



# Durham E-Theses

---

## *Private devotion in England on the eve of the Reformation illustrated from works printed or reprinted in the period 1530-40*

Rhodes, Jan

### How to cite:

---

Rhodes, Jan (1974) *Private devotion in England on the eve of the Reformation illustrated from works printed or reprinted in the period 1530-40*, Durham theses, Durham University. Available at Durham E-Theses Online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/701/>

### Use policy

---

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

## II

"Et verbum caro factum est."

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Treatises on the Mass.

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

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

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

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



The Doctrinal Approach and Preparation for Communion.

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

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

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



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

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

successors:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Medieval congregations received little instruction about the nature

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

mystics such as St. Catherine of Siena the prelude to ecstasy.<sup>87</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Interpretations of the Mass and devotions to accompany it

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

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



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

A parfyte preste made strong with thy Armure,  
 Tofore the Auter as Crystes champiune,  
 Shall stand vpryght, & make a discomfyture,  
 All our .iiij. enemyes venquysshē and bere downe,  
 The flesshe, the world, Satan that fell dragowne.<sup>99</sup>

It is an important reminder of the celebrant's dispensation of the power of Christ.

After the static moralization of the vestments and setting the Medytatyons embark upon the narrative allegory of the process of the

service. Since the narrative begins with the vesting, the vestments are interpreted again, only this time with reference to the Passion narrative, which dominates the remainder of the interpretation. Garade's interpretation of the altar and eucharistic vessels is very similar to the Medytatyons but he does not moralize the vestments. Instead the amice on the priest's head symbolizes the cloth with which the Jews blindfolded Christ at His mocking, the stole is the rope put around Christ's neck and body while in the Medytatyons it is the rope used to strain Christ to the cross, both agree that the manipule symbolizes the rope which bound His hands, and the chasuble is the purple garment of Christ's mocking. Garade sees the cross on the chasuble as the fifteen foot long cross that Christ bore on His shoulders to Calvary, whereas A Kempis, IV.v, describes <sup>how</sup> the cross borne front and back on the chasuble helps the priest keep Christ's Passion in continual remembrance, and he goes on to elaborate upon its significance for the individual priest. Only A Kempis gives personal application to the remembrance of Christ's Passion; Garade, the author of Medytatyons and Lydgate are, at this stage, concerned only to translate the setting of the mass into objects involved in Christ's Passion.

The Medytatyons go on to detail the main actions of the mass, providing for each some brief meditation, mostly of a fairly general but appropriate kind. The Canon, the heart of the mass, noted as coming after the Sa<sup>n</sup>ctus, begins after the priest has kissed the mass-book and ends after the sacring. It is occupied by a summary recital of the main events of the Passion, "frome Mandy vnto the poynt of [crysts] deeth", and is interrupted only by two brief Latin prayers to be said at the first and second elevations. The description is

not very detailed, and although it describes Christ's injuries and talks more than once of "the crueltie of the Iewys" it is not particularly emotive. It does, however, make use of a familiar image of the Passion, describing Christ's silence, patience and meekness "In the wyne presse of hys blyssed Passyon"<sup>100</sup> It was a figure which was related to the VIII fountain or well of life (both could be interpreted<sup>as</sup> eucharistic symbols), but although known in England it does not seem to have been as popular there as it was on the continent. The author of the Medytatyons dwells upon this meditation on the Passion:

because yt shuld not lyghtly passe ouer. but rayther graueid in the soule of man. and Inprinted In hys harte. and for this consyderatyon. the prest Immedyaitly. after the Sacryng. spreides and splays hys armys Abroyde. In manner of A crosse. sygnyfying. the presse of the Passyon of Cryst. the whiche owght to be remembryd in the hartes of faithfull Crysten People. 101

The remainder of the work related the events of Christ's life after his crucifixion to the actions of the mass which follow the Canon. Reference is made to the seven words from the cross, to the peace achieved through Christ's sacrifice between God and man and among men, and to the idea of the sacrament as the food to restore and relieve all the necessities of the soul and the body. The author once again introduces a well-known symbol of Christ:

Therefore neuer forgeyt this moost tender louyng Pellycane, whiche of hys meyr marcy. wolld wouchayffe. not only to dye. for to sawe hys byrdes. but ouer that he haith ordeyned and dysposyd hys moost gloryouse and blyssyd fleyche and bloode. to be our dayly foyde. mynystreid and consecrayte in the masse. in the moost gracyous Sacrament of the awter. 102

This is an unusually detailed explication of a symbol which is better known as an iconographical representation appearing in woodcuts, carvings, on seals and book-bindings;<sup>103</sup> it was<sup>also</sup> the personal crest of Bishop Fox, and used as his device by the printer Richard Jugge.<sup>104</sup> The pelican also

figures in a very crude woodcut,<sup>105</sup> wrongly described as a phoenix by Hodnett, in A glorious medytacyon of Ihesus Crystes passyon, where it is accompanied by an explanatory verse which makes clear the sacramental significance of the figure.<sup>106</sup> The image<sup>is</sup> thus related to the idea of Christ as the fountain of life and the mystic wine press, which also have sacramental connections.<sup>107</sup> The Medytatyons continue by reminding the reader of Jesus' meekness, the Lamb of God, as the priest repeats the agnus dei. The fraction, with the division of the host into three parts, looks beyond the Passion narrative, for the parts symbolize the three parts of the true Church, the saints in glory, the church on earth "as yet in this pylgramaige as lyuyng people In the vaile of mysery", and thirdly the souls in purgatory. The meditation concludes with brief reference to the Resurrection and the Ascension, and an appended note on the characteristics of the Requiem Mass which is really too brief to be of much practical use.

Since the reader restricted to English could take little active part in a Latin service, the author of the Medytatyons provides little more than a key to the more obvious and important actions and prayers of the mass, and he uses these as a point of departure for a rather miscellaneous and unstructured collection of private devotions which are dominated by the narrative and symbols of Christ's Passion. The work has no overall shape or development, and although most of the devotions make some reference to the Passion it is not the author's only interest, nor is it explored chronologically.

The second book of Garade's Interpretacyon and sygnifycacyon of the Masse has a far more regular structure; it is also more detailed, and the symbolism is more systematically applied. Like books one and



and three, book two has thirty-three chapters, the traditional age of Jesus, and the mass is divided into three parts which correspond to the three parts of Jesus' life. The first part of the mass, from the priest's vesting to the Sanctus - the equivalent of the synaxis - corresponds to Christ's life from His conception to the Triumphal Entry; then the canon covers the Passion and death, divided with reference to the canonical hours; and thirdly the remainder of the mass is related to Jesus' Resurrection, His appearances to the disciples and the Ascension. The three parts are each introduced by a prayer carrying with it the promise of an indulgence.<sup>108</sup> The chapters all follow a regular pattern, first describing the actions or words of the priest, then giving the allegorical interpretation with reference to some event in Christ's life, and concluding, after a "Pater" and an "Ave", with a brief prayer.

Most of the chapters hold together well, with little sign that the events of Christ's life have been unduly stretched to fit the action of the mass- perhaps because the liturgical action and the events of the **life** follow parallel courses rather than one being translated into or read out of the other. The fourth chapter, for instance, considers the priest going towards the altar after the "Confiteor", which corresponds to the coming of the Three Kings to see Jesus, and the prayer asks that the reader's obscurity of conscience may be illumined by the light of grace so that he may offer to Christ the myrrh of fervent devotion, incense of diligent prayer and gold of divine "dyleccyon"; the links between the parts of the chapter are strong enough to weld it into a satisfying whole. After the Canon the elevation of the chalice commemorates the renewed bleeding of Christ's wounds caused by the jolt



as the cross drops into the mortice, and the prayer runs:

O Blyssed lorde Ihesu chryste/Ithanke the that thou  
hast suffred ~~thy~~ selfe to be drawen and nayled vpon  
the crosse/so that a man myght haue compted all thy  
membres/wherof dyd yssewe abundantly thy prescyouse  
blode vpon the erth/I pray the good lorde graunt me  
that I may vse all my power & vertues in thy seruyse:  
and to thy honour and not in synne/to the entent that  
all my membres maye laude & prayse the euerlastyngly. 109

The reference to the jolting of the cross in the mortice, the re-opening of Jesus' wounds and the echo of the Psalm XXI:8 (Vulgate)-"din-umeraverent omnia ossa mea"-are all common-place in devotional descriptions of the Passion. In the selection of events from Christ's life and the kind of language used to describe them Gar<sup>de</sup> is content to remain within the tradition built up by ~~numerous~~ devotional treatises; he has no need to strive after originality. The structure of the prayers is also similar to those found in the Meditationes Iordani de vita et passione iesu christi and in Fewterer's Myrrour of Glasse of Christes Passion, whose central section <sup>translated</sup> ~~was~~ Jordanus' prayers. They fall into two parts; a brief description of some event from Christ's life, followed by some personal, often moral, application which is frequently linked to the first half by a catchword, the repetition of some word or phrase from the first half. Had Gar<sup>de</sup>'s prayers been published separately, as Fewterer's were in Deuoute prayers in englysshe of thactes of our redemption, they would have made a collection very similar in form and content, only enlarged in scope so as to cover the whole of Christ's life, not just the Passion sequence. Interestingly, if Gar<sup>de</sup>'s prayers were removed from their original context no trace of their original connection with the mass would remain, so thoroughly has the mass been subordinated to the life of Christ. The author suggests that the book

was intended to be read during the service; the illiterate person, who could perhaps learn some of the prayers by heart, was to occupy himself in thinking of the Lord's Passion.<sup>110</sup> To have read it thoroughly during the service would have left little time or energy to take much heed of the service, for which it is a substitute. Whether the reader attends the service or in case of need reads it elsewhere,<sup>111</sup> the life of Christ, the subject of the private devotions, supplants the liturgy. This kind of dissociation between the public liturgy and the individual's private devotion, even though this was usually intended to be followed in church, tends to happen with all the treatises designed to accompany the mass, although the type represented by the Medytatyons and Garade's Interpretacyon - the narrative type - is liable to exclude the liturgy more completely.

The Lay Folks' Mass Book<sup>112</sup> makes direct reference to Christ's life only at the offertory, which is linked by the Three Kings' journey to see Jesus in His birthplace at Bethlehem; otherwise there are a few general references, such as "penk on him þat dere<sup>pe</sup> boght" or "þou boght me dere with þi blode, | and dyed for me o-pon þo rode". There is, in fact, no separate narrative content, and in contrast to the Medytatyons or Garade's Interpretacyon, the Lay Folks' Mass Book depends far more upon the service. Expanded translations and paraphrases of sections of the mass, the Confiteor, the Gloria, the Creed and Lord's prayer, establish a closer contact between the reader and the liturgy, but because they are said as part of the reader's private devotion there is still some dissociation; the reader is saying his own devotions even though these overlap to some extent with the public liturgy. The main occupation of the devout mass-goer who followed the Lay Folks' Mass Book

was frequent repetition of the Lord's prayer;<sup>113</sup> and he is provided with prayer to say at the beginning of the office, the Gospel, the offertory, during the secrets and the Canon, at the elevation, the Agnus Dei, and there are a couple of post-communion prayers. They are mainly prayers of personal praise, thanksgiving, or intercessions, which frequently follow the pattern of the priest's prayers. For instance, the prayers during the Canon and after the sacring<sup>114</sup> include sections which correspond to the mementos for the living and the dead said by the priest. The prayers were intended to be learnt by heart; most are brief and the use of rhyme would help the memory—and the rubrics, which often describe and sometimes explain the significance of the priest's actions, were to be referred to from time to time. The assumption seems to be that when the work was composed even devout church-goers were generally illiterate, whereas to be fully effective the narrative type of devotion demanded an audience which could read.

Lydgate's poem "The Virtues of the Mass"<sup>115</sup> offered its readers an explanation of the mass, much of it typological, with a prayer to be said at the elevation. It seems designed to instruct the reader about the mass but, with the exception of the elevation prayer, it does not seem intended to accompany the liturgy. The Medytatyons and Gaude's Interpretacyons, although clearly intended to be used at mass, were sufficiently self-contained, especially the latter, to be used independently. In the Lay Folks' Mass Book, however, the reader is enjoined: "when þo preste saies he, or ðif he singe, | to him þou gyue gode herknyng" and later, "take gode kepe & here him wele",<sup>116</sup> Even if he does not understand the mass-goer is expected to be attentive and to listen to the priest's words, and "at þo messe no ianglyng make".

The priest's actions, described in some detail, are not as in the Medytatyons and Garade cues for meditation on Christ's life and Passion, but tell the layman when to pray, when to listen and when to respond with devout actions: "Take gode kepe vnto þ~~to~~ prest,| when he him turnes, knoc on þi brest". Even if no verbal response was required from the layman he was expected to respond with the appropriate actions: "Knelande on þi knese", "ioyntly hold þi handes" and "a large cros on þi þou make".<sup>117</sup> As mentioned earlier, considerable importance was attached to devout actions, and although reformers such as Thomas Becon attacked this emphasis on external matters as empty ceremonies they perhaps overlooked the fact that some pious but illiterate persons may have found comfort and a sense of community in them.

The prayers which make up the second half of Whitford's Preparacion vnto howselynge are not so closely related to the mass as those of the Lay Folks' Mass Book. To judge by some characteristics of style, notably the indulgence in the use of doublets, most of the prayers were either original compositions or thorough reworkings of extant material.<sup>118</sup> His prayers are intended to edify the reader and there is a strong moral emphasis. They are conventional in their phraseology, for example in their frequent references to the Passion, and as a collection ~~their~~ predictability tends to become dull as they repeatedly ask forgiveness for various sins and for assistance in virtue:

I beseche the for all the whole vertue of thy  
bytter passion/put away from me the spirite of  
elacion, and pryde, of enuy, and detraction, of  
yre wrathe, malyce, & impacience, and of all other  
morbes (sic), diseases, and pestilences of ye soule.  
And plante, good lorde, and ground in my hart and mynd  
very true mekenes/charity, and pacience, innocency, and  
the loue of pouerty/due temperaunce/&pure chastity/with



all suche other vertues/medicynes/and preseruatyues  
vnto the soule.119

This kind of listing is characteristic of the prayers, and though they are worthy and edifying they are hardly likely to inspire devotion. The lists of sins and virtues may vary, as do the length of the prayers, but they persist in saying very much the same kind of thing. Some of their weakness as prayers lies in their lack of clear structure, ~~w~~ither the two-part structure used by Garafé or the looser form of the Lay Folks' Mass Book (although that is shaped by the verse line and influenced by liturgical forms), and also in Whitford's determination to use each one as an occasion for comprehensive instruction. Successful prayers usually focus upon one theme or have a unity of language or imagery which Whitford's lack. He is too much the instructor and catechist to write the kind of prayer which would rouse the soul to love and devotion. It is interesting that a religious whose extant works have so much to say about various aspects of devotion should be so prosaic and should so consistently fail to penetrate the more spiritual levels of devotion. It is characteristic of the times in which he wrote that Whitford should assume a literate audience and make many references to Christ's Passion, but his determination to use each prayer as an occasion for instruction again draws the reader away from the mass to concentrate on other, quite unconnected matters.

The fourth book of A Kempis' De Imitatione Christi, first printed in the Lady Margaret's translation from the French version, does not fit conveniently into any of the groups outlined above. It is made up of meditations, prayers and intercessions of the Disciple, and chapters which tend to be of a more didactic nature spoken by Christ. Several



places<sup>120</sup> suggest that the Disciple is a priest, but the book contains much of value for, and was undoubtedly used by, devout lay people such as the Lady Margaret herself. It was not intended to accompany the service; it neither comments on nor allegorizes the liturgy, nor does it contain any readily separable prayers. But neither was it a doctrinal exposition or defence, although it is not without doctrinal content. It is a work of affective piety, whose meditations are characterized by an intense personal devotion to Christ.

The Disciple of Jesus is to turn away from all worldly concerns<sup>121</sup> and offer himself to Jesus. The daily obligation of the Disciple in the mass, that re-enactment of Christ's supreme self-oblation, is asked for by Christ in a speech which retains something of lyrical complaints of Christ:

O man, as I dyd offre myselfe/and my free wyll vnto  
god my fader, my handes sprede on the crosse/and my  
naked body for thy synnes. In so moche that no  
thyng remayned in me/but all passed in sacryfyce to  
apease his wrathe, in lyke wyse thou oughtest to offre  
vnto me wyllyngly thy selfe in pure oblacyon dayly in  
the masse, wythe all thy affeccyons/ and strengthes, as  
profoundely/and feruently as thou maist. What aske I of  
the more but that thou study to resynge thyselfe vnto me  
enterely? 122

The Disciple who can thus deny himself to resign himself to Jesus in love becomes united with Him in the Blessed Sacrament,<sup>123</sup> the Sacrament of unity between the individual and Christ which gives a foretaste of the enjoyment of Christ's presence in heaven. The author of The Goad of Love suggests the kind of devotion with which the believer should approach the body of Christ:

Wherefore it seemeth wonder that a man in receiving of  
this worthy sacrament melteth not all into love. The  
gathering of Christ's love into us, and of his passion  
is a sovereign mean to stir man's affection to devout  
receiving of this sacrament. 124

It is this kind of love and devotion which the Disciple strives after and laments his inability to attain fully. The language, with its talk of "the plenteous effusion of holye terys" and how "all my herte ought to brenne & wepe with ioye" and the monologue of John the Baptist,<sup>125</sup> is characteristic of much ~~a~~ffective-mystical devotion both in the Low Countries among the Bretheren of the Common Life and in England among mystics such as Rolle and Hilton.<sup>126</sup> Although he conveys some instruction and gives practical advice on how to prepare to receive the sacrament, A Kempis is mainly concerned with the spiritual development of the Disciple and his personal relationship to Jesus.

A Kempis' focus on the whole person of Christ is unusual when compared to later fifteenth-century devotions connected with the mass, where the tendency was to concentrate upon Christ crucified. The laity were, as we have seen, encouraged to link the mass with the process of Christ's Passion. To stimulate the celebrant's devotion the "T" of the "Te<sup>3</sup>igitur", with which from about the eighth century the Canon was understood to begin, was frequently decorated with a crucifix, in many cases full page,<sup>127</sup> and a rubric in the Medytatyons reads: "after<sup>1</sup> that he haith kyssed the Crucifix on the masse book", which seems to have been accepted as a common custom. In ~~the~~ Dives and Pauper,<sup>128</sup> however, the celebrant is said to arouse his devotion by looking at the crucifix on the altar.

The re-enactment or realization of the process of Christ's Passion within the mass was supported by two not unrelated doctrines, that of the ~~e~~ucharistic sacrifice and of the Real Presence.<sup>129</sup> Popular works of devotion tended to leave theology to the theologians, but most insist that the doctrine of the Real Presence is to be believed even if they give no

indication of the content of the belief.<sup>130</sup> More often, as in Love's Schort tretys, the doctrine was "illustrated" by miracles, of which The Play of the Sacrament is one of the most fully developed.<sup>131</sup> Many of the legends involve the incredulity of the Jews, who question, mock or physically attack the host: an example of the strong antisemitic current of the middle ages, which also found expression in many Passion narratives.<sup>132</sup> Probably the most widely known miraculous proof of the Real Presence was the legend of the mass of St. Gregory.<sup>133</sup> This was viii b usually illustrated by an imago pietatis: the wounded Christ, crowned with thorns, standing in a grave before the cross and surrounded by the instruments of the Passion. In view of the way in which private devotion for the time of the mass tended to emphasize the Passion, it is not surprising that the imago pietatis was the form chosen to illustrate Christ's presence in the sacrament. It was, after the crucifix, one of the most often used visual stimuli for devout meditations and prayers, especially on the Passion.

Some of the miracles were told in the context of Corpus Christi sermons, and indulgences were often obtainable for attendance at them.<sup>134</sup> The feast of Corpus Christi, formally instituted in 1264, provided an occasion for the annual public celebration of the doctrine of the Real Presence. From childhood people were taught to venerate the sacrament as the body of Christ, both in church<sup>135</sup> and if they saw it being carried through the streets to the sick or dying.<sup>136</sup> Desire to see the host, especially the newly consecrated host of each mass, was regarded as a sign of devotion, and it was also believed to confer a wide range of spiritual and material benefits. Consequently the elevation was considered by many to be the most important moment of the mass.<sup>137</sup> The sacring bell

warned of its approach,<sup>138</sup> and people came in from the churchyard or moved forward to see "the preest...lyft oure lorde in the blessed sacrament". The custom was, of course, strongly attacked by the Reformers,<sup>139</sup> but traditional authors such as Garade<sup>140</sup> also commented on the abuses to which the custom was open. Yet against this evidence of ill-behaviour must be set the numerous prayers which were provided to be said at this point of the service.<sup>141</sup> Such a widespread effort to instil a feeling of reverence and devotion in the members of the congregation was surely not entirely in vain.

The promise of various rewards to those who witnessed the elevation devoutly may also have been some incentive to good behaviour. It undoubtedly encouraged superstitious reliance on the benefits to be gained by mass-going.<sup>142</sup> According to Garade,<sup>143</sup> simply to see the sacrament guaranteed that all bodily needs would be met that day, and promised preservation from sudden death and forgiveness of such things as vain or unadvised oaths. Substantially, the same list was to be found in Mirk's Instructions<sup>144</sup> where they are attributed to St. Augustine. In the Festial the list ~~which~~ includes the promise of not growing older so long as mass lasts.<sup>145</sup> Lydgate too quotes St. Augustine "of the medys of the Masse",<sup>146</sup> and the benefits listed consolation and help in case of sudden death - not in this list the power to prevent such death - forgiveness of venial sins and the promise that attendance at mass prospers voyages and helps women in childbirth. Preceding this list is another, "The vertu of heryng of the masse after the opynyng of seynt Bernard", a mixture of spiritual graces and material benefits. Many undoubtedly believed that the benefits thus promised automatically attended those who met the requirement of going



to mass. Reformers of the 1550s challenged such superstitious credulity. For instance, <sup>in</sup>The Resurrecion of the masse, the mass boasts:

There is no disease in all the contrie  
Whether it be pockes/pyles/or other sicknes/  
But to heale it I haue habilitie  
Helping all kynde of people in their distres,  
Messeled swyne and mangye horses likewise  
Do I cure/and chickens that haue the pyppe/  
A wynchester goose to heale is my gyse  
No kynde of disease do I ouerhyppes...  
Of ought be loste/I am very profitable  
To bring it agayne to the true owner/  
To gyue rayne or fayre weather/I am able  
Whan soeuer to me men make theyr prayer...  
Come to me who lyst/and they shal be sure  
To haue good successe in all their doynge/  
For my vertue is great/if it maye endure  
And farre surmounteth all earthely thing...  
Golde/syluer rychnesse/glorie and honoure  
Fame/renoune/and worldly felicite/  
House/lande/lordshippe/village towne and bowre  
Do I gyue to all them/that come vnto me.  
Whatsoever in this worlde is containd  
Is myne to geue at myne owne pleasure/  
Fall doune and worshippe me with hartes vnfrayned  
And ye shall wante no worldly treasure. 147

In addition to material benefits, the mass could also inspire the sinner to conversion, and God's holy angels would help the mass-goer's prayers and protect him. But the spiritual benefit of the mass tended to focus on the relief or liberation of souls in purgatory. Stories such as that in the Dialogues of St. Gregory, where a soul is freed from purgatory by a trental of masses,<sup>148</sup> were very common by the late fifteenth century.<sup>149</sup> The second memento of the mass, the commemoration of the dead, was used by devotional writers as an occasion to remind their readers that "til alle in purgatory pyne, þis messe be mede & medicýne" and to encourage prayers for the dead.<sup>150</sup> The provision of masses to speed a soul through purgatory became a popular, complex and costly business, and a large proportion of the



masses celebrated in churches and convents and especially in chantry foundations were designed to help the dead. Garade describes one sequence of masses which, said daily through the week by a devout priest, is claimed to deliver souls out of purgatory speedily. Each of these seven Golden Masses corresponds to some part of Christ's Passion;<sup>151</sup> again the Passion narrative and the mass are drawn together, the once-for-all historical work of salvation is offered daily in the sacrifice of the mass. Yet despite the high value attached to prayers and masses for the dead Garade still argues that it is better for a man to hear one mass in his life-time than to cause a hundred to be said for him after his death.<sup>152</sup> Similarly he declares that it is better to hear mass than to give to God an amount of land equivalent to that which could be traversed while mass was in progress.<sup>153</sup> It was better to make sure of salvation in this life than to risk the pains of purgatory and have to rely upon the good offices of executors; personal attendance at mass was one of the most meritorious actions a man could perform.

#### The Life of Christ and some associated devotions

Corpus Christi day was marked by special services, sermons, processions,<sup>154</sup> and in a number of places by the performance of mystery play cycles.<sup>155</sup> In their choice of incidents from the life of Christ and in the style of their descriptions the plays frequently overlapped with devout treatises and religious lyrics.<sup>156</sup> Many of the more common descriptions and phrases such as the "O vos omnes" refrain were to be found in treatises, drama and lyrics, and they can be traced back, often through the liturgy, to the Bible.<sup>157</sup> Methods of biblical exegesis gave wider currency to some texts than they would have received if

interpreted in the literal sense only. Other often-repeated details were absorbed into the tradition from influential works such as the Dialogus Beatae Mariae et Anselmi de Passione Domini and the Liber de Passione Christi<sup>158</sup> - much was attributed to saints Anselm and Bernard -  
 and the Speculum Vitae Christi often linked with saint Bonaventura's name; the Revelations of St. Bridget,<sup>159</sup> and Ludolphus of Saxonia's Vita Iesu Christi<sup>160</sup> were also very influential. The increasing importance of the Passion was also reflected in the institution of new liturgical feasts, such as the masses of the Five Wounds, of the Crown of Thorns and of the Compassion of the Blessed Virgin.<sup>161</sup> Up to the reforms of the later 1530s the printed primers often contained not only the biblical Passion narrative or harmony but also prayers to the wounds of Christ, the Hours of the Passion and the compassion of Our Lady.<sup>162</sup> Residual division of the Passion narrative according to the canonical hours was very common in devout treatises.<sup>163</sup> Thus, while concentrating upon the devout treatises, the contribution to the tradition of the religious lyrics, drama, the liturgy, preaching and biblical exegesis as well as art must not be forgotten. There was by the later middle ages a common body of tradition concerning the life and Passion of Christ, derived from and at the same time contributing to a wide range of literature, art and theology.

Scenes from the life of Christ were to be found illustrated in the glass, painting or carved work of many churches,<sup>164</sup> and the illiterate probably knew the main events of Christ's life from seeing them there or perhaps in the drama, and from hearing them in stories and lyrics. The qualities demanded for effective iconographical representation and for vivid or moving description were not, of course, to be found in every

event, and so the number of scenes was reduced. It is not difficult to think of famous paintings, woodcuts or other illustrations depicting the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Circumcision, the visit of the Magi and the adoration of the Shepherds or the Flight into Egypt. The tendency of art was to illustrate selected episodes and to ignore others; and literary description too concentrated on certain scenes, often drawing upon the infancy Gospels for supplementary details.<sup>165</sup> The rays of light which surround the newborn child, the ox and the ass, and the Blessed Virgin kneeling in adoration before her son so often depicted in nativity paintings were probably all derived from such literary elaboration.<sup>166</sup> Many of these details, and others such as the star having in it "a fourme and a liknesse of a yonge childe, and aboute hym a sygne of þe holy Cros", were to be found in the first half of The Three Kings of Cologne, which was printed as late as 1530.<sup>167</sup>

The Gospels, apart from the incident recorded in Luke when the twelve year old Jesus was lost in the temple of Jerusalem,<sup>168</sup> were silent about Jesus' childhood, and from the Flight into Egypt moved on to record the Baptism and Temptations.<sup>169</sup> Apart from the miracle of Cana in Galilee,<sup>170</sup> which was distinctive in its representation and easily linked to the eucharist in interpretation, the miracles were comparatively rarely portrayed. In an age which seemed ready to accept the miraculous in the stories of saints or concerning the host, this neglect seems strange. One reason may well be the difficulty of making the healing miracles sufficiently distinctive in art, but another may have been that they were not to a medieval audience sufficiently different from the miracles performed by numerous saints, and consequently attention focused on the parts of Christ's life which were more distinctive: His infancy

and the last week of His earthly life. The teaching too, was given little if any place in the narrative cycles;<sup>171</sup> that found its place in more didactic works in drastically summarized form.<sup>172</sup> The illustrated and narrative versions of Christ's life then tended to be unbalanced by the inadequate treatment given to the central portion of it; the works and words of Jesus were almost wholly ignored.

In England the most influential life of Christ, indeed one of the most popular devotional works of the fifteenth century, was the Speculum Vitae Christi<sup>173</sup> - one of the best known of the many works to bear the title Speculum or Mirror.<sup>174</sup> It was to be found in many convents and among lay people in both manuscript and printed form;<sup>175</sup> there were at least ten printed editions produced in England 1486 - 1530. It was recommended as suitable reading for lay people by Sir Thomas More in his Apologye,<sup>176</sup> and the author of A dyurnall: for deuoute soules assigns a chapter to be read each day "to styrre your herte to compuncyon".<sup>177</sup> Its popularity was probably encouraged by its guaranteed orthodoxy: the episcopal approbation of Archbishop Arundel was copied in many of the manuscripts and appeared in the printed copies.<sup>178</sup> The only other such licence known to me was that granted by the conservative and lollarū-hating bishop of London, Richard Fitzjames, to Simon's Fruyte of Redempcyon.<sup>179</sup> It is unlikely that either represented any effective form of censorship,<sup>180</sup> but the guarantee of orthodoxy must have been important to the success of these devotional works at a time of lollard activity when possession of English treatises might be taken as proof of lollard inclinations.

The translator and adapter of the work was Nicholas Love, religious and later prior of Mountgrace Charterhouse. He was prevailed upon to



undertake the work "at the instaunce and the prayer of somme deuoute soules", to the edification of those "that ben of symple vnderstondyng".<sup>181</sup> There are signs that within this wide audience Love's particular concern was for his fellow religious.<sup>182</sup> The division of the narrative according to the days of the week, and the Passion section according to the canonical hours, together with a number of references to the feasts of the Church, would all accord with a religious setting. However, Love recognizes "the freelte of mankynde" and does not insist upon his readers following the daily scheme, but rather he advocates that they should choose the parts "as it semeth moste comfortable and stiryng to (their) deuocioun",<sup>183</sup> and especially those appropriate to the feasts of the Church.

Love's treatise is characteristic of the affective piety of the later middle ages. But he was more explicit than many authors as to his purpose and methods. He makes clear the distinction between gospel narrative and pious imagining,<sup>184</sup> and he justifies the kind of imaginative elaboration which makes his book so vivid. Starting from the premise that "a symple soule that kan not thenke bot bodies or bodily thinges"<sup>185</sup> requires "somwhat accordyng vnto his affeccioun", he uses an argument ascribed to St. Gregory: it is only by likening heaven and heavenly things to the earthly, visible and known, that a soul without any intellectual training or understanding of abstract thought can grasp anything of the unseen and spiritual world. This type of reasoning justified the use of imaginative description found in Love's treatise, the use of images and representations of the life of Christ and the saints in church, for they are all intended to make the scenes and people of the bible narratives and saints lives real to



the unlearned and to stir them to devotion. From the time of Bede<sup>186</sup> onwards the use of images as books for the unlearned had been approved by the Catholic Church,<sup>187</sup> and much late medieval devotion to Christ's Life and Passion presupposes some visual focus for the contemplation, and imago pietatis, a pieta or a crucifix. The Reformers, of course, challenged the use of images as idolatry and superstition,<sup>188</sup> but they were unable to break away entirely from the visual element of contemplation.<sup>189</sup> Literal and materialistic interpretation of imaginative detail or of images was a risk which Love and authors such as Bonde recognized and tried to prevent by careful explanation. Vivid description, imaginative elaboration and images and other representations at their best did make the scene real and enable the reader to imagine himself present at the events described. Christ was a real person to <sup>him</sup>~~them~~, to be loved, known and followed. The reformers' solemn moralizing and their tendency towards an unimaginative literalism made religion a matter of intellectual apprehension and duty. They banished as unscriptural the devout stories of the life and Passion of Christ and brought to an end one very important strand of late medieval devotion.<sup>190</sup>

The Speculum Vitae Christi uses a chronological narrative structure - an accommodating form and one which is easy to follow. It begins with the Council in Heaven where it is determined that the second Person of the Trinity shall become man to redeem fallen mankind.<sup>191</sup> The process of that redemption is unfolded through the narrative which follows. An introductory chapter on the life of the Blessed Virgin leads on to the usual sequence of the Annunciation, the Visitation, IXa

the Nativity, the Circumcision, Epiphany and the Purification.<sup>192</sup>

The second part, Tuesday, covers the flight to Egypt and return, the child Jesus in the Temple, His hidden life from the age of twelve to thirty and His baptism, which is awkwardly separated from the third part, which begins with Christ's fasting in the desert and His temptations. Starting with the miracle of Cana in Galilee a number of the healing miracles and the feeding of the five thousand are included, and other episodes from Christ's ministry are discussed, including the disciples' eating of corn on the Sabbath and some of His encounters with the Pharisees. Considerable space is devoted to the conversion of St. Mary Magdalene, and the raising of Lazarus is also the occasion of lengthy teaching. There is much teaching too, about prayer, in chapter xviiij, on Jesus' sermon on the mount, and later, chapter xxvij; and there is also a long chapter, xxxiij, on the active and contemplative life. Inevitably the narrative structure is weaker in this central section than in the part which concludes with Jesus' temptations or in the Passion week part, which begins with Palm Sunday and which will be discussed later with the other Passion literature.

Even in the narrative life to the temptations, the work is never content merely to describe scenes and events. In each case Love extracts some moral or spiritual edification. Reference to saints Augustine, Gregory and especially to saint Bernard indicate his nominal sources, but he also refers to Hilton and was perhaps familiar with the Ancrene Riwe.<sup>193</sup> His teaching indeed reflects and gathers together many of the concerns noted in the treatises of Part I of this discussion. Readers are warned against singularity and slander, while moderation and discretion in matters such as abstinence are commended.<sup>194</sup> The virtue

of silence is praised and Christ's obedience<sup>195</sup> to His parents is held up as an example to be followed especially by religious in obedience to their <sup>superiors</sup> ~~governors~~. The miracle of Cana in Galilee<sup>196</sup> provokes some discussion on marriage, and, although Love is not so hard on the married state as Hilton in the Scale, it is clear that he too believes that the heavenly marriage is better. The virtues of tribulation and meekness, recurring topics of medieval devotion, also find their place. Tribulation is the means by which God teaches men patience. Mary and Joseph know it on the flight to Egypt, Mary experiences it when Jesus is lost in Jerusalem (ca. xii), and the disciples learn its lesson on the lake (ca. xxvii).<sup>197</sup> The Blessed Virgin is praised for her meekness at the Annunciation, and there is a brief discussion on the relative merits of meekness and virginity.<sup>198</sup> The most extended discussion of the virtue of meekness is to be found in the chapter (xiii) dealing with Our Lord's hidden years.

In the Scale of Perfection Hilton had insisted that the contemplative must be subjected to the ordinances of the Church, especially in matters regarding confession and penance. Traditional teaching on these subjects was challenged by the Lollards, and although anchoresses and enclosed religious were probably protected to some extent against their heresies<sup>199</sup> the general audience addressed by Love were more obviously open to danger. Love takes the opportunity of the occasion of Mary Magdalene's conversion to refute Lollard views on oral confession and penance. He also refutes the Lollards' heretical views on the sacrament of the altar,<sup>200</sup> and especially the doctrine of the Real Presence. He answers them in three ways: he asserts that natural reason cannot fully comprehend this marvel, which is to be believed as it has been by the faithful for centuries; secondly he gives a clear and brief statement of the actual doctrine; and

finally he challenges the Lollards on the grounds of personal experience<sup>201</sup> - the lack is in those who do not share in that experience:

and by cause that he tasteth nought the swettenesse  
of this precious sacrament/ne feleth the gracious  
worchyng thereof in hymself/therfore he leueth nought  
that eny othir dothe. 202

These arguments against the Lollards would, of course, be equally useful in the 1520s and 1530s against the views of the Reformers.

Love was aware that there were dangers not only from without, but within the Church, even among enclosed religious,<sup>203</sup> and that the inward life did not always live up to the outward profession.<sup>204</sup> This failure "to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called" resulted often from lack of instruction or of understanding, and sometimes even from a lack of vocation. Love also included a more specific attack on the hypocrisy which so often lay behind conventionally pious behaviour:

We mowe see alday many men and wommen berynge bedes  
with trillynge on the fyngres and waggyng the lippes/  
bot the sight caste to vanytees and the herte that only  
god knoweth/ as it is to drede/ sette more vpon worldely  
thinges. 205

The treatise contained a great deal of fairly elementary teaching and the author employed all his skill to make his message heard. There is, for instance, a splendid passage on prayer, which is worth quoting as an example of Love's mastery of English style; the meaning is clear and the repetitive rhythm and the verbal repetition hammered home the central point:

Wherefore yif thou wilt paciently suffre aduersitees and  
myghtily ouercome temptaciouns and diseses/be thou a man  
of prayer. Also yif thou wilt knowe the sleighes of the  
deuel and be not begiled with his false suggestions/be a  
man of prayer. Also yif thou wilt take the streight wey  
to heuene by trauaile and penaunce of flesche and therwith  
gladly contynue in goddis seruice/be a man of prayer. Also  
yif thou wilt putte away veyne thoughtis and fede thi soule



with holy thoghtis and gostly meditaciouns and deuociouns/  
 be a man of prayer. Also yif thou wilt stable thy herte  
 in good purpos to goddis wille/putting away vices and  
 planting vertues/be a man of prayer. for thorough prayer  
 is goten the gifte of the holi goste/that techith the  
 soule all thing that is nedeful therto. Also yif thou  
 wilt come to heuen by contemplacioun/and fele the goostly  
 swetnesse that is feled of few chosen soules/and knowe  
 the grete gracious giftes of oure lorde god that mowe  
 be feled bot not spoken/be a man of prayer. for by the  
 exercise of prayer specially a man cometh to contemplacioun  
 and the felynge of heuenly thinges. 206

Like all the best teachers he does not merely tell the reader what to do and what not to do; he inspires him to strive after the heavenly things and feel for himself that "goostly swetnesse".

One of the reasons for the popularity of the Speculum was Love's ability as a story teller. There is the variety of descriptive narrative, teaching, and meditation, and even the occasional pieces of dialogue. Many of the meditations open in a beguilingly conversational manner—"Now take we hede...", "Bot leuyng this matere...", "Now lete vs abide here awhile and take hede inwardely of the foreside notable poyntes"—and immediately the reader is counted in. Another time the narrator steps out of the story to comment upon it and instruct his readers, or even to address one of the characters in the drama, so that the audience is always kept in touch with the narrative. The author sought not only to involve his audience, but to convince them of the reality of what he describes, so that they feel themselves present at the scenes:

thou that couetest to fele the fruyte of this boke/  
 thou moste with al thy thought and al thyn entente  
 in that manere make the in thy soule present to tho  
 thynges that ben here writen/ seide/or done of oure  
 lord Jesu and that besily/likyngly/and abidyng. as  
 theyhthou herdest hem with thy bodily eeres/or seie  
 hem with thyne eigen done, 207



This practice of the devotional present<sup>208</sup> is the key to so much of the affective devotion, which is characteristic of late medieval piety and which tended to focus upon the life and Passion of Christ. Three types of detail, by no means peculiar to the Speculum, are used by Love to encourage the sense of reality and concreteness of the scene. The first is visual detail, which enables the reader to see the setting; the second is what might be termed methodological detail, which describes how something is done – the most obvious example is the crucifying of Jesus (ca.xliii) where Love describes the two methods most commonly depicted – and the third type is the kind of homely detail which helps to bring the setting of Jesus' life <sup>on</sup> to the present, making it familiar to the reader.<sup>209</sup>

The chapter on the nativity (ca.vi) is characteristic of Love's method.<sup>210</sup> He begins with a paraphrase of the narrative in Luke II, but the detail is elaborated. We see how Joseph and Mary, "ledyng with hem an ox<sup>and</sup> an asse/they wenten al that longe wey to gidere/as pore folk/ hauynge no more worldely good bot tho tweyne bestes". The "inn" becomes a definite locus, "in a comoun place/bytwixe tweyne houses/that was hel<sup>d</sup> aboue men for to stonde ther fore the reyn".<sup>211</sup> Joseph, the carpenter, builds them a small enclosed area and he makes a manger for the animals. The setting established, the author pauses briefly to remind the reader of the Blessed Virgin's plight. She was young, only fifteen, and had travelled some seventy miles in great poverty when near her time, and arrived in Bethlehem she was unable to find rest or proper shelter. The sympathy of the reader thus gained, the birth on "the sunday at mydnyght",<sup>212</sup> which is pure and "with outen trauaille", is given as a brief statement of fact. The author dwells

upon the mother love of the Virgin and her homely care for the Child, and the homage of the beasts completes the scene.<sup>213</sup> Mary's homage is expressed in her attitude, "deuoutly enclynande",<sup>214</sup> and in a brief prayer, while Joseph gives practical expression to his worship: he took "the sadel of the Asse and made therof a kusshyne oure lady to sitte on and a suppoyle to lene to". The birth of Christ exemplifies the virtues of poverty, meekness and bodily penance, which Love draws out in a short didactic passage that remains firmly rooted in the scene previously described. He goes on to describe the worship of the angels and of the shepherds, the latter being briefly mentioned, in contrast to the mystery plays which tend to elaborate the adoration of the shepherds. The chapter closes with a recapitulation of the main points, showing why Christmas is celebrated by the Church and how the Feast should be honoured. The importance of the Feast is supported by reference to miracles which have taken place in Rome - as we have seen miracles were often used to support teaching about the Sacrament of the Altar.<sup>215</sup> The scene is "realized" not by lengthy description but by a number of minute but deftly chosen touches, such as the rain or the use of the ass's saddle.

A number of other works derived their structure from chronological reference to the events of Christ's life. They are all much shorter than the Speculum, and the tendency is for them to reduce or omit altogether the instructional matter and much of the narrative description and to use the life merely to provide some structure for a work of pure devotion.

The popular Fruyte of redemcyon<sup>216</sup> by Simon Anker of London Wall,<sup>217</sup> is much shorter than the Speculum and probably reflects the growing demand of individuals, especially lay-people, for compact works of devotion.

The author's main source is the Revelations of St. Bridget, especially I.x, which may suggest a connection with Syon Abbey;<sup>218</sup> and his work would doubtless have appealed to nuns of the house - there is some evidence that the author had a particular concern for religious although like Love he addresses a general audience - and to the intimate circle who had some connections with Syon. The book's thirty-one chapters unfold the scheme of salvation from the Creation and Fall of man, through the life of Christ, to the Resurrection, Ascension and sending of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. The characteristic emphasis of late medieval devotion is to be seen in the fact that over half the book, chapters xiii - xxviii, <sup>is</sup> ~~are~~ concerned with the Passion of Christ.

Although there is much less instructional matter in Simon's work than in the Speculum his work is not exclusively devotional. Several familiar topics are mentioned if not discussed in detail, both in the contemplations which ~~from~~ <sup>begin</sup> the first half of each chapter and in the prayers which conclude them. This pattern of teaching or contemplation, which is summed up in a personal, separable, prayer, we have found used a little earlier in Garde's The interpretacyon and sygnifycacyon of the Masse, and it was later used by Fewterer in The Myrroure or Glasse of Christes Passion; it seems to be characteristic of devotional works of mixed content - teaching, contemplation and description as well as prayers - with a strong narrative element. In the opening chapter of The Fruyte of redempcyon the emphasis on the Trinity is characteristic of orthodox devotion of the period.<sup>219</sup> The creation of man, especially <sup>his</sup> power of reason and understanding, which distinguish him from the beasts, and God's mercy <sup>are</sup> in redeeming man, <sup>to</sup> be recognized thankfully.

On a more personal note the author thanks God for his own temporal estate, for a sound body, for shelter and for food - things not to be taken for granted in the early sixteenth century. The meekness, obedience, sobriety and abstinence of Jesus are noted as exemplary virtues to be followed. There is a brief consideration of man's last end, and the prayer at the end of chapter thirteen expresses the trust that the faithful had in receiving the sacrament before death, "that thou wylte not exclude them from thy heauenly kyngedome/vnto whome it pleaseth the to be knytte vnto by connexyon of this honourable sacrament!".

Simon, perhaps influenced by the Revelations of St. Bridget, gives rather more prominence to the Blessed Virgin than the Speculum, which as a longer work seems better able to absorb the story of the Virgin's early life, her cultivation of virtue and her great devotion to God and her will to serve Him. In the Fruyte Mary is portrayed as the ideal woman, or more especially, as the ideal religious. The nun, as we have seen in The tree & .xii. frutes and The abbaye of the holy Ghost, must centre her whole life upon God and like Mary learn to conform her life to His will. Like Mary, her love for God must be burning and fervent. The nun's vows of poverty, obedience and chastity are reflected in Mary's giving her goods to the needy, in her obedience to her parents and to the law, accepting the laws of purification like other women though she has no need, and especially her chastity, who "fyrst of all in the worlde amonge women hast vowed ye vowe of chastyte and offred therby a glorious gyfte to god".<sup>220</sup> Mary also sought solitude, kept silence and practised abstinence, besides cultivating that supreme virtue of meekness which every religious should seek to emulate. Simon is alone among the devout treatise writers of the period in suggesting that Mary's sorrows -



mentioned by several authors in connection with the Passion - began at the nativity:<sup>221</sup>

good lady whan thou be helde and consydered the places  
in his fayre handes & prety fete where ye sharpe nayles  
sholde perce through/as thou had herde by holy prophetes/  
thy blessed eyen were replete with teres of wepyng/& thy  
virgynall herte was as coluen a sonder for sorowe. And  
whan thy lytell swete sone behelde thy eyen full of wepynge/  
he was sorowful as vnto ye deth for the. And whan yu  
consydered the myght of his dñete thou were comforted/  
knowynge well that thy sone wolde haue it so/and that it  
was expedyent. 222

In the first dialogue of The boke of conforte agaynste all tribulacions and in The dialogue betwene our sauior Ihesu Chryste and a synner, which seems to be a later version of the same work,<sup>223</sup> Jesus Himself describes the continual pain, the double martyrdom of soul and body, which He knew throughout the Thirty-Three years of His life:

For truelye I receiued ye crosse of my bytter passyon  
in ye wombe of my mother/& bare hit continually in my  
hart & stablyshed hit in my body with great austerite/  
wherfore to shew the endles measure of ye hydeous paynes  
of my soule/I wylled al my membres to haue sweten blode  
and water/in the fynall & instant ende of my bytter  
passion. 224

The general perception of the Passion which checks the simple joy of the Nativity makes the event, both emotionally and theologically more significant. But the perception is more effective coming from the lips of Jesus in the Dialogue, when He describes how He came into this world by three steps of humility, poverty and pain, as a needy child wrapped in clothes of sorrow, lying in a manger.<sup>225</sup> The Blessed Virgin's perception of her Son's Passion is prophetic; Christ's view is retrospective, and the Dialogue makes a serious attempt to describe not only the ways in which Christ suffered throughout His life but how it was that the Son of God suffered such pains. The brief discussion of the relationship between Christ's Godhead and His Manhood makes it clear



that Christ, by the very perfection of His nature and from the superfluity of His love, suffered more than any other man.

Although the prayers in Simon's work grow naturally out of the contemplations it would have been possible, as in Garāde's Interpretacyon, to detach them and use them separately. It is possible that the type of devotion encouraged by the use of the rosary suggested this kind of chronological meditation. The prayers are of much the same kind as those in Book II of Garāde's work; they referred to and gave personal application to the events of Christ's life. Thus the prayer which concludes chapter V on the circumcision asks Jesus "to circumcyse me from euery spotte of syrne" and that love of "thy holy name Iesus may be imprynted in my herte". The prayer at the end of chapter xvi, which describes Christ's stripping and scourging, asks for grace to remember Christ's suffering "& that they wylte ouersprynge ye interyour partes of my herte with thy precyous blode". There is nothing unusual about the subject or expression of the contemplations or prayers, although the language is occasionally a little more ornate and emotional than in some other works. The distinctive feature of the work is its expression of praise and thankfulness. The tone is set by its opening:

Lorde my god I desyre to laude the/for I knowe myself  
to be made to laude ye. Open my mouth in thy laude/  
that I may synge ioy to thy name. Stere my herte in the/  
put away euery tedyous thyng/ infunde grace/kendle loue/take  
away wyckednes of thy seruānt/ clense me from all vnclennes  
of body and soule/that I may be founde worthy vnto the  
honour of thy name/and therto open my lyppes...226

and each chapter begins with a phrase such as "Thankynges I yelde to the lorde" or "I laude and gloryfye the lorde". Although Simon does not overlook man's unworthiness: "a frayle man fylth and wormes meet fayleth in thy condygne laude. And so doth euery creature, euery oryson/

euery tunge and sermocination [sic]" yet he persists in his praise of God and in his thanksgiving for the work of redemption. In his meditations on the Passion Rolle renders thanks to Jesus for every article of His Passion,<sup>227</sup> and the Monk of Farne talks of the exultation which grows out of frequent meditation on our Lord's Passion.<sup>228</sup> Thankfulness and praise<sup>229</sup> are of course a good and valid response to Christ's incarnate life and His Passion, which were the means of man's redemption. Often lost amid the more harrowing details of the Passion and the late medieval concentration on the realistic description of Christ's sufferings, the note of thanks and praise in Simon's Fruyte of redempcyon does something to redress the balance.<sup>230</sup> Though characteristic of its time in its tendency to concentrate upon the more emotional scenes, especially those concerning Christ's Passion, the work is noteworthy for its expression of thankfulness for the work of redemption.

#### Rosary books and other devotions based on Christ's life.

Three rosary books are known to have been printed during the 1530s. The Rosary of our Sauyour Iesu seems always to have been published in relation to William Bonde's Pylgrymage of perfeccyon,<sup>231</sup> while The Rosarye of our lady<sup>232</sup> and The Mystic sweet Rosary of the faythful soule<sup>233</sup> both seem to have been first printed in Antwerp and to have been reprinted several times during the 1530s. To these may be added the Jesus Psalter, which was organized in a similar manner to the rosary books<sup>234</sup> and which occurs in many manuscript and printed versions from the late fifteenth century onwards.<sup>235</sup> Because they are based on a recital of the events of Christ's life and combined with a repetitive formal structure two other works will be included in this section, The golden letany<sup>236</sup> and an

imperfect rosary-type devotion found among the Copland tracts at Blairs College, Aberdeen.<sup>237</sup> I have not included any version of the Hortulus Animae in the discussion since the English version really belongs to the English Primer tradition.<sup>238</sup>

The use of prayer beads and numbered series of prayers with a repetitive element were known in the Christian church from very early times,<sup>239</sup> but it was not until the last quarter of the XVth century that the rosary acquired a more settled form.<sup>240</sup> The devotions seem to have developed first in the Rhine valley and the Low Countries, an area which had had considerable influence on English devotional literature long before it began to disseminate reformed literature.<sup>241</sup> In England prayer beads had been in use for several centuries,<sup>242</sup> but from about 1500 onwards it became more likely that the beads bequeathed in wills<sup>243</sup> or portrayed carried in many ways<sup>244</sup> were rosary beads. Around 1500 an Italian visitor noted that English women came to church carrying long rosaries in their hands,<sup>245</sup> and a little later in the century there were some churches where a set of beads was provided for common use.<sup>246</sup> There were also special beads which seem to have been particularly associated with Syon and Shene, where the repetition of certain prayers on these hallowed beads carried the promise of substantial indulgences.<sup>246A</sup> From Sir Thomas More's brush with a Franciscan friar in Coventry sometime before 1520<sup>247</sup> it looks as though people were on occasion encouraged to use the rosary devotions in a superstitious manner by the promise that daily recitation of the rosary would preserve a soul from damnation - the same kind of benefit as was often attached to the mass. Not surprisingly the rosary was attacked as superstitious by the Reformers and officially condemned in Henry VIII's second Royal Injunctions of 1538.<sup>248</sup>

The Rosary of our sauyour Iesu would be far easier to place were the word Rosary not contained in the title. Bonde refers to the work in The Pilgrymage of perfeccyon,<sup>249</sup> where he says that it was originally divided into seven parts to be used before the seven canonical hours, but subsequently it was applied to the seven days of the week as printed.<sup>250</sup> He seems to be aware of the Rosary's early history, and whether or not he was its author it was probably known at Syon. It is recommended to the readers of the Pilgrymage as a book where "they may lerne yt maner to forme a meditacyon" on the points of Our Lord's Passion. But apart from the fact that each chapter ends with a Pater and an Ave it is difficult to find much common ground between the discursive meditations which make up The Rosary of our sauyour Iesu and the more compact and organized devotions of The Rosarye of our lady or The mystic sweet rosary.

The title yields two clues about the contents of the work: firstly that it offers "thankes and prayse" to Christ's holy name, and secondly that these thanks are given "for all the labours and great paynes that he suffred for man in this worlde/from the first instant of his blessed incarnation/vnto his glorious ascencion". Though less exuberant than in Simon's Fruyte of redemcyon a note of praise is sounded at the opening of each chapter. Grammatically, indeed, each whole chapter depends on some phrase such as "glory/ioye/honour and reuerence/be euer to thy holy name". Although the title claims to cover the life of Christ from the Incarnation to the Ascension the bulk of the work is occupied by the Passion. The opening chapter briefly lists the events of Jesus' early life from the Incarnation and Nativity, pausing to give thanks "for the



great pouerty in body/wherin it pleased thy grace to be borne bytwene two beestes/ & layde in a cryb/& wrapped in poore clothes" to Mary's loss of the twelve year old Jesus in the Temple. The second chapter spans the period from Jesus' baptism to His entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and the repentance of Mary Magdalene. The remaining chapters are mostly rather longer and their references to events in Jesus' life more detailed; they cover from Maundy Thursday to the burial of Jesus; the Resurrection and Ascension find no place in the meditations. The last chapter departs from the chronological sequence, describing the descent into "Lymbo patrum" and the burial, and then giving a set of prayers based on the seven words from the cross. These in turn give way to personal dedication, confession and petitions for salvation, with which the work concludes.

To the recital of events - there is little direct description apart from Christ's scourging, mocking and crucifixion - is frequently added some comment pointing to Jesus' meekness, patience and goodness, to His loneliness, or to the cruelty and violence of the Jews. The latter part of each chapter tends to become more personal in tone, expressing devotion to the instruments of the Passion, to the injured members of Christ's body and to His holy name, and asking for some spiritual virtue or blessing such as forgiveness of sins, patience and comfort in tribulation, the grace to make a good end, the virtues of chastity, abstinence and temperance, obedience, silence, and acceptance of the works of penance - virtues which suggest a predominantly religious audience. They are not separable prayers but rather a personal extension of the meditation. The difficult grammatical form<sup>251</sup> and the lack of clear distinction between narrative, comment, adoration and petition

make the work seem wanting in the kind of clear structure which tends to characterize the other rosary devotions.<sup>252</sup> The longer chapter divisions also make the author's task more difficult. What distinguishes The Rosary of our sauour Iesu from other Passion literature is its devotion to the instruments of the Passion, more clearly stated here than usual, and devotion to the Holy Name, which was particularly characteristic of mystics such as Rolle and Hilton.<sup>253</sup>

The Rosarye of our Lady presents what may be described as the classic pattern for a rosary devotion. The five decades of brief chapters describing the life of Christ from His conception and birth to His resurrection, ascension and the Last Judgement are each concluded by an elaborate expression of praise addressed to the Blessed Virgin. In addition each chapter is addressed to her<sup>254</sup> and asks for her prayers; there is also a chapter on her Assumption in the final decade. The author of The tree & .xii. frutes of the holy gcost, who encourages the newly professed nun to have special devotion to Our Lady, recommends to her that if possible "thou saydest to her among, her psalters of Aues, called our ladyes psalter". The Marian emphasis of the Lady Psalter seems to have been carried over into The Rosarye of our Lady. Yet, despite the important place held by the Mother of God in this work, the focus remains firmly on her son. With few exceptions (the Visitation and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin) each chapter relates some event from Christ's life, and this is frequently taken into the petitionary second part of the chapter, although not as consistently or neatly as in Garade's Interpretacyon of the Masse, book II, or in Fewterer's Myrrour or Glasse of Christes Passion. The application of the event sometimes sounds rather forced:

Mother of God which did lappe thy lytel swete babe  
in clothes/and bytwene two beestes in a crybbe layde  
hym in hey, praye for me that my naked soule may be  
lapped in drede & loue for my lorde god & the/& that  
I may oft remembre my flesshe is but donge & hey in  
this crybbe of mortalite. 255

or Blyssed mother of our sayour whose holy fete mary  
magdalene wasshed with ye teares of penaunce. Also  
she kyssed them deuoutly & dried them wt her heare,  
& anoynted them with swete oyntment/& there by penaunce  
she did wyne full remission of all her synnes, pray  
for me yt my fete of carnal affections may be wasshed  
from all fylth of synne, & haue them anoynted wt bawme  
of deuocion, yt I may vnto the loue of god myghtely  
clymme. 256

The brevity of each chapter gives little scope for description, but many of the familiar details are included, such as the beasts at the nativity and the cold marble pillar of the scourging. Also the requests of the petitions seek the usual selection of virtues: patient acceptance of poverty and tribulation, abstinence, chastity and the subjugation of fleshly desires; the flesh is seen as dung and hay, and this life as an exile and desert; the doctrine of holy church is to be obeyed during the "pilgrimage to that heuenly cite", and there are references to confession, penance and the need to receive the sacrament faithfully.

In the Dutch edition of the Rosarye of our lady, c.1525, each chapter is illustrated by a crude woodcut,<sup>257</sup> which while it may not have stimulated the reader's devotion probably did help to fix his thoughts and may have been useful to people of limited reading ability. In the devotion based on Christ's life found among the Copland tracts at Blairs College<sup>258</sup> the woodcuts which dominate the text suggest in their composition some familiarity with the Dutch ones. They appear on every page followed by a complete verse describing the event portrayed and ending with a "Pater" and an "Ave". This unsophisticated life, which could have been

easily committed to memory by the illiterate, seems to be a rudimentary type of rosary devotion. The work is incomplete,<sup>259</sup> and it is difficult to know how many episodes were originally included. However, following the life are a set (incomplete)<sup>260</sup> of devotions to each of the five wounds which seem to belong to it - the five wounds are celebrated as the five mysteries of The mystic sweet rosary. These prayers to the five wounds, together with the "Pater" and "Ave" following each episode, suggest that it was some kind of rosary devotion.

The mystic sweet rosary of the faythful soule, like the Rosary of our ladye, consists of five decades separated by five mysteries, addressed not to the Blessed Virgin but to the wounds of Christ. The title declares that the fifty chapters of Christ's life are each provided "with certayn placis of the holy scripture", "a deuoute prayer" and with "a fayer picture: that the inwarde mynde might sauour the thinge that the vtwarde eye beholdeth". The woodcuts are of a much higher standard than those of the Rosary of our ladye, which also seems to have been produced in Antwerp some eight years earlier. In their handling of the human body, their architectural backgrounds and balanced scale and composition they betray a strong Renaissance influence.<sup>261</sup> The whole volume is unusually well produced, the Latin, Dutch and English versions all having the same format.<sup>262</sup> The illustrations include a number showing the Blessed Virgin crowned, holding the Christ child and standing or sitting on the crescent moon, the serpent crushed beneath her feet and the whole surrounded by a rosary acting as a mandorla around her.<sup>263</sup> X̄ b  
There is also a cut showing Mary being received in heaven and another X̄ a of her coronation. The mystic sweet rosary begins at an earlier point in time than the other rosary devotions: starting with the creation it



includes chapters on the birth, presentation and marriage of the Blessed Virgin before embarking on the usual sequence of the Annunciation, the visitation and the nativity. In illustration and organization the Marian interest of the work is unmistakable, but apart from the Hayle Mary which ends most of the chapters there is no formal address to her. The wounds of Christ are saluted and honoured, but the prayers which accompany them are not as emotional as might be expected.<sup>264</sup> The subjects of the illustrations<sup>265</sup> are those of traditional catholic piety. The fact that there is no narrative description - the pictures tell the story - and that the text consists of biblical quotations, often from the Old Testament, commenting on the event and prayers which are addressed to Jesus, is surely not sufficient ground for describing The mystic sweet rosary as a work of the Reformers.<sup>266</sup> X b

The prayers follow the pattern found in Book II of Garade's Interpretacyon of the Masse and in Fewterer's Deuoute prayers in englysshe. The first part refers to some event from Christ's life, and often includes a traditional non-biblical detail, such as the fifteen steps of the Temple ascended by Mary at her presentation, the painlessness of Jesus' birth, the renewed bleeding of Christ's wounds as He is stripped naked before His crucifixion and His body being stretched upon the cross; the second part contains a personal petition. The connection between the two halves is less obvious than in Garade or Fewterer because The mystic sweet rosary rarely uses catchwords, but there are no glaring incongruities between narrative and petition.

The concerns shown by the petitions are not so obviously monastic as in The Rosary of our Sauyour Iesu or Simon's Fruyte of redempcyon, and

in that respect are closer to Garade's and Fewterer's. The virtue of chastity is sought<sup>267</sup> but not stressed. There is no reference to obedience, poverty, silence or even the use of abstinence, but the more general virtues of humility, purity, charity and restraint of tongue are sought. The world is condemned not because it is evil in itself, but because of its vices,<sup>268</sup> and even more because worldly concerns and affections draw the soul from love of and desire for Christ.<sup>269</sup> More often the prayers condemn pride, vain-glory and other vices in the individual, and a few call upon the reader to mortify himself and follow "with feruent loue the stepis of thy life".<sup>270</sup> Considerable emphasis is given to the requirement to love one's enemies, to prefer others to self, and never to slander a neighbour, as well as asking that the virtue of Christ's Passion and blood may "descende into the soulis dede thorow synne".<sup>271</sup> The traditional tribulation doctrine makes its appearance,<sup>272</sup> but the emphasis falls not upon the ennobling virtue of tribulation or on the accumulation of merits thereby but on the purifying aspect which will enable the soul to join Christ after death. Christ is also seen as the sinner's refuge and hope in temptation.<sup>273</sup> Although the prayers show awareness of man's sinfulness they do not dwell upon the corruption of his nature as in the contemptus mundi tradition. Rather, the emphasis falls on the soul's need of contrition and desire for absolution and cleansing. The reader is encouraged to weep for and bewail his sins.<sup>274</sup> The most conspicuous element of the prayers is the expression of love for and yearning after Christ, a spirit reminiscent of the Imitatio Christi which may be due in some measure to the influence of the devotio moderna. To the usual late medieval insistence on the importance of

meditation on the Passion:

Swete Iesu/prynte into my herte the continuall  
remembrance of thy passion/incessantly to prik  
my mynde/to mollifye it: that it may be hole swallowed  
vp in thy loue 275

is added a strong desire to know Christ personally, which is expressed in physical terms:

Make my harte to be syk for thy loue/make it to  
yrke all worldely thingis onely to thirst ~~and~~ &  
honger aftir the so feruently that nothinge els  
may make me glad; 276

or again the soul asks to be "swallowed vp whole of thy moste feruent loue" and Christ is besought "Burye thou my harte my wittes and all my strengthes in the". Not only does the soul desire Christ "for the effusion of thy bloude and water take me into thy <sup>5</sup>only possession and tuicion/and to knitte me wholl vnto the in loue",<sup>277</sup> but more physically and dramatically, in language reminiscent of some mystics, He is implored "O moste gloriouse passion of my sauour/wounde thou my soule. O moste precyouse woundis of my loue/make moyst my mynde"<sup>278</sup> and again, "wound my harte (I beseche the) with the spere of thy loue/that I nother think vpon nor desier nothing els then the my lord for me crucified".<sup>279</sup> Although not florid in the way that so much devotional writing about the Passion and wounds of Christ tends to be at this period, the language suggests a fervent personal devotion to Christ.

The rosary is particularly associated with devotion to the Blessed Virgin.<sup>280</sup> Legends concerning its origin nearly all include some vision of Mary,<sup>281</sup> rosary paintings too tend to focus upon her,<sup>282</sup> and while the "Pater" and "Credo" are used irregularly in the English rosary devotions the "Ave Maria" is used much more regularly and frequently.

The fullest praise addressed to her among the rosary devotions is to be found in the five prayers which conclude each decade of The Rosarye of our Lady; with the exception of some Primer prayers<sup>283</sup> nothing as elaborate as this is to be found in the English devotional literature of the 1530s. In the course of the salutations many of the traditional epithets for Mary are listed;<sup>284</sup> and she is praised as the instrument of  $\bar{\chi}$  God in the Incarnation, and seen as the solace of sinners, their  $\bar{\chi}$  sanctuary in the hour of death and mediatrix between God and man—the two latter are perhaps her most prominent roles.<sup>285</sup> The fifth salutation concludes:

Accept good lady of thy maydenly benigne these.v.roses  
which I haue offred to the/not accordyngly dere lady to thy  
moost excellent ~~digny~~tye/but after myne exile and feble  
power...<sup>286</sup>

In The mystic sweet rosary there is no verbal equivalent to the illustrations of Mary in glory. The decades are marked by the salutations of the five wounds of Christ, and as previously noted verse prayers to the wounds seem to have concluded the Copland tract. Woodcuts with emblematic representations of Christ's wounds, sometimes including instruments of the Passion, surrounded by a rosary,<sup>287</sup> gave  $\bar{\chi}$  iconographical expression to what was from early on a common subject of meditation for part of the rosary cycle.<sup>288</sup> Extravagant praise of the Blessed Virgin was by no means an inevitable part of the rosary devotions, and the extant English rosary books suggest a preference for contemplation of the life, Passion and Wounds of Christ.

The surviving rosary books provide a compact and systematic meditation on the life of Christ. The clear division of sections and chapters allowed the individual to select various portions according to his time and inclination. This adaptability, and the fact that none of the rosary books – even The Rosary of our Sauyours Iesu, which seems to have



been originally intended for religious - betrays the overt preference for the religious way of life so often found in devotional writing of the period, must have helped to make the rosary a popular devotion among lay people as well as religious. The chapters and prayers were brief and usually followed a regular structure, which helped to check the tendency for them to grow into shapeless meditations. The narrative reference was also restricted by length, and while it was sufficient to remind the reader of the more detailed tradition the description was not over-written. But perhaps the most interesting feature of the rosary books is the way in which pictures seem to have been considered an important part of the meditation. The static picture was the focus for many Passion devotions. One author recommends that when meditating on Christ's bitter Passion "thou shalt haue before thee in place of a book a representation of Christ suffering or crucified".<sup>289</sup> Unser Lieben Frauen Psalter, printed in 1489, was even more explicit in drawing the reader's attention to the illustrations of the mysteries; "these you may look at and meditate upon while you are saying the psalter: or else you may study the picture before you begin to say the psalter".<sup>290</sup> The Carthusian author of The Pomander of prayer was surely thinking of this type of illustrated rosary book when he describes how some people use against distractions in prayer:

lytell bokes/in the whiche is conteyned pyctures of the articles of the lyfe and passion of our lorde Iesu/and tournynge ouer theyr leues doth worshype our lorde/ saying for euery article a Pater noster. an Aue. and a Crede. And this exercise is good for them whiche be vnlearned. 291.

In the Copland tract and The mystic sweet rosary, while an illustration accompanies each episode, the woodcuts carry the narrative; they alone tell the story. The sight - both the physical sight and the imaginative

seeing - was a sense frequently stimulated by devotional authors, most often in connection with certain events of Christ's life, particularly His childhood and the Passion.

Another work which is based upon the life of Christ and uses a regular structure, in this case derived from liturgical use, is The golden Letany in Englysshe.<sup>292</sup> It seems to have made its appearance at about the same date as the rosary devotions, the late fifteenth century, and to have remained popular among English recusants.<sup>293</sup> The golden Letany is a continuous narrative which unlike the rosary is not broken up into shorter sections, nor does the total number of petitions seem to be significant.<sup>294</sup> It begins with petitions for mercy couched in the usual litany form, and then launches into a recital of salvation history from the creation to the sending of the Holy Ghost. In the last few pages the narrative ceases and the same sentence form is used to carry a number of more personal petitions for mercy addressed to Christ, calling on His Holy Name and the merits of Himself and Mary. It continues, in the manner of contemporary litanies, by seeking the intercession of a number of apostles, martyrs, holy fathers and confessors, including saints Francis, Augustine and Anthony, and among holy women saints Anne, Catherine and Barbara, and the piece ends with a number of supplications:

Succour vs swete Iesu in the tremblynge and strayte  
day of iudgement, & graunte vs in this exile & transytory  
lyfe those thynges that be necessary to the helth of our  
body & soule/and after this lyfe to lyue in ioye with  
the euerlastyngly withouten ende 295

and brief commendations of the dead and prayers for the church and for individual salvation. Copland's and Skot's editions<sup>296</sup> both conclude with a "deuoute blyssnge", "lately translated out of fre<sup>n</sup>sshe by Robert

Copland".<sup>297</sup>

Although the form is regular—"By....have mercy upon us"—the petitions vary considerably in length. Many of the familiar details are to be found: the harsh surroundings and poverty of the nativity for instance:

By the colde crybbe in ye whiche wt vyle clothes  
ye were wounde and put/&nourysshed with maydens  
mylke....<sup>298</sup>

and the painful circumcision, with the shedding of blood and receiving the Holy Name, Jesus. His obedience to His parents in Nazareth and the "humble & meke conuersacion" of His thirty-three years on earth, His pains and weariness, the poverty, the hunger, thirst, cold and heat "whiche in this vale of mysery thou suffred", together with the detractions of His enemies, show the privations which Christ endured on earth.<sup>299</sup> Though nothing is said, the reader with some knowledge of the standard views on the value of tribulation would surely see Christ's life as an example to be followed. The "holy meditacions", "stedfast contemplacyons & knelynges, and ouercommynge of the fendes temptacion" suggest another side of Christ's life which should be emulated. Very brief mention is made of His "holosome doctryne" and <sup>of</sup> His miracles. But, as might be expected, the bulk of the work, nearly half of it, is devoted to Passion week.

The incidents of the Passion which are recorded follow the usual sequence: the entry into Jerusalem, the institution of the Sacrament, the prayer in the garden<sup>300</sup> and the betrayal, followed by the process of the trials, with the mocking and physical pain inflicted on Christ, and His crucifixion, with the "thyrling" of the hands, the "boystous nayles" and the nailing of His feet to the cross.<sup>301</sup> The expansion and suggested

rather than real variation of form in describing the wounds seems to have as its background the widespread popular devotion to the wounds of Christ. The language in which the wound of the side is described is similar to that of the rosary devotions:<sup>302</sup>

By the openynge of thy syde & the reed wounde  
of it and the precyous blode good lorde thyrle  
our herte with ye spere of all thy loue & haue  
mercy vpon vs. By the precyous bloode and water  
that ranne out of thy holy hert/wasshe and make vs  
clene in the same holy water & blode from all our  
aynnes/& haue mercy vpon vs. 303

The descent into hell is recounted before the deposition, then follow the usual sequence of resurrection, ascension and the sending of the Holy Ghost.

Reference to the Blessed Virgin is limited, being confined as usual to the time before the nativity and during the Passion. She is chosen by God to be Christ's mother, her conception, birth and the "perfyte purite and the mekenes of her" are described. Then in the Passion sequence there is the meeting as Christ bears His cross to Calvary, the words He speaks from the cross recommending His mother to the care of St. John, "the swerde of sorowe that went vnto thy moders herte, and the compassyon & teares that she shed out of sorowe standyng vnder the crosse", and her lamentation over her Son's dead body. Although Mary's joy at the resurrection is mentioned there is no reference to the common tradition that the risen Jesus appeared first of all to His mother. Basically the narrative contains the usual selection of events briefly described with the traditional detail. But despite the usual tendency to dwell upon the physical pains of Jesus during His Passion:—

By al the dolours that yu suffred in thy rybbes  
hyppes and sholders crucyfied/haue mercy vpon vs.



By all the paynes that thou had spredde on the  
 crosse in thy synewes, veynes, fete, and all thy  
 membres, haue mercy vpon vs. 304 —

the Golden Letany pays more attention to Jesus' inner state than might be expected in so brief a work. Jesus' heaviness of heart, "hugely great heuynesse", afflicts Him during the Agony in the Garden, when Pilate shows Him to the people and at His crucifixion. On two occasions during the trials the reader is reminded of His "labour and secret vnknownen turment". Inner virtues too are revealed, Jesus' compassion for His "sorowful mother", His patience and stillness before the judges, and above all His meekness, shown in His washing of the disciples' feet, His acceptance of comfort from the angel of the Passion and His prayer from the cross for His enemies' forgiveness.<sup>305</sup> Finally, attention is drawn to the love and charity with which He accepted suffering, His profound Love for Saint John, His "immutable goodness" in not refusing the traitor's kiss, and "the triumphant wyl" with which He went to meet His enemies. All too often in the Passion narratives Jesus is seen as one who endured with exemplary patience the worst malice of man. Here we catch a glimpse of a Saviour, motivated by love: "By thy inflamed desyre that thou had to redeme vs/haue mercy vpon vs".

The last work to be considered in this group is the Jesus Psalter. Although it is not based on the life of Jesus, its structure clearly places it in the same tradition as the Lady Psalter and the Rosary books. The preface to the Copland edition of 1529 recounts how the "xv pryncipal petycions... times repeted make also thries.L.". Each of the sections begins "Ihesu. Ihesu. Ihesu merci", "Ihesu. Ihesu. Ihesu. helpe me" and so on, and is to be repeated ten times. This opening leads into a number of personal requests, and all the sections end in the same way:

Haue mercy on the soules in purgatory for thy bytter  
 passyon I besече the/and for thi glorious name Ihesu.  
 The holy trinityte one very god haue mercy on me. Pater  
 noster. Aue maria.

After each group of ~~the~~<sup>five</sup> prayers occur two Latin biblical quotations, which are not translated.<sup>306</sup> The repetitive structure of the piece as well as its content emphasizes the merit of repeating the "glorious name of our sauour Ihesu", which is named "liiC. & lxxx.tymes" according to the Preface. This Psalter seems to have become popular at about the same time as the rosary devotions. It exists in several versions in fifteenth-century manuscripts.<sup>307</sup> Its earliest<sup>printed</sup> version seems to be by Copland, 1529, but it was popular later in the century among English recusants.<sup>308</sup> Its authorship had frequently been attributed to Richard Whitford,<sup>309</sup> but some of the manuscripts ~~may be~~<sup>are</sup> a little too early, and in view of Whitford's fondness for recommending to his readers his own and other suitable books it does not seem likely that he would have passed over the Jesus Psalter in silence had he written or substantially revised it. As so often in Whitford's books there is a note at the end giving practical advice as to how the psalter may conveniently be shortened,<sup>310</sup> suggesting that other writers were aware of practical limitations of time available for devotion.<sup>311</sup>

Despite the regular repetition within each of the fifteen sections of the Jesus Psalter there is no organized development of topics from one section to another, such as was ~~provided~~<sup>provided</sup> in the rosary books by the narrative of Christ's life. The various petitions express many concerns commonly found in late fifteenth - early sixteenth century devotional works. A number of petitions are moral in content, seeking help to turn from and protection against various forms of sinful delectation and

carnality. More specifically help is sought to repress the motions of the flesh in sloth, gluttony and lechery, and to be preserved from pride, anger, envy and covetousness – the seven deadly sins. One of the principal petitions asks "grace to fle yl company", and goes on to ask "Kepe me mouthe good lorde fro sclaunderous spekyng/lyenge/flyas wytnes berynge/cursyng/sweryng/vncharytable chydinge/dissolute laughyng/and wordes of vanyte"; it also reminds the reader that God hears and will judge all that is said. Other petitions encourage contempt of the world and its vanities, seek to recompense mis-spent years and ask help to use time virtuously. In a rather more positive vein assistance is sought to overcome temptation and "to perseuer in vertue" acceptable to Jesus. Among the virtues sought are patience in tribulation, obedience (especially to the doctrine and observances of the Church), to be constant and stable in faith, hope and charity. "Graunt me ye.vii.giftes of ye holy goost/the .viii.beatitudes/the.iiii. Cardynall vertues/& in receyuyng of the sacramentes deuoutly to dyspose me" is a petition which seems to betray the influence of popular catechetical teaching with its reliance on numbered groups of sins, virtues and other precepts, while on another occasion the beatitudes are paraphrased to form a petition.<sup>312</sup> Many of the petitions are moral in tone and are clearly intended to edify the reader and remind him of what he has learnt.

Two subjects touched upon by a number of petitions in the course of the work reflect common devotional concerns of the period: the desire to make a good death and the fear of hell and damnation. Although only one principal petition asks "Ihesu. Ihesu. Ihesu graunt me grace for too remembre my dethe", there is some reference to the subject in five of the

fifteen sections. Two seek protection from sudden death, and other prayers express the hope that the reader will keep his five wits until he dies, that he will have the protection of the sacraments, the help of his good angel, the mediation of the Blessed Virgin and the prayers of the saints at his end. In the face of the threat of God's vengeance, the strictness of His judgement, the torments of purgatory and the eternal damnation of hell such protection seems very necessary. On occasion the threat of damnation can have positive results, encouraging "the spirite of perfyte penaunce/contrycion/confessyon/& satysfacyon to opteyne thy grace/& fro fylthi sinne to purge me". There is frequent reference to the Passion, and bitter pains Christ suffered to redeem sinners. The sinner prays that Christ's merits may help to save him: "The merytes of thy meke pacyence thugh charyte & chastyte mytygate ye pronyte to synne & fraylte in me" and later in an effective set of contrasts Christ's virtues are set against the sinners faults:

Thi obedyence lord recompence for my obstynacy/thy  
abstinence for my superfluyte/thy mekeness thy  
pacyence for my pryde/yrefull hert & enmite. Thy  
charyte for my malyce/thy deuocion for my dulnes:  
thy loughce hert for myn vnkindnes/ Thy holy deth  
for my wretched lyfe & for al my misery. 313

Christ is not some remote source of grace, but a man whose virtues and sufferings are known to be available to help the soul towards salvation. Christ is addressed directly with a variety of requests relating to the soul's salvation:

The water & blode which ranne fro thy blyssed hert  
wasshe my soule fro synne & iniquyte/& purches to  
me abundaunce of grace faythfully to serue ye. O my  
lorde/my might/my lyfe/my syght/lede me/fede me/and  
spede me in the pylgrymage pf thys mortalyte...At ye  
hour of deth whan I shall be acused afore ye for deth  
yu suffred for synners haue mercy on me. Breke my  
frowarde hert & make it obedyent to the/fro sodeyn  
& vnprouyded dethe lorde preserue me. Grace to departe



wyth contempte of this worlde/& with ioyfull herte  
to come to the. 314

Earlier on the language of mystical writers had been used to express  
the hope of eternal life with Christ:

Ihesu confort me/& gyue me grace to haue my moost  
ioy & pleasure in the. Sende me heuenly meditacions  
goostly swetnes/& sauour of thy glory. Rauysshe my  
soule wt brennyng desyre to ye heuenly ioy there I  
shall euerlastyngely dwell with the. 315

The author is not, in general, striving after original thoughts  
or modes of expression. The topics are sufficiently familiar to  
encourage the reader to meditate upon them rather than leaving him  
fumbling with obscure meanings or seeking to impress him by verbal  
display. The <sup>repetition</sup> ~~repetition~~ and regular structure of the sections, together  
with the personal note of the petitions, provide sufficient unity to hold  
together what at first appears to be a random, even haphazard selection  
of topics within each section. The sections are not carefully developed,  
unified meditations on a single theme, but the petitions are nearly all  
concerned in some way with the soul's salvation; the threat of hell,  
personal sinfulness and lack of virtues threaten the soul's safety while  
hope lies in the merits of Christ. The Jesus Psalter provided a collection,  
a kind of rapiarium, of devotional topics which would have been familiar  
to any devout soul, religious or lay - again as with the rosary books  
there is no overt religious orientation - about the end of the fifteenth  
century. As if to emphasize this element of familiarity a number of  
well-known prayers in English are included at the end of Copland's 1529  
edition: among them "Adoro te Domine Iesu Christe", Richard de Caistre's  
hymn, "A prayer to Ihesu"<sup>316</sup> and a piece attributed to Gerson on  
confession. It is of interest that in the 1583 edition these miscell-  
aneous prayers are replaced by "a hoolsome doctrine, hovv to resiste and

ouercome the ghostly temptations of the Fiende", which is in fact by William Bonde.<sup>317</sup>

The rosary structure was sufficiently firm to contain the late medieval tendency to produce rather lengthy and shapeless meditations which often contained much elaborate description. The short sections of the rosary, usually grouped in tens, fifteens or fifties, contained sufficient detail to remind the reader of more elaborate descriptions of, for example, the crucifixion or of some ars moriendi book, and some of the brief descriptions are themselves quite moving. The form was adaptable: the user, religious or layman, could choose particular sections according to his time or inclination. The same form could also accommodate differing contents: some were structured on the life of Christ; others, such as the Jesus Psalter, were more exclusively personal in content although they did not ignore the benefits of Christ's life and Passion, just as the narrative works included personal petitions. The regular forms and frequent use of repeated words and phrases combined to provide a coherent and satisfying group of devotions. The familiarity of the contents and the regular repetition of form<sup>318</sup> provided a set of devotions which could be used by those with no meditative experience; it could be used when the soul was troubled, unable to concentrate or devoid of devotion,<sup>319</sup> or it could help to encourage a state conducive to the higher states of contemplation.<sup>320</sup>

The Passion of Christ.

The Passion of Christ was undoubtedly considered by medieval authors and the Reformers as the most important <sup>part</sup> of His life. Nicholas Love's estimation of the spiritual benefits of meditation on Christ's Passion was shared by many other authors:

it byhoueth to sette therto all the scharpnesse  
of mynde/with wakyng eygen of herte/putting away  
and leuyng alle othere cures and besynesse for  
the tyme/and makynge hym self as present in all  
that byfelle aboute the passioun and crucifixioun  
effectuously/besily/auisely/and perseuerantly. and  
nought passynge lightly or with tediousse heynesse/  
but with al the herte and goostly gladnesse. Wherefore  
if thou that redest or herest this book hast here  
byfore besily taken hede to thoo thinges that hauen  
ben writen and spoken of the blessid lyf of oure lord  
Jesu crist in to this tyme/ moche more now thou schalt  
gedre alle thy mynde and al the strengthe of thi soule  
to thoo thinges that folowen of his blessid passioun. 321

Love also mentions the two common requirements preparatory to any meditations, the need to banish all worldly thoughts from the mind and to concentrate upon the object of devotion. This concentration is the practice of the devotional present, and, in the case of devotion to the Passion, more often than perhaps any other form of devotion, it is assisted by visual stimuli: the crucifix, the imago pietatis, representations of Christ's wounds or the instruments of the Passion.<sup>322</sup> In XIII a-b many cases devout beholding of some such image, accompanied by the repetition of a few prayers, carries with it a substantial indulgence. To the numerous examples found in horae, prayer rolls and other manuscripts<sup>323</sup> may be <sup>added</sup> the one which occurs at the end of Bonde's Deuoute Epystle....for them that ben tymorouse...in Conscience. There, a scroll at the bottom of the cut bears a verse,

Vox xpi :	O man vnkynde	)	My paynes smerte
	Bere in thy mynde	)	
	And ye shalt fynde	)	Lo here my herte
	Me true and kynde	)	

324 XIII c

and around the border runs "The pardon for.v.pater nosters.v.aues & a crede wt pyteous beholdynge of these armes is.xxxii.M.&.iv.yeres".

Fewterer's The Myrrour or Glasse of Christ's Passion was the most substantial English work on the Passion of Christ to be printed during the 1530s.<sup>325</sup> It is an ~~eclectic~~ <sup>eclectic</sup> work, citing not only the usual authorities, saints Augustine, Anselm, Jerome, Bonaventura and Bernard, but relying heavily on more recent continental authors, Simone de Cassia (Fidati), Reinhardus de Laudenburg, and especially Jordanus of Quedlinburg and Ludolphus of Saxonia.<sup>326</sup> The instruction and information provided in the first five "particles" - nearly a third of the work's total length - gathers together a great deal of material which is to be found scattered in many other works. Despite its apparent organization into various lists and under separate headings there is much repetition. But just because it is derivative, this introductory matter is of considerable interest, providing an insight into widely held views about the Passion. The Preface, addressed to the Lord John Hussey,<sup>327</sup> makes it clear that Fewterer shared Love's view of the importance of meditation on the Passion: "no thyng is thought always more frutful, than the continnal [sic] meditacion of the passion of our lorde god Iesus Christ, for the exercyses of all other spirituall meditacions may be reduced and brought vnto this".<sup>328</sup>

The prologue provides a formal exposition of Exodus XXV:40-"Inspice et fac, secundum exemplar quod tibi monstratum est in monte"-which holds up Christ as an example to be followed and particularly stresses the way in which He suffered for man, which is to be acknowledged in penance and thankfulness. The first section which follows it is "an exortation/mouyng men vnto the meditation of the passion of Christe", a sustained



piece of emotional writing in the manner of the Stimulus Amoris and Suso's Orologium Sapientiae.<sup>329</sup> The reader is drawn into the description until he suffers with Christ, experiencing something of His physical pain and appreciating a little of His mental anguish. This sense of suffering with Christ was widely encouraged and took many forms. A person could relate his own suffering and adversities to those of Christ on the cross and offer them to Him,<sup>330</sup> or he could imagine himself present at the scene, witnessing Christ's sufferings and imagining the agony He endured;<sup>331</sup> and a few chosen souls received a visible sign of participation in Christ's Passion or experienced actual pain.<sup>332</sup> The former view tried to see Christ on the cross as ~~he~~ exemplar of all virtue - a point to be considered in more detail later on - the latter approach, the more common one in the later fifteenth - early sixteenth centuries, emphasized the visual - descriptive and emotive aspects of the Passion.

The second section of Fewterer's introduction considers "the meane and maner of the remembraunce of the passion of Christe". The main method is to "ordre hymselfe/as if Christe were to put all the paynes of his deth and passion in his presence" - the practice of the devotional present.<sup>333</sup> He is also to set aside all worldly business.<sup>334</sup> The Passion is to be remembered at least seven times a day, and if the heart is not moved to sorrow with Christ, the eyes do not weep for him nor the soul feel thankfulness, then Fewterer recommends that the inward remembrance be coupled with:

outwarde laboure of thy bodye/as exercysynge thyselfe  
in lyftyng vpon thy handes or thy syght/vnto the crucifixe  
in ofte knockynge on thy breste/in deuoute genuflexions/  
knelynge/or payne takynge/or in exercysynge thyself in  
takynge disciplines of scourging/or in other lyke outwarde  
exercise/and so continue vnto thou haue gotten the grace of  
teares. 335

The third practice suggests the ways in which the reader should learn to know Christ's Passion in his understanding and his affections, and to show it in his outward actions, his acceptance of poverty, rebukes and other adversities. The fourth particle is concerned with "diuerse maners and wayes to remembre Christes passion", and the six headings are the same as those used in the fourth chapter of the Stimulus Amoris.<sup>336</sup>

In the course of the fourth particle Fewterer introduces two images of Christ which were quite widely used in verse and prose, Christ as a lure or bait, and as a book; and although not used in The myrrour or Glasse of Christes passion it seems appropriate to link with these images some consideration of the Charter of Christ. According to Fewter<sup>er</sup> Christ of His infinite charity, by His bloodstained body, ~~an~~<sup>de</sup> Himself a lure to reclaim "those wylde hawkes and vnkynde people/the whiche by inordinate loue to the flesshe and the worlde/had taken theyr flyght from the hand and fauour of the noble fawconer our sauour Iesus".<sup>337</sup> The same image was used by the Protestant author William Thomas in The Vanitee of this World, 1549,<sup>338</sup> but there the lure is heaven although the complaint is still that men forsake Christ, despite all He has suffered for them, prefer<sup>r</sup>ing the pleasures of the world.<sup>339</sup> As used by these authors it is a physically precise image, and may well be derived from transactional views of the doctrine of the atonement, which saw Christ's sacrifice on Calvary in terms of a bait.<sup>340</sup>

The book image was more widespread in its application.<sup>341</sup> In Fewter<sup>er</sup> Christ is likened to "a boke layd open on the pulpyt of the crosse".<sup>342</sup> Two more elaborate versions of the image dating from the fourteenth century are to be found in Rolle's Meditations on the Passion

and in the monk of Farne's Meditation on Christ Crucified.<sup>343</sup> According to Rolle the wounds on Christ's body are like the red ink in which a book is written, whereas the monk of Farne sees Christ's wounds as the letters and <sup>the</sup> five chief wounds as the five vowels.<sup>344</sup> This emphasis on the wounds and the writing of the book is closely related to the concept of the Charter of Christ. The most elaborate exposition I have found of the book image is in Bishop Fisher's A Sermon verie fruitful, godly, and learned.<sup>345</sup> It begins with a straightforward application of the parts of the book to the position of Christ spread upon the cross,<sup>346</sup> then adds "Neuer anye Parchement skynne was more strayghtlye stratched by strength vpon the tentors then was this blessed body vpon yt crosse" - a figure found again in the Charter of Christ. Again, Fisher, like the authors of the Charter, Rolle and the monk of Farne, compares the wounds of Christ to the lines and the small red, black and blue letters of the text:

Besides these small letters, yet there was also greate Capytall Letters precyousle illumyned with Roset colour: Roset is a reade colour lyke vnto the colour of a Rose which colour that most precyous bloude, whiche issued out of his hands and feete, doeth represent vnto vs, with this most precious blud was illumined the fyue great Capital letters in this wonderful booke. I mean by these capital letters ye greate wounds of his body, in his handes, and in hys feete, and in his side|| These fyue great woundes were ingraued with sharpe & vyolent pennes, that is to say, the sharpe nayles, and the speare.<sup>347</sup>

Fisher is here surely drawing upon the Charter of Christ traditions, which lived on at least to the middle of the sixteenth century.<sup>348</sup>

The book, however, was not only something to be looked upon and learnt from; it taught the Disciple the virtues he should try to emulate, "þe wheche beþ writene and grauen in þis opune boke as þou seeste, þat is to seye, in mye bodye crucified".<sup>349</sup> Fewterer saw the open book of

Christ crucified as teach<sup>ing</sup> exemplary patience, meekness and charity and how to do penance. William Bonde also approached the image in this way. It is to the exemplary virtues of Christ that he draws the reader's attention in "an exercyse to be used before the ymage of pite":

And that thou mayst the sooner come to this holy sacrifice of teares of contemplacyon/lyfte vp thyne eyes reuerently/and loke on his blessed body/hangynge on the crosse/as on ye boke of lyfe/wherin thou mayst rede & lerne all maner of vertues/as obedyence/pacyence/mekenes/charite/mercy/& suche other. Lokyng thus on this boke/consyder all the course and processe of his holy lyfe/and compare his moost pure & innocent lyfe to thy croked maners and euyll customes of lyuyng...350

It is not surprising that it was this moral interpretation of what is to be learnt from the book, rather than the more emotional comparison of Christ's body and wounds to the parts of a book, which was taken up by Protestant authors. In the preface to The Lamentacion of a synner Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley, commends the author, Catherine Parr,<sup>351</sup> who did not disdain "to submitte herselfe to the schole of the crosse, the lernyng of the crucifixe, the boke of our redempcion, the very absolute library of Goddes mercy and wysdome"; and in the course of the work Catherine uses the image several times:

this crucifix is the boke, wherin god hath included all thynges, & hath morste compendiouslye written therin, al truthe, profitable & necessarye for our sauacion. Therefore let vs indeuor our selves to study this boke, that we being lightned wt the spirit of god, may geue him thanks for so great a benefit. 352

John Bradford frequently reminds his readers that "You learned Christ's cross, afore you began with A.B.C."—a reference to the child's horn-book<sup>353</sup> — which shows that the cross was as basic to the Protestant faith for what it taught, as it was to Catholic tradition for the devotion it inspired. It is significant that in the Protestant usage the more abstract word cross is preferred to the word crucifix, a visual symbol inseparably linked with



"papistical superstition".

The Charter of Christ, based on the legal form and using legal terminology, seems to have originated during the fourteenth century but to have been at its most popular during the fifteenth century.<sup>354</sup> Legal forms and formulae - wills,<sup>355</sup> charters<sup>356</sup> and proclamations<sup>357</sup> - were employed in a number of literary and devotional works during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries but here the deed is identified with the crucified body of Christ. In several versions, such as the "Carta libera" and "Long charter", there is quite detailed reference to Christ's wounds and the instruments of the Passion; and in B.M. ms. Addit.37049 the charter is shown nailed to the cross with Christ.<sup>358</sup> The most graphic description of Christ's sufferings ~~is~~<sup>is</sup> to be found in a description of the charter, rather than an actual charter. A general free Pardon or Charter of heuyn blys,<sup>359</sup> which purports to have been granted "in the yere of our lorde God M.iiii.C", is in fact taken from the popular fourteenth century compilation of religious pieces Pore Caitiff,<sup>360</sup> and it provided, in effect, an allegorical interpretation of the crucifixion.

Just as Fisher had compared the crucified and wounded Christ to the parts and writing of a book, so does this author liken Christ to the elements of the charter. The parchment of the charter was neither sheep nor calf but the body and skin of that spotless lamb Jesus Christ, "& there was neyther skyn of shep neyther of calfe/so sore & so hard strayned on ye teyntur/eyther harow of any parchement maker/as was ye bleesed body & skyn of our lord Iesu Chirst/for our lyfe streyned & drawen vpon the yebet of the crosse".<sup>361</sup> No scribe ever wrote upon animal parchment with "so hard & hydous pennys: so bytter so sore or

so depe" as did "the cursed Iues" on Christ's body with hard nails, a sharp spear and a crown of sharp thorns pressed down onto His head, "that lyghtly perced his brayne pan". The wounds upon His body, which numbered "fyue.M.CCCC.lccv" according to St. Anselm, are the number of letters with which the charter was written. Beneath all hangs the seal, its print Christ on the cross, the crucifix described in terms attributed to St. Bernard: the head bowed down, ready to kiss those who turn to Him, His arms spread to embrace them and His hands and feet nailed to dwell with them:

And he hath al his body spred abroad/to gyue himselfe  
holly to vs cleuyng to him and verely he hath his syde  
openyd/& his hert clouen for our sake: so yt without  
lettyng we must crepe into his hert & rest there thorow  
stedfast beleue & herty loue.362

Many of these details—the idea of Christ strained on the cross, the description attributed to St. Bernard, the thorns piercing His brain pan, the number of wounds and the idea of them as a refuge together with the flash of anti-semitism—are all to be found so frequently in the Passion literature of the later middle ages, that they might be described as commonplaces of the tradition. The visual and affective content is for the most part conventional, and even the more striking metaphors of Christ's body being stretched like parchment on the nails and spears as pens may be found in other works. The charter image, however, remains a striking one, and it is able to combine the physical description of the charter and the wounded body of Christ with some reference to the content, and the meaning and obligation attached to Christ's sacrifice. The charter confers a heritage which can only be claimed by virtue of right belief – the sentence "is our beleue" – by repentance and trust in God's mercy and His promises – the two laces of the charter from which

hangs the seal and by a virtuous life. Considerable emphasis is placed on the need for repentance and penance. To the penitent sinner Christ's wounds offer medicine and health, but to the sinner who does not persevere in virtue and falls back into the bondage of sin they spell sorrow. The reader is encouraged to have "the last day - ever afore our eyen", to refrain from all vice and evil covetousness and to trust in the merits of a good life. The second part of the printed work elaborates the teaching, warning the repentant sinner of the hell which awaits him, and contrasting that fate with the reward of the faithful in heaven. Its content is conventional enough; "despyse we all thynges that by vayne & fallyng", eschew vice and follow virtue. The lusts of the flesh and the deadly sins are condemned and the reader is warned to keep silence and speak but little. The teaching has little relevance to the conceit of the charter of Christ, but as a devotional work the second half helps to weight down the affective piety of the description of Christ's suffering and to add a number of conventional moral admonitions. The charter, the grant of heaven's bliss, is dependent upon the sinner's repentance, right belief, devout love and good living.

The Passion of Christ was widely regarded as the climax of His incarnate life and as of direct relevance to man's salvation. In the same way that men were encouraged to attend mass and see the sacrament by the promise of various rewards to be gained from so doing, the profits of meditation on Christ's <sup>Passion</sup> were also widely advocated. The author<sup>364</sup> of "A deuoute frutefull and goodlye remembraunce of the passion of oure sauioure Christ Iesu", which appeared in Certaine prayers,<sup>365</sup> refers, without enthusiasm, to those who have gathered together "diuerse commodities" which come from:

the diligent beholdynge of thys passyon/whereof is  
the sayenge of Albert in euerye mans mouth: that it  
is better to remembre the passyon of Christ once in  
oure lyfe all though it be but slenderlye/then to  
fast euerye daye a hole yere together: or to reade  
ouer the hole Spalter of Daud....366

Many authors, including Fewterer (who acknowledges his indebtedness to Reynardus de Laudenburg), Garade, Jordanus and the author of the Dialogue or communicacion betwene our sauour Ihesu Chryste and a synner,<sup>367</sup> include lists showing the profits which accrue from remembrance of Christ's Passion.

Fewterer gives one of the most comprehensive lists in the fifth particle of his introduction. The negative advantages of such meditation include preservation from the pains of hell<sup>368</sup> and from sudden evil, which is not further defined but which probably included sudden death, protection against temptation<sup>369</sup> and from the power of devils. It weakens the soul's propensity to vice, recalls those in error and purges the soul, and Garade claims "that the synner ofte tymes is conuerted therby/from his euyll".<sup>370</sup> The world-denying outlook of so much late medieval devotion is reflected in the way that recollection of the Passion teaches a man to set the world at nought<sup>371</sup> and makes him ready and glad to die. Garade and Jordanus<sup>372</sup> add that it will comfort a soul in death - a view shared by the ars moriendi writers.<sup>373</sup> On a more personal level remembrance of the Passion eases the pains of tribulation,<sup>374</sup> comforts God's warriors, brings peace between God and the sinner<sup>375</sup> and helps him to know God's will. The meditation also <sup>establishes</sup> ~~the~~ the righteous man in faith and good works, gives him hope, brings him grace and directs him in the way of eternal life.<sup>376</sup> The Dialogue particularly emphasizes the love, compassion and devotion



which recollection of Christ's sufferings and awareness of all He has done for man should arouse.<sup>377</sup> The fact that Christ here addresses the sinner directly helps to make the list of profits seem less materialistic and less in danger of sounding like a system of automatic rewards - a danger which besets the promised profits of patient endurance of tribulation or of faithful attendance at mass as well.

The opening of A glorious medytacyon,<sup>378</sup> for instance, suggests the kind of mechanical, numerically calculated reward which the promise of such profits could induce if applied uncritically. If a man says the requisite number of paters and aves daily, he will receive forty days' pardon every time he repeats them; if he reads them to another he is promised everlasting bliss;<sup>379</sup> "I shall kepe hym from all perylles and I shall defende hym from wyked spyrytes". The more materialistic rewards promised for meditation on the Passion are similar to those previously mentioned which were promised for devout attendance at mass. A late fifteenth - early sixteenth century prayer roll<sup>380</sup> provides two lists of profits of a kind which must have encouraged people to ~~beet~~<sup>place</sup> a distinctly superstitious reliance upon it. Beneath a picture of the wound of Christ's side<sup>381</sup> are drawn three nails with a crown of thorn<sup>s</sup>; the two outer nails each transfix a wounded hand, the central nail pierces a heart, and below<sup>are</sup> two wounded feet. The rubric reads:

Pope Innocent hath graunted to euery man and woman yt berith vpon them ye length of these naillesseyng daily .v.pater nosters.v.Aue marias.and.i.credo shall haue .vij.giftes.

These are: "he shal not dye no suden deth", "he shal not be slayne wt

no sward ne knyffe", "he shal not be poysoned", "his enemys shal not oncom hym", "he shall haue sufficient goodes to his lyues ende", "he shal not dye wt oute all the sacramentes of holy church", and finally "he shall be defendid fro al euell spiritus pestelens ffeuers and all other infirmytes on londe and on water". The other list is even more sweeping in its promises and does not even require the repetition of any prayers;<sup>382</sup> it seems to rely entirely on physical contact with the piece of paper. As might be expected the author of the "godlye remembraunce of the passion" in Certeine prayers denounces those who "caryed aboute them ymages/paynted papers/carued tables/crosses and soch other trifles", trusting to be saved thereby from fire, water and other perils. "For all theire politike meanes and studyouse ymaginacyons" those whose faith was unreformed cannot obtain the full profit of Christ's Passion as long as they seek it for "their owne priuate welth". Apart from the strong element of superstition which attached to such charm-like profits, any devout act which promised personal reward or increase of merits was condemned by the Reformers as being tainted by the pernicious doctrine of "works and merits".<sup>383</sup>

The Passion narrative, like the complete life of Christ, tended to crystallize into a series of separate scenes.<sup>384</sup> It was usually prefaced by the triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the Last Supper and other events of Maundy Thursday. Although the amount and selection of detail varied from work to work the following list represents a fairly standard selection: the agony in the garden, the arrest, a trial scene, the mocking, the crowning with thorns, an "Ecce homo" scene, and Christ's wrongful condemnation; the second part begins with the bearing of the

cross, the crucifying and Christ on the cross; there follow the deposition, a *pietà* scene and the entombment. Forming a kind of coda to this main sequence are the events of the resurrection and resurrection appearances, the Ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit. Several scenes were less than secure in the chronological sequences, especially the trial sequence (which varies in the Synoptic accounts) and the associated mocking, buffeting and crowning with thorns, which in some versions seem to happen all on the same occasion. Other scenes, especially those which lent themselves particularly to iconographical representation, such as the "Ecce homo" figure, Christ in distress<sup>385</sup> and the *pietà*, were operative outside the chronological scheme, and this was especially true of the *imago pietatis*, which had no fixed place in the narrative but was purely an iconographical symbol. If some events lent themselves particularly to artistic representation others were better conveyed by verbal description, such as the process of the crucifying of Christ and the cumulative effect of the pain and disfigurement of His wounds. The trial sequence is probably most effective in the drama, where Christ can be seen confronting Annas, Caiaphas, Herod and Pilate in turn; and although the prose treatises include various lamentations of the Blessed Virgin at the foot of the cross, or more commonly in a *pietà* setting, the lyric versions are usually more poignant and moving.<sup>386</sup> One must turn again to the lyrics to find the more subtle shades of emotion which may accompany the Passion scenes.<sup>387</sup> Finally it is worth noting that the prose and the verse narratives<sup>388</sup> are of mixed content. In addition to narrative description, most contain some legendary material and provide various explanations about the events, which sometimes refer to the ceremonies of

the Church but are more often of a didactic or hortatory nature.

The prose narratives may contain snatches of verse and they frequently include meditative material and prayers.

Cyclical representations of the Passion survive from as early as the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries,<sup>389</sup> but they seem to have reached the high point of their development around 1500.<sup>390</sup> It is not difficult to think of famous paintings of most of the Passion scenes mentioned above,<sup>391</sup> but no English work figures among them. The large mural cycles such as those by Giotto or Piero della Francesca have no counterpart in extant English art, nor have the numerous carved<sup>392</sup> and painted<sup>393</sup> altar-pieces of Austria and North Germany any significant parallels in England. Yet while England may not have produced artists of the same calibre as those in Northern Europe, and many productions doubtless suffered in successive periods of reforming zeal,<sup>394</sup> there are traces of mural cycles still to be found, tapestries seem to have been widely used, and many scenes were carved on roof bosses or friezes<sup>395</sup> and above all on the alabasters for which England was famous.<sup>396</sup> There was also stained glass, such as that at Fairford, Malvern and King's College, Cambridge<sup>397</sup> which frequently included Passion scenes. Series of Passion illustrations were often found in manuscript and printed Horae,<sup>398</sup> and although English woodcuts did not reach the standard of Jacob Cornelius or of Dürer,<sup>399</sup> Caxton, Pynson and de Worde did produce series of woodcuts,<sup>400</sup> and continental cuts were known<sup>401</sup> and copied in England.<sup>402</sup> There was then some contact between England and the continent, especially as far as woodcuts were concerned, and the descriptions given in English Passion narratives, which are themselves often translations of French or Latin originals, may occasionally be



indebted to Flemish or French works of art.

It would require a full-length study to cover all the variations of description, to discuss their sources and inter-relationships, and to do justice to the descriptive content even of the comparatively small number of Passion narratives which were printed in England between 1530 and 1540. It is clear that authors did not strive after originality in their choice of scene nor in its expression, yet within this broad similarity variations were sufficient to prevent verbatim repetition.<sup>403</sup> Writers did not seek to impress their audience by their literary skills but to stimulate their devotion. To this end the descriptions tend to emphasize the physical and spiritual sufferings of Jesus,<sup>404</sup> and  $\times \overline{\text{iv}}$  a they depend heavily on visual and other physical details and information about how things were done. The result was usually a description of intense, sometimes even harrowing physical detail, which focused exclusively on Christ's anguish perhaps supplemented by the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin or Mary Magdalene. Not infrequently such emotionally charged passages were allowed to stand alone, being neither applied for instruction or edification nor specifically related to any meditation or other devotion.

Descriptive emphasis tends to fall on those points of the narrative which enabled writers to describe and artists to depict the physical pains inflicted on Jesus, such as the scourging and the crowning with thorns. Chertsey's translation, A goostly treatyse of the passyon of Christ, like Fewterer's Myrrour or Glasse of Christes Passion, has a regular structure,<sup>405</sup> but it is much shorter and it is generally more concerned to instruct the reader than to present him with a vivid picture of the scene. In common with many authors<sup>406</sup>



Chertsey paraphrases Isaiah I:6, describing how Jesus was beaten "so horribly that from his heed to his fete there was on him no place hole" and the servants then "folded a crowne of thornes sharpe and prickynge whiche they put on his heed". Fewterer's version of the scourging shows how descriptive detail could be elaborated:

(Jesus) was bounde fast to a pyllar, whiche was so great and thycke that his armes & his handes myght nat compas it. And therfore the sauiours corrupt by many drewe out his armes with harde cordes: that all the vaynes of his armes appered out to the extremitie. And then those sauiours called in all theyr compaigney and our sauour Iesus so bounde and naked/they bette so cruelly with roddes/knotted whyppes and thorny rushes of the see: that they dyd teare the flesshe and drewe it away/so that his bones ware sene bare, and also greate gobettes and pecys of the flesshe hange vpon the scourges and whyppes. There stode naked before all the people: the most louely yonge man/eligant and shamfast, beautilous aboue all other men, speakynge not one worde/but as meake as a lambe dyd suffer pacyently the harde/sharpe and paynfull beatynges of those most vyle & cruell tormentours. That most innocent and tender flesshe, most pure and most fayre the floure of all mankynde was replete and full of strokes/blomes/woundes and brozers/he was wounded thorow out all his moste holye bodye, so that fro the toppe of the hed vnto the sole of his foote: there was none hole skynne. 407

He continues, citing St. Bernard, to describe how Jesus was loosed from the pillar, then bound with His back to it and beaten on His front and face - the position in which artists usually depict Him. The reference to the beauty and shamefastness of the naked Jesus<sup>408</sup> seems to be an unacknowledged ~~source~~ borrowing from the *Speculum Vitae Christi*,<sup>409</sup> while other details such as the reference to the pillar, often said to be cold marble,<sup>410</sup> and Jesus' being beaten to the bone,<sup>411</sup> occur in other works and may be counted as part of the common tradition. The description of the crowning with thorns is told briefly by Chertsey, more elaborately in the accounts of Simon, Bonde and Fewterer,<sup>412</sup> who attributes to St. Bernard the often quoted phrase that the thorns<sup>413</sup> pressed down onto

Christ's head "persid greuously in<sup>to</sup> the brayne panne and made it all full of blood"<sup>414</sup> and an unusually detailed version is given in "The Revelation of the Hundred Pater nosters".<sup>414A</sup> Chertsey puts in<sup>to</sup> a XIV<sup>b</sup> list<sup>415</sup> eleven of the pains which, according to late medieval tradition, Christ was believed to have suffered during His Passion. In most of the accounts the Jews are seen as "the fyers cruell tyrauntes & tormentours of our mercyfull lorde", who out of pure malice seek every means "to put Christ to the more payne".<sup>416</sup> Longland sums up:

He gaue his bodye for the to the Iewes to handle,  
to treate, to beate, to scourge, to turmoyle, to  
kyll, to flee, to crucifye, to do with it what they  
wolde: an' so dyde they, euen to theyr own dampnacyon,  
he gaue so hys bodye into theyr handes to redeme and  
bye the. 417

The event of the crucifixion is the culmination of this type of physical description. It takes two forms: a methodological approach giving a detailed account of what happens, or a static description of the crucified Jesus - the verbal counterpart of numerous devotional images of the crucifix. The Speculum Vitae Christi and Bonde's Pilgrimage of perfeccyon<sup>417A</sup> describes the two methods of crucifixion. According to the Speculum in the first the cross is already set up and Christ ascends a short ladder, turns His back on the cross and gives His hands to "tho wicked mynistres"<sup>418</sup> who had climbed up a longer ladder set up behind the cross and who were ready with nails and hammers. With the hands nailed the ladder is removed and the whole weight of Jesus' body, with the added pressure of "another harlot" drawing down His feet, is sustained by His hands.<sup>419</sup> The other method, whereby Christ is nailed to the cross as it lies on the ground, His XV<sup>a</sup> limbs being strained to reach the holes previously bored for the nails, is the one more usually described and illustrated in English works:<sup>420</sup>

Than the turmentours moost buystously extended & spred  
thy blessed body on the crosse/& began moost vtterly to  
shewe all theyr cruelnesse...moost violently they ioyned  
thy gracyous hande to the crosse/& smote in a great nayle/  
so buystous & harde/that thy moost precyous blode myght  
not yssue out/the nayle so fylled the wounde/&than after  
they toke ropes/and with all violence drewe the other arme  
to the palme of the crosse/& also smote in it another nayle:  
And lykewise with ropes they drewe thy fete so harde &  
strayte/and so naylynge them/that all thy vaynes & senewes/  
& ioyntes & bones of thy moost blessed body were so dissolved  
& losed/that they myght haue ben nombred & discerned.<sup>421</sup>

The quotation, "dinumeraverunt omnia ossa mea",<sup>422</sup> is frequently included  
in the description, which tends to concentrate on the stretching of  
Christ on the cross, the wounds of the great, blunt, iron nails and  
the jolt of the cross as it falls in to the mortice.<sup>423</sup>

One of the most detailed static descriptions of the crucified Jesus  
is to be found in the eighth revelation of Dame Julian's Revelations of  
Divine Love.<sup>424</sup> The same kind of realism is to be found briefly in  
Simon's Fruyte of redempcyon.<sup>425</sup> His source is St. Bridget's Revelationes  
I:x, which is also used in Bonde's more lengthy catalogue of the injuries  
done to the body, limbs, head and face of Jesus, where their aspect in  
life <sup>is</sup> compared to their present state: thus His face, which was so joyful  
to behold in life, is "now transfigured & deformed wt stremes of blode",  
His cheeks are "all bloo & wanne/wt buffettes & beatynges/&all discoloured  
with spyttynges", and His hair "now mixt with blode & dried by the wynde  
& sonne/&made styffe as a corde".<sup>426</sup> Lengthy descriptions of the Lord's  
physical state as He hung on the cross are not common. More often some  
occasional detail sounds an effective note of realism as it is pointed  
out to the reader how "his lymmes quake & tremble for payne"<sup>427</sup> or "how  
horryble was it to here the sounde of the hamerse stykyngye ye grosse  
nayles through skynne bone and senows".<sup>428</sup> These details usually point  
a more general exhortation to the reader that he should remember and

see in his mind's eye what Christ suffered and "haue therof grete compassyon"<sup>429</sup>.

Authors did not rely exclusively on physical description in their endeavour to convey something of what Jesus suffered. One author suggests that "yf thou canst not remembre the anguysshe of this payne/thou mayst pynche thy finger or some other parte of the body/yt by the felynge of thyn owne lytell payne thou mayst the better remembre the grete payne/that he suffred for the whiche yu were cause of".<sup>430</sup> At the other extreme from this trivial-sounding comparison is the attempt made in The myrrour of the chyrche to convey the anguish, pain and grievous sorrow of Christ. If one man were to bear<sup>in</sup> his body all the pain, sickness and sorrow of the world, it would be little or nothing compared to Christ's sufferings;<sup>431</sup> to live for 100,000 years and to die daily 1,000 times the death He died would be nothing in comparison to His pain. While on the cross Christ endured pain worse than that of hell itself: "he sayth hymselfe by Ieremye ye propheth. O vos omnes qui transitis per viam attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus surely there is none/or neuer was yet sorowe lyke yours".<sup>432</sup>

In addition to such comparisons there were several lists which included the spiritual and mental sorrows of Jesus in addition to His physical pains. One of the more compact summaries is given by the Monk of Farne,<sup>433</sup> who reminds the reader how Jesus was afflicted in all His five senses: "Thou dist see thyself crucified and hanging between thieves, thy friends deserting thee, thine enemies gathering round, thy mother weeping, and the corpses of condemned criminals strewn round about; whatever met thy gaze was a source of pain and sorrow, of horror



and dismay". The five-point list of the Legenda Aurea<sup>434</sup> includes the shame of death on Calvary, the unjustness of His accusation, the desertion of His friends, the tenderness of His body and the affliction of His five wits. Longland's sermon for Good Friday, 1536, also includes discussion of five things which augmented the pains of Jesus' Passion<sup>435</sup>. He dwells particularly upon the Person who suffered and those for whom He suffered. The motif of Jesus' nakedness found in a number of works helps to suggest something of His chasteness, His innocence and His physical vulnerability,<sup>436</sup> but Longland also reminds the audience that Jesus was creator and sustainer of the world.

Similarly a piece attributed to St. Bernard contrasts the estate enjoyed by Christ before His incarnation with His sufferings on the cross: "The heed that made aungels to tremble is perced", "The mouth that teche & ensygneth aungels/is made drynke vynayger & gall", and "The handes yt fourmed ye heuens ben stratched vnto ye crosse and nayled wt nayles".<sup>437</sup> Behind the reproach of Christ—"O my people, what haue I doon to the. haue not I doon ye good..."—there lies a threat, the day of Judgement, when the instruments of the Passion and the wounded Christ will accuse the unrepentant sinner.<sup>438</sup>

Prose authors do not seem to explore the more subtle feelings of Christ, His regret and sorrow at man's unkindness, which find fuller and more eloquent expression in verse laments,<sup>439</sup> such as Ye new Not borune mayd vpon ye passion of cryste.<sup>440</sup> The closest prose equivalent is to be found in a dialogue between Christ and a sinner.<sup>441</sup> In answer to the Sinner's questions about His sorrows, Christ describes the continual spiritual martyrdom He endured throughout His life, the sorrow of His fore-known Passion and the sufferings which His lovers would face, and the torment of His spirit, which came from

the superfluity of His love. The greater intimacy and personal involvement made possible in the dialogue form - Ye new Not borune mayd is also a dialogue, between Jesus and His mother - helps to suggest something of Christ's love for man and His sorrow: "I do the daily good, and ye dayly doste crucifye me, by this abominable lyuinge", "Thy synfull lyfe greues me more then dyd all the tormentes that were putt vnto me".<sup>441A</sup> Although late medieval devotion concentrated its attention on the physical, mental and spiritual sufferings of the Son of Man, the divinity of Christ, His prescience, the depth of His love and His work as Creator, Redeemer and Judge, was not entirely forgotten.

According to the dialogue, Christ mentions one other source of sorrow at His Passion, "the most sharpest darte and most bitter anguysshe of the blessed virgyn my mother was an excessive cause of all my dolorous paynes".<sup>442</sup> The Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, plays a vital role in the early part of Christ's life<sup>443</sup> and she is involved too in the events of His Passion. Several authors prefaced their life of Christ with some account of Mary's life,<sup>444</sup> and Lydgate's Lyfe of our Lady<sup>445</sup> was reprinted as late as 1531. Although traditionally the birth of Jesus was said to be painless, Mary was widely held to have foreseen her Son's sufferings from His birth.<sup>446</sup> A little later she has compassion upon His pain at His circumcision<sup>447</sup> and she experiences anguish over His loss in Jerusalem,<sup>448</sup> but it is during the Passion she suffers most, when Simeon's prophecy,<sup>449</sup> "a sword shall pierce through thine own soul", is fulfilled. Fewterer lists three reasons why "it pleased our sauyour Christ to haue his mother present at his passyon/ and there to suffer with hym in soule as he suffred in bodye":<sup>450</sup> that she might be involved with Him in reversing the condemnation of Adam and Eve;<sup>451</sup> that as Christ became

our Father through His Passion so because of her suffering "our blessed ladye myght be called our mother";<sup>452</sup> and finally "that after Christ: we al shulde honoure the gloriouse virgyn as our modre".

Longland, like Fewterer, openly acknowledges the subordination of the Blessed Virgin to her Son<sup>453</sup> in her role as mediatrix:

Afore the sone, thou haste his modre Marye. And to procure grace and mercy, to moue god to pytie, she dothe shewe to hir sone Christe, hir breste & pappes: the sone dothe shewe to his fadre, his syde and woundes: there can be no repulse, no denyall of our petitions, where are shewed and alledged so many tokens of loue and chastyte.<sup>454</sup>

The isolated, single-subject lyrics addressed to the Blessed Virgin, often based on secular models, cannot be expected to show the firm hierarchial frame of reference which is usually to be found, stated or implied, in the prose treatises.<sup>455</sup>

Some of the Passion narratives, the Speculum, Chertsey's Goostly treatyse, Simon and Fewterer, introduce the subject of the Blessed Virgin's compassion into the narrative and perhaps devote a separate section to her sufferings. Other accounts tell the sufferings of Jesus through the eyes of His mother. In neither case does the Mother's grief eclipse that of the Son's; rather it reflects and responds to His.

The point in the Passion narrative at which Mary is usually first introduced is where Jesus bears His cross towards Calvary. Simon and Chertsey refer briefly to His Mother's grief at this point. The Speculum Vitae Christi records Mary's prayer as she learns of her Son's arrest,<sup>456</sup> and then how she, St. John and the other women take a short cut so as to meet Jesus as He bears the cross and His mother is overcome by the sight.<sup>457</sup> Fewterer heightens the encounter: "Iesus seynge and consederynge her great heuynes: fell downe for sorowe and werynes vnder the crosse. And that seynge his moste alouynge mother: for sorowe

she fell to the erth as deade".<sup>458</sup>

Attention focuses on the Blessed Virgin as she stands at the foot of the cross. The hymn, "Stabat mater dolorosa",<sup>459</sup> is a justly famous expression of the Virgin's grief and of the author's desire to share her pains and to mourn with her. The chapter on Our Lady in the Stimulus Amoris begins "Fast by the cross of Jesus, stood Mary Virgin his mother".<sup>460</sup> It falls into two parts, the first describing how she was crucified with her son "in heartily compassion", and in the second the meditator pleads "I ask not but wounds" that he might share in the Passion of his Lord and Lady. Fewterer seems to echo the opening in his chapter "Of the passion that Christ had vpon his mothers sorowe".<sup>461</sup> He goes in to considerable (and repetitive) detail, pointing to the closeness of the bond between Mother and Son and the way in which she suffered with Him. He adds a separate section "Of the sorowe and compassyon of our ladye".<sup>462</sup> There he draws attention to the Mother's sense of helplessness, which together with her desolation at the loss of Her Son was frequently dwelt upon.<sup>463</sup> Fewterer holds up Mary as an exemplar to be followed, as she followed the way of Her Son, and he takes the opportunity to deliver a moral lesson on the need "to have compassion of the afflyccyon of our parentes, and to prouyde for them in theyr mecessityes".

Fewterer's treatment is detailed, but the brief indirect dialogue between Mother and Son recorded in the Speculum<sup>464</sup> is a far more moving expression of the love and concern of each for the other. Their concern is expressed in the form of a brief prayer to God, asking that the pains of Son and Mother might be eased, and commending the Beloved to God's care. In Chertsey's Goostly treatyse<sup>465</sup> Mary gives expression to a



much lengthier lament as she stands at the foot of the cross. She reflects on the apparent strangeness of God's judgement which would condemn His Son to the death of the cross:

Alas my dere sone....what haue ye done that I se  
you in this confusyon? What caused you to take the  
nature of man in your humble handemayd to susteyne  
so cruell dethe? Alas Haue I norissed you so  
tenderly to dampnacyon/namely in the floure of your  
chefe youthe and in your parfyte age whan I sholde  
moost haue inioyed your holynesse. Who shall now  
comfort me? or of whom shall I now haue ayed or socoure/  
is this the rewarde that you iewes of curresey (sic) yelde  
vnto my sone for the grete benefytes yt he hath done to  
you....How might I than enioye to tary amonge you/ or to  
beholde your vysages disteyned with rightuous blode/suffre  
me not dere sone to lyue after you right it is that I be  
not disceuered fro you by dethe/syth we haue lyued here  
togyder/delyuer me from these euyll and cruell iewes  
whiche thus hath put you to dethe. 466

She goes on to express the wish that she too might die and join her son in Paradise. Although it is unusually placed - the planctus Mariae usually follows the deposition or accompanies the burial - the contents are characteristic of the genre. 466A

The deposition, in which Mary frequently takes a part, and some kind of pietà scene are usually included in the Passion narratives. Simon and Fewterer tell how she held Jesus' body on her lap<sup>467</sup> - XV b-c  
the classic pietà position,<sup>468</sup> while according to the Speculum and Chertsey she takes Him in her arms. In the Speculum she gazes at her Son's wounds and weeps over Him; Chertsey and Fewterer heighten the scene describing how she kisses the wounds "tyll that her blyssed vysage/and her preçyous vestmentes were tatched and spotted with his moost preçyous woundes & the noble blode".<sup>469</sup> Fewterer is content to do little more than paraphrase the narrative of the Speculum, characteristically elaborating the expression of the Mother's grief.<sup>470</sup> Simon adds a description of the Lord's dead body which is derived from St.

Bridget's Revelationes,<sup>471</sup> but only in the Speculum and Chertsey does a planctus mariae precede the burial. In Chertsey's Goostly treatyse<sup>472</sup> Mary dwells particularly upon the separation she must endure and on the need for Jesus' body to be buried - "wolde to god it were his pleasure that I were buryed now with hym"-that the prophecy might be fulfilled and His sepulchre made glorious. This sense of expectation contradicts and to some extent invalidates the expressions of grief preceding it. The lament in the Speculum<sup>473</sup> is much more convincing. The Mother dwells particularly on the sorrow of the bodily separation, but her personal grief, though profound, is also restrained and tempered by her acknowledgement of the purpose for which He died, to "agen begge and saue mankind": "but ful hard/peynful/and dere is this bigginge: wher of neuertheles I am glad for the hele and saluacioun of men: but in thy passioun and deth I am ful harde tormented". Her faith is not made to seem easy by any reference to the Resurrection. Simon and Fewterer describe Mary's behaviour, which betokens her grief. In the Speculum her grief is dignified in its restraint and her faith is edifying. She appears not simply as a mother afflicted by the death of her innocent Son, but as the Mother of God who co-operates in the work of redemption.

There were a number of other works, apart from the Passion narratives, which included some consideration of the Virgin's sorrows. Since her sorrows are caused by the sight of the pains endured by Jesus these pieces tend to retell part of the Passion narrative from Mary's view, dwelling particularly on the physical torments of her son. In honor of ye passion of our lorde. And the compassyon of our blyssed lady moder of chryste, printed by Copland in 1522, contains ten sections which nominally cover the pains of the Blessed Virgin from the point at

which she first saw her son bearing His cross to the deposition and burial. In fact there is very little reference to Mary's sufferings. The work provides one of the most detailed accounts of the pains Jesus underwent and includes some harrowing descriptions of His appearance as well as a number of the kind of emotive details found in St. Bridget's Revelationes.

In view of the liturgical celebration of the Compassion of the Blessed Virgin it is not surprising to find that Our Ladyes Myrroure,<sup>474</sup> prepared for the nuns of Syon, contains in its rationale of the service for Friday an exposition of the Passion of Christ and the various sorrows of His mother. In the section on the Passion<sup>the pains</sup> of Jesus are described in some detail and they are answered by the sufferings of His Mother.<sup>475</sup> Thus, as His cheeks are reddened by blows and blood, "her chekes waxed pale", blood flows from Him at the scourging "And water of innumerable teres ranne oute of the vyrgyns eyne"; as she hears the sound of the hammer-blows nailing Jesus to the cross she falls to the earth as one dead, "And when the iewes gaue hym drynke galle & vyneger. The anguysshe of harte dryed so the tongue & palate of the vyrgyn. that she myghte not then meue her blyssed lyppes for to speke". Although concerned almost entirely with such external manifestations of pain and grief the lesson concludes with the reminder that Mary alone kept faith and knew that her son would rise again.<sup>476</sup> The liturgical connection is maintained in the "houris of oure Ladyis dollouris", from MS. Arundel 285, a translation from Jordan's Meditationes.<sup>477</sup> The seven verse quatrains describe Jesus' sufferings, which Mary hears of, follows, sees and in some cases feels: "The blud droppit down on his moder Mary"; and after He has been taken down from the cross the body is laid "with mony salt teir, In our Ladyis bosum".<sup>477A</sup> The affirmation

which concludes the hours—"And þe faith of Crist remanit in our Lady all-~~(Ane)~~" parallels the conclusion of the third lesson of the Friday service.

Following the meditations on The shedyng of the blood of oure lorde...seuen tymes the reader is invited to direct his attention "toward his sorowful moder/& beholde well her heuy chere & sorowfull contenance/& see how pyteously the teares renne out of her gracyous eyen & dystayne her bewteous vysage". The reader is to imagine her sobbing, wringing her hands and often falling swooning as she looks up at her Son hanging on the cross. Eight sorrows of Mary follow, in which she is addressed by such traditional epithets as Mother of Pity, Queen of Heaven, well of Mercy and Tree of Life, which were to be found in liturgical use. Like the lessons of the Friday service in Our Ladyes Myrroure these sentences place particular emphasis on Mary's care for the infant Jesus. She sees her Son given "bytter aysell and galle", "to whom thou were wonte to gyue swete virgynes mylke of thy blessyd breste", and she sees the limbs she had once swaddled cruelly pierced with nails. The contrast between the Mother's joy in and care for her infant son and her helpless sorrow as she witnesses His present sufferings are ably exploited in these sentences - and in some lyrics and verse laments - but the reference to her sad face, her sighs, sobs, tears and fainting which precedes the contrast is superfluous. The contrast suggests a deeper, more subtle sorrow than these physical signs of grief which have, in any case, already been described in the opening paragraph. The lament which follows again exploits the retrospective view, contrasting the way in which angels sang at His birth and the homage of the three kings with the unfriendly crowd which



clamoured for His crucifixion and used deceit against Him. The greater part of the lament is rather unusual in taking the form of reproaches against those who have slain their "connyng surgyne", "your wyse physycyen yt gaue lyff to the deed"<sup>477B</sup> and she accuses the Instruments of the Passion :

O ye vnkynde scourges nayles spere and Thornes/  
how durste ye perse the flesshe of your maker &  
lorde. O thou stronge & sturdy tree/for vnkyndnes  
also may I accuse the/why dydest thou not leue and  
put away thy naturall styfnes & bowe thy braunches  
to fauour & ease my dere sone all weryed wt sore  
payne & tormentes.<sup>478</sup>

Similar accusations are made by Mary in some lyrics<sup>479</sup>. In mood they seem not unrelated to the Improperia of the Good Friday liturgy,<sup>480</sup> and these reproaches sound far more dignified than the near-hysterical outpourings of personal grief to be found in many planctus Mariae pieces. Also, the references to the people and instruments which caused Jesus pain recall indirectly the events of His Passion without the need for the usual description of His sufferings, which would have interrupted the unity of this extended reproach. These pieces are as near as the prose treatises seem to come to any formal celebration of the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin which were to be found in verse and semi-liturgical pieces.<sup>481</sup>

Most of the pieces which describe Mary's grief during her Son's Passion and burial record, with varying degrees of detail, the physical manifestations of her sorrow such as her crying - "blude ran of hir eghen bright"<sup>482</sup> - wringing her hands, "I hadde loste mye voys for crynge & sorowyng" - and her frequent faintings. The emotionalism of the scene is further heightened by such acts as "whanne I knowde fynde none oper confort, with a grete liste I kyssede þe hote blode þat droppede downe

into the erpe owt of þe wondes of mye der sone, in so moche þat þe moder face was alle blodye of þe slayne sones blode",<sup>483</sup> or the kissing of Jesus' wounds as He lies in her arms before burial. Many of these actions are repeated in the Digby "Burial of Christ",<sup>484</sup> which includes lengthy and emotionally loaded lamentation by the Blessed Virgin. The lamentacyon of our lady<sup>485</sup> represents Mary as fainting with great frequency and indulging in such extreme grief that her behaviour seems unbecoming. For instance, on hearing of Jesus' arrest:

whan these tydynges were brought to me it was the  
begynnyng of the nyght/& the derkenesse came aboute  
me that I wyst neuer wheder I went/& mannes helpe had  
I none but as I laye al that nyght on the erth wepyng  
& cryenge that heuen myght be fylled therwith/& all my  
hous I wette with my wepyng of myn eyen; 486

and the next day it is only with difficulty that she can go in search of her Son, "for feblenes of my body soo sore I had beten it on the nyght before". After news is brought by Mary Magdalene of Jesus' arrest Mary breaks into laments, bewailing the loss of her child to Gabriel.<sup>487</sup> She hears report of Jesus' "lokyng" as He was led from one judge to another. She sees Jesus exhibited to the people - an "Ecce Homo" scene - and suffers the opprobrium of other women as the thief's mother. The piece concentrates on two brief dialogues between Mother and Son, the first as Jesus bears the cross when she begs to die with Him, the second as Christ hangs on the cross. He explains to her why He suffers thus, "to helpe mannes soule & to bye the soules out of payne that were lost for synne", begs her to leave off weeping, and declares "I shall ryse the thyrde day". Unlike the Speculum Mary seems here to have no part in or knowledge of the redemptive work of her Son: "I the wretched moder wende neuer to have seen this sorowe

of the nor these sorowes haue suffred for the/but I wende for to haue had many ioyes & neuer to haue departed for the". She is certainly not seen as the only one to have kept faith until the Resurrection. It is hard to see in this weak hysterical woman the Mother of God.

The picture of the Blessed Virgin indulging in unrestrained grief and hysterical behaviour seems to have been a late medieval development.<sup>488</sup> There is little apparent edification to be found in such scenes. But in an age of highly wrought emotions, where ready tears were widely attested and expected,<sup>489</sup> these scenes were the unmistakable demonstration of the extent and depth of Mary's sorrow. External behaviour of table,<sup>490</sup> in general conduct<sup>491</sup> at church and in devotion, counted for so much that it was necessary that her grief should be seen to be more extravagant than that of other pious mourners. Since the greatness of her love for Jesus caused her such intense suffering<sup>492</sup> the reader may, by contemplation of her sorrow, learn of her love, receive the "Inwarde wounde of sorowfulle compassion",<sup>493</sup> and so learn to love Jesus for himself:

Ye that can not wepe, com lern at mee!  
Keping this Crucifixe still in your mynd! 494

The more hysterical manifestations of grief are also characteristic of and perhaps more appropriate to Mary Magdalene. She brings tidings to the Blessed Virgin, mourns with her and attempts to comfort her in a number of pieces,<sup>495</sup> but she also has her own part to play in preparing Jesus' body for burial; she washes His feet with her tears.<sup>496</sup> Rather surprisingly there is no reference to this well-known episode in the highly emotive verse narrative The complaynt of Mary Magdaleyne.<sup>497</sup>

This is set at the empty tomb early on Easter Day and it is essentially a lover's lament; Mary mourns the loss of "my turtell doue", "my most excellent paramour|Fayrer than rose/sweter than lylly flour". While much of the complaint is occupied by emotional lamentation expressing her sorrow<sup>m</sup>, her sense of desolation and her desire to find her Lord again, she also, as in the Digby "Burial of Christ", recalls the events of the crucifixion. She describes Jesus' sufferings and her own reaction to them:—

Than kneled I downe in paynes outrage  
 Clypynge ye crosse within myn armes twayne  
 His blode dystylled downe my vysage  
 My clothes eke the droppes began to steyne 498—

and the seven sorrows of His Mother. She also details the insatiable <sup>xvi</sup> vengeance of the Jews, making them appear more monstrous than usual: "ye Iewes worse than dogges rabyate". Towards the end she makes her will, asking to be buried in the sepulchre beneath the inscription: "Here wt in resteth/a gostly creature|Christes true loue/Mary Magdaleyne",

And in token of loue perpetuall  
 Whan I am buryed in this place present  
 Take out my hert/the very rote and all  
 And close it within this boxe of oynment  
 To my dere loue/make ther of a present, 499

Mary Magdalene was widely regarded as the perfect penitent,<sup>500</sup> and as the forgiven sinner she was a source of hope to the repentant sinner who confesses his sins and seeks to die in the love of Christ; for this reason she was sometimes pictured in ars moriendi scenes.<sup>501</sup> The legend of her life was widely known in the later middle ages<sup>502</sup> and the cult of her tears became very popular towards the end of the sixteenth century among recusant authors.<sup>503</sup>



Prayers and Devotions associated with Christ's Passion

The distinction between narrative description, meditation and prayer is an extremely fine one in devotional literature. The narrative Speculum Vitae Christi, for instance, contains a number of devout contemplations; Rolle's Meditations on the Passion and several of the rosary pieces are essentially narratives divided into prayer sequences by the addition of formal introductions and concluding "Paters" and "Aves"; or the narrative may be divided according to the seven canonical hours. Some narratives add distinct, separable prayers at the end of each chapter. These nearly always make some reference to the episode narrated and carry through a word or idea from the narrative into the personal petition. The prayers at the close of each chapter in Simon's Fruyte of redempcyon are loosely structured and variable in length; many of the personal petitions are concerned with the desire to make a good end and the hope of heaven:

O swete Iesu hertely I praye<sup>the</sup> for all the woundes of  
thy precyous body/& for the feruent anguysshe whiche  
thou suffred on the crosse to be there as a man forsaken  
of god/for that god sholde not forsake vs eternally/and  
for the bytter wepynges whiche yu wepte on the crosse for  
vs wt dolefull cryenge for huge bytternes of sorowes and  
ardent desyre of charite/forsake me not meke Iesu at my  
laste ende/but receyue me to thy mercy and saue my soule  
that thou hast bought so dere. 504

Although they are longer, with more elaborate introductions and more detailed descriptions of Jesus' sufferings, The .xv. oes,<sup>504A</sup> perhaps the most widely known Passion prayers in England during the early sixteenth century, are very similar in tone and structure. However, the prayers which conclude each article of the second book of Gararde's Interpretacyon and sygnyfycacyon of the Masse and the articles of

Fewterer's Myrrour or Glasse of Christes Passion are more highly organized, regularly employing a collect-like structure. The prayers of Fewterer's Myrrour ~~were~~ printed separately as Deuoute prayers in englysshe of thactes of our redemption by Robert Redman, probably at about the same time.<sup>505</sup> The narrative content of each prayer details some event of the Passion, and the personal petitions are generally appropriate to the episode commemorated. Whereas emotional description and the stimulation of the reader's feelings and compassion seem to be the main purpose of the XV.Oes and Simon's prayers, and the personal petitions are both limited in subject and rather perfunctory, in Garaðe and Fewterer the narrative element is not so emotionally loaded and the personal petitions are given more emphasis and range over a greater number of topics. The long central section of sixty-five prayers in Deuoute prayers in englysshe is, in fact, translated from the Meditationes Iordani,<sup>506</sup> which were printed by Pynson in 1513<sup>507</sup> and which seem to have been known among the brethren of Syon.<sup>508</sup>

In addition to these set prayers and distinct contemplations, late medieval devotion to the Passion was intensely felt and deeply personal. The fervent tone and intimate personal address to Jesus characteristic of mystical works such as the Orologium or Stimulus Amoris is found too in shorter works such as The Rosary of our Sauyour Iesu and The.xv.oes, and in parts of the Speculum, Chertsey's Goostly treatyse and Fewterer's Myrrour. Numerous rhetorical devices were employed by these authors to heighten the emotional impact and involve the reader more deeply.<sup>509</sup> Many of the earlier chapters of the Stimulus amoris are written in the first person, while Dame Julian's Revelations provide a first-hand account

of what she witnessed. The introduction to each of Rolle's Meditations on the Passion and the opening of every chapter of Simon's Fruyte of redempcyon begin with a personal act of thanksgiving—"I yeld to þe þankynges" or "I laude and gloryfye the lorde"—which helps to make the ensuing description a personal act of commemoration. The use of dialogue in the Orologium and the Dialogue betwene our sauour Ihesu Chryste and a synner places the reader in the position of the Disciple or the Sinner, and in the latter piece the sinner addresses Jesus directly as He hangs upon the cross. Similarly nearly every type of petitionary prayer addresses Jesus directly, from the rather prosaic four pages of A deuoute Intercessyon and prayer<sup>510</sup> to the brief and immensely popular "Lorde Iesu Christe sonne of liuing god, set thy holye passion, crosse and deathe, betwene thy iudgement and oure soules".<sup>511</sup> The individual addressed his needs and aspirations to an intensely real Person, the epitome of suffering humanity, seen on the Cross or in the composite Image of Pity.<sup>512</sup>

In addition to the prayers and contemplations related to the Passion, the widespread practice of the devotional present, and intense personal devotion to Jesus, there were a number of more specific devotions connected with various aspects of Christ's Passion. A number attached themselves to the physical places and things mentioned in the narratives. From the fourth century onwards pious Christians had shown a desire to visit and see for themselves the places and objects associated with Christ's life and Passion.<sup>513</sup> By the second half of the fifteenth century there was a regular pilgrim industry and among English pilgrims to leave accounts of their travels were William Wey and Sir Richard Gylforde.<sup>514</sup> Those who preferred a more romantic survey doubtless

turned to the legends of Mandevilles Travels.<sup>515</sup>

In the treatises references to the places visited by these pilgrims, such as the judgement hall, Pilate's house or Calvary, are given no significance beyond their setting, except for Calvary which is seen to afflict Jesus's senses. There are occasional references to "al þe steppis and pacis þat þou yede"<sup>516</sup> or "Thy fete steppes as thou for the yode were seen through she dyng of thy blode".<sup>517</sup> In his article on "Howe Christ was led vnto Golgotha" Fewterer concentrates on an allegorical explanation as to why Jesus died outside the city and the shameful treatment He suffered on His way to death. The concluding prayer makes brief general mention of the way:

O Iesu which for me wolde be led vnto Golgotha to  
be there crucified: lede me in the pathe of thy  
commaundementes, that I may folowe the steppes of thy  
passion with the holye women and wepe vpon myselfe  
the miserie of my frayle condicyon.<sup>518</sup>

At the end of the chapter he notes that Jesus bore His cross for 666 paces and that it was 50 paces from the bottom to the summit of mount Calvary.<sup>519</sup> Doesburgh printed a brief devotion on "the nombre of <sup>the</sup> sore steppes of oure lorde the whiche hy wente in his passion", and counters any challenge of authenticity by declaring that "it hath hondred tymes bee more and gretter than men there of can writte".<sup>520</sup> This curiosity about the number of paces Christ covered, like the interest in the number of His wounds,<sup>520A</sup> was, on the one hand, an aspect of the precise realism which writers strove after in their descriptions of the Passion and, on the other, part of the more general fascination with numbers, especially their symbolic significance.<sup>521</sup> The most precise reference to what was later to become the Stations of the Cross seems to be in



Chertsey's Goostly treatyse, where he tells how the Blessed Virgin, St. John and the other Marys returned to Jerusalem after the Burial: "in the waye they shewed the places/in the whiche our lord Iesu Christ hadde ben euyll entreated/and often tymes they retourned agayne towarde the crosse sayeng/here he was stryken/here he might no lenger bere the crosse/here he commaunded vs to wepe no more...".<sup>522</sup> The Speculum Vitae Christi also seems to suggest that the journey back to Jerusalem was made in the consciousness of what had happened on the way to Calvary, but it chooses to dwell particularly upon the Blessed Virgin's veneration of the Cross;<sup>523</sup> "sche was the firste that honoured the crosse". The cross was the most obvious of all the instruments of the Passion; it was widely venerated,<sup>524</sup> and legends concerning its origin, composition and history were numerous.<sup>525</sup>

Other symbols of the Passion were frequently illustrated, either in an imago pietatis setting<sup>526</sup> or as part of a church's decoration, carved on the roof bosses, especially over the chancel, or on bench ends.<sup>527</sup> The instruments of the Passion lent themselves particularly to iconographical representation of a schematized kind, and were often illustrated on shields held by angels or as a heraldic composition in the arma Christi shields.<sup>528</sup> However, they were also referred to in Passion lyrics, narratives and devotions. In art and literature reference was made more often to the instruments which came into closest contact with the Lord – the crown of thorns, the cross, the nails and the vernicle; but other objects, especially those of which relics were claimed to remain such as the seamless robe, the column of the scourging, the scourges, sponge and lance are frequently included.<sup>529</sup> Nearly all the instruments portrayed, with the exception of the vernicle, are either mentioned in the Gospel accounts

or, like the column of scourging, the nails, hammer, ladder and pincers, may be inferred from them. The "instruments" were not confined simply to objects but included pictorial references to a number of events: the kiss of Judas; the smiting hands and spitting faces of the Jews, who also plucked out His hair.<sup>530</sup> It is surprising that in neither art nor literature was any obvious attempt made to detail the instruments in chronological order or to use them as a mnemonic summary of the Passion narrative. The instruments were undoubtedly thought of as relating to more general Passion devotions, but there seems to have been no desire to relate devotional objects or stimuli to the chronological narrative. Despite the practice of the devotional present the Passion narrative was a historical account; the instruments of the Passion, like the *imago pietatis* or the *pietà*, were present devotional images lifted out of a strictly historical context.

In narratives, lyrics and devotions the descriptions of some of the instruments tended to become stereotyped. Thus the pillar of scourging was thick and of cold marble; the thorns of the crown were "not of ye commune thornes/ but of ye moost harde & tough sharpe thornes/ called the *lunkes* of ye see"<sup>531</sup>; while the nails were said to be of iron, large and in some versions blunt.<sup>532</sup> There were a few lists of the instruments to be found in devotional literature,<sup>533</sup> but perhaps their most effective setting is when Christ is shown them before His crucifixion on Calvary:

Where anone as thou were comme/ thou myght se (for the encreasement of thy payne) all the instrumentes & armes of thy blessed passyon. There wanted nothyng/ but all was prest & redy/ that myght make or helpe for thy confusyon: The buystous nayles/ the hammer/ the pynsons/ the speare/ the ropes/ the ladder/ ye sponge/ & the gall/ with all other instrumentes/ whiche they vsed in theyr moost cruell tyranny. 534

Apart from their Passion setting, the instruments also occur with some frequency in connection with the Last Judgement, where they reproach and accuse the sinner.<sup>535</sup> The most elaborate showing of the tokens of the Passion is in Doesburgh's Lytel treatyse the whiche speketh of the .xv. tokens, where fifteen instruments, each illustrated by a woodcut, are shown in turn to those guilty of various sins, with an appropriate moral comment, usually attributed to a church father. Thus the column of scourging is shown to the unmerciful, the crown of thorns to the proud, the lance to the angry, the nails of His hands to the covetous and the nails of His feet to those who preferred dancing to the remembrance of the Passion: "And therfore the deuyll shall daunce wyth them in hell."

And at the syxte tyme shal hi shewe yt glorious Crosse  
to them yt haue not be pacient in this worlde.& haue  
wolde not suffre nothinge fore the loue of our lorde.  
Gregorius sayde to them ¶ Si illic... Desire we ye  
swetenes of yt paradis. Than is it of nede that wea haue  
bitternes in this worlde. 536

Here the instruments receive a basically moral interpretation; in Garde's Interpretacyon and sygnyfycacyon of the Masse and Bonde's Meditatyons for goostly exercyse some of the priest's vestments are said to betoken various instruments: the cloth of the blindfolding, the white garment, the purple robe and the ropes with which He was led and bound.

The instruments are illustrated, described and made the basis of brief personal prayers in a series of devotional verses found in several manuscripts<sup>537</sup> and printed with a number of other pieces by Richard Fakes in A glorious medytacyon Of Ihesus Crystes passyon.<sup>538</sup> The list is for the most part conventional except for the inclusion of the

pelican,<sup>539</sup> and more chronological than most, although the spitting Jews seem oddly misplaced after the ladder and the pincers, instruments of the Deposition. Although they are in verse the prayers are of the same general type as Garade and Fewterer, recalling the event connected with each instrument and adding a petition for some virtue suggested by the episode:

The crowne of thorne on thy heed fast  
 Thy heere to torne/thy skynne all brast  
 Lorde kepe me from payne of hell pytte  
 Neuer to deserue it by mysspent wytte.  
 To the pyller lorde also  
 with a rope men bounde the so  
 Herde drawne and strayed fast  
 That synewes from the bones brast  
 Lord lose me of bandes in dystresse  
 Though I am vnkynde ayenst kyndnesse.<sup>540</sup>

The use of illustrations and verse would presumably appeal to the same kind of audience as the illustrated rosary books, such as that among the Copland tracts at Blair's College. As with the rosary books, looking at the illustrations was an integral part of this devotional exercise: "Of grete synnes that I haue do| Lorde of heuen forgyue them me.| Thruugh vertu of yr fygure that I here se".<sup>541</sup>

In Doesburgh's treatise and A glorious medytacyon the instruments seem to be illustrated and described as a stimulus to devotion and virtue, and not as objects worthy of veneration in their own right. Yet, even though England possessed comparatively few relics of the Passion, there is no doubt that there was a tendency to venerate them. At the conclusion of the fifth chapter of The Rosary of our sauour Iesu, for instance, the author prays:

that by the remembraunce of thy innumerable paynes I  
 may lerne ye vertue of scylence/pacyence/& obedyence.  
 All workes of penaunce/bothe goostly and bodyly/gladly  
 to suffre for thy holy name/and that I may worshyp that



blessed crowne of thorne & scourge/that pyller &  
ropes that were consecrate in thy blessed blode....542

To those who lacked theological training this must have sounded like an open invitation to idolatry. Fewterer warned against the tendency to focus devotion upon the external objects associated with Christ's life and Passion:

For yf the nayles that persed his handes and feet  
were sanctified and called holy by tochyng of his  
blessed membres/how moche more then shulde our  
reasonable thoughtes whiche cleue fast to Christe  
crucified by continual or ofte remembraunce of his  
passion be called holy. 543

Protestant authors made a similar plea that devotion should go beyond the external objects to follow the living example of Christ:

...we wolde be wonderfullye well contente, to handle the  
table at whiche Chryste dydde sytte, the garmentes or  
vestures he vsed, or other lyke reliques, beyng as consecrate  
with his holye touchynges: muche better me thinke we ought  
to be apaid to handle afflictions, as reliques whiche besydes  
that they were oft halowed by his most holy touchyng, be  
also commaunded to be fingered of vs, specially seigne yt  
more rewardes, & merites come by the handeling of them,  
than by ye afore named. 544

As in the case of images, relics were believed by many to have independent powers, and popular belief concerning them must often have tended towards superstition.<sup>545</sup> External forms seem to have assumed an unduly important role in late medieval popular religion, with its stress on the observance of due forms, ceremonies and behaviour, and the tendency to venerate relics and images alike to excess suggests an obvious limitation of such externalism.<sup>546</sup>

The veneration of relics and images nearly always involved pilgrimage. Very few travelled as far as Sinai or Jerusalem to see the holy places for themselves; a much larger number probably sought to make the journey to one of the great English shrines at Canterbury or Walsingham or to see

the roods at Boxley<sup>547</sup> or Bromholm<sup>548</sup> or the Holy Blood of Hayles.<sup>549</sup>

The pilgrimage motif was widely used in medieval literature – for example Deguilleville's Pilgrimage of the Life of Man and Bonde's The pilgrymage of perfeccyon – where it conveyed something of the quality of man's life, its shortness, temptations and tribulations, against an external perspective.<sup>550</sup> This view the Reformers accepted.<sup>551</sup> The Lollards had, however, attacked pilgrimages as idolatrous and superstitious;<sup>552</sup> and their criticisms were taken up, in very different styles, by the satires of Erasmus<sup>553</sup> and in the more outspoken condemnations of Protestant authors.<sup>554</sup> Apart from the way in which the credulous and superstitious were deceived into parting with their money<sup>555</sup> there were two main criticisms. The first concerned the nature and status of the relics and images. Pecock had declared that "God is lyk presentli euerywhere, and therfore he is lyk ready for to geue hise gracis and giftis euerywhere, whereuer a man sechith after hem; and therfore no place in erthe is holier than an other place is".<sup>556</sup> This view challenged the whole meaning of pilgrimages on theological grounds, but it undoubtedly overlooked the possible devotional benefits of a religious journey, especially if the pilgrim was accompanied by other devout souls, and the special atmosphere and different ceremonies of worship at the shrine, which might stimulate the faith of some.

Protestant authors, given suitable safeguards, were prepared to "alowe pylgrymages and oblacyons very expedyent in the syght of god/& profytable to the soule/so that it be done accordynge to the lawe and wylle or pleasur of god".<sup>557</sup> The other main criticism reflects the lollard-protestant preference for practical religion; time and money could be

more profitably spent by reading the Bible, hearing godly preachers and especially by relieving the poor.<sup>558</sup> Thomas Cromwell's support for moderate reform and the destruction of numerous images in the last few years of the decade would further have checked the social pilgrimage.<sup>559</sup> Again, those of reformed views were unlikely to make provision <sup>in</sup> their wills for pilgrimages, which had traditionally been considered meritorious.<sup>560</sup> Gnapheus, who was extremely hostile to the traditional trappings of religion, boasts: "there is not so much resorte to the bloude of Hayles, oure lady of Walsyngam, to this or that sainte as ther hat bene: By reason the myrakles haue not now so much fayth geuen vnto them".<sup>561</sup> As much as reformed views one is tempted to see increasing education as a means of lessening the credulity and superstition upon which much popular pilgrimage-going was based.<sup>562</sup>

Devotions associated with the Blood and Wounds of Christ.

Reverence for the Holy Blood of Christ had pre-Christian antecedents in the almost universal tendency to identify blood with life.<sup>563</sup> In Christian theology the blood of Christ is most obviously connected with the sacrament of the altar, suggested iconographically by the chalice in which the blood from His wounds is caught, on the Cross or from the mystic wine press.<sup>564</sup> The verbal equivalent of this image is to be found in a verse by Robert Copland following The doctrynnall of mekenesse:

O heuenly folke and good  
which lyst for to take payne  
To taste of this swete flode  
which on ye rode dyd straine  
In your hertes let remaine  
Thy swete tast & sauoure  
Of that heuenly lycoure.

Out of that doulcet well  
To sowles con ortatyfe  
Moost reuthfully dyd swell  
The very streame of lyfe  
To vs restoratyfe  
Whice payd ye hole raunsom  
For thy heuenly kyngdome

Let in your hertys degout  
yt spryng of lyfe most swete  
that from god hert did spoute  
And from his handes & fete  
And thus wt grace replete  
Ye may be full sure  
From all mysaventure. 565

Apart from the pilgrim's veneration of the Holy Blood, which was ridiculed or condemned by several humanists and reformed authors<sup>566</sup> and which, even to the orthodox, raised problems concerning the physical survival of Christ's blood after the Resurrection,<sup>567</sup> the only devout treatise to provide any meditations on the subject was A contemplacyon or medytacyon of the shedyng of the blood of our lorde Ihesu Cryste at



seven tymes.<sup>568</sup> The seven occasions upon which the contemplation focuses are the circumcision,<sup>569</sup> Christ's bloody sweat, the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the renewed bleeding of His wounds when His clothes were pulled off, the nailing of His hands and feet to the cross, and finally the piercing of His side. The seven articles<sup>570</sup> are mainly descriptive, and the reader is repeatedly invited to "thynke on thou sawest" Jesus, to behold Him and to remember all that He endured. The descriptive details are precise and vivid. Jesus is to be pictured,<sup>?</sup> for instance, in the Garden: "thynke as thou sawest hym knelynge on the grounde holdynge vp his holy handes/lyftyng vp his face to heuen with the moost pyteous chere & rufull contenaunce that yu canst ymagyne". As the thorns are pressed down on His head until they pierce the brain "he shrynketh his necke in to his sholders"; and again His physical reaction is noted when His clothes are pulled off Him re-opening the wounds, "he shrynketh trembleth & quaketh/& stoupeth lowe downe in all his body". The reader is reminded of the physical contrast between the past beauty of His appearance and His present disfigurement,<sup>571</sup> and in addition to seeing Jesus' sufferings he hears His sighs and groans as He is stretched on the cross: "it may seme to the that yu herest his Ioyntes to cracke & the senews to braste in sondre". On occasion Jesus faces the reader more directly:

amonge all thyse paynes & sorowes he lyfteth vp  
his eyen & loketh vpon the in token of loue. As  
who sayth I loue the so moche yt I wylfully suffre  
this payne for the/& am redy to suffre more yf it  
be put to me. 572

A little later<sup>573</sup> He addresses a substantial reproach, nominally to the Jews, but in fact it is applicable to any sinful Christian reader.

The conditions of the meditation are the usual ones, the need "to withdrawe our mynde & wyttes fro all outwarde thynges & besynes as moche as we may" and to concentrate on the subject of devotion. At the beginning two reasons are given why the reader should remember Christ's sufferings, "that our loue may be the more feruent to hym" and we "may for his loue pacyently suffre trybulacyons & dyseases in this worlde/leste we for our vnkyndenes be cast from his face in to euerlastynge payne"; but the main object of the meditations is for the reader to have compassion - to suffer with and respond to his Saviour - and to remember all that Jesus has done for him. The two opening articles suggest that the way to give expression to this compassion is to weep with Jesus "yf yu can". Beyond the vivid "beholding" of Jesus' suffering and the remembrance of all He has done for the individual sinner, who was the cause of all His pain, the devotion does not seek to go. It is, as the first three articles<sup>574</sup> suggest, an introduction or preparation to more formal prayers - religious might use an article before each of the canonical hours, for instance; it creates an atmosphere, focuses the attention upon the suffering Christ, reminds the reader of the love he owes to one who loved him enough to suffer and die for him, and serves generally to stimulate devotion.

The wounds of Christ, especially when portrayed in a semi-heraldic manner on a shield, were a very popular decorative motif in England during the late fifteenth - early sixteenth century.<sup>575</sup> They were x̄x̄ - x̄x̄ also mentioned with some frequency in devotional and liturgical<sup>576</sup> works and in numerous prayers.<sup>577</sup> Although devotion to the wounds received considerable impetus after the stigmatization of St. Francis in 1224<sup>578</sup>, it can be traced back to the Gospels, notably the Johannine account of

the Risen Lord's appearance to His disciples and St. Thomas.<sup>579</sup> By the late fifteenth century the physical aspect of the wounds <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ often described in narratives of Christ's life and Passion, and in the numerous devout treatises, including rosary books,<sup>580</sup> which made some reference to the Passion. Such descriptions of the physical wounding of Christ, in addition to being an event in the narrative, seem also to have been intended to awaken the reader's compassion, to make him feel with Christ, and perhaps further to make him recognize himself as the cause of Jesus' sufferings and to remember all that He underwent to redeem mankind; certainly they were intended to stimulate in him love, devotion and a sense of thankfulness. Thus in The tree & .xii. frutes the new religious is encouraged during divine service to imagine:

in thy herte as though yu se lyeng afore the Christ  
Iesu streyned vpon the crosse. And he with the crosse  
to gyder lyft vp on hygh with woundes bledyng. And in  
that lyfting, than lyft vp thyn eyes suyng after, and  
renne from wounde to wounde, and so sigh and sob pryuely.  
Now for the nayles, now for the thorns, now for the spere,  
now for the crowne, now for the fete, now for the handes/  
and so thanke hym for his passyon whiche he suffred for the. 581

To the practice of the devotional present is added a token thanksgiving, and the sighs and sobs which should betoken compassion.

One of the most extended celebrations of the Passion and wounds of Christ is to be found in the Stimulus Amoris.<sup>582</sup> The opening chapter, and to a lesser extent the following one, is an outpouring of love and devotion to the crucified Christ which displays the controlled fervour of the best English mystical writings. The wounds of Christ and His precious blood are seen as aspects of His marvellous love displayed in His Passion. It is impossible to divide these various elements into

separate compartments, and so in selecting from the Stimulus some of the topics which were taken up by other authors, frequently from a common or analogous source or more general tradition,<sup>583</sup> the division has to be artificial, even arbitrary.

Two virtues of the wounds which are touched on in the course of these chapters are their cleansing and their medicinal powers.<sup>584</sup> It is particularly the blood of Christ, together with the water that flowed from His side, which was thought of as cleansing and purifying the sinner's soul. Thus as he approaches death the soul prays: "wasshe my soule from synne with those stremes of the bloode whiche ranne from the fountayne of thy right syde".<sup>585</sup> A number of authors remind their readers of the blood and the water which flowed from the wound of the side: "Blode in token of our redempcyon. water in token of remyssyon of our synnes".<sup>586</sup> The sacramental significance of the effusion is made clear by Simon in The fruyte of redempcyon and by Fewterer. Simon gives a standard typological interpretation: as Eve was created from Adam's side, so the church was formed from the side of the second Adam, "& al the sacramentes of the same our sayd good mother of thy fore-sayd precyous wounde toke all theyr strength & vertue".<sup>587</sup> Fewterer adds to this a brief reference to the Longinus miracle,<sup>588</sup> and he also gives a paraphrase of St. Bernard's well known celebration of the wound of Christ's side in Sermo lx in Cantica;<sup>589</sup> the mystical language and mode of interpretation, which is very similar to the Stimulus, is clearly congenial to Fewterer. The first of his two lessons on this article seeks, in common with other mystical authors, to receive the wound of love,<sup>590</sup> the second teaches the sacramental significance of the wound.



The idea of the medicinal virtues of the blood and wounds of Christ is closely related to the general idea of cleansing: "What thyng is so spedf~~u~~ll to hele and purge þe spyrytuall woundis as entytyf medytacion of þe sorowfull woundys of our swete lord Ihesu Cryste."<sup>591</sup> The Stimulus describes Christ's body as full of medicinale ointments and recommends that the sinner annoint his soul with the blood of Christ's heart: "That blood is medicine ~~of~~<sup>for</sup> all sins, restoring of all graces, comfort in all tribulations, feeding in all sickness".<sup>592</sup> The idea is related to widespread concept of Christus medicus.<sup>593</sup>

The author of The tree & .xii. frutes counselled his reader to "Quenche thy thurste there with plente of haboundaunce of his moost blissed blode",<sup>594</sup> and the author of the Stimulus will "eat thy flesh for sweetness of love".<sup>595</sup> Not only does Christ vouchsafe food and drink to the hungry soul: "Ioyne or put thy mouth to that wounde: that thou may sucke or drawe the watre of helth from ye fountayns of our sauio<sup>r</sup>",<sup>596</sup> but the wounds are seen also as the door of love, the gate of paradise. The Tauerne of goostly helthe<sup>597</sup> invites the <sup>thirsty</sup> reader who desires "a drynke of euer lastyng lyfe" to "come to the tauerne of heuenlyswetnesse. I meane to the woundes of Ihesu cryst." The conceit upon which the work is based is clearly related to the figure of the "cella vinaria" used by a number of mystical writers.<sup>598</sup> Before the soul can enter the tavern he has to call on the Tave<sup>r</sup>ner, Christ, to open the door to him.<sup>598A</sup> After some, often lengthy, delay the soul is allowed in, and perceives the body and wounds of Christ all naked, without skin; a sight which generates more compassion than the contemplation of Christ's outward appearance can ever do. The notion of seeing Christ without skin, His flesh all red and bloody, seems to

be a curiously crude attempt to convey in physical terms the inwardness of the mystic's vision.<sup>599</sup> This inward vision induces a heavenly drunkenness - a theme frequently mentioned in the Stimulus<sup>600</sup> - and the sight of the streaming tuns so ravishes the soul that "ye soule is made able to reste in the woundes for a tyme. And thanne the eye of the soule loketh in at the gate of heuen".<sup>601</sup> Such spiritual drunkenness is, of course, an extreme form of spiritual ecstasy, and as such it required careful explication and control by spiritual authors such as Hilton, who are quick to warn the contemplative of the dangers which attend such a state.<sup>602</sup> The end of this kind of mystical contemplation of the wounds of Christ is that the soul may enter the wounds of the side; "thou shalt soon then come to his heart and <<then thou mayst rest thee there as in thy bedstead>>", or,<sup>603</sup> a more commonly used simile, "as a doue buyldyng thy nest and restyng place in the deapnes of this hole or wounde".<sup>604</sup> The mutual love of the soul and his spouse, Christ, will generate such sweetness, "and in thine heart shalt sometime be enflamed, that the soul would out of the body, and aye wone in Christ's wounds".<sup>605</sup>

Related to the contemplation of the soul's indwelling in the wounded heart of Jesus is the idea of the wounds as a refuge and a hiding place. It was probably the most widely known function of Christ's <sup>wounds,</sup> and as with many other ideas connected with the wounds it goes back to the Canticum Canticorum and was popularized by St. Bernard.<sup>606</sup> References to the idea are very common, especially in devotional works which tend towards mysticism.<sup>607</sup> The wounds offer the sinner protection from the temptation of the fiend,<sup>608</sup> from the three great enemies of

mankind—the world, the flesh and the devil<sup>609</sup> and from ~~the~~ numerous other sins.<sup>610</sup> Conversely, of course, the wounds of Christ and symbols of the Passion accuse the unrepentant sinner on the day of Judgement.<sup>611</sup> Where the wounds are invoked as remedies for sin there is a tendency to link specific sins to one or other of the five wounds. In The mystic sweet Rosary various sins are consigned to the wounded feet of Christ; to the right "al my synnes/lyfe/ingratitude/my infirmities and vyle naughtynes" and to the left "al of my synnes negligently done and that bynde me to damnacion/praying the not to reken them/but to absolue me..."; and all the reader's worthy deeds, the benefits he has enjoyed and all his strength and affections are offered up to the wounded hands and side of Jesus. In Fewterer's prayers to the five wounds of Jesus, basically taken over from Jordanus,<sup>612</sup> and preceded by expository articles and lessons of some length, he seeks to "hyde all myne aduersities & temptations in the most swete wounde of that lefte hande/and that I may fynde in it a sure and holosome remedy agaynst all maner of tribulations"; in the right hand are hidden "al my good workes that it shall please thy goodnes to worke in me"; while the left foot is prayed to as a source of medicine for all "euyll cogitations/sinistrall affections and desyres"; and to the right foot, from which "Iesu...dyd make a fountayne of thy grace/sprynge to vs", is joined "all my good desyres....with a louely kysse". The reference to the fountain of grace springing from the wound brings us back again to the idea of the fountain of life<sup>613</sup> and to the cognate figure of the wounds as wells.

nr [The idea of the wounds as separate named wells is found in a series of brief verses, each illustrated by an angel bearing a shield depicting a

wounded hand or foot, in A glorious medytacyon.<sup>614</sup> The wound of the right hand is the well of mercy, and the prayer asks: "Be my socour in the extremyte|Of dethe"; the left hand is the well of grace and source of deliverance from vices; the right foot is the well of pity, and the prayer seeks to serve God; and the left foot, the well of comfort asks: "Gracyously be my refuge and bote|And comferte in aduersyte". The centre-piece of the series is a full-page woodcut of the heart of Jesus, wounded and crowned, labelled "welle of lyfe"<sup>615</sup> which is followed by three seven-line stanzas<sup>616</sup> which deal with the events of the wounding and the virtues of the blood and the water which flowed from Jesus' side. Although most of the ideas outlined above concern the five principal wounds there is a tendency, especially in devotions of a more mystical kind, or those which deal with eucharistic motifs, to concentrate on the wound of the side. The measure of the wound of Christ's side is perhaps another example of the late-medieval interest in precise physical detail, so often pursued in the desire for realism; it was frequently illustrated<sup>617</sup> and, together with the other wounds, pseudo-magical powers were sometimes attributed to it.<sup>618</sup> Like the superstitions attaching themselves to the mass and the merits of the Passion, those associated with the wounds grew mainly from the uncritical assumption that performance of the required "ritual", usually looking at an image and repeating a few simple prayers, would automatically secure the promised end, which is not infrequently involved personal security or advantage.

The tendency to move from a general contemplation of the wounds to focus on the wound of the side as the entrance to the heart of Jesus (this despite the mirror-image placing of the wound on His right side

in nearly every illustration)<sup>619</sup> has been traced by a number of authors who have written about the devotion to the Sacred Heart.<sup>620</sup> The heart of Jesus figured in a number of woodcuts, drawings and carvings of the late fifteenth - early sixteenth centuries;<sup>621</sup> on the woodcuts it is usually shown in association with some representation of the wounds. Similarly in devotional writings the heart of Jesus was rarely addressed on its own but usually in a set of prayers which included devotions to the wounds of the hands and feet, as in A glorious medytacyon, The mystic sweet Roasary and Fewterer's Deuoute prayers in englysshe, which does not name the heart of Jesus:

O Iesu which for me wold haue the syde of thy  
 deed body opened/from whens came plenty of blode &  
 water for our helth & comfort: wounde I beseche the my  
 hert with the speare of thy chryte/that I may woꝛthely  
 receyue thy sacramentes/whiche flowed out of that thy  
 moost holy syde. 622

The only set of extant printed prayers specifically addressed to "the moost holy & sacred herte of our sauour Iesu cryst" dating from the first half of the sixteenth century follows The doctrynnall of mekenesse, printed by Copland in 1529.<sup>623</sup> There are eight prayers, all of which address the heart of Jesus with various epithets such as "most glorious and precyous", "moost humblest", "moost sacred", "moost swetest" or "moost full of sorowe & heuines". The last prayer includes two more personal petitions addressed to Jesus. In each of the eight prayers the description of the pains Jesus bore concludes with the phrase "And all for loue", followed (except in the first prayer, where it is inserted at the beginning, and in the last, where it is elaborated into a personal petition) by some version of the prayer "I beseche the swete Iesu that this payne habounde in me/as moch as it dyde habounde in the."



The first two prayers describe the pains of Jesus' infancy and His ministry, and the remaining six detail the sufferings of His Passion, from His sweating blood to His crucifixion.<sup>624</sup> Apart from the prayers being addressed to the Heart of Jesus there is no reference to the piercing of His side, and the "woundes in handes hert & fete" only receive the briefest mention. The prayers focus on what Christ endured during His Passion and show why He suffered - "all for loue". The reader seeks to share something of His agony:

Now swete Ihesu for this moost greuous & sorowful  
paine yt thou suffred ~~in~~ thy herte/wounde my herte  
so that thy paines may be mi paines/& that thy dethe  
be mi deth And if I may not haue it in affeccyon/at  
the leest that I may haue it at wyl and desyre/all  
onely for thy loue.<sup>625</sup>

The final petition asks for grace to taste of the chalice of the Passion and that Jesus will "opres myne hert wyth ye within the pressoure of thy most bitter passyon" - surely a reference to the figure of the mystic wine press. The emphasis falls upon the need for the sinner to suffer with Jesus, but the refrain "all for loue" and the eucharistic imagery of the final petition suggest that pain and suffering can be redemptive.<sup>626</sup> These prayers are distinguished from many other Passion devotions only by their address to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Like the wounds, the Heart of Jesus was seen as a place of refuge and a source of redemption, but it was not fully distinguished from the wound of the side. It was not, at this period in England, an object of separate devotion.

The story of the Passion, and narrative and symbolic illustrations of various aspects of it, were undoubtedly familiar to late fifteenth - early sixteenth century congregations. They were clearly considered suitable subjects for the decoration of religious buildings.<sup>627</sup> Their placing on bench ends, high in stained glass windows, on roof bosses and chancel vaults, makes it unlikely that they were intended to be used for any specific devotional purpose, but the very multiplicity of Passion symbols and illustrations must have had its effect on the general spiritual atmosphere.<sup>628</sup> Occasionally narrative sequences of the Passion depicted in carving or stained glass may have been used for didactic purposes, and some of the larger murals and statues probably had brief prayers addressed to them, but for the most part these Passion motifs were decorative rather than functional; their application was of a very indirect and general kind, not specific.

Just as this type of illustration kept the image of the suffering Jesus constantly before the people's eyes, so those who could read were offered numerous verbal equivalents of the carved and painted Passion scenes. Authors tended to concentrate on visual, physical description of Christ's sufferings, sometimes supplemented by reference to His mental and spiritual sufferings and to the sorrows of His mother. On their own these descriptions, found in drama and lyrics as well as in devout treatises, are not strictly devotional, any more than the decorative motifs of religious art; they require some kind of application to turn them into devotions. Frequently this was supplied by the form in which the narrative was cast, the rosary form, the litany, the addition of regular introductions and conclusions to turn small sections of the

narrative into a series of prayers, or even the common division into seven parts after the canonical hours. A substantial proportion of the Speculum Vitae Christi, Simon's Fruyte of redempcyon and Fewterer's Myrrour of Glasse of Christes Passion was devoted to descriptive narrative. Fewterer seeks to explain and give moral application to what he describes before he gathers each article into a concluding prayer. The descriptions in the Speculum and Simon more often seem intended to stimulate the reader's imagination and his emotions, and similarly the brief descriptions of the Passion found in numerous other treatises. A clue to the "function" of these "unapplied" descriptions is to be found in A Contemplacyon or medytacyon of the shedynge of the blood of our lorde Ihesu Cryste at seuen tymes. Following the three opening meditations is some phrase such as: "And whyle yu hast this fresshe in thy mynde saye thy deuocyon". This suggests that the preceding description was to be used as a prelude to more formal devotion or recitation of the hours.<sup>629</sup>

This kind of descriptive writing could stir the affections, and in some souls helped to stimulate a very real and intimate personal relationship with Jesus. Under the guidance of a good spiritual director the contemplative could advance from the practice of the devotional present encouraged by these descriptions to the deeper experience of Dame Julian or the author of the Stimulus, and, entering the wounds of Jesus, experience a foretaste of the rapturous love of heaven. But what of more earth-bound souls or those who were not well instructed in spiritual matters? Beyond a very real and, in the case of someone like Margery Kempe, an impressively emotional attachment to the Person of Jesus, it is hard to see how a soul could

develop spiritually through contemplation of the Passion. The printed texts of the early sixteenth century suggest that all too often the descriptions of the Passion were isolated from the basic doctrinal teachings of the Christian faith. This is much less true of the Speculum than of Simon or even Fewterer, whose explanations and applications tend to be particular, arising from specific details of the narrative. The practical instruction associated with catechetical and penitential literature seems to be divorced from the more emotional piety of the Passion.

In the devotional writings and translations of the English recusants there seems to have been some attempt to control and organize the affective piety of the late middle ages. The growth of methodical prayer and systematic schemes of meditation which were founded on a solid doctrinal basis seems to have developed first among the Brethren of the Common Life.<sup>630</sup> It received a classic form in St. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises.<sup>631</sup> The devotional literature of the English recusants retained the sense of vivid reality, the love, compassion and strong personal relationship with Jesus characteristic of late medieval piety but the meditations tended to be better structured. The set of fifteen meditations on the Passion in A Manual of Prayers<sup>632</sup> are basically moving narrative descriptions, but the reader is given a reason for using them: "If thou wilt profit and growe in the loue of God, thou must haue an often and frequent memorie, & as it were an Image before thine eyes. of thy Lord and Sauour crucyfied for thee". Again, the prayer to be said after the meditations gives thanks to Jesus for His love manifested in His suffering; asks mercy for sins seeking to be made "like vnto thy holy humanitye"; and finally offers

the life and Passion of the Son to the Father "for my saluation, and for the saluation of all men, as for full amendmente and purgation of all our sinnes and offences."<sup>633</sup> Here at least there is some attempt to relate the historical events of the Passion to the saving work of the Son of God.

Where any attempt was made by medieval authors to explain the significance of Christ's Passion, it tended to take the form of a list of profits as in the Legenda Aurea.<sup>634</sup> The difficulty is to prevent any list of this nature from sounding impersonal, especially with its neat parcelling out of points, and the parallels drawn in this instance between Christ and Adam, which make it sound remote in time as well. Allegorical interpretations sounded equally distant, such as the idea of the four corners of the cross being adorned with precious stones, the virtues of charity, obedience, patience and hum<sup>il</sup>ility.<sup>635</sup> The seven words from the cross, which are listed by numerous authors with or without explanations<sup>636</sup> and made the basis of several prayers,<sup>638</sup> offered an opportunity for authors to break off the narrative and to use them for teaching. Several do this, but the teaching is more likely to be about the various virtues exemplified in Jesus' words<sup>639</sup> than about the Redemption of mankind. The instruction given in the course of the longer Passion narratives tended to be about specific virtues and sins, ~~and~~<sup>about</sup> good works and matters of behaviour. Christ was seen above all as an exemplar of all virtues who was to be emulated. Indirectly He was also recognized as the Son of God as well as the perfect man, but this aspect of His Person is rarely emphasized in the treatises or in the iconography of the Passion. Somehow the moving narrative of the sufferings of the Son of Man needed to be related to the redemptive work of the Son of God.



### The Resurrection Faith of the Reformers

Like the Lollards before them the Reformers attacked traditional beliefs and practices at their most vulnerable points, where popular superstitions and abuses were all too apparent. Catholic authors too recognized and condemned popular superstitions connected with the mass and the Passion, with indulgences and pilgrimages. But, like Whitford, they felt that it was better "to praye...to gyue studie and diligence...rather to refourme and amende bothe" than, like the Protestants, "to blaspheme/detracte/depraue/and to speke yuell"<sup>640</sup> and to seek change by destruction. It cannot be denied that the Protestants were fervent in their destruction not only of relics, shrines and statues, which were objects of pilgrimage, but of much architecture and decoration, furnishings and vestments, which they considered superstitious.<sup>641</sup> Some of the destruction was probably wanton damage; some might have been prevented by a little foresight.<sup>642</sup> Under Edward VI the content<sup>643</sup> and setting of worship<sup>644</sup> underwent drastic change, and demands for change were being made in the 1530s. But the zeal of the Reformers was not entirely, nor even mainly destructive; they sought to edify the people, to open the Bible to them and teach them the essential truths of Christianity.

Narratives of the life of Christ and saints' legends were an important section of <sup>the</sup> religious press of the late fifteenth - early sixteenth century.<sup>645</sup> The saints' lives contained a lot of legendary material and frequently provided tales of adventure and entertainment, but their popularity seems to have declined after the early 1520s; 1530 saw two editions of The life of St. Margaret and 1534 The life of St. Alban. The same year saw the

publication of what seems to be the last life of Christ, Fewterer's Myrrour or Glasse of Christes Passion. Since both types of work made use of legendary<sup>material</sup> and pious imaginings they were condemned by the Reformers as superstitious, not adhering strictly to the standard of Scripture. Since saints' legends would have been particularly vulnerable to reforming Protestants of the first or subsequent generations it is hard to estimate the significance of extant publication figures,<sup>646</sup> but it looks as though readers had begun to neglect them before the views of the Reformers could have been widely influential. But if the medieval "lives" did not continue after the middle of the 1530s they were supplanted in 1538 by the book which was to become as influential in the shaping of English language and literature as it was in religious matters - the English Bible.<sup>647</sup>

There seems to be only one work in the second half of the decade whose title suggests any continuity with the medieval Passion narratives: "A deuoute frutefull and godlye remembraunce of the passion of oure sauoure Christ Iesu", which was printed in the Byddell - Marshall Primer about 1534 and again in Certeine prayers and godly meditacyons, 1538.<sup>648</sup> It is a translation of Luther's Ein Sermon von der Betrachtung des heiligen Leidens Christi of 1519.<sup>649</sup> It opens with a condemnation of those who trust superstitiously in the fruits of Christ's Passion or the profits of the mass, and it also censures those who vent their anger on the Jews or who advance no further in understanding the Passion than a vague feeling of pity. The true beholders of Christ's Passion "consyder & marcke in his passyon their awne synnes & enormityes which were the cause & grounde of his passyon and deeth/for they are feared/and their consciences tremble

as sone as they remembre the passyon".<sup>650</sup> The Catholic martyr, John Fisher, had made the same point in his Good Friday sermon,<sup>651</sup> and like Luther he declares that the sinner deserves to suffer a thousand-fold what Christ endured,<sup>652</sup> for his sins were the cause of Christ's pains.<sup>653</sup> Indeed, the two works follow similar lines: they both strike fear into the audience for the enormity of their sins:

for on this hangeth the hole profyte and vse of  
Christes passion/that a man maye knowe him selfe/  
that he myght tremble and repent in beholdinge his  
greuous enormytes. 654

Having brought the soul "euen to the brinke of desperacyon", Luther then begins to raise the soul, not by the self-satisfaction of good works, but through faith in Christ's work of redemption, through prayer and recollection of God's love. The second half of Fisher's sermon also concerns itself with the promise of the cross and the love, hope, joy, comfort and mercy to be derived from it. Fisher ends with the offer of joy to those who will amend, and the threat of pain and damnation, described in some detail, to those who refuse to suffer with Christ. Luther's conclusion is perhaps less threatening, but no less adamant, on the need for the sinner to conform his life to Christ's. The Christian must learn to express Christ's Passion not only in his outward behaviour but in his inner life and thoughts. This is the true meditation of the Passion; "And we haue chaunged it all together in to an outwarde apperaunce and haue thought it sufficient to behold the story of the passyon paynted vpon walles", to hear it told as a story or to see it re-enacted in the mass. The lack of personal application and the externalism of many late medieval descriptions of, and devotions connected with, the Passion which Luther condemns was, on the whole, justified. It was not enough

to describe the Passion in moving or harrowing words and simply to tell people to imagine that they were present at the events described or to encourage them to respond with feelings of love and compassion. They needed to understand why the events of the Passion were important and how they affected the individual's salvation.

The "frutefull and godlye remembraunce of the passion" does not banish all the emotive detail characteristic of traditional descriptions. The reader is reminded of the nails which were fastened into Christ's hands, which pierced His tender flesh and "his brayne perced with the croune of thornes". There is even a suggestion of the medieval practice of the devotional present: "when thou seyst", "when thou beholdest", "where thou seyst" what is done to Him. However, what description there is is incidental, it is not the main substance of the work, and it is proportionately much, much less than in Fisher's or Longland's Good Friday sermons. The work is a carefully constructed explanation of how to meditate Christ's Passion and of the spiritual and practical fruits which should come from such an exercise. It concentrates particularly upon the individual's inward apprehension - of mind, not merely of sight and feeling - of Christ's redemptive work. The conscience is brought to the brink of desperation and then assuaged, not by running to good works, pilgrimages and pardons, but by faith in Christ's redemption and His satisfaction, by prayer and recollection of God's Love. Later Protestant devotion was to pay great attention to the inner state of the believer and his conscience, which had been largely neglected, except in some preparation for confession, by traditional treatises on the Passion and on death and the last Things. It is also characteristic of Protestant devotion that everything should be spelt out in precise detail; for

instance, the way in which meditation on the Passion was to be used against particular temptations.<sup>655</sup> John Frith takes over

Luther's application in his Preparation to deathe:

If thou be punished with sickenes reken with thy selfe,  
howe it is not to be compared with Chrystes crowne of  
thorne and his nayles. If thou be restrayned of thy  
desyres and lustes, remembre Christ led hyther and thither  
If pryde styre thy mynde, remembre Christ nayled on the  
crosse betwene two theues...If thou brenne in lechery,  
or any other yll desyre, remembre howe Christe stonde  
fleshe was all to torne with strypes, thrist through,  
and al to broken...If thou be vexed with enuy or desyre  
of reuenging, thinke with thy selfe, that Christ dyd  
preye his father for theym, whiche crucified and scorned  
him....<sup>656</sup>

Where there is description it is not intended simply to stir the reader's affections but to contribute to the reader's awareness or understanding of some point which is to be grasped with the mind.

Catharine Parr's Lamentacion of a synner<sup>657</sup> retains a number of traditional characteristics, not least the principle that "inwardelye to beholde Christe crucified vpon the crosse is the best and godlyest meditation that can be". Yet despite repeated invitations to see Christ upon the cross, there is no description of His sufferings. The object is not to contemplate the figure of Christ crucified to be moved to compassion by the sight, but to learn from "the booke of the crucifixe". No longer does the crucified Jesus bow His head to kiss the sinner or spread His arms to receive him, nor does He give utterance to any lamentation. Although the sinner still prays to the Lord, He is no longer the Son of Man on the Cross, but a more remote, less clearly defined being. Christ is seen as the supreme exemplar, the source and object of saving faith and grace; a being who is to be understood and who requires the performance of various duties rather than a Person to



be seen, known and loved.

The Lamentacion of a synner combines personal confession with instruction, and the intention is to edify the reader, to bring him to, or strengthen him in, the true faith of Christ. Catherine laments, sighs and weeps for her former life so evilly spent in gross idolatry and under misguided belief in and obedience to the Pope's promises and the ways of Rome.<sup>658</sup> Aware that she has deserved damnation, rather than despair she "wil cal vpon Christ the light of the worlde the fountayne of lyfe...ye peacemaker betwene god & man, & the only health & comfort of al true repentant sinners". She confesses her sinfulness, her ignorance and her inability to "bring myselfe out of this intangled & waywarde maze". As L  ther had recommended she asks for the grace of the Holy Spirit and for increase of faith, and she remembers the love of God. From faith springs assurance and good works, "Yet we may not impute to the worthynes of fayth or workes, our iustification before God: but ascribe & geue the worthines of it, wholly to the merites of Christes passion, and referre and attribute the knowledge & perceiuyng therof onely to fayth".<sup>659</sup> From spiritual autobiography - a form of religious literature which was particularly favoured by later Puritan writers<sup>660</sup> - the author passes on to instruction, taking the cross of Christ as her exemplar.

In her final section she turns her attention to the contemporary situation. She especially gives thanks for "suche a godly and learned king" as Henry VIII, who has banished the mists of error and given England the knowledge of truth and the light of God's word. This glorification of the English monarch as the instrument of God's will in the cause of reform seems to have begun in the early 1530s.<sup>661</sup> and to

have been characteristic of those who favoured reform, for only the King could subdue the traditional church to make way for the new learning.<sup>662</sup> Then, like contemporary authors such as Becon,<sup>663</sup> Catherine outlines the responsibility of various classes to teach or follow God's words in their particular vocation, and to set a good example to others. This detailed, practical concern to teach every person his Christian duty was, of course, characteristic of later Protestantism.<sup>664</sup> Yet despite the benefits of Henry's enlightened and godly rule, she is "able to iustifie the ignoraunce of the people to be greate", in their ignorance of God's word and of the true - the Reformed - faith. She prays that God may defend all men from the Bishop of Rome's "ingeleinges and sleytes. But specially the poore simple, vnlearned sowles", and she concludes with a warning of the awful judgement that awaits the unfaithful servant contrasted with the joyful abode promised to the blessed in heaven.

Another reformed author who was much concerned with the contemporary situation was Nicholas Wyse, whose Consolacyon for chrysten people was printed by John Wayland in 1538.<sup>665</sup> His chief targets were ignorance, pilgrimages and idolatry. Wyse attacks the apathy of the people who will not use their newly granted liberty, especially their freedom to read the English Bible. They do not seem to appreciate that they have been freed from the heavy traditions of Rome, and they are heedless of the benefits conferred on them by the enlightened rule of Henry VIII, who is likened to "Esechias" and "Josias".<sup>666</sup> Henry's establishment of the reformed faith and the provision of the Scriptures in the "maternall tonge", "is of suche valure that Englyshe men had neuer greater cause to thanke God for, and to pray for the gracyous pro<sup>s</sup>pertyte of theyr kynge

then for this matter".<sup>667</sup> Allowing for the fact that Wyse was keen to see reforms implemented, his comment—"it is a straunge rekenyng to here the vnwyse sayenges of many of the people, say they not, why shulde we not lyue as our fathers haue done before vs"<sup>668</sup> does suggest considerable popular reluctance or apathy to change, if not a positive preference for the old ways, which of course had the great advantage of familiarity.

The bulk of his work is occupied by attacks on and exposures of papistical ceremonies and superstitions, and defence of "these newe gospellers". He attacks images of saints, on the grounds that they are <sup>a</sup>gainst the first commandment,<sup>669</sup> and because during their life saints had refused the kind of wealth and power accorded to their shrines in death.<sup>670</sup> He suggests that images of saints are used to rob people and to maintain priests' harlots or sturdy beggars,<sup>671</sup> and he mocks the placing of strong boxes by the images as though the priest did not trust the saint to guard the money.<sup>672</sup> Again he ridicules the way in which saints were <sup>invoked</sup> ~~invented~~ to cure every kind of disease, and he asks pity for saint "Uncombe" of St. Paul's, so recently pulled down, to whom wives used to offer oats to remove troublesome husbands. More seriously he condemns prayers made to saints' images:

When the people wold saye, our blessyd lady of Walsyngham helpe me, the holy rode of Northdore, and the crosse of Chaldon be my comforte, the trewe remembraunce of the crosse of Christ wherin they ought only to seke their consolacyon, ioy & confort, was forgotten or at lest abused vnto a great nombre of crosses & rodes within this realme. For.... many are pulled downe, but ther remayne some yet, for all thynges cannot be done at one tyme. <sup>673</sup>

Like earlier Lollard authors<sup>674</sup> he objects to the impression given, especially by pilgrimages, that some saints' images, and some places,

are more meritorious than others.<sup>675</sup>

Rather than wearing out their bodies, spending their substance and abandoning their children to go on pilgrimage to holy places, they should give their money to relieve Christ's "quene quycke and lyunge Image" in the poor, the sick, the lame, the blind, the helpless, the aged and the prisoners.<sup>676</sup>

He mocks the traditional literature - official and that permitted for private use - asking whether men will seek the Kingdom of God "in the bysshops of romes decretals and in Legenda aurea as your fathers dyd....ye shall as sone fynde it in Beuys of Hampton, & Guy of Warwycke as amonge the holy bokes that ye & your fathers in tymes past haue ben permytted to loke on."<sup>677</sup>

They should give up such books and their babbling prayers in foreign tongues.<sup>678</sup> Rather they should read the Bible, learn to test all claims against the standard of Scripture and go willingly to hear godly preachers. The teaching they purvey is not new, but it is that of the New Testament and the Apostles, which has endured over a thousand years.<sup>679</sup> He concedes:

It is not moch to be meruayled at, and yf there be many yet that murmour at the puttynge downe of ydolatrie, specyally in them that are not learned in goddes worde. For it is harde sodenly to roote out superstycyous holynesse from the vnlearned peoples myndes...<sup>680</sup>

But he is insistent that the people must labour to build up the Lord's Temple, to reform abuses, and establish church and state upon the Word of God. But, as with many other Protestant authors, Wyse's zeal to right ~~the~~ wrongs tended towards polemic and propaganda rather than towards devotion. There was little in his book to console the Christian reader who did not share his vision of an English Church purged of all superstition and abuses and based on the sole authority of the Bible.

Despite set-backs, especially during the last nine years of Henry VIII's reign, the progress of the Reformation was steady. Images were destroyed, pilgrimages and the use of the rosary forbidden; the traditional Passion literature and saints' lives were no longer produced and the development of devotion to the Sacred Heart<sup>681</sup> prevented - all in those same years 1538 - 47.<sup>682</sup>

However, the Reformers' contribution was not entirely destructive. As far as the life of Christ was concerned they changed the emphasis ~~from~~<sup>on</sup> the sufferings endured by Christ during His Passion to dwell upon the triumphant victory of the Resurrection. Proportionately the period from the Resurrection to the Ascension receives little attention in medieval lives of Christ.<sup>683</sup> The author of A goostly treatyse does not take his life as far as the Resurrection but ends with the return of Mary and the Disciples to Jerusalem after the burial. It is more usual to find some reference to the Resurrection and Ascension and perhaps the coming of the Holy Spirit and the Last Judgement, the concluding act of Christ's saving work.

Within the chronological framework of the lives of Christ, the supernatural events following His death demanded some place although they defied all attempts at physical description. In fact, most authors made no attempt to describe the events of the Resurrection or the Ascension.<sup>684</sup> in any detail. The scenes would have been familiar to the reader from numerous illustrations, woodcuts and stained glass,<sup>685</sup> xxiv and perhaps from the mystery play cycles.<sup>686</sup> Fewterer made use of quotations from the psalms and the prophets in his attempt to convey the joy of the Resurrection - in much the same way the patriarchs and prophets responded with verses of Scripture when Christ came to liberate



them from hell.<sup>687</sup> In the Speculum Vitae Christi the event of the Resurrection is announced in advance to the souls in hell, and the Lord goes forth to rise from the grave, accompanied by their words of acclaim and expectation.<sup>688</sup> Immediately the scene moves ~~to~~ His Mother, whose solitary prayers are fulfilled by the presence of her Son.<sup>689</sup> Thereafter the Gospel narratives are used as the basis for separate descriptions of Jesus' various post-Resurrection appearances, supplemented by other appearances, such as <sup>to</sup> St. Peter and to the patriarchs of the old law. Individually some of the appearances are made the occasion for a brief instruction, so that the encounter at ~~Emmaus~~ <sup>Emmaus</sup> teaches the reader to do "the werkes of pitee and hospitalite" and to desire Christ to dwell with him; but taken together the appearances represent a joyful, triumphant progress which culminates in the Ascension with the jubilation and homage of all heaven. The Speculum stresses the importance of the Ascension more than either Fewterer or Simon:<sup>690</sup>

this gloriose feste of the ascencioun of oure lorde Jesu us an ende and fulfillynge of alle othere solempnitees and feestes/and a blessed conclucioun of all the iourney of oure lorde Jesu after his man hede. Thus mowe we opounly see that this day and this feste is moste highe and solempne of alle othere. And that soule that loueth trewely oure lorde Jesu schulde this day be more rauished to heauen and more goostly ioye haue in herte thanne yn any day of the yere. 691

The Reformers neither related the events of Jesus' life to the liturgical year, nor did they endeavour to produce a chronological relation of His life, which was almost bound to rely on pious imaginings rather than on the bare word of the Scripture. Thus freed from the need to describe the historical content of these events<sup>692</sup> they were able to concentrate on their meaning in terms of salvation history. As might be expected they make extensive use of biblical quotations

concerning the promises of the Resurrection, especially I Corinthians XV.<sup>693</sup> One of the most forthright statements is found in A myrroure or glasse for them that be syke: "The mystery of the resurreccion of Chryst, is the chefe, the princypall poynt of our fayth".<sup>694</sup> The author goes on to explain that, had He not risen again, Christ's death alone would have achieved nothing. To believe in the resurrection of Christ is to believe that He reigns and has subdued sin and death.<sup>695</sup> It is a guarantee of His victory, and by faith the believer becomes a partaker of that victory. Thus to the faithful death is not to be feared,<sup>696</sup> for "beholdynge stedfastly with the eies of faythe in the resurrection, by deathe he shall so passe awaye, that surely he shall not see deathe".<sup>697</sup> The final chapter of <sup>the</sup> "consolacyon for troubled consciences" describes the benefits the soul enjoys on account of the Resurrection of Christ, and especially ~~for~~ the way in which the believer is taken up into the righteousness of Christ, so that sin and death can no longer harm him. The fact that Jesus rose from the dead is for the Protestant, as it was for the early church,<sup>698</sup> the event which makes His death both meaningful and effective.

There was much that was truly moving in the medieval concentration upon the sufferings of Jesus, and the descriptions and meditations must often have aroused compassion and moved more sensitive souls to tears. The weakness was in the lack of real spiritual application. Description can only go so far, and, even if the reader is able to imagine that he is present at and involved in the events described, his feelings do not necessarily relate to his own needs and spiritual state. The Reformers abandoned the descriptive - imaginative approach to the Passion and concentrated instead on man's inner state. They insisted on his

identity as a sinner before God, but, rather than generating physical revulsion through the use of "vile body" language,<sup>699</sup> they encouraged the reader to look within his own conscience and to recognize his failure to trust and to love God. Any reaction is likely to produce a certain imbalance, and Protestant treatises, because they overlook the power of human feelings and ignore the evocative impact of descriptive writing, tend to sound rather dull and prosaic. But their insistence that man should understand what it means to have faith and to be assured of salvation was a healthy corrective to the emotional ~~pride~~<sup>piety</sup> of most late medieval Passion narratives and devotions, whose teaching tended to be about good works and matters of behaviour and morality rather than about the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. The Protestants did not ignore morality or good works, but they put faith and right belief before them; and, although they did not encourage emotional demonstrations of feeling in response to Christ's Passion, the love of God in Christ was deeply known and responded to in the more sober and restrained language of the Reformers' devotional treatises:

No man can vse due loue in God without he be sure  
 fyrst by fayth inwardly how wel God doth loue vs,  
 reioycing in the same loue, and puttynge al his  
 saluacyon therin. Thus doynge he shall passe  
 by all creatures, estymynge them as donge, countynge  
 CHRIST onely his ioye, glorye, & hertes desyre. He  
 now that vttereth ye loue, (for true loue can not be  
 ydle) he vttereth it, ye which God the louer of loue  
 wyl haue ye louyng man to do. 700

## PART III

"Per multas tribulationes oportet intrare in regnum dei"

(Tribulation~~s~~ and related topics: The awareness of death and decay: The contemptus mundi: The preparation ~~s~~ for death, the ars moriendi and The Four Last Things).

Many of the themes and attitudes dealt with in a brief and general manner by the authors of tribulation treatises are reiterated or elaborated in ars moriendi books and other works connected with the literature of death and related topics. For instance, the contemptus mundi theme and warnings about the dangers and transitoriness of wealth and position are found in both tribulation treatises and death literature. Death was regarded by some authors as a kind of final or intensified form of tribulation; both were to be borne patiently in expectation of a heavenly reward, and correct faith was important to overcome the temptations accompanying them. The death-bed literature placed great emphasis on the need to prepare for death throughout life, and ideally the patient endurance of tribulation encouraged the kind of growth in faith and virtue which would ensure that a man died well and received the heavenly reward he had been promised. A discussion of some of the tribulation treatises available during the 1530's may well serve as an introduction to a survey of the literature of death and the Four Last Things.

Man's immortal soul could be saved by death-bed repentance and frantic alms-giving,<sup>1</sup> but it was undoubtedly risky to leave provision for the soul's eternal welfare so late: there was always the danger of

sudden death, of the body weakened by illness succumbing to temptation, or failing to recognize that this illness would prove fatal.<sup>2</sup> The unmistakable intention of numerous lyrics, plays, sermons and treatises concerned with some aspect of man's mortality was that now was the time to repent, to have done with the cares of this world: "nolite conformari huic saeculo, sed reformamini in novitate sensus vestri: ut probetis quae sit voluntas Dei bona, et beneplacens, et perfecta."<sup>3</sup> The assumption was that the glad acceptance of suffering was particularly pleasing to God. The view may be summed up in the words of Luther's last two "theses" —

Exhortandi sunt Christiani, ut caput suum Christi  
per penas, mortes infernosque sequi studeant  
Ac sic magis per multas tribulationes intrare  
celum quam per securitatem pacis confidant<sup>4</sup> —

and it was confirmed in numerous stories of saints and martyrs who had overcome the temptations and persecutions of this world and received a heavenly reward.<sup>5</sup>

New Testament and patristic authors tended to see the world, the flesh and, of course, the Devil as the implacable enemies of the Christian. St. Paul expressed the fallen soul's propensity to evil, against which the Christian is bound to struggle, in memorable words,<sup>6</sup> and it was he who seems to have crystallized the idea — far older than Christianity<sup>7</sup> — of the spiritual warfare into the image of the Christian soldier.<sup>8</sup> Deeply influenced as he was by St. Paul's thought,<sup>9</sup> it is not surprising to find Erasmus declaring that "The service of god is a <sup>professyon</sup> ~~proffessyon~~ of a chrysten warfare",<sup>10</sup> and his Enchiridion militis christianae<sup>i</sup> opens with a frequently cited quotation from Job<sup>11</sup> in which



man's earthly life is described as a continual battle. The Enchiridion begins by outlining the field of battle, gives some idea of the enemy to be engaged, and then goes on to deal with the weapons of Christian warfare: prayer, knowledge of the Scriptures and of selected wisdom from the ancients, and love of Christ, which help the soldier to obtain the arms of justice, the armour of truth, the breast-plate of justice, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit and the handy "enchiridion" which he is always to have by him.<sup>12</sup>

A more elaborate allegory of the Christian's armour, along the lines of A trectyse of gostly batayle,<sup>13</sup> is The assaute and conquest of heven, translated from the French by Thomas Paynell and printed by Berthelet in 1529.<sup>14</sup> Designed to help "the vnlearned people" to resist their ghostly enemy, by abstinence and penance, especially during Lent, "the tyme and season of gostly <sup>&</sup> spiritual warre", it not only likens the various pieces of armour to the Christian virtues but it also outlines the strategy and goal of the Christian warfare.<sup>15</sup>

It is more than just a list of pieces of armour equated with various virtues. In some cases the form of the piece helps to convey the quality of the virtue: thus the coat of mail represents charity to neighbours:

For as the mayles of this coote knytte one mayle to another: so all good christen people shulde be ioyned and knytte with the corde of charite one to another.<sup>16</sup>

In other cases the author may consider the functions of the limbs a piece of armour protects: as the feet carry the body from place to place so is the soule carried about by man's affections, and the shoes of the armour, which are either the good example of holy fathers or else,

"heavenly desyre/couetyng to be out of this worlde/and to come to the company of our lorde god", are designed to protect and regulate these affections. To the traditional ascetic virtues of chastity (the shirt), penance (the doublet) and abstinence (the gorgette) are added the more spiritual values outlined by Erasmus, the helmet of the fear of God created with the virtue of hope, the two-edged sword of God's word and the shield of faith, and the author includes much basic Christian teaching in his exposition. The chapter on "the Coote armour" is a particularly rich example of his method. He first describes what coat armour is, how it is worn over the body armour and is richly decorated with gold and precious stones of various colours,<sup>17</sup> and how the arms of Christ are emblazoned front and back upon the purple and white material of which it is made. The coat is likened to the virtue of charity, and the three jewels which decorate it, ~~chrysolite~~ <sup>chrysolite</sup>, beryl and topaz, reflect the pure heart, good conscience and true faith from which the virtue proceeds. The nature of each of the jewels is then considered in some detail. For instance, ~~chrysolite~~ <sup>chrysolite</sup> is noble and sparkling, and if set near a fire it becomes all fire:

The fyre is of very pure nature and vertue: For hit taketh away the rustynes and all fylthynes from golde/sylver/& other metall/and maketh hit bright and shynyng: so in lyke maner the fyre of charite remoueth from mans harte all fylthynes of synne...<sup>18</sup>

The description of fire purging rustiness and filth from gold and other metals will be encountered later as a common figure for the purgative aspect of tribulation. Here a parallel is drawn with Christ, who, wishing to inflame man with the fire of charity, took our fleshly body and shed his blood for our redemption, thus showing how much He loved

us; it is for man to light his small reflective fire at the large fire of Christ. Later in the same chapter there is an extended comparison between the nature of fire and the qualities of charity.<sup>19</sup> The other two jewels enable the author to explore other aspects of charity, and he then goes on to consider the cloak, woven with the thread of grace and the Holy Ghost, made of the inward parts of our Lord and dyed purple at the time of his Passion.<sup>20</sup> Thus not only is the nature of charity explained but it is closely linked to Christ, the greatest exemplar of the virtue, whom the Christian knight is encouraged to imitate. The imagery too, while not complex, is richly symbolic and at several points echoes the teaching of tribulation treatises, the contemptus mundi literature and more general ascetic works.<sup>21</sup>

The treatise goes on to consider the weapons of the knight and the horse's harness,<sup>22</sup> and concentrates increasingly upon the way in which the knight is to advance in the Christian faith. He requires various provisions, including the ability to foresee and take defensive action against adversity,<sup>23</sup> and the virtue of hope (the crest of the helmet) so necessary to those in tribulation.<sup>la</sup> The horse is to be guided in the right way by the reins of discretion and the bridle of wisdom. The allegory, then, is not simply a static picture of a Christian knight; he is armed for a purpose in the same way that the pilgrim is equipped for his journey in Deguilleville's Pilgrimage of the Life of Man.<sup>24</sup> The armour is to enable him to reach his destination, the city, safely, to attack it and to bring the ensuing siege to a successful conclusion. The city is, of course, the Kingdom of Heaven, and the quickest way in is by shooting darts against the tower where the king and queen, Jesus and Mary, dwell. "Agaynst this towre we must cast... many syghes/compunctions of harte/

teares/and deuoute prayers"; and if this fails we should use prayers to various saints and especially to Mary, the compassionate "mother of mercy and <sup>of</sup> all pite".<sup>25</sup> If the siege continues the walls may be scaled with the ladder of contemplation, and even if the weight of the body drags the soul off the ladder there are still saints who may be taken prisoner by special devotion and spoil to be won in the shape of the gifts and virtues of the Holy Spirit. Provided he perseveres in the attack it is not dishonourable to be wounded, or even to be killed in the battle; the knight can still be sure of his victory and look for a heavenly reward.<sup>26</sup> Although the Christian warfare receives more dramatic treatment here than in most tribulation treatises,<sup>27</sup> the assurance of victory to the faithful and the idea that without experience of adversity the Christian cannot hope for any reward are common to most works which discuss the subject of tribulation at any length.

The religious life was generally regarded as the better life,<sup>28</sup> but neither the taking of vows nor the seclusion of the cloister, nor a sheltered life given to good works and devout exercises secured automatic separation from the troubles of this world: tribulation, adversity and suffering were as much a part of religious as of a secular life.<sup>29</sup> While the more advanced contemplative received fairly detailed instruction about the reasons for suffering and various aspects of temptation,<sup>30</sup> and was shown ways of overcoming or at least containing the attacks of the Devil, the newly-professed religious and many pious lay people were in need of more elementary instruction about the suffering or adversity which they had to face. Unlike the contemplatives they were hardly ever given practical advice as to how they should overcome various forms of adversity; rather they were provided with a general justification of suffering.



The approach is nearly always theoretical, with no attempt to give practical help or comfort to those in trouble. The burden of the tribulation treatises is that suffering is to be endured because it is good for man's soul and if borne patiently it carries with it the promise of an eternal reward; and A. Kempis is only one of the authors who quotes St. Paul's: "quod non sunt condignae passionibus huius temporis ad futuram gloriam".<sup>31</sup>

The characteristic English tribulation treatise, such as those available in print about the year 1500—The Chastysing of goddes Chyldern, The boke of conforte agaynste all tribulacions, The remedy ayenst the troubles of temptacyons by William Flete,<sup>32</sup> the Six Masters on Tribulation,<sup>33</sup> The xii pofytes of tribulacyon<sup>34</sup> and The Rote or myrroure of consolacyon and conforte—seems to be an outgrowth of two distinct but not unrelated traditions. The ascetic traditions of the New Testament and the early fathers helped to shape the world-denying attitude which is fundamental to tribulation teaching, although the Fathers rarely discussed tribulation on its own.<sup>35</sup> St. Augustine's views, together with St. Gregory's, which do not differ substantially from those of his predecessor, are the most commonly quoted non-biblical sources cited in the tribulation treatises and may be taken as representative of this patristic tradition.<sup>36</sup> He saw temptation in terms of a battle<sup>37</sup> in which salvation was the reward of victory and where failure meant damnation, but because Christ has overcome temptation and the power of darkness, union with Him will enable the Christian to conquer sin.<sup>38</sup> The individual could profit from the experience of tribulation in a number of ways: it helped the good to persevere in virtue and so to increase their heavenly reward,<sup>39</sup> and it encouraged them to pray.<sup>40</sup> It purged a man's



soul<sup>41</sup> and taught him to know himself and God more truly.<sup>42</sup> But the struggle was more than just an individual concern. Christ talked of the clash between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan,<sup>43</sup> and St. Augustine used the figure of two cities.<sup>44</sup> Somehow authors had to express the fundamental opposition between the two powers without falling into the heresy of manichean dualism.<sup>45</sup>

To the spiritual combat and world - denying outlook of the ascetic tradition may be added the influential tradition of the pagan-Christian consolatio genre.<sup>46</sup> Cicero and Seneca were among the most influential pagan users of the form, and Seneca's views on worldly values, fortune and suffering are frequently quoted in devout treatises.<sup>47</sup> Boethius in his De Consolatione Philosophiae was the first Christian to make use of the genre, and his influence on subsequent authors was very great,<sup>48</sup> although he is not mentioned in the English tribulation treatises. Two reasons may be adduced for their silence. The first is that they are primarily devotional works which contain little theological argument and even less philosophical reasoning;<sup>49</sup> they tell the reader what is to be believed and do not really attempt to console him in his adversity. The second reason is that the English tribulation treatises lack the essential form of the Boethian consolatio, the debate.<sup>50</sup> The kind of civilized dialogue characteristic of Cicero, Seneca and Boethius is not found in English until the time of More and Lupset, and even More seems unwilling to use the method whole-heartedly in works of a religious nature. On a superficial level, however, the apparent world-denying strain of Stoicism was clearly congenial to many medieval moral and religious writers,<sup>51</sup> and on occasion the effect of the "reversal ethics" of the Kingdom of God seems remarkably similar to the changes wrought by Fortune.<sup>52</sup>

The English tribulation treatises printed about 1500 may be seen as brief and much simplified versions of the large consolation books of Dambach and Nider.<sup>53</sup> They are very simple in form, relying mainly on numerical division<sup>54</sup> or on casual connection without any sense of overall structure or development, and they rarely attempt to discuss any wider issues. The boke of conforte agaynste all tribulacions is unusual, both in its use of the dialogue form and in its inclusion of standard elementary teaching on the seven deadly sins, the five wits, the Sacraments and the Creed.<sup>55</sup> However, they seem to have provided the beginner in religion with the rudiments of an ascetic theology,<sup>56</sup> and they are of particular interest because they overlap at several points with other devout literature.<sup>57</sup> Many general works of edification have something to say on the subject,<sup>58</sup> and in particular a number of images which seem to have been closely connected with tribulation literature have a very wide diffusion.<sup>59</sup>

Only two of the tribulation treatises printed in England before 1500 are known to have reprinted during the 1530's, The xii profytes of tribulacyon and The Rote.<sup>60</sup> The latter is an expanded version of The xii profytes, to which it adds four introductory paragraphs and another eight chapters, which for the most part are no more than variations on what has gone before,<sup>61</sup> and a number of moral passages.<sup>62</sup> At other times the expansions are the result of the author's attempt to make the meaning clearer and capable of practical application, especially in matters relating to religious practice and personal piety.<sup>63</sup> A number of phrases such as "I exhorte you" or "I counseyll the"<sup>64</sup> are added, which help to temper the impersonal address of The xii profytes and make the conclusion of several chapters more emphatic.<sup>65</sup> The Rote may be a reworking of

The xii profytes by some ghostly father,<sup>66</sup> a conjecture which might be supported by a phrase such as, "I counseyll the as the ghostly phesycyon of thy soule..." or "wherefore dere beloued soule I praye the..."<sup>67</sup>

The xii profytes is known to have been popular in nunneries and among people connected with religious houses, but it was not confined to them.<sup>68</sup>

The two treatises are unusual in betraying no sign of any particular religious interest, a neutrality not often found in fifteenth century devotional works.<sup>69</sup> The Chastysing and The remedy ayenst the troubles of temptacyons are more obviously intended for religious,<sup>70</sup> but provided a lay person was sufficiently advanced in the spiritual life they would be as useful outside as inside the cloister. The boke of conforte, like the later Assaute and conquest of heven and More's Dyalogue of conforte, is completely neutral; and one reason for the popularity of the tribulation treatises may have been that they dealt with a problem common to all men in a general way.<sup>71</sup>

The various ways in which tribulation profits the soul may be likened, in a very general way, to the stages of growth in the spiritual life, and readers at different stages of spiritual development could concentrate on the aspects of the teaching which they found appropriate. The purgative way is the foundation of the spiritual life,<sup>72</sup> and tribulation purges the soul.<sup>73</sup> It also encourages separation from the cares of this world and fear of offending God,<sup>74</sup> and prevents the soul falling further into sin;<sup>75</sup> more positively, tribulation nourishes the heart.<sup>76</sup> The illuminative way is concerned with a growth in knowledge, with the way in which the soul learns from its sufferings; and The Rote quotes St. August<sup>ine</sup>'s dictum "Nouerim me nouerim te".<sup>77</sup> Through his tribulation man learns to recognize his own sinful nature<sup>78</sup> and to

comprehend something of God's love for mankind. Thus the soul learns to see its suffering as at least in part deserved, the payment of a small part of the immense debt owed to His Creator.<sup>79</sup> Once tribulation is accepted as a token of God's love—"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth"<sup>80</sup> the way is open for further progress. Adversity leads the soul to seek "the things that are above"<sup>81</sup> and gradually the soul becomes more malleable, more open to the influence of God's grace, and more eager to pray to Him and to serve Him.<sup>82</sup> Knowing that even suffering is within God's providence,<sup>83</sup> the soul may endure it more easily and though it be drawn into deeper communion with His Maker: "tribulacyon ioyneth mannes soule vnto god".<sup>84</sup>

Unlike The Assaute, The xii profytes and The Rote together with The Chastising, The boke of conforte and Flete's Remedy show no sense of progression and are not arranged so as to show the kind of development outlined above. A well structured and developing theme is not characteristic of the fifteenth nor of many sixteenth-century devotional treatises, and The xii profytes and The Rote are good examples of a characteristic method employed by many authors. Each chapter revolves around a proposition, which is illustrated and repeated with variations. The method was well suited to an unlearned audience; it could be read a section at a time and the reader or hearer was constantly reminded of the main point. The Rote was introduced by four paragraphs of what can only be described as miscellaneous reflections on the subject of tribulation, while the printed versions of The xii profytes<sup>85</sup> were prefaced by two originally independent pices, the Six Masters and the "Nota de pacientia".<sup>86</sup> For some reason the latter, a general encomium of tribulation, was not translated, making it the longest piece of

untranslated Latin found in the English treatises under consideration. It repeats many of the points already noted and emphasizes the purgative aspect and the value of separation from the world.

Infirmitas enim corporis generat odium mundi & parat  
amorem dei. Cogit nos vitam presentem tamquam  
erumnosam peregrinationem & exilium odio habere &  
vitam eternam desideranter concupiscere.

The Six Masters is like the kind of "Sprüche" often attributed to Eckhart and his followers,<sup>87</sup> and it uses a series of comparisons to show how much better it is to suffer tribulation than to live a life of perfect devotion, to have the Blessed Virgin and all the saints pray for one, or to gain worldly reward. The summary of the fifth master of the virtues of tribulation may be compared with those of the Orologium and More's Dyalogue of comforte.<sup>88</sup>

Tribulation was considered a necessary condition of salvation—"Per multas tribulationes oportet intrare in regnum dei" is the quotation with which The Rote begins and The xii profytes ends<sup>89</sup> — and there was no alternative way to heaven.<sup>90</sup> The Christian<sup>is</sup> irrevocably committed to the fight. Man's debts must be paid and those who refuse suffering in this world face the prospect of the eternal pains of hell.<sup>91</sup> The Rote gives the orthodox view, that sins which have been confessed (actually or by intention) will not merit damnation, although "y<sup>e</sup> muste suffre temporall payne for them here or in purgatorye".<sup>92</sup> This encouraged a tendency to emphasize the quantitative value of tribulation—"after the quantyte of trybulacyon shall be the qu<sup>an</sup>tyte & mesur of thy glorie & consolacōn".<sup>93</sup> and not unrelated is the idea frequently expressed that tribulation is a more meritorious and less painful choice than purgatory.<sup>94</sup> As might be expected from one who wrote much against the Reformers in



defence of traditional doctrines, More's Dyalogue of conforte discusses the question of purgatory in more detail than the other tribulation treatises; but observing the distinction between devotional and doctrinal or polemical work, he refuses on this occasion to be drawn into controversy.<sup>95</sup>

Although the experience of tribulation was a necessary part of the salvation process and could help to reduce the pain of purgatory, ultimately salvation depended upon the saving work of Christ. The boke of conforte with its dialogue between Christ and the poor sinner is far more obviously Christocentric than other tribulation treatises of the same period. Christ addressed the sinner in language which echoes the complaints of Christ characteristic of the passion literature. It is far more personal and emotive than the rather impersonal and unemotional style of most of the other treatises:

... I say you that all my life hath ben in dolours  
and my yeres ben ended in wepynges/to the ende that  
ye lerne for to bere pacyentlye your payne and  
labour & that ye ayde and helpe me for to bere my  
crosse. Wepe/wepe your synnes. Offre to me in the  
place of the droppes of my precyous blode the  
whyche I haue shedde for you abundantly clere  
teris for to washe and to clense your consyence  
so purely that I there may haue my dwellinge place:  
and to the entent that ye knowe the loue whych I  
haue shewed vnto you: I demaunde and aske now of  
you what thyng may I more do for you than I haue  
done/and yet dayly I ceasse nat to gyue you goode  
inspyracyons for to withdrawe you frome synne I  
sende you the goodes of the erthe and somtyme of  
trybulacyons to call you ageyne. 96

Obvious references to Christ's Passion are not common in The xii profytes, The Rote or More's Dyalogue of conforte.<sup>97</sup> There are two direct references to the Passion in The xii profytes. The first offers a summary of Christ's sufferings and dwells, as did so much devotion centred in the Passion, on His wounds:

For here he|| toke mankynde/in whichehe suffred many  
tribulacyons detraccyons/blasphemyes/scornes/repreues  
slaunders/hunger/thurste & colde/& many betyngs/sharpe  
scourgynges/many thousandes of great woundes/and was  
nayled vpon ye crosse bytwene<sup>tw</sup> theues/& dyed the  
shamefullest deth y<sup>t</sup> the iewes coude ordeyn for hym.  
And after yt he was rysen from deth & styed vp in to  
heuen he kepte his woundes as for tokens that yu sholdest  
knowe that he wold have mynde of the...  
Loo I have wryten the in my handes/yt is in all<sup>98</sup> my woundes  
whiche I suffred for ye love of the & mankynde.

The second example presents Christ as an exemplar of suffering and introduces the simile of the true knight, around which a number of images cluster:

And yf the smytynge of trybulacyon in the syde be  
sharpe & grevous to suffre/beholde our lorde Jesu  
Chryst thy maker & thy brother wounded in the syde  
for thy love/& yu shalte suffre it the more easely/  
as a true knyght whom he seeth his lordes woundes/  
[he felith not his owen woundis].<sup>99</sup>

Sometimes the tribulations are seen as Knights of Christ sent to defend the soul against temptation; on one occasion the soul besieged by tribulation is delivered by God's aid;<sup>100</sup> and finally, as the knight must be proved in battle before he is dubbed, so must the soul be tried by tribulation before it can be rewarded.<sup>101</sup> The remaining references to Christ's work are perhaps less direct and they are all derived from biblical metaphors for, or types of, Christ. These include the third, fourth and fifth manners of purgation—the gardener pruning his vines, the threshing of corn and the pressing of grapes,<sup>102</sup> and there are several references to the Christus medicus theme.<sup>103</sup> More describes various types of tribulation as "medicinable or els more than medicinable", and later introduces a discussion justifying the use of physic;<sup>104</sup> discussion as to how far medicine was to be trusted was frequently raised in the ars moriendi literature. The final image

of Christ to be considered is that of a nurse or mother:

For as the mother with the chylde cheweth harde meat/  
the whiche the chylde may not chewe/and draweth it into  
her body/where that meat is turned in to mylke to nourysshynge  
of the chylde. So Christ that in holy wryte is cleped  
our mother/for the greatnes of his tender love that he  
hath to vs/he chewed for vs bytter paynes/harde wordes/  
repreues & slaunders/with bytternes of his passyon that  
he suffred for us to nouryssh vs/& strayneth vs ghostly  
by ensample of hym to suffre trybulacyons & aduersytees  
of this worlde.<sup>105</sup>

It is characteristic of late medieval devotion that the references to Christ should concentrate on His Passion, and the first of the quotations from The xii profytes given above is an expanded version of the Latin and of the first group of manuscript sources.<sup>106</sup>

Most of these biblical metaphors were fairly well known, but one which was very widely used <sup>and</sup> seems to have been particularly connected with the theme of tribulation is that used in the second manner of purgation, the purging of gold by fire, or of iron by a file.<sup>107</sup> The purgative value of tribulation was widely accepted; but it encouraged other virtues as well, notably patience and meekness, of which Christ was the perfect exemplar,<sup>108</sup> but Job is frequently cited as an example of patience.<sup>109</sup> Other virtues referred to, but again neither explained nor elaborated upon, include obedience and trusting God.<sup>110</sup> The promise that man will not be tempted above what he will be able to bear<sup>111</sup> is reiterated: "as trybulacyon encreaseth/so god multiplyeth grace <sup>&</sup> virtue". But just as the soldier must be ready armed before the attack, "so is it spede full afore trybulacyon yt the herte be heted with perfyte love & charite/that temptacyon of tribulacyon may be suffred ye more pacyently & gladly".<sup>112</sup> The more endowed with virtues a man is, the more he will profit from tribulation, which rather enhances the virtues

he already possesses than creates new ones. Unless it is well taken, tribulation will profit a soul nothing.<sup>113</sup> The only virtue which may be seen as positively encouraged by tribulation is hope, which takes the form of the expectation of the heavenly reward promised to those who suffer patiently.<sup>114</sup> Only More's Dyalogue of conforte questions but does not alter the traditional view that tribulation is a good and necessary experience, a gift of God.<sup>115</sup>

More's work is far longer than The xii profytes or The Rote, and would hardly be appreciated by anyone unable to read it for himself. The leisure of greater length and the lack of any tightly-woven driving argument<sup>116</sup> encourages the discussion of topics raised in the course of the dialogue between Vincent, whose role is mainly that of prompter and questioner, and his uncle Anthony. These include the question of purgatory, the nature of pusillanimity and scrupulosity (subjects dealt with more authoritatively but ~~perhaps~~ less amusingly by Bonde in his Devoute Epystle), and the long digression on suicide.<sup>117</sup> The mood, as might be expected of a work written in prison, is reflective; and the blending of truth and fiction, his mixture of personal history with allegorical touches and his use of "merry tales"<sup>118</sup> in a serious work provides a variety, a reality of setting<sup>119</sup> and a personal interest<sup>120</sup> not to be found in the fifteenth-century compositions which used allegory and exempla in a more formal way. The care over setting is characteristic of the dialogues of Cicero, Seneca and Lucian, which were often translated by humanist writers.<sup>121</sup> Unlike most of the fifteenth-century treatises, we not only know the author's name, but much about his personal life, through his own correspondence and through the lives of Roper, Harpsfield, and



Ro:Ba.<sup>122</sup> It is difficult to avoid reading More's own circumstances, reminiscent of Boethius' when he wrote De Consolatione, into his text and to wonder, for instance, whether Dame Alice More was the model for the shrewd wife and the woman who found the prison room so claustrophobic.<sup>123</sup> More's thoughts were often with his family during his imprisonment and it would be surprising if they did not find some place in his work.<sup>124</sup>

Just as the setting and the "merry tales" suggest the humanists' care for detail and concern to make a treatise interesting and occasionally entertaining as well as edifying,<sup>125</sup> so More, like Erasmus and Lupset but unlike Colet and most medieval authors,<sup>126</sup> was content to use the "goodly sayings" of the pagan philosophers in a devout treatise. He considered that their lack of Christian knowledge made them inadequate, but neither useless nor necessarily dangerous, guides to life.<sup>127</sup> Apart from Aristotle, Cicero and Seneca classical authors are not often cited in the more popular medieval devotional treatises. Of those three More quotes only Seneca by name, but he included references to Martial's Epigrams and to Pliny, and Aesop's fables are quoted four times; his own fable of the ass, the fox and the wolf is of a similar kind, lightly satirical and with an obvious moral.<sup>128</sup> St. Augustine is the patristic author most often quoted in the Dyalogue, but saints Ambrose, Bernard, Cassian, Cyprian and Jerome are also referred to - a highly traditional list of authorities.<sup>129</sup> Gerson too seems to have been influential, and although not quoted Boethius' De Consolatione may well have been in his mind.<sup>130</sup> By far his most important source of quotation was the Bible, with a preference for the Pauline epistles, while Psalm XC (Vulgate) plays an



important part in the Dyalogue's structure, almost acting as a refrain linking together the various types of temptation.<sup>131</sup> Important though these literary influences are, More's main debt was probably to the spirituality of the "Holy munkes...of the charter house order."<sup>132</sup> In the Dyalogue the peace of mind and quiet confidence of Anthony seem to reflect the mood of More, "well content to goe, if God call me hence tomorowe".<sup>133</sup>

More's views on tribulation differ little from the earlier treatises; like them he emphasizes the necessity of suffering and the profits to be gained from patient endurance of it. Though he analyses different types of tribulation and forms of temptation in rather more detail than The xii profytes or The Rote, the approach is still reflective and theoretical.<sup>134</sup> He stresses the importance of contrition and tears, confession and penance, and describes some of the seven deadly sins, the summons of "the gryselye cruell hangman death" and scenes from Christ's life and Passion in a manner which could be paralleled from a large number of fifteenth-century treatises.<sup>135</sup> The advice given in The Dyalogue, II xvi, on private devotion seems to be largely autobiographical,<sup>136</sup> and offers a fine summary of the mood and content of late medieval piety, as does his rather more world-denying "Godly meditation":

Geue me thy grace good Lorde to set the worlde at nought.  
To set my mynde fast vppon the  
And not to hange vppon the blast of mennes mouthes.  
To be content to be solitary.  
Not to long for worldly comapny.  
Lytle & litte vtterly to cast of ye worlde.  
And ridde my mynde of all the busynesse therof...  
To knowe myne owne vilitee & wretchednes.  
To humble and maken myselfe vnder the myghty hand of God.  
To bewayl my sinnes passed.  
For the purgyng of them, paciently to suffer aduersitie.  
Gladly to beare my purgatorye here.

To be joyful of tribulacions.  
 To walke the narowe way that leadeth to lyfe.  
 To beare the crosse with Christ.  
 To have the laste thyng in remembrance.  
 To have ever afore myne eye, my death  
 A death, that is ever at hande.  
 To make death no straunger to me.  
 To forsee and consider the everlasting fier of hell.  
 To pray for pardone before the iudge come.  
 To have continually in minde, the passion that Christ  
 suffred for me.  
 For his benefites vncessantly to giue him thankes.  
 To bye the time again, that I before have lost...  
 Of worldly substance, frendes, libertye, life, and al,  
 to sette the losse  
 at right nought, for the winning of Christ.  
 To thinke my most enemies my beste frendes.  
 For the bretherne of Joseph, coude neuer have done him  
 so much good with their love and favor, as they did wt  
 their malice and hatred.  
 These mindes are more to be desired of everyman, than all  
 the treasure of all the princes and kinges christen &  
 heathen, were it gathered and layde together all vpon one heape.<sup>1</sup>

The world's denying strain of medieval piety is reflected in the  
Dialogue of comforte's warnings on the insecurity of money, lands and  
 possessions, and the folly of seeking them for personal gain.<sup>138</sup>

Persecution is seen as a means of exposing men's true attitude to outward  
 goods: "Non potestis Deo servire et mammonae."<sup>139</sup> But while most of  
 the content takes up the standard moral denunciations of the medieval  
 devout treatise - usually written for religions, whose business ought  
 not to have been with worldly goods - there are signs of a greater  
 social awareness. More recognizes the practical necessity for men of  
 substance to supply the materials and a market for labour and produce;  
 "For surely ye riche mannes substaunce, is ye wel spring of the poore  
 mannes liwing."<sup>140</sup> He makes it clear that the wealthy are not always  
 courting damnation, nor are the poor always virtuous; it need not be  
 wrong to possess riches but it is always wrong to covet them.<sup>141</sup> Of

his other work it has been said that he "anticipated some of the most penetrating social analysis of the revolutionary thirties by almost a generation"<sup>142</sup> - the Dialogue's teaching is consistent with that of his earlier works.

As so often, what may be described as the catholic tradition was continued in the writings of the English recusants. The second part of Person's Christian Directory<sup>143</sup> deals with impediments which hinder or reduce the effectiveness of the Christians' witness. The third impediment takes up the problem of the fear among the English Catholic community of the 1570's and 1580's.<sup>144</sup> Although better arranged, being clearly set out, with introductions, headings and sub-sections, and going into more detail on some points, such as how to behave in tribulation, than the earlier treatises, Persons adds little that is new. The only conspicuous difference is his greater use of scriptural quotation, not only verses but whole passages.<sup>145</sup> Tribulation is seen as the mark of the just man, of the elect, indeed, for a man in adversity may comfort himself that suffering is a sign of predestination.<sup>146</sup> The godly person cannot escape the battle - if not against external enemies then against inward passions.<sup>147</sup> The list of reasons why God sends affliction gives an indication of how much Persons was indebted to earlier thinking on the subject.<sup>148</sup> Tribulation increases the merit of this life and therefore the glory of the future reward; it draws men from love of this world; it is a medicine to cure, or purge their diseases; it preserves them from future sin and lessens the pains of purgatory; it proves men; it makes them run to God<sup>149</sup> and it demonstrates and makes men appreciate God's power to deliver them; it exercises the Christian

virtues, makes men more resolute to serve God and helps them to grow more like Christ.

In the third section he reiterates several of these points, but with variations and additions intended to comfort those in tribulation. God, he declares, has ordained suffering to be "the ordinary meanes of his seruantes saluation, the badge and livery of his Sonne; the highway to heauen vnder the standard of his Crosse".<sup>150</sup> Persons reminds the sufferer that all his pain is within God's providence; it is laid on him by Christ and the quantity of his suffering is a measure of God's love; the sufferer must trust God and he will be helped by His grace. The emphasis again falls on the consolation of the reward which suffering will merit provided it is well taken:

The hole scripture/all the wrytinges of the fathers/  
and all the deades and actes of the holy men are consenting  
vnto thys that those thynges whyche are most noysome are  
most profytable to theym that beleue/so that they be well  
suffered. 151

Like The xii profytes, The Rote and even More's Dyalogue of comforte Person's attempt at consolation relies almost entirely upon the promised reward and upon the rationalization and explanation of various aspects of tribulation.

A Kempis's brief summary of the uses of adversity<sup>152</sup> is traditional enough in content, but the negative contempt<sup>element</sup>us mundi is balanced by the positive emphasis on what man can learn about himself and particularly how, in his helplessness, he can through prayer draw closer to God.<sup>153</sup> The following chapter shows how no-one can escape temptation, but how its effects may be reduced by firm resistance at the very beginning and how by enduring it patiently a man may progress in virtue.<sup>154</sup> By emphasizing the way in which tribulation helps a soul to grow in virtue and draw nearer to God, and omitting all mention of the heavenly reward



as a compensation for earthly suffering, A Kempis offers a new understanding of tribulation, which may best be seen in the chapter "Of the royall & victorious waye of the <sup>holy</sup> ~~holy~~ crosse".<sup>155</sup> Christ's call to his disciples, to deny themselves, to take up their cross and follow Him, is contrasted with the far more awful words of judgement: "Go ye fro me for ever, to be in perpetuall fyre";<sup>156</sup> and the way of the cross is shown to be not only the safer, but the most truly joyful and glorious way to inward peace and salvation. It is the only way, and since it is inescapable it is better embraced willingly than violently against the will. Neither the saints nor Christ Himself could escape suffering. But the way is not without solace; Christ offers both help and comfort, and provided the soul will trust God there is the promise of consolation, perpetual life and joy.<sup>157</sup> The xii profytes, The Rote, The Chastising, Flete and More all at some stage seek to answer the problem of suffering in terms of an equation whereby the heavenly reward - never more closely defined - will be commensurate with the amount of suffering endured on earth. A Kempis deals with the problem in a more personal way. He is sympathetic and understanding in his treatment of the subtleties of temptation and its varying effects on the individual; and he resolves the problem of tribulation not in terms of an equation, but in terms of a progressive personal relationship with Christ, a relationship animated by love.<sup>158</sup>

Two things link the Protestant treatise, Of the Preparation to the crosse, and to Deathe, and of the comforte vnder the crosse and deathe,<sup>159</sup> to A Kempis's chapter on the victorious way of the cross: the first is its refusal to make suffering a matter of merit deserving reward—



And when god doth afflicte his people for theyr synnes,  
 he dothe not therfore afflycte them, that by theyr  
 afflictions, they shuld satisfie for theyr synnes.  
 For the passion and sufferynge of Iesus Christe only,  
 is the raunsome and expiation of our synnes. But  
 therfore he afflicteth, that by affliction he maye  
 dryue synners to repentaunce. For repentaunce or  
 penance cometh fyrste by the knowlege of synne:  
 and then by faythe, that our synne is forgyuen vs  
 for goddes promise sake: and of faith burgeth forthe  
 the callinge on the name of God. 160—

and the second is the emphasis upon the cross, not so much as conformity ~~xx~~  
 to the example of Christ in His sufferings (although this aspect is not  
 ignored)<sup>161</sup> as conformity to the word of God—

For the gospell is the worde of the crosse,  
 who soeuer preacheth it trewely, and confesse it,  
 muste nedes suffre afflyction. 162

The greater part of the Preparation to the Crosse is made up of direct  
 quotation or paraphrase of the Scriptures. Catenas of quotations from  
 the Bible are used to prove, illustrate or justify the main points, and  
 the margins are peppered with references in the approved Protestant style.  
 The long final chapter (xv) provides the reader with an armoury of  
 quotations suitable for the refutation of all manner of temptations by  
 the Devil. The same method, of allowing scripture to speak for itself,  
 had been used a little earlier in The Fountayne or well of lyfe, but the  
 almost complete lack of headings makes this a difficult book to use.<sup>163</sup>  
 However dull this weight of exclusive biblicism may seem to the modern reader  
 it is clear that then the Bible, until so recently banned to the English  
 reader, was not only regarded as authoritative, but was also immensely  
 popular.<sup>164</sup>

The unrelieved biblicism — there are no "merry tales" or exempla or  
 even quotations from the fathers or saints' writings — together with the  
 author's determination to preach the gospel of truth makes Of the preparatiou

the crosse sound much more earnest than the earlier works. Earnestness was a common, but, as Hughe's Troubled mans medicine demonstrates,<sup>165</sup> by no means inevitable characteristic of Protestant writers. Although he does not indulge in the kind of bitter anti-Roman polemic found in Turner's slightly later Huntyng and fynding out of the Romish fox, Becon's Relikes of Rome or the numerous anti-papal tracts of the 1530's, the author makes sure that his readers will be able to distinguish the true cross from any strange one: "as prescript dayes of fastynge, vowed chastitie, shurtes of heare, disguised garmentes, and such other trifles".<sup>166</sup> Many of the traditional points are made—about all tribulation being within God's providence, the promise that man will not be tempted above what he can bear, the need for patience and resort to prayer—but the underlying sola fideism frequently alters their interpretation. God's providence, for instance, is seen to extend beyond His conduct of tribulation; it becomes the undergirding principle of all creation.<sup>167</sup> God is not only the dispenser of tribulation, which does not just happen but is sent for some good reason, but Creator of the world, who cares for all His creatures. Thus medicine, made from things created by God, may be used as an instrument of God, but it cannot be effective without faith in the Creator.<sup>168</sup> God is seen<sup>as</sup> actively involved in the salvation of men, and tribulation is not a matter of ill-luck, fate or chance, nor is it sent to destroy but to save man. It is God's way of proving him and strengthening his faith, or of calling him to repentance. Seen in this way, with faith, there is no reason to despair, for the cross "sanctifyeth, and declar<sup>goddess</sup>eth/favoure. Happy is he that vnderstandeth... howe god even in striking vs, wyllleth vs wel",<sup>169</sup> and there is further comfort in the knowledge that Christ too was tempted and suffered adversity.<sup>170</sup>

Tribulation was not just to be accepted passively and endured in expectation of a heavenly reward. The man in adversity must pray to God.<sup>171</sup> After a general introduction of quotations and examples from Scripture of those who prayed to God in adversity the author goes on to explain what prayer is and to insist on the need for it. He defines it in terms of a request made to God or a calling on the name of the Lord, and goes on to show by means of scriptural quotation, whose prayers are heard of God and to define the parts of prayer - the promise, faith, the desire, to ask in the name of Jesus and thanksgiving, each of which is briefly explained.<sup>172</sup> The ~~desire~~<sup>wish</sup> to define and explain is again characteristic of the Protestant desire to ensure that Christians should understand what they believe. The reader is also warned against being tempted in adversity to use prayer in a way which dictates to God the time or manner of relief<sup>173</sup> - a warning which suggests considerable understanding of human weaknesses. As well as praying to God the man in adversity must trust Him, believe in His presence with him, believe in His promises, and in His power and willingness to forgive.<sup>174</sup>

Apart from the increased biblicism of the Protestant treatises, their other distinguishing feature is their emphasis upon faith, in particular the faith that God will forgive men's sins for Christ's sake. Tribulation therefore is not something which earns a heavenly reward, nor is it taken up into love as in the Orologium or A Kempis, but it is a summons, a sign and a promise:

God calleth to repentaunce, and by affliction he in a manner speketh and declareth, that he wyll forgyue. For as baptisme, or eatynge of the lordes body, do wytnesse vnto vs, that we are forgyuen: even so nerehande affliction maye be called a certain sacrament. For it sygnifieth that god wyll forgyue... even as other sacramentes have the worde of the element: so to affliction is the word annexed, whereby is promysed grace. 175

Adversity frequently brings a man to repentance, which is defined as contrition coupled with faith.<sup>176</sup> But once he has repented, and provided he has faith and believes in God's promise of forgiveness, tribulation may encourage great hope and desire for the life of the world to come.<sup>177</sup> In the "consolacyon for troubled consciences" there is an excellent summary of the Christian hope, which sees it not as the expectation of a post mortem reversal as in The xii profytes or The Rote<sup>178</sup> but in terms of Christ's resurrection in which the believer will share.<sup>179</sup>

It is worth noting the translator's dedication Of the preparation to the Crosse to Thomas Cromwell because, he says:

I ewydently perceyue, that you are endewed not only with godly knowledge and doctryne, but also have a right *onehly/* fervent zeale, good mynd, and desyre to set forth all suche thynges as may be for the vtilitie helpe and comforte of the hole congregation and churche of this reälme. 180

The work is translated and put into print for the good of the common weal. This desire to advance England's knowledge of and adherence to the true faith was in succeeding years to encourage considerable national pride and the sense that England was in some special way under God's providence.<sup>181</sup> However, with the hardening of the Protestant - Catholic opposition, particularly under Mary's and Elizabeth's reigns, tribulation treatises seem to have flourished, especially among Protestant authors. A full treatment of the subject was to be found in Otto Wermüller's Aspyrytuall and most precyouse pearle, translated by Coverdale and first printed in 1550.<sup>182</sup> It is a classic exposition of the Protestant doctrine of tribulation, emphasizing the need for faith and repentance but including a great deal of traditional material, of which the most notable are the numerous similitudes showing how God

chastens and proves the soul in adversity.<sup>183</sup> Some tribulation treatises were a direct outcome of and written for those caught<sup>up</sup> in the political situation. The party enduring persecution is encouraged by its own priests or ministers to stand firm and to use the occasion to advance in knowledge of the faith and grow in virtue. Hide's A consolatorie Epistle, printed in 1579, is a summons to the English Catholics to suffer for God's cause and to preserve the unity of the Church:

This cause is so important that none can suffer for it but by the gracious gifte of God, and God gyveth this gyfte to none but to his speciall friends. This ioyneth you neare vnto God, causeth you to set lesse by the worlde, diminisheth your paynes in Purgatorie, and encreaseth your finall rewarde in heaven. 184

Some twenty years earlier under the Marian persecution Protestants had sought to comfort their followers. Bradford's Exhortation to the Brethren in England,<sup>185</sup> like many of his letters,<sup>186</sup> contains much that is traditional. He opens by reminding his readers that they are strangers and pilgrims in the world and that all God's children have tasted adversity in their journey to heaven. Among the commodities of tribulation he mentions that it brings knowledge of God and of self and that the cross of affliction is a means whereby God increases virtues in us. However, in one sense Bradford resorts to the idea of the post-mortem reversal of earlier Catholic writers, in his promise that the apparent triumphs of evil - identified with the Roman Church - would at the last be reversed. Becon makes the same point in his Comfortable Epistle<sup>187</sup> and adds much more in the way of anti-Roman polemic. Bradford and Becon saw England's captivity under Mary as God's just punishment for the country's failure to live the true faith. Their present sufferings were a collective warning to repent, in much the same way that the fifteen tokens of Doom



were to be the culminating tribulations before the end of all things:

"For<sup>in</sup> those days shall be tribulation, such as there hath not been like from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never shall be".<sup>188</sup>

### The Contemplation of Death

The tribulation treatises, with their justification of suffering and their teaching on how man was to behave in adversity, were probably intended less for those who were actually enduring suffering than as a preparation for it. Apart from the chance of adverse fortune, political or financial, physical suffering from illness or wounds, was not only more painful, unrelieved by modern drugs or surgery, and more public, since the sick person would be nursed at home, in houses which generally had far fewer separate rooms, but it was not infrequently fatal. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries anyone who reached maturity would almost certainly have known death in his own family, death from illness, or the death of an aged relation or more frequently an infant's death.<sup>189</sup>

The victims of public hanging or execution remained on the gibbets or exhibited on stakes long after they were dead.<sup>190</sup> The fact of death was commonplace, an ever present reminder of man's mortality.<sup>191</sup> The churches too were crowded with memorials to the dead, which ranged from the ornate chantry chapels and cadaver tombs of the great cathedral and abbey churches, to brasses of shrouded effigies or skeletons and simple stone memorials in local parish churches. During the course of the liturgical year many a preacher would, no doubt, have something to say about death.<sup>192</sup> It was obviously even more important in the case of death than of suffering that men should be prepared and equipped to face it, and this is what much of the literature about death was intended to do. But although death was undoubtedly considered an important subject it was not the only nor the most frequent preoccupation of devout souls during the period.<sup>193</sup>

These signs show none of the crude physical detail of a poem such as

Before embarking on a more detailed survey one point must be made: nearly every modern writer on the literature and art of death has dealt with it either from a European point of view or has at least made use of examples drawn from European sources.<sup>194</sup> From her study of the English religious lyrics of the middle ages Miss Woolf has been led to question the application of Huizinga's conclusions to England,<sup>195</sup> conclusions which have sometimes been applied rather uncritically.<sup>196</sup> A study of English devotional literature confirms the view that, despite the influence and borrowings from continental sources, during the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the native tradition eschewed the excess<sup>es</sup> of morbidity and the fascination with the more macabre aspects of death found, for example, in France.<sup>197</sup> The literature and art of death does not seem to have occupied the English presses - even including English translations produced in France - to anything like the same extent as it did the French presses between about 1470 and 1540. In this chapter emphasis will wherever possible be placed upon English illustrations - that is, examples available in England even if not of English provenance.

#### Memento mori

The only sure defence against death was to be prepared for it, replenished with good deeds, shriven, and at peace with man and God. For those whose lives were not cut off by accident or illness there were natural warnings of advancing years. Too often the young and lusty delay for too long the contemplation of death, saying:

For the They shulde lyue in thoughte and care for drede of deathe,  
That be olde and coked, and stoupyng to the erthward/that  
have a lyghte shakynge heed/hangynge chekes/and holowe eies/  
||a continuall droppynge nose/ a fewe tethe and rotten...<sup>198</sup>

These signs show none of the crude physical detail of a poem such as "Burgeis, thou haste so blowen atte the cole" nor the elaboration found in a lyric such as "From þe tyme þat we were bore",<sup>199</sup> and they seem to have been a far less popular form of warning in devotional treatises than among poets and preachers.<sup>200</sup> The treatise writers also ignored the possibilities of the old man's warning;<sup>201</sup> they seem to have avoided this type of dramatic confrontation, which was so congenial to artists and to the writers of lyrics. They did, however, make considerable use of the signs of death, more effective as a warning to repent because more urgent, decisive and final. In themselves the signs listed<sup>202</sup> are no more religious than in books of practical instruction such as The boke of knowledge/whether a syke person beynge in perylle/shall lyue, or dye & c., Prognosticacion drawn out of Ipocras or The treaures of pore men,<sup>203</sup> it is the use to which they are put that invests them with religious significance. The list in The mirroure of golde concludes: "And the forsayde signes shalbe neighbours doynge servise to deth". Death here is not, as in the medical treatises, a simple physical fact but an event of eternal significance. The obscurity in H.R. Robbins' useful article, "Signs of Death in Middle English",<sup>204</sup> is due to his inability to maintain the distinction between medical and religious lists of signs, whereas it seems to me that the difference lies not in the lists of signs but in the differing attitudes to death. In the medical treatises the emphasis is upon the signs and the way in which they may be treated to try to avert death; in the devout treatises the signs are less important than the death they herald.

For the most part the signs of death are given as a simple list of

things which warn that death is imminent. In the Speculum Vitae Christi Christ shows signs of death just before he utters the seventh word from the cross and dies. More uses them in a more effective way than most when he makes his reader imagine what it would be like to feel those signs now, in his own body:

....yf thou dye no worse death, yet at the least  
wise lying in thy bedde, thy hed shooting, thy  
backe akynge, thy vaynes beating, thine heart panting,  
thy throte ratelinge, thy fleshe trembling, thy mouth  
gaping, thy nose sharpenge, thy legges coling, thy  
fingers fumbling, thy breath shorting, all thy strength  
fainting, thy lyfe vanishing, and thy death drawyng on... 205

He goes on to relate the signs even more closely to the reader's own experience by asking him to remember the pain of some illness he has suffered, and warning that the pain will be greatly intensified at death. Somehow men must be made to realize that death is not just a remote possibility, but that it will happen to them all and that it will feel like this. Later in the century and during the following century this imaginative anticipation of the circumstances surrounding death was elaborated and explored by St. Ignatius Loyola, by John Donne and by Luis de Granada, who wrote:

imagine yourself sometime all alone in the face of the  
agonies of death, and consider the things that would  
most likely trouble you at that hour.... For one blow  
that can be struck but once should be well rehearsed. 206

Interest in death was not confined to the aged or the ill, but, as Owst has said,<sup>207</sup> it casts its shadow back across the whole of life. The subject though important was not, to judge by the surviving printed works, by any means an obsession in England; the first half of the sixteenth century was not an age which "saw the skull beneath the skin" all the time. The subject of death can be treated in many ways, but the



most direct was the simple memento mori injunction. Because it was so simple the memento mori motif was frequently fused with other themes, forming a starting point, for example, to the ubi sunt or quid profuit themes, or involved in the idea of the body's decay or in the contemptus mundi outlook; it is rarely found alone in the devout treatises. Most of them, however, were agreed upon the importance of the recollection of death, and authorities cited in support of this view included biblical ones such as Ecclesiasticus VII: 36, XXVIII:6, XXXVIII:20 - 3; the philosophers Plato, Socrates as quoted in Cicero's Tusculan Disputations I.xvi, and Seneca Epistulae Morales XVI, and, among the Fathers, saints Augustine, Gregory and Bernard.<sup>208</sup>

▮ The most interesting thing about this otherwise unremarkable list of characteristic medieval authorities is that the emphasis tends to fall upon the wisdom of the pagan philosopher's and their discernment of the subject's importance: "Tota vita philosophorum, meditatio mortis est".<sup>209</sup> Thomas Lupset was particularly impressed by the pagans' philosophy of death and the practical courage this inspired,<sup>210</sup> but pagan exemplars were quoted by Legrand, Dionysius <sup>De</sup> and Carthusian and in the Cordiale well before the influence of the humanists reawakened interest in the classics.

The value of the memento mori was well summarized but without approval in Certeine prayers:

se how many meditacyons: howe many bokes: how many meanes:  
howe many remedies: are ymagined/that by the memorye of this  
ane euil [death] they may fear vs from synne/make vs dispyse  
the world/alleviate oure passyons/& euyls/andcomfort theym  
that are vexed by the comparyson of this horrible & great  
euyl/whiche for all that is necessarye. 211

The first benefit claimed is that recollection of death will make men afraid to sin and so help to keep them in the way of life. The same

point was made by many authors, including Isidore, Legrand, Whitford and in The mirroure of Golde and the Cordiale,<sup>212</sup> and it is perhaps the most obvious lesson of the memento mori teaching. Coupled with the recollection of death as a warning against sin is the exhortation, frequently found, to live in a state of constant preparedness for death as though each day were the last, and thus the memento mori is taken up into the carpe diem theme.<sup>213</sup> The second and third benefits of the remembrance of death noted in Certeine prayers were that it encouraged man to despise the world and that it helped to alleviate the fear of death, two subjects frequently discussed in the devout treatises. In order to despise the world, however, it was necessary to be cut off from any involvement in it, to hold no affection for the things of this world, riches, position or possessions, and here the memento mori merges into the contemptus mundi theme: "he lyghtly dyspisyth all thingis: that thinketh alwaye to dye".<sup>214</sup> The third benefit, that the recollection of death alleviates fear, since what is familiar by anticipation is never so alarming as the unexpected and unknown, is one of the reasons which seems to have prompted Whitford to write A dayly exercyse and experyence of dethe. Both Whitford and Lupset expose the foolishness of fearing that which is inevitable.<sup>215</sup> If familiarity and inevitability were rather negative comforters against death, there were several authors who offered more positive comforts in the vision of death as a joyful release, the means of entry into eternal life.<sup>216</sup> Protestant authors were particularly concerned to remove from their readers the fear of death, and the author of To <sup>teche</sup> take a man to dye was critical of traditional teaching, which he thought played upon man's natural fear.<sup>217</sup> Suso had lamented that few were well disposed to die—

The whiche (with) grete abstraccyone for ~~ye~~ worlde  
and deuocoyone of herte coueyten to dye for ~~ye~~ desyre  
of everlastynge life and with alle hir inwarde affe~~cy~~ouns  
desyren to be with ~~de~~cryste. 218 —

but in the closing prayer of the Orologium the description of the reception of the disciples' souls into heaven has about it a joyousness which dispels all trace of reluctance and fear.<sup>219</sup> An outburst of the enthusiastic language associated with mysticism is not surprising at the end of a work like the Orologium, but it is surprising to find Christ referred to as "the spouse" in Protestant tr<sup>at</sup>ises,<sup>220</sup> and to find writing as powerful as that of the seventh chapter in the first part of the "Concolasyon for troubled consciences",<sup>221</sup> which must not only have comforted its readers but inspired them to face death with confidence:

Truely whyle thou herest <sup>that</sup> Jesu Christ the sonne of  
God hath (by his most holy touching and passyon)  
consecrate and hal~~low~~ed all oure ewylles/and  
suffrynges/ye the deth itsel~~f~~e most extremest and  
greitest of all other/ hath blyssed the curse/  
glorified the slaunder made ryche the powertye/  
so that deth is compelled to be the gate of lyfe/  
curse/the begynnyng of blyssyng.222

The only way in which the memento mori finds expression on its own rather than as the starting point of or an element in other themes is in the form of an exercise: the ways in which the individual can imagine or practise death and the benefits which accrue from such a contemplation.<sup>223</sup> Richard Whitford's A dayly exercyse and experyence of dethe, printed by John Wayland in 1537,<sup>224</sup> is the fullest exposition of the memento mori theme to be published during the 1530's, and it is also one of the earliest attempts in English to treat the subject at all fully and systematically.<sup>225</sup> The treatise is in two parts: the first part is concerned to banish the fear of death ( a subject to be considered in

more detail later) and to encourage the reader to welcome death;<sup>226</sup> the second part offers a more practical form of "dayly exercyse" although it is liberally provided with theoretical definitions of words such as exercise, experience and death. After discussing various forms of death such as spiritual death and death to sin, Whitford introduces:

another maner of deth called of lerned men,  
meditatio mortis (that is to saye) the cogytacyon,  
thought and remembraunce/the busynes, tractacyon or  
intreatye, mencyon, ~~and~~ disputacyon of dethe.<sup>227</sup>

It is by frequent remembrance, discussion and exercise that a thing becomes known, and what is familiar and understood should not be frightening. Having stated the value of such recollection, to prepare the reader for his last end and to put away sin from the soul and replenish it with all good virtues,<sup>228</sup> Whitford at last introduces the first of his two methods of meditation on and exercise of death.

The first method is for the reader to remember or imagine someone condemned to death, to reflect that every deadly sin committed merits more pain than the cruel<sup>1</sup>lest physical distress, and to think what he would do to save his soul were he to find himself thus condemned. Or, he may remember a death-bed scene, the weakness and temptations of the dying man, so familiar from numerous woodcuts and ars moriendi books and, no doubt, from actual experience.<sup>229</sup> Whitford, like the author of the Exornatorium curatorum,<sup>230</sup> is here recommending the use of <sup>the</sup> ars moriendi while a person is in good health to help him prepare for death and its temptations. Having persuaded him of the need to be prepared for death, Whitford then provides the reader with a dramatic monologue to say to himself: "I wil now in helth study, <sup>&</sup> ~~and~~ exercise my selfe wt this fourme:



& ~~and~~ specially how I shal answere ye lothly beste ye fende".<sup>231</sup> This calls upon the Lord, <sup>the</sup> "blessed lady mother of mercy", his good angel, patrons and his own saints to help him at his end; his sins are offered upon "vnto ye ston there to be polysshed, rubbed, ~~and~~ <sup>&</sup> scourd|| (that stone is the holy sacrement of penaunce)"<sup>232</sup> and so washed away by the merits of Christ's blood. Paraphrasing ~~the~~ a familiar prayer he continues:

I put yt precyous blode with his bytter passyon  
and his most cruel/and shamefull deth/ bytwene me  
~~and~~ all the synnes that ever I dyd in thought,  
worde, or dede, ~~and~~ <sup>&</sup> betwene me and his wrath and  
displeasure. 233

The fiend is challenged to produce any unconfessed sins, but is powerless to harm where there is "desyre of perfect contricyon", and finally all his sin is bequeathed and committed to the cruel beast. The monologue ends with a recapitulation of the death scene, "as yf you were than at the poynt of deth", a cry for forgiveness and the final committal:

In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum: redemisti  
me domine deus veritatis. In nomine patris ~~and~~  
filii, ~~and~~ spiritus sancti. Amen. Makyng a  
crosse wt a holy candell yf you haue it present...  
And thus do .iii. tymes together/and so go vnto  
reste as you shulde || go vnto your grace. 234

This rehearsal of the ars moriendi followed daily, a requirement only practicable for religious such as the nuns of Syon for whom it was written.<sup>235</sup> but easily adaptable to weekly or less frequent use by lay-people, would familiarize the reader with the thought of death and help to allay fear in that way. But the monologue also seeks to remove the fear of sin,<sup>236</sup> one of the main causes of the fear of death, and to encourage the reader to have faith in the merits of Christ's blood and the sacraments.<sup>237</sup> Unlike the second exercise this one requires no



contemplative gifts; it could be followed by beginners in religion and by lay-people, and its outline was simple enough to be easily grasped.

The second exercise, described as "more hygh <sup>&</sup> ~~and~~ excellent", seeks not only to prepare the reader for death and to allay his fear, but to give him "an audious <sup>&</sup> ~~and~~ gredye appetite to thirst <sup>&</sup> ~~and~~ wyssh for deth";<sup>238</sup> it provides the knowledge, art and "very practyse of dethe". Whitford begins with a conventional definition of death as a "departynge in sondre/ of the soule and the bodye";<sup>239</sup> and he goes on to show how the mystical experience of such holy peoples ~~as~~ St. Catherine of Sienna, where the body loses all its physical senses, is, according to this definition, an experience of death. For further information he refers the reader to another of his works (a not infrequent practice of Whitford), A werke of preparacyon, but this does not prevent his giving a brief summary of the familiar threefold remembrance - what I was, what I am and what I shall be<sup>240</sup> - in practice he ignores the last. The foulness of man's generation is handled in the usual contemptus mundi manner, but the consideration of man's present state takes ~~the~~ unusual form of a comparison between the infirmity, ignorance and villainy of the sinner and the power, wisdom and love of Christ, without which man would be "but an hethen hounde". The exercise goes on to consider how much He did for man, and it gives an outline of Christ's life and work in rather more detail than the forty-word summary given at the end of the Werke for housholders, to which the reader is directed. The mention of Christ's Ascension leads into a lengthy description of heaven, clearly intended to sound attractive but in fact earth-bound by Whitford's wordy parallelisms, contrasts and lists. It lacks the sense of spontaneous joy found, for example, in many of

Thomas More's letters, at the end of the Orologium or in Cyprain's Sermons of Mortality. In this narration of Christ's life and description of heaven, some nine pages in all, Whitford seems to have lost the thread of the exercise and embarked upon teaching which seems more suitable for householders or beginners in religion than for contemplatives. From meditation on heaven and the Trinity the reader is abruptly summoned, without any obvious preparation, to the climax of the exercise:

~~Sh~~owe (I saye) and take hede where and with whome you be.  
And here kne||lynge or rather lyenge downe prostrate vpon  
your face: remayne byde ~~and~~ dwell here styll/here expyre  
~~and~~ dye starke deed/ ~~and~~ vtterly that no soule ne spiryte  
be lefte/ in your body/ but all for the tyme so ferre  
departed/ not onely from all thynges of the world, but also  
from the selfe body yt there lyenge as a lumpe of cley be  
lefte without any senses or wyttes. 241

From this description of the body's trance-like state Whitford returns to the subject of fear, which occupied the first part of the Dayly exercyse, showing how death cannot possibly hurt the body - bodily sensations are numbed in such a trance as in death-and going on to offer various comforts against the fear <sup>some</sup> presence of the Devil.

The first exercise bears some resemblance to parts of the ars moriendi books, and they could well have been used in conjunction with the first or last section of the exercise. Although it is not highly schematized as later meditations of this nature were to become, it would probably have been of practical use to the less intelligent and imaginative sisters of Syon and, used less frequently, to lay people. His werke for housholders and A werke of preparacyon show that Whitford was at his best when dealing with practical affairs, the monastic vows, devotions during mass or the organization of household devotion. The first exercise

seems to succeed in showing how fear of death may be dispelled and in providing a practical form of daily remembrance of death. The second exercise, however, does not seem so successful, and one reason for this may have been some lack of insight into the higher reaches of contemplative life<sup>242</sup> - a limitation which Erasmus seems to have shared.<sup>243</sup> There is no real indication given as to how the reader is expected to achieve the trance-like state which lies at the heart of this exercise, nor is there any suggestion of the arduous discipline required to reach such a state - a rare experience as most of the great mystical writers warn.<sup>244</sup> Also, if this second exercise was intended for those who were well advanced in the contemplative life the rather elementary instruction on Christ's life and heaven would hardly seem necessary. His thought like his language remains earthbound, and seems unable to penetrate with any success what is essentially a mystical experience.

### The Image of Death

In the Orologium "þe ymage of deth" counsels the Disciple:

Ofte-syþes sette byfore thyne eyen þis þat þou now  
seest, my sorrowful persone, and bisily brynge hit  
to thy mynde...ffor þou schalte so profyt þere-by þat not oonly þou schalte  
not drede to dye, but <sup>ake þyot</sup> deth þat is to alle leuyng men dreedful þou schalte  
abyde and receyue with the desyre of þy herte, in þat  
it is þe ende of trauayle and þe bigynnyng of felicitye  
euerlastyng; þis þinge oonly I-do, þat þou euery daye  
brynge me inwardly to thy myne. 245

Here the starting point of the meditation is a young man at the point of death. More often the image of death itself was conceived as the skeleton or cadaver of wall-paintings, carvings, manuscript illustrations and woodcuts. Although Sir Thomas More contended that no visual representation of death could ever sufficiently bring home to man its

awful reality,<sup>246</sup> the fact is that representations continued to be produced, reaching their greatest popularity in England between the last few decades of the sixteenth and the middle of the seventeenth centuries,<sup>247</sup> rather later than on the continent, where Tenenti states that:

Dès la fin du xv<sup>e</sup> siècle, ce thème du miroir et du memento te mortis s'est transformé en méditation spontanée....les symboles macabres se multiplient et ils sont à la portée de tous. La nouvelle religion de la mort a donc des images sensibles qui entretiennent son culte et excitent la réflexion. Grâce à ces moyens d'expression, elle a pu pénétrer partout et exercer une influence psychologique toujours plus vaste. 248

The way in which people thought about death must have been influenced by what they saw around them. Funeral monuments including brasses and wall-paintings were to be found not only in the great cathedral and abbey churches but in numerous parish churches, and they were a constant reminder to their congregations of the fact of death. Death appears, usually as a decomposed corpse, sometimes in a grave, sometimes as an upright skeleton, in the popular wall-painting of the Three Living and ~~the~~ the Three Dead, and in surviving panels of the Dance of Death.<sup>249</sup> Despite the popularity of both - the Dance of Death does not seem to have been as widely popular in England as in Europe - neither finds any place in the devout treatises, except for More's reference to the Dance of Death in St. Paul's.<sup>250</sup> The treatises' authors preferred other means than the direct confrontation pictured in these two moralities to warn men against pride and to exhort them to be prepared for death.

During the fifteenth century increasing attention was given to the physical effects of death and the lesson to be derived from the spectacle of human decay.<sup>251</sup> A more brutal reminder of the dead than the familiar graveyard which was to be found in many parishes was the charnel house,<sup>252</sup>

although this was never made a compulsory provision in England as in some continental dioceses.<sup>253</sup> Inside the church from about 1430 onwards cadaver tombs, a form derived from France, began to make their appearance, although because of their cost they were never very common.<sup>254</sup>

Monuments and brasses of shrouded effigies and skeletons also began to appear during the same period and were perhaps at their most popular during the last quarter of the fifteenth and the first quarter of the sixteenth century,<sup>255</sup> while death's heads occasionally occurred as decorative details in other pieces of carving and sculpture.<sup>256</sup>

xxv

xxvi

However, cadaver tombs and brasses of shrouded effigies and skeletons were at no time so popular as to make them the dominant form of funerary art, and the great scarcity of death's heads or other macabre subjects as decorative motifs during the late fifteenth-early sixteenth century suggest that Huizinga's macabre vision was not to be found in England.

There was one other way in which the figure of death was seen publicly, and that was in the drama. Several treatises mention the fear inspired by the terrible "visar and outward face" of death.<sup>257</sup> This fear might have been inspired by the sight of a painted or carved corpse, but it is likely that the appearance of death moving about on the stage with his spear poised to strike, as in the Ludus Coventriae, or in Everyman or the Castle of Perseverance,<sup>258</sup> would have been far more frightening.

Whitford gives the example of women and children almost frightened out of their wits by "a bugge that is a personage, that in playe dothe represent the devyll".<sup>259</sup> The image of death as a physical fact and in some form of iconographical image must have been common enough for most people to have been familiar with it.



It was not necessary to be able to read or to possess books in order to be confronted with the image of death, but illustrations of death were also to be found in both manuscript and printed books. In England, as on the continent, Hora<sup>260</sup> sometimes contained illustrations of funerals xxvii and burials, although not so frequently as in contemporary Flemish or French books.<sup>261</sup> There are also pictures of death-bed scenes to be found,<sup>261</sup> but skeletons, cadavers and death's head motifs are very scarce in English manuscripts of the period,<sup>262</sup> although they seem to have been popular in France and Italy. The woodcuts range from the scenes of hanging and execution already noted to representations of death as a skeleton or cadaver, frequently shown in the act of arresting someone or sometimes carrying a coffin,<sup>263</sup> and a few portray skulls and cadavers.<sup>264</sup> Although these woodcuts were used by English printers in English books most of the illustrations of death and skeletons are confined to two books, The crafte to lyve and to dye well and The Kalender of Sheparden; both are French in origin, and their English printers copied the French woodcuts of the Verard editions.<sup>265</sup> For the most part the crudity of the English cuts limits their ability to evoke horror or disgust; they are symbols whose effect is associative and indirect, not immediate as in the case of some of the unpleasantly realistic continental panel paintings.<sup>266</sup> The three relevant illustrations of the Hortulus animae<sup>of</sup> 1531, which was produced in France for the English market, are clearly in the continental tradition.<sup>267</sup> Sometimes the woodcuts are accompanied by verses such as those found in The Kalender of Sheparden,<sup>268</sup> which relate to the profit to be derived from the contemplation of death. The crafte to lyve well and to dye well opens with the same woodcut on

successive pages, of a shrouded, wormy corpse lying upon a horse-drawn hearse,<sup>269</sup> and the second cut is followed by some admonitory verses:

O mortall man/lyfte vp thyn eye  
 And put all vanytees out of thy mynde  
 For as thou seest/this corse here lye  
 Even shalt thou/ by nature and kynde...  
 ... Take ye example/of this carkes here  
 Wheron these wormes: do gnawe ~~and~~ fede  
 No man is sure/houre daye/ne yere  
 In this worlde to lyue: it is matter in dede  
 Hyder thou camest/without ony wede  
 All naked ~~and~~ bare: save onely the skynne  
 In lyke wyse from hens:departe ye myst nede  
 By ye neuer so ryche or noble of kynne...  
 ...Now take hede/what I to ye have sayd  
 Remembre this lesson/~~and~~ often it repete...270

Gathered into this verse, which is explicitly related to the illustrations of the rotting corpse above it, are many of the themes associated with death, which will be discussed in more detail in subsequent sections.

There is the warning against vanity, and the reminder that "As I am so shall you be" associated with the ubi sunt theme. The natural nakedness of man, the uncertainty <sup>of</sup> ~~by~~ his hold on life and the inevitability of his death are also common topics, while the idea of man as worms' meat is elaborated in the contemptus mundi literature. This type of verse was also to be found on funeral monuments, where the known contents of the grave made an accompanying image of death unnecessary. The verses ranged from a simple couplet to fairly elaborate pieces, but nearly every one, directly or by implication, reminded the passer-by that he too would return to dust.<sup>271</sup>

The Ubi sunt and Quid profuit themes.

Although medieval authors tended to see death as a focus for the more ascetic teachings of Christianity and ~~the~~ emphasized the need to flee the world, to repent and do penance, it was possible to regard the subject in a more gentle manner, of regret or even wistfulness for the loss of people and things past.<sup>272</sup> Generally, however, the devout treatises show little sorrow for past times, there is no suggestion that things were better in the past than nowadays;<sup>273</sup> their lament is over people's failure to learn from the past and to discern and eschew the false values of the world and the folly of trusting in fortune. In the thirteenth chapter of A lytell necessarye Treatyse/the whiche speketh of the estate of the Comonalte,<sup>274</sup> the author quotes from Maximian:<sup>275</sup>

O lyfe humayne that thou arte myserable/for thou art alwaye in peryll of deth/thou arte without surete/thou arte no thyng stable... Alas where ben by come the goodes of tyme passed / in stede of lawghynge now I wepe/my Joy is ~~t~~ourned in to heuynesse/thenne is it folye for a man to affye and truste in fortune/ne in the lyfe humayne/all <sup>for naturally</sup> demaunde ruynne ¶ More over late vs enquiry and demaunde where they ben bycomen : yt have lyued so pleasauntly in this worlde ¶ And me semeth yt the grete myddle/ and lytell/deth hath put in his subgeccyon is not Octauius deid/and Cressus whiche were so||ryche. Salomon the wyse. Sampson ye stronge. Davyd the loyall. Holofernes the geaunt/and all other puyssaunt conquerours/hath not deth dysconfyted theym.<sup>276</sup>

Reflection on the transitoriness and instability of human life leads the author on to pose two questions: where are all the goods of times past, not only the riches but the virtues of strength, wisdom and loyalty; and, secondly, what has become of the great ones of the earth?

In the prose treatises the ubi sunt list, which may, as above, include the qualities for which each person was noted, is usually set in the form of a rhetorical question, so that even the form helps to

emphasize the hollowness of worldly<sup>1</sup> fame and power. The ubi sunt lists<sup>277</sup> cite a strange variety of names, classical and biblical figures, and men of letters or of medicine, as well as <sup>those</sup> ~~the~~ most frequently quoted, the rich and the great rulers of the world; all that was necessary was that readers should recognize the names and preferably the reason for their fame. The list in the Cordiale, for instance, includes Aristotle and Virgil, Galen and "Auy~~s~~enne". Erasmus' list is far more compact than most, being limited to tyrants of old, among whom he lists Alexander, Xerxes, Hannibal, Emilius Paulus, Julius Caesar and Pompey. The contrast between man's estate in life and his condition after death was most obvious where he had held not only riches but great power and lon<sup>d</sup>ship in life. As the greatest ruler the earth has known, and a figure whose exploits were familiar from numerous romances, it is not surprising that Alexander was sometimes singled out.<sup>278</sup> In the Cordiale, Erasmus' De contemptu mundi and the first part of Hughe's A troubled mans medicine Alexander is supposed to have returned to the world and to tell of the difference between his state in life and his present state.<sup>279</sup> In Erasmus' oration Alexander describes the benefits and honour he enjoyed as ruler of the world compared to his present estate, where he is "thrust in to a lytell vessell, and a .vii fote space suffyseth me", and vulnerable to the insults of any page-boy.<sup>280</sup> The smallness of the grave was frequently used as a warning against pride in this life.<sup>281</sup> Death is the great leveller, and ubi sunt's proof of this was reinforced iconographically by the Dance of Death, where rulers and prelates are plucked by Death in the same way as fools, beggars and infants. The

message is memorably conveyed in The mirroure of golde's ubi sunt passage:

And where<sup>be</sup> the popes/Emperours/kynges/dukes/princes/  
Marques/Erles/Barons/noble Burgeis/Marchauntes/  
laborere/and folkes of all estates/ they be all in  
powder and rottenness/and of the most greate: ther is  
noo more but a lytell memorye vpon their sepulcre...  
... goo see in their sepulcres and tombes/and loke and  
thou canst wel knowe<sup>282</sup>/and truly Iuge: whiche is thy  
mayster: ~~and~~ whiche is the verlet/whiche bones be<sup>of</sup> the  
pore: and wiche be of the riche/~~deu~~ide yf thou maye:  
The laborer from the kinge/the feble frome the strong  
the faire/from the foule/and deformed...

Death cannot be bought off with riches, and no knowledge can outwit it;<sup>282</sup>  
in the grave all men will find themselves equal; "Dethe onely maketh a shewe  
and a profe of what valure mens bodyes be".<sup>283</sup> The ubi sunt theme warns  
men against pride and reminds them of their mortality.<sup>284</sup> One of its  
most telling statements is to be found in Fisher's commentary on Psalm CII,  
where the listed names of the great men of the past and the description  
of the estate of the great families of the more recent past are set within  
the framework of reminders of the shortness of man's life.<sup>285</sup>

It is almost inevitable that Alexander's speech should partake of  
something of the nature of a lament for the things that are past and for  
the way in which the soul is now made "to suffer payne for all the yuel  
lyuyng of the bodye".<sup>286</sup> In this it has links with the sort of extended  
lament which comprises The complaynt of the soule and The deyng creature,  
which in turn derive ultimately from the debate between the Body and the  
Soul. The following passage from the Orologium illustrates the connection  
between the lament for things past, the Quid profuit complaint and the  
Body and Soul debate. Here the body demands:

Alas, what profetid hit to me, pryde, or the boste  
of riches what hath pat holpen me?.... And perfore  
now is my worde ~~and~~ my speche in bitternesse to my soule,  
and alle my wordes ful of sorowe, and myne yen daswed. O  
who schalle now geue to me pat I myghte be after myn  
olde dayes, wh~~om~~ I was cloped with strengthe and with  
beute and hadde many yeeres byfore me to come...<sup>287</sup>



It is only from the other side of the grave that the true vanity of worldly power and riches can be seen, and this is perhaps one reason for summoning Alexander back to this world to make his complaint. Like the ubi sunt, ~~motif~~ the Quid profuit, which concerns itself with things rather than people, is posed <sup>as</sup> a question whose answer lies in the opposition between the things of this world and the true riches of eternal life - a contrast which underlies so much medieval teaching. Sir Thomas More, for example, in his Dyalogue of comforte deals with topics such as the unsurety of lands and possessions, the small commodity of riches, fame and authority, and the danger which such outward possessions can do to the soul.<sup>288</sup> He shows how the desire to possess these things leads to violence, pride, gluttony, flattery, the abuse of authority and many other sins: Hughe demands of his readers what they have gained by winning worldly preferment, and suggests busy fear, unquietness and care will be their reward.<sup>289</sup>

Both the ubi sunt and the quid profuit remind man of the powerlessness of his own hold on life and of its brevity. It was not a new idea: biblical authors and pagan philosophers had both exposed the vanity and the brevity of human life.<sup>290</sup> Erasmus declared that "an earnest contemplation" of the brevity of man's life "is no lyght remedy ayenst the horroure of deathe";<sup>291</sup> and many treatises included warnings on the inevitability of death,<sup>292</sup> or reminded the reader that from the moment of his birth his life was nothing more than a process of dying;<sup>293</sup> reminded him of his vulnerability to disease and accident,<sup>294</sup> of the folly of presuming to live another day, let alone until old age,<sup>295</sup> and of the minute span of even the longest life when measured against the true life

of eternity.<sup>296</sup> Some of the most telling examples of the ravages of time are drawn from the natural world.<sup>297</sup> The Cordiale likens man's brief duration on earth to a piece of snow, a red berry or the lustre of a new apple.<sup>298</sup> A little later it describes the passing of time in terms of two worms, one black, the other white (night and day), which gnaw continually at the root of the tree of life,<sup>299</sup> and Erasmus gives a detailed description of the life of an apple tree, from its blossom-covered spring-time through the attacks of worms, wind and inclement weather on blossom and fruit, to the three or four apples which will eventually reach maturity, as an illustration of the chances and uncertainties to which man may so easily succumb.<sup>300</sup> Time, then, is the implacable foe of man in this life, and the only defence lies in so living as to ensure that death will be the entrance into eternal life. There is no suggestion in these treatises that there exists in this world any means of halting or transcending time's destruction.<sup>301</sup>

But if death is inevitable there is nothing so uncertain as the time or manner of its coming.<sup>302</sup> Man must therefore live in a state of constant preparedness; "Let every day be reckoned with you as your last".<sup>303</sup> The urgency of the twenty-third chapter of A Kempis's first book, "Of the remembrance of death",<sup>304</sup> is largely due to the emphasis placed upon the passing of time; it might well be sub-titled "The precyousnesse of tyme and the shortnesse of the same".<sup>305</sup> The chapter opens with the uncompromising statement "The houre of death wyll shortely come", and goes on to lament men's unpreparedness. They think only of the present and let that which is out of sight remain out of mind as well. If men were to live always so as to be ready for death at any moment, that is

with a clear conscience, they would not fear death.<sup>306</sup> Amendment now is the only way; man may not live until tomorrow, and a long life more often brings increase of sin than amendment.<sup>307</sup> À Kempis, like Whitford,<sup>308</sup> asks the reader to recollect "yf thou ever sawest any man dye" and reminds him that he too will die; "Blessed be tho persones that ever have the houre of deth before theyr eyen";<sup>309</sup> they will not die unprovided.<sup>310</sup> Man should labour now to achieve this state – note that the underlying contemptus mundi theme is present:

Truly a perfyte dispisyng of the worlde, <sup>8</sup>and a fervent desyre to profyte in vertue, alone to be taughte a fruteful laboure in workes of penaunce, a redy wyl to obey, a ful for sakyng of our selfe, <sup>8</sup>and wylful sufferynge of all adversy||tes for the love of god, shall gyue vs a great truste that we shal dye well.<sup>311</sup>

Security is to be sought in doing good deeds now, for À Kempis declares that few achieve amendment in sickness or through pilgrimages, and it is folly to trust to the good offices of friends, who will quickly forget you once you are dead. He returns again to the chapter's theme:

Nowe is thy tyme very precyous, but alas for sorrowe that thou spendeste thy tyme so vnprofitable; in which thou shuldest wyn the lyfe ever lastyng<sup>312</sup>

Now, in fact, is the time to choose between this world, with its earthly, material interests, and the life eternal. Many, he warns, have died unexpectedly; now is the time to work out your own salvation. Meanwhile:

Kepe the as a pylgryme <sup>8</sup>and as a straunger here in this worlde to whom nothings belongeth of worldly besynes, kepe thy herte fre alway lyft <sup>8</sup>up to god...<sup>313</sup>

Thus in a few pages À Kempis gathers together two important strands of medieval devotional teaching, the need for the Christian to separate himself from the world and the urgent need for him to redeem the time.

It is more surprising to find a full exposition of the traditional memento mori, ubi sunt and quid profuit written by a Protestant during the 1560's - Thomas Becon's The Prayse of Death,<sup>314</sup> which takes the form of a dialogue between Man and Reason. Running through the work like a refrain is Man's reiterated lament that death has summoned him before his time. A summary of Reason's often-repeated answers to this complaint will show how closely Becon was following earlier thought.<sup>315</sup> Reason declares that a long life will not benefit Man, since the older he becomes the more sinful he will be, and, in any case, the continuance of life may not be counted on. St. Augustine and Innocent III are quoted assaying that death is necessary, and since death abolishes the miseries of man's life it is advantageous to die young and thus escape the miseries of old age. If the old cannot live long, the young may soon die. Man laments that death has come unexpectedly, which Reason counters by saying that it would have hurt less had it been remembered more often, and that the best preparation for death is "the contempt and despysing of worldly thynges, (and) the diligent remembraunce of the heavenly Jerusalem".<sup>316</sup> Remembrance of death prevents sin, and Becon approves the custom of the Egyptians, who provide "that the Image of death be offered to thy syght" at each banquet.<sup>317</sup> He goes on to quote the familiar saying of Plato, that the whole life of a philosopher is a continual meditation of death, and to describe death in terms of the liberation of the soul from its bodily prison. Reason then returns to the familiar theme "Nothing is more certain than death: yet is it vncertain what day death wil com".<sup>318</sup> Briefly the seven ages of man are rehearsed. Man is reminded that riches cannot profit the soul, and that he is earth and to the earth he will

return. An ubi sunt passage <sup>319</sup> is used to emphasize the levelling power of death; rich man and beggar cannot be distinguished in the grave, and the body of both becomes the inheritance of serpents, beasts and worms. <sup>320</sup> Theodore is cited on the indifference of where the body is buried; what matters is Man's state of soul. He cannot avoid death but he can make sure that he will die a good death. Finally Man's fears about the pains preceding death are allayed, and he is encouraged to bear his tribulation bravely and patiently. It is only in the last few pages of The Prayse of Death, where Becon rehearses Christ's promises of forgiveness to all those who repent and believe in the justifying power of His Passion and gives biblical examples of God's care for the souls of the righteous, that the Protestant views of the author find expression. In the context of a complaint against Death Becon has gathered together a great many of the traditional medieval themes related to death. As a summary of the ubi sunt motif and other topics it would be hard to better, even though one would not immediately think to find it among Becon's works.

The widespread teaching about the inevitability of death and the uncertainty of its time and manner had one result which Erasmus found it necessary to condemn. If, he says, <sup>321</sup> people knew when they were to die, they could put off repentance until the last possible moment but still repent in time. As it is, he feels that the uncertainty makes the good live better and the evil worse. However, it is clear that some people were endeavouring to have the best of both worlds:

what meane these men, whiche renne to pronosticatours,  
whiche diuine by the inspection of a mans hand, of the  
sterres, of the mans nature, of his byrth, of the bealye,



and babylonicall numbres, and wytchecraftes, to the extent they may knowe the space of theyr tyme? 322

In addition<sup>to</sup> the more general almanacks and prognostications available in England during the mid-sixteenth century, at least two books, The boke of knowledge/whether a sycke person beynge in perylle/shall lyue or dye and a Prognasticacion.... shewynge the daunger of dyuers syckenesses, that is to say, whether peryll of death be in them or not,<sup>323</sup> dealt specifically with illness and the threat of death, and attempted to resolve the uncertainty in a pseudo-scientific manner. Dives and Pauper,<sup>324</sup> originally printed in 1493 and reprinted by Berthelet in 1536, also finds it necessary to condemn the practice of prognostication<sup>325</sup> as a branch of witchcraft, as does Richard Whitford.<sup>326</sup> Another popular superstition to outwit death is referred to in an earlier chapter of Dives and Pauper:

Dives: Is it lefull to trust in these fastynges newe founde to flee <sup>o</sup>gain deth? Pau: It is a great folly to trust therin... god wyll that man and woman be vncertayn what tyme that they shulde dye and in what maner. For god wylle that man and woman be always beysye to flee synne, and for to do well for drede of deathe, and alway redy what tyme that god wyl sende after them.<sup>327</sup>

Fear of sudden death, which gave a man no time to prepare his soul, to make his confession and receive the sacraments, was clearly widespread, and there are numerous prayers seeking protection from it.<sup>328</sup> The author of Dives and Pauper, however, like Erasmus, argues that if men knew they were protected from such a death it would encourage them to do amiss. The evidence of popular attempts to insure against sudden death, together with the criticism of Protestant authors about the fear generated by the traditional teaching on death,<sup>329</sup> suggests that the Church had not

fully succeeded in answering the fear it had generated in its attempt to raise moral and religious standards, and that people frequently turned to popular superstition in their search for security.

#### De Contemptu Mundi.

The quid profuit theme was mainly concerned with those worldly and transient things esteemed by men: pride of place, honours, riches, beauty, power and worship. Many more treatises than actually pose the quid profuit question are also concerned to expose the essential insubstantiality of the things of this life, and of the world itself, as their chapter headings record: "Of the vayne Ioye/might/dignite/honours/and riches of the worlde", "Of the dyspysynge of all vanyties of the worlde", "That the world is both miserable and scelerous!".<sup>330</sup> According to the "monastic philosophy"<sup>331</sup> which dominated late medieval devotional teaching, the only security lay in being cut off from the world and in learning to despise it. The world-denying strain found particularly forceful expression in the de contmptu mundi tradition of Christian teaching, which in its developed form may be traced through saints Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Gregory the Great, Peter Damian, Anselm and Bernard and Pope Innocent III.<sup>332</sup> The two last named are the most frequently cited, and Innocent's De Miseria Humanae Conditionis seems to have been very influential.<sup>333</sup> The assumption of most authors up to about 1540 who held to traditional beliefs and were not influenced by Protestant thought, was that the world could only be truly forsaken in the cloister, and there was little relaxation of the monastic ideal made

to accommodate lay-people. Protestant authors did not regard the cloister as either a necessary or a desirable condition of the Christian life, but they were as forthright as their predecessors in their condemnation of the world. Hughe, for instance, describes it as "not onely an harlot, but the most fylthy, and most durtyequeane, whose face is foule, horrible, sharpe bytter and cruell".<sup>334</sup>

Among the charges levelled against the world one of the most common is that of its instability and transitoriness<sup>335</sup> and the way in which its promises deceive men.<sup>336</sup> But it is also described as corrupt,<sup>337</sup> unable to satisfy man's needs,<sup>338</sup> to comfort or save him,<sup>339</sup> and its rewards are hell and damnation.<sup>340</sup> A characteristic indictment of the world, ascribed to St. Jerome, is to be found in The mirroure of golde:

O lyfe of the worlde: not lyf but deth/a lyfe false  
and deceyuable/a lyfe mixed/and medled with disters  
(sic)/A lyfe shadowed with lyes/nowe as a fresshe  
floure: and a noon drye/a lyfe fragile and caduke/  
O lyf miserable: to the true lyfe contrary/that the  
more he groweth:the more he mynssheth/the more he  
goeth forth: The nygher is the deth: O lyfe full of  
sanres. ¶ Howe many haste thou in this worlde of  
miserable men:taken and wrapped in thy lases/howe  
many hast thou ledde and dayly leadeth: in to the  
tourmentis|| infernall...<sup>341</sup>

It offers a summary of the sort of charges most frequently levelled against the world. A far more comprehensive and effective indictment is to be found in The treatise of faith, hope and charite, by an anonymous Protestant author:

... I wente astraye whan I soughte the, I was  
beguyled whan I fand the, I was blynde whan  
I set my love vpon the, I was amased whan I  
pleased the, I was comfortlesse whan I occupied  
the, I was parted from god whan I serued the, I

was in death whan I lyued with the, I was restlesse  
 whan I behelde the, I was sorye whan thou gauest me  
 noughte, I was not suffised whan thou gauest me  
 mucche, I was myscaryed whan thou madest my glad.  
 Oh thy wysdome is folyshnesse before God, thy  
 glorye is heye, thy smyllynge is deceate, thy  
 bewtye is fylthynesse, thy ryches are vnstable,  
 thy presence is without rest, thy rewarde is but  
 death, thy joye|| endeth with sorow...342

The charges and style of the second part of this extract <sup>are</sup> in the traditional form, but in the first part the use of the first person suggests personal experience and conveys the lack of fulfilment felt by the servant of the world. For the first time the world impinges upon the reader's own experience and may be judged by that experience. The effect of this part of the passage is further enhanced by the echo of the form of the parable of the Sheep and the Goats,<sup>343</sup> and in the shadow of the Judgement meted out there by the Lord the reader is encouraged to judge both himself and the world. Protestant authors, such as Thomas, Hughe and Becon,<sup>344</sup> are as insistent as their predecessors on the Christian's need to despise the world, and their analyses of the world's corruption are often very detailed. But unlike the writer who accepted the "monastic philosophy" of perfection, they do not like Bernard counsel their readers "to flee the worlde and vse a religious lyfe."<sup>345</sup> The world is not to be abandoned for the cloister, but for Christ—"lyfte vp oure hart and ascend vp into the mountayne of Myrthe with the spouse"<sup>346</sup> to love and serve Him.<sup>347</sup>

The golden epistle declares that two things are necessary for the man who would be truly solitary and thereby find God's grace: the first is to withdraw himself from all transitory things, and the second is "that thou sette thyselfe at sqvyle a pryce in thyne owne syght, that thou accompte thy selfe as nought..."<sup>348</sup> To impress upon the reader

the frailty of human life was one of the purposes of the ubi sunt passages, but the contemptu mundi authors went considerably further in their attempt to destroy man's pride in himself and to make him know himself. The author of the Cordiale quotes from two of the most influential contemptus mundi writers, St. Bernard's Meditations and Innocent III, who is quoted thus:

That humayn flesshe is the vessell of fylthe/  
and a vessell of teeres/a drye thought/a stynkyng  
sacke. The lyfe of the flesshe is laboure. The  
concepcon of the flesshe is but fylthe. The ende  
therof is rotenesse. And the byrthe is but vyle.  
It was fyrst a sparre. That is to saye. The  
seed of man/and now it is a stynkyng sacke: and  
after fynally shall be wormes mete in the erthe.  
Now wherfore sholde a man then be proude. 349

His method is to expose the bestiality of man as he is, to look back at his conception and procreation, and forward to his end as worms' meat in the earth. This form of three-fold meditation, what I was, what I am, and what I shall be, was widely used in devotional treatises, particularly when the writer sought to draw his readers out of their involvement with sin and thus out of the world.<sup>350</sup> The idea of the foulness of man's beginning goes back to Psalm L:7 (Vulg) and its interpretation by St. Augustine and his followers.<sup>351</sup> Of the present Bernard points to man's natural functions as evidence of the foulness he bears within him,<sup>352</sup> not to mention other miseries, such as illness or the burden of old age, which are often cited. The contemplation of man's future state is based upon the kind of view expressed in Ecclesiasticus: "Cum enim morietur homo, hereditabit serpentes, & bestias, & vermes",<sup>353</sup> and with it one returns to the cadaver tombs and brasses of skeletons and shrouded skeletons mentioned earlier. The author of the Medytacyons of saynt Bernarde reflects:



I haste towarde theym ye whyche by bodyly deth  
ben passed out of this worlde. Whan I beholde  
their sepulcres ~~and~~ graves: I fynde notelles  
in theym but powder/wormes/stenche ~~and~~ lothsomness.  
Suche as I am now thei were by lately: ~~and~~ suche as  
they ben I ~~sahl~~ be hastily. 354

Up to about the middle of the sixteenth century this three-fold meditation not only encouraged reflection upon the state of man's life, which ideally would lead to repentance and rejection of the world,<sup>355</sup> but it tended to make considerable use of "vile body" details, and indeed the sort of description of man found in the Medytacyon was often found apart from the three-fold meditation. <sup>356</sup>

There were two weaknesses of this "vile body" genre which may have limited its effectiveness. The first was that the description of man's foul conception or of the state of his body after death was sometimes long enough to give the impression that it had become independent of the lesson it was intended to teach. In his Dayly exercyse Whitford <sup>uses</sup> ~~was~~ the meditation on man's past, including a description of his conception and birth, to emphasize the point "that you hadde newe/ ne have, or shall have anythyng of your selfe but euill"; a view which may serve to introduce the second, more theological weakness of the genre. In denigrating man's physical origins in this way there was some danger of forgetting that man is God's creation, that he was made little lower than the angels, and that God loved him enough to sacrifice His Son for man's redemption. In The mirroure of golde, for example, it is said "that amonge all thing that almighty god hath created and fourmed man is made of the most foule ~~and~~ abhomynable mater".<sup>357</sup> Such statements were clearly intended to rebuke man's pride, but in warning him against presuming

on salvation there was a danger that the sensitive soul might ~~well~~ despair of it. Careful literary and theological balance is required if this "vile body" type of illustration is to be used successfully; the illustration must be clearly and closely related to its context and not allowed to become an independent piece of description for its own sake, and theologically it needs to be balanced by some reminder that man was made in the image of God, who loved him enough to provide for him the means of salvation.

Protestant authors seem not to have made use of the "vile body" tradition,<sup>358</sup> but that does not mean that they ignored the misery of the human condition. In the "Consolacyon for troubled consciences" of Certaine prayers there is a striking description of human misery, which is the more moving for concerning the living and for being linked to the reader's own probable experience:

Who is<sup>so</sup> hard harted that wyll not pytye the myserabyll condicyon of theym whiche lye before the churche/and in the streates with deformed faces/theyre noses eaten of/theyr iyes out/~~and~~ other of theyr membres consumed with matter/fylthe/and corruptyon/in so moche that the sense can not onely abyde to beholde it/but also the mynde doth abhorre to remembre it. And whate meaneth god by these lamentable monstres of our flesh ~~and~~ lykenesse but to open the iyes of oure mynde that we may perceyue with whate en horrible facyon the soule of a synner sheweth out his matter and corrupcyon...<sup>359</sup>

The author is not saying that their mis-shapen misery proves their sinfulness,<sup>360</sup> but rather he offers the reader a general comparison, showing him that the soul of a sinner is more hideous than these physical "monstres". Bernard's descriptions of the physical man cause revulsion; here horror of the soul's deformity is tempered by pity. Frith in The Preparation to Deathe is uncompromising in his assertion that "The cause of deathe is synne", and shows how in Adam all have

sinned.<sup>361</sup> Like the author of the Treatise of faith, hope and charite<sup>362</sup> Frith shows how sin affects the individual, making him dull towards virtue, inclined to self-love and hating God.<sup>363</sup> While not overlooking the generic inheritance of sin in Adam, the Protestant tendency is to stress its effect upon the individual, so that men may see in themselves the corrupting effects of sin and as individuals they may remedy the situation. The "vile body" tradition, with its emphasis upon the physical transmission of sin, perhaps made sin seem less real to the individual and almost certainly gave the impression of being less remediable by him. Frith does not abandon the reader to his sins: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive",<sup>364</sup> which is the burden of the fourth chapter of The Preparation to Deathe. Because they never allow a description of the sinfulness and misery of man to stand for long unrelieved by some reminder of the saving work of Christ, Protestant authors such as Frith, William Thomas and the translator of the "Consolacyon for troubled consciences"<sup>365</sup> tend to sound more obviously hopeful than substantial passages of Bernard's Medytacyons or The mirroure of golde.

Although the contemptus mundi theme was often used during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, it more often occurred as a chapter in a treatise, a passage in a sermon or in brief references than as a complete work. There are two works which were printed during the 1530's that have the de contemptu mundi as their main theme: Erasmus' De contemptu mundi, which was translated by Thomas Paynell and printed by Thomas Berthelet in 1533,<sup>366</sup> and A svvete and devowte sermon of holy saynct Ciprian of mortalitie of man, translated by Sir Thomas Elyot and also printed by Berthelet, in 1534 and 1539.<sup>367</sup>

Erasmus' work, written in his early twenties while still a monk at Steyn, was not printed until 1521.<sup>368</sup> Its avowed intention, which would have been approved by St. Bernard and countless later followers of the "monastic philosophy", was to persuade a friend, Joyce, to withdraw from "the hurly burly <sup>&</sup> and busynes of the world" and to bring him "to a lyfe monastycke". The treatise falls into two halves, with the problematic twelfth chapter, a later addition, standing on its own.<sup>369</sup> The first half describes the miserable life of the worldly man, and there are chapters dealing with the evil of riches and fleshly lusts and the transience of worldly honours.<sup>370</sup> Erasmus also gives examples of some of the arguments used by others to stifle the call to religion: these include the appeals of wife and parents not to abandon them, warnings that his upbringing has made him too delicate to withstand the austerities of religion, and that youth is not a time to wail in solitude. The long ubi sunt passage which occurs in chapter five concludes with praise for those "whiche be contentedde with theyr fortune and state" and who are more concerned to rule themselves well than to seek to govern others - a point which would have appealed to Henry VIII and to Thomas Cromwell.<sup>371</sup> The chapter on the necessity of death lays particular emphasis upon the inevitability of death, which surrounds people and yet is rarely thought upon: a reflection of the common concern to make men realize the frailty of their own lives. This half of the treatise ends with a picture of the soul's nakedness before God's judgement, as it stands deserted by riches, beauty and friends, which flee like swallows after summer - the plight of Everyman - and like Everyman, the reader is exhorted to be prepared in advance by good acts and virtues.<sup>372</sup>

The second half, which might well be subtitled "Laus vitae monasticae",<sup>373</sup> provides a counter-balance to the view of the first half "that the world is both miserable and scelerous". The world can neither satisfy nor save a man, but apart from the world he may find both "felicitate" and salvation in the religious life. In successive chapters Erasmus outlines various aspects of the pleasure to be found in religion, its liberty and its tranquillity, and returns to dwell upon the "voluptas" of religion. The twelfth chapter, innocuously <sup>en</sup>titled in English "Howe one ought to entre in to religion", is in fact a warning against a too hasty flight to religion, and contains much criticism of contemporary monastic life, which is compared with primitive monasticism. It warns the postulant to choose an order suitable for his needs, to think seriously before taking vows which cannot be revoked, and finally there is the suggestion that it is perhaps better to live out the religious life in the world:

repute thyself to be in a monastery, where so ever  
thou be conversante amonge them that love trouthe,  
pure chastite, sobrenes, and temperance/and do bothe  
in worde and dede expresse the same.<sup>374</sup>

The abbaye of the holy Ghost had attempted to provide a spiritual cloister for those who were for some reason prevented from entering religion. Erasmus in this last chapter reverses the assumption upon which the "monastic philosophy" was based. — that the religious life was the best life — by suggesting that the life of perfection might be better lived outside the cloister.

Because the two halves of De contemptu mundi reflect the traditional contemptus mundi contrast between the condition of the worldly man and the "felicitate" of the religious or solitary life, it is not immediately



apparent that Erasmus' views differ considerably from the picture of the monastic life to be found, for example, in John Alcock's Mons perfectionis or in Whitford's Pype or Tonne of the lyfe of perfection. The author of The Tree and the Vff, frutes of the holy goost tells the newly professed nun to:

Thinke therfore why thou comest to relygion.  
I trowe for the profyte of thyn owne soule  
and of thin ordre. It is not ynough for  
the onely to entre religion for thyn owne  
profite... 375

Erasmus recommends the religious life for its liberty, its tranquillity and its pleasure - concepts which seem at first sight to have little to do with the cloister. The restraint of the monastic rule is passed over with a neat chiasmus -

For we wyll nothyng but that is leful: and therfore  
it is lefull for vs to doo what soeuer we wylle 376 -

and the subject of obedience, which occupies so many monastic authors, is given no further mention.<sup>377</sup> By liberty Erasmus means freedom from the captivity of the world and sin, and freedom to fight in God's service against the Devil with the expectation of victory.<sup>378</sup> As previously noted, the conceit of the Christian warfare was much used from St. Paul's time onwards;<sup>379</sup> but the idea of the Christian soldier battling against the world and sin<sup>380</sup> - especially the former - seems more suited to the individual in the world, for whom the Enchiridion militis christiani was written, than to a member of a religious community. Within the cloister obedience and penance were more commonly advocated, and appropriate antidotes for the spiritual sins found there; open warfare against the world should no longer concern those who have left it. The tranquillity of which Erasmus speaks is both the outward setting, notably the silence, and the inward peace, which springs from a pure mind and a clear conscience.<sup>381</sup>

The contrast he draws between the troubled mind of the worldly sinner and the inward peace of the religious makes no reference to the troubled and scrupulous conscience or the desolate soul often found within the cloister.<sup>382</sup> In contrasting the two lives he makes the one sound worse, the other more peaceful than it is likely to prove, It is a weakness of Erasmus' method to encourage the reader to regard the life of the world and the life of the cloister as total opposites rather than simply as different or even complementary. Finally, there is the pleasure of religion. For learned men there is the abundant and varied joy of study, reading and writing. The range of literature included<sup>383</sup> covers not only the Scriptures and the Fathers, Albertus Magnus and St. Thomas Aquinas, but, in addition, for him "that knoweth howe to chose the holsome herbes amonge those that are venomous", there are the writings of pagan philosophers and poets.

Tell me/what tyme thou arte conuersant amonge|| these  
things quietly at rest in thy studye/and at thyne  
owne libertye/voyde of all care and trouble/dothe  
it not seme that thou dwellest in a paradise of al  
delytes and pleasures? 384

and the author breaks into a lyrical description of the most perfect and varied countryside in an attempt to convey the idyllic setting for study provided by the monastic life.

By comparison the earlier description of the "pleasures of the soule" seems a little dull and lifeless. Basically these pleasures are the possession of a clear conscience and the contemplation of heavenly bliss to which the soul aspires. Although Bernard's warning that glimpses of heavenly delight are but rare and brief is noticed,<sup>385</sup> and Erasmus says, "I am vnworthy as yet to be admitted to come to these delytes",<sup>386</sup> his description of the joy of contemplation, which employs the sort of

terminology used, for example, by the Brothers of the Common Life,<sup>387</sup> gives no impression of the hard discipline required and of the extreme rareness of such experiences:

Farthermore, that swetnes, that the holy goste  
many tymes secretely entrynge in to the cleane  
and pure myndes cause the, howe ofte in the  
moste chaste cham||bre he embraceth and clyppeth  
his spouse, languishyng in his love/and lamentyng  
as lovers are wont that love feruently/with mooste  
gentyll and frëndly familiarite, dothe comforte and  
chere her....<sup>388</sup>

Like Whitford in the second part of A dayly exercyse and experyence of dethe, Erasmus makes it sound too easy to reap the greatest reward of the contemplative life.

Superficially Erasmus' De contemptu mundi seems to be a product of medieval piety, but closer inspection reveals significant departures from the contemporary view of the monastic life. Pineau says that "Dans son petit livre, il a donné la juste image de son idéal monastique. Et cet idéal est fort humain".<sup>389</sup> In the entire work there is no reference made to the Opus Dei, probably the most obvious activity of the monastic life in any order, nor to the Sacraments, nor to Christ and scarcely to God. He does not mention the monastic discipline, and there is no suggestion that the religious life involved communal obligations nor that private study and devotion might well be prescribed by the monk's superior. The Erasmian freedom is hard to envisage in the context of a monastic community and its organization unless it was unusually slack. One cannot help but feel that the courts of Cambridge or life in More's household offered Erasmus a more congenial setting than the cloister of the Augustinian Canons at Steyn.

sources, which, although they by no means include quotations from Scripture and the Fathers, seek to be considered as of at least equal authority.

Another thing which distinguishes Erasmus' treatise from the tradition of Bernard and Innocent is his view of man. There is no reference made to the "vile body", nor is there any suggestion that man carries with him a weight of inherited sin or even any proclivity to sin. The sin and temptations which assail the worldly and the religious man are seen ~~as~~ external adversaries, not as part of the inherited corruption of fallen men. Erasmus, like Lupset, suggests that human bestiality is avoidable.<sup>390</sup> Man is not simply a body, like a beast, that he should gratify his bodily lusts, but he must understand that he has an eternal soul. It is in his description of the body as "a thyng erthie, beastly, slowe, mortal, syckely/caduke, vncraftye, and vn~~so~~ble"<sup>391</sup> that Erasmus comes closest to the "vile body" genre, but if man will exercise his reason and understanding he can overcome these weaknesses. There is no sense of the unceasing struggle to be waged against the flesh: "hit is impossible to enjoy the pleasure of the bodye and of the soule bothe at ones. The one muste nedes be forgone".<sup>392</sup> The opposition between body and soul is a traditional element of ascetic Christianity, but Erasmus never really shows how the pleasure of the body is to be "foregone". Similarly he never specifically defines how the soul's pleasure is to be followed. The evidence of the treatise suggests that he thought the choice was made in the quiet and ordered study he was able to pursue at Steyn, a very different life from that suggested in the eighth chapter of St. Bernard's Medytacyons, "Who is able to have ye Joyes of heven".

The third indication of Erasmus' growth away from medieval traditions is to be found in the high proportion of quotations drawn from classical sources, which, although they by no means exclude quotation from Scripture and the Fathers, seem to be considered as of at least equal authority.<sup>393</sup>

For instance, the use of Epicurus as the authority for his definition of pleasure<sup>394</sup> may not seem unusual until it is remembered that the pleasure Erasmus is discussing is a virtue of the monastic life. Most of the names cited, Plato, Epicurus, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Juvenal and Terence, would have been familiar enough to educated men of the late fifteenth century. What was unusual was their use in a devout treatise; until about 1540 it was unusual to find more than occasional classical references in an English devotional treatise.<sup>395</sup> In addition to quotation from classical authors Erasmus makes use of classical literature, mythology and history in a more general way. Thus Joyce is called upon to "shewe thyselfe to be Vlyxes" against the Sirens of the world; "Eutrapelus" corruption of his enemies by riches is described, but knowledge of Crassus' and Iru's<sup>396</sup> relevance to a discussion of riches is assumed. Joyce is assured that the monastic life does not call for the labours of a Daedalus or a Hercules, and to illustrate the subject of remorse of conscience the curious examples of Cain, Lucius Sulla and Orestes pursued by the Furies are given. So pervasive are the classics in the De contemptu mundi that it is hard to realize how much contemporary ignorance and prejudice Erasmus had to overcome to pursue his study.<sup>396</sup>

In its nominal support of the religious ideal and in its reliance upon recurrent sets of opposites<sup>or</sup> contraries Erasmus' treatise is characteristic of numberless medieval devout treatises. Cyprian's sermon, however, shows no trace of the monastic philosophy and it is not structured upon opposites; its connection with the contemptus mundi theme of medieval tradition must be sought elsewhere. In the translator's preface Sir Thomas Elyot recommends the work to his sister, Dame Suzan Kyngestone, as a preservative against sickness and death, declaring "howe we



may be alway prepared agaynst those naturall and worldly afflictions".<sup>397</sup> The sermon has many affinities with the tribulation treatises discussed earlier in this chapter.

Cyprian wrote his sermon to encourage the Carthaginian Christians, who were suffering under the Decian persecution and also being ravaged by plague, to hold fast to their faith, and it seems to have survived the centuries without obvious alteration.<sup>398</sup> Having announced the sermon's purpose, to restore backsliders and encourage the faint-hearted, Cyprian firmly places his readers on God's side in the battles and tempests of the world. Because God has already spoken of the things which should come to pass before the end of time, Christians should not be dismayed to find themselves amid battle, famine and pestilence, but should realize that "The kyngedome of heven...beginneth now to approche". The only people to fear these troubles will be those who lack faith and hope: "for he onely feareth death, whiche wyll not go vnto Christe, and he whiche wyl not go vnto Christe, is he whiche doeth not beleve, that he nowe begynneth to rayne with Chryste".<sup>399</sup> The note of eager expectancy and the desire to be with Christ captures the authentic spirit of the Apostolic faith<sup>400</sup> which the Reformers sought to reawaken.<sup>401</sup> The words of Simeon, Luke II: 28 - 32, are quoted as an example of the peaceful tranquillity with which the faithful soul is able to face affliction or death.<sup>402</sup>

The sermon goes on to survey the perpetual battle against the Devil which engages the Christian in this life. The conflict with sin is not here as in Erasmus' De contemptu mundi something which may be defeated by reason and understanding; it is hard and bitter, a constant and all-embracing struggle:

The mynde of man is besyged, and all aboute  
 compassed and assaulted with synne, and hardly  
 is matched on al partes, and may vneth resiste  
 and defende hym frome| all. For if he overthrowe  
 Auarice, than stereth vppe lecherye: If lechery be  
 oppressed, ambition commeth in her place...  
 Pride inflatith, drunkenness allureth, enuy breketh  
 concorde, and by the same is frendshyp dissolved...403

No sooner is one vice defeated than another rises up to take its place.

He<sup>who</sup> would also choose to remain in such a world when he might depart to  
 "be mery" with Christ is blind of mind and mad. Yet despite God's promises  
 many "flitter in a mynde mistrustefull and wauerynge", insult Christ with  
 the sin of incredulity, and fail to see the profit to be derived from  
 departing this life to be with Christ.

The next consideration is how grief, disease and death afflict all  
 men. The vulnerability of the body to disease<sup>404</sup> is stressed here not  
 so much to make the reader reflect upon the inevitability of his own death  
 as to remind him that Christians too are human and do not enjoy some sort  
 of special protection against the plague. Even a little later on,<sup>405</sup>  
 when a variety of human illnesses are described in some detail, it is not  
 done primarily to expose the body's frailty but, like the tribulation  
 treatises, to show that suffering patiently taken "profiteth to the  
 doctrine of fayth". This theme of patience in adversity, illustrated by  
 the examples of Job, Tobias and the Apostles, occupies the central section  
 of the sermon. The date and circumstances in which the sermon was written  
 mean that the emphasis falls not upon the heavenly reward to be won by patient  
 endurance but upon suffering as an opportunity to prove and declare the  
 Christian faith. Cyprian was writing to Christians who were a minority  
 group in the pagan world,<sup>406</sup> and the point of his argument was that although

all men suffer Christians suffer differently: "The feare of god <sup>&</sup> and faithe shulde make the redye to sustayne all thynges".<sup>407</sup> This is illustrated in a set of sentences, many with biblical overtones, which have an almost proverbial sound:

... in a tempest a good master is knowen, <sup>&</sup> and the souldiour in bataile is proued. Bosting out of perill is pleasant, but resistance in aduersitie is the || tryall of truth. The tree whiche with a deepe roote standethe faste in the grounde, is not meiled with euerye puffle of wynde that bloweth... And whan the corne is thesshed in the barne, the sounde and stronge grayne continueth the wyndes, while the chaffe is blowen about with euery light blaste.... 408

Every adversity offers the Christian a chance to test his faith and to draw nearer to Christ.

If the warning against the fate of the unbaptized was hardly relevant to the sixteenth-century readers of Christian England, the warning against trying to defer or avoid troubles and pains in this life because it will earn eternal torment after death is common enough; the tribulation treatises often stress that it is better to suffer pain within the limited duration of this life than to face the more intense pain of purgatory or hell hereafter. Contrary to the Carthaginian Christian's<sup>1</sup> expectation, persecution and pestilence have worked to their advantage. They have not only secured to the good welcome release from the miseries of the world, but it has rekindled the faith of many, curbed social vices and encouraged charity, and

in lernynge not to feare deathe, we the more wyllungly desyre martyrdome. This to vs is no death, but an exercise, whiche bryngeth to the mynde renoume of valyante courage, and by dispysynge of deathe prepareth to receiue the garlande of vycory. 409

Again, the problem of how to comfort those who, having prepared themselves for martyrdom, were then cheated of their glory was of more immediate concern to the third than the sixteenth century;<sup>410</sup> but the general point that God judges according to faith, not according to the manner of death, is frequently found in the Tudor literature on death.<sup>411</sup> Cyprian goes on to condemn lamentation for the departed, whom faith declares to be alive with God - another subject much debated in later literature, to be discussed later - the infidels are right to see such mourning as a denial of the faith Christians profess. This section of the sermon emphasizes that Christians should always be ready to welcome death whenever or however it comes, a point reiterated by Protestant authors in Certeine prayers and <sup>in</sup> The troubled mans medicine,<sup>412</sup> whose second part owes much to Cyprian.<sup>413</sup> The remainder of the sermon returns to the subject of the world's miseries, and points out that since man is but a stranger and a pilgrim on earth<sup>414</sup> he should rejoice at the prospect of death on two counts, firstly because it will free him from the snares and miseries of the world, and secondly because it will restore him to God and his dwelling in heaven. The sermon ends with a description of heaven as a place of joyful meeting with friends and ancestors, apostles, martyrs and prophets - Hughe's Troubled mans medicine ends with the same "ioyouse compaignie" - "To those let vs hye a peace good frendes, that we may shortly be with them, lette vs desyre feruently to come vnto Christe".

Elyot's translation follows the Latin faithfully,<sup>415</sup> and the sermon's main characteristic is its positive, joyous and expectant attitude toward death, typical of the first few centuries of Christianity. Unlike the medieval contemptus mundi authors Cyprian's work shows little sign of

of opposition between this world and the life to come, between the body and the spirit; rather there is a consistent emphasis upon that which is eternal and of the spirit. The Christian is in God's hand, and the miseries of the world and the fate of the body are of little importance to him except in so far as they are profitable to faith and speed the soul to heaven. Man is regarded not as filth and worms' meat, nor particularly as a creature of sin, although his sinful nature is taken seriously, but as a servant of God journeying towards his heavenly home, to whom the adversities and miseries of this world can be a positive asset. The corruption of the body and the evils of the world were so emphasized in the medieval contemptus mundi tradition that they had become important in their own right; and had the power of evil been stressed much more the dualistic structure inherent in the contemptus mundi form, but usually controlled by the wider context in which it occurred, might have threatened Christian orthodoxy. In Cyprian contempt of the world is hardly possible - it is not sufficiently important. The whole direction of the sermon is so emphatically Godward that other things are judged as helps or hindrances to the achievement of God. Protestant authors of the 1530's and 1540's sought to recapture this concentration upon God. Like Cyprian they made little or no use of the traditional oppositions between this world and eternity, the body and the spirit, but dwelt instead upon the power of faith and the hope of God's promises.<sup>416</sup> In Cyprian the exhortation to hope for death is set in the context of the eschatological hope of the early church,<sup>417</sup> and the tempests and evils which assault the world herald the end of all things. This vision the English Protestants did not entirely recover. In Hughe the miseries of the world are seen as a



reason for wishing to depart life, and had the source of the passage borrowed from Cyprian not been recognized it would have sounded like another pessimistic lament on the degeneracy of the present times.<sup>418</sup>

### The Business of Dying

Although the treatise writers sought to instil into their readers the idea that "the best meane to dye well: is well to lyue",<sup>419</sup> death remained a moment of supreme importance for which suitable preparation must be made. The preliminary preparations are for the most part only mentioned incidentally in the devout treatises. Several of them do, however, emphasize the need for a man - they tacitly assume a man of some means - to have settled all his worldly affairs in the time of his health so that his death will not be burdened by business concerns.<sup>420</sup> Erasmus goes into the matter in some detail in his Preparation to deathe. He includes the particular advice that all litigation should be settled while still in health, and counters what seems to have been a popular superstition:

Some do abhorre <sup>from</sup> makinge their testament, as though it were some euyl lucke of death. But the making of thy testament good felowe causeth not the to dye the soner, but safelyer. 421

Like the charter, the will was widely used in literature.<sup>422</sup> Two verse pieces printed during the 1530's make use of some form of the testament, Sir David Lindsay's The complaynte and testament of a Popinjay and The fantasy of the passyon of ye fox. Lindsay's Complaynte begins with two epistles from the popinjay, the first to King James V of Scotland, the second "to her brether of the Court", which contain much moral teaching, especially on the fickleness of fortune and the falseness of the world, and the exposition of the instability and mutability of the court includes a long catalogue of past rulers of Scotland and a more orthodox ubi sunt verse which lists the court of Troy, Alexander, Julius Caesar and Agamemnon. The second half of the poem, "the common-ynge betwyxte the Papinge and hye Executors", deals mainly with the

corruption of the church, its hypocrisy, sensuality, love of property and riches, and its banishment of chastity. However, it is introduced by a satire on the rapaciousness of corrupt clergy, who under the appropriate guise of raven, magpie and Kite attempt to extort from the popinjay her confession and the disposition of her goods in return for the promise of a good burial and a number of trentals said after death. At her end in the absence of any more trustworthy friends the popinjay distributes the parts of her body to various birds, only to be eaten by her executors as soon as she is dead. A more obviously allegorical <sup>series</sup> ~~series~~ of bequests <sup>is</sup> ~~are~~ made by the guiltless fox, whose death has been brought about by envy, and the fox's will also contains an echo of the legal formula. The testament begins:

The fyftene kalender of Novembre mysty  
In the name of the kyte/crowe/and py  
I Curribus of Mere dyoces of Sarum  
of subtile mynde and wyl con do testementum, 423

which suggests that the legal form was sufficiently widely known to be recognized. The fox first disposes of his natural body, leaving his eyes to the blind, his ears to the deaf, his teeth for burnish to the book-binder, and his skin to "my maysters of the chauntry" to make them amices when they win prebends—a detailed list containing several ironic bequests. He goes on to bequeath his name to Ingratitude and some of his other qualities to suitable recipients — the irony is more obvious in some bequests than in others:

My slyes and wyles vnto the weuer  
My flat\_erynge also to the bruer  
My obedyens to every good wyfe  
My fast holdyng to hym that wyll make stryfe  
Me lepes and skyppes of great quycknes  
I gyve to se<sup>ru</sup>antes in theyr busynes, 424

The animal will provided a convenient vehicle for allegory, satire and irony, and Perro~~re~~ mentions a Testamentum Porcelli as early as the fourth century.<sup>425</sup> The testaments of the popinjay and the fox are neither fables nor exempla so much as the literary counterparts of the babewyns of fourteenth-century English manuscript illustrations or the grotesques found on misericords where animals are pictured in human situations.<sup>426</sup>

The emphasis in both the Complaynte and testament of a Popinjay and The fantasy of the passyon of ye fox is upon the bequests, and there is little or no reference to the legal form. The wyll of the Devyll,<sup>427</sup> however, relies almost entirely upon its audience's knowledge of the usual form of a will, which is at once faithfully reproduced and perverted:

In mine owne name Amen: I Belseebub chiefe of Hell,  
Prince of Darckenesse, Father of Vnbeleevers, and  
Gouernour of the vniuersall Sinagogue papisticall,  
being sycke in body and soule, make this my Testament  
and last wyll, in a maner and forme following...  
Fyrst I bequeath my spitefull soule and body, to  
my sonne Antichriste...

The will is, in fact, a piece of anti-Roman polemic, which provided for the total perversion of all religious good and social justice, bequests entirely in keeping with the character of the testator. Having itemized the bequests, the Devil concludes:

Over this my Testament and last wyll, which I haue  
here made, in my ragious minde and spightfull deuylish  
memorye, in the presence of my great counsaylours....  
I doo make the Furies of Hell Executors,  
That is to saye: Megero, Alecto and Tisiphone: all  
Massemongers and Papistes, with the Author of Heresies  
Wyll and Testament, being faythful Overseers of the same.  
Written to our faithfull Secretaries, Hobgoblin, Rawheade,  
and Bloodybone: in the spightfull audience of all the  
Court of Hel. Teste Meipso. 428

Here the emphasis has moved from the satire or irony which may be drawn from the general will situation - although the same kind of moral/religious comment is made by the bequest - to the more precise parody of legal forms, a more elaborate, but perhaps a more restricted literary form than the animal wills.

Surviving wills give a fascinating insight into the spiritual preoccupations of men and women as they thought of death,<sup>429</sup> as well as providing information about the possessions, including sometimes religious books, owned by people.<sup>430</sup> Changing religious views were reflected in the different words used and concerns shown by Protestant testators.<sup>431</sup> A few Protestant authors refer to the contents of wills in order to counter what they feel to be misguided traditions; thus A myrrour or glasse for them that be syke condemns the habit of leaving money for masses or for the foundation or repairing of churches, or giving money to religious orders at the expense of providing for one's own dependants.<sup>432</sup> The same author goes on to condemn the provision of altars, monuments and costly graves intended to keep a person's fame alive. A multiplicity of "tables" and memorials, he complains, are to be found hung in churches as a bird net is spread.<sup>433</sup> Certainly provision for tombs was sometimes made in the wills of the wealthy.<sup>434</sup>

Legrand devotes a chapter to the subject "How noo man ought to be curyous of his sepulcre".<sup>435</sup> He attacks such curiosity as a sign of pride and vanity and continues:

in my lyfe I have seen many sepulturs/but I have  
not apperceyued yt ye people is meoued to douocion/  
or || to praye to god by cause of them/but I have well  
seen moche poeple beholde/adyse/and Cangle by cause  
of suche sepultures/and me semeth it is noothyng  
aduenaunt/ne apperteyneth not to a synfull creature to have  
a sepelture soo curyous ne so enhaunced as many men have. 436

Vives too criticized the provision of an over-costly tomb.<sup>437</sup> Legrand allowed that a monument appropriate to a man's degree could be provided, but he would prefer to see the money used "to shryne the bodyes of ~~the~~ sayntes" - a suggestion which the author of The myrrour...for them that



be syke would have found abhorrent. Legrand goes on to cite with approval a number of pagans, including Diogenes, Theodore<sup>438</sup> and King Lygurgus, who cared nothing for their burial, although he feels it is reasonable for a Christian to seek burial in hallowed ground. The chapter concludes by commending those who are diligent to bury others but warning people against taking too much interest in their own sepulch<sup>h</sup>re. The author of Dives and Pauper<sup>439</sup>, however, finds it necessary to warn against mean and "preuy burienges," which cheat the poor of their dole and deprive the souls of the living and the dead of the prayers of Holy Church. In particular he argues that "they offende greatly ayenst all the soules that ben in purgatorie, that shulde be releued by masses singing by the prayers and suffrages of holy church, whiche ben ordeyned in the burienge of deade folke for the helpe of all christen soules". He goes on to quote scriptural support for his views including Ecclesiastic<sup>s</sup> XXXVIII:16-17, which suggest that God requires mourning and "worshypfull buryenge" from those who can afford it. A good funeral and burial, together with suitable provision for obits and masses to be said after death, are justified and required for religious and social reasons. Alter the theological view to banish purgatory, and expose the vain expense of the grand funeral, and the arguments of Dives and Pauper are no longer tenable.

Erasmus' Preparation to deathe<sup>440</sup> goes on to outline the following course of action: having settled his worldly affairs, preferably some time before, while still healthy and active, but otherwise by a "nuncupatory testament" or by remitting care of the will to the heirs, "all babblers of worldly goodes" are to be removed from the sickman's chamber. Several authors comment on the place of the physician, with the older works tending

to ignore his skills while those touched by the Renaissance tend, like Erasmus, to allow the use of physical remedies provided that a man's chief hope remains fixed in God.<sup>441</sup> Finally, however, it is to the physician of his soul that the dying man must turn, and Erasmus advises care in the choice of a priest, one who will sustain and comfort the sick man and not flatter him or cast him into despair.<sup>442</sup> If possible he should receive the Last Rites of the Church, Confession, and absolution, the Sacraments of the Altar and anointing:

Ye souerayne medycyne bothe for soule and body are  
ye sacramentes of the chyrche/wherefore yf it please  
god ye shall have your helth agayne ye shall have it  
ye soner and ye better/for without ye specyal helpe  
of god there is no medycyne that may helpe nature...<sup>443</sup>

Protestant authors too recommend that the sick man should receive communion,<sup>444</sup> but the author of A myrrour...for them that be syke warns against receiving it merely in the hope of obtaining health and prosperity. Erasmus also warns against popular superstitions involving the Last Rites. Some people believed that to receive the Last Rites, like making a will, would make death come the sooner, which Erasmus counters by showing that the sacrament can be health-giving. There were also those who feared to die unless they had received the Last Rites,<sup>445</sup> a fear which Erasmus attempted to allay. Of course every Christian desires the comfort of the Sacraments at his departure, but Erasmus reassures him that God will accept sincere confession even if it is not made to nor absolved by a priest. He adds that not even burial is necessary, for some have been received by God without Sacrament or burial, while others buried with the full solemnity of the Church have gone to Hell. What

matters is not the outward manner of death but the life which preceded it and the faith which accompanies it. 446

Finally there is one more provision:

Whan ony lyklyhode shal deye/~~therme~~ is moste  
necessa~~rye~~ to have a specyall frende/the whiche  
wyll help and praye for hym ~~and~~ therwyth counseyll  
the seke of the wele of his soule/~~and~~ moreouer to  
see that alle other so do aboute hym/or ellys quykly  
for to make hym departe. 447

The Exornatorium curatorum urges the same course, saying that, if some one who is concerned to minister to the bodily needs of a dying man may be called a friend, the name is far more worthily bestowed upon one who ministers to the soul; the body will soon be dissolved to become meat for worms, but the soul shall live forever in either heaven or hell. 448

Most of the ars moriendi books seem to assume the presence of some friend to read the book to the sick man and to interrogate him on the points of belief. Although the priest is called in to administer the Last Rites the ars moriendi books, like many of the tribulation treatises, seem to have been written for a neutral audience, but perhaps predominantly lay. The friend must be carefully chosen and tested in life, for it is only at and after death that the true friend will be revealed. 449

Dives and Pauper contains a cautionary tale about those who trust, unwisely, to executors and attorneys, 450 and goes on to tell a tale from the Vita Barlaam 451 about a rich man's three friends, two of whom he loved while disregarding the third. Threatened with ruin and death by the king the rich man turns to his friends for help. The first offers him a burial sheet, the second offers to accompany him on the way, but it is the unregarded third friend who goes to the king and saves the

rich man's life. The tale is then interpreted: the rich man is anyone who has worldly possessions; the first friend is the world, who gives him nothing for his love; the second ~~are~~<sup>is</sup> family and bodily friends, who bear him to his grave, perhaps shed a few tears, but then soon forget, and the third friend is almsdeed, often disregarded in life, which alone will stand with the soul before God's judgement. This story, so like the play Everyman<sup>452</sup> in outline, makes it clear that the dying man will need not only a bodily friend to help him through the process of dying and who will fulfil his trust and pray for him after his death but he must during his life acquire those virtues which will remain his friends through death and judgement.

The most telling exposition of the preparations customary for death is to be found in Ye dialoge called Funus by Erasmus, which was added to the 1526 edition of the Colloquia and printed in an English translation by Robert Copland for John Byddell in January 1534.<sup>453</sup> There are several points of contact between Funus and Erasmus' Preparation to deathe, written at the end of 1533 and dedicated to Thomas Boleyn, Earl of Wiltshire and Ormonde.<sup>454</sup>

The greater part of Funus tells of the death of George, which is marked by constant activity, the presence of hordes of assistants and onlookers, and almost continual contention occasionally erupting into violence; yet while contriving to ridicule many aspects of the scene Erasmus presents it as substantially true. By contrast the death of Cornelius is told briefly and simply and his last days are marked by tranquillity and quiet hope. At the outset Phedrus undertakes merely to describe the death of the two men: "it shall by thy parte to iuge



whiche of the dethes is moost to be wyssed<sup>h</sup> to a chrysten man"—but despite the lack of overt polemic the reader is left in no doubt as to which is the more dignified, charitable<sup>and</sup> Christian ending.<sup>455</sup>

George is first seen surrounded by physicians, who have given up hope of a physical cure but who yet disagree as to what the illness is and are eventually allowed to perform "an Anothomye" on the dead body.<sup>456</sup> A Franciscan is called to hear George's confession,<sup>457</sup> and is soon followed by a multitude from the "four beggyng ordres". The parish priest called to administer the Sacrament and anoint the sick man refuses unless he hears the confession also. The ensuing altercation between friars and parish priest is settled when George, having succeeded in making himself heard above the noise, offers to confess again to the priest and to pay for "bell rygyng, dyryges, the herse, for buryall vnder stole" if the priest will leave the house forthwith. The payment settled, the priest pronounces the absolution without hearing confession, administers the Sacrament, and departs. Cornelius, on the other hand, feeling his death approach, goes to church on Sunday to be confessed, to hear the sermon and attend mass. He consults one physician, a close friend, and joyfully accepts the doctor's judgement that "he thought there was more socoure in god than in physiciens".

In George's house there ensues contention between the four orders of friars and a fifth, "the crouched freres", which degenerates<sup>into a violent argument</sup> between the orders. By promises of money to each George again purchases peace — money gained by false accounting while he was an army captain. The next issue is George's will, which sought to make his wife and each of his children enter the religious life and their portions were to be forfeit to the various convents if they refused. Other bequests went



to the two friars and to the Charterhouse that George might become a partaker of all the good works done by those orders, and the remainder of his money was to be bestowed by the friars on poor people.<sup>458</sup> By contrast Cornelius was always liberal towards the poor, distributing as much as he could spare to industrious poor people, not giving indiscriminately to "ambycious beggers", and during his last days he continued to relieve the poor, especially those who "dwelled nygh to hym". His will had long been made, "for he denayed vtterly that they were called testaments, whiche were made of suche as lye on dyeng: but rather folisshe dotinges", and it contained no bequests to religious or monasteries. The parish priest being called for administers the Sacrament of the Altar and anoints him, but Cornelius does not require confession, being recently confessed and feeling at peace.

Cornelius' priest asks about burial arrangements, to be told that Cornelius does not care where his body is buried, "whiche shal be founde in the last day as well out of one place as other", nor does he wish to have anything to do with "the ringyng of belles, trentals, and yeres myndes, of bulles, of bying part takyng of merites!". All he needs is a simple mass, and he trusts to the merits of Christ and the prayers of the whole Church, of which he is a member.<sup>459</sup> George's funeral arrangements are very different, and the elaborate typology seems to mock contemporary methods of exegesis:

....ix of everyone of the .v.ordres should be present in the honour of the .v. bokes of Moyses/ and of the .ix. ordres of aungelles. And that every ordre sholde haue theyr crosse borne before them/ and they sholde synge theyr mournyng songes. Moreouer .xxx. (besyde suche as were kynne to hym) shold be hyred, (for so many pyeces of money was our lorde solde) all in blacke to bere the torches. And for his honours sake.xii. mourners (this nombre is in the honour of the .xii. apostles) sholde go about the corps... 460

The tomb is then discussed in detail: his effigy will make it clear that "he was a gentyll man of cote armour" and his epitaph will be "mete for a worthyman" - a splendid illustration of the "curiosity", pride and vanity condemned by Legrand. His body is to be divided for burial in various worthy and meritious (and expensive) places of rest. xxviii Everything pertaining to his funeral and burial is arranged with an eye to the due honours of the participants as well as to the greater glory of the dead man.

George shows unmistakable signs of death: "The last acte of the comedy was therfore prepared". George is thrown into desperation by a legal fault in the bull promising him forgiveness of sins and escape from purgatory<sup>461</sup>, but Vincent quickly volunteers to exchange souls and if necessary to suffer even hell for George's sake; the numbers of masses and nocturns, "truely it was an vnreasonable nombre", to be provided are ~~then~~ agreed upon. George is then laid on a mat covered with ashes and a grey friar's coat laid over him.<sup>462</sup> He grasps a cross and holds a holy candle in each hand, while for nearly three hours Bernadine and Vincent canvass the respective merits of their orders, Franciscan and Dominican in to his left and right ear. After death, the anatomy being made, the mangled remains are buried with due solemnity.

~~Phedrus~~  
~~Hedrus~~ justifies the publication of the account thus:

...yf these thynges be godly whiche I shewe,  
it is theyr profet that the people do know them/  
~~yf~~ if they be otherwyse, so many as be good among them,  
will gyue me thanks whiche haue shewed forthe suche,  
wherby some correcte with shame, may refrayne lyke dedes.<sup>463</sup>

Cornelius passes his last hours having the Bible read to him. He then commends the care of their children to his wife, warns her to choose

carefully if she marries again, and exhorts his children to follow virtue and obey their mother. He blessed them all and the children are sent to bed for the night. At his end Psalm xxii is read to him and he takes up the cross and candle with appropriate biblical quotations. At last he raises his eyes to heaven, saying, "Lord Jesu, take my spyryte", and dies as gently as if he had simply fallen asleep. The death of Cornelius, indeed, exemplifies the principles of a good death which Erasmus describes in The preparation to deathe, while George's activity, his reliance on mechanical means of grace and post-mortem compensation, is characteristic of one who has refused to hear God's call to repentance during his life. The description in The preparation to deathe of how sick a man faces death sums up George's last hours:

Than haue they ynough to do with theyr sycknes,  
whiche suffereth them to do nothing els: with  
the phisitions, with their heires, with them to  
whom they bequethe, & with wayters for prayse,  
with crytours and dettours, with wife and chyl dren, with stuardes and seruantes,  
with fren des and foes, with durges & burial, with confessions, dispensations,  
and censures, with restitutions and makyn g amendes, with  
sundry doutes of conscience, fynally with the articles  
of the faith. 464

While Erasmus on more than one occasion had to protest his orthodoxy and deny Protestant sympathies, the manner of death he sought to encourage in The preparation to deathe and which was exemplified by Cornelius was clearly congenial to Protestants. For instance Werdmüller's A moste frutefull/piththe and learned treatise may well owe something to Erasmus' Preparation. In the fortieth chapter of Book I, Werdmüller persuades the reader to make his will while still healthy, which "causeth not thee to dye to sooner...but...the more quietly", and he uses a series of comparisons which in structure and occasionally in content seem similar to Erasmus': it is good to restore ill-gotten goods in the will, but better to do it while

still healthy; it is good to bequeath goods to the poor but it is better to give to them during life and be able to oversee the distribution of what is still yours to give; and finally it is good to forgive enemies at death but better to forgive them in life.<sup>465</sup> Elaborate funeral ceremonies were seen by Protestants as ~~often~~ superstitious or hypocritical, and in any case unnecessary since heaven was to be won by personal faith in the merits of Christ and trust in His forgiveness and it was not to be bargained for or purchased with money or masses. Cyprian, as we have seen, condemned excessive mourning, among other reasons because infidels noted that such mourning contradicted Christian belief in man's immortal soul and the <sup>Christian</sup> assertion that there exists a better world than the present one. Hughe echoes Cyprian again, and offers a useful summary of Protestant views.<sup>466</sup> With purgatory removed and faith in the resurrection affirmed, the Christian who dies passes directly from the cares and miseries of this world straight to the comfort, light and joy of heaven. It is the survivor left on earth, still far from "the port of our sweet country", who should mourn.

The Comfortable exhortation against the chance of death, made by Erasmus Roterodamus,<sup>467</sup> which may well have been used by Werdmüller in the third book of his Moste frutefull...treatise, is one of the few works that pays any attention to the state of the bereaved. The medieval ars moriendi<sup>e</sup> books concentrated upon the behaviour, temptations and faith of the dying man, while Protestants such as Frith and Hughe emphasize the importance of right belief. The death of kindred or friends seems to have been generally regarded as a tribulation to be

borne<sup>m</sup> 2 Thou muste paciently suffre, and grutch not at it that can not be ammeded".<sup>468</sup> Mourning and tears are unprofitable, in that they cannot restore the dead and they may harm those who indulge in them.<sup>469</sup> Compassion and sympathy for the bereaved seems to have been largely ignored in favour of more important issues, how to make a good death and what is to be believed. For the most part the Comfortable exhortacion reiterated familiar themes - the inevitability of death, the wretchedness, frailty and shortness of life - and Erasmus gives numerous examples of the heroic stoicism shown by pagan men and women in the face of death - a list substantially reproduced in Werdmüller's seventh chapter. Erasmus' Exhortation deals particularly with the death of a child, and the father's lament, "He died ere his daie", is very similar to that of the man in Brecon's The Prayse of Death.<sup>and</sup> It is answered partly by showing that no-one can presume to live another day, that life is a "perpetuall course vn-to death", that few reach old age, and that an early death saves a child from subsequent miseries and corruption.<sup>470</sup> The point is illustrated by the tale of a prince who lends a fine "table", which should be enjoyed while it can be and gladly returned when it is asked for again.<sup>471</sup> The other part of the answer is given in terms of the familiar medieval opposition, heightened in the contemptus mundi writings, between the miseries of this world and the joys of heaven. The body is seen as "the burial or prison of the soule" - a common enough view<sup>472</sup> - and the mourner does wrong to begrudge the soul its new-found liberty and security in heaven. The thought of the loved one's soul alive in the joy of heaven was clearly intended to be the chief consolation. Werdmüller gives body to the consolation by talking of the Christian's living hope of a joyful



resurrection,<sup>473</sup> and he reminds the reader that time is a great healer. But perhaps the greatest concession to human feelings is made in Erasmus' insistence that friendship continues beyond the grave. The father may still enjoy the company of his son in his thoughts,<sup>474</sup> and he may find comfort in the thought of a son in heaven whom he can reverence and who can help his cause on earth.

The ars moriendi

The undated monument to Richard and Margerie Nordell at St. Edmund's, Lombard Street, bore the following inscription:

Returned to erth ans so sall ye  
Of the erth we were made and formed  
And to the erth we bin returned  
Have þis in mynd and memory  
Ye þat liuen lerneth to dy.  
And beholdeth here your destine  
Such as ye erne somtyme weren we  
Ye sall be dyght in þis aray  
Be yere nere so stout and gay  
Therefore Frendys we yow prey  
Make yow redy for todey  
þat ye be not for sinn atteynt  
At ye dey of Judgment. 475

It is to the living that the warning to learn to die is addressed,<sup>476</sup> and Erasmus recommends attendance at other men's <sup>deaths</sup> that the onlooker may learn to distinguish the good and holy from the detestable, and by implication avoid the bad.<sup>477</sup> The ars moriendi is essentially a conduct book designed to instruct man how to "deye <sup>&</sup> departe in our Lorde/that is to say from the worlde and his pleasurys and deye in the trewe fayth of the chyrche and repentaunce for hyr synnes". Since the sources and variants of the two main versions of the ars moriendi have been ably dealt with by Sister Mary Catharine O'Connor,<sup>478</sup> I shall concentrate upon the ars moriendi books printed in England during the 1530's: Wyer's edition of "Caxton II", A lyttll treatyse schortely compyled and called ars moriendi;<sup>479</sup> <sup>The doctryne of deathe</sup> and Erasmus's Preparation to deathe,<sup>480</sup> which does include some practical advice towards the end.

The xylographic editions of the ars moriendi seem never to have been produced in England, but The boke of the craft of dying circulated quite widely in Latin and English versions.<sup>481</sup> It was divided into

six chapters; an introductory commendation of death, the five death-bed temptations, the interrogations, and in the last three chapters miscellaneous instructions and devotions. Most of the ars moriendi books seem to have contained an introductory exhortation/commendation, the temptations, the interrogations thought to be derived from St. Anselm,<sup>482</sup> and various devotions or prayers. The Lytell treatyse is somewhat unusual in not having a separate section on the temptations,<sup>483</sup> although they are not wholly disregarded. It begins with a general introduction - exhortation, which is followed by the interrogations, and then the work provided a rather more miscellaneous collection of general information and devotions than is usual in ars moriendi treatises: various snatches from primer prayers and psalter, a remembrance of the sacraments of the altar, remedies against venial sins, a confession of sins ascribed to Gerson, - "iij verytees", a prayer for the dedication of a church, and finally lists of catechetical material: the twelve degrees of humility, seven degrees of obedience, twelve degrees of patience and the fifteen degrees of charity. As a whole it lacks the organisation of subject matter or the schematized divisions necessary to a successful practical guide to the business of dying, and much of its content is clearly peripheral or irrelevant to the subject of death. However, as a general devotional treatise ~~is~~ intended for the living but including some instruction on the business of dying, the Lytyll treatyse seems a rather less misdirected work, although it is still difficult to justify the inclusion of the prayer for the dedication of a church. The doctrynnall of dethe is rather better organized, and had Sister Mary Catharine<sup>484</sup> seen

it, she would surely have linked it with The boke of the craft of dying. Though shorter than that book it is organized on the same lines, with an introduction-exhortation, then a detailed treatment of the five death-bed temptations, which had figured so prominently in the earlier xylographic editions,<sup>485</sup> followed by the interrogations and a number of prayers.

The Lytyll treatyse, The doctrynnall and the practical section of Erasmus' Preparation to deathe<sup>486</sup> are addressed to the friend who is to help the sick-man through the last hours of his life and to whose care the safe departure of the dying man's soul is committed. More obviously than perhaps any other class of late medieval devotional literature these treatises were written for lay people. Although the priest is to be brought in to hear confession and administer the Last Rites he has no other part in the process. In the Lytyll treatyse, Gerson's La Médecine de l'Ame, and The doctrynnall he is hardly mentioned, and in Erasmus' Preparation to deathe, while the Last Rites should be desired by the Christian and the priest carefully chosen, they are not necessary to a good death. Against the frequent tendency of medieval religion to insist upon the correct performance and fulfilment of religious obligations, in this case the reception of the Last Rites,<sup>487</sup> the authors of these treatises seem more concerned with the general state of the dying man's soul and with the need to strengthen his faith and console him.

The type of consolation offered is two-fold: one is the rather theoretical consolation of the tribulation treatises, the other is centred in the far more sympathetic figure of Christ crucified. The doctrynnall sees death in the terms of the last struggle of the Christian's warfare:

"ye shall vnderstonde that none shall haue ye kyngdome of heu~~en~~ but such as fyghteth for it/and specyally agaynst theyr body in tyme of temptacyon and sekenes." Death is the last and decisive tribulation, and it is to be borne with fortitude and patience. The Lytll treatyse exhorts its audience "to be glad for to departe from this wretchyd worlde and fall of alle mysery/and thynke that ye nedes must departe", and reiterates the familiar idea that the time of death is better than the time of birth.<sup>488</sup> Since death is inevitable God's summons is to be accepted willingly whenever it comes. The arguments of the tribulation treatises are reproduced to console and encourage the sufferer. Tribulation is to be desired and taken patiently and thankfully, not "wyth grutchyng". To suffer now is to be sure of avoiding the pains of purgatory or hell hereafter. Gerson sums up the rather more diffuse reflections of The doctrynnall upon the subject:

si dois bien prendre la painne de ta maladie  
 et la douleur de ta mort en bonne pacience,  
 en priant Dieu que tout ce tourne en la purgation  
 de ton ame et a la remission de tes pechez; que ce  
 soit yci ton purgatoire car tu dois mieulx aymer estre  
 pugny en ce monde qu'en l'autre; et se ainsi tu le  
 demandes de bon cuer et repentent, tu feras de necessité  
 vertus; et Dieu te pardonra et peine et coulpe; et iras  
 certainement en paradis; et aultrement, par impacience,  
 tu porrois cheoir en pardurable dampnacion.<sup>489</sup>

Finally The doctrynnall declares that patient endurance of pain is a proof of faith and a valuable example to others.<sup>490</sup>

Whereas the tribulation treatises offered a heavenly reward hereafter commensurate with the amount of suffering endured in this life, the Lytll



treatyse suggests a more immediate exchange: the miseries of this world are soon to be exchanged for life with Christ and the possession of the heavenly inheritance "that he dyde bye for you with his precyous passyon & blood".<sup>491</sup> Christ is seen as the perfect example, and The doctrynnall encourages the sick man "with all the force that ye may applye your body to suffre payne/lyke as our sauour applyed his body to ye crosse for you". Erasmus's Preparation to deathe ends with a description of Christ's Passion from His sermon on Maundy Thursday, through the Agony in the Garden to His crucifixion, and what Christ did outwardly the dying man is to do spiritually. Like Christ the dying man must go out alone, leaving behind him all possessions and "domestical affections", and speak to his heavenly Father as the extreme necessity approaches. In the Garden Christ had felt weak and afraid but he had continued to cry to God, and so must the dying man, whose good angel will at last come and wipe the bloody sweat from his mind:

Last of al we muste with our lord al naked,  
ascende vpon the crosse, far from erthly  
affections, lift vp to the love of the heavenly  
lyfe... And there nayled with three nayles, fayth,  
hope, and charite, we muste constanlye persuer,  
fyghtyng valiantely with our ennemy the diuel,  
vntyl at last, after we have vanquished hym, we maye  
passe into eternal rest, throughe the ayde and grace  
of our Lorde Iesus Chryste.<sup>492</sup>

Christ will help those who endeavour to follow His example. To inspire faith and hope most of the ars moriendi treatises recommend that a crucifix should be held before the dying man,<sup>493</sup> and this is illustrated in the xylographic illustrations and in the Verard and deWorde woodcuts.<sup>494</sup> In xxxix the third chapter of her Revelations of Divine Love Julian of Norwich

gives a vivid description of her awareness of the crucifix held before her eyes by the priest as she begins to lose consciousness, and it is from the vision of Christ crucified that her revelations proceed. The author of The boke of the craft of dying declares that "the disposition of Criste in the Crosse shuld grettly draw" the sick man, and he goes on to quote the often-used but most moving words of St. Bernard:

What man is it þat shuld not be rauysshed and  
draw to hope ~~and~~ to have full confidence in god,  
~~and~~ he take heed diligently of the disposicione  
of Cristis body in the crosse: take heed ~~and~~ see  
his heed enclyned to salue the, his mouth to kysse  
the, his armes I-spred to be-clyp the, his hondis  
I-thrilled to yeue the, his syde opened to loue the,  
hys body alonge straught to yeue all hym-selfe to the. 495

Here Christ is seen not only as a noble exemplar to be followed but as a tender and loving Saviour, whose care for the individual must have offered consolation and hope to the suffering <sup>and</sup> despairing.

In addition to the crucifix it is recommended that the friend read to the sick man, especially from Christ's Passion, but the Lytell treatyse and The doctrynnall also recommend the seven psalms, and the litany with perhaps part of "our lady psalter"; Erasmus simply suggests appropriate topics from Scripture. The doctrynnall also recommends some representation of Our Lady, while Erasmus suggests pictures of saints, in whose lives God's goodness was to be clearly seen; The doctrynnall adds the provision of a holy candle, and together with the Lytell treatyse calls for plenty of holy water to be cast upon and about the sick man "for auoydung of euill spirytes, ye whiche thenne be full redy to take theyr auantage of the sowle yf they may". It was generally believed that the Devil intensified his attack on the soul as it drew towards death, when its resistance was lowered by pain, by natural weakness of mind, by the

dread of death and the horror of hell. The struggle was crystallized in the dramatic series of illustrations which accompanied the xylographic ars moriendi books and continued in Veraard's woodcuts for L'Art de bien vivre et de <sup>bien</sup> mourir, which were in turn copied by de Worde.<sup>496</sup> In the standard ars moriendi illustrations it is the devils and their temptations which threaten the dying man, not a direct representation of death. Pictures of devils struggling with angels for the possession of a soul or of devils dragging souls to hell, not to mention sculptured devils or the devils who appeared in the Doomsday plays of the Chester or Ludus Coventriae cycles, must have helped to make the Devil seem all too real and threatening, especially to the dying.<sup>497</sup> The problem of death-bed temptation was widely recognized in both traditional Catholic and Protestant treatises.<sup>498</sup> Traditionally there were five temptations: loss of faith, despair, impatience, vain glory and avarice. All of them as described in the ars moriendi books are psychologically credible afflictions of the soul in its last hours, and as a guide to the living their teaching is very relevant; three of the temptations—vain glory, impatience, and avarice—are counterparts of three of the seven deadly sins—pride, anger or hatred, and avarice.

Faith is the basis upon which man's <sup>1</sup>salvation is built: undermine it by, for example, superstition or heresy, or deny it by living a wantonly evil life, and the soul will be in serious danger of being lost. The authors of the ars moriendi books, like those of many devout treatises, emphasize the importance of obedience to the Church and of belief in her teachings, even though the individual "may not actually <sup>8</sup>and intellectually apprehend him". To reinforce the sick man's faith The booke of the craft of dying, The doctrynnall and Erasmus all recommended that the creed be recited before him, and The booke, and The doctrynnall suggest that stories showing the

faithfulness of patriarchs, apostles and martyrs be read to him. The doctrynnall sums up the antidote to this temptation by encouraging the sick man to put his confidence in God and to trust in the power of God and the help of the Blessed Virgin. Erasmus particularly warns of the danger of being drawn into arguments with the Devil,<sup>499</sup> and he illustrates the warning with an amusing tale of two men who were tempted by the Devil at their death. One, a philosopher, entered into argument with the Devil and was induced by his philosophical reasoning to show that Christ could not be God and Man, and that a Virgin would not conceive a Son: his faith thus undermined, the philosopher wavered and was lost. The other, a simple Christian, was asked what he believed and answered "As the church beleueth". The Devil demanded:

How doth the churche beleue? Mary quod he, as I beleue.  
How dost thou beleue? As the church beleueth. How  
beleueth the church? As I beleue,<sup>500</sup>

and the Devil departs, vanquished. Erasmus advocates this type of argument against subtle questions on such subjects as the Trinity and the Sacrament of the Altar. He goes on to give a dialogue between the Devil and the sick man - it is substantially reproduced in Hughe's Troubled mans medicine<sup>501</sup> - in which the sick man is provided with quotations and paraphrases of scripture with which to refute the Fiend's suggestions. This was the method used by Jesus when tempted by the Devil after His baptism; and, not surprisingly, it was the method most often recommended in Protestant works, such as A myrrour...for them that be syke, and Frith provides an armoury of biblical quotations against numerous temptations at the end of his Preparation to the crosse; A godly and holosome preseruatyue against disperaciō uses the same method.



William Bonde recommends a passive response to spiritual temptations against faith or to desperation:

Wysely ~~and~~ dyscretly we must resyste them/  
but in no wyse wrastell wyth them. When  
the enemy putythe to you a mocion of infydelyte/  
reason not with hym/and lyke wyse when he castyth  
a suggestion of desperacion/styue not with hym... 502

One of the Devil's aims in undermining a man's faith is to induce him to despair of salvation<sup>503</sup> - the sin of Marlowe's Dr. Faustus - or, even worse, to commit suicide.<sup>504</sup> His chief means is to remind the sick man of all the sins he has committed and so lead him to doubt God's mercy.<sup>505</sup>

The Chastising of God's Children<sup>506</sup> shows how remembrance of Christ's Passion will overcome the sinner's despair, and other treatises use the Bernadine description of Christ crucified (quoted above), leaning down from the cross to save His people, to dispel despair. It is to the suffering and crucified Christ, the proof of God's love for man, that the soul tempted to despair must turn. He must trust in Christ's mercy and believe the promises of forgiveness recorded in Scripture and shown in the reconciliations of such sinners as St. Peter, who denied His Lord, and St. Mary Magdalene.<sup>507</sup> Although despair is particularly dealt with in the context of death-bed temptation, as the full title of "A godly and holse preseruatye against disperacion at al times necessarye for the soule: but then chieflye to be vsed and ministered when the devil doth assault vs most fiersely, ~~and~~ deth approcheth nieste" shows, the temptation does not only afflict the dying. Both the author of The Chastising of God's Children and Bonde in his Deuoute Epystle<sup>508</sup> devote a chapter to the dangers of despair, for the living.

The remaining temptations, to impatience, vain-glory and avarice, are ~~xxx~~ even more obviously the concern of the living, but they intensified their



attack as a man drew towards death. Impatience is described in The boke of the craft of dying and The doctrynnall as a denial of charity, and warnings against "grutchynge agaynst god" in pain or illness suggest that death was regarded as the final tribulation. Its pain if borne patiently would please God and help to satisfy for sins committed, so reducing or saving the soul altogether from purgatory. The temptation to vain-glory or spiritual pride particularly afflicts the devout soul, and according to The boke of the craft of dying shows itself as complacency or self-satisfaction. The antidote is to remember the sins which have been committed - but not so pessimistically as to cause despair; to think along the lines of the contemptus mundi writings on the vileness of the body or the misery of the human condition; and to follow the example of St. Anthony,<sup>509</sup> in confounding the Devil, by showing hope when tempted to despair, meekness when tempted to pride. The final temptation, to avarice, particularly afflicts "carnall men <sup>&</sup> and secular men" according to The boke of the craft of dying. It concerns not only love of riches but all manner of worldly business and earthly affections, all that ties a man to this world and leads him to hope against all reason that he may escape death. Preachers, authors of contemptus mundi works and numerous more general devout treatises all inveighed against the love of riches, undue affection for this world, and the refusal to recognize the inevitability of death and prepare for it. Life was to be a preparation for death, and a good life <sup>en</sup> ~~su~~ assured a good death. It is unlikely that any of these temptations would occur for the first time when a man was on his death-bed. Ideally they should have been overcome in life, but the Devil

was particularly ready at death to remind the dying man of past failures and to make use of any remaining weaknesses. The final piece of comfort offered in this chapter by The boke of the craft of dying is the reminder that, however sorely tempted, a man who has free will does not sin unless he consents to it, and the assurance, given in many tribulation treatises, of I Corinthians X:13 is reiterated, that God "will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able".

Although traditional ars moriendi books were reprinted during the 1530's and Erasmus' Preparation to deathe contains so many familiar teachings and examples that it may be counted as traditional, the same decade saw the appearance of several Protestant works. Two of them have been associated with the name of John Frith: The preparation to deathe<sup>510</sup> and A treatyse to teche a man to dye/and not to feare deathe.<sup>511</sup> The latter was probably first printed at Antwerp, as was Certeine prayers and godly meditacyons\*, "Emprinted at Marlborow...per me Ioannem Philippon",<sup>512</sup> whose "consolacyon for troubled consciences" contains some teaching about death. Also originating from Antwerp, probably, was A myrroure or glass for them that be syke & in payne, which was "Translated out of Dutche in English", perhaps by Coverdale, from Guilielmus Gnapheis' (Fullonius) Troost ende spiegel der siecken.<sup>513</sup> It is a list which clearly shows the importance of the Low Countries, especially Antwerp, in supplying Protestant works for the English market during the 1530's.

The Protestant treatises differ from the traditional ars moriendi books in two very obvious ways: they abandon the division into exhortation, temptations, interrogations and miscellaneous instructions, prayers and devotions; and they are clearly not designed as practical guides to conduct but are usually longer and more discursive. Their method is not to instruct the reader in the art of dying so much as to teach him

about death and what he is to believe. Yet despite their shift of emphasis and their obvious scorn for the traditional paraphernalia of the sick room<sup>514</sup> and condemnation of traditional Catholic doctrines, the shadow of the ars moriendi books still lingers, to be discerned in the choice of topics, in some of their teachings or rebutted by the more aggressive Protestant authors. Their greatest contribution to the literature of death is the Reformed authors' confident assertion of the hope and joy of the resurrection of faith.

new para/ [Frith's Preparation...to deathe reveals many of the characteristics of the Protestant authors. The first six chapters deal generally with the nature of death and contrast the hopefulness and security of the death of the godly with the miserable plight of the ungodly. The teaching is derived exclusively from Scripture, especially the Pauline epistles, and many biblical quotations and paraphrases are included in each chapter. A typical example of Frith's method is the sixth chapter<sup>515</sup>—"Baptisme is a comferte in the poynte of deathe"—which owes much to Romans VI. Baptism is the sick man's "letter and token" that his life is "incorporate with the deathe of Christ", and as Christ by His death has overcome death, so the Christian is to trust that he too will be delivered. He is to remember:

that thou arte baptysed,||that is, that thou hast  
received remission of synnes: that thou haste made  
a couenaunt with god, that thou arte delyuered frome  
the ~~deathe~~, deathe, and synne, reconciled to god.<sup>516</sup>  
dyuell

The Christian by virtue of his baptism is reconciled to God and is heir to His promises.<sup>517</sup> The following chapter, entitled "The goodlye knowe the tyme of dyinge to be determyned of god", sounds at first as if it runs counter to the widespread traditional teaching on the inevitability of

death and the uncertainty of when or how it will strike, but although there is a change of emphasis Frith does not contradict the traditional teaching. The Christian is assured that no matter when or how he may die he will be in God's hand, because God alone has appointed his time. The godly man will so live as to be constantly prepared to die, while the ungodly, assuming a long life ahead, will invariably be caught unprepared. Unlike the traditional ars moriendi authors Frith is much less concerned to encourage the heedless to repent and prepare for death, which may strike at any moment; he addresses himself to the godly reader, and offers ~~him~~ assurance, comfort and hope in the promises of Jesus and in the resurrection of the flesh and the life everlasting. Frith's treatise contains no Protestant polemic or criticism of Catholic customs, but its exclusive biblicism, the assurance of salvation promised to the believer, its emphasis upon the resurrection and the importance it attaches to the personal faith of the believer all help to make it a distinctively Protestant treatise.

A treatyse to teche a man to dye/and not to feare dethe is more obviously intended as an antidote to the traditional ars moriendi books and Catholic teaching about death. Its opening is surely a deliberate echo of L'Art de bien vivre et de bien mourir, that popular collection of Catholic teachings on death and the Last Things—

When the only eternall and all myghtie god had  
created/and made heven and erthe and all manner  
of beastes/he created also man/after his owne  
Image 518 —

and the introduction goes on to give a brief account of the Fall and to show that it was by sin that death came into the world, a point also made



in Frith's Preparation... to deathe. Since God has ordained corporal death to be <sup>the</sup> punishment for sin, all men - for there is none without sin - must die, and the Christian should welcome it whenever it comes, both in obedience to God's will and also because it heralds "a lyfe thousande folde better". The treatise's main concern is to remove three causes which make man fear death: fear of ~~the~~ sin, which gnaws his conscience, fear of God's judgement, and ignorance about the fate of the soul after death. Fear of sin is, of course, closely related to the traditional death-bed temptation to despair.

The great fear arising from sin is that man has not done sufficient by way of satisfaction to earn forgiveness; the tendency to <sup>n</sup>justify religion must have left many people feeling incapable of balancing the equation between merits and reward. The author laments "that so many of Christen people are now is (sic) euylle enstructed and taught", that they trust their own deeds or the works of other men rather than the works and merits of Christ.<sup>519</sup> Good works are of value in helping to form a Christian character and for the assistance of other Christians, but they cannot without faith save a man, and a series of biblical quotations proves the often-stated Protestant assertion that salvation is in Christ alone. Pardon for sins is to be found not in the promises and pronouncements of men but in Scripture, and it is up to the individual to test whether he is forgiven against the standard of Scripture and according to his own feelings. Reminders of the joy of Christ's promises of forgiveness, and numerous biblical quotations, take up much of the remainder of the chapter, and as in Frith the emphasis falls upon the individual's faith. A myrrour...for them that be syke also deals with



the fear born of sin, although in the more traditional context of the death-bed temptation to despair. Its author provides a catena of scriptural quotations to show that Christ's natural work, like that of a physician, is to save His people and to heal their sins. He goes on to emphasize, like Frith, the importance of belief in the resurrection of the flesh.

The second fear dealt with in To teche a man to dye is the fear of judgement; and the author returns to his attack on the inadequacy of external works to pay the debt of sin, and he particularly attacks those who hope to live long in order to accumulate more merits: "Shewe me wherin are ye amended sente (sic) youre last sycknes/when you thought that ye shulde have dyed?" Man stands condemned by the law, but if he has faith in Christ all his debts may be laid upon Him; and the treatise goes on to show the ways in which sin may be covered. The third fear arising from ignorance of where a man will go after death is answered by faith in God and belief in life everlasting, and the author returns to his attack upon the way in which "the multitude of symple people" are taught. He contends that doctors and preachers instil into the people fear of death and terrify them with their stories of purgatory and hell.<sup>520</sup>

By comparison with A myrrour or glasse for them that be syke, To teche a man to dye is very mild in its criticism of Catholic teaching and customs. A myrrour begins with a bitter indictment of the Catholic clergy and later denounces pilgrimages and devotion to saints. Like To teche a man to dye, the author of A myrrour laments the people's ignorance of God's word, "that they beleue rather, the visions of Tundall, the tales of legenda aurea, or such fantasies" than the Bible. It is

largely by Timothy's exposure of Catholic superstitions and his exposition of Scripture that Lazarus is brought to repent and to apologize for having gone so far from God, with his "pardon letters, my reliquyes, my folysshe treatises of meditation, my bedes, and all such superstitions", and a little later he tells Tobias that all have been burnt. The attack on the superstitions and materialism of Catholic religion is to be expected from Protestant authors, but it is to be noted that in Fumes and his Preparation to deathe Erasmus had indirectly attacked the more obvious abuses, and one of the declared aims of the traditional ars moriendi books was to help the soul prepare to meet death, with all his worldly concerns settled.

But the Protestant treatises do not simply replace Catholic teaching by heavy-footed biblicism and condemn earlier customs as superstitions, nor are they solely preoccupied with the question of faith and works. Their writers are convinced that death has been conquered in Christ:

And yf that this aduantage of deth do but lytell moue vs/  
it is a signe that oure faith in Christ is verey weke with  
vs/for he that doth not well exteme the pryce and value of  
a good deth/or elles that deth is good/he doth not yet beleue  
but is ouer moche lette by the olde adam/and the wysdome of  
the flesshe yet reynnyng in hym/we must therfore laboure that  
we may be promoted to knowe and loue thys benefyte of deth. 521

Thus death, so fearful to other people, becomes the greatest advantage to the Christian; "deth is now dede to faythfull men/and hath nothyng to be feared for/but hys visar and outward face". Those who join themselves to Christ by baptism and in faith will be partakers of His victory.

Contributing to the Christian's victory, however, is the traditional virtue of patient bearing of tribulation and death,<sup>522</sup> and awareness<sup>of</sup> being a member of the communion of Saints.<sup>523</sup> These Protestant authors of the 1530's would, one feels, have greatly admired Donne's sonnet, "Death be not proud..."<sup>524</sup>

It is apparent that by the 1530's devotional writers, whether Catholic or Protestant, who wish to treat of death find themselves having first to overcome a widespread fear of death. Whitford in his Dayly exercyse and experyance of dethe puts the case in some detail. Before he can introduce the devout meditations and exercises of his subject:

It is necessarye <sup>&</sup> spedefull that we inforce and gyue dilygence to auoyde, exclude, exyle, and put ferre away: that chyldysh vayne and folyssh feare, and drede of deth, that many persones haue: for doubtles it is both vayne and folye: to feare <sup>&</sup> drede that thynges: that by no meane, may be auoyded <sup>&</sup> yet some persones ben so afrayde of deth/that they shrugge, temble and quake, whan they here speke therof: and renne or departe out of company/bycause they wyll not here tell of dethe. And to excuse theyr folye they take auctoryte of Aristotle the great Philosophour: that sayth: <sup>that</sup> of al terryble thynges, deth is moste terryble... 525 —

the quotation from Aristotle was used by a number of authors. Where the majority of people are morally lax and heedless of their end it may be argued that to impress on them the horrors of death, judgement, purgatory and hell is justifiable as means of recalling them to a more Godly life. A work which aims to frighten people into dying well is The nedyll of the fere dyuyne for to dye well, which was one of the pieces included in The Crafte to lyue well and to dye well. It particularly stresses the way in which fear of God drives sin out of the soul. The opening sentence, however, seems calculated to inspire the kind of uncertainty which was closely linked to ignorance of man's fate after death; "For that no man lyuyng in this lyfe presente ne may knowe ne vnderstande certainly yf he be in the grace and love of god..." The Protestant emphasis upon assurance and the love and forgiveness of Christ can be seen in part as a reaction against this

kind of teaching. Another class of literature, to be considered in more detail later, which did nothing to comfort and allay the fears of those facing death, were the laments of souls who had died unprepared, such as The dyenge creature, The complaynt of the soule and, despite its title, Fisher's A spirituall consolacyon. The author of To teche a man to dye believes the traditional teaching about death to be based upon fear,<sup>526</sup> and argues that this fear has done nothing to bring people "to well doynge and <sup>to</sup> lyue vertuously". He continues:

One may preache vn̄to me longe ynough of hell/  
of the deuyll/of gyuinge a straitte accomptes/  
of a rigorous iudge and soche lyke thinges/or  
euer I can have a love <sup>to</sup> God/for they shulde  
rather make me drawe back from|| God and bringe me  
to haue soche a concayte/that I shulde alwayes be  
afraid of God willynge to abyde <sup>still</sup> in this lyfe/  
or else to dye as beastes do in body and soule/and  
so by that meanes to escape deathe/hell/the deuyll/<sup>and</sup>  
that dredefull accomptes also in the daye of iudgement. 527

But, as More noted,<sup>528</sup> the sad tendency of human nature is to be bored by hearing of heavenly things, whereas when <sup>someone</sup> ~~the~~ preaches about the pains of hell the congregation is all attention. Preachers have to address themselves to the majority of their congregation, so that an individual looking for consolation and needing comfort in his fear was all too likely not to receive help from the pulpit. However, Protestant preachers did attempt to redress the balance, and the First Book of Homilies issued in 1547 contained a sermon in three parts against the fear of death.<sup>529</sup>

Erasmus considers the fear of death to spring either from no belief in an after-life, which sees death as the end of all things, or from distrust of God's promises, or from man's despair of himself, which stems from lack of faith usually coupled with love of the world. The first half of The preparation to deathe is in some ways an answer to these

fears, dealing as it does with God's promises and the saving work of Christ. Lupset's Compendious treatise, teaching the waie of dieyng well names fear of death and love of life as the two main hindrances to dying gladly, the former being the greater. In seeking to explain this fear he comes to the conclusion that fear of death is natural, being found even in young children, who know nothing "of this lyfe, nor of the deadly panges, nor of hewen, purgatorye, or helle".<sup>530</sup>

Erasmus reminded his readers that Christ's victory had broken the power of sin, death and the Devil, not banished all trace of them. Christ did not escape the fear of death, and the Christian has still to fight against all three.<sup>531</sup> Lupset, while he condemns excessive fear as cowardly, allows that "there is a meane measure of fere in dethe, that may be rekened honest and iuste, bycause nature maketh it necessary". In Certain prayers, the "Consolacyon for troubled consciences" describes fear as "a passyon of the mynde about euyl to come... And the more vncerteyn this ewil is/the greater it is!"<sup>532</sup> Whitford deals with this anticipatory fear, which is fed by tales of great pains and sickness suffered in death, in the first half of his Dayly exercyse, and diagnoses love of this world and lack of faith as its main causes.<sup>533</sup> His indeed is by far the most detailed discussion of the fear of death provided in the devout treatises of the 1530's. In some ways the two exercises of death he provides may be seen as answers to the problem: death is to be thought of, anticipated and even experienced until it becomes so familiar that it cannot frighten. Whitford also seeks to counter the fear that death will be a painful experience, a fear that the quotation from Aristotle about death being



the most terrible of all things and More in his Quattuor novissima did nothing to ally. Like Lupset and Erasmus, Whitford accepts that some fear is natural, nature always seeks to continue and resists death, and all three authors find reason to praise examples of pagan fortitude in resisting the impulses of nature and facing death so calmly. Whitford argues that bodily pain precedes death, and death itself is without sensation like a swoon and may even happen as a person sleeps.<sup>534</sup>

From the 1530's onwards those who write about death usually make some reference to or attempt to overcome the fear of death. The first half of Whitford's Dayly exercyse and the whole <sup>of</sup> To teche a man to dye concern themselves with the fear of death. Protestant authors tend to blame the traditional Catholic teaching, and they condemn the threat of purgatory and hell as fantasies, the product of a fearful imagination.<sup>535</sup> Yet belief in purgatory and hell had been challenged well before 1517, when Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg. The first chapter of The nedyll of the fere dyuyne, which appeared in various editions of L'Art de bien vivre et de bien mourir during the last decade of the fifteenth century, contained "the dysputacyon yt I thynke to make agaynste them the whiche as vnfaythfull people byleue not yt there is helle nor purgatorye and the reasons and auctorytees the whiche I thynke to brynge and alledge agayn them". Despite the Protestant criticisms the traditional ars moriendi books make very little reference to purgatory and hell and do not use them to threaten the dying man. The threat of death and damnation was more often used by preachers and writers on more general topics as a means

of moral coercion, and was not applied in the ars moriendi books.<sup>536</sup>

The fear of death seems to have been in part a result of the stress laid upon the importance of making a good death and fear of the consequences if one did not die well:

For this is <sup>of</sup> mans lyfe the last parte (as it were)  
of the play wherof hangeth either everlastyng blisse  
of man, or everlastyng dampnation. This is the  
laste fyghte with the enemy, wherby the souldiour of  
Christ loketh for eternall triumphe, if he overcome:  
and everlastyng shame, if he be overcome. 537

But the threat of purgatory, generally described as being physically as painful as hell but offering hope of eventual release, and of hell for those who did not die well, probably did contribute, as the Protestants asserted, to popular fear of death. Descriptions of death, the signs of death, the "vile body" teaching about the bestiality and sinfulness of man and the fate of his body after death, and the debates between the body and the soul, must all have helped to make death sound both a painful and a bitter experience and have contributed to fear of it. Also awareness of man's bestiality and sinfulness would have done nothing to encourage confidence or hope in the face of death.

Most of the writers who concern themselves with the preparation for death at some stage hazard a definition of what it is, and the majority define it in terms of the separation of the body and the soul. Erasmus, like Whitford and Lupset, sees nature as frightened by this threat of destruction:

The first affection of nature is, that everythyng  
shulde defende it selfe. But death against this  
affection of nature, thretneth destruction, which  
so moche is the more detestable and to be abhorred,  
that it diuideth. i. j. which be most conioyned and knit  
together. For there is no straighter copulation  
or knot, than is of the body and soule. 538

Recourse to the bond of nature to explain man's fear of death seems to be more characteristic of authors who have had some academic training, especially those influenced by humanism, such as Erasmus, Lupset and Whitford, than of earlier writers, such as the authors of the Cordiale, The crafte to luye well and to dye well or The mirroure of golde; these latter generally contented themselves with definitions and made little attempt to explain or understand the reason for that fear. On the other hand the Protestant author of A myrrour...for them that be syke warns his readers against regarding death after the philosopher's definition as a separation of the body and the soul, because to see death thus will frighten them and cause a man to hate death for taking away the body he loves.<sup>539</sup>

Lupset's Compendious treatise, teachyng the waie of dieyng well<sup>540</sup> is the most obviously humanist work to be considered in this chapter; neither Erasmus nor Whitford despite their academic training are as wholeheartedly classical as Lupset contrives to sound. The treatise gives little practical instruction about how to die, and, unlike the other treatises discussed so far, there is no sense of urgency about the work. There is little appeal made to the emotions, and Lupset seems deliberately to avoid all reference to Christ's Passion and death, the emotional focus of medieval and much reformed devotion. The only reference made to Jesus is to His teaching. The atmosphere of the treatise is one of relaxed and civilized discussion, and it is addressed to a friend, John Walker.<sup>541</sup> Lupset assumes in his readers some knowledge of Roman history - Cato, Catulus and Merçula<sup>542</sup> are not all obvious names of the period; an interest in the discussion of metaphysical

problems; and the intellectual ability to appreciate a well constructed and well reasoned argument – not the usual demands of a devout treatise. It was noted that Erasmus' De Contemptu Mundi made greater use of classical quotations, references and exempla than was usual in devotional works: Lupset goes much further. His admiration for the courage and virtue of the pagans and their quest for truth tends to overshadow God's part in natural revelation,<sup>543</sup> and although he talks of the difference between pagan and Christian philosophy, the treatise never really defines the philosophia Christiana or sufficiently explains its supposed superiority – a similar weakness is to be found in Erasmus' Enchiridion. The inspiration for Lupset's work is to be found in the work of Stoic philosophers, especially Seneca's Epistulae Morales and his essays, rather than in the Bible.<sup>544</sup>

The first part of the treatise presents a series of contrasts between the courageous death of Canius and the cowardly emotional death of Frances Philippe,<sup>545</sup> which earlier authors would have seen as an example of despair, and Lupset goes on to contrast at greater length the worldly man and the spiritual man, "in whome the mynde and spirite chefelye ruleth". The actual distinction is familiar enough from earlier treatises, but not perhaps the clear definition and balanced contrast found here. The real business of the treatise starts with Lupset's definition of what<sup>it</sup> is to die gladly, that is "in a sure hope to lyue ageyne". This requires faith, which includes the expectation of "the rewarde of vertue", the rather vague notion of the confidence "of a good mynde", a strong trust in God's mercy—although there is no word of repentance or penance—and also charity "whiche euer burneth in the loue of doinge good".<sup>546</sup> Like his predecessors<sup>547</sup> Lupset insists that the way to die well or to die gladly was to live well. But whereas the usual view of a good life in the middle ages was one which approximated

most closely to the religious ideal - dedication to God, abandonment of the world, a life of prayer and obedience, regular church going, alms deeds and performance of the seven works of mercy—Lupset's treatises leave the reader with the impression that his idea of the good life is more closely modelled on the ideals of a pagan stoic philosophers, <sup>h</sup>were courage, honesty, friendship and the cultivation of intellectual powers are the most important qualities.

Much of the treatise is taken up by the discussion of the two "letters to dye gladly", fear of death and love of this life. The latter receives fairly brief treatment. Lupset does not simply attack the possession of wealth.<sup>548</sup> but the attitude of mind which sets great value on the acquisition of worldly possessions. This wretchedness of fortune's bondage is as likely to afflict religious, merchants, ploughmen and beggars as rich men.<sup>549</sup> All man's care should be "for the kingdom of heven, the whiche standeth in the clemmes of conscience", and goods are to be valued "no more than is convenient for instrumentes <sup>&</sup> and toles to the pilgrimage and passage of this strange countrey": the idea of this life as a pilgrimage was highly traditional. Like Erasmus<sup>550</sup> Lupset recommends almsgiving as a means of breaking down love of possessions. Lupset again makes use of ~~the~~ traditional teaching towards the end of the treatise, when he warns of the passing of time,<sup>551</sup> the uncertainty of when death will strike, and <sup>he</sup> warns John Walker to flee all temptations to idleness and exhorts him to live well and be always prepared for death.

The central portion of the treatise discusses the fear of death and related topics. Lupset concludes that a large part of the fear is natural and cannot be entirely banished although it should be



controlled. In order to understand the fear more fully he considers "What deth is," taking as his point of departure the usual definition, "the losyng a sonder and departyng of .iii. thinges, the soule from the bodye"; unusually he does not stop with the definition but seeks to understand its meaning. When the body's life is lost the soul departs, since it cannot remain where there is no life, and Lupset even attempts a scientific definition of life.<sup>552</sup> However life is to be distinguished from the soul, for although the soul cannot remain where there is no life, not everything that lives<sup>553</sup> - plants, birds and animals - has an immortal soul:

Yet the hande of god hath not gyuen to any creature lyuyng in the erthe water or ayre, to have besyde lyfe a soule, the whiche is a thyng formed after his lykenes, sauynge onely to man, whome he hath putte here to rule ouer thynges created. 554

It is the soul which brings the use of reason,<sup>555</sup> and Lupset suggests that it is by reason that man realizes what he is and who made him, and faith, by which he apprehends his soul's immortality, has little to do with feeling but seems to be a higher kind of reason based on the "vnfallible doctrine of Christe". Lupset's view of man is far more optimistic than that of most medieval devout treatise writers, who were so often influenced by the "vile body" genre; and many Protestant authors continued to see man as weak and sinful, helpless apart from faith in Christ, with little claim to any independent dignity or nobility. By emphasizing that natural reason alone was capable of carrying man far on the road to truth and inspiring many noble virtues and actions, Lupset allows man far more independence and encourages greater respect for man's powers of thought and action. He approaches what may be described as

the Renaissance view of man more closely than any other English author of the 1530's.<sup>556</sup> Faith in Christ, a matter of eternal life or everlasting death to most of the other Catholic and Protestant authors of devout treatises, has in Erasmus's Enchiridion and even more obviously in Lupset's treatises become little more than a desirable extra, a better, because truer, philosophy of life.

Having analysed the nature of death Lupset goes on to discuss whether death in itself is good or evil, a question which does not seem to have interested earlier writers. Since no living man knows what death is like it may seem folly to discuss whether it is good or evil, but Lupset shows an interest in reasoned debate as a tool of knowledge apart from experience, "we maye for oure lernyng debate with reson the thing, as moche as shalbe within the bondes of our capacitye..." If death were good the generally accepted<sup>view</sup> that it was wrong to murder or commit suicide would receive no support. But since Christ willingly surrendered Himself to death, and the holy martyrs received a heavenly reward for accepting death, it cannot be evil. So Lupset concludes that death in itself is neither good nor evil, but the manner in which a man dies determines its evil or goodness. Judas' death was evil because it was an act of desperation, the consequence of avarice and of mistrust in God's mercy.<sup>557</sup> Of the two thieves crucified with Jesus, the physical circumstances of whose deaths were identical, only one died well.<sup>558</sup> The determining factor is the state which follows death: "For by the maner of hym that dyeth, we coniecture the state and condition of the soul." This tendency to judge the fate of man's soul hereafter according to the manner in which he died is condemned by Erasmus; "But what fascion of deathe so ever chaunceth, noo man is

therby to be esteemed".<sup>559</sup> Lupset and Erasmus answer the fear which arises from uncertainty about the soul's fate, the third fear discussed in To teche a man to dye, by asserting that "it cannot be an euyl death, be it neuer so sodeyne, before whom went good lyfe".<sup>560</sup> As long as a man lives it is never too late to repent, but not to be prepared for death is to ~~be~~ court uncertainty and to make death seem fearful.

Lupset then returns to his discussion on the natural fear of death, concluding that fear may be overcome by strength of mind and faith. He seems ~~about~~ to revere the courage of pagans who did not have the comfort of faith but relied on their own courage <sup>almost</sup> more than the example of courageous Christians. He reiterates the folly of fearing death, which is as yet unknown but which is inescapable and common to all men. If the thought of the pain of death frightens a man, he may take comfort from Epicurus' assurance that where pain is "vehement" it cannot last long, and after death there will be no more pain. Most men could help themselves to die well by amending their lives and so avoiding an evil death. The necessity of death should inspire courage to face it and not degenerate into panic and despair. After the example of Theodore's courage, also cited in Legrand's Book of Good Manners, Lupset gives his one extended reference to Christian sources, describing St. Paul's sufferings and St. Lawrence's martyrdom, and detailing the different sorts of death suffered by "manye thousande martyrs." It is in the witness of these martyrs, in "numerable myracles", and in the testimonies of "the diuels with all the damned spirites", that the truth of Christ's teaching, His

infallable doctrine, is proved. The word of Christ, Lupset declares, is to be believed above everything the world or even heavenly angels may say or do to the contrary. Yet the supremacy given to Christ's word seems to be a question of intellectual assent, and to lack the spirit of devotion or the animating power of love centred on the sufferings of Jesus which permeates the earlier ars moriendi books and Protestant treatises on death.

The whole atmosphere of Lupset's Compendious treatise...of dieyng well is that of a civilized debate and quite unlike any of the other treatises on death, even Erasmus' Preparation to deathe with which it has most in common. It is, on the whole, a clearly reasoned and lucidly written piece of intellectual discussion, conducted in a tone of studied informality, and appealing to the mind not the feelings of the reader. Man appears as a more dignified, self-sufficient creature, and much less abjectly sinful than in most of the other treatises on death, and emphasis falls less upon how to die than how to live; "who so ewer feareth death, he shal neuer do a dede worthy for a lyuyng man".<sup>561</sup> Despite its use of and reference to common motifs of earlier literature on death, the treatise's inspiration lies in the ideals of Stoic philosophy.<sup>562</sup>