

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

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

One of the principal reasons for the decay in religion is that people enter for the wrong reasons, as the author of The foundacyon and the summe of the holy scripture had noted. Whitford says⁹⁹ that people enter without having felt any calling to the life and without examining their reasons for entering. Some are provoked by the Devil to become religious out of pride, believing that their life will be so holy that their monastery will be reformed, but the failure of their enterprise makes them discontented and unstable. Others are ambitious to enjoy riches and plenty and to hold important offices, or simply to escape the hardships of the world and to be assured of "theyr bodely lyuyng", and these people will infect the monastery either by ill-rule, by discontent or because they are remiss and dull in their duties. Whitford also discusses the case of child oblates, for which he finds biblical precedent, and since "the best bryngynge vp is in the monasteries amonge religious persones it semeth vnto me that chyldren may comuientely be receyued into religion".¹⁰⁰ He only insists that no child be bound to make his profession before reaching the required age. He lists numbers of other wrong or unspiritual reasons why children are put to religion¹⁰¹ or why adults enter,¹⁰² and endeavours to show how once bound as religious even these unhappy souls may profit from their bondage. They should apply their reasonable soul to be sorry for their sin, and to labour and

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

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

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

The third and main part of The Pye or Tonne is devoted to an exposition of the three essential vows of religion—obedience, poverty and chastity—with a translation of De precepto et dispensatione attributed to St. Bernard¹¹⁰ following the section on obedience. According to Whitford's definition obedience "is an applicacion/or graunt of herte/minde/and wyll/vnto the due and the lawfull preceptes/or commaundementes of the ryght and ordinarie superiours/accordynge vnto the ordinaunce of god and|| of his churche catholike/after the rules of holy scripture."¹¹¹ For the religious the definition is more demanding, and involves "a wyllful and vtter abnegacion and forsakyng of proper wyll" and total obedience to their religious superior and their Rule. Whitford then outlines four motives which may govern obedience: self pleasure or profit, necessity, fear, and finally love and good will. He goes on to place the virtue of obedience immediately below the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, esteeming it "of more perfection than is her mother mekenes". It is the perfection and proof of humility and meekness. William Bonde also sets a high value on it: "obedyence pleaseth god more than any other thyng",¹¹² but he places it after meekness, which he sees as the foundation of all perfection.¹¹³ The author of The Orchard of Syon celebrates the virtue of obedience at some length¹¹⁴ and seems to set it above meekness, who nurses and nourishes it, but it is perhaps less a question of priorities than of mutual dependence: "For a man is so myche obedient as he is meke, & so myche he is meke as he is obedient".¹¹⁵

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

the behaviour which will follow from willing obedience and the qualities of love, strength, cheerfulness, speed, reverence and perseverance which should accompany it. The latter part of the "fyrste membre" is concerned with the profits and benefits of obedience and the dangers and incommunities of disobedience, and it concludes with a long chapter¹¹⁶ of scriptural examples of the miserable fate of the disobedient. The first profit of obedience is in worldly goods, and Whitford accepts the Deuteronomic connection between obedience to the will of God and material rewards:¹¹⁷ "For as the monasteries: where ~~the~~ obedience is kepte: done prospere with pleintie in all maner of commodities that done apperteyne vnto theyr worldly goodes & substance: so in lyke maner vnto the contrarie parte/where is inobedience or disobedience: the monasteries done deokay/fall vnto ruine & pouerty/as dyd ye chyl dren of ^sIra~~el~~ for theyr disobedience".¹¹⁸ The second profit is long life, a promise supported by various Old Testament Quotations.¹¹⁹ The third profit is that obedience deserves honour, fame and respect, and finally it profits the soul by delivering it from damnation and keeping it in a state of grace. It helps to repel temptations, and brings tranquility of mind and offers the hope of eternal glory. ~~Although~~ He has clearly tried to stress the spiritual aspect of these rewards, ^{but} worldly goods, a long and well-provided life and a good name were difficult not to interpret as material benefits. As in the case of the rewards promised for devout attendance at mass or meditation on the Passion,¹²⁰ these seem to be encouraging religious to pursue the virtue of obedience for material as much as for spiritual ends.

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

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

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

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

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

The two principal parts of his poem, separated by a brief section on the love of God, use as a refrain the respective parts of a verse from I Peter II, "Deum timete et regem honorificare". He begins the section on the honour due ^{to the king} by tracing the growth of kingship from the rule of patriarchs, prophets and judges. He particularly praises the rule of peace and equity imposed by the king, and mentions that simony is checked by his rule. He goes on to cite biblical authority¹²⁶ for the obligation to obey princes, even if they are unworthy. There are

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

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

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

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

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

the principle of obedience upholds the whole structure of society. Thus children are bound to obey their elders, wives their husbands, and servants their masters, as well as subjects their rulers.¹³¹ Those who hold offices must rule firmly but justly, as Fathers over their families, husbands over their wives, masters over servants, landlords over tenants, and Kings, judges and officers over their people;¹³² and it is the duty of the prince and his officers to see that the Church and clergy do not claim any special exemptions from this general obligation of obedience to the secular powers.¹³³ Tyndale objects strongly to the Church's involvement in secular government and the way in which the Pope has usurped the power of an emperor¹³⁴ and bishops and cardinals have become servants of the state.¹³⁵ Of obedience within the church, the exclusive concern of Whitford,¹³⁶ Tyndale has nothing to say. His concern is to apply the biblical ~~per~~cepts of obedience to the secular world and to English Society. The contemporary popularity of authors like Tyndale and Thomas Becon undoubtedly owed something to their determination to expound the Christian faith and to make ^{it} relevant to ordinary people in their particular occupations and stations in life. They ignored the ideal and other-worldly life of the cloister, which hitherto had dominated religious thought, and applied Christianity to the world in which most Christians found themselves living, working and raising their families.

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

undertaken voluntarily to the service of God and which is pursued not in solitude or mendicancy but within the cloister. The words and life of Christ, the life of the Apostles and the traditions of the early church¹³⁷ are adduced in support of the vow, but apart from the basic premise that poverty frees the soul from worldly cares and affections - a point which, rather surprisingly, he does not particularly emphasize - he makes no attempt to list the merits and rewards enjoyed by those who fulfil the vow. He is more concerned to warn sovereigns against weakness, ambition or partiality, which encourage subjects to keep private property, and to criticize not only the general contemporary laxness with regard to property¹³⁸ but also the abuse of the stipend system.¹³⁹ The only personal possessions he will allow are those necessary for health,^{those} which encourage education, and "tokens/ymages/paynted papers"¹⁴⁰ of private devotion-provided they do not encourage ^{ra}affections of vanity. The easy, "all-found" life of contemporary monasticism and the great wealth of many foundations devalued the primitive concept of poverty and not unnaturally attracted the criticisms of reformers.¹⁴¹

In his treatment of the third essential vow, chastity, Whitford again adopts a practical approach, showing the readers in some detail how to avoid and conquer temptations to the contrary vice, and encouraging ~~them~~ to pursue and cherish the virtue. As in previous sections the example of Christ's life and those of the Apostles¹⁴² are cited as authority for the vow. Most of the section is concerned to show how chastity, which he understands principally as bodily cleanness or purity, is to be preserved, and the fourteen main

headings are conveniently summarized at the end.¹⁴³ One of the more obvious threats to chastity comes through the five wits, for the five senses are easily roused and stimulate lustful thoughts and feelings. The five wits were widely recognized as vulnerable to deadly sin,¹⁴⁴ and Whitford was by no means the only author¹⁴⁵ who warned that sight, touch, hearing, speaking and even the sense of smell must be warily defended against worldly and fleshly sins and temptations.¹⁴⁶ Among other physical defences of chastity¹⁴⁷ were sobriety¹⁴⁸; refraining from pampering the body;¹⁴⁹ seemingly outward behaviour and avoidance of any familiar talk, behaviour, correspondence with or the company of men;¹⁵⁰ and private meetings between individuals of opposite sexes were entirely forbidden.¹⁵¹ Apart from these physical precautions there were more general defences against sensuality, such as prayer, the avoidance of idleness by mental and physical labour, temperance and abstinence; all of them were familiar topics in works addressed to religious and anchorites, ~~especially~~. But in addition to these rather negative defences - which are reinforced in the concluding chapters¹⁵² by contrasting the clean life and heavenly rewards of the chaste with the fleeting reward and subsequent physical decay¹⁵³ and loss of goods, crowned by eternal death, which face the lecherous¹⁵⁴ - Whitford also stresses the importance of a good will and positive desire to conquer sin and pursue chastity, whose virtues he had praised at the beginning of the section.¹⁵⁵

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

to emulate the religious way of life. The Dyetary of Ghostly Helthe,¹⁵⁶ dating from the previous decade, and A deuoute treatyse called the tree &.xii.frutes of the holy goost¹⁵⁷ ~~are~~ ^{are} two shorter, more general treatises written for religious sisters. Compared to the restricted subject matter, the detailed and rather technical nature of the discussion and the overt didactic intention of Whitford's work, these two books of spiritual counsel cover a much wider range of topics, but they go into little detail and do not demand the intellectual application or perseverance of The Pype or Tonne. They are also marked by a far more personal approach.

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

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

There is a rudimentary instruction on "Howe to ouercome temptacyon", which again reminds the reader of the "ghostly consolacyon" which will follow great tribulation, and the author goes on to advocate "Howe study or medytacyon in a holy wrytynge profyteth moche agaynst temptacyon" - the same point is made by Whitford in The Pye or Tonne.¹⁶⁶ In an allegorical figure of some beauty¹⁶⁷ the author recommends the study of Scripture, or "holy redynge" of a more general nature, as a way to calm lust, to put away evyl thoughts and to prevent a troubled night's rest. Whitford recommends first the contemplation of God and also the life, passion and death of Jesus, and then the study of holy Scripture, for "such per^sons as ben entred in gramer", that is, who can read Latin. He goes on to recommend¹⁶⁸ that those under about forty-four or forty-six years of age, men and women, provided they can spare the

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

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

Time in which to do penance for sins committed and in which to labour for salvation¹⁷¹ was short and precious. "There is none so greate a losse, as is the losse of tyme. Another thyng yf it be loste, may be founden agayne/but tyme whan it is lost, may neuer be founde agayne".¹⁷² Awareness of the transience and mutability of all earthly things, the retrospective regret expressed in the ubi sunt and quid profuit themes, and the harder lesson of the inevitability of death,¹⁷³ were all comments on man's awareness of the passing of time. Time was to be used profitably, and idleness was to be avoided:¹⁷⁴

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

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

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

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

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

The treatise is in two parts. The first concentrates upon the tree, the fundamental growth in religion, which is rooted in meekness, watered by compunction and spreads forth in charity. The second part is connected with an exposition of the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost,¹⁸² the fruits of "goostly lyuyng". The tree that is to flourish "in the gardyng of holy relygyon"¹⁸³ must be rooted in meekness,¹⁸⁴ the contrary of pride, which grows from self knowledge¹⁸⁵ and contempt of

self, and which is nourished by the many examples of meekness shown by Christ.¹⁸⁶ A little later, in discussing the vow of poverty, the author again refers to the example of Christ, "þe pore crybbe and few clothes" at His nativity, and His nakedness and thirst upon the cross.¹⁸⁷ Obedience is related to the virtue of meekness.¹⁸⁸ The second quality of the tree is compunction, which may be stimulated by the familiar three-fold recollection of man's estate¹⁸⁹ and thoughts of death and judgement. Tears¹⁹⁰ are the sign of contrition, and they may also be the proof of inward devotion to Christ.¹⁹¹ The virtue of holy tears was, of course, highly regarded in late medieval devotion, and the gift of tears is often mentioned,¹⁹² sometimes in considerable detail.¹⁹³ Charity is the third quality needed to enable the tree to grow, but discussion of this virtue is postponed until the second part, where it stands as the first fruit of the Holy Ghost. The remainder of the first part is mainly concerned with matters of religious conduct and devotion. In addition to the vows of obedience and poverty (chastity is discussed at the end of Part II), silence is commended. The nun must learn to despise the world, to avoid frivolity and "alle dishonest playes", and to eschew the often-mentioned monastic vices of slander and singularity. To prevent her attention wandering during services the sister is to contemplate Christ crucified, to see His wounds and the instruments of the Passion, and if possible to enter His heart by the wounds of His side.¹⁹⁴ Special devotion to the Blessed Virgin is also encouraged. Finally, the author devotes considerable space to defining the character and purpose of various kinds of vocal and mental prayer and meditation. He gives no actual examples, but on occasion he does suggest various topics.¹⁹⁵

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The abbaye of the holy Ghost²¹³ is an example of the way in which the religious life dominated a work which was expressly intended for those who were not religious. It begins with the foundation charter and establishment of an abbey, which is peopled by such familiar monastic virtues as meekness, patience, temperance, sobriety, poverty and chastity, and even a form of obedience. The abbey is attacked by the Devil and his four daughters, Pride, Envy, False Judgement and Lust, and the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve, to whom the abbey was originally

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

The charter, based on the standard legal forms and terminology²¹⁴, grants to Adam and Eve "a lytel precyous place that is called conscyence", which is "cleyenly dyght without ony wemme. In the whiche god made a noble house of religyon yt is called the abbaye of ye holy ghost". Again, as in Alcock's Mons perfectionis, the perfection of paradise is taken up in to the monastic ideal, and the figure of the abbey is used to describe the spiritual history of mankind. Like the young religious of The tre & .xii. frutes, the abbey is founded on meekness, to which is added poverty, not the absolute poverty of the monastic vow but the relative poverty of not setting the heart upon worldly goods. As the young religious must be watered by compunction, so is the abbey "set vpon a ryuer...of teeres", the sign of sorrow for sin, but tears of devout joy as well as of sorrow are mentioned a number of times.²¹⁵ At the door stands the porter, dread, to close the gates of the cloister, the five wits, against evil. Several of the ladies of the convent have their counterpart in the xii. frutes of the holy goost; temperance and sobriety are related to continence, bounty and largesse to benignity, and joy is common to both. Over all is set the abbess, charity, to whom all owe obedience, and she has wisdom as her

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

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

The story of the Fall is a fairly detailed paraphrase of the biblical account, except for the added details of Adam's and Eve's fruitless search for the abbey. The search was continued by patriarchs and prophets, and effective use is made of Old Testament quotations. The parliament of heaven,²¹⁸ where the four daughters²¹⁹ I of God discuss whether man should be redeemed, was widely known, not only from devotional works such as The abbaye or Speculum Vitae Christi²²⁰ or Piers Plowman (Passus I B.18), but in drama such as the morality Castle of Perseverance or the mystery play Ludus Coventriae; it appeared also in verse,²²¹ and in sermons,²²² and was illustrated in a variety of

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

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

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

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

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

By far the most substantial and comprehensive work on the religious

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

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

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

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

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

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

The second book considers the life of religion in more detail, and the opening chapters present various similitudes, including a star and a tree, before focusing on the figure of the religious life as a following or a journey. Three types of pilgrim to Jerusalem are introduced - the contemporary pilgrim traveller, the Jews who journeyed from Egypt, and the three Wise Men - which show how the religious pilgrim should prepare himself, how he should exercise himself on the journey, and how he should follow the star of grace. The earthly pilgrim's preparation,²³⁶ for instance, the negotiations with his banker to arrange for a supply of local currency in each country, the provision of the pilgrim's habit with the sign of the cross, and the preparation of a will and suitable provision for his wife and family before he leaves on his journey, stand in the religious life for the abandonment of all earthly wealth in exchange for trust in the blood of Christ, for the donning of the religious habit and for the removal of all carnal affection for kindred and friends. In this chapter²³⁷ the author allows himself an uncharacteristic digression in praise of the Bridgettine order, founded "now in the last ende of the worlde"²³⁸ in honour of the Blessed Virgin, and according to Bonde "No religyon is founded hytherto/yt so nere representeth ye primityue Chirche of Chryst".²³⁹

In the course of this book reference is made to a number of problems. One which he raises here and in book III²⁴⁰ is that of ~~discerning~~^{distinguishing} good spirits and revelations from the illusions and visions of the Devil - a problem which had previously engaged the attention of

fourteenth-century English mystical writers.²⁴¹ Among the problems which seem to have been endemic among members of a closed religious community are slander or back-biting and singularity, a temptation which also assailed the solitary contemplative. According to Bonde²⁴² no individual may defend himself against any kind of slander, and the author of The tre &.xii.frutes repeatedly warns his readers against back-biting²⁴³ and against slander, by which he seems to mean harming the convent's good name.²⁴⁴ The question of singularity is more serious, for it betokens a presumptuous self will and the vain desire to be noticed. "Eschewe singulerte in alle þin outward obseruaunces" warns the author of The tre &.xii.frutes,²⁴⁵ and more particularly Hilton and the author of Speculum Vitae Christi²⁴⁶ warn their readers against abandoning set prayers such as the Pater and the canonical hours in favour of "synguler deuocioun" and private meditation before they are sufficiently advanced in the spiritual life. Such presumption leads to a kind of hypocrisy, of which the Speculum is highly critical.²⁴⁷ Bonde too notes that "many wyll kepe the outwarde cerimonyes of religyon precysely and to the vttermost/but the inwarde exercyse of vertue/as mekenes/obedyence/and charite/with suche other/they care not how lytell they fulfyll",²⁴⁸ but he warns against presuming to judge a man's inward state by his outward behaviour, for that is to usurp the power of God.

Inserted into the book is Bonde's translation of Bonaventura's Memorials, twenty-five points which are to be observed by the religious in search of perfection. They provide a convenient summary of the exercises which should occupy his life. The first ten points²⁴⁹ maintain the need for the religious to separate himself entirely from all worldly interests and ties, to despise the world and to repute

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

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

the life and gifts of grace. The introductory declaration is based on the star of grace figure;²⁵³ the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are listed,²⁵⁴ and the nine prerogative graces²⁵⁵ given in more detail; but the most important, the one essential to the pilgrimage, is the grace of life. While the prerogative graces are given freely, usually unsought, to the bad as well as the good, the grace of life is granted only to the good who keep God's commandments. Among the signs of God's grace, "now in the last age of ye worlde", Bonde mentions indulgences²⁵⁶ drawn on the accumulated merits of the Church; but he makes it clear that a good life aided by the sacraments is able to wipe away sins completely, whereas those who rely on pardons must bear the full pain of purgatory. The dominant figure of this book^{however,} is not the star, but the tree of grace.²⁵⁷ A substantial proportion of chapters 13 - 16 is devoted to the listing, classification and definition of the tree. Rooted in grace, the three theological virtues are respectively the trunk, bark and sap, while the four cardinal virtues are branches, and their leaves, subsidiary moral virtues. The flowers are the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost to which are linked the Beatitudes,²⁵⁸ and the petitions of the Pater, and finally the twelve fruits, met already in The tre & .xii. frutes, are the reward "of labour and exercyse in goostlynes." The declaration of the opposing tree of vice is given in the first day's journey of Book III. Its root is pride and its seven principal branches the seven deadly sins,²⁵⁹ while its other branches and leaves are subsidiary sins and vices.

The tree image, which was of course used in various contexts in both the Old and New Testaments,²⁶⁰ was used as early as the fifth century in connection with the cardinal sins;²⁶¹ but the pseudo-Hugonian De fructibus carnis et spiritus²⁶² seems to have been one of the

earliest to portray developed trees of vices and virtues. The iconographic development of the tree of Jesse²⁶³ - and perhaps the idea of the living cross²⁶⁴ - may well have contributed to the elaboration of the tree image. The Isaianic prophecy concerning Jesse was also the authority for the identification of the seven gifts of the Spirit, and they were portrayed in connection with the tree of Jesse from an early date.²⁶⁵ The tree of Jesse was itself used as an instructional figure for novices in the Speculum Virginum and the Hortus Deliciarum,²⁶⁶ where selections from the Beatitudes, the Pater and Psalm XXVIII are included with the seven gifts of the Spirit. The tree image could of course be adapted to a variety of uses, to show the seven fruits of the tree of penance or the seven branches of contemplation,²⁶⁷ for example; or a number of symbolic trees might be gathered together in "gastely foreste groves" as in The Desert of Religion.²⁶⁸

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

are the Beatitudes, in whose words "is enclosed al highenesse and al perfeccion of grace, of vertue, and of verreye blessednesse". There follows an exposition²⁷² of the Paternoster, whose seven petitions ask God for the seven gifts of the Spirit, deliver man from the seven deadly sins and sow in their place the seven virtues, and lead man to fulfil the seven Beatitudes. The tree of virtue is explained in terms of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, which allow the growth of the seven virtues and their branches. Bonde was probably familiar with another work, The Orchard of Syon, which, in addition ~~the~~^{to} the orchard figure, made use of the image of rotten trees, rooted in pride, nourished by sensual self-love, subsisting on impatience, shaped by indiscretion and gnawed by the worm of conscience.²⁷³ One other presentation of the tree of vices and the tree of virtues was that in The Kalendar of Shepherds, printed both before and after The Pilgrimage.²⁷⁴ These are no more than a list of the seven deadly sins and the seven virtues, subdivided into large numbers of subsidiary branches and small sprays.²⁷⁵ In the consistency of their declaration and the complexity of their associations²⁷⁶ Bonde's treatment of the two trees is similar to that in Somme le Roi, but since his main interest is the religious pilgrimage not morality, his exposition of the vices and virtues is much briefer. The two trees are convenient pictorial summaries, which can be related generally to the scheme of salvation or more particularly to the religious life, and from which he can select various topics for more detailed examination.²⁷⁷

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

selves in the freely given grace of God, and He will not compel them, for "he hath lefte mannes wyll in his owne liberte/to do what he pleaseth/eyther by grace to meryte his saluacyon/or els by his neglygence & foly to deserue & procure his own dampnacyon".²⁸⁰ Even the secular or worldly person who does not neglect to cultivate his spiritual vineyard will produce no more than light wines; only holy religious people " bryngeth forth the myghty swete wyne of contemplacyon/ whiche doth so inebriate & replenysshe the soule/that it is rauysshed with ioye vnspekably".²⁸¹ The religious must not only labour to uproot all vices, but he must not allow his virtues to become weakened by excess²⁸² and he must defend his vine against:

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

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

The first five days of Book III are concerned with the labours, gifts and fruits of the active life,²⁸⁴ with the fifth day²⁸⁵ acting as a summary of the four preceding days, and offering a foretaste of days six and seven on the contemplative life, which occupy half the total length of The Pilgrimage. The first day deals with the gift of ghostly fear and the virtues of temperance. Adam fell from grace through pride, which led in turn to disobedience, gluttony, lechery and excuses by which he attempted to evade responsibility for his sins.

Apart from warning the religious against the dangers of singularity, curiosity, vain speech and evil company, and encouraging him to renounce the world - a recurrent exercise of these five days - Bonde concentrates on the exposition of those virtues which will counter the sins of Adam: meekness, obedience, abstinence, chastity and simplicity - a familiar set of monastic virtues. Meekness,²⁸⁶ for instance, is described as the foundation of the spiritual temple on a number of occasions; and the picture of the meek soul as one who is never grieved, never show⁵ any trace of pride, who accounts himself and the world as vile and nothing worth, all for the love of Jesus, is supplemented by illustrations from Vitae Patrum. Among many others who exhort their readers to live meekly²⁸⁷ Hilton, in his explanation of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem,²⁸⁸ sees meekness and love as the two essential companions for the journey. Meekness is derived not only from the soul's awareness of his own frailties and wretchedness, but also the "meekness that the soul feeleth through grace, in sight and beholding of the endless being and the wonderful goodness of Jhesu."²⁸⁹

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

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

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

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

Bonde does not neglect the dangers of the journey caused by man's three principal enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil: "And that they may the sooner brynge about theyr purpose/they ley engyns/trappes & snares in our waye/to let vs in our iourney/& fyghteth myghtely against vs".²⁹⁰ Under these three captains fight the seven deadly sins and their subsidiary vices. On two occasions Bonde looks back to the battles of the children of Israel after they passed over Jordan, "whiche fygureth and signifyeth to vs the spirituall batayles of vertues/that we shall haue after our entrynge to religyon/longe tyme or we can come to the entent of our iourney/whiche is holynesse and perfeccyon of lyuynge".²⁹¹ But as Joshua and the children of Israel overcame Jericho, Ai and Gibeon,²⁹² so are the three cities held by the deadly sins²⁹³ in the soul of man overcome in the battle of patience by grace and the appropriate virtues, and three new cities established.²⁹⁴ In the course of the first day, however, he presents a full scale "batayle of vyce and vertue/pytched in the feelde of the cognitacyon or mynde of man or woman".²⁹⁵ The general image of the Christian warfare was widely used in the New Testament and among the Fathers,²⁹⁶ but the confrontation of the vices and the virtues is generally traced back to the late fourth century and the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius.²⁹⁷ In Bonde it is less a battle than a debate, where each sin states its views and ambitions and is answered by its opposing virtue, who frequently cites the words of Jesus. There is no trace of dramatic action nor even of martial imagery apart from the word battle, nor could it be described as a dialogue. It offers a formal summary of the main sins and the opposing active virtues²⁹⁸ dealt with in the first few days, ~~and~~ adapted from the traditional lists to follow Bonde's own teaching. In addition

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

While the first two days of Book III are mainly concerned with the exposition of virtues and the vices they oppose, the third day - the gift of ghostly knowledge and the virtue of prudence - devotes a substantial number of chapters. (3 - 9) to the discerning of spirits and means of testing whether revelations are true or are merely an illusion of the Devil. The fourth day - ghostly strength and fortitude - is largely occupied by the value of adversity (the doctrine of tribulation³⁰⁰) and by the virtue of patience. The fifth day, unlike those which pre^{cede} it, has no particular labour. Its gift of ghostly counsel, which is of particular value to prelates, rulers and teachers, directs the other virtues, illuminates the soul, and tunes the spiritual ear to hear the counsels of Jesus.³⁰¹ A number of images are used, especially of cities,³⁰² buildings³⁰³ and the mason,³⁰⁴ who as his skill and knowledge increases does less physical work in the same way that labour ceases at the fifth day, the completion of the active life. The soul, its labour and battles over, becomes like a bird, free to fly to the mount of contemplation.

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

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

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

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

the bee³¹² which gathers pollen from every flower; so the religious person should seek out books of perfection and feed on them. The author of Oure Ladyes Myroure, Whitford and others had more to say about the selection and reading of devout books.³¹³ A large proportion of this day is devoted to detailed expositions of "ye prayer of all prayers/ye holy Pater noster",³¹⁴ the Ave Maria,³¹⁵ Creed³¹⁶ and Ten Commandments.³¹⁷ Versions of some or all of these - especially the Pater noster³¹⁸ and Creed which were considered as the basic knowledge required of all Christians - were to be found, with or without accompanying expositions, in a large number of hand-books for clergy³¹⁹ and in devotional treatises for religious or lay people.³²⁰ The statement and exposition of these works was continued on into the 1530s and beyond in Primers,³²¹ sermons³²² and treatises.³²³ In a number of cases the Pater noster³²⁴ or Decalogue³²⁵ provides the structural basis for an entire work. Although there were precedents for including lists and expositions of articles of belief and prayers in devotional treatises, in The myrroure of the chyrche for example, Bonde's expositions are far longer and more detailed than usual. A vast amount of religious teaching, and even criticism of Wycliffe and Lutheran heresies,³²⁶ is included in the course of the fifteen chapters devoted to the creed;³²⁷ and the twelve articles allow various general topics to be loosely grouped together. The first article, for instance, considers the propriety of worshipping images and grapples with the problem of representing the mystery of the Trinity,³²⁸ while V the fourth (Passus sub Poncio Pilato/crucifixus/mortuus et sepultus) for once attempts to explain the significance of Christ's death rather than dwelling upon descriptive detail.³²⁹ Yet despite the amount of

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

Prayer and meditation, about which Bonde has quite a lot to say, were common enough topics of discussion in Catholic devotional treatises, but it was unusual to find much about faith beyond the necessity of having it.³³¹ The Christian's obligation to believe and not to question the teachings of the Church was frequently stressed:³³²

"Wherefore let vs neuer dispute or reason the mysteryes of our fayth: but let it be sufficyent to vs/yt it is ye werke & worde of god".³³³

Following Hebrews XI and Aquinas, Bonde defines faith as the beginning, the door or foundation of eternal life. It enables the Christian to accept what is above reason and not apparent to the senses, and to believe the articles of his faith. As material must be dry before the fire will catch, or as the painter prepares the bare board with "grosse colours" before painting on his fine colours, so the soul cannot receive the light of grace until disposed thereto by faith.³³⁴

In his Holy Instrucyons Whitford too had said that the only sure knowledge available to man in this life was by faith alone as interpreted by Holy Church.³³⁵ Bonde declares "ye soule cannot be iustified before god wtout fayth", but against the Lutheran heretics he argues that faith alone is not sufficient to salvation:

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

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

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

his attempt to reserve treatment of the higher state of meditation³⁴³ until the final day.

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

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

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

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

words,^{347A} and the author declares his own unworthiness to "touche the mount of contemplacyon".³⁴⁸ Yet he gives an adequate description, relying particularly on Bonaventura, Bernard, Aquinas and Henry of Herp, of the way in which souls can attain to the highest degree of mortification, the complete abnegation of self, until not only are they willing to suffer or die for Christ, but their whole heart is so fixed in God that they will nothing but his will; thus "Loue knytteth the louynge soule to god/whome it moost loueth/and maketh it one with hym". From children they become spouses of God, and they receive the spiritual kissing of the Son of God in varying degrees, with the Blessed Virgin as the supreme example. If they die the inexpressible joy of this union will be retained by them and they will be received into heaven, to see the clear vision of the Holy Trinity and to be fed with the fruits of glory. Although Bonde would not claim any mystical insights of his own, his exposition of the various degrees of perfection within the contemplative life is based on good authority, and in his use of traditional mystical terminology - the sweetness of the gifts of this day, the wine of love and the spiritual drunkenness³⁴⁹ it produces, and the final expectation of the heavenly marriage with Christ - he captures something of the contemplative's vision and crowns a lengthy pilgrimage with a foretaste of heaven.

Treatises concerning the contemplative life

A great deal has been written about mysticism in general,³⁵⁰ and more particularly the English mystics of the fourteenth century have been the subject of a number of studies.^{350A} But although Rolle,³⁵¹ Hilton,³⁵² the author of The Cloude of Unknowing and Margery Kempe flourished in the fourteenth century, their works continued to be copied during the following centuries³⁵³ and in some cases to be printed.³⁵⁴ Hilton's work was recommended by Love in the Speculum Vitae Christi³⁵⁵ and by Sir Thomas More, who thought it better for:

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

rather than they should spend their time reading polemic and controversial tracts. The author of Oure Ladyes myroure³⁵⁷ and Bonde both refer to Richard Rolle while the Stimulus Amoris was recommended by the author of The tre & .xii. frutes³⁵⁸ to his readers, and Margery Kempe had it read to her and quoted from it.³⁶⁰ But the interest was not merely retrospective. Bonde devoted over half the total length of The Pilgrymage of perfeccyon to a study of the contemplative life, using both well known authorities like St. Bernard, Bonaventura and Aquinas and the fifteenth century Dutch writer Henry of Herp. Later, in the middle of the century, the Yorkshire priest Robert Parkyn not only copied works by Richard Rolle, but like Bonde he wrote a number of brief instructions about the contemplative life.³⁶¹ The English

mystical tradition, with its combination of elements from the religious - handbook tradition³⁶² and teaching about the contemplative life, was at least as much instructional as autobiographical. Rolle and Dame Julian of Norwich communicate something of their own mystical experience to the reader, but Hilton and the author of The Cloud make no direct reference to their own experience. Their concern is to instruct the reader in various aspects of the contemplative life, and Bonde and Parkyn follow in their footsteps.

Hilton's Scala perfectionis or The ladder of perfeccyon,³⁶³ addressed not to a "ghostly sister" within the convent community, but to an enclosed ancess,³⁶⁴ sets out like Bonde's Pilgrimage³⁶⁵ to lead the reader by gradual degrees³⁶⁶ to the life of perfection or the contemplative life. The pursuit of the solitary life, like entry into religion, "and the stricter that the religion is, the more excellent is the deed in the doom of Holy Kirk", was widely accepted as being the most meritorious form of life.³⁶⁷ But as well as providing the best setting for the pursuit of perfection and the contemplative life, the solitary life of the ancess, recluse or hermit was fraught with dangers.³⁶⁸ But before discussing Hilton's treatise it will be useful to look briefly at some other works written for recluses.

Just as the regular religious was bound by vows and the rule of his order, so the solitary hermit or enclosed ancess usually took vows.³⁶⁹ Some undertook to follow a particular rule³⁷⁰, while others received more informal, personal instruction about their manner of life. One such instruction was the Carthusian Richard de Methley's

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

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

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

Another influential work³⁷⁶ was Aelred of Rievaulx' De Institutione Inclusarum. Although it was addressed to his sister allowance is made for readers who may be less experienced in the enclosed life. Here again over half of the work is devoted to the life of the recluse and to the discussion of various virtues. Following a comparison between the ideal of the enclosed life and the shortcomings of contemporary recluses the author goes on to outline suitable occupations, which include prayer, reading and work, and to provide regulations for the keeping of silence, for the provision and quantities of food and drink and for suitable apparel. Among the virtues he discusses are chastity; humility, the foundation of all virtues; and charity, which unites all the other virtues. He also devotes considerable attention to the need for discretion or moderation. The second half of the work is

given over to spiritual exercises, a systematic three-fold meditation³⁷⁷ on the past benefits of Christ, revealed in the story of His life and Passion; experience of His present grace, told in an autobiographical account of Aelred's earlier life and how, like St. Augustine, he was converted from his rebellious course; and consideration of the future Judgement, the fate of the damned and the bliss of heaven which awaits the blessed. Yet again there is no obvious reference to the contemplative state. Even the chapter³⁷⁸ which contrasts the life of Martha and that of Mary is more concerned to discuss the expression of charity appropriate to two states of life, the active religious, clerk or prelate, who retains some contact with the world, and the enclosed solitary. The conditions to be observed by the enclosed imply the separation from worldly affairs and the concentration on spiritual things characteristic of the contemplative: "Itaque totum mundum uno dilectionis sinu complectere, ibi simul omnes qui boni sunt considera et congratulare, ibi malos intueri et luge... Omnibus pectus tuae dilectionis aperias, his tuas impende lacrymas, pro his tuas preces effundas. Haec eleemosyna Deo gratior, Christo acceptior, tuae professioni aptior, his quibus impenditur fructuosior"... but no more is said about the content of that vocation. As in the Ancrene Riwe, however, a few statements in the course of meditation on the Passion seem to suggest a more intimate, mystical association with Christ than is usually derived from the practice of the devotional present.³⁷⁹ That part of devotion distinguished by the fourteenth century authors as contemplation, seems in these earlier works to be assumed to be an integral part of the solitary's life, even though it is not singled out for special discussion.³⁸⁰

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

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

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

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

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

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

perfect living although charity may not be fulfilled in this world. The author then goes on to discuss virtues which help towards perfect love, including patience, perseverance, a good will, the ability to conquer temptation and prayer, especially when accompanied by compunction and tears. The treatise is concerned, then, not with contemplation, but with the virtues of a good life. Only the chapters describing the degree of love (B) and the qualities of the love of God³⁹⁶ echo anything of Rolle's understanding of the contemplative's experience of burning love and passionate desire for Jesus. Love in this later work is considered as a virtue to be attained through a good life. Significantly the reader here is not required to forsake and despise the world, the need for solitude and the rest of body and soul necessary to the pursuit of contemplation are not mentioned, and although it expresses the conventional view that the religious way - it does not mention the solitary recluse - is the safest, the author recognizes that "all may not be men or women of relygyon":

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

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

Hilton's Scala Perfectionis has been the subject of a number of articles³⁹⁸ and brief chapters³⁹⁹ and of one full length study.⁴⁰⁰ Milosh's study raises two questions: one concerns only mystical writings, the other applies more generally to most late medieval English devotional treatises. The first is the tendency to view the works of the fourteenth century English mystics in the light of the vast amount that has been written about the theory of mysticism, and to apply concepts like the three ways - purgative, illuminative and unitive - to earlier works which rarely define states and words rigidly or systematically. The second, more general, problem concerns structure, and the tendency of modern critics to look for logical connections between topics and a reasoned structure sustaining the whole work.⁴⁰¹ However, the "structure" of these late medieval devotional works is much more likely to depend on an allegorical framework (the tun of Whitford's Pype or Tonne, or the complex allegorical interpretation of the children born to Lia and Rachel, the two wives of Jacob, ⁱⁿ ~~of~~ Benjamin Minor) or on simple numerical division (Fyue notable chapyres;⁴⁰² The seuen poyntes of trewe wisdom or The.xii.profytes of tribulacyon - sometimes the numbers may suggest a symbolic meaning) than on logical argument. The author will move on from one topic to the next when he has exhausted the subject or when some phrase suggests the subject of the next one, and topics are frequently repeated with variations.

In his final chapter Milosh⁴⁰³ suggests that there is an overall unity in The Scale, derived from its unity of teaching, tone and structure. As far as unity of teaching is concerned the extent

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

open to the attack of the Devil's temptations. The experience of being abandoned by God and the consequent desolation has always been familiar to those who seek to follow ^{Him} ~~God~~.⁴¹³ Job and the Psalmist⁴¹⁴ had felt themselves forsaken of God; The Protestant Timothy comforts the dying Lazarus with the reminder that Christ too was tempted and felt Himself abandoned by God on the cross.⁴¹⁵ The dying soul laments that he is "so barayne so drye frome all deuocyon" that he is ready for the fire, and he pleads "cutte me not downe by deth to suche tyme that my tree maye haue moysture through thy grace";⁴¹⁶ and over three and a half centuries later Hopkins echoes the appeal "Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain".⁴¹⁷ One of the fullest descriptions of this state of spiritual abandonment is found in the Orologium,⁴¹⁸ where the soul becomes "seke & vnlistye; & þenne folowep werynes of þe bodye & hardnesse of herte, & sorowe of þe spiryte....and þanne mislykene all þinges"; the call becomes hateful, the brethren are despised and the soul begins to slumber for heaviness"so þat sumtyme for þe pusill[an]imite and febelnesse of spiryte he wote neyþer wheþene hit comeþ or wheder hit goþ". It is not surprising that in such a state the soul is prone to vices, weak to withstand temptation, and reluctant to undertake spiritual exercises.

According to Hilton,(I:36) the gift of devotion may be withdrawn to prevent a man growing proud of the gift, because of some sin which hinders the grace or in order to wean the soul from dependence on fleshly love to more spiritual perception. Later⁴¹⁹ he adds what was probably the most widely stated reason for this sense of abandonment, that it is one of the ghostly tribulations by which the rust of sin

is burnt out of the soul. In other words, it is a form of temptation by which God proves His children;⁴²⁰ but the author of The Ladder of Paradise comforts his reader "feare not O spouse, despair not, neither thinke thyself to be contemned, though for a while ye bridegrome hide his face from thee, all these things woork together for thy profit".⁴²¹ The remedy suggested by Hilton and the author of The Book of Privy Counselling is to wait and suffer patiently and to trust God, who, although He may withdraw His presence, does not move away nor withdraw His grace. The problem of aridity and desolation is dealt with very briefly in these contemplative works but it is the subject of more lengthy treatment in two works written for religious sisters, The Chastising of God's Children and Bonde's Deuoute Epystle.⁴²² Like Hilton (I:37), Bonde lists some of the guises in which the Devil may afflict the conscience or imagination of man. The purpose of such temptation is to strengthen faith, and to encourage hope in God's mercy. Bonde's main purpose is to comfort the troubled, and especially the fearful and scrupulous soul, and to this end he declares that whoever cleaves to God and calls for mercy will not be overcome;⁴²³ no matter what his thoughts, reason or actions may do, the person who resists motions to sin in the depth of his heart will be safe. He sums up the idea of God's continuing and sustaining care in the image of a mother's care as she teaches her child to walk unaided.⁴²⁴ The author of The Chastising⁴²⁵ lists six profitable reasons why God may withdraw His presence, including the danger of pride, and some self-caused reasons, such as negligence. Like Hilton he sees the gifts of ghostly comfort and sweet feelings as characteristic of an early stage of spiritual

development, and warns against over-valuing them and loving the gift rather than the giver.⁴²⁶ He likens the withdrawal of these gifts to the declining sun of late autumn, and describes the heaviness, wretchedness, infirmities and perplexities of the soul's winter state, apparently cut off from Christ, the sun.⁴²⁷ His advice on what to do begins, "I counceile euery man to Sette it to his owne defaute þat grace is wipdrawe", and concludes with an application of that principle in a recommendation of meekness that sounds not unlike Hilton's "I am nought".⁴²⁸ He says that a man thus troubled should "sette himself at nought, and þenk in his hert þat nought he hap, ne nought he hadde, ne nought he may haue, but oonli of god".⁴²⁹ Also reminiscent of Hilton is the advice to persevere in prayer, but to temper this by other occupations⁴³⁰ and the sane counsel "in al suche tyme to take bodili sustenaunce and other nedeful reste in resonable maner".⁴³¹ Meekness, patience, perseverance and trust are the main remedies advocated by spiritual guides to overcome, or at least endure, loss of devotion and the apparent absence of God. Not surprisingly this desolation or withdrawal was often seen as a temptation which, if withstood, could profit the soul.

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

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

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

From temptation, Hilton goes on to consider some aspects of sin. Although he makes use of features common in the treatment of the seven deadly sins - listing subsidiary branches of these sins⁴³⁸ or likening them to various animals⁴³⁹ - he again concentrates not on the external manifestations of sins, so much as ^{on} their inner workings. In fact he devotes considerable attention to practical examination by which the recluse may discern to what extent she is guilty of the principal sins,⁴⁴⁰ especially with regard to her feelings and inner thoughts. For instance, physically the recluse has left the world for her enclosed anchorage, but if she finds herself loving any physical ^{ones} ~~possessions~~, yearning for something she has not got or troubled

because something lent has not been returned, then even if ^{she does not openly show her feelings} she is guilty of loving worldly goods, and more guilty than a worldly man who has not vowed to renounce them. The questions are searching and reveal a shrewd knowledge of the workings of the human heart. But, as the memorable image of the fouled well⁴⁴¹ which corrupts the flowers of the soul's garden suggests, Hilton is more concerned to expose and destroy the ground of sin. Again, the reader is to enter into himself, where he will find "soothly right nought but a murk image and a painful of thine own soul", an image "all belapped with black stinking clothes of sin".⁴⁴² Sin is defined, not in terms of a bodily thing, a wrong act or word, but as a "lacking of love", "a wanting of God",⁴⁴³ and a love of self.⁴⁴⁴ Because it can find no rest or comfort within itself the unreformed soul stays outside itself, where it succumbs to worldly vanities and temptations. Who would find Jesus must be prepared to endure this dark conscience and to "swink and sweat" there awhile, to uproot the seven deadly sins, especially the spiritual ones, of which pride is considered in most detail. The remedy, besides specific remedies for particular sins, is to labour to supplant the image of the first Adam by the image of Jesus, and to bear down and overcome the "nought" and "murkness" of sin by fervent desire for Jesus; the importance of meekness and charity for this work is stressed repeatedly.⁴⁴⁵

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

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

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

Christ's Passion or the virtues of the sacraments as automatically available to the faithful.⁴⁴⁶ Although sin is forgiven by contrition of soul, confession is necessary before the pain is remitted and whole satisfaction done. Confession⁴⁴⁷ is like a charter made between the individual and the Church, which stands as proof of his forgiveness; it may even encourage full contrition and bring the grace of compunction, and it is in any case a regulation of Holy Church to be obeyed - an insistence which may reflect contemporary Lollard attacks on this sacrament.⁴⁴⁸ Sacramental confession also offered reassurance to fleshly men who, unable to feel their forgiveness, find it hard to believe they are forgiven unless they have "some bodily token".⁴⁴⁹

The problem of bodily feelings and the physical interpretation of spiritual things recurs throughout The Scale.⁴⁵⁰ Although the problem was more acute for mystical writers, the difficulty of how to describe and relate the physical representation (iconographical or verbal) to its spiritual reality was widely recognized, particularly with regard to images.⁴⁵¹ In addition to the need to distinguish between true and false visions - according to Hilton they are to be judged by the degree to which they further desire for God⁴⁵² - there was the danger of misinterpreting mystical language, and a tendency to over-value the physical feelings often associated with mysticism. Rolle's autobiographical writings and his emphasis on the more physical aspects of contemplation - his canor, calor, dulcor - was undoubtedly responsible for a number of misunderstandings which both Hilton and the author of The Cloud⁴⁵³ sought to correct. Hilton, for instance, denies that

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

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

unformed, but it generates formed love, "the affection of the soul, made by the Holy Ghost of the sight and the knowing of soothfastness, that is God only, stirred and set in him".⁴⁵⁹ Together with this knowledge and love of Jesus comes perfect meekness⁴⁶⁰ or the total abnegation of self, the gift of ghostly prayer,⁴⁶¹ than which none is better than the Pater noster, used now very differently from the vocal prayer of common men, and ghostly understanding of Scripture.⁴⁶² Further, the soul is able to see something of the degrees of the Church on earth, to discern the fallen and the blessed angels, to see the manhood of Christ and something of His Godhead and the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, and to enjoy "lovely dalliances of privy speech atwixt Jhesu and a soul". The soul which has climbed so high up the ladder of perfection can be assured that it will enjoy full sight and knowledge of the spouse Jesus in heaven.

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

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

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

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

The Stimulus Amoris, which according to Miss Kirchberger⁴⁶⁷ may have been translated by Hilton before the completion of the Scala Perfectionis, remained influential among some religious as late as the 1530's,⁴⁶⁸ but there seems to have been no English edition printed. It falls into three parts. The first nine chapters offer devotional meditations on the Passion, and the last five chapters are also meditative, with devout expositions of the "Pater", "Ave" and "Salve Regina", a complaint of the Flesh to God with the Father's answer, and concluding with an evocation of the restful place of high Jerusalem and the clear sight of the Blessed Trinity. The central section, about half the work's total length, is derived from a treatise by James of Milan.⁴⁶⁹ It is a miscellaneous collection of teaching about various aspects of the spiritual life, mainly related to the love of God, and not surprisingly it has many points of contact with the Scala Perfectionis⁴⁷⁰ and more generally⁴⁷¹ with other works of spiritual instruction such as the Ancrene Riwle,⁴⁷¹ The Chastising of God's Children⁴⁷² and William Flete's De Remediis contra temptationes.⁴⁷³

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

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

The change of audience has a clear effect on the teaching: the introspection required is far less deep and rigorous, and there is correspondingly greater emphasis given to the reader's relationship with other Christians⁴⁷⁴ and to the performance of the works of mercy.⁴⁷⁵ The audience is not clearly defined, but most of the Stimulus seems intended "to tell how a man may with active life have contemplation of Jesus Christ!"⁴⁷⁶ At some points the writer seems to think particularly of a priest—"We...that have power and authority of speaking and of preaching"⁴⁷⁷ but the chapter on the importance of obedience, "that is the ground of Religion", is clearly addressed to a conventual religious;⁴⁷⁸ and at another point he compares the religious with the recluse: "if thou be solitary and seest thy brother liue in congregation..."⁴⁷⁹ Like Nicholas Love, Richard Whitford and many other religious authors, the writer laments the present state of religion, particularly the want of obedience:

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

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

progress up the hill of contemplation; "And that is the cause of why so few that are in the state of contemplation come, these days, < to perfection > ". Again like Love and William Bonde⁴⁸¹, he denounces spiritual hypocrisy in words which echo Christ's:⁴⁸² "we are like to graves painted without^{with} colours of hypocrisy, and within are full of rotten bones, seeming outward as dead to the world and inward we are blown with boils of pride <and of covetousness> ".

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There seems, however, to be a tendency for treatises of affective devotion, particularly those printed in the earlier decades of the sixteenth century, to concentrate more exclusively on the life and Passion of Christ. A number of authors declared meditation on Christ's Passion to be the highest form of devotion.⁵⁰⁸ Like many other authors the monk of Farne describes how the arms of Jesus are extended on the cross ready to embrace man, His head is bowed to kiss him and He seeks to draw man into His wounded side;⁵⁰⁹ the author links this image with a description of a mother's love for her child. The two images are moving, but they are handled with more restraint than in A talking of the love of God,⁵¹⁰ where an ejaculatory style, frequent rhetorical questions, and a vocabulary which emphasizes the feelings of affection, combine to produce a characteristic piece of affective devotion. The same piece includes some reference to the poverty of Christ's birth,⁵¹¹ details which were elaborated by later authors,⁵¹² and a lengthier section of His Passion⁵¹³ that dwells on the physical shame He endured and the pains inflicted on Him⁵¹⁴ in very much the same way as later narratives. The first nine chapters of the Stimulus also focus on Christ's Passion. They are written in the style of affective devotion, but their emotional appeal does not depend on description of His physical sufferings, which are mentioned only in brief summary lists or very generally.⁵¹⁵ However, such references are very frequent and the reader is left in

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

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

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

Spiritual drunkenness can be an effect of "inly beholding of Christ's passion",⁵²⁰ but it also encourages the desire to do His will.⁵²¹ This desire for Christ is particularized in the virtues of His blood and wounds. Recognition of the healing properties of His blood seems to have been widespread in the fourteenth century,⁵²² and by the end of the century devotion to the five wounds was well established.⁵²³ The monk of Farne seeks refuge in the wound of Christ's side⁵²⁴ and Julian enters into His breast by the same wound.⁵²⁵ The author of the meditations in the Stimulus dwells upon the wounds with unusual persistence and fervour. He sees them as the way ~~in~~ to incorporation

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

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

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

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

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

Apart from a few exceptions like Hilton's Vita Mixta or The Kalender of Sheperdes the majority of devotional works available in print before 1530 were probably religious in origin. The myrroure of the churche⁵³² and The myrroure of golde for the synfull soule⁵³³ were both printed a number of times during the 1520s. One is addressed "to all maner of people" as "necessary & comfortable to the edyfycacion of the soule & body to the loue & grace of god", and the other is intended for any "pore synfull soule". The myrroure of golde is written in the contemptus mundi tradition,⁵³⁴ and dwells upon the filthiness and misery of man, the need to hate, despise and flee the

world and the importance of constant recollection of death.

Although not in itself overtly religious, the world-denying emphasis of this kind of teaching made the cloister the only effective refuge against sinful flesh and the world. It was hardly practical or encouraging advice to anyone who had to earn his living in the world. Apart from hatred of all sin and worldly vanities man's only hope lies in penance - which must not be deferred - accompanied by prayer, fasting and almsgiving. The widely known Myrrour of the church⁵³⁵ is a more comprehensive, much less oppressive work. The contemptus mundi outlook is still to be found in the description of man's sinful body, but it is balanced by descriptions of the benefits and gifts of God. Practical advice is given on "How a man sholde spende his tyme", and there are brief instructional passages on the usual seven deadly sins, the seven beatitudes, seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, the ten commandments, the creed, the seven sacraments, the seven works of mercy and the "Pater". There is also an extensive meditation on Christ's Passion linked with other notable events of His life and divided according to the canonical hours. Such a division was, as we shall see,⁵³⁶ frequently used, but here the meditation is firmly set in a religious - contemplative context. Despite the general address of the ^{title} and the addition of ^{Copland's verses,} the version printed was originally intended for religious use - "you that lyue in relygyon or in congregacyon folowe the way of perfeccyon"⁵³⁷ and it contains a simple exposition of three manners of contemplation. The contemplation of God in his creation in learning of God's will from hearing the Scriptures expounded, and finally the contemplation of God Himself. The seven-fold meditation on Christ's life and Passion represents the contemplation of His manhood, while the means of knowing His Godhead is briefly explained and followed

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

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

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

Another work that enjoyed a wide circulation, but which even in its adapted form gave clear evidence of its religious interest, was The golden epistle⁵⁴² attributed to St. Bernard.⁵⁴³ At least three translations were printed. The earliest was in a collection compiled by Thomas Betson,⁵⁴⁴ called A ryght profytable treatyse,⁵⁴⁵ which was described as "medefull to religyous people as to the laye people", where the piece was entitled simply: "St. Bernarde to a newe begynner in relygyon". Another version was printed by Thomas Godfray as "an Epistle of saynt Bernarde called the Golden epistle/whiche he sent to a young religious man whom he moche loued". This version was found,

often with four extracts from the Revelations⁵⁴⁵ of St. Bridget and a chapter of Hilton's Scala Perfectionis,⁵⁴⁶ as a separable appendix to his editions of the Imitatio Christi.⁵⁴⁷ The other version,⁵⁴⁸ generally described as "a notable lesson", "profytable vnto all chrystianes" and "edificatyue vnto all them haue a zeale/ and cure vnto soule helthe and desyre of saluacyon", is a re-working by Richard Whitford "of an olde translacyon/rughe/and rude" - probably that of his confrère, Thomas Betson. Even contemporary printers like Redman and Wayland seem on occasion to have confused Whitford's version with the anonymous Godfray translation.⁵⁴⁹ Separate editions of the work, in both versions, suggest that it was popular in its own right and not simply as an appendage to A Kempis or among other pieces by Whitford.

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

place/and that thou be cast out as a stynkyng careyon". It sounds as though Godfray took over a version that had been adapted for a religious, or perhaps for a solitary contemplative,⁵⁵¹ and rather surprisingly he made no attempt to alter it for the wider audience likely to read the printed version. Even at a later date, probably after the dissolution of the monasteries, Paynell does not seem to have found it necessary to adapt A compendius & a moche fruytfull treatyse of well liuynge for a different audience.⁵⁵² Perhaps the authority of St. Bernard's name was sufficient to guarantee an audience, or perhaps it was rather that tastes in religious literature changed more slowly than the official legislation which dissolved the monastries. There are too many signs of the continuation of medieval ~~and~~ traditions into the mid-sixteenth century to be able to dismiss Paynell's translation as a book born out of time; presumably the publisher at least believed it would find an audience.⁵⁵³

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

detail than either the original or the other two English translations. He does, however, present it as an objective statement—"The tymes of scylence in religyon ben these..."—and not as a command to his readers, and he gives no indication of his own status with regard to such a rule. The detailed instruction he supplies on prayer⁵⁵⁵ is a good example of his ability to cast his teaching into an easily remembered form. The grammatical cases - nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, vocative and ablative - serve to remind the reader of the different estates of people for whom he is to pray and the sort of prayer which is appropriate to them. To the primary list, which concerns this present life, is added a second application of the cases to cover prayer for the souls departed, kindred, benefactors, the souls in purgatory, for all souls in general, and for those whom you harmed or who harmed you in this life. As an example of the main sequence: the nominative case is prayer for yourself and seeks ghostly strength against sin, knowledge of God based on knowledge of your own estate and condition and reverend fear and love of God. Prayer for kindred, benefactors and enemies, including those who have slandered you or hurt you in any other way, is followed by prayer for all those who "ben out of the state of grace", including Turks, Saracens and heretics,⁵⁵⁶ "that they may come vnto the ryghtwaye of their saluacyon". It offers a useful summary of the different people^{who} should be remembered in prayer, and gives some suggestion as to the content of prayer, which could be expanded as desired.

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

common place teaching. Many of the topics discussed in the first half of the treatise, such as discretion of speech; the dangers of exposure to or indulgence in worldly talk, the advisability of saying little and that sadly, prudently, and of God, the value of silence, and the related group of issues concerning slander, vain glory and false judgement, are characteristic of many works for religious or contemplatives.⁵⁵⁷ In the advice to "esteme and acompte your selfe moste vyle and moste symple/and as very naught in respecte & regarde of vertue" the virtue of meekness is implied. The other theme which is introduced at the beginning is the need to "withdrawe your mynde from all worldly and transytory thynges/ in suche maner as though you cared not wheder any such thynges were in this worlde or no", ■ a statement of the contemptus mundi attitude. The need for detachment from worldly things, whether they be troubles or blessings, runs throughout the treatise and is, of course, a condition not only of the religious or contemplative life but of successful meditation.⁵⁵⁸ The second part of the treatise begins with the familiar three-fold meditation of what man was, is and shall be⁵⁵⁹ - interestingly Whitford elaborates the physical detail.⁵⁶⁰ Warnings against sloth and the dangers of idleness and lost time are given, and the practice of bedtime recollection of the day's activities and sins is recommended and speedy confession advocated where the conscience is troubled. The remainder of the work shows various aspects of the contrast between the pains of hell which await those who indulge in worldly pleasures and the joys of heaven which will reward those who deny themselves and choose the brief suffering of this world.

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

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

The Imitatio Christi, with which the Godfray version of The Golden Epistle usually appeared,⁵⁶³ though much longer, is itself a rather repetitive summary of many characteristic themes of late medieval devotion. Leaving aside Book IV on the Blessed Sacrament,⁵⁶⁴ the first three books, which circulated independently under the title Musica Ecclesiastica,⁵⁶⁵ seem first to have been translated into English in the mid-fifteenth century, and one copy was made in 1502 by William Darker of Sheen for Elizabeth Gibbs, abbess of Syon, for whom Whitford wrote his Dayly exercyse and experyence of dethe.⁵⁶⁶ However, until the translation by William Atkynson was printed in 1503⁵⁶⁷ the circulation of the work seems to have been restricted to the Carthusian order, Syon, and a few other individuals and houses mainly in the London area.⁵⁶⁸ Although Atkynson made a few minimal alterations for the more general readership of the printed book⁵⁶⁹ he did nothing to soften the uncompromising world-denying outlook of the work which was characteristic of the monastic-contemplative philosophy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Imitatio Christi is a remarkably balanced book. Although most of the chapters are best described as meditation, they vary considerably from brief prayers⁵⁹⁸ to the more practical, didactic, approach of the first book, and the dialogue between Christ and His disciple, who is usually addressed as Son, which makes the third book slightly reminiscent of a work like the Orologium Sapientiae. There is practical teaching on such matters as the reading of Holy Scripture,⁵⁹⁹ evening devotions and the celebration of the feasts of the Church,⁶⁰⁰ and the advantages of varying spiritual labours according to personal mood and the season.⁶⁰¹ On a more spiritual level the soul is warned that it "may nat rest ouermoch by confidence or trust of soul" in heavenly consolations,⁶⁰² and that it must learn to accept their withdrawal and even the apparent withdrawal of God's presence.⁶⁰³ Like other authors, A Kempis warns against those who are "led by pryde & curyosyte to serche & knowe my secretys & the hye thynges of my godhead",⁶⁰⁴ but while Hilton allows a limited value to human teaching and study of Scripture,⁶⁰⁵ A Kempis, like Rolle, seems almost to despise human learning.⁶⁰⁶ Although an anti-intellectual tendency might have dangerous consequences and lead eventually to some form of pietism, it must have been encouraging to the "unlearned" English reader to find Christianity liberated at once from its monastic shell and from the schoolmen and theologians. The follower of Christ,

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

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

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

CONFESSION AND PRAYER

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

The seven sacraments were probably a familiar list to most church-goers of the early sixteenth century. They were to be found illustrated on numerous fonts, especially in Norfolk⁶¹⁰ and Suffolk,⁶¹¹ and depicted in mural paintings⁶¹² and stained glass,⁶¹³ where they were usually portrayed in connection with the suffering or crucified Christ, whose wounds are often linked to the smaller sacrament scenes by thin red lines.⁶¹⁴ Illustrations of the sacraments were also to be found in manuscripts⁶¹⁵ and in printed books.⁶¹⁶ From the thirteenth century onwards a number of English bishops had attempted to implement the decisions of the Fourth Lateran Council. Archbishop Pecham's Lambeth Constitutions of 1281⁶¹⁷ are among the best known in England; in ~~which~~^{them} he listed the topics on which priests were to instruct

their parishioners - under the title Exornatorium Curatorum this summary remained in print until the 1530s.⁶¹⁸ In treatment the seven sacraments, like most of the other topics detailed by Pecham, varied from a brief list,⁶¹⁹ through varying degrees of explanation,⁶²⁰ to substantial theological commentary.⁶²¹ The sacraments of penance and of the altar were often treated separately; the subject of marriage too was given detailed separate treatment in William Harrington's Commendacions of matrimony,⁶²² while the Last Rites were frequently illustrated and mentioned in ars moriendi books.⁶²³ Protestant authors of course recognized only the two so-called biblical or Dominical sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper⁶²⁴.

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

how to conduct confession or impose penance.

The most detailed exposition of the more theoretical aspects of confession to be printed during the 1530s was Erasmus' Lytle treatise of the maner and forme of confession.⁶²⁹ It was intended to be of use to priests as well as lay people, and although, as might be expected of Erasmus, he is critical of some contemporary practices, he defends the customary manner and form of confession on personal grounds, not by citing proof texts from authorities. The treatise falls into three parts: the first lists nine "utilities" of confession; the second begins with nine human failings which lessen the value of confession or even make it harmful, and goes on to discuss related matters such as scrupulosity or the mis-use of the confessional to work off personal grievances, to tell tales, for business transactions or simply as an opportunity to wallow in sin. The third part, on the manner of confession, is particularly addressed to lay people. By comparison with the advice offered in the majority of books on confession Erasmus' treatise, especially the third part, shows an unusual interest in the motives and principles of priest and penitent. The author notes that the ceremonies and commandments of men are regarded as more important than God's law, so that ^{an} offence against human regulations ~~is~~ ^{is} considered more heinous than to contravene the letter and spirit of God's law.⁶³⁰ There is no list of the seven deadly sins, which forms the staple of A boke of Ghoostly fader/that confesseth his Ghoostly chylde, the treatise on confession printed by Copland in 1529⁶³¹ or the tract by Gerson Examen de conscience selon les péchés capitaux.⁶³² The reader is offered no reference list or rule by which he may recognize and enumerate his sins and judge their seriousness. Instead,

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

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

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

The evil disease of sin - a figure which recurs a number of times in the first part of this treatise⁶³⁵ - must be bared to the "leche of the soule" in confession:

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

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

in relation to various things,⁶³⁸ it is most commonly associated, as Erasmus suggests, with confession. He mentions various manifestations of scrupulosity - inability to believe in the absolution granted, doubting the scriptures, serious confession of trifles or of fleeting thoughts as though they were ingrained habits, worries about correct pronunciation of the service to the neglect of its meaning and content.⁶³⁹ Further on⁶⁴⁰ he declares "that aūxite and precise diligence in rehersing and declaryng all maner circumstaunces, I do not greatly alowe", and he disallows the fear which makes every sin a deadly one and blames the constitutions of men for often engendering fears and scruples - he particularly blames Gerson⁶⁴¹ - so that some fear greatly to break a human rule but are reckless in their disregard for God's laws.

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

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

will seem greater the more the light of grace is sought. But the reader is reassured that as the soul is cleansed by contrition and sorrow, so the hope and trust of forgiveness will grow, and although the sin will be hated it will no longer cause despair. He must avoid wallowing in his sins⁶⁴⁴ and remember rather the mercies and benefits of God:

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

To help keep this mean between hope and despair he recommends devout prayer and frequent remembrance of the pains of Christ's Passion: "What is so virtuous a ¹paster to heal all the wounds of thy heart, and to cleanse the eye of thy soul, as that gracious Passion and heartily thinking of these wounds? Full heal of soul is that Passion..." As Erasmus answers criticisms of confession by going behind the human conduct and rules of the institution to its underlying spiritual value, and also looks beyond particular manifestations of sins to their root causes, so does the author of this letter teach his correspondent to understand the causes for his scrupulosity. The advice is offered sympathetically; it is simple without being in any way superficial, profound but neither obscure nor impracticable, and it reflects the same kind of understanding and concern for moderation which is characteristic of the teaching of the Scala Perfectionis.

William Bonde's Deuote treatyse for them that ben tymorouse and fearefull in conscience⁶⁴⁶ was a much longer work, apparently written for "a deuote Relygiouse woman of Denney",⁶⁴⁷ and it^{was} intended to

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

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

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

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

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

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

If unwise meditation on God's judgement and the pains of hell encourages the sensitive soul inclined to melancholy and depression in scrupulosity, ^{scrupulosity} ~~is~~ is often maintained by singularity, the presumptuous assertion of private opinion and self will. Sir Thomas More in his Dyalogue of comforte⁶⁵¹ also notes that pusillanimity causes cowardice, which prevents the soul doing good things, but in other cases it can cause impatience which grows into stubbornness and anger against God, which is a stronger expression of singularity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

sins according to the five senses is added at the very end. Apart from the introduction and the personal note at the end⁶⁶⁶ the contents are taken with a little alteration and occasional adaptation^{at} from Mirk's Instructions for Parish Priests.⁶⁶⁷ Although the questions go into more precise detail they are very similar to those included under the headings of the seven sins in the Exornatorium curatorium.⁶⁶⁸ Like Mirk's Instructions the Exornatorium was written primarily for the use of priests but it is not so obviously addressed to the confessor and was probably quite widely used by lay people. Indeed, the advice concerning six points which should be remembered by the soul in "secrete counsayle" before he comes to his ghostly father seems particularly directed to lay people,⁶⁶⁹ and the questions regarding the sins are so phrased as to form part of this private self-examination rather than the questions of priest to penitent.⁶⁷⁰ Following a brief explanation of how sin is forgiven and the pains of hell and purgatory remitted is a short section which reassures the reader that, while sacramental confession remains the best remedy for sin, contrition, desire to amend and to confess,^{is} ~~and~~ sufficient to bring the soul out of danger of damnation into a state of grace - both these pieces seem intended to settle doubts which were likely to afflict penitents not priests. But whether the examination of the penitent were conducted by a priest or by the penitent himself, the questions, which cover mental and spiritual states as well as physical acts, general intentions as well as specific deeds, would be likely to convict nearly every soul of some of the seven deadly sins. Whereas to be thus convicted of guilt would be a salutary lesson to the hardened sinner, it would surely be likely to make the sensitive soul scrupulous, or fearful, or even bring it to desperation. Used indiscriminately by priest⁶⁷¹ or laymen,^{such manuals} ~~any~~ could, as

Erasmus suggested, have a harmful effect.

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

In the form of confession edited by Horstmann from the Vernon manuscript⁶⁷³ the penitent acknowledges his guilt according to the seven deadly sins, the ten commandments, the seven deeds of mercy and the five senses. The form of confession printed by Copland in 1529⁶⁷⁴ begins with general expressions of guilt before going on to acknowledge particular sins under each of the seven deadly sins, by breaking the ten commandments, by

breaking the five senses, and by failing to do or showing the seven

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

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

under the numerous headings given in subsequent chapters. He is to pray God for knowledge of forgotten sins, learn what deadly sin is from reading Scripture and asking his confessor about doubtful points and finally, try to keep clear of deadly sins. Though no man may know for sure whether he is in a state of grace some signs follow a good confession,⁶⁷⁵ and the soul prepared by good confession may be assured that it receives five important virtues in the sacrament of the altar.⁶⁷⁶ The bulk of the book, chapters vii - xxv, is devoted to a detailed examination of conscience in which the soul confesses its guilt according to various categories. To the ten headings used in the Copland tract Gararde adds another six,⁶⁷⁷ some of which are not usually included in the summaries of faith expected to be known by the unlearned, and whose titles might suggest categories formulated with particular reference to confession rather than being taken over from general catechetical summaries. Inevitably there is a certain amount of repetition between sections and not ~~all~~ all the groups, particularly the less common categories like the sins against the faith of the Trinity or the four sins which cry to God for vengeance, hold together well or deal with the same kind of sin. As so often the disposition of material under distinctive headings suggests more organization and structure than is to be found in the sum of these parts. While some of the chapters are little more than lists⁶⁷⁸ others go into more detail. For instance, in the chapter on the ten commandments⁶⁷⁹ according to the first the soul must consider whether he has given any credence to necromancy, witchcrafts or heretics; against the second, whether he has sworn unnecessarily or by God's members and His Passion or by the saints or the Blessed Virgin; the third demands among other things whether he has prevented servants hearing mass; the sixth condemns secret plighting of troth or carnal knowledge before marriage; and the seventh censures failure or

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

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

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

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

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

However, while some forms of confession were probably intended for practical use others seem to have been intended as summaries of Christian knowledge. Although cast in the form of a confession the catechetical list is rarely far below the surface. The inclusion of categories such as the beatitudes, the seven virtues, the seven works of mercy and the seven sacraments, which are not strictly precepts that may be transgressed, still less sins or causes of sin, is probably best explained by reference to the didactic intention of these treatises. This didactic intention might also help to explain why no element from the standard numbered summaries is ever omitted or obviously subordinated, even where it has little direct relevance to the confession of sins. The form of confession found in 1538 primer⁶⁸⁵ makes it very clear that confession was regarded as an excellent opportunity, both to examine the penitent in his knowledge of the faith⁶⁸⁶ and to instruct him further.⁶⁸⁷ The confession, made according to the usual categories, introduces each section with "I haue synned" and ends it with the refrain "Wherof I cry God mercy" and the whole concludes, like Whitford's, with a general plea for mercy and forgiveness. However, this is preceded by an instruction in the standard catechetical question and answer form.⁶⁸⁸ The majority of answers,⁶⁸⁹ especially in the latter half, tend to be given in the form of lists which are both brief and easy to memorize. But the need for simplicity and brevity forces the answers to questions like "what is penitence?", "What is confessyon?" or "What is synne?" to sound inadequate and superficial. Such popular instruction dealt almost exclusively with categories,

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

There was little opportunity for the expression of any personal feeling in these formal recitals of sin, nor, as Erasmus' Lytle treatise of the maner and forme of confession implies, did they encourage the penitent to look within himself to discover the causes of his sin. Feelings of sorrow for sin, fear of its consequences⁶⁹⁰ and desire to amend⁶⁹¹ are more often and usually more effectively expressed in verse. For instance, the verse dialogue between God and Man, The remors of consyence,^{691A} succeeds in conveying to man his need of contrition as a response to God's threats of judgement, His reproaches for man's unthankfulness for all the benefits of creation, redemption by Christ's death and continued preservation he enjoys. The problems which hinder man's amendment, customary sins, fleshly lusts and worldly interests, are well expressed and there is a real sense of the sinner's remorse in Man's words. Although many of the standard teachings on the need for contrition, will to amend, satisfaction by means of alms-giving are touched on, the approach to both sins and remedies is much freer than in the formal confession treatises. The most certain medicine against sin is seen in the refuge offered "In the great wounde of thy ryght syde" - in prevention rather than just a formal cure. The formal structure imposed on prose (and verse) confessions of sin undoubtedly inhibits feeling. It is more liable to find expression outside formal categories, for example in the general self-accusatory confession included in St. Bernard's Meditacyons,⁶⁹² in Bonde's Pilgrymage

of perfeccyon^{692A} or in the complaints of a dying soul.⁶⁹³ In many ways the briefer, more general prayers of confession are more satisfactory than the detailed treatises because they encourage confession only of such sins "as hys conscience is most grewyde with"⁶⁹⁴ rather than an impersonal recital of each type of sin. Private confession of sins at the end of each day was widely advocated for both religious⁶⁹⁵ and lay people.⁶⁹⁶ Not only would such recollection help the soul remember his sins and try to avoid and amend them in future, but he could then face the "perils and dangers" of the night secure in the knowledge that he was in a state of grace.

Although prayers of general confession were to be found in late medieval - early sixteenth century Horae,⁶⁹⁷ they assumed a new importance in the Protestant primers which began to appear in the later 1530s.⁶⁹⁸ The traditional obligations of auricular confession maintained by the English recusants⁶⁹⁹ had been under attack for over two centuries, first by the lollards⁷⁰⁰ and then by the Reformers.⁷⁰¹ Erasmus, in addition to his more detailed criticisms of the contemporary theory and practice of confession, concluded by listing nine main evils of confession and some remedies against them for the particular benefit of the simple reader.⁷⁰² But although he condemns the shortcomings of man-made regulations and other human failings he still insists on the need for confession. Thomas Becon, in an early work, A Potation for Lent,⁷⁰³ most of which is devoted to an exposition of the three parts of penance (contrition, confession and satisfaction) shows that on occasion⁷⁰⁴ even a Protestant author can declare the "utilities" of auricular confession⁷⁰⁵ and defend its institution even while acknowledging its abuses.⁷⁰⁶ Tyndale, as might be expected, is

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

In place of annual Lenten confession to a priest according to the prescribed forms, most Protestants followed Tyndale in defining confession as the individual's acknowledgement of his sins to God,⁷¹⁰ in seeing repentance⁷¹¹ and contrition as continual mourning and sorrow for sins and Christ as the only God-ward satisfaction.⁷¹² Lent was also observed as a period of abstinence according to regulations laid down by the Church and supported by the state.⁷¹³ The value of fasting and abstinence was widely recognized by early devotional writers as a means to subdue the lusts of the flesh and to overcome temptation.⁷¹⁴ But it was to be used moderately, lest excessive abstinence should weaken the body for God's service.⁷¹⁵ Advice on fasting was normally given in the course of other devotional or ascetic teaching; the only Catholic work devoted entirely to the subject to be reprinted during the 1530s was Wednesdays faste.⁷¹⁶ It provides some thirty examples illustrating how those who abstained from meat on Wednesdays did good or were saved in contrast to those who did not fast.

Not only does such fasting "Haloweth mennes soules/and maketh them chaste", but it carries with it the promise that "Thou shalt not lacke/at thyne ende to haue a preest", and the hope of a place in heaven. The kind of customary and partial fast - to abstain only from meat - commended by this book would seem to deserve the kind of criticisms levelled against "The popish and superstitious fast" by Becon.⁷¹⁷ But, stripped of its ^{er}superstitious and ceremonial elements, Becon and later Puritans⁷¹⁸ commended the godly fast, that is one accompanied by prayer and edifying reading or preaching, and encouraged a total abstinence where possible. It is, however, very doubtful whether the manner of imposing Puritan fast days can escape many of the criticisms levelled by Becon against ~~these~~^{his} Catholic predecessors.

Like confession, prayer was to some extent obligatory on all Christians, religious and lay, learned and unlearned, during the 1530s. Weekly assistance at the Sacrament was required of the lay man, and in addition the religious was bound to attend the daily round of choir services. Even the most simple soul was supposed to know the Pater noster, and expositions of it were offered in varying degrees of detail by traditional Catholics,⁷¹⁹ humanists⁷²⁰ and Protestants⁷²¹ alike. Private prayer, especially night and morning, was encouraged by devotional authors for religious⁷²² and eventually for lay people,⁷²³ although it does not seem to have been widely expected of them before Whitford's Werke for housholders.⁷²⁴ However, the provision of prayers to be said in the morning and evening as well as at other times was greatly increased during the following two decades.⁷²⁵ In the earlier works prayer is usually discussed in the course of longer general treatises. Sometimes brief definitions of different types of prayer would be given,⁷²⁶ or problems especially of distraction during

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

With four extant editions between 1528 and 1532 The pomander of prayer⁷³³ was clearly a popular book, and it seems to have been successful in its attempts to instruct "the vnlernd" in "the ordre of prayer". But despite the author's care to direct his teaching to the "good deuoute people of the worlde/for whome I specially wryte this treatise/the whiche haue a good mynde to serue god", what he has to say on the theory and practice of prayer is derived with little adaptation^{at} from the familiar religious - contemplative tradition. The treatise concerns itself with what might be termed the theory of prayer, with the conditions of prayer, with some of its problems and with its profits. Although much of what he says has practical implications these are not worked out in specific detail: the advice is general and by comparison with Protestant works of the following decade⁷³⁴ it seems more theoretical than practical.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Dyurnall: for deuoute soules⁷⁶² in a sense complements the theoretical approach of The Pomander by providing a practical order of prayers, meditations and devotional readings for each day. If used without any abbreviation it would be too demanding for any except a religious, a recluse, or the leisured devout nobleman or woman who has "lyberte to frequentate the churche and other secrete places at his pleasure for his deuocion".⁷⁶³ The key to the daily exercise, which the author considers essential to the pursuit of perfection, is frequent recollection, by which every waking deed, thought and inclination is recalled and judged according~~ly~~ to the rule of perfection. Despite advice to "beware that ye be not moche anxious or pensyfe/nor longe abydyng in any heynesse"⁷⁶⁴ awareness of faults and lack of progress in amending them, ~~and~~^{and} minute

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

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

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

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

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

TREATISES FOR LAY PEOPLE

The laity's interest in religious matters and desire for instruction was recognized long before printed books were available. The lollards, for instance, sought to provide them with the Scriptures in English⁷⁷⁰ and to offer them instructions by means of vernacular treatises, some of which like The lanterne of lyght and Wycklyffes Wycket⁷⁷¹ were printed during the 1530s and 1540s. From the orthodox side came compilations like Pore Caitif originally intended for a lay audience, but also popular among some of known lollard connections and among religious.⁷⁷² It contained expositions of the Creed, the "Pater" and Ten Commandments as well as a number of other pieces, some of which were subsequently printed.⁷⁷³ Expositions of the Creed, "Pater", Decalogue and the numerous groups of seven were included in a large number of vernacular treatises, often as the main substance of the work or as part of its structure.⁷⁷⁴ Books based upon these summaries of Christian belief and moral teaching I have described as belonging to the catechetical - confessional class of literature, and it was an important source of devout instruction for lay people. Another source of information and instruction was the type of book which treated of "vertues and good maners", although here secular instruction was often more important than religious teaching. But the most obvious source of devout instruction available to lay people consisted of treatises originally intended for religious or contemplatives. Even while in manuscript a number of such works succeeded in reaching a wider audience - both numerically and with regard to the type of reader - than originally intended,⁷⁷⁵ although a number were probably written to a particular audience with the possibility of a more general one in mind.⁷⁷⁶

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

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

Biblical and legendary sources.⁷⁸¹ Under the general headings suggested by the ten commandments⁷⁸² the author covers a vast range of topics, providing much practical information, trying to show the reason for various duties, and exposing the types and degrees of numerous different sins. It is a work set very much amid the cares, ~~pastimes~~ ^{pastimes} and occupations of the early fifteenth century, and its main concern is the regulation of the Christian's life in this world. Although riches are condemned, it does not attempt to draw men out of the world into the cloister or the recluse's cell.

Books of good manners often included a certain amount of moral-devotional matter although their main substance was more concerned with the government of state and church. They sought to add conventional Christian teaching to the kind of moral - political treatises produced by such classical authors as Xenophon, Cicero and Plutarch, or they can be seen as in some ways the forerunners of humanist treatises like Sir Thomas Elyot's Boke named the gouvernour,⁷⁸³ Castiglione's The Courtier or Machiavelli's The Prince. As the titles suggest these conduct books were primarily directed to the ruling classes. Thus Christine Du Castel's The body of polycy⁷⁸⁴ is divided into three parts: "The fyrst party is adressed to prynces. The seconde to knyghtes and nobles: and the thyrde to the vnyuersal people". Similarly the central sections of Legrand's Boke of good maners⁷⁸⁵ deal respectively with the duties of prelates and clerks, with the responsibilities of princes and secular rulers and with "the state of the commonaltye". The first and last books of Legrand's work contain traditional moral-devotional matter. The first discusses the virtues of humility, abstinence, charity, benevolence, diligence and liberality, and some of the opposing sins: pride, envy,

lechery, negligence and avarice; the last contains representative selections from the contemptus mundi tradition and literature about death. Books IV and V were printed separately by Robert Wyer during the 1530s as A lytell necessarye Treatyse/the whiche speketh of the estate of the Comonalte and of the people.⁷⁸⁶ The fourth book details the duties of representative "estates": rich and poor, young and old, married people with a family to govern and those vowed to celibacy. It concludes with chapters addressed to merchants on the subjects of usury,⁷⁸⁷ and it goes on to reflect that this earthly life is a pilgrimage, a temporary exile in a strange country, traditional ideas which lead naturally into the topics of the final book. If Wyer's selection represents a reasoned choice,⁷⁸⁸ it looks as though he felt that the contents of book IV were better suited to the type of audience likely to buy his books: that his audience was more likely to be drawn from the "vnyersal people" than the nobles and knights who had patronized Caxton.⁷⁸⁹ Whereas earlier authors were generally content to recognize that there were various degrees and estates in society, to place them in an ordered hierarchy and to encourage everyone to rest content with his lot, Protestant authors like Thomas Becon⁷⁹⁰ and his Puritan successors,⁷⁹¹ without disturbing the hierarchy, tended to focus their attention on a wider range of callings, especially the duties of the middle and lower classes.

However, the conduct books of the late fifteenth - early sixteenth century were not exclusively directed at the noble and ruling classes. The Shepherds' Calendar⁷⁹² offered a mixture of practical, secular information and elementary religious instruction to "them that be no clerks" to enable them to live long, whole and joyously in both body and soul. The

latter part of the Calendar offered practical teaching on the body and health of man, astrology and the natural world; the first part presents an amalgam of various elements of popular religious literature. The calendar, preceded by a moralization of the twelve ages of man, had an obvious practical use and was also a standard item in most Horae. Trees of vices and of virtues⁷⁹³ were to be found in a number of moral treatises, and they offered a convenient form in which to list definitions and examples of virtues and sins, although the detail of the branches of the tree of vices seems a little excessive for a simple audience.⁷⁹⁴ The brief practical remedies offered for venial and deadly sins summarize the Church's standard teaching on confession, while the material in Chapter VI—expositions of the Lord's prayer and Ave, the declaration of the Apostle's Creed, the Decalogue (in verse) and the five commandments of the Church—where man-made regulations are elevated to the level of divine precepts—is characteristic of the contents of confessional—catechetical books. The teaching of chapter VIII does not fit so readily into any one category. It is concerned to impart the knowledge necessary for salvation, that shepherds and simple people may learn to know themselves and to know God. Apart from the articles of belief etc. given in chapter VI, a man should know his vocation, how to do his job, and he should be able to judge as far as man can, whether or not he is in a state of grace.⁷⁹⁵ Three ways are recommended by which the lay man may learn to know God:⁷⁹⁶ by contemplating His nature—His riches, power, worthiness, nobility and especially His "sovereign joy"; by considering His works in the glory of creation; and thirdly in thanking God for all the benefits He has given man, especially in his creation as a reasonable being made in God's

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

familiar figures of Martha and Mary, Lia and Rachel the wives of Jacob, are used to illustrate the characteristics of the active and the contemplative life.⁸⁰⁷ The warnings given towards the end—against trying to stir up or keep feelings of devotion roused by contemplation of Christ's manhood;⁸⁰⁸ against presumptuous curiosity about ghostly matters⁸⁰⁹ or the expectation of a sudden growth in grace—⁸¹⁰ echo those of other contemplative authors. More fundamental to the religious-contemplative tradition is the other-worldly direction in which the motivating desire draws the soul. Here the desire is described as "noping but a loping of þis worldly blisse & of al fleschli lyking in þin herte, & [a] quemeful longyng wiþ a tristi yerngyng to heuenly ioye & endeles blis".⁸¹¹ The same direction is taken by the religious who would follow the way of perfection and by the contemplative. The desire which the reader is encouraged to nourish—in a characteristically vivid but simple image Hilton talks of the fire of his love for God being fed by small sticks of good works and acts of devotion⁸¹²—is the same as the yearning felt by the contemplative⁸¹³ but is limited by the circumstances of the meddled life. What is novel about this work is not its exposition of the three lives, nor its advice on suitable topics of meditation,⁸¹⁴ but its refusal to allow this particular man to follow the contemplative life because to do so would be to abandon his social responsibilities.

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

devotional activities with his social responsibilities and necessary worldly business. Hilton develops the Pauline figure of the body of Christ⁸¹⁷ into a vivid physical image - the limbs of the body, which are all the Christian men who are part of holy Church, are not to be left naked and uncared for while the head which is Christ receives all the worship and attention; "þou makest þe to þe cus his mouþe be deuocion of gostly preyere, but þou tredest vpon his feet & defoulest hem, in as muche as þou wolt not tende to hem for neccligence of þi-self of whiche þou hast take cure".⁸¹⁸ In Hilton the figure of the body remains metaphorical, whereas the author of the Stimulus Amoris, to convey how a man in active life may yet have contemplation of Jesus, particularizes the image, showing how Christ is served in helping poor men, or those in prison.⁸¹⁹ Indeed, far from being a hindrance to devotion these outward, active works can nourish the flame of desire for God, as small sticks feed a fire. Against the tendency to emphasize the vertical dimension of devotion and to focus on spiritual works and the contemplation of God and Christ without relating these themes to the deeds of mercy and other good works which express the horizontal dimension, man's involvement with his even-Christian in society, Hilton shows his reader how to relate the two and how, by adopting a common-sense, flexible approach, they can be balanced.⁸²⁰ As far as the practical expression of this principle of the meddled life is concerned, Hilton will only advise and suggest; he refuses to provide a daily rule like the Dyurnall:for deuoute soules:

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

The 1530s saw a considerable increase in books specifically addressed to or likely to appeal to lay people⁸²² and, especially in the latter half of the decade, a corresponding decrease in the number of works addressed to religious or recluses.⁸²³ Yet it was a religious, Richard Whitford of Syon, who seems to have been the most popular devotional author of the 1530s.⁸²⁴ His reputation was established by A Werke for Housholders, the earliest of his works to be printed.⁸²⁵ Like Hilton's book "to a deuoute man in temporall estate", and like many conduct books, "The mater is directed principally vnto housholders/ or vnto them that haue guydyng and gouernaunce of any company/for an ordre to be kepte/bothe in them selfe/and in them that they hane (sic) in rule and charge".⁸²⁶ A substantial proportion of the contents is made up of familiar devotional or catechetical material. The opening sounds a note of warning as it reminds the reader of the inevitability of death,⁸²⁷ the uncertainty of its manner or time of coming,⁸²⁸ of the Judgement which the naked soul must face,⁸²⁹ and of the eternal joy or everlasting pain and sorrow which will follow. Remembrance of such themes was widely accepted as profitable to the soul, as a deterrent to sin and an encouragement to live well, which is the purpose of such a "customable course of good and profytable exercise" as Whitford proceeds to give.

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

~~the promise~~ made in baptism⁸³⁰ and seeks to do God's will. The evening devotion is mainly confessional, reckoning up the "qualytes and quantytes of the synne" committed that day. Objections to the length or the conspicuousness of such devotions are brushed aside.⁸³¹ To these devotions he adds a recollection of the life of Christ - probably the most common topic of late medieval devotion although it is rarely given in such a brief, practical form.⁸³²

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

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

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

forget it, show a shrewd awareness of human nature.

The ten commandments form the basis of his more general moral teaching, which concentrates particularly on contemporary abuses and the responsibilities of the householder. The first commandment allows the author to warn against resort^{to} "wysemen or wysewomen" and against charms, especially those which include unlawful use of the sign of the cross.⁸³⁵ The second attacks the habit of swearing, which Whitford sees as "one of the greate causes of all these sodeyne plages amonge men and beastes/as pestilence/pockes/swetynges/and mo^enyngs/with suche other",⁸³⁶ the implication being that blasphemy like unworthy reception of the Sacrament of the Altar is of more than personal significance.⁸³⁷ The only lawful oath is that sworn in a due place before lawful authority such as a judge, and three short narrations,⁸³⁸ each personally documented to emphasize their veracity,⁸³⁹ illustrate the fate of swearers. He then goes on to discuss the dangers of lying. His advice on Sunday observances - some of which was supported by official legislation⁸⁴⁰ - is detailed, practical and very demanding, especially for the householder who is expected to set a good example, to see that his household behaves well at church; "And charge them also to kepe theyr syght in the churche close vpon theyr bokes or bedes".⁸⁴¹ Directions are also given about the points in the mass when people are expected to stand - another instance of the importance attached to correct external behaviour.⁸⁴² In the afternoon he must see that his charges do not indulge in such pastimes as bear-baiting, cards, "whiche more properly may be called lose tymes than pastymes", nor resort to the tavern, nor keep wanton company. Rather

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

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

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

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

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

As if to emphasize this domestic orientation, A short monycyon, or counsayle of the cure & gouernaunce of a housholde by Bernard Sylvester was included at the end of the Werke, as well as being published separately.⁸⁴⁷ It is a collection of maxims,⁸⁴⁸ some of them proverbial,⁸⁴⁹ on various domestic matters such as the relationship between the householder and his wife,⁸⁵⁰ his neighbours and his servants; the importance of living within one's income, of temperate habits of food, drink and dress and not wasting money on expensive weddings, wars or prodigals nor having recourse to usury. Unlike Whitford's Werke, which sets the householder's responsibility towards his family and servants in the context of his duty towards God, this treatise is primarily secular in orientation. Despite several biblical echoes,⁸⁵¹ and advice familiar from ars moriendi treatises, such as the importance of making a will⁸⁵² and that "the moste sure waye, to dye well/is will to lyue",⁸⁵³ there is little reference to spiritual things and God is

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

Two vices which seem to have been widespread among lay people were swearing and gaming. Warnings against blasphemy occur in many sermons⁸⁵⁷ and devout treatises.⁸⁵⁸ It was a direct contradiction

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

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

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

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

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

Beholde your seruauntes how they do tere me
By cruell othes now pvon (sic) euery syde....

....Beholde my body with bloody proppes endewed
Within ~~my~~ ^{your} realmes nowe torne so piteously
Towsed and tugged with othes cruelly
Some my heed some myn armes and face
Some my herte do all to rente and race

They newe agayne do hange me on the rode
They tere my sydes and are nothyng dismayde
My woundes they open and deuoure my blode...864

It is characteristic of the later middle ages that blasphemous oaths should have been translated into physical terms and related to the dominant focus of devotion, the Passion of Christ.⁸⁶⁵ Yet, although Thomas Becon's Inuectyue agenst the moost wicked & detestable vyce of swearing⁸⁶⁶ dwells on the legal aspects of swearing, the divine and human precepts against it, the question of perjury and of lawful oaths, he does not neglect to give contemporary, generalized examples of God's punishment of blasphemers and to threaten similar plagues as a result of God's wrath if swearing does not cease.⁸⁶⁷ Also, his language echoes the idea of oaths doing physical injury to Christ's Person:

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

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

the player's kinsmen, wife and children, those who allow their premises to be used for gaming, those who help to supply or make cards or dice and those who watch such games - all of whom will merit damnation for their contact with gamesters. At the end is added an example of some laws made against gaming and the opinions of several doctors of the Church on the subject. While blasphemy was an obvious contradiction of the law of God there was no specific condemnation of gaming to be found in the Bible. However, the implications of the dividing of Christ's robe by casting lots were not neglected.⁸⁷² The author of this treatise also associates gaming with denial of the first two commandments, for gamesters accept the judgement of dice or cards, "whiche seeth nat/hereth nat/nor speketh nat"⁸⁷³ and gives them more honour "than he dothe to the humanyte of our lorde/for often at the play he is vsurped and blasphemed".⁸⁷⁴ Although blasphemy is primarily a sin against God it was associated with a group of social vices - such as gaming, drinking, frequenting taverns or even following the extremes of fashion - which if not intrinsically evil, were certain to lead to sin. They receive comparatively little attention in the devout treatises circulating before 1530, since most of these were intended for religious audiences, but in some treatises like The churche of yuell men & women or The .ix. Drunkardes⁸⁷⁵ particular vices received separate treatment, and all were condemned in parish sermons.⁸⁷⁶

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

exercyse and experyence of dethe⁸⁷⁷ and the Dyuers holy instrucion⁸⁷⁸ were originally written. Also, the success of the Werke for housholders probably encouraged secular readers to try his other books. Dyuers holy instrucion, printed in 1541, was the last of his works to appear. It consists of four different pieces, three of them being translations, which between them cover many aspects of the Christian life. The first item, on patience, is also the longest and the only one which seems to be an original composition. It begins by contrasting wilful and natural patience in a manner similar to the more philosophical approach adopted by the humanist author Thomas Lupset, and although much of what Whitford says has an obvious practical application, it is not primarily a practical treatise. The humanistic character of the piece is emphasized by an unusually varied selection of authorities from Prudentius' Psychomachia and St. John Climacus De triginta gradibus scale celestis⁸⁷⁹ to such classical authors as Solon, Cato, Seneca, Quintilian, Macrobius and Valerius Maximus and a number of English proverbs.⁸⁸⁰

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

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

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

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

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

With this quotation from St. Gregory's Moralia and with the examples of patience among worldly men, among spiritual people - especially Job, - and the example of Christ's life and teaching given in the following chapters, Whitford^{work} may be compared with various tribulation treatises.⁸⁸³ But he goes further than most tribulation treatises by relating man's patient endurance of adversity to the sinful state of man⁸⁸⁴ and to the atoning work of Christ,⁸⁸⁵ and not merely to the expectation of a heavenly reward.⁸⁸⁶

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

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

The three remaining works which make up the Dyuers holy instrucionys are all translations. The first deals with seven impediments which hinder the soul's advancement in the way of perfection, to which are added four things which are better forgotten. It seems to have been originally written for religious,⁸⁸⁹ and although Whitford has made some alterations to cater for a more general audience⁸⁹⁰ this bias remains.⁸⁹¹ Most of the impediments listed here are noted in many works addressed to contemplatives or religious. For instance, Hilton and Rolle⁸⁹² both condemn the lack of discretion (the subject of the third impediment), which leads people to "take vpon them greater labours then theyr disposicion, and nature may bere. And so do many persons fall

into the dekey of bodyly strength, and into great sekenes, and diseases... & want of wytte, and wexe fantasticall melancholy, & some starke³madde, or folyshe. And so nother do they profete vnto god, nor yet vnto them selfe, ne theyr neyghbour".⁸⁹³ Too much talk, the fourth impediment, is more obviously a religious impediment than a secular one,⁸⁹⁴ and inordinate love of one's own body, which can lead to pusillanimity and sloth, the opposite of the ascetic ideal of perfection, is condemned in many religious - contemplative works.⁸⁹⁵ More basic than this reluctance to hurt the body is a general lack of desire to labour in the way of perfection, the lack of single purpose to follow Christ, or a wavering will.⁸⁹⁶ These weaknesses encourage pride and presumption, as a person assumes he is already perfect, worldly vanities draw the soul away from God and leave him unable to withstand temptation. The four "virtues" better forgotten, which are added to the impediments, continue in the same vein, warning men against the kind of things which, if they do not cause actual sin, are likely to lead to loss of virtue. Thus, except to counter scrupulosity or despair, a man should not think of his virtues lest he fall into pride or vain glory, nor should he derive any pleasure from the remembrance of his past sins. He is both to forgive and to forget any wrong done to him, and finally, while recollections of God's goodness and His benefits to mankind are good, it is perilous to seek to penetrate the hidden mysteries of God:

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

Whitford, like A Kempis⁸⁹⁸ and other authors,⁸⁹⁹ declares that the Christian's duty is not to question nor to understand but to believe what God teaches through the Church and Holy Scripture. Although the negative form in which these pieces are cast is somewhat unusual, the content is familiar enough, and there are many parallels - explicit and implicit - to be found, especially in more contemplative works such as Hilton's Scala Perfectionis or A Kempis' De Imitatione Christi.

A number of these topics recur in "An instrucion to auoyde and eschewe vices and folowe good maners", Whitford's translation of the Counsels attributed to St. Isidore. Headings such as: Of constancy of mind, Of patience in adversity, Of custody or keeping of the mouth, Of curiosity, suggest the overlap between this and the preceding piece. This collection of maxims on various moral and religious topics had already circulated widely⁹⁰⁰ before they were printed. In addition to Whitford's version, which by his own admission was a free one,⁹⁰¹ there was another printed version, perhaps by Thomas Lupset, since it appears among his collected works,⁹⁰² as well as in two separate editions.⁹⁰³ Not only does Whitford alter many of the headings,⁹⁰⁴ augmenting some sections⁹⁰⁵ and omitting others, but on the basis of a hint given in the final section on "Despite of the World" he adds a whole new and lengthy section "Of almes dede". The general effect of his alterations is to produce a more connected treatise. He lengthens the short, gnomic sentences, and wherever possible unifies a section by limiting its range of reference⁹⁰⁶ or the diversity of its imagery,⁹⁰⁷ and he sometimes links sections together.⁹⁰⁸ Occasionally he converts a general topic into a more specific one, so that on Curiosity, for instance, he gives a general warning against seeking to know what is hidden and

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

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

form of horn books⁹¹³ - was to be found in The Maydens Crosserewe.⁹¹⁴ Following the poet's acknowledgement of his debt to Lydgate⁹¹⁵ and a conventional dream setting,⁹¹⁶ the dreamer finds himself before a maid who laments that "My flowrynge age I spent in vanyte", that she did not heed Dame Reason but allowed herself to be ruled by three enemies, the world, the flesh and the Devil. After this introduction^{the alphabet}⁹¹⁷ is formed by the first letter of each stanza, with the opening word repeated at the beginning of each subsequent line. Among the vices detailed, the seven deadly sins, especially sins of the flesh, idleness, trust in riches, heedlessness of the future and all types of worldly vanity, are condemned more than once; and the virtues of prudence, reason, patience in adversity and obedience to "thy prynce" are commended. Above all man should love and serve God and remember His goodness and "...in tyme nowe take the gyfte of grace". The verses are competently handled,⁹¹⁸ and the lament form is more interesting than the simple rhymed form of the shorter alphabet. In the four concluding stanzas the maid again bewails the time lost in thralldom to the world, the flesh and the Devil:

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

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

The final piece included in the Dyuers holy instrucion is Whitford's translation of a sermon attributed to St. John Chrysostom against what seems to have been a widespread vice, especially amongst religious, backbiting or slander.⁹²⁰ It had been used in a sermon "that I spake vnto ye people yeres ago" and "one of my brether" had suggested its inclusion among the Instrucion "bycause hyt doth agre with some artycles therin conteyned". It is a straightforward account of the different forms of backbiting, the evil it does, the way in which backbiters should be treated and if possible reformed. Thus it defines the problem and offers positive practical advice for its solution. The verse piece Of euyll tonges⁹²¹ although indifferent as verse is a strong warning against "yll tonges", a warning that is hammered out by the repetition of the last line of each group of five stanzas.⁹²² The piece can be regarded as an elaboration of the statement in the Epistle of James that "the tongue...is a restless evil, it is full of deadly poison",⁹²³ as one verse puts it:

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

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

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

the period of his greatest popularity was between 1530 and 1541. Of his books printed during that decade one, The Pyper or Tonne, addressed to a "Good deuout religious daughter", was of primarily religious interest and two others, of more general application, A dayly exercyse and Dyuers holy instrucionys, seem to have been written "at the request of the reuerende Mother Dame Elizabeth Gybs", Abbess of Syon.⁹²⁶

In writing such works for, or at least at the request of, the nuns of Syon, Whitford, himself a religious, was continuing the traditions of his medieval predecessors, most of whom were also in orders or religious, and who wrote devotional treatises in English very often for religious sisters. But Whitford was no out-dated reactionary: it is clear from the work of other authors⁹²⁷ from Syon Abbey and elsewhere⁹²⁸ - that medieval traditions were still very much alive in the early 1530s, new books were written on traditional topics and old ones reprinted.⁹²⁹

His most successful book, A werke for housholders, was, like Erasmus' Enchiridion, originally sent to "a priuate persone and speciall frende", and subsequently came ~~back~~ to the notice "of certeine deuout persones" who, finding it "edicatyue and profitable", wished to make it public.

This may be no more than Whitford's version of the familiar medieval humility formula,⁹³⁰ or it may record the fulfilment of an actual request from someone who had "the guidyng or gouernaunce" of a household - requests of this nature from lay people were common enough. His time at Cambridge, in attendance on William Blount, Lord Mountjoy, and in Bishop Richard Foxe's household at Winchester, would have given him experience of many different types of household. The genesis, subject-matter and original audience of the majority of his books are not sufficiently distinctive to explain his popularity.

It seems to me that the popularity of his other books⁹³¹ during the 1530s was largely dependent on the success of A werke for housholders, which was reprinted ten times between 1530 and 1537. Although a number of historians have noted Whitford's popularity,⁹³² there seems to have been little attempt made to discover the reasons for his success or his possible influence.⁹³³ The fullest discussion that the Werke for housholders has received seems to be that by Helen C. White in her Tudor Books of Private Devotion;⁹³⁴ she particularly emphasizes his practicality and his sympathy "with the problems of the average man in family life". Whitford was certainly among the first to attempt to adapt traditional, monastic-based devotion to the needs of the secular man, whose main occupation was worldly business and whose natural setting was the family household not the cloister. It is significant that another work which gives serious consideration to the differing conditions of secular life - from the leisured nobleman to the hard-working merchant, yeoman or craftsman⁹³⁵ - The Pomander of prayer, also by a religious, of Sheen Charterhouse, should have been printed as often as four times 1528 - 1532. This suggests that an increasingly large proportion of the audience for devout books printed in English were lay people, hitherto almost entirely neglected as a separate category, who had had to adapt monastic - contemplative literature as best they could and who had received no instruction on the specific demands and problems of their situation. Whitford's serious attempt to provide this class of reader with appropriate instruction, even if, as Helen White suggests, he asked too much ^{of} ~~for~~ them,⁹³⁶ was probably the major reason for his success. But there were other contributory factors. The character of the Werke for housholders - comprehensive in its coverage yet brief, easily followed and practical in its recommendations - would undoubtedly have appealed to this audience,

especially when contrasted with the more theoretical and discursive approach, the impractical generalities or detailed analysis of topics of specifically monastic-contemplative interest, characteristic of so much late medieval devotional literature. Another attraction, at a time when the traditional beliefs of the Church were being increasingly challenged by the Reformers, and the constitution of the English Church was being changed, was the unimpeachable orthodoxy of Syon,⁹³⁷ which together with Whitford's criticism of these new heretics⁹³⁸ probably helped to reassure the devout. Whitford's own businesslike approach to the printing of his works - for instance, seeing that they are produced in the same format so that they can be bound together⁹³⁹ - may have encouraged printers to accept his work or to reprint it and thus accelerated his popularity. To judge from the number of books printed by authors⁹⁴⁰ from Syon or for the Abbey,⁹⁴¹ the house seems to have had established contacts with various London printers⁹⁴² - that might explain why it was a monk of Syon who wrote the preface and "dyd cause" The Pomander of prayer "to be imprynted".

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

providing him with suitable prayers and devotions. The very traditionalism and orthodoxy which probably helped to make Whitford popular during the 1530s contributed to his speedy eclipse in the following decade, when the works of Becon first began to appear,⁹⁴³ and books by Bale, Bullinger, Calvin, Joye, Melancthon, Tyndale and Zwingli⁹⁴⁴ indicate the increasing influence of Reformed teaching. The brevity of this section suggests that within the Catholic devotional tradition, at least up to 1540, devotional treatises were not usually addressed to lay people. The Carthusian author of The Pomander of Prayer and Whitford departed from that tradition in addressing themselves to a new audience of working lay people and families, who were soon to become the main audience of devotional authors. But lay people were not unprovided for, even though they had nothing of their own which corresponded to the monastic-contemplative works characteristic of medieval devotional writing. There were numerous general moral treatises and edifying tales as well as the more precise instruction offered in sermons and conduct books. Also during the later 1520s and the 1530s there were available various translations of classical works and some humanist writings as well as the first Protestant treatises.

TREATISES BY HUMANIST AUTHORS

Humanism - Renaissance, Christian or English - is such a vague concept that it is possible to include a large number of early sixteenth century politicians, courtiers, clerics and writers within its scope. J. McConica makes the cognate term Erasmianism equally accommodating.⁹⁴⁵ Indications of humanist attitudes or influence may be suggested by an author's admiration for, knowledge or imitation of classical works, by a critical approach to questions of authorship and the correct text, by his use of rational, progressive argument or by his interestⁱⁿ and concern for education. According to such criteria translators as diverse as John Tiptoft,⁹⁴⁶ John Skelton,⁹⁴⁷ Robert Whittinton,⁹⁴⁸ Gentian Hervet⁹⁴⁹ and Richard Taverner⁹⁵⁰ all have some humanistic characteristics; Richard Whitford, a friend of More and Erasmus, makes a few critical comments on matters of authorship;⁹⁵¹ John Colet,⁹⁵² and John Fisher, whom Surtz places "squarely in the movement called Christian humanism",⁹⁵³ show the humanists' concern for education in their foundation statutes for St. Paul's school and for Christ's and St. John's colleges, Cambridge; men such as Reginald Pole⁹⁵⁴ and members of his household,⁹⁵⁵ including Thomas Lupset,⁹⁵⁶ who studied in Italy, courtiers such as Sir Thomas More,⁹⁵⁷ Sir Thomas Wyatt⁹⁵⁸ and Sir Thomas Elyot⁹⁵⁹ and distinguished visitors to England such as Erasmus⁹⁶⁰ and Vives⁹⁶¹ may all be considered as humanists.

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

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

of devotional writing.

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

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

The secular humanist tradition, which was mainly concerned with the rediscovery, translation and scholarly appraisal of classical texts, with various branches of classical knowledge and with the imitation of classical models of life and government, had, of course, some medieval antecedents. Between the twelfth-century Renaissance represented by the schools of Chartres and Orleans, by the increasing importance of Paris as an intellectual centre⁹⁷¹ and by such individuals as the Englishmen William of M¹ansbury and John of Salisbury,⁹⁷² and the rise of Italian humanism during the fourteenth century, classical scholarship seems to have been mainly dormant.⁹⁷³ But although knowledge of the classics was not actively pursued during this period, at least manuscripts were preserved in numerous monastic and cathedral libraries, such as Monte Cassino, Pomposa, Verona, Chartres, Cluny and St. Gall, to be discovered by men like Lovato, Petrarch, Coluccio and above all Poggio,⁹⁷⁴ and later printed – the Aldine press at Venice being the most famous.⁹⁷⁵ Knowledge of classical Latin authors survived in various ways through the middle ages. Authors who remained popular, so popular that spurious works were sometimes attributed to them,⁹⁷⁶ included Cicero and Seneca, Virgil and, with suitable interpretation, Ovid;^{976A} they were appreciated mainly for their moral teaching and only a small portion of each author's work was at all well known. Other authors found a regular place in the

curriculum of schools and universities,⁹⁷⁷ among which Cato's Disticha seems to have been one of the most influential.⁹⁷⁸ Particular works by slightly less common authors were sometimes translated.⁹⁷⁹ Names and quotations attributed to a wide number of classical authors were kept alive in various encyclopaedic compilations such as the influential Speculum historiale by Vincent^{of} Beauvais or the Mirroure of the world,⁹⁸⁰ in florilegia and other collections including Walter de Burleigh's De Vita et moribus philosophorum, the Liber Philosophorum Moraliū Antiquorum,⁹⁸¹ the Secreta secretorum⁹⁸² attributed to Aristotle and The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers.⁹⁸³ Finally, a large number of tales from classical mythology – including the Troy and Alexander legends⁹⁸⁴ – lived on, variously transformed in the medieval romance tradition.⁹⁸⁵

Thus the wisdom of the ancient world was at least partially preserved during the Middle Ages and put to diverse practical and edifying uses. One of the most obvious survivals was in the form of collected sayings. A popular example of this type of compilation was the Secreta Secretorum, which was printed as late as 1528.⁹⁸⁶ This purports to be a series of letters written by Aristotle to Alexander the Great in answer to the latter's question on how best to subdue the rebellious Persians he had recently conquered. Since the work is addressed to the greatest ruler the world has known it is not surprising to find that the first part of the work is mainly concerned with the qualities of a king or ruler, how he should behave himself towards his people, how he should select his counsellors, and what his manner of dress and form of recreation should be. The noble/princely orientation of the work is emphasized in the preface to James Yonge's expanded translation, where he declares "that

Chyuary is not only kepete, Sauyd, and mayntenyed by dedys of armes, but by wysdome and helpe of lawes, and of witte, and wysdome of vnderstondynge....whan with Streynth and Powere, hym [the ruler] compayn^yth witte and connynge, and witte dressith Powere, in goodnys may the Prynce Play, and with good men surly walke". A wider usefulness is claimed for the work in the colophon to the Copland edition, which claims it to be "very proff^ufytable for euery man/and also veray good to teche chyl dren to lerne to rede Englysshe". In addition to the teaching directed to rulers, which links the work to the tradition of instruction for the nobility that blossomed during the Renaissance in such works as Machiavelli's The Prince, Castiglione's The Courtier and Sir Thomas Elyot's The Governour, some consideration of other estates is included: notaries, messangers, subjects and barons. A substantial portion of the work is devoted to practical instruction on physiognomy, astronomy, the complexions of the body and some elementary rules to preserve health - a comparable instruction was to be found in the fourth and fifth parts of The Shepherd's Kalender. The longer version of the work translated by James Yonge⁹⁸⁷ adds a section on the four cardinal virtues which makes considerable use of examples drawn from ancient history and mythology, includes a topical digression on the conquest of Ireland and England's claim to sovereignty over Ireland, and a few more obviously devotional chapters which recommend prayer as a "souerayn remedy in euery trybulacion", discuss the virtues of prayer - the authority of Seneca is added to that of the Bible and SS. Isidore, Augustine and Bernard - and add "that god hath not in despite the orisones of Pagans, yt thay hym with good herte Pray", a sentiment which would not have been unanimously approved during the fifteenth century. The blending of different periods of history and the blurring of the distinction between reality and legend is characteristic of medieval

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

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

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

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

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

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

A more restricted and sober selection of aphorisms - over half of them drawn from the Bible and the Fathers¹⁰⁰⁴ - was compiled by Sir Thomas Elyot and arranged under subject headings; this Bankette of Sapience

was printed in 1539.¹⁰⁰⁵

Of the classical works known to have been translated between about 1520 and the end of the 1590s,¹⁰⁰⁶ some can be separated into distinctive categories. There was a small group of historical works by Sallust, Caesar and Livy, to which their translators sometimes added moral comments.¹⁰⁰⁷ Another group of practical treatises included medical works by Galen and Plutarch,¹⁰⁰⁸ to which may be added translations of a few more recent works¹⁰⁰⁹ and Sir Thomas Elyot's Castel of helth.¹⁰¹⁰ Xenophon's Οἰκονομικός, which was recommended in Cicero's De Senectute and by Lupset, was one of the first English translations to be made directly from the Greek,¹⁰¹¹ It offered practical advice on estate and household management: in addition to discussing the relationship between masters and servants, husbands and wives – the place of women was also discussed in More's Utopia and in greater detail by Vives – the master is encouraged to take an active personal interest in the cultivation of his estates. The picture of the landowner presented by this treatise was closely related to the ideal to which the English gentleman was encouraged to conform. A small number of works, such as Cato, Vulgaria Terentii and the Flores of Ouide, were used for teaching purposes, but these were far outnumbered by the grammar books, of which Stanbridge's and Whittington's were the most popular;¹⁰¹² the humanist productions of William Lily and William Hornman¹⁰¹³ had comparatively little success. Knowledge of the languages of antiquity – the colloquial Latin of the Middle Ages was far from classical – and of classical texts¹⁰¹⁴ was only restored very gradually during the sixteenth century. Educational theory was mainly developed by Erasmus and Vives, but translations of a few classical works such as Plutarch's De Educatione Puerorum¹⁰¹⁵ supplemented more

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

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

Vith century B.C.¹⁰²⁰ The classical debt of Gower, with the exception of his use of classical tales, is at least partially masked by his strong moral-didactic emphasis. But he seems to have made independent translations of a number of classical tales used also by Chaucer,¹⁰²¹ and like Chaucer to have known and made use of Ovid.¹⁰²² He also drew on the Secreta Secretorum,¹⁰²³ and in his discussion of the education of Achilles and of Alexander by Aristotle¹⁰²⁴ he puts forward his views on the correct education for a prince, a topic which greatly interested humanist authors. John Lydgate,¹⁰²⁵ the third of the English poets to whom later writers paid homage,¹⁰²⁶ enjoyed the patronage of one of England's earliest humanists - Humphrey of Gloucester - and shows considerable evidence of classical and humanistic learning, especially in the Troy Book, the Siege of Thebes, and most notably in the Fall of Princes, which maintained its popularity into the mid sixteenth century.¹⁰²⁷ As well as allowing scope for the display of humanist learning, the introduction of moral tales, which frequently echo devotional teaching (for example in the ubi sunt motif and in warnings against trust in Fortune),¹⁰²⁸ and even veiled comment on contemporary politics,¹⁰²⁹ these three works were all intended to be mirrors for princes,¹⁰²⁹ although this theme did not dominate the works as it did the Regement of princes¹⁰³⁰ by Thomas Hoccleve, a near contemporary of Lydgate's, who also shows signs of humanist interests.¹⁰³¹ But although these poets were to varying degrees familiar with tales of classical history and mythology, they did not view them critically or historically. Thus Lydgate, whose classical-humanistic knowledge seems to have been extensive, was nevertheless a religious, much of whose output was devoted to religious verse and saints' lives,¹⁰³² and whose attitudes and values were characteristic of late medieval Christianity. Christian poets and teachers simply made use of

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

One author who acknowledged a debt to Chaucer, Gower and particularly to Lydgate¹⁰³³ was Stephen Hawes, whose works, first printed in 1509 - 10, were reprinted later in the century, either about 1530 or 1554 - 5. Although his poems were probably written not much before the beginning of the sixteenth century, his work looks back to the world and methods of Lydgate;¹⁰³⁴ indeed his Pastime of Pleasure has been described as "in some sense an epitome of the Middle Ages" with its varied interest in "scholastic and classical learning, philosophy, religion, mythology, chivalry, romantic love, fantastic adventures".¹⁰³⁵ Taking his two most substantial works, the Pastime and The Exemple of vertu, their most obvious features - their allegorical structure, personified abstractions and strong moral-didactic tone - are characteristic of numerous other medieval authors. Although classical names and characters¹⁰³⁶ are introduced into the Pastime, the extensive programme of moral and intellectual education undertaken by Graunde Amoure and his romantic quest for La Bell Pucell are entirely medieval. The conclusions of Time and Eternity place the intellectual, moral and romantic achievement of Graunde Amoure in a Christian perspective. Time asserts his dominance over all earthly lives and events, and sums up the process of salvation history from the Fall of Adam, to the redemptive death of Christ and the coming Day of Judgement, which will be followed by the reign of Eternity, whose figure seems to merge with that of the Blessed Virgin.¹⁰³⁷ In her summing up Eternity promises eternal joy to those who love God above all else, obey His commandments and spend their time in virtuous living eschewing idleness, and she warns her readers of the

transcendence of worldly wealth. The exemple of vertu although it lacks the scheme of formal education and does not develop the romance element as fully as the Pastime, again charts the narrator's growth in virtue according to the wise examples and moral doctrine supplied by the personified abstractions who people its island and castle setting. The Christian emphasis dominates the whole poem more obviously than the Pastime. For instance the debate between Nature, Fortune, Hardiness and Wisdom is somewhat reminiscent of the debate between the Four Daughters of God;¹⁰³⁸ there are many parallels to the arming of the narrator¹⁰³⁹ against the three-headed dragon—the world, the flesh and the Devil — which confronts every Christian, and warnings against trust in the world and Fortune are frequent.¹⁰⁴⁰ The narrator ends his journey in a chapel filled with Saints, Apostles and obviously Christian virtues,¹⁰⁴¹ he is fed with the Body of Christ by St. Peter, and he witnesses the various pains of hell before describing the joys of heaven. The poem concludes with a eulogy of King Henry VII.

Hawes' poems, with their allegorical structure, their chivalrous ideals, their strongly didactic emphasis and their Christian overtones, look like a belated attempt to preserve the medieval world of Gower and Lydgate. At first sight they seem far removed from the virtues and morality of classical authors and their humanistic imitators. But when Hawes' Pastime and Exemple of vertu are compared with a short Latin piece of the first century A.D., The Table of Cebes the Philosopher,^{1041A} which was probably translated into English between 1523 and 1527 and perhaps first printed towards the end of the 1530s¹⁰⁴², a number of similarities appear. Like Hawes, Cebes uses an allegorical framework — in this case a votive picture hung in the temple of Saturn — through which to explain his vision of

human life. The picture depicts two concentric circles: the outer one representing the lower life of the senses, the inner circle being reserved for those who attain true knowledge and follow virtue. The man in pursuit of Felicity, who sits crowned at the centre of the circle, must like the Christian pilgrim fight many battles and overcome numerous temptations if he is to complete his journey from the outermost circle to the inner centre. On entering life - the outward edge of the circle - man is briefed by Genius, but quickly tempted from his way by fair women representing deceit, self-opinion and lust, who promise him a happy and profitable life. There is a memorable description of Fortune¹⁰⁴³ and her followers, and more women waiting to beguile those who receive gifts of Fortune - Incontinence, Riot, Covetousness and Flattery. His fortune consumed, the traveller becomes these women's slaves and is compelled to commit crimes like perjury, forswearing and robbery before being handed over to the torments of Punishment. Unlike hell this state is not final, for Repentance can set a man once more on the way to true learning. This lies up a steep, difficult and dangerous path by way of Contenance and Suffering - particularly the patient endurance of adversity - to Learning, who is supported by Truth and Persuasion. At her hands he is purged of Ignorance, Error, Pride, Concupiscence, Intemperance, Fury and Covetousness, the vices of the outer circle:

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

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

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

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

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

The three classical authors in whom English translators of the 1530s and 1540s seem to have taken the greatest interest were Cicero, Seneca - even though a number of the works attributed to him were in fact by the sixth-century writer Martin of Braga¹⁰⁴⁹ - and Plutarch. Of course, few sixteenth-century authors, in whom knowledge of Latin may generally be assumed, were limited to works available in translation,¹⁰⁵⁰ and thus English readers acquired indirect knowledge of a wider range of classical works than were actually translated. Moral soundness and practical utility seem to have been the main factors to have influenced translators and publishers in selecting works to put before impressionable school boys - many translations were issued in parallel English and Latin texts¹⁰⁵¹ - and the general public. ~~Thus~~ classical authors were pressed into Christian service to edify and instruct their readers, just as medieval Christian writers had sought to do.

The most obvious debt of Christian teachers to pagan philosophers is in the area of virtue as it relates to conduct, and from Plato onwards¹⁰⁵² their practical virtues were usually summed up under the heads of prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude, and in popular medieval teaching they^{se} were added to the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity to make another group of seven, often in opposition to the seven deadly sins.¹⁰⁵³ But there were also many points of contact between Stoic philosophy, to which in varying degrees both Cicero and Seneca were indebted, and which even Plutarch, although he formally rejected their doctrines^s, occasionally echoed,¹⁰⁵⁴ and popular Christian teaching. For instance, the Stoic views that man should cooperate with the Deity,¹⁰⁵⁵ that moral theory should be validated by practical application,¹⁰⁵⁶ that a life of sensual pleasure was to be rejected in favour of a useful life of moderate asceticism,¹⁰⁵⁷ that death, disease, disgrace, poverty, fortune, riches and such things were indifferent as far ~~as~~^{as} the good life was concerned,¹⁰⁵⁸ would all have been acceptable to Christian writers. The dialogues on friendship and old age,¹⁰⁵⁹ both topics of enduring human interest, while using well known Stoics, respectively C. Laelius and M Porcius Catoⁿ, as the principal interlocutors to present Cicero's analysis of the true nature, the advantages and dangers of each state, have in them nothing overtly inimical to Christianity and a number of incidental points may be paralleled in devotional treatises. A number of ars morien^di pieces stress the importance of a trusty, well-^ktried friend to support the dying man,¹⁰⁶⁰ and Cicero's advice on the care needed to select and try virtuous friend is echoed in a short piece on "The maner to choose and cherish a freende".¹⁰⁶¹ On the whole, however, the virtues of friendship, while they are frequently recognized by romance authors, are usually neglected in devotional treatises. In contrast to Cicero's view of the nobility

and special virtues of old age, medieval authors tend to take a pessimistic view,¹⁰⁶² but they echo his assertion that death is not to be feared,¹⁰⁶³ that no-one can be sure of life, and that youth is more vulnerable than is generally recognized,¹⁰⁶⁴ and although death may be painful the pain will not last long;¹⁰⁶⁵ and Cato, like Sir Thomas More, looks forward to the liberation of his soul from the body's prison¹⁰⁶⁶ and^{to} being reunited with his departed friends.¹⁰⁶⁷ Christian teaching on death made considerable use of classical wisdom on the subject.¹⁰⁶⁸

Cicero's De Officiis¹⁰⁶⁹ was a much more substantial work than the two dialogues. Philosophically there was nothing original about it;¹⁰⁷⁰ what was significant was the way in which philosophy was applied to human conduct and the pursuit of a steady and virtuous way of living.¹⁰⁷¹ The third book, for instance, is mainly concerned with the connection between honesty and profit in public and private life, and it condemned desire for power, riches and other forms of self-seeking as well as warning against hypocrisy: Christian moralists also warned against such vices. The second book discusses other topics of common pagan - Christian interest including attitudes to fortune, the nature of glory, the right use of riches and, in some detail, the qualities and duties required of rulers and magistrates. But it was the first book which was characteristic of the sort of pagan - humanist literature which, more than any other, seems to have appealed to the English translators and publishers of the first half of the sixteenth century. Taking as his point of departure the contention that man is distinguished from the beasts by his powers of reasoning, his capacity for love and his desire

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

Other English translations which took as their main subject the exposition of the cardinal virtues - Seneca's Forme and Rule of Honest lyuyng,¹⁰⁷³ ^{Mancinus' Four cardynale vertues 1074} and Martin of Braga's Rule of an honest lyfe¹⁰⁷⁵ - did not emphasize the equality of men in the same way as More's Utopia, nor did they stress the importance of public duty and service to the state to the same extent as Cicero in his De Officiis. The virtues are given

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

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

paste, prouyde for thynges to come..."¹⁰⁷⁷ - another application of the familar three-fold meditation of devotional literature.¹⁰⁷⁸

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

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

The books by Cicero, Seneca, Martin of Braga and Mancinus on the cardinal virtues, to which may be added the summary teaching of The Myrrour or Glasse of Maners¹⁰⁷⁹ and the far lengthier Boke of wysdome,^{1079A} even though the four virtues are not specifically listed, exhibit a remarkable uniformity of teaching. They cover similar topics such as fortune, friendship, riches, the relationship between outward appearances and inward virtues and the nature of honesty. Similar illustrations are often used; thus Cicero, De Officiis I:39, warns that while a man's house may enhance his reputation he should not seek to base his reputation on a fine house; Seneca states that a house should be known by its owner and not the owner by his house,¹⁰⁸⁰ and Mancinus warns against an over-large or over-gay house. Mancinus, however, gives a more obviously Christian cast to his teaching, making more frequent reference to the life of the world to come, suggesting a more thorough going contempt for this world, and referring not only to God, but to Christ and the Blessed Virgin. Martin of Braga also adds a conventional piece of devotional teaching, entitled "The encherydion of a spirytuall lyfe, teachyng the waye vnto perfeccyon. Wherin be opened and brought to lyght. ix. impedimentes whiche do interrupte and let those that cometh to walke in the waye of god",¹⁰⁸¹ to his Rule of an honest lyfe. Yet although these authors

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

these works seem to reflect something of the tranquillity they seek to teach.¹⁰⁹⁶ Seneca's essay is perhaps the more obviously practical. While both authors advocate purposeful activity, preferably some form of public service, and emphasize the importance of self-knowledge, so that man pursues a calling for which he is naturally suited and does not overreach himself, Seneca also sets out a detailed code of behaviour:¹⁰⁹⁷ "let us learn to increase our self-control, to restrain luxury, to moderate ambition, to soften anger, to view poverty with unprejudiced eyes, to cultivate frugality...to keep unruly hopes and a mind that is intent upon the future, as it were, in chains, and to determine to seek our riches from ourselves rather than from Fortune". These principles are applied to domestic life, to learning, to the pursuit of wealth and position, to amusements and relaxations. Man must learn to accept, helped by the good examples of brave and noble men and warned by the fate of the rich and great, that the goods of Fortune and of Nature are only lent to him, and that he must be willing to return riches, position, and even his life when called to do so. Seneca believes that every man is chained to Fortune¹⁰⁹⁸ and must learn to accept ^{its} ~~their~~ servitude, to grasp whatever good he can find, and by reason to mitigate his difficulties. Plutarch's tranquillity suggests a rather more positive sense of joy.¹⁰⁹⁹ When attacked by ill-fortune he recommends recollection of all the good things which have been enjoyed in the past, and of present causes of thankfulness such as, life, health, sight, peace, arable land to cultivate, seas to sail, liberty to speak or be silent, to be busy or idle. The torments of ambition, which ~~are~~ ^{are} never satisfied no matter how high a person climbs, are well described; "For truly vehement appetit of any thing/hath alway

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

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

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

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

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

not seen as the mainspring of action, nor was the imitation of Christ the ideal set before the would-be gentleman. Christianity was overshadowed by the pagan virtues, and pious actions lost any distinctive Christian motivation. The practical and secular orientation of Elyot's Gouverneur and the various pagan moral treatises which became available during the 1530s, a decade of great religious change and uncertainty, may well have contributed to the breakdown of the unity of the tradition^{al} Christian-religious ideal of the life of perfection. Not even the increasing Protestant emphasis on the importance of biblical studies later in the century and their attempts to provide prayers to cover every aspect of human life¹¹²¹ succeeded in restoring that unity. In the devotional treatises of Protestant authors from the 1530s onwards the importance of the secular world, its social activities and obligations, ^{is} fully recognized and accorded an independent significance, albeit under the general providence of God.

Christianity seems to have left a stronger imprint in the works of Juan Luis Vives, who came to England in 1523 and lectured in Rhetoric at Oxford until banished in 1528 for his support of his compatriot, Queen Catherine of Aragon.¹¹²² Whereas Elyot's treatment of the nature of knowledge, Of the knowledg~~e~~e whiche maketh a wise man,¹¹²³ is cast in the form of five dialogues between Aristippus and Plato, where God appears as an abstract diety and the whole tone of the discussion is classical, Vives' Introduction to Wisedome¹¹²⁴ defines the virtues as "a reuerent loue towardes god and man, a ryght seruice and worshipping of god, a right loue toward man". The work is dominated by Christian ideas and forms of expression familiar from medieval devotional literature. Thus life

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

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

Vives joins with A Kempis¹¹²⁶ against the humanist tendency to see learning and knowledge of the pagan virtues as sufficient equipment for a virtuous life, declaring: "All humayne wysedome, compared with Christis religion, is but durte, and very foolyshnes". Although the emphasis of the treatise is emphatically Christian and traditional, there are a few ~~hints~~ ^{hints} of classical influence; Christian virtue achieves its fulfilment not in the conquest of vice or in mystical union with God, but "in

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

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

serve as a warning against assuming that all humanists allowed pagan literature and ideals to dominate their thought to the same extent as Sir Thomas Elyot, or that they were consistently classical at the expense of their traditional religion, which Colet, Vives¹¹³⁰ and Erasmus were so eager to purify and build up.

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

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

Vives's debt to classical authors underlies much of his practical advice in the Instruction, from Quintilian and Plutarch, on the importance of the earliest influences on a child before it is weaned, to numerous sayings by authors as diverse as Plato and Juvenal which are used to support his arguments. But the more obvious instance of classical and humanistic learning and influence lies in what Vives had to say about the intellectual education of women. In the Introduction to Wisedome true wisdom was seen as the knowledge and following of Christ. For women he advocates "the study of wisdom, which doth instruct their manners, and inform their living, and teacheth them the way of good and holy life".¹¹³⁸ The girl is not to be brought up on chivalric tales of romantic love and war, but on the scriptures, on patristic authors such as SS. Augustine, Cyprian, Jerome and Gregory, and on "moral" classical writers including Plato, Cicero and Seneca. She is not to pursue knowledge in order to be able to teach, to bear rule, or to take part in public life, but as an aid to virtue - her own and that of her children. In addition to the listing of virtuous pagan women and holy Christian women,¹¹³⁹ Vives cites the contemporary examples of Catherine of Aragon¹¹⁴⁰ and of the daughters of Sir Thomas More, "whom their father not content onely to haue them good and very chaste, would also they should be well learned, supposing that by that mean they should be more truly and surely chaste". Learning,

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

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

Much of what Lupset has to say in his Treatise of Charitie and the Exhortation—about the need to be able to "dispeise the vanite, that folishe men take, in the deceyteful pompe of this shorte & wretched life;"¹¹⁴⁷ about the importance of controlling the passions and avoiding every kind of excess;¹¹⁴⁸ about the patient bearing of tribulation;¹¹⁴⁹ on the works of mercy¹¹⁵⁰ and the virtues of the body and soul—

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

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

-the former exemplified in the lives of Lupset's contemporaries

John Colet and Sir Thomas More,¹¹⁵² the latter familiar variants of the fruits of the spirit - would have been familiar to earlier writers. The language he uses to express the meaning of charity - the perfect lover of God is "wedded to god", he has "his mynde inwardly ameled, baken, & through fyred with the loue of god" and knows "the hotte feruente burnynge hartes affect towarde god" - echoes the terminology of the mystics. Yet for all these superficial similarities, the context in which these ideas are set and the application they are given differs significantly from earlier usage. Contempt of the world is not absolute, but rather an ability to judge things aright, according to their usefulness and utility, which comes from the "redynge of these olde substanciall workes": Aristotle's Ethics, Plato's De re publica, the moral philosophy of Cicero and Seneca, and the New Testament with the commentaries of SS. Chrysostom and Jerome.¹¹⁵³ Lupset does not require that "we shulde forsake all the commodities of this worlde", but that riches, honour and worldly power should be used aright as "instrumentes and toles" to the benefit of ourselves and our neighbours.¹¹⁵⁴ The patient endurance of tribulation is seen not as a means to an end - a heavenly reward - but as proof of true faith and hope in God and a guarantee of the integrity of man's "secrete mynde" and his "owne free wyl". The passions - emotions such as anger, envy, grudging, slander, coveting honour, preferment or riches, bodily pleasures and sensual lusts¹¹⁵⁵ - are to be controlled because they reduce men to the level of wild beasts; they are symptoms of self love, which separates man from God. Earlier writers would probably have agreed with Lupset's diagnosis,¹¹⁵⁶ but they would ^{have} ^{ed} tend to obscure the root cause of the passions by describing them according to such

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

Despite the use of language reminiscent of the mystics, Lupset's treatises are devoid of the emotional fervour characteristic of much contemplative writing and the affective piety related to it. He even avoids all reference to Christ's Passion, the emotional focus of most medieval devotion, and regards Jesus primarily as a teacher. His own skill as a teacher is demonstrated in the Treatise of charitie, addressed to his sister.¹¹⁵⁷ It opens in an engaging conversational manner, with an amusing inversion of the usual apology for any shortcomings in the work to follow and with an outline of the subject to be discussed. He then breaks off to introduce a more formal opening, declaring "you shall with the more ease gather the fruite of this lesson, and I shal the better se what is taught, if the sentences be layd in their due ordre". In contrast to earlier treatises which tended to rely on numbered categories or divisions - the numerous groups of seven, The.xii.profytes of tribulacyon, The tre &.xii.frutes - and to develop a point by variation and repetition, Lupset leads his reader on from one point to the next in a logical sequence. Repetition is controlled, the number of variations or examples given on one point limited so as not to obscure the structure; and explanations, whether the detailed consideration of charity which draws on etymological evidence¹¹⁵⁸ or brief descriptions such as the nature of the passions,¹¹⁵⁹ do not take refuge in stock catechetical answers but seek to help the reader understand their meaning. To make

sure that the main points of his teaching have been properly understood and remembered, Lupset follows the summary conclusion and brief rule of charity¹¹⁶⁰ by a dialogue which reduces the treatise's contents to three easy lessons. The form in which this further summary is presented avoids any sense of dull repetition; the sister's evident boredom and slow wittedness are quietly amusing and provide a natural opportunity for further clarification of the teaching.

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

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

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

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

If this order of priorities is maintained in every activity and decision of life, then "you shall surely content god, nexte please your selfe, & thyrdly satisfye the worlde"; but if the order is upset, and the common opinion of the world followed which places worldly riches and bodily pleasures above the soul then "you shal runne into the vengeance of god, into the hate of your selfe, and into the indignation of al men".¹¹⁷¹

Within this general scheme Lupset covers a wide range of subjects, from warnings against meddling in other people's business and lying¹¹⁷² to the importance of obedience to the Church in all matters of faith, a point made by contemporaries such as Sir Thomas More and Richard Whitford, as

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

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

are listed which may help a soul to judge whether it is in charity and four degrees of charity are listed and defined, and the chapter concludes with the four virtues of charity for a religious soul.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lupset's appreciation of classical learning and morality, his optimistic view of mankind, and his stress on the importance of the soul and spirit and the inward integrity of man, are also to be found in the writings of the most influential and representative of the early sixteenth-century Christian humanists, Erasmus, described as the dominant figure of his age.¹¹⁸⁴ His contribution to the spread of classical culture, in editions of classical authors¹¹⁸⁵ and perhaps even more in his own collections like the Adagia, his colloquies, satires and educational works, is well known.¹¹⁸⁶ He also did much to raise the intellectual and critical standards of Christian scholarship, notably in his edition of the Greek New Testament and in his editions and translations of the Greek and Latin fathers.¹¹⁸⁷ At different times in the centuries following his death he was acclaimed for his rationalism and for his religious and political toleration, and he continued to be used by both Protestants and Catholics for propaganda purposes.¹¹⁸⁸

Erasmus made three visits to England, 1499 - 1500, 1505 - 6, 1509 - 14, and three more 1515 - 7,¹¹⁸⁹ and he seems to have made the acquaintance of many who held influential positions in Church or court,¹¹⁹⁰ and ~~with~~^{of} nearly all the English humanists of the time: Grocyn, Linacre, William Lily, Lupset, Colet and More, the last two becoming his close friends. It was a group capable of appreciating the wit and learning of Erasmus, and the Latin style in which he always chose to express himself, but it was by no means representative of English taste and education of the time. With the exception of two schoolbooks¹¹⁹¹ none of Erasmus's works seem to have been printed in England before c.1525.¹¹⁹² From that date until the middle of the century the works published in England were all printed in translation.¹¹⁹³ From the selection made available to him the English reader of the 1530s and 1540s had a very unbalanced view of Erasmus' work. His editorial activities on the Bible, the Fathers and the classics remained unknown, except for the collections translated by Richard Taverner.¹¹⁹⁴ A few colloquies,¹¹⁹⁵ Julius Exclusus and The praise of folie,¹¹⁹⁶ represented his more satirical output; De Civilitate morum puerilium seems to have been the only educational work to have been translated.¹¹⁹⁷ It was as the author of sermons,¹¹⁹⁸ paraphrases of Scripture,¹¹⁹⁹ expositions of the creed and Lord's prayer and devout treatises on such traditional topics as contempt of the world and preparation for death, that Erasmus was presented to the English reading public. Over half of the treatises translated in the 1530s were first published 1521 - 36, a period when he was in conflict with both reformers and humanists, during which he seems to have moderated some of his views, and been more concerned to stress the orthodoxy of his beliefs.^{1199A} Many of these treatises went through two editions, but rarely more, and they are concentrated in the 1530s although reprints occurred during the following decade and on

into Edward VI's reign.¹²⁰⁰ However, the emphasis seems gradually to shift from the devotional treatises to the more classical-educational works. The number of translations to appear during the 1530s and their concentration on the content and practice of devotion does seem to support the view that such works were agreeable to and probably encouraged by the government - the fact that the king's printer, Berthelet, was responsible for nearly twice as many editions¹²⁰¹ as any other printer seems to bear this out.

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

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

The Enchiridion and Paraclesis offer a representative and serious view of Erasmus's religious thought, and both were of importance in the development of English devotion. The Enchiridion, although it enjoyed considerable success in its English translation, was not perhaps so outstandingly popular as has sometimes been suggested.¹²¹⁴ Its greatest success was among the educated, who could appreciate the refinement of its Latin style,¹²¹⁵ its classical allusions,¹²¹⁶ and its use of paradoxes and contrasts¹²¹⁷ which posed questions rather than answering them. Thomas Lupset's recommendation of the work as one "that in fewe leaues conteynethe an infynite knowlege of goodnes"¹²¹⁸ was probably characteristic of the reputation it enjoyed among the largely court-based circle of well educated humanists.¹²¹⁹ Erasmus described the origin of the work over

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

The structure reflects the arbitrary division, the repetition and variations characteristic of medieval treatises rather than the rationally developed argument of Lupset's carefully constructed pieces. There is no detailed setting, little sense of any personal relationship between the author and his reader, and none of the humour which enlivens More's Dyalogue of comferte or Lupset's works. The figure of the Christian knight¹²²⁴ ^{and} his armour, and the warfare of Christ,¹²²⁵ which dominate the opening chapters of the Enchiridion, were derived from biblical and patristic sources and were frequently found in late medieval tribulation treatises. The endurance of tribulation and the need to combat temptation are endemic problems of the Christian life. Much of Erasmus' teaching recalls the earlier tribulation treatises, and his advice on ways to overcome temptation—by defiance, by prayer or concentrating on some holy occupation, by uprooting vices as soon as they are recognized and refusing to overlook any sin, by fighting to win and preventing despair by trusting in Christ's strength or uprooting pride by ascribing the victory to Him – all these have their counterparts in earlier treatises addressed to nuns and contemplatives.¹²²⁶ Suffering,

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

In common with many earlier treatises the Enchiridion seems to regard the world as transitory and corrupt, and the Christian is warned not to trust its perverted values,¹²³³ its false learning¹²³⁴ and its hypocritical holiness.¹²³⁵ However, it is not to be hated for itself alone, but in contrast to the love of the true and eternal; "As moche as thou shalt prfyte in ye loue of Chryst so moche shalt thou hate the worlde".¹²³⁶ Erasmus tempers the thorough-going contemptus mundi attitudes of earlier authors¹²³⁷ by introducing the concept of neutrality, things which in themselves are indifferent, neither good nor bad,¹²³⁸ but which like wealth or knowledge may be put to good use, or abused. Similarly the traditional opposition between body and soul, which seems to be reflected in the Enchiridion, owes as much to Plato as to St. Paul.¹²³⁹ The affections and fleshly lusts - avarice, ambition, pride, wrath and vengeance¹²⁴⁰ - are condemned because they obscure the reason and reduce man to the level of a beast rather than because they are

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

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

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

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

introductory to a more perfyte thyng".¹²⁴⁶ With the proviso that all learning was to be referred to Christ and loved for His sake, the confident reader was at liberty to study any classical work, so long as he found it "profytable to good lyuyng":¹²⁴⁷ the use of allegory and determination to profit from what was read made even "poetes which wryte vnclenly"¹²⁴⁸ acceptable. Although theoretically subordinate to Christian writings, Erasmus in fact allows the best pagan authors such as Plato almost equal authority, and in some of his works such as De contemptu mundi the enjoyment of classical literature is in danger of becoming an end in itself.¹²⁴⁹ In common with other humanist authors, Christ is regarded primarily as a teacher and as the only true exemplar of good living.¹²⁵⁰ Unlike Lupset, who avoids all reference to Christ's Passion, Erasmus encourages his reader to follow Christ's cross,¹²⁵¹ but he does not provide the practical assistance given by later authors.¹²⁵² Although he avoids, and indeed criticizes, the prominence given to Christ's Passion in so many late medieval devotional treatises - for instance mechanical repetition of the Passion narrative and superstitious trust in symbols and relics of the Passion¹²⁵³ - he penetrates more deeply into the meaning of the Christian faith in his discussion of the meaning of love¹²⁵⁴ and in his sermon on God's mercy¹²⁵⁵ than most writers of medieval handbooks outside the mystical tradition.

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

Enchiridion stresses the inward and spiritual interpretation repeatedly, rising to a climax in the longest chapter of the book, the thirteenth. Erasmus' criticisms are substantiated by the evidence of many late medieval devotional treatises. Superstitious customs and ^{and relics (often the object of pilgrimage),¹²⁶⁰ with the sacraments, especially mass,¹²⁶¹} prayers associated with the veneration of saints¹²⁵⁹ and with occasions of human significance, especially death,¹²⁶² are reflected if not encouraged in many works. He also challenges the general assumption of the superiority of the monastic life.¹²⁶³ Not only does he criticize the contemporary standards of regular religious,¹²⁶⁴ but he implies that it is neither the only, nor even the best, expression of Christian living. He makes use of a historical argument to show how monasticism has grown away from its original ideals to become corrupt and parasitic,¹²⁶⁵ until now he regards obedience to the baptismal vows, the willing service and chaste marriage of the secular man as a better reflection of "the religyon of the gospell" than "the relygyon of blacke monkes or grey freeres" with their man-made vows and enforced submission to so many regulations and ceremonies. Just as ceremonies and vows ^{obscure} the simplicity of Christ's gospel and hedge it about with regulations, so does contemporary scholasticism, with its barbaric language and irrelevant subtleties, because it does not "instructe vs to lyue well and after a christen maner".¹²⁶⁶

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

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

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

Although the Enchiridion claims to be a manual setting forth "rules of true chrysten lyuyng" - in fact much practical advice of a general nature is included - the practical teaching is an incidental though necessary product of Erasmus' theory of the Christian life. His precise views on particular issues are often ambiguous. His personal tolerance and moderation,¹²⁸⁰ his desire for unity in the Church¹²⁸¹ and for peace between men and nations,¹²⁸² and his preference for indirect criticism and satire rather than dogmatic statements, make him seem weak, vacillating and adaptable to the point of contradiction - he was capable of writing In laude and prayse of matrimony and, with every appearance of sincerity, he could also praise the religious vocation of virginity in the highly traditional ComapARATION of a Vyrgin and a Martyr.¹²⁸³ Erasmus does not reveal the strong personal conviction and zeal for reform of Luther or Tyndale; his faith was more intellectual, less personal than theirs, he appealed to the mind and reason rather than to the heart and emotions; but his sincere concern to elucidate the philosophy of Christ is not to be doubted. This distillation of the wisdom of Christ was to be sought primarily in Scripture, especially in the Gospels and Epistles and in the life of Christ: "What other thyng is all the lyfe/ye death/& the resurrection of Christ than a moste pure and clere myrrour or glasse of the euangelical philosophy".¹²⁸⁴ He declared that "all the trewe fountayne and vayne of Christes philosophy is hydde in the gospels and the epystels of the apostels",¹²⁸⁵ but he recognized that Scripture was obscure and difficult and needed interpretation:

Therefore in myne oppinyon the best were that some bothe well lerned men and good of||lyuing shuld...make a collectyon and...gather the somme of Christes phylosophy out of the pure

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

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

Whereas the Enchiridion concentrated on the manner of life which should grow from the philosophia Christi, the Exhortacyon to the dylygent study of scripture (the Paraclesis) and the Exhortacyon to the study of the Gospell¹²⁸⁹ (Preface to the Paraphrase on Matthew) represent an appeal to "entyse all mortall men vnto the moste holy & holsome studye of Chrystan wysdome/and pure phylosophy". This "very pure & naturall philosophye of Christe",¹²⁹⁰ "this vnlearned Phylisophy",¹²⁹¹ "this doctryne of Christe",¹²⁹² "this Phylosophy of the Gospelles"¹²⁹³ was the means whereby Erasmus sought to recover the simplicity, liberty and purity of the apostolic faith. But he was so concerned to free the Gospel of Christ, "Ye quycke & lyuyng ymage of his most holy mynde/ye and Chryste hymselfe spekyng, healyng, deyenge, rystynge agayne... In so moche that thou couldest not so playne and frutefullye se hym. Although he were present before thy bodely eyes",¹²⁹⁴ from the accretions of human tradition, external ceremonies and scholastic subtleties, that he fails to give any positive personal or theological content to the Christianity on which his ethics are based. Having neither an object of faith - the suffering Jesus of medieval devotion or the Risen Lord of the Reformers - nor a satisfactory intellectual framework, the

the philosophia Christi is an essentially negative concept.¹²⁹⁵

But although its content was ambiguous, the philosophia Christi was positive in its requirements that the Bible, should be made freely available to everyone so that all might profit from it: "there is nothyng pertaynyng vnto mannes felycyte/other elles vnto any operacyon expedyent vnto this presente lyfe. But it is declared, dyscussed, and absolutely touched".¹²⁹⁶ In his edition of the Greek New Testament Erasmus addressed himself to scholars, but in its preface and in his paraphrases he sought "plus propres à émouvoir le sentiment religieux, exposer cette philosophie du Christ que son exégèse érudite et critique dégageait de la lettre sacrée".¹²⁹⁷ He renewed his attack on the scholastics and theologians for obscuring the truth, for their ignorance of Scripture and because they prevented access to it.¹²⁹⁸ Other sects - Platonists, Aristoteliens, Stoics - know the teachings and traditions of their masters, and indeed much of what the pagan philosophers taught corresponded to Christian teaching,¹²⁹⁹ but Erasmus is emphatic that Christ is the only perfect teacher.¹³⁰⁰ The clergy too are ignorant and have failed to provide a living example of Christ's philosophy or to teach it.¹³⁰¹ They mislead the people with human vows and ceremonies,¹³⁰² entice them by plays¹³⁰³ and provide entertainment rather than instruction in their sermons.¹³⁰⁴ The true divine is one who lives according to Christ's teaching, "though he be a weuer/yea though he dygge & delue" and who, being inspired by the Holy Ghost, teaches accordingly and draws others to follow Christ.¹³⁰⁵ But when the official clergy are lax or ignorant, then every Christian is entitled to "fede & norysshe his owne mynde wt priuate redyng of the Gospell".¹³⁰⁶ But for the Bible to be freely available to every baptized Christian¹³⁰⁷ it must be first translated.¹³⁰⁸ Christ's empire has been diminished and His Church^{is} torn by strife because His word is not known;¹³⁰⁹ He desired "that his counceylles and myster^ys

should be spred abrode, as moche as is possyble",¹³¹⁰ and rather than mumbling their psalms and Pater in a language they do not understand¹³¹¹ Erasmus would rejoice to have the Bible

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

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

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

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

what a goodly and a royall syghte wolde it be, to here ye voyces of so many yonge men, dedycatyng and gyving themselfe wholly to Iesu Chryst: of so many yonge souldyars, sweryng to do and fulfill his commaundementes, forsakyng and renounsynge this worlde....¹³²⁴

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

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

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

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

PROTESTANT TREATISES

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

The ymage of loue¹³³¹ was one of the first English books printed that was openly critical of some of the traditional Catholic customs and institutions which were to be the chief targets of the Reformers, ~~and~~ several of which had been already condemned by the Lollards.¹³³²

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

and thy doctryne holosome yt shall sterve people to deuocyon". Rykes then voices one of the most characteristic pleas of the reformers, that money should be spent on "ye lyuyng temple", on the people of Christ, not on the glorification of inanimate church buildings: "That that is not necessary neyther to ye necessary sustenance of the body/nor be the honest & reasonable maynteynyng of the degre & state of a person : can not well be ordred but to any³ll ende/excepte it be bestowed vpon poore people", although he does allow that provision should be made ~~by~~^{for} the Church's necessary maintenance. The quest having so far proved fruitless, the author is instructed to abandon his search for a physical image and to seek a spiritual one - just as the Enchiridion encouraged its readers not to be content with the physical and external ceremonies and regulations, but to seek spiritual truth. The spiritual sight, made dim "wt dust & humour of vanite & carnalite" is to be cleansed, not by entering religion which encourages self love, but by following the Protestant ideal of active service of Christ's body:

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

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

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

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

patience and poverty, skill and humility, mercy and justice, benignity
 and gravity, and discretion in all things. Godly wisdom, however,
 consists not only in despising all earthly things, in compunction of
 heart, contrition for sins, charitable works and contemplation, but in
 "study of holy scriptur & in the lawe of god". ^{Belief} ~~Reason~~ in the articles
 of the faith and the gifts of grace, a pure heart, a good conscience
 and a sure hope "wt dewe of grace from aboue" complete the clothing of
 the image of love. For the most part the virtues are those of countless
 medieval treatises written for religious, but the reading of the Bible
 hints at a new order. So too do the criticisms of "the supersticious
 obseruaunces & vayne customes "which burden contemporary monasticism
 and hinder the true following of Christ.¹³⁴² He also includes a
 comprehensive indictment of the dangers of hypcrisy in the monastic
 life,¹³⁴³ and seems to value personal contrition more than confession
 to a priest. Such criticisms, with his general warning against
 placing too much faith in outward ceremonies, point towards reform, as does
 his advice "gete you leryⁿge bothe by doctryne & grace, wherby^{ye} may worke/
 teche & shewe examples of lyght". The author goes on to encourage his
 readers to love God above all, showing them how they should learn to
 give themselves freely to God and how to judge when they act against
 that love. He paints a fearsome picture of the Devil - perhaps the
 most vivid and detailed description to be found in the literature of the
 period¹³⁴⁴ - and the work concludes with an ^estatic celebration of charity,
 based on Hugh of St. Victor, and a prayer "besechyng ye to comme in to my
 soule for to kyndle it in loue/to lyghten it wt grace/to dilate my hert/
 to stretche out my desyre/to open the bosome of my mynde/to enlarge &
 stablysshe thy dwellyng place in my soule".¹³⁴⁵ For the most part the

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

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

A good deal of the extant teaching¹³⁵¹ – for it is a work that seeks to instruct rather than to provide topics for devout meditation – echoes the form and content of earlier works. He arranges his topics according to the traditional catechetical lists of sins, virtues, works of mercy, five wits, etc., and even includes lists of the names of the devils and the pains of hell. Usually, however, he does not merely list the sins

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

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

Such sympathy for human suffering, rarely expressed in medieval works, was common in the writings of the Reformers,¹³⁵³ and made many of them critical of social conditions¹³⁵⁴ and ecclesiastical administration.¹³⁵⁵ It is not unusual in works of the 1530s that incline towards reform to find a characteristic concern of the reformers pushing out through a traditional form of topic. Chapters on the dangers of drunkenness or lechery, the fate of the covetous and echoes of the *memento mori*, vile body and *quid profuit* motifs,¹³⁵⁶ were all solidly traditional, and the authorities cited - SS. Augustine, Ambrose, Bernard, Gregory, Hugh of St. Victor, Richard of St. Victor, Pope Leo and Nicholas of Lyra - might have come from any medieval treatise. But there are signs of change, new ideas breaking through the old forms. Humanist influence is to be seen in the inclusion of a chapter (viii) providing "A good rule for a man to brynge vpyouth" - although threats of "the moste horryble paynes of hell" to enforce obedience would not have been welcomed by Erasmus - and in Colet's translations of the Pater and creed (ca. iii); perhaps also in the collection of maxims that comprise "An ordre of Crysten lyuyng" (ca. ix),¹³⁵⁷ although this seems to represent the traditional religious view of life.

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

There are more positive signs of reformed teaching to be noted in the frequent use of biblical quotations, to which references are given, and in the recommendation "that scryture is very wytle and profytable to rede" (ca. vi). Like Erasmus, the author reminds his readers of what was promised at their baptism and rehearses the vows – a full explanation of all the ceremonies of the baptismal rite was provided in A declaration of the Seremonies a nexid, to the sacrament of the Baptyme, what they sygnyffie and how we ought to vnderstande them.¹³⁵⁸ By means of the familiar three-fold recollection,¹³⁵⁹ the readers are reminded of man's natural state "Fyrste we were borne in orygynall synne and naked in to this worlde/moste pore of our selves of all creatures that beryth lyfe";¹³⁶⁰ this is contrasted with the new birth and regeneration of baptism and the infinite mercy of God. The author, in common with others who inclined towards reform, is clearly concerned to give not only the rather impersonal moral – ecclesiastical instruction characteristic of the catechetical tradition, but to provide more personal teaching of the meaning of the Christian faith. The opening chapter of The Myrrour "contayneth the dyffynycyon of fayth, and of good workes" – two of the most common topics of reformed treatises. He bases his definition of faith on Hebrews XI:1 – as does William Bonde in The Pilgrymage of perfeccyon¹³⁶¹ – and argues that

it knits the soul spiritually to God, enabling it to believe in the goodness of God as revealed in salvation history (again Protestants wherever possible include a summary of man's redemption from the creation and Fall to the Incarnation and death of Christ, which is here described in familiar medieval terms¹³⁶²) and to trust in His word. The author goes on to show that, although good works are necessary, they are not the chief cause unless the soul is in a state of grace; good works cannot be meritorious.¹³⁶³ Works done out of fear or in over-confident trust of salvation are not acceptable; they must be done out of love for God and a desire to serve Him. The doctrinal teaching of The Myrroure is not sufficiently developed¹³⁶⁴ to make the gulf between this kind of work and that of an orthodox Catholic like Bonde absolute, but taken in conjunction with the author's concern to give the Christian faith and life a personal and social emphasis rather than the impersonal, formal and ecclesiastical^{es} quality of traditional teaching, the signs of reform are unmistakable.

John Frith's Mirrore to know thyselfe¹³⁶⁵ again echoes a number of views familiar in medieval devotional treatises, but it is a more obviously Protestant work than The ymage or The Myrroure of lokynge glasse of lyfe. Like many earlier treatises Frith's was written at the request of a friend who wished to "be sumwhat enstructed to knowe himselfe/& so geue God thanks for the benefytes which he hath so abyndantlye poured vpon hym". The preface echoes earlier contemptus mundi pieces in its exposure of the vain and transitory objects - riches, honours, position, beauty, strength - but rather than condemn man's vanity in negative terms, by use of the vile body genre for example, Frith is concerned to make the more positive point that every outward gift, such as long life, riches or honour; every gift of the mind, such as wisdom and eloquence; and above all the gifts of the soul, predestination, election, vocation and justification -

all come from God and are gifts of His grace and mercy. All gifts are to be used to the mutual benefit of the Body of Christ¹³⁶⁶ — again the Reformed concern that faith should find active expression in love and service of the community. This service is not limited to physical assistance, but every Christian "which hath the lyght of Goddes worde reuelated vnto hym" is under obligation to share his spiritual knowledge, to preach God's word and to save his neighbour. The ministry of the Word is not confined to the ordained ministry of the Church, who, Frith believes, have betrayed their trust; "And therfore I afferme that all oure holy hypocrites & ydle belyed Monkes/Chanons & Prestes whether they be regulare or seculare/yf they laboure not to preache Goddes worde are theues & also murtherars".¹³⁶⁷ He condemns clergy, monks and friars both for their failure to preach the pure word of God and also because they spend money on idle pleasures such as hawking, rich clothes and large palaces rather than giving to the poor. Alms are better spent helping men set up or maintain a trade rather than on those who live off society and contribute nothing to it. Frith includes a story of Abbot Silvan from Vitae Patrum, a highly traditional source of illustrative material, to show that even pure contemplatives must work to live. Faith demands works that are socially and spiritually useful, not pilgrimages to Walsingham or Canterbury. ^{Frith's} Open criticism of Roman customs and clergy, and of their chief apologist Sir Thomas More, whose "paynted poetrye" obscures the truth of God's word, and ^{his} ~~his~~ extensive use of biblical paraphrase and quotation, his concern that God's word should be widely preached and faith expressed in useful social activity, leave the reader in no doubt of his reformed position.

The Summe of the holye scripture¹³⁶⁸ contains rather more anti-

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

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

Chapter xv raises the familiar devotional topic of the Christian's attitude to death. The author ranges himself clearly with other Reformers¹³⁷³ in emphasizing that faith in Christ removes all horror of death and that a willing death is a sign of faith and triumph over sin; "they that die with suche a courage and suche a trust in God it is a certayne signe that they be saued". To sorrow over death, or to make provision for an elaborate funeral or an expensive tomb, "is more institute for the profit & aduauntage of the lyuyng/then to helpe the deed" - Legrand, Vives and the outspoken Protestant Gnapheus all condemn

expensive monuments.¹³⁷⁴ Equally familiar was his advice that "the best preparacyon vnto deth is to loue nothing in this worlde" and to live a godly life¹³⁷⁵ - that same point was made by the humanist Lupset and in more traditional ars moriendi books.¹³⁷⁶

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

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

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

that he can serve God as well by willing service to his master as by going to mass or praying in church. Instruction on the relationship between masters and servants, the choice, character and training of servants was elaborated a few years later in Cousin's Of the office of seruauntes.¹³⁸⁴ Although addressed principally to the master it reflects the widely held Protestant concern that every order of society should be taught their duty - social and religious. Not only the servant but every artisan is to work joyfully in the knowledge that he is serving God, and while at work he should from time to time lift up his heart to God in a short prayer - a practice also recommended in The Pomander of prayer.¹³⁸⁵ It is significant that of the five classes of society distinguished by the author¹³⁸⁶ it is the common Christian, who earns his own living and helps to maintain the lives of others, that is seen as the most worthy. The monastic ideal and the monastic-based devotion of a leisured nobility that had dominated the later fifteenth - early sixteenth century was replaced during the 1530s and 1540s by the ideal of the sanctified life and labour of the ordinary householder.

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

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

The best known Protestant polemics from Redeme and be nott wrothe onwards¹³⁸⁸ tend to focus on the mass, and most of those extant date from the 1540s and 1550s. But during the 1530s the polemic tended to be less specific, and on the whole less scurrilous and more political and doctrinal. The most obvious characteristic was the depth and extent of the division the Reformers saw between themselves and the traditional

doctrines, beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church. The opposition between God's laws and man's inventions, between the authority of Scripture and that of the Church, between those who follow God and those who submit to the Pope, and between those who believe in justification by faith alone and those who hope to secure salvation by works and merits, was as absolute as the gulf fixed between right and wrong, truth and error, Christ and Antichrist. Regius' Comparison betwene the Olde lernynge & the Newe¹³⁸⁹ presents a systematic contrast between the traditions of the Catholic Church, "the new learynge", and the old or biblical teaching, which proves that while the Protestants follow God's word on the sacraments, faith and works, the worship of saints, fasting, vows, prayer, ceremonies and matrimony, the Catholics are guilty of innovation and departure from Christ's teachings. Joachim von Watt's Of ye olde god & the newe/of the old fayth & the newe, of the olde doctryne and ye newe/or orygynall begynnynge of Idolatrye¹³⁹⁰, however, adopts a historical approach, showing the way in which the Church gradually abandoned its primitive purity and the rule of the Bible and became involved in secular power and increasingly hampered by regulations, riches and ceremonies. During the early stages of the reformation in England it is not surprising to find that the powers and prerogatives of the papacy and the clergy were frequent targets of treatise-writers,¹³⁹¹ some of whom may well have enjoyed tacit official approval, for a number of their works were published by the King's printer Thomas Berthelet.¹³⁹²

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

to the publication of useful historical documents such as John Le Maire's Abbreyacyon of all generall councylls.¹³⁹³ Dialogues in verse like Rede me and be nott wrothe or in prose like Occam's Dialogue betwene a knyght and a clerke - the dialogue form was later to be used extensively in the devotional treatises of Thomas Becon - offered some variety and helped to sharpen the debate, although they seem stilted by comparison to Erasmus' Colloquies or More's Dyalogue of comforte. Protestants were also willing to make use of the kind of legal forms and terminology which had been popular during the previous century in the medieval charters of Christ and in various literary wills and testaments.¹³⁹⁴ The wyll of the Deuyll and William Hayward's The general pardon,¹³⁹⁵ the one a vehicle for Protestant polemic, the other teaching reformed doctrine, were not only ingenious applications of legal forms; but the familiarity of the form, especially in the latter case, may have deceived the reader into expecting something more orthodox. But the principal appeal seems to have been the legal form itself, rather than its deceptive uses. A proclamacyon of the hygh emperour Iesu Christe¹³⁹⁶ provides a legal framework for the teaching, which is expressed entirely in biblical quotations and paraphrases, the references duly noted in the margin in the approved Protestant manner. Despite the emphatic contrast drawn between the few who follow God's word and the majority who accept "ye doctrines of men, with their lawes, customes and constitucions" and "kepe their Ceremonyes", there are echoes of medieval treatises and Erasmus' Enchiridion in the martial imagery of the Christian's call to arms¹³⁹⁷ and Christ's appeal to His people to return to Him is reminiscent of earlier laments.¹³⁹⁸ A heauenly Act concernynge how man shal lyue¹³⁹⁹ begins, after a brief legal preamble,

with a summary of man's redemption from the Creation and Fall to Christ's coming; Protestant authors took every opportunity to recount the history of man's salvation. To those who will keep God's covenant "and liue in our lawes and statutes that we haue set forth by our high court of parliament" is held out the promise of eternal rest. The laws are based on the Decalogue supplemented by the words of Christ and of "the lord secretary Ihon the euangelist" and "Paule, the lorde chauncellor". Other precepts are added to encourage wider knowledge and daily reading of the laws: "it is our wil & godly pleasure to haue our moste sacred worde go forth whiche in the comforte for man to guyde hys whole lyfe with all"—but it must be received spiritually. While those who rebel and refuse to repent are threatened with eternal punishment, those who willingly obey God's laws and faithfully endure temptation can look forward to a material as well as to a heavenly reward. Similar teaching appeared in a more novel form in A spirituall Almanacke,¹⁴⁰⁰ which offered a summary of God's laws to be followed by the Christian through various seasonal situations. A faythfull and true pronostication¹⁴⁰¹ exploits the usual format of the prognostication even more effectively, to criticize contemporary, including Catholic, abuses and to recommend the true faith to its readers. Catholic authors, however, seem to have been content to leave their defence in the hands of their official apologist, Sir Thomas More, and perhaps to trust to the superiority of their numbers and the ecclesiastical hierarchy to contain the spread of reformed teaching — but neither Church nor government was effective in preventing the circulation of prohibited books.¹⁴⁰²

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

1530s were not uncritical of the contemporary state of life and devotion among religious, secular clergy or lay people.¹⁴⁰⁴ It is interesting to find that Protestants, as well as being highly critical of Catholic ceremonies and institutions, could be critical of their own party and deplore the slow progress of the truth. The translator of A goodly treatise of faith, hope and charite¹⁴⁰⁵ regrets that "ther are many now a dayes that vse greate disputacions and reasonynge of fayth", thinking that if they can argue about justification by faith they will have faith. He laments:

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

"Ye true fayth can better be felt inwardly, than it can be expressed with wordes". The early Reformers, like many contemporary humanists, seem to have thought that they could convert people by teaching them what they should believe, and consequently, especially in contrast to the late medieval devotion, they neglected to engage their readers' feelings and imaginations as well as their minds. Like Sir Thomas More,¹⁴⁰⁷ this translator feels that the real meaning of the faith has been obscured by the contemporary debate. In urging his readers to throw off the traditional customs¹⁴⁰⁸ and false teaching of Rome, and to test them against the Scriptures now made available in English, Nicholas Wyse praises Henry VIII for allowing the Lord's temple - the figure has national as well as individual implications¹⁴⁰⁹ - to be rebuilt on the foundation of Scripture despite opposition. The king is likened to the Old Testament reformers, Hezekiah and Josiah, and Wyse believes that the English never had greater cause to honour, obey and pray for their king,

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

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

The most elaborate celebration of Henry VIII's part in restoring God's Word and overthrowing the Antichrist of Rome was in John Pylbarough's exposition of the Benedictus, A commemoration of the inestimable graces and benefites of god...¹⁴¹² Although the King's own attitude to reform remained ambiguous, or rather seems to have fluctuated according to his personal and political circumstances, it was to him that the Reformers turned for help in their struggle against the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome, and between 1536 and 1539¹⁴¹³ there seemed to be considerable official support. The Ten Articles of 1536 were sufficiently ambiguous in their formulation to admit of Lutheran interpretation, while the First Royal Injunctions attacked superstitious worship of saints and pilgrimages, and ordered curates to see that children and servants were taught the Pater, Creed and Commandments in English. Accordingly a number of small booklets were printed,¹⁴¹⁴ setting forth not only the Pater with a number of expositions, the Creed and the Commandments, but also including the familiar catechetical lists of the five ghostly and bodily wits, the seven ghostly and bodily deeds of mercy, the four cardinal virtues and the seven sacraments of the Church. Transgressions against the Commandments were spelt out in detail, including a condemnation^{of witchcraft} and prognostications under the first command^{ment},¹⁴¹⁵ while traditional warnings

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

In addition to the Crown's support for reform, reflected directly in its articles and injunctions and indirectly in the books containing the Pater, Creed and Commandments in English and in the idea of an official primer, the need for reform was recognized by many within the Church. Treatises such as Whitford's Pype or Tonne and Dionysius Carthusianus' The lyfe of prestes¹⁴²⁰ had called for the reformation of religious and clerical life; and John Colet, preaching on Romans XII:2 in his convocation sermon of 1511,¹⁴²¹ declared that the Church was more harmed by "the facion of seculer and worldly lyuyng in clerkes and prestes" than by any persecution or heresy. Hugh Latimer in his first

convocation sermon, 1537,¹⁴²² accuses prelates and clergy of adulterating the Word of God, teaching the dreams of men and garnishing images while Christ's lively images go hungry and untaught. Like Colet he sees the clergy as children of the world, fathered by the Devil; and in his sermon he calls on them to reform Roman customs and ceremonies, the worship of saints and pilgrimages which hide much money-grubbing and superstition, the abuses of the ecclesiastical courts and the doctrines of purgatory and works and merits. But in addition to such pulpit polemics¹⁴²³ the official representatives of the clergy in convocation were attempting to find a formulation of doctrine that would admit of some declaration of reformed views without completely alienating the more conservative clergy. The Ten Articles were taken up into a much lengthier work, The institution of a Christen man,¹⁴²⁴ which seemed to leave many traditional doctrines apparently untouched but makes extensive use of Lutheran material. For three years, however, it was regarded as the official catechetical summary of doctrine and its ambiguities enabled both parties to claim it as the fulfilment of their programme.

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

a Primer and a Psalter in English.¹⁴²⁷ The previous year Thomas Patmore, parson of Hadham, had been accused of going to Wittenberg, meeting Luther, and reading reformed books, apparently in the company of other Englishmen.¹⁴²⁸ Merchants such as Humphrey Monmouth¹⁴²⁹ helped to maintain contact between England and Reformers, English and foreign, abroad, but although he gave Tyndale money and shelter he also made gifts to orthodox divines and institutions. A surprisingly large number of books by continental Reformers were available, and a number of them were printed in England during the later 1530s. The names of Bugenhagen, Francis Lambert, Luther and Erasmus Sarcerius, also the Augsburg Confession with Melanchthon's Apologie,¹⁴³⁰ were announced openly on title pages. In addition Bucer, Brunfels, Calvin, Johannes Campensis, Wolfgang Capito, Gnapheus, Pederson, Urbanus Regius, the Strassburg preachers and Joachim von Watt either had their works translated or made substantial contributions to a number of English treatises, which did not always acknowledge the source of their material.¹⁴³¹ Contributions by Luther, for example, appeared without any indication of their provenance in several English primers of the 1530s and in Prayers of the Byble and its derivatives.¹⁴³² Finally there were a number of translations whose origins, though not declared, are known or may be surmised to have been among the continental and exiled English reformers. These varied from the polemic of Roy and Barlow's Rede me and be nott wroth, based on Manuel's Krankheit der Messe, to a collection of biblical extracts like The fountayne or well of lyfe; from works where instruction veers towards polemic, as in The Summe of the holye scripture, to instructional treatises of a more devotional nature, such as A goodly treatise of faith, hope and charite or A Treatyse to teche a man to dye/and not to feare deathe.

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

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

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

A number of Lollard-Protestant treatises were published during the 1530s. They included The examinacion of master W. Thorpe, preste..., which particularly attacked the sacrament of penance; The dore of holy scripture, Purvey's prologue to his revised version of Wycliffe's Bible; The prayer and complaynt of the Plowman vnto Christ,¹⁴³⁹ which draws a contrast between the "lewde man" for whom the ploughman prays, who believe in Christ and endeavour to keep the seven commandments of the Gospels¹⁴⁴⁰, and "Christes vyker in erthe", "that maketh men worshippen him as god on erthe", and his followers who blindly follow "his lawe and his hertes". The particular points of criticism are common-place enough, and include auricular confession, tithes, simony, the exclusive power of the keys, lustful chastity, the ease of the monastic life, the failure of the clergy to teach their flocks, and the widespread perversions of all the virtues Christ taught. The Lanterne of lyght¹⁴⁴¹ again criticises contemporary abuses, including monasticism and the building of expensive churches, and it appeals to the reader to follow the small band of the true followers of Christ's Gospel, not the adherents of Anti-Christ, who accept the traditional teaching and customs of the Roman Church. As well as helping the Reformers to establish historical roots in England, these treatises also suggested that since persecution was a sign of truth in the past the same could be true with regards to the Reformers of the 1530s.

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

Bible".¹⁴⁴³ Eight years before the English Bible was officially permitted, Lollard arguments were revived in A compendious olde treatyse/shewynge/howe that we ought to haue ye scripture in Englysshe.¹⁴⁴⁴ Again, Antichrist, the king of the clergy, and his prelates, who since the time of archbishop Arundel have forbidden translation of the Scriptures and delighted to keep people in ignorance, are condemned.¹⁴⁴⁵ But the work is more concerned to present an accumulation of historical evidence in support of the vernacular Scriptures than to indulge in the usual kind of anti-clerical polemic. It argues that God's law was given to Moses in the vernacular, and that people presentⁱⁿ Jerusalem at Pentecost heard the Gospel preached each in his own language. The compilers of the Septuagint and Church Fathers, including Origen and Jerome, had translated Scripture; and in England Bede and King Alfred, and later Archbishop Thoresby and Richard Rolle¹⁴⁴⁶ in his glossed psalter are cited as examples of a native tradition of translation. The examples of the holy virgins, SS. Katherine, Cecilia, Lucy, Agnes and Margaret, who knew and preached the Gospels, are used to show that women too should be allowed access to the Bible. In ~~the~~^{the} deuteronomic style the present plagues, wars and famines are blamed on the absence of God's word from England, although it is available in other vernaculars including French, Spanish, Italian and Flemish.¹⁴⁴⁷ Characteristically, it is to the king that the author appeals for the restoration of God's word. He~~is~~ is asked to disregard the counsel of antichrist^{ion} prelates, and to act for himself to give the people the Scriptures in English and thus secure rest and peace in his realm. A similar plea is made in "A prayer for the modifying and suppling of our hard hearts", in the Byddell-Marshall primer.¹⁴⁴⁸

The English Reformers believed that pure faith and the true doctrine of Christ were to be found in Scripture, and the very title of Alesius' Of the auctorite of the word of god¹⁴⁴⁹ indicates their exclusive source of authority, as opposed to the late medieval view which tended to regard the tradition of the Church as being of equal if not superior authority.¹⁴⁵⁰ Although the Bible was not officially made available to English readers until 1538 various partial translations and extracts,¹⁴⁵¹ even a concordance,¹⁴⁵² were printed before that. Illegal translations had been produced about a century and a half earlier by Wycliffe and his followers¹⁴⁵³ but there were other translations and paraphrases produced during the late fourteenth - fifteenth centuries.¹⁴⁵⁴ However, the lack of complete or any extended literal translations did not prevent popular knowledge of many biblical events and characters. Characters such as the prophets and the evangelists took their places alongside non-biblical saints in church decorations, carving and stained glass.¹⁴⁵⁵ The mystery play cycles were, of course, ultimately based on Scripture, so too were the various lives of Christ available in prose and verse, and sermon collections such as Mirk's Festial and the Legenda Aurea also contained biblical material beneath extravagant allegorical interpretation and blended with more legendary material.¹⁴⁵⁶ Devotional authors long before Erasmus had woven biblical paraphrases and allusions into their treatises, although they did not draw attention to the fact by citing their references.¹⁴⁵⁷ A Kempis' De Imitatione Christi, for instance, paraphrases and quotes Scripture extensively,¹⁴⁵⁸ and even in the English versions includes a chapter "Of the redynge of holy scripture", which encourages the reader to approach the Bible with

"great fervour of spryte", in "mekenes and confidence", diligently seeking charity and "profitable fedyng for owre soule", not for elegant speech or out of "desire of curiosite or name of excellence".¹⁴⁵⁹ In fact, he uses Scripture in much the same way as some earlier Protestant authors such as Frith, blending its words with his ~~own~~; but, unlike the Protestants, A Kempis does not seem to make the precepts of the Bible the starting point of his teaching. Catholice authors tended to use Scripture as a quarry for illustrative material, and to consider it as one source among many rather than as the exclusive source of all doctrine and devotion.¹⁴⁶⁰ Whereas they concentrated on the New Testament, particularly the life and Passion of Christ, and usually interpreted the Old Testament typologically or allegorically, the Reformers, theoretically at least, demanded a literal interpretation¹⁴⁶¹ and gave much more weight to the Old Testament. The Reformers' use of Scripture tended to be doctrinal, to be authoritative rather than illustrative, and to move away from narratives and personalities towards theology.

A large number, probably the majority, of Protestant treatises printed in English during the 1530s were in some sense biblical compilations. Apart from various translations there were a substantial number of commentaries and expositions of individual books and Psalms.¹⁴⁶² A number of these were explanatory-doctrinal introductions, which served the same kind of purpose as Erasmus' Paraphrases¹⁴⁶³ but tended to link reformed doctrine more closely to the text. The most popular during this decade was Savonarola's Exposition after the maner of a contemplacyon vpon ye. l^e. psalme, published in association with various editions of the primer,¹⁴⁶⁴ whose ~~culmin~~^{mul}ative effect is a powerful, strongly personal, appeal to God for mercy. Here, rather than in the prayers or the more

general devout treatises of the Reformers, one finds the kind of emotive impact which previously had been particularly associated with meditations on Christ's Passion. The first English edition of Savonarola's Exposition appeared in connection with the publication of the first Byddell-Marshall primer¹⁴⁶⁵ - a work which illustrates a number of the changes reflected more generally in Protestant devotion. Firstly, the entire primer is in English, whereas previously printed Horae, although they had contained rubrics and occasional prayers in English since 1494, and during the 1520s forms of confession and "The maner to lyue well" were sometimes added,¹⁴⁶⁶ were basically in Latin.¹⁴⁶⁷ Secondly the calendar and hours, which had been the main content of the medieval Horae, were reduced in the Byddell-Marshall primer to about a quarter of the volume's total length; and although the devotional content was increased by the Savonarola exposition, by a Gospel harmony on the Passion of Christ, and by "A deuoute frutfull & godly remembraunce of the passion" (based on a sermon by Luther)¹⁴⁶⁸ and a number of prayers, there is still a far larger instructional-didactic element than in the traditional Horae. Most of the material preceding the actual hours and the traditional groups of psalms^{was drawn} in part from Luther's Betbüchlein and partly from Joye's Hortulus Animae.¹⁴⁶⁹ Nevertheless, although interpreted according to the doctrines of the Reformers and relying less on stereotyped lists, the topics ^{the ten commandments, the creed, the Lord's prayer and Ave as well as the provision of} (expositions of a general confession based in part on the decalogue and seven works of mercy) are those of the traditional confessional-catechetical books. There is also "An instruction how we ought to praye", which characteristically insists on the necessity of knowing and believing God's promises, warning that doubt makes prayer ineffectual and dishonours God; it also warns against prescribing "any terme, time, place, or forme, and maner" for the fulfilment of prayer, and repeatedly stresses that prayer

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

A considerable number of the items found in the Byddell-Marshall primer were subsequently reprinted in later editions of the Primer, in Redman's Prayers of the Byble, and in Certeine prayers and godly meditacyons.¹⁴⁷² However, a considerable amount of the material derived from Lutheran sources had been printed the previous year in John Gau's The richt way to the Kingdome of heuine.¹⁴⁷³ Another indication of the way in which texts passed from one author or printer to another is shown in Gau's "Schort disputacione apone the pater noster betuix god and ye saul",¹⁴⁷⁴ a piece of Lutheran origin, which is reprinted at the end of Gough's 1536 Primer¹⁴⁷⁵ and appeared separately printed by Godfray as The pater noster spoken of ye sinner: God answeyng him at euery peticyon.¹⁴⁷⁶ Gough's primer¹⁴⁷⁷ also included, again without acknowledgement, part of Patrick Hamilton's Dyuers frutful gatherynges of scripture.¹⁴⁷⁸ Under four main headings, the Law, the Gospel, Faith (including hope and charity) and Works - contrasted pairs which occur frequently in Protestant treatises - Hamilton sets out various propositions, proofs, arguments, answers, disputations and comparisons in sentences drawn for the most part directly from Scripture. He provides a brief and clear summary of Reformed doctrine, emphasizing the fundamental importance of personal belief in Christ's mercy and His power to save contrasted with the condemnation of the Law and showing how man is justified by faith alone, not by good works. A

longer and more regularly systematic work, which again uses Scripture to prove and illustrate reformed doctrines, was Erasmus Sarcerius' Common places for scripture.¹⁴⁷⁹ But although it discusses a number of topics relevant to devotion, such as prayer, confession, faith, hope and charity, the work is doctrinal, not devotional. A number of other works, such as Francis Lambert's The summe of christianitie gatheryd out almoste of al places of scripture, or Joye's letters to John Ashwell, Prior of Newnhan Abbey on justification, or the more doctrinally neutral Answere to a letter, which describes the course of the reformation in England regarding the abolition of papal power and questions such as the worship of saints, the mass, pardons and the declaration of Scripture, to an exile thinking of returning home¹⁴⁸⁰ - these are likewise primarily concerned with matters of doctrine, which they discuss in a rather impersonal, intellectual manner or else with polemic fervour.

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

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

A few treatises touched on topics familiar from earlier works, suggesting that some continuity of interest remained. The declaracyon and power of the Chrysten fayth¹⁴⁸² was very obviously reformed in its stress on the need for individual repentance and faith in God's mercy to obtain remission of sins^{and} on the need for rebirth, and there is the familiar warning against putting works before faith, although faith must be proved by good works. But other concerns which find expression—including a longing for the life to come, the need for the Christian to battle against the world, the Devil against whom he must be armed with God's armour, and the necessity of subduing the flesh—were all to be found in earlier as well as later treatises, for they are the common concerns of the Christian profession in all ages. The author uses medieval-sounding symbols, the heart, heaven and a scourge, in his elucidation of the character and meaning of faith, hope and patience — topics frequently discussed by earlier authors. Love too was frequently regarded by them as one of the fruits of faith, although r^eighteousness and perhaps peace, the other two qualities of faith noted in The declaracyon, were not

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

A goodly treatise of faith hope and charite¹⁴⁸⁵ illustrates a number of the characteristics of the Protestant treatise which, while containing a good deal of doctrine, relates subjects to the needs and

experience of the individual in a way that suggests some devotional concern. The three subjects around which the treatise is built - faith, hope and charity - frequently occur together in Protestant treatises¹⁴⁸⁶ and sum up three fundamental elements of the reformed faith: the importance of a strong and knowledgeable personal belief, a confident expectation of mercy and salvation, and love of God proved in active service of mankind. While medieval authors rarely discussed the nature of faith, but simply demanded assent and obedience to the teachings of the Church, reformed authors regarded faith as the foundation of religion: "It is not sufficient to saye: I beleue that the holy church beleueth, or as myne elders haue beleued, but a man muste searche and proue how he beleueth. For by his ~~wone~~ fayth shall a man be acceptable to God".¹⁴⁸⁷ Accordingly the author not only quotes Scripture, including Hebrews XI:1, to define what faith is, but emphasizes that the individual must grasp this faith for himself. As the author of A very declaracyon of the bond and free wyll of man reminds his readers, God will compel no man against his will, but He seeks to persuade man to turn to Him.¹⁴⁸⁸ The sinner must submit himself to God, repent of his sins, and pray for mercy and for faith, which requires knowledge and brings assurance:

Whan man fyndeth rest, and quietness in his conscience by fayth beleuyng that all that is in God, is to mans behofe, that is a ~~sire~~ token that such a man is come to the faith whiche geueth health. For fayth certifyeth hym that CHRISTE hath ouercome death, hell, synne, and the deuyll for hym. 1489

The keynote of the reformed faith is assurance or confidence:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

No man can vse ~~die~~ loue in God, without he be sure fyrst by fayth inwardly how wel God doth loue vs, reioycyng in the same loue, and puttyng al his saluacyon therin. Thus doynge he shall passe by all creatures, estymynge then as donge, countynge

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

But such love, though it is as world-denying as the medieval contemptus mundi - this the chapter on "howe hurtefull the loue of the worlde is, and howe we maye despyse it" makes abundantly clear¹⁵⁰⁰ - and demands mortification of the flesh like earlier ascetic treatises and centres as intensely upon Christ as any contemplative author, is somehow less emotional and more dynamic than the medieval concept of the love of God. Compared to the exclusively God-ward love manifested in the physical love of the soul's compassion for the sufferings of the Son of Man or in the higher degrees of the contemplative's union with God, which tended to dominate medieval devotion, Protestant authors suggest a more spiritual love grounded in faith and knowledge of God as Creator and Redeemer, which naturally requires active expression in love of and care for others, especially those within the Body of Christ.

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

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

The fountayne or well of lyfe¹⁵⁰⁵ was a collection of brief biblical quotations which offered the reader "compendiously gathered togyther/the thynges that parauenture thou mightest seke after in the Bible a gret while". In fact the collection was not very clearly set out. The headings were too general¹⁵⁰⁶ and the sections too lengthy to enable the reader to use it to meet specific needs in the same way that he could use Frith's collection of Scriptural quotations against the different temptations of the Devil.¹⁵⁰⁷ But in recommending the Bible as the answer to every human need and in its emphasis on the love and mercy of God it clearly reflected Reformed teaching. The quotations are given (unusually for a Protestant treatise) without comment, and they are not structured into prayers or meditations so that the collection could serve equally as a source - book for doctrine or devotion. The following year Coverdale's translation of Campanus' Paraphrasis vpon all the Psalmes of David¹⁵⁰⁸ was published, and four years later Taverner translated another work by^a German author, Wolfgang Capito, An Epitome of the Psalmes or briefe meditacions vpon the same.¹⁵⁰⁹ In the latter all the psalms are included in order, adapted to the form of a prayer and provided with a descriptive title summarizing the prayer's intention. There was no

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

discerne good from euill, swete from soure, lyght from darkenesse, truth from falshode, Religion from superstition, Christ from Antichrist, God from Baall, &c, and from hence forth serue the Lord our God not as blind reason fantasieth, and filthy fleshe imagineth, but as Gods word precibeth..."¹⁵²⁹

The more positive aspect of Becon's desire to teach his children and other readers Christian doctrine according to reformed principles is to be seen in his lengthy New Catechism, which is divided into sections on repentance, faith, law, prayer, sacraments and the offices of all degrees. The social and educational concerns which were hinted at in the earlier reformed treatises received more extended treatment from Becon, not only in his New Catechism but in the fourth part of his Booke on Matrimony - itself a characteristic topic of reformed authors - and incidentally in a number of his other treatises.¹⁵³⁰ He also produced a number of Latin anthologies, presumably intended for school use.¹⁵³¹

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

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

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