

Walter Hilton

The Scale of Perfection

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The Scale of Perfection

Introduction

Among the major religious treatises written in fourteenth-century England, *The Scale of Perfection* of Walter Hilton maintains a secure place. *The Scale* is a guide to the contemplative life in two books of more than 40,000 words each and is notable not only for the careful exploration of its religious themes, but as a principal monument of Middle English prose.

Although we know relatively little about the author of the treatise, we have more information about Walter Hilton than is known about many authors of medieval texts. He was a member of the religious order known as the Augustinian Canons, and died at the Augustinian Priory of Thurgarton in Nottinghamshire in 1396.¹ There is reason to believe that he was trained in canon law and studied at the University of Cambridge. The exact date of his birth is unknown, but it is thought to be around 1343.

Besides *The Scale of Perfection*, Hilton is the author of a number of other surviving works in both English and Latin. Among the English works, all of which are much shorter than either of the books of *The Scale*, are a treatise *On the Mixed Life*, which deals in briefer form with some of the same topics taken up in *The Scale*; *Eight Chapters on Perfection*; *Of Angels' Song*; quite probably an English commentary on Psalm 90 (Vulgate), *Qui habitat*; and less certainly a commentary on Psalm 91, *Bonum est*.² On the basis of the content of certain of his works it can be safely inferred that Hilton was actively involved in some of the religious controversies current in England in the 1380s and 1390s. His principal concern, which is present in *The Scale*, is to defend orthodox belief, especially in the conduct of the contemplative life. One treatise, the *Conclusiones de imaginibus* ("Conclusions Concerning Images"), which cannot unequivocally be assigned to him, suggests that he defended the veneration of images against the kind of critique characteristic of the heterodox movement known as Lollardy.³ The dates of Hilton's works cannot be known with certainty. In the case of *The Scale of Perfection* it is generally agreed, on the basis of the greater depth and maturity of approach in Book II, and

¹ See John P. H. Clark and Rosemary Dorward, trans., *Walter Hilton: The Scale of Perfection*, p. 13 [hereafter cited as Clark].

² For discussion of the English and Latin works, with full bibliographical information, see Lagorio and Sargent, pp. 3075–80.

³ See Clark, p. 16; Lagorio and Sargent, p. 3075.

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the fact that manuscript evidence suggests that Book I circulated independently, that some time separated the writing of the two books. A date range for the composition of the whole from about 1380 to Hilton's death in 1396 seems reasonable.⁴

The title *The Scale of Perfection*, or in Latin *Scala perfectionis*, is found in several manuscripts; *The Scale* of the title has the proximate Latin meaning of ladder or stairway. The treatise itself is addressed to a female who has taken religious vows. It is thereby connected to an extensive Western European tradition of works of devotion or spiritual guidance directed at women, written either in Latin or the vernaculars. Representative of such works are the *De institutione inclusorum* ("Rule of Life for Recluses") of Aelred of Rievaulx (d. 1167), a work translated from Latin into Middle English in the fourteenth century, the *Ancrene Wisse* ("Guide for Anchoresses") written in English in the thirteenth century, and the extremely popular *Meditationes vitae Christi* ("Meditations on the Life of Christ") extant in several fifteenth-century English versions or adaptations from the original Latin of the late thirteenth century.⁵

Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* is always counted among the masterpieces that constitute the great efflorescence of English mystical writing of the fourteenth century and the early years of the fifteenth. Along with Hilton the other members of the canon of great mystical writers of the age are Richard Rolle (d. 1349); the unknown author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*; Julian of Norwich (d. 1413); and Margery Kempe (d. ?1440) who has a less secure but steadily solidifying position in the roster.⁶ Although there are certainly similarities among them, Hilton is quite distinct from each of the others. In very general terms, his understanding of contemplation is less material, less dependent on imagery and sensation, than that of Richard Rolle, whose approach he seems to counter directly in *The Scale*. Despite some superficial similarities between the *myrkessse* ("darkness") and the cloud of forgetting or the cloud of unknowing of *The Cloud* author, Hilton's use of this imagery is quite different. Hilton's *myrkessse* is the darkness of sin and separation from God; there is no signifying of the pseudo-Dionysian annihilation of the self so prominent in *The Cloud*.⁷ Although both Hilton and Julian of Norwich are concerned with the recovery of the image of God and the meaning of sin, Hilton manages to be more orthodox and less innovative, and at the same time less personal and ultimately less theologically profound than Julian. Margery Kempe is justly said to be

⁴ See Underhill, pp. xlvi–xlv; Gardner (1936), pp. 12–14.

⁵ For the versions of Aelred, see Ayto and Barratt; *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Robert Hasenfratz for the Middle English Texts Series; for the English versions of the *Meditationes*, see Sargent (1992) and Lagorio and Sargent, pp. 3103–07.

⁶ See the METS editions of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, ed. Patrick Gallagher; *The Shewings of Julian of Norwich*, ed. Georgia Crampton; and *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Lynn Staley.

⁷ The use of the phrase "I am nought" in *Scalr*, Book II, chapter 21, has to do with the acquisition of humility.

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incomparable; nevertheless, one readily notices in Hilton's *Scale* that very little is said of the author's spiritual or mystical experiences (Hilton at one point declares that he is writing about prayer at a level that has been beyond him),⁴ experiences of a kind which are the heart and soul of *The Book of Margery Kempe*.

The two books of Hilton's treatise are quite different from each other. Book I is divided into 92 chapters, and although Book II is more than a quarter again as long, it has only 46. This difference is more than superficial. Hilton rarely develops a line of thinking for more than a few chapters in Book I, whereas in Book II several of the chapters, particularly those in the middle sections of the book on the reforming of the soul to the image of God, contain profound and detailed analyses of certain aspects of advanced stages of the contemplative life, some of which he had already examined in Book I. The obviously greater intellectual depth is the strongest internal evidence for the theory that the books were written at different times in Hilton's life.

Book I begins with definitions of the active and contemplative lives, and distinguishes three degrees of contemplation. The first is in knowledge of God through reason and learning only; the second is knowing God in the affections (or emotions) only; the third, and highest stage attainable on earth, lies in knowing God in both cognition and affection. This constitutes perfect knowledge and love of God and happens only when the soul is purged of sins and reformed to the image of Jesus. This is the "perfection" of the title.

Hilton also explains what contemplation is not, in a passage that is usually taken to be a direct criticism of the kind of spirituality advocated by Richard Rolle (whose name, of course, is not mentioned). Hilton notes that some persons would associate spiritual visions with bodily sensations, such as music in the ear, a sweet tasting in the mouth, or a heat that can be felt by the body. This enumeration corresponds closely with Rolle's celebrated trio, *calor, dulcor, canor* (heat, sweetness, song). Such physical sensations, Hilton says, are at best only secondary phenomena, and are not contemplation, which is exclusively spiritual (chapter 10).⁵

Hilton then considers how contemplation is initiated by reading of Scripture, meditation, and prayer. Since reading the Bible would not be a means ordinarily available to his female readership, Hilton concentrates on prayer and meditation, including the impediments and distractions that often stand in the way. The last half of the book takes up Hilton's major theme, one Hilton returns to in greater depth in Book II, the use of contemplation to assist in the recovery in the individual of the image of God that has been distorted by sin. The topic, and Hilton's treatment of it, is generally Augustinian, beginning with the analysis of the soul

⁴ See *Scale*, Book I, chapter 33.

⁵ See Clark, p. 163n36, for a discussion and reference to Rolle's *Incendium amoris*. There is also criticism of excessive materialism in Book II, chapter 32. Lagerlo and Sargent (p. 3074), however, doubt that Hilton is directly criticizing Rolle.

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as a reflection of the Trinity (chapter 43). Hilton's thinking is appropriately consistent with his membership in an Augustinian order, but the ideas expressed are the general possession of late medieval intellectual life.

The last half of the book also gives advice about overcoming the seven deadly sins, advice which is specifically tailored to the circumstances of a person leading a contemplative life. This section of the book contains Hilton's brief excursions into practical advice of the kind that enlivens a work such as the *Ancrene Wisse* (Scale, Book I, chapter 83, tells an anchorite how she should handle an intrusive visitor). The importance of humility, charity, and self-knowledge is stressed and advice is given about how to control the senses. All this is necessary preparation for destroying what Hilton calls "the myrke image of synne" (chapter 84; "the dark image of sin"), which must be broken down before man can be reformed to the image of Jesus.

Hilton's second book is less wide ranging, focused on a smaller number of topics, and more logically arranged. He begins by explaining how the divine image in man was deformed by original sin and how only the sacrifice of Christ makes it possible for that image to be restored and reformed. Such reformation, and with it, salvation and eternal life, is open only to believers in Christ, and is not available to Jews and pagans. Hilton's stance on the question of the salvation of the heathen, a topic of active concern in the later Middle Ages, is distinctly hard line.¹⁰ It can be contrasted, for example, with Dante's more generous treatment of virtuous pagans in *The Divine Comedy*.¹¹

Hilton then discusses how the restoration of the divine image can take place, distinguishing between reformation in faith and reformation in feeling. The process begins with the sacrament of baptism, which allows the image to be reformed from the distorting effect of original sin; the sacrament of penance allows reformation from the effects of sin actually committed by an individual. Hilton explains that some persons are reformed only in faith but not in feeling; the highest state, which corresponds to the limits of human perfection, is to be reformed in both faith and feeling. This state is reached only after a lengthy and often arduous process of spiritual growth, is limited to those leading a contemplative life, and is attained by very few. At the same time, Hilton makes clear that the attainment of such a state is not a requirement of salvation, which is open to all, learned and unlearned, whether leading a life in the world or a life of contemplation. This point is consistent with Hilton's defense of orthodoxy; he is very careful to avoid the appearance of advocating a special way to salvation that stands outside of or competes with the universal message of salvation proclaimed by a universal church.

Using the metaphor of a pilgrim going to Jerusalem, Hilton explains how the soul should attain restoration of the divine image, and the difficulties and obstacles that must be overcome.

¹⁰ See notes on chapter 3 and references given there.

¹¹ See, for example, Statius who, in *Purgatorio* 22.73-93, is identified as a secret Christian — "per paura chiuso cristian fu'mi."

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In this section (especially chapters 24–27) Hilton adopts paradoxical imagery of light and darkness that superficially resembles that used in *The Cloud of Unknowing*. In Hilton's usage, the brightness of day is a false light representing love of the world and is therefore evil. The night represents withdrawal from the world, a desire to love Jesus, and longing for spiritual fulfillment. It is therefore a good night and an illuminated darkness ("this is a gode nyght and a lighti merkenesse," chapter 24), because it blocks out love of the world, and enables love of Jesus, which in turn destroys in the soul all sinful impulses ("stirynges of synne," chapter 25). The soul must be careful to recognize the difference between the true light of knowledge sent from God and false illuminations that are the work of the devil. Chapter 30 articulates a familiar medieval theme, that knowledge of spiritual themes begins with knowledge of self, a theme treated also in Book I (chapter 42).¹² Chapter 31 of Book II is especially important because it contains Hilton's explicit connection of his conception of reforming the soul in feeling with Pauline ideas of reformation and renewal, putting off the old man of sin and taking on the new man reformed in the image of God, ideas notably expressed in Colossians 3:9–10, verses which are quoted and commented upon by Hilton.

Once the soul is reformed in faith and feeling, the inner eye of the soul can be opened, which allows knowledge of God in perfect love for him. It is at this point that Hilton comes closest to describing what might be called a mystical vision of the deity. Hilton stresses that the vision is not to be equated with a picture formed in the imagination of Christ seated in majesty in the firmament. The vision is not physical or material, or capable of definition by images constructed by the human imagination, but it is spiritual only (chapter 32).

Hilton then affirms the importance of the love of Jesus for such reformed souls. Love is the greatest gift of Jesus to his followers; it helps to overcome sin and to achieve a quiet humility. Once Jesus is beheld through the opening of the inner eye, the soul increases in virtues, which are gifts of grace, but require spiritual striving as well.

The last section of the book (chapters 41–44) deals with the problems caused when the vision of Jesus is sometimes withdrawn from the soul. Even though the soul may feel his absence, Hilton affirms that Jesus is always present in the soul, but his presence or absence is a matter of his grace. Finally, Hilton explains that the opening of the spiritual eye to the vision of Jesus brings true wisdom, allowing the soul to recognize the difference between good angels and the reprobate, the distinction and unity of the persons of the Trinity, and to see that Jesus as man is above all creatures.

Knowledge of Hilton's spiritual vocabulary and terminology is important in understanding *The Scale*. Among Hilton's most frequently used words, *goostly* (or spiritual) is constantly

¹² See Pierre Courcelle, *Connais-toi soi-même: De Socrate à saint Bernard* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1975); and R. Baltot, "Les 'Meditationes' pseudo-Bernardines sur la connaissance de la condition humaine: Problèmes d'histoire littéraire," *Sacris Erudiri* 15 (1964), 256–92.

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contrasted with its opposite, worldly. Hilton makes frequent reference to his *even Cristene* ("fellow Christians"), a collocation also prominent in Julian's *Revelations of Divine Love*. *Liknesse* is the term usually used for the image of God in the soul that has been distorted by sin; *merknesse* ("darkness") is the consequence of sin and is used for any attachment to the things of this world. The word *gracious* in Hilton almost always carries the specific meaning of having to do with the operation of divine grace (for example: "He mosste biconne man thourgh a gracious generaciooun, bi wirkyng of the Holi Goost," II.57-58). *Ransake* ("ransack") is used to describe the act of making a thorough examination of the conscience in preparation for penance; *ravysche* ("carried off, ravish") is the Englishing of Latin *raptus*, used in St. Paul's account of his experience of being swept away into the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2), and often in later writing on mysticism and contemplation. The *goostly iye* ("spiritual eye") is the means by which the soul receives knowledge of God, once the barrier of sin has been removed.

Among the most important terms in *The Scale* are those that describe the non-intellectual, non-rational aspects of the soul, or broadly speaking, the emotions. *Affectionis* ("affection") is used often, and is the technical term derived from the *affectio* of Latin writing on the psychology of the soul; in Hilton, however, the word also sometimes assumes its modern meaning of affection or love. Hilton speaks of contemplation "in cognicion and in affection," which he defines as "in knowyng and in perfight lovyng of God" (I.147-48). Hilton's usual term is *styringe* ("stirring"), which means some kind of arousal of the emotions. The term most often describes a sinful impulse. Hilton speaks of fleshly stirrings, such as stirrings of pride and envy; but there are also stirrings to devotion and prayer, stirrings of meekness and charity, and stirrings of grace.¹⁰ *Feelynge* ("feeling") is the other major term, which is especially important in the second book. *Feelynge* again refers to the non-intellectual part of the soul, the source of love and desire for God. Reforming in feeling is contrasted to reforming in intellect through study and reason. The state of earthly perfection for Hilton is reformation of the soul in both intellect and in feeling, a state attained when God is both perfectly known and perfectly loved. Reformation in feeling is harder to describe and understand, but love of Jesus is at the base of it. It is for Hilton the chief reward of contemplation.

Hilton's *Scale* was one of the most popular religious texts of late medieval England. Its popularity is attested by the large number of manuscripts that survive — some forty-two containing one or both of the books, with a relatively large number of manuscripts with Book

¹⁰ On the term "stirring" in Margery Kempe, Rolle, and Julian, see Lynn Staley, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, p. 236; and Aers and Staley, *The Powers of the Holy*, pp. 107-78.

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I alone, suggesting it may have been the more popular of the two.¹⁴ The manuscript evidence suggests a fairly broad readership for the work, which certainly extended beyond the female anchorites who were its putative first audience. Michael Sargent has gathered evidence to show that *The Scale* was a well-known text in monastic foundations in or near London, such as the Carthusian houses of London and Sheen and the important Brigittine abbey of Syon.¹⁵ Another sign of its popularity is that it was translated into Latin by the Carmelite monk Thomas Fishlake, perhaps around the turn of the fifteenth century.¹⁶ *The Scale* was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1494 and several times thereafter, and, as Helen Gardner notes, it was the first English mystical work to appear in print.¹⁷ Hilton's book clearly reached a lay as well as clerical audience. Margery Kempe was familiar with "Hylton's boke," and lists it with other spiritual classics.¹⁸ As we shall see, the manuscript that is the basis of the present edition is likely to have been prepared for a London merchant early in the fifteenth century.

About this edition

This edition is made from London, Lambeth Palace, MS 472, written early in the fifteenth century, possibly in London.¹⁹ The manuscript has been chosen because it contains a well-written text of a type that would have been read in early fifteenth-century London, but it is also significant for other reasons. The manuscript seems to be a purposely assembled collection or anthology of Hilton's work, although it is noteworthy that his name is not mentioned in a contemporary inscription, and none of the works is ascribed to any author. Besides both books of *The Scale of Perfection*, the manuscript includes Hilton's *Mixed Life*, *Eight Chapters on Perfection*, and work that is likely to be his, the commentaries on the psalms *Qui habitat* and

¹⁴ See Lagorio and Sargent, p. 3075, and the listing of manuscripts, pp. 3430–31; including collections of extracts and fragmentary texts, the total given is forty-nine manuscripts. Lagorio and Sargent has the most recent account of the manuscripts; slightly different counts are given in Clark, p. 33, following information from S. S. Hussey and A. J. Bliss. Ignoring the extracts, Hussey (1992, p. 101), counts forty-one manuscripts with Book I and 24 with Book II. Clark (p. 33) suggested that the simpler treatment of the subject in Book I contributed to its greater popularity.

¹⁵ Sargent (1983), pp. 189–90; see also Gardner (1936), pp. 27–28.

¹⁶ On the Latin translation, see Sargent (1983), pp. 189–90; Clark, pp. 56–57; Lagorio and Sargent, p. 3076, where it is noted that Fishlake's Latin version circulated also on the continent.

¹⁷ Gardner (1936), p. 11.

¹⁸ *Book of Margery Kempe*, 1.17 (ed. Staley, p. 51).

¹⁹ See Gardner (1936), pp. 25–26; *Walter Hilton's Mixed Life*, ed. Ogilvie-Thomson, pp. xii–xiv; *Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English*, 1.118.

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Bonum est, and a commentary on the *Benedictus*. The manuscript can also be regarded as an interesting document reflecting the growth of lay piety in fifteenth-century England. The anthology appears to have been made for John Killum, a grocer of London, who died in 1416. An inscription in the manuscript describes it as a "common profit" volume, intended to benefit the spiritual welfare of its owner, then to be passed down to benefit another reader at his death, and so on from person to person "as longe as the booke endurith."²⁰ Inscriptions in the manuscript indicate that such a procedure was followed by a series of London owners until the end of the fifteenth century.²¹

This is a scribal, not an authorial edition; that is, it does not seek to recover the words that Hilton actually wrote (if such a thing were possible). Neither should it be thought of as a "best-text" edition, as that term is usually defined.²² The edition represents a coherent text from a well-written manuscript as produced by a scribe (or scribes), with emendations made only to correct obvious mistakes or when necessary to preserve the sense. In my opinion, there are good theoretical reasons for preferring this editorial method, but the justification for such a procedure is also practical.²³ As noted above, *The Scale* exists in many manuscripts, and the textual tradition is unusually complicated, so much so that an edition based on more comprehensive principles would be difficult to accommodate within the scope of this series. But the chief practical reason for the present procedure is that an edition is in progress for the Early English Text Society that will be based on an entirely different editorial method. That edition, for example, will be based on examination of the known manuscripts, and attempt, through the traditional methods of recension and collation, to recover a sound authorial text.²⁴ The fact that this edition has been so long in progress and is still some time from completion indicates the complexity of the editorial task, and also, I believe, provides a warrant for the more modest undertaking presented here.

²⁰ Inscription quoted and discussed by Ogilvie-Thomson, p. xii (fol. 260r).

²¹ More information on the common profit books and the succession of owners may be found in Sargent (1983), pp. 205–06.

²² See Moffat, "A Bibliographical Essay," pp. 31–36.

²³ The editing of Middle English texts is a topic that has inspired much recent scholarly debate; much of this is admirably summarized in Moffat, "A Bibliographical Essay," pp. 25–57. All the essays in this volume, *A Guide to Editing Middle English*, may be consulted with profit; see also the important essays in Minnis and Beever (1992), especially S. S. Hussey, "Editing *The Scale of Perfection*," pp. 97–107; and R. Allen Shoaf's Introduction to his edition of Thomas Usk's *Testament of Love* (1998), pp. 1–5.

²⁴ For the EETS, the edition of Book I begun by A. J. Bliss is being completed by Michael Sargent; Book II is being edited by S. S. Hussey; see Clark, pp. 53–54; I am grateful to Michael Sargent for informing me of the present state of the EETS edition.

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Most of the textual complexities of *The Scale* are found in Book I. Although a full discussion is not appropriate here, it should be noted that at least two versions of Book I were in circulation, the second being an expansion of the first, with alterations and additions that Evelyn Underhill described as "Christo-centric," for example the substitution of "Jesus Christ" for "God."²² By no means all of the changes, however, can be characterized in this way.²³ Whether Hilton was responsible for the revisions or whether they were the work of a scribe or another reviser is a matter of doubt, but scholarly consensus leans to the view that they are not authorial.²⁴ An exception to this conclusion is the long passage on the Holy Name of Jesus which has been added to the end of chapter 44 of Book I in many manuscripts, including the Lambeth manuscript edited here.²⁵ This is widely accepted as Hilton's work, the result of conscious authorial revision.

The Lambeth manuscript is an example of the expanded version of Book I, including both the "Christo-centric" and other additions as well as the Holy Name passage.²⁶ Not only that, Gardner notes that a feature of this manuscript is that there are slight expansions of the expansions, so that it appears there is little doubt that the text contains words and phrases that are unlikely to be authentically Hilton's.²⁷ Gardner concludes that the Lambeth text is a representative of an enlarged revision of *The Scale* that appears to have originated in the major Carthusian or Brigittine religious houses in or near London and was widely circulated there;²⁸ as such it has a claim on our attention.

In this edition, the text of the Lambeth manuscript is compared with Cambridge, University Library MS Additional 6686, which is a good representative of the unexpanded version. This manuscript also has been chosen for comparison because it will form the base text of the EETS edition of Book I now in progress.²⁹ The Textual Notes identify the considerable number of major variations between the two versions, and are thus more extensive than is usual for this

²² Underhill, p. xxvi.

²³ See Gardner's (1936) critique, pp. 23–25; and Sargent (1983), p. 197.

²⁴ Clark, p. 55; Gardner (1936, p. 26) notes among other evidence that the expansions are not in the Latin translation; see also Sargent (1983), p. 197.

²⁵ See the Textual Notes, where the passage is identified.

²⁶ On the classification and affiliations of the Lambeth manuscript, see Gardner (1936), pp. 15–18 (the Lambeth manuscript belongs to Gardner's type A); Sargent (1983), pp. 190–93.

²⁷ Gardner (1936), pp. 25–26.

²⁸ On the London origin of this version, see Gardner (1936), pp. 26–28; Hussey (1992, p. 106) agrees on the London (probably Carthusian) origin, but rejects Gardner's notion that the great houses near London, Shene and Syon, could have been involved.

²⁹ See Clark, pp. 53–56.

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series. The reader should be aware that not every variation has been recorded; the decision of what to include under the category of major is inevitably subjective and depends on editorial judgment. The aim is to give the reader an idea of the nature and extent of the revisions. A complete list of variants must await the publication of the EETS edition.

The assumption is usually made that the text as represented by the Cambridge manuscript is the earlier form of Book I. This is a reasonable assumption, but it should be noted that the Cambridge manuscript includes several passages, some of them quite lengthy, that are not found in the Lambeth version (these too are recorded in the Textual Notes). It is possible to consider these as scribal deletions made to the earlier version, or it may be that the Cambridge version itself is based on a somewhat different interpolated tradition. In any case, the important point is that the text in the Lambeth manuscript is not simply an enlarged version of the Cambridge text.

For the student, the practical consequences of the editorial decisions I have made will be that the text of this edition will differ from what eventually appears in the EETS edition. In some sections of the book, the variation will be considerable, while in others the variations will be relatively minor.¹¹ It should also be noted that the text of this edition will differ to the same extent from the modern English translations of Clark and Dorward, which is based on the Cambridge manuscript.

The textual situation of Book II is less complicated. There are many fewer manuscripts, and the textual variations, though considerable, are less substantial.¹² Despite the relatively uniform textual tradition, there appear to have been two versions of the book, and manuscript categories can be constructed on the basis of the variants.¹³ Hussey's EETS edition of Book II will be based on the uncorrected text in London, British Library, MS Harley 6579, a member of a group of manuscripts designated by Hussey as *x*, and regarded by him as prior to another group of manuscripts designated as *y*.¹⁴ Since the Lambeth manuscript belongs to Hussey's type *y*, in the Textual Notes I record variations with a representative of Hussey's type *x*, namely Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 100. This manuscript was chosen in preference to

¹¹ This is because it appears that the Lambeth manuscript followed two exemplars for different parts of the book, one with the expansions, and the other close to the Cambridge manuscript; this can be seen, for example, in the small number of variants in chapters 1–10; I owe this information to a personal communication from Michael Sargent.

¹² Hussey (1992), p. 103.

¹³ Hussey (1992, p. 103) inclines to think that the revised version is at least in part authorial.

¹⁴ Sargent (1983), pp. 193–95; *x* and *y* include most of the existing manuscripts of *The Scale* II; the situation is further complicated because both *x* and *y* have several subgroups: Harley is subgroup *a* of the *x* group; Bodley is subgroup *c* of the *x* group; Lambeth is subgroup *d* of the *y* group; Hussey (1964), pp. 85–86. The textual complexities will presumably be addressed in the EETS edition.

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Harley 6579 because the Harley manuscript includes many erasures and corrections, which must be evaluated in order to recover the type *x* text. This is a task Hussey will undertake in his edition.¹⁷

The Lambeth manuscript, too, has been subject to much correction. There are insertions of words and phrases from the margin; insertions of words and letters above the line; words and phrases written over erasures by a second hand; occasional glosses; and cancellations and expunctions. Some of this activity is no more than a typical scribe's routine correction of his own work, but in other cases, the insertions from the margin are the passages and phrases that are not found in the Cambridge manuscript. Not all this activity has been recorded in the Textual Notes, especially in cases where the alterations are simply corrections of obvious errors. An attempt has been made, however, to give an idea of the extent of the scribal correction, and I have tried not only to record the significant variations from the Cambridge text, but to signal when they are inserted from the margin or above the line. I have not indicated where another hand has written over erasures in the main text when the original readings are not recoverable, which is usually the case. Ogilvie-Thomson claims that the corrections in the Lambeth manuscript have been made by three different hands, with one contemporary hand being responsible for most of them.¹⁸ It is not always easy to distinguish the activity of this corrector from the corrections of the main scribe, and I have accepted the corrections into my text without trying to distinguish between them. The corrections and additions I take as integral to the scribal text that this edition aims to reproduce. As Ogilvie-Thomson notes, because of the authoritative correcting activity, the Lambeth text is in some senses already an edited text.¹⁹

Although the Lambeth manuscript is likely to have been written in London, its language is distinctly more northern. Whether this language represents the dialect of the scribe or the dialect of his exemplar, or a combination of both, is not easy to determine. The language of the Lambeth manuscript has been analyzed by the editors of the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English* and localized to northern Cambridgeshire, near the borders with Huntingdon and the Isle of Ely.²⁰ Although there is no necessary connection between the language of a manuscript and the language of the author, the location in northern Cambridgeshire accords well with the known facts of Hilton's life. Thurgarton Priory is further north, in Nottinghamshire, but in the

¹⁷ See Hussey (1964), pp. 91–92.

¹⁸ Ogilvie-Thomson, pp. xii–xiii.

¹⁹ Ogilvie-Thomson, p. xiii.

²⁰ *Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English*, 1:118; 3:25–26 (the linguistic profile); 4:336 (the map location). See also Hideo Yamaguchi, "A Short Descriptive Study," pp. 110–71.

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same general north-east midland dialect area; and there is strong reason to believe, as noted above, that Hilton spent considerable time in Cambridge and its environs.⁴¹

The reader will notice in the Lambeth text a mixture of northern and southern forms, such as the variation between northern *-ande* and southern *-yng*e for the ending of the present participle, and the northern *mykl*/beside the southern *moche* or hybrid *mychil*. The third person plural pronoun system is usually the *thei/hire/hem* of Chaucer's London, but occasionally the northern oblique forms *ther(e)* and *them* are encountered. The first person singular pronoun is *I* or *y*. The third-person singular ending of present tense verbs is invariably *-en*. Readers can expect to find standard orthographic variations, such as *thou/þu*; modern English *oo* spelled as *to*; modern English *ow* rendered as *o* or *oo*.

For modern readers, Middle English pronouns are often confusing: their forms differ from modern forms and sometimes they appear to overlap because of multiple spellings, particularly in the possessive and third person forms. Moreover, because the forms undergo change within a single dialect at the time a manuscript is being copied, the referents are often ambiguous. Forms most likely to be confusing are *here*, usually meaning "their" but occasionally meaning "her," and *hem*, usually meaning "them." Normally, the third person feminine pronoun is *hire*, though occasionally it is *her*, and thus easily confused with the word for "their." So too the third person masculine pronoun is usually *hym*, not to be confused with *hem*, meaning "them." But it is the strings of *he*, *his(e)*, and *hym*, referring to a male person, or a hypothetical male, or God, or the devil, without clearly defined antecedents that are likely to give the modern reader the greatest trouble. To assist the reader in such situations, I have followed the practice of the Middle English Texts Series and capitalized personal pronouns referring to God. This should help to clarify the sense where strings of pronouns with different referents occur. The ambiguity of readings created by such repetitions of the same pronoun may be attractive to modern readers, but ambiguity in these matters was certainly not the intention of the author.

Hilton's syntax is generally clear, the prose vigorous and easy to read, although there are sometimes very long paratactic sentences that are loosely constructed by modern standards. On a very few occasions, Hilton uses a construction based on the Latin ablative absolute, especially when he is closely following a Latin source, such as in the second chapter of Book II, which is based on Anselm's *Cur deus homo*. Such constructions are awkward stylistically and can create confusion for the modern reader, as, for example, "standinge the righwisenesse of God" (II.38), which means "the righteousness of God being maintained" or "were the justice of God to stand."

In reproducing the text, the editorial principles followed are those of the Middle English Texts Series. Manuscript spelling is followed, but *w/v* and *i/j* are normalized in accord with modern spelling conventions. Initial *ff* is given as *F* or *f*, depending on context; thorn is

⁴¹ Clark, pp. 13–14.

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rendered as *th*. Manuscript yogh is given as *g*, *gh*, *y*, or *z*, depending on modern equivalents. When palatal yogh is rendered as *y* before or after a front vowel also symbolized by the graph *y*, spellings result that may at first confuse. Examples are *yif* (for *yif*, modern English "if"), and *yye* (*ye*, modern English "eye"). The use of yogh in this manuscript is particularly interesting. It is found unhistorically in such spellings as *oughte* ("out") and *thougħ* ("thou"), and is sometimes not present where it would be historically expected, in spellings such as *maſt* ("might") and *not* ("nought"). These spellings suggest that yogh no longer has specific phonemic value for this scribe.

When the second person singular pronoun is spelled *the* in the manuscript, this is rendered as *thee*; conversely, the very few instances when the definite article is spelled *thee* are rendered *the*. The final *e* of French loan words that eventually came to be spelled as *y* is given as *é* to indicate that the final *e* is syllabic. Examples are such words as *charité* ("charity"), *cité* ("city"), *plenté* ("plenty"), and *freelté* ("frailty").

Abbreviations in the manuscript are silently expanded in accordance with the way the word is usually spelled out in full;⁴² roman numerals are written out; word division and capitalization are modern; paragraphing, sentence division, and punctuation are modern, although guided by manuscript practice.

In this manuscript, each book is preceded by a Table listing chapters and their titles. The Table of Contents for this edition does not reproduce the Tables in the Lambeth manuscript, but is made from the chapter titles as found in the main text. Readers should be aware that chapter divisions as well as titles of individual chapters are not uniform in all manuscripts.⁴³ In comparing this edition with Underhill's translation, for example, there are several differences in chapter breaks; in the case of the Clark-Dorward translation, on the other hand, the chapter divisions correspond exactly.

Hilton uses many biblical quotations, which are given here in the Latin form as they are found in the manuscript, since Hilton always translates the Latin in the immediately following lines. Sources of the biblical quotations are placed in parentheses in my text. The practice is of course editorial, although in the Lambeth manuscript each biblical quotation is identified in the margin. Readers will notice occasional differences from the standard Vulgate. Like many medieval writers, Hilton seems to quote from memory, a practice which sometimes results in small inaccuracies; or, he may quote the biblical text as cited in one of his patristic sources, such as Augustine or Gregory, where a version of the Bible may have been used

⁴² Among the most frequently abbreviated words is the sacred name Jesus, almost always rendered as *īsū* (*īhesu*), as is customary scribal practice; on two occasions, however, the name is written in full as *īhesas*, supporting the expansion in the edition as *īhesus* rather than the more linguistically accurate *īesus*.

⁴³ The textual tradition of the tables and titles has its separate complexities; see Hussey (1992), p. 106.

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different from what became the standard late-medieval Vulgate. Students should remember that the numbering of the Psalms (and occasionally a few of the verses) will differ from that in Protestant Bible translations.

Translations of *The Scale* are listed in the Bibliography. Until the EETS edition appears, the present edition is the only published modern edition of the entire Middle English text. Special mention should be made of the translation of Evelyn Underhill published in 1923; her semi-modernized version of the Middle English, prepared from an examination of ten manuscripts, has been the foundation for most modern scholarship on *The Scale* as well as the basis of subsequent modern translations, such as that by Leo Sherley-Price in the Penguin series. The 1991 translation by John P. H. Clark and Rosemary Dorward, on the other hand, was made directly from the manuscripts which will form the base texts of the EETS edition, with doubtful readings checked against Fishlake's contemporary Latin translation. The Clark-Dorward translation has an extensive introduction discussing Hilton's sources and the relation of *The Scale* to his other writings, as well as a particularly detailed analysis of the spirituality of the text. The annotations, the work of Clark, are also exceptionally thorough, especially in the matter of sources, and I have made much use of them in my own annotations, indicating my obligation by appropriate citations. The Clark-Dorward translation, which also has a valuable bibliography, should be consulted by any student of *The Scale*.

A hypertext version of the present edition will be made available on the world wide web, so that corrections may be entered, and space made available for clarification of the relationship of the version edited here with the text in the EETS edition when it appears. Folio breaks for the Lambeth MS will be indicated in the Web edition.

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Chapter Seven: That thorugh the sacrament of penaunce that stondeth in contricion and in confessioune and in satisfaccioun this image is reformed fro actuel synne.

Chapter Eight: Hou in the sacrament of baptym and of penaunce thorugh a privei unperceivable wirkynge of the Hooli Goost this image is reformed though it be not seen ne feelid.

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Chapter Tew: That alle the soules that lyvenmekeli in the trouthe of Holi Chirche and han here trouthe quykened with love and charité aren reformid bi this sacrament, though it so be that thei mown not fele the special gift of devocion or of goostli feelyng.

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Chapter Fifteen: Hou loveris of this world unable hemself on seere wise to the reformyng of here owen soulis.

Chapter Sixteen: A litil conceile hou loveres of this world schullen doon yif thei wolen be reformed in heer soules biforn that thei passen hemys.

Chapter Seventeen: That reformyng in feith and in feelynge mai not sodeynli be geten, but thorugh grace and mochil traveile bodili and goostli.

Chapter Eighteen: On encheson whi so fewe soulis as in regarde of the multitude of othere comen to this reformyng in feith and in feelynge.

Chapter Nineteen: Another encheson of the same, and hou wilful bodili custum undiscreteli rewarded and usid, sumtyme hyndren soulis fro felinge of more grace.

Chapter Twenty: Hou that withouten moche bodili and goostli bisynesse and withoute moche grace of mekenes of soulis mowen not be reformed in feelinge ne be kept in it whan thei mai come thereto.

Chapter Twenty-one: That a man that wil come to Jerusalem, that is undirstonde to the cité of pees, the which is contemplacion, muste hoolde him lowe in mekenesse and in feith, and suffir diseise bothe bodili and gosteli.

Chapter Twenty-two: Of a general remedie agens wikkid stirynges and peynful tarynges that fallen in here hertis of the fleisch, the world, and the feend, and hou a stidefast desire to Jhesu mayntened and strenghed with devout praire and bisi thenkyng on Him is a sovereyn remedye.

Chapter Twenty-three: Hou thou that art thus in this weie and wolt not be put out bi no diseses; thyne enemyes wolen than forgen thee and sette thee biforn alle thi good deedes and commende thee of hem and hou than thou schalt pume hem away.

Chapter Twenty-four: Hou a soule whan it is hid thorugh grace fro the vyle noise and besynesse of the world is a gode nyght and a lighti merkenesse, for thane may it freli praien and thenken on Jhesu.

Chapter Twenty-five: Hou that desire of Jhesu sothfastli feelid in this lightli myrkenesse sleeth alle stirynges of synne, and ableth the soule for to perceyve goostli lightnynges for the goostli Jerusalem, that is Jhesu.

Chapter Twenty-six: Hou a soule mai knowe fals illuminacions feyned bi the feend fro the trewe light of knowing that cometh oute of Jhesu; and bi what tokenes.

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Chapter Twenty-seven: Hou grete profite it is to a soule for to be brought thorough grace into this lighti merkenes, and hou a man nedeth to dispose him yif he wole come thereto and hou it is oonli the gate and the entré to contemplacioun.

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Chapter Twenty-nine: Hou it failleth sumtyme that soulis bigynnynge and profitynge in grace han more fervour of love as bi outward tokenes than sum men han that are perfite and nevertheless yit is it not so.

Chapter Thirty: On what manere a man schal have the knowing of his owen soule and hou a man schal setten his love in Jhesu God and man, oo persone and nevertheless yit is the love that is caused of biholdynge of Him as God and man worthiere and betere than that that is causid of Him oonli as man.

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Chapter Thirty-three: Hou Jhesu is hevne to the soule; and hou a soule schal seke Jhesu above itself and withinne itself; and whi Jhesu is callid fier and light.

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Chapter Thirty-five: Hou sum soulis loven Jhesu bi bodili fervours, and bi ther owen affeccions that aren stired bi grace and bi reson; and sum loven Jhesu more restfulli, bi goostli affeccions onli, stired inward thorough grace of the Hooli Gost.

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Chapter Forty-six: Hou bi the selve light of grace the blissed aungeles kynde mai be seen; and hou Jhesu as man aboven alle creatures, and as God aftir that the soule mai seen Hym heere.

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Book I

Chapter One

That the innere havynge schulde be like to the uttere.

Goostli suster in Jhesu Crist, y praye thee that in the callynge whiche oure Lord hath
callyd thee to His servyse, thu holde thee paied and stond stedefastli therinne, travailynge
bisili with alle thyne myghtes of thy soule bi grace of Jhesu Crist to fullefilie in
soothfastnesse of gode lyvynge the staat whiche that thoa hast take thee too in likenesse
and in semynge. And as thu hast forsaken the world, as it were a deed man turnyd to
oure Lord bodili in sight of men, right so that thyn hert myght be as it were deed to alle
ertheli loves and dredes, turnyd hooli to oure Lord Jhesu Crist. For wite thu weel, a
bodili turmyng to God without the herte folwynge is but a figure or a likenes of vertues
and no soothfastnesse. Wherfore a wrechid man or a woman is he or sche that leveth
al the inward kepinge of hymself and schapith hym withoute oonli a fowme and likenes
of hoolynesse, as in habite and in specche and in bodili werkes, biholdynge othere mennys
deedys and demyng here defaughtes, wenynge hymself to be aught whanne he is right
nought, and so bigileth hymself. Do thou not so, but turne thyne herte with thy body
principali to God, and schape thee withinne to His likenesse bi mekenesse and charite
and othere goostli vertues, and thaenne art thou truli turned to Hym.

I sey not that thou so lightli on the first day may be turnyd to Hym in thi soule bi
fulheed of vertues as thu may with thi bodi be speryd in an hous, but that thu schuldest

1 **havynge**, conduct; **utter**, outer. 2 **Goostli suster**, Spiritual sister; **callynge**, her vocation as
an enclosed anchorite. 3 **paied**, satisfied. 4 **bisili**, diligently; **myghtes**, powers. 5 **soothfastnesse**,
truthfulness; **staat**, estate. 6 **semynge**, appearance; **deed**, dead. 8 **dredes**, fears; **holli**, wholly;
wite, know. 11 **kepinge**, maintaining; **schapith**, forms; **withoute**, on the outside. 13 **demyng**
here defaughtes, judging their faults; **wenynge**, supposing; **aught**, something. 14 **nought**,
nothing. 15 **schape thee**, conform yourself. 16 **goostli**, spiritual. 17 **lightli**, easily. 18 **fulheed**,
fullness; **speryd**, locked.

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knowe that the cause of thy bodili enclosyng¹⁹ is that thu myght the betere come to
20 goosteli enclosyng²⁰; and as thi bodi is enclosid fro bodili conversacioun of men, right
so that thyn hert myght be enclosid from fleisschli loves and dredis of alle ertheli thynges.
And that thu myght the betere come thereto, I schalle telle thee in this litel wrytinge, as
me thynketh. Thou schalt undirstonde that ther ben in Holi Chirche two maner of lyves,
as Seynt Gregor seith, in the whiche Cristene men schul be saaf. That on is callid actif
25 lif, that other contemplatiif lif. Withoutin the ton of these two may no man be saaf.

Chapter Two

Of actif lif and of the werkes of it.

Actif lif lieth in love and charitē schewyd outward in good bodili werkes, in fulfillynge
of Goddis comauendementes and of the sevene deedys of mercy, bodeli and goostli, to a
mannys even Cristene. This lif longeth to alle worldli men whiche han richesse and
30 plentē of worldli goodes, and also to alle othere whiche eithir han staat, office, or cure
over other men and han goodis for to spende, leryd or lewyd, temporal or spiritual; and
generali alle worldli men. They aren bounden to fulfille up here myght and here connyng²¹,
as reson and discrecion asketh. Yif he mykil have, mykil doo; yif he litil have, litil doo;
yif he nougth have, that thanne he have a good wille. These aren werkes of actif lif,
35 eyther bodili or goostli.

Also a partie of actif lif lieth in grete bodili deeds whiche a man dooth to hymself, as
greet fastynge, mykil wakynge, and other scharpe penaunce-doyng²² for to chastise the
fleissch with discrecion for trespasses that been bifore doon, and bi sich penaunce for
to refreyne lustes and likynges of it, and make it buxum and redi to the wil of the Spirit.

19 **bodili enclosyng**, enclosure in a cell as an anchorite. 20 **conversacioun**, interaction. 21 **fleisschli**, carnal; **dredis**, fears. 23 **me thynketh**, it seems to me; **ben**, are. 24 **saaf**, saved. 25 **ton**, one. 27 **schewyd**, shown. 29 **even Cristene**, fellow Christians; this is Hilton's frequent usage; **longeth**, belongs; **han**, have. 30 **plentē**, plenty; **staat**, status; **cure**, responsibility. 31 **leryd**, learned; **lewyd**, ignorant. 32 **up here myght**, according to their ability; **connyng**, knowledge. 33 **asketh**, requires; **mykil**, much. 34 **nought**, nothing. 36 **partie**, part. 38 **fleissch**, flesh; **trespaces**, trespasses. 39 **lustes**, desires; **likynges**, pleasures; **buxum**, obedient; **redi**, prompt.

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- 40 These werkes, though thei ben actif, not for thi they helpen mykel and ordaynen a man
in the bigymrynge to come to contemplatif lif, yif thei ben usid bi discretion.

Chapter Three

Of contemplatif lif and the werkes of hit.

- Contemplatif lif is in perflight love and charitē feelid inwardli bi goostli vertues and bi
soothfaste knowynge and sight of God in goosteli thynges. This lif longeth speciali to
45 hem whiche forsaken for the love of God al worldli richesse and worshipes and outward
besynesse and oonly gyven hem body and soule, up her myght and here kunnynge, to
the service of God bi goosteli occupacion. Now sithen it is so that thy staat asketh to
be contemplatif, for that is the ende and the entent of thyn enclosynge, that thu myght
50 more freli and entierli gyve thee to gosteli occupacion — thanne bihoveth thee for to be
right bisy nyght and day with travale of bodi and of spirit, for to come to that lif as neer
as thu may bi swich meenys as the hopist were best unto thee.

Neverthelees bifore that I telle thee of the meenys, I schal telle firste a litil more of this
lif contemplatif that thu myght sumwhat see what it is and sette it as a mark in the sight
of thi soule wherto thu schalt drawe in al thyn occupacion.

Chapter Four

- 55 Of the first partye of contemplacioun.

Contemplatiif lif hath three parties. The first is in knowynge of God and goosteli thynges
geten by resoun, bi techynge of man and bi studie of Hooly Writ, withouten goostli

40 *not for thi*, nevertheless; *ordaynen*, dispose. 43 *perflight*, perfect; *feelid*, felt. 44 *soothfaste*,
true; *goosteli*, spiritual; *longeth*, belongs. 45 *hem*, them. 46 *besynesse*, activity; *gyven hem*,
give themselves. 47 *occupacion*, activity; *sithen*, since. 48 *thu*, you. 49 *freli*, freely; *entierli*,
entirely; *thee*, yourself; *bihoveth thee*, it is necessary for you. 50 *right*, very. 51 *meenys*,
means. 54 *occupacion*, activities. 55 *partye*, part. 56 *lif*, life; *parties*, parts. 57 *geten*, ob-
tained.

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affection and inward savour feelid bi the special gift of the Hooli Goost. This party han speciali summe letterd men and grete clerkes whiche bi longe studé and travaile in Hooli Writ comen to this knowyng, more or lesse, after the sutelté of kyndeli wit and contynuance of studie after the general gift that God gyveth to everi man that hath use of reson. This knowyng is good, and it may be called a partie of contemplacioun in as mykil as it is a sight of soothfastnesse and knowyng of goostli thynges.

Neverthelees, it is but a figure and a schadewe of verry contemplacioun, for it hath no gosteli savoure in God ne the inwarde swetnesse of love, whiche may no man feele but he be in mykil charité. For that is the propir welle of oure Lord, to the whiche cometh noon alien. But this maner of knowinge is comone to gode and to badde, for it may be had withoute charité. And therfore it is not veri contemplacion, as ofte sithes heretikes, ypocrites, and fleischly lyvynge men han more sich knowyng than many trewe Cristene men, and yit han thise men soo charité. Of this maner of knowyng speketh Seynt Poul thus: *Si habuero omnem scienciam et noverim mysteria omnia, caritatem autem non habuero, nichil sum* (1 Corinthians 13:2). Yif I hadde ful knowyng of alle thyngis, yhe, and y knewe al privytees and I hadde no charité, I am right nougat. Neverthelees, yif they that han this knowyng kepe hem in mkenesse and charité, sich as thei han, and felen woeldli and fleischly synnes up her myght, it is to hem a good wey and a gret disposynge to veri contemplacion yif thei desiren and prayen devouteli after the grace of the Hooli Goost.

Other men whiche have this knowyng and turnen it into pride and veynglorie of hemself, or into coveityse or desiryng of worldli staatis, worshipes or richesses, not mekeli taken it in praisynge of God, ne charitabli spenden it in profight of here evene Cristene, summe of hem fallen oither into errors and heresies, or into othere opyn synnes bi the whiche thei sclaundren hemself and al Holi Chirche.

58 **affection**, affection; **savour**, taste; **feeld**, felt; **han**, have. 59 **studé**, study. 60 **after**, according to; **sutelté**, subtlety; **kyndeli wit**, natural intelligence. 63 **mykil**, much. 64 **schadewe**, shadow; **verry**, true. 65 **savoure**, taste; **swetnesse**, sweetness. 66 **propir**, belonging to; **welle**, source. 67 **noon**, no. 68 **veri**, true; **ofte sithes**, often times. 69 **ypocrites**, hypocrites; **han**, have; **sich**, such. 72 **yif**, if. 73 **yhe**, yea; **privytees**, mysteries. 74 **hem**, themselves. 75 **han**, have; **felen**, flee; **up her myght**, according to their ability. 76 **disposynge**, disposition; **yif**, if. 77 **after**, for. 79 **hemself**, themselves; **coveityse**, covetousness; **staatis**, positions; **worshipes**, honors. 80 **ne**, nor; **proflig**, profit; **here**, their. 82 **sclaundren**, slander.

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85 Of this knowyng seyd Seynt Poul thus: *Sciensq; inflat, caritas autem edificat* (1 Corinthians 8:1). Knowyng aloone bolneth up the hert into pride, but medle it with charité and thanne turneth it to edification. This knowyng aloone is bat water, unsavery and cold; and therfore yif thei wold mekeli offre it up to oure Lord and praye Hym of His grace, He schulde with His blissinge turse the water into wyn as He dide for the praiers of His moder at the feest of Architriclyn. That is for to seie, He schulde turne the unsavery knowyng into wisdom and the colde naked resoun into goosteli light and
90 brennyng bi the gift of the Holi Goost.

Chapter Five

Of the secunde partye of contemplacion.

The secunde partie of contemplacion lieth principali in affeccion, withoute undirstondynge of gosteli thynges, and this is comonli of simple and unlettrid men which gyven hem hooli to devocion. And this is feelid on this maner. Whan a man or a woman in meditacion of God feelith fervour of love and gostli swettenesse, bi mynde of His passioun or of ony of His werkes in His manhede; or he felith greet trust in the goodnesse and in the merci of God, of forgivenesse of his synnes and for His grete giftes of grace; or ellis he feeleth drede in his affeccion with gret reverence of the pryvey doomes of God which he seeth not, and of His rightwisenesse; or in praier he feelith the thought of his herte drawe up from alle etheli thynges, streyned togedre with alle the myghtes of it, upstiande into oure Lord bi fervent desire and goostili dylite; and neverthelees in that tyme he hath noon opyn sight in undirstonding in goostli thynges, ne of pryvitees of Holi Writ in special, but only that hym thenketh for the tyme nothyng liketh hym so mykil as for to priae or for to thynke as he dooth for savour, delite, and
100 101 102 103 104

84 **bolneth**, swells; **medle**, mingle. 85 **unsavery**, unsavory. 86 **yif**, if. 88 **Architriclyn**, ruler of the feast, mistakenly taken as a proper name; see John 2:9 and Clark, p. 162n14. 90 **brennyng**, burning. 91 **partye**, part. 92 **affeccion**, the emotions. 93 **gosteli**, spiritual. 94 **hem**, themselves; **holli**, wholly. 95–96 **bi mynde of**, by remembering. 96 **manhede**, humanity. 98 **drede**, fear. 99 **pryvey**, secret; **doomes**, judgments; **rightwisenesse**, righteousness. 100 **streyned**, contained. 101 **upstiande**, ascending; **dylite**, pleasure. 103 **hym thenketh**, it seems to him. 104 **liketh**, pleases.

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105 comfort that he fyndeth thereinne; and yit he can not telle weel what it is, but he feelith
it wel, for oute of it springeth many good sweet teres, brennande desires, and many
stille mornynge, whiche schoure and cleasyn the herte fro al the filthe of synne, and
maken hit melten into a wondirful swetenesse of Ihesus Crist, buxum, souple and redi
to fulfille al Goddis wille, in so mykil that hym thynketh he maketh no charge what
110 come of hymself then, so that Goddis wille were folfillid, with siche many styringes
moo thanne y can or may seye. Thes felynges mai not be had without greet grace, and
whoso hath hem, for the tyme I hope that he is in charité. Which charité may not be
loen ne lassed, though the fervour of it passe away, but bi a deedli synne; and that is
counfortable. This may be called the secunde partie of contemplacioun.

Chapter Six

115 Of the lower degré of the secunde partie of contemplacioun.

Neverthelees this partie hath two degrees. The lowere degré of this feelynge, men
whiche aren actif may have bi grace whanne thei be visited of oure Lord, as myghtili
and as ferventli as thei that gyven hem hooli to contemplatiff lyf and han this gift. But
it lasteth not so longe. Also this feelynge in his fervour cometh not alwey whanne a man
120 wolde, ne it lasteth not wel longe. It cometh and gooth as he wole that gyveth it. And
therfore whoso hath it, meke hymself and thanke God, and kepe it prevey, but yif it be
to his confessour, and holde it as longe as he may with discretion. And whanne hit
withdraweth, drede not to mykil, but stand in feith and in meke hope, with pacient
abidynge til it come agen. This is a litol tastynge of the swetenesse in the love of God, of
125 the whiche David seith thus in the sautier: *Gustate et videte quoniam suavis est dominus* (Psalms 33:9). Tasteth and seeth the swetenesse of oure Lord.

106 **brennande**, burning. 107 **mornynge**, mornings; **schoure**, scour; **cleasyn**, cleanse. 108
108 **buxum**, obedient; **souple**, compliant. 109 **fulfille**, fulfill (the second *u*, if it is not the result of
a minim error for *i*, indicates a southern spelling). 110 **folfillid**, fulfilled; **styringes**, stirrings.
111 **moo**, more. 112 **hope**, suppose. 113 **born**, lost; **lassed**, diminished. 114 **counfortable**,
comforting. 116 **degrees**, stages. 121 **meke**, humble; **prevey**, secret; **but yif**, unless. 123 **to**
mykil, too much. 125 **sautier**, psalter.

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Chapter Seven

Of the highere degree of the secunde partie of contemplacion.

- But the highere degré of this partie may not be had ne halden, but of thoo that aren in
130 grete reest of bodi and soule, the which bi grace of Jhesu Crist and longe travaile bodili
and goostli felen rest of herte and cleannessse in conscience, so that hem liketh nothyng
so mykil for to do as for to sittie stille in reste of bodi and for to alwey pray to God and
135 to thynke on oure Lord, and for to thynke sum tyme on the blissid name Jhesu, which
is maad comfortable and delitabile to hem, that they bi the mynde of it, felen hem feed in
here affeccion. And not oonli bi that name, but alle othere praieres, as the Pater Noster
135 or the Ave Maria or ymptys or psalmes or other devoute seyynges of Holi Chirche aren
turnyd as it were into gostli mirthe and swete songe, bi the which thei aren comfortid
and strengthed agens alle synnes, and mykil relevyd of bodili dishese. Of this degree
speketh Seynt Poul thus: *Nolite inebriari vino sed impleamini spiritu sancto, loquentes
vobismetipris in ympnis et psalmis, et canticis spiritualibus, cantantes et psallentes in
cordibus vestris domino* (Ephesians 5:18–19). Be not drunken with wyn, but be ye
140 fulfilled of the Holi Goost, seiande to youreself in ympnes and psalmes and goostli
songs, syngynge and phalmyng in youre hertes to oure Lorde. Whoso hath this grace,
kepe hymself in lowenesse, and that he be evermore desirynge for to come to more
knowyng and feelyng of God in the thridde partie of contemplacioun.

Chapter Eight

- 145 Of the thridde partie of contemplacion.

The thridde partie of contemplacioun, whiche is perfite as it may be here, lieth bothe in
cognicion and in affeccion: that is for to seie, in knowyng and in perfitly lovyng of

128 **halden**, held; of **thoo**, by those. 129 **reest**, rest. 130 **cleannessse**, purity; **hem liketh**, it
pleases them. 132 **blissid name Jhesu**, devotion to the name of Jesus was popular in the later
Middle Ages; see Clark, p. 162n20. 133 **comfortable**, comforting; **delitabile**, pleasant. 134
Pater Noster, the Lord's Prayer. 135 **Ave Maria**, the prayer, "Hail Mary"; **ymptys**, hymns. 137
dishese, distress. 141 **seiande**, saying; **ympnes**, hymns. 142 **phalmyng**, psalming (see Tex-
tual Notes). 144 **thridde**, third. 146 **perfite**, perfect.

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God. And that is whanne a manrys soule first is cleensid from alle synnes and reformyd
bi fulheed of vertues to the ymage of Ihesu; and after whanne he is visitid and is taken
150 up from alle ertheli and fleisschli affecciones, from veyn thoughtis and veyn yimaginacions
of alle bodili thynges, and as it were mykil ravyschid out of the bodili wittes and thanne
bi the grace of the Holi Gost is illumyned for to see bi undirstoondynge soothfastnesse,
whiche is God, and also goostli thynges, with a soft swete brennande love in hym, so
perfeightli that bi raveschynge of this love the soule is oone for the tyme and conformyd
155 to the ymage of the Trinité. The bigynnyng of this contemplacioun may be felid in this
lif, but the fulheed of it is kepid in the blisse of hevene. Of this onynghe and conformynge
speketh Seynt Poul thus: *Qui adheret deo unus spiritus est cum illo* (1 Corinthians 6:17).
That is for to seie, whoso bi raveschynge of love is fastned to God, thanne God and a
160 soule aren not two but bothe oon. Not in fleisch, but in oo spirit. And sotheli in this
onynghe is the mariage maad bitwixe God and the soule, which schal nevere be brokyn.

Chapter Nine

Of the twymynge of the thridde partie of contemplacion fro the secunde, and of praysyng
of it.

That oþer partie mai be called brennande love in devocioun, but this is brennande love
in contemplacion. That is the lowere, this is the highere. That is the swettere to the
165 bodili felinge, this is swettere to the goostli felynge, for it is more inward, more goostli,
and more worthi and more wonderful. For this is verili a taastynge, and as it were a
sight of heveneli joye, not cheerli, but half in derkenesse, which schal be fulfillid and
opynli clerid in the blisse of hevene, as Seynt Poul seith: *Videmus nunc per speculum in
enigmate; nunc autem videhimus facie ad faciem* (1 Corinthians 13:12). We seen now
170 God bi a myrour, as it were in deerkenesse, but in hevene we schulen see openli face to

148 manrys, man's; cleensid, cleansed. 149 fulheed, fulness. 150 yimaginacions, imaginings.
151 ravyschid, ravished; the term is from St. Paul's description of his mystical experience on
the road to Damascus (2 Corinthians 12:2) and is typically associated with contemplation.
153 brennande, burning. 154 oone, united. 156 fulheed, fulness; kepid, kept; onynghe, union.
159 oo, one. 161 twyaynge, separation. 166 verili, truly. 168 clerid, made clear.

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face. This is the illuminacion of undirstandyng in delites of lovyng, as David seith in the sautier: *Et lux mea illuminacio mea in deliciis meis* (Psalms 138:11). Mi nyght is my light in my delitees. That othere partie is mylk for children, this is hool mete for perfite men, which han assaied wittes to knowe the gode from the yvel, as Seynt Poul seith: *Perfectorum est solidus cibus qui habent sensus exercitatos ad discretionem boni et mali* (Hebrews 5:14).

The wirkynge and the ful use of this gift may no man have, but yif he bee first reformed to the likenesse of Jhesu bi fulheed of vertues. Ther may no man lyvande in fleisch dedis have contynueli it in his fulheed, but bi tymes whanne he is visited. And as I conceyve of the writyng of holi men, it is ful schort tyme, for soone after he falleth into sobirté of bodili felyng. And alle this werke maketh charité. Thus, as I undirsonde, seid Seynt Poul of hymself: *Sive excidimus, deo, sive sobri sumus, vobis; caritas Christi urget nos* (2 Corinthians 5:13–14). Whether we overpassee oure bodili wittes to God in contemplacion, or we aren more sobre to yow in bodily felyng, the charité of Crist stireth us. Of this partie of contemplacion and conformyng to God speketh Seint Poul: *Nos autem revelata facie gloriae domini speculamur, transformati in eundem ymaginem, a claritate in claritatem tanquam a domini spiritu* (2 Corinthians 3:18). This is thus moche for to seie, Seynt Poul in the persone of hymself and of perfight men seith thus: We, first reformed bi vertues to the likenes of God se the face of oure soule unhiled bi openyng of the goostli iye, bihalden as in a myrour heveneli joye, ful schapen and oned to the ymage of oure Loed, fro brightness of feith into brightness of undirstandyng, or elles from clerté of desire into cleerté of blissid love. And al this is wrought of the sprite of oure Lord in a mannes soule, as Seynt Poule seith. This part of contemplacion God gyveth where that he wole, to lerid or to lewed, men or women occupied in prelacie, and to solitarie also, but it is special and not comone. And also though a man which is actif have the gifte of it bi a special grace, nevertheless the ful use of it as I hoope may no man have, but he be solitarie and in liyf contemplatif.

172 **sautier**, psalter. 173 **delitees**, delights. 173–74 **mylk for children . . . for perfite men**, a commonplace contrast based on 1 Corinthians 3:1–2; used also in Scale, Book II, chapters 10 and 31. 173 **mete**, food. 174 **assaied**, tested; **wittes**, sense. 178 **lyvande**, living. 181 **sobirté**, soberness. 183 **overpassee**, surpass; **wittes**, senses. 184 **felyng**, feeling. 190 **unhiled**, revealed; **iye**, eye; **schapen**, formed. 191 **oned**, united. 192 **clerté**, brightness. 193 **sprite**, spirit. 194 **lerid**, learned; **lewed**, ignorant. 195 **prelacie**, prelacy; Clark notes (p. 163n33) that the women prelates referred to must be heads of religious houses. 197 **hoope**, suppose; **liyf**, life.

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Chapter Ten

How the schewynges to the bodili wittis and the feelynge of hem may be bothe good and yvel.

200 By this that I have seid myght tha sumwhat understande that visiones or revelaciouns of ony maner spirite, bodili apperynge or in ymagynynge, slepanad or wakand, or ellis ony othere feelinge in the bodili wittes maad as it were goosteli; either in sowsynge of the eere, or saverynge in the mouth, or smellynge in the nose, or ellis ony felable heete as it were fier glowanad and warmand the breest, or ony othere partie of the bodi, or onythinge
205 that mai be feelyd bi bodili wit, though it be never so comfortable and lykande, aren not verili contemplacion; ne thei aren but symple and secundarie though thei be good, in regard of goostli vertues and in goostli knowynge and loovynge of God.

For in vertues and in knowynge of God with love is noo disceit. But al swich maner of feelyng thei mowe by gode, wrought bi a good angil, and they may be deceyvable,
210 feyned bi a wikkid angel whan he transfigurith him into an angel of light. Wherfore sithen thei moun be bothe good and yvel, it semeth that thei aren not of the beste; for wyte thou weel that the devyl may, wharne he hath leve, feyne in bodili felinge the liknes of the same thinges whiche a good angil may worche. For as the good angil cometh with light, so can the devel, and so of othere wittes. Whoso hadde felid bothe,
215 he schulde kunne telle whiche were gode and whiche were yvele, but he that nevere feelid neither, or elles but that oon, may lightli be disseyved.

Thei aren like in maner of feelynge oughtward, but thei aren ful diverse withinne; and therfore thei aren not to desire greethi, ne for to resseyve lightli, but yif a soule myght bi spirite of discreciooun knowe the gode from the yvele, that he were not bigiled. Seynt Joon seith thus: *Nolite credere omni spiritali, sed probate si ex deo sit* (1 John 4:1). Seynt

198 schewynges, revelations; wittis, senses. 201 slepanad, sleeping; wakand, waking. 202 sowsynge, sounding. 203 saverynge, tasting. 204 glowanad, glowing; warmand, warming. 205 wit, sense; comfortable, comforting; lykande, pleasant. 205–06 aren not verili contemplacion, are not truly contemplation; the first of several critiques of the association of sensible phenomena with contemplation, an association found in the works of Richard Rolle; see also Scale, 1.669–79; Clark, p. 163n36. 209 mewe by, may be; deceyvable, deceitful. 211 moun, may; yvel, evil. 212 wyte, know. 213 worche, work. 215 kunne, know how to. 216 lightli, easily; disseyved, deceived. 217 oughtward, outward.

Book I

Joon biddeth us, we schulde not leve everi spirit, but we schullen assaien frist whether he be of God or no. Therfore bi oon assaie, I schal telle thee as me thenketh.

Chapter Eleven

Hou thu schal knowe whanne the schewinges to thi bodili wittes and the feelynge of hem aren good or yvle.

- 225 If it be soo that thou see ony maner of light or brightnes with thi bodili iye or in ymagynnge, othir than every man mai see; or yif thou here ony meri or wondiful sowninge with thi bodili eere; or in thi mouth ony swete sodayne savour, othir than of kynde; or ony heete in thi breest as it were fier; or ony maner of deelighte in ony partie of thi bodi; or yif a spirit bodili appere to thee as hit were an angel for to conforte thee and teche thee; or ony swich feelynge which thu woost weel it cometh not of thiself ne of noo bodili creature — be thanne waer in that tyme or soone afur and wisili bihoold the stirynge of thyne herte. Yif thou be stired because of that likinge that thu feelist, for to drawe oute thyn herte from biholdinge of oure Lord Jhesu Crist and fro goostli occupacions, as from peeiers, and thenkinge of thiself and of thi defautis, fro the inward desire of vertues and of goostli knowynge and the feelinge of God, for to sette the sight of thin herte and thyn affeccioun, thi delite and thi reest principali therinne, wenynge that bodili feelinge schulde be a partie of heveneli joie and of angilis blisse, and for thi thee thynketh that thu schuldest never pray ne thinke not elles, but al hooli tende thereto, for to kepe it and delite thee therinne: this feelinge is suspect and of the enemye. And therfore, yif it be never so likinge and wondiful, refuse it and assente not thereto, for this is the sleighe of the enemy. Whanne he seeth that a soule gyveth him entierli to goostli occupacioun, he is wondiful wrooth, for he hateth nothinge more thanne for to see a soule in bodi of synne feele verili the savour of gostli knowinge and the love of God, the whiche he withouten bodi of synne loste wilfulli. And therefore yif he may not

221 **leve**, believe; **frist**, first. 222 **bl**, by; **assaie**, test. 225 **lye**, eye. 227 **sowninge**, sound. 228 **kynde**, nature; **fier**, fire. 230 **woost weel**, know well. 231 **waar**, aware. 232 **stirynge**, stirring; **likinge**, pleasure. 234 **occupacions**, activities; **defautis**, faults. 236 **wenynge**, supposing. 237–38 **for thi thee thynketh**, because it seems to you. 239 **the enemye**, one of Hilton's regular terms for the devil. 240 **likinge**, pleasant. 241 **sleighe**, deception. 242 **wrooth**, angry.

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245 lette him bi opyn bodili synnes, he wole dere hym and bigile him bi swich a vanite of
bodili savoures or swettenesse in the wittis, for to bringe a soule into goostli pride and
into a fals sikernessee of himself, wenande therbi that he hadde a feelinge of heveneli
joye, and that he were half in paradise for delite that he feeleth al aboute hym, whanne
250 he is neer atte belle gates, and so bi pride and presumption he myght falle into errooris
or into fantasies or into oþere bodili or goostli myschevys.

Neverthelees, yif it so be that this maner of feelynge lette not thyn herte fro goostli
occupacion, but it maketh thee the more devoute and the more fervent for to pray, it
maketh thee the more wise for to thenke goostli thoughtes; and though it be so that it
255 stonyeth thee in the first bigimmyng, neverthelees afterward it turneth and quykeneth
thy nerte to more desire of vertues and encreseth thi love moe bothe to God and to
thyne evene Cristen; also it maketh thee more meke in thyne owyn sight. Bi thise tokenes
may thu knowe thanne that it is of God, maad bi the presence and the touchinge of the
260 good angil, and that is of the goodnessse of God in confort of symple devoute soulis for
to encreser ther trust and ther desire to God, for to seke therbi the knowyng and the
love of God more perflightli for swich a confort, or ellis, yif thei be perflight, that thei
fele suyche a delite; it semeth than that it is an ernest, and as it were a schadewe of
265 gloriþyng of the bodi which it schal have in the blisse. But I not whether ther be ony
siche man lyvande in erthe. This pryyylegie hadde Marie Mawdeleyn, as hit seemeth to
my sight, in tyme whanne sche was visited, whanne sche was aloone in the cave thriddi
wynadir and iche day was born up with angelis into the eyr, and was feed bothe bodi and
soule bi the presence of hem. Thus we reden in the legend of hire.

Of this maner of assayinge of wirkynge of spirates speketh Seynt Joon in his epistil
thus, and techeth us: *Omnis spiritus qui solvit Ihesum, hic non est ex deo* (1 John 4:3).
Eche a spirit that looseth Ihesu or ellis unknitteth Hym, he is not of God. Thise woordes

245 **lette**, prevent; **dere**, harm. 247 **sikernessee**, security; **wenande**, supposing. 250 **myschevys**,
misfortunes. 251 **lette**, hinder. 254 **stonyeth**, astonishes; **quykeneth**, enlivens. 255 **encreseth**,
increases. 260 **perflightli**, perfectly; **swich**, such. 261 **suyche**, such. 262 **not**, know not. 263
pryyylegie, privilege; **Mawdeleyn**, Magdalene. Mary Magdalene was identified with Mary,
the sister of Martha, thus becoming a type of the contemplative; the story of her dwelling in
a cave was a widely known medieval legend. See Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*,
trans. William Granger Ryan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 1:379–80. 265 **eyr**,
air. 267 **assayings**, testing.

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- 270 may be undirstonde on many manerys; nevertheles upon oon maner I mai undirstonde
to that purpos whiche y have seid.

Chapter Twelve

What knetteth Jhesu to manrys soule and what looseth Hym therfro.

- The knytyng and the festenyng of Jhesu to a manrys soule is bi good wille and a greet
desire to Hym oonli, for to love and for to have Hym and see Him in His blisse. The
275 more goostli that he desireth, the fastere is Jhesu knyt to the soule; and the lesse that he
desireth, the lousere He is knyt. Thus what spirit or what felyng that it be that leeseth
this desire and wolde drawe hit doun fro stable mynde of Jhesu Crist, and from the
kyndeli stiynge up to Hym, for to sette it upon himself, thys spirit wole unknytten and
undo Jhesu from the soule, and therfore it is not of God, but it is of the wirkynge of the
280 enemye. Nevertheles, yif a spirit, or a felyng, or revelacion maketh his desire more,
knytteth the knotte of love and of devocion to Jhesu fastere, openeth the sight of the
soule into goostli knowyng more clearerli, and maketh it more meke in itsilf, this spirit is
of God. Here mai thu see sumwhat that thu schalt not suffre thyn herte wilfulli for to
285 reste, ne for to delite hooli, in no bodili thynge of sich maner felinge, confortes or
swettenessis, though thei were gode; but thou schalt holde hem in thyn ownen sight as
thei were right nought or litil in regard of gostli desire, ne sette not to mykil thyn herte
upon hem. But thou schalt ay seke that thou myght come to goostli feelynge of God;
and that is that thou myght knowe the wisdom of God, the eendeles myght of Hym,
290 the grete goodnessse of Hym in Hymself and in His creaturees. For this is contemplacion
and that othir is noon. Thus seith Seynt Poul: *In caritate radicati, et fundati, ut possitis
comprehendere cum omnibus sanctis, que sit longitudo, et latitudo, sublimitas, et
profundum* (Ephesians 3:17–18). Be ye rootid and groundid in charité, that ye may
knowe, he seith, neither the sound of the eere, ne the swete savour in the mouth, ne
siche bodili thyng, but that ye myght knowe and fele with alle halewes, whiche is the
295 lengthe of the eendeles beyng of God, the brede of the wondirful charité and goodnes

276 lousere, looser; leeseth, loses. 278 kyndeli stiynge, natural rising. 287 ay, always. 294
halewes, saints. 295 brede, breadth.

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of God, the heigthe of the almyghti mageste of Hym, and the groundees depesesse of the wisdom of God.

Chapter Thirteen

How and in what thynges a contemplatif man schuld ben occupied.

In knowynge and in felinge gostly, in thise schulde be the occupacion of a contemplatif man, for in thise mai be undirstonden the ful knowynge of gosteli thynges. This occupacion is that thyng that Seynt Poul coveitede, seiynge thus: *Unum vero, que retro sunt obliviscens, in anterius me extendam sequor si quomodo comprehendam supernam braviam* (Philippians 3:13–14). O thyng, as who seith, is left to me for to coveite, and that is that I may forgeten al thynges whiche aren hyndward, and y schal strecche unto myn herte ay forward for to feele and for to gripe the sovereyne meede of the endeles blisse. Hyndward aren alle bodili thingis, forward aren alle goostli thinges; and therfore Seynt Poul wolde forgeten al bodili thyng, and his owen bodi also, forthi that he myght see goostli thynges.

Chapter Fourteen

Hou in resoun and in wille vertues begynnen, and in love and in likynge it is eendid and maad perfight.

Now have y tooerde thee a lilit of countemplacion, what it schulde be, for this entent, that thu myght knowe it and sette it as it were a mark before the sight of thi soule, and for to desire al thy lyvetyme for to come to ony partie of it bi the grace of oure Lord Ihesu Crist. This is the confoormyng of a soule to God, which may not be had but he be first reformyd bi fulheid of vertues turnyd into affection. And that is wharne a man loveth vertu, for it is good in the sylf.

303 O, One; as who seith, as is said; coveite, desire. 304 hyndward, behind. 305 gripe, grasp; meede, reward.

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There is many man that hath vertues, as lowenesse, pacience, charité to his even
Cristene, and siche othere, onli in his resoun and wille and hath no goostli delite ne love
in hem. For ofte tyme he felith gruochinge, hevynesse, and bittimesse for to doo hem,
and neverthelees yit he doth hem bi strengthe and stiryng of resoun for drede of God.
This man hath vertues in resoun and in wille, but not the love of hem in affeccion. But
320 whanne bi the grace of gode Jhesu, and bi goostli and bodili exercise, reson is turmyd
into light and wil into love, thanne hath he vertues in affeccion, for he hath so wel
gnawen upon the bittir bark of the note that he hath broken it and fedeth him with the
swete kirmel. That is for to seie, the vertues whiche weren first hevy for to do aren now
325 turmyd into delite and savour, as whanne a man liketh in mckenesse, in pacience, in
clennesse, in sobirté and in charité, as in ony delices. Sothli whanne vertues be turned
thus into affeccioun, he may have the secunde partie of contemplacioun, but to the
thriddie soothfastli he schal not come. Now sithen vertues aren so disposynge to
330 contemplacion, than bihoveth thee for to use certayn meenes for to come to vertues.

Chapter Fifteen

Of the meenes that bryngen a man to contemplacioun.

Thre meenis there ben whiche men most comonli use that gyven hem to contemplacioun:
redynge of Holi Writ and of holi techynge, goosteli meditacion, and besi praeris with
devocioun. Redynge of Holi Writ mai thu not wel use, and therfore thee bihoveth more
335 occupye theo in prayer and in meditacioun. By meditacion schalt thou see how mykil
thee wanteth of vertues; and bi prayer schalt thou gete hem. Bi meditacion schalt thou
see thi wrechidnesse, thi synnes, and thi wilkidnessis, as prude, coveytise, glotonie,

317 **lowenesse**, humility. 319 **gruochinge**, complaining; **hevynesse**, gloom. 320 **drede**, fear.
324 **note**, nut. 327 **clenesse**, purity; **sobirté**, soberness; **delices**, delights. 329 **sithen**, since.
330 **bihoveth thee**, it is necessary for you. 332 **gyvea hem**, give themselves. 333 **besi praeris**,
diligent prayers; with *redynge* and *meditacion* just mentioned, the conventional triad, *lectio*,
meditatio, *oratio*, associated with the contemplative life. See Leclercq, *Love of Learning*, pp.
15–17, 72–74. 334 **mai thu not wel use**, Clark notes (p. 165n52) that the (female) reader ad-
dressed by Hilton presumably could not read Latin. 336 **wanteth**, lack. 337 **peyde**, an ex-
panded list of the seven capital (or deadly) sins begins here; the others of the seven included

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lecherie, wikide stiryngis of envye, ire, haterede, malincolie, angrynesse, bitternes, sleughtre, and unskilful hevynesse. Thou schalt also see thyn herte ful of veyn schames and dredes of thi fleisch and of the world. Alle thise stirynges wole alwey boylen ought of the herte as watir wole renne from the spryne of a stynkande welle, and letten the sight of thi soule, that thu mai neither see ne fele clenli the love of Jhesu Crist; for wite thou wel, til thyn herte be mykil yclensid from sich synnes thorough stedefaste trouthe and biss bholdynge on Jhesu Crist in praieres and in oþir good werkes, thou mai not perfightli have goostli felynge of Hym. Witnessinge Hymself in the Gospel thus: *Beati mundo corde quoniam ipsi deum videbunt* (Matthew 5:8). Blissid be the clene of herte, for thei schullen see God. Also in meditacion thou schal see vertues whiche aren needful to thee for to have, as mekenesse, myldenesse, pacience, rightwisenesse, goosteli strengthe, temperaunce, pees, clennessse, and sobirmesse, feith, hope, and charité. Thise vertues schalt thou see in meditacion, hou goode, hou faire, hou profitable thei aren, and bi prayer thou schalt desire hem and gete hem, withoute whiche thu may not be contemplatif. For Job seith thus: *In abundancia ingredientis sepulcrum* (Job 5:26); that is for to seie, thou schalt in plente of gode bodili werkes and goostli vertues entre thi grave, that is the reste in contemplacion.

Chapter Sixteen

355 What a man schal use and refuse bi vertu of mekeness.

Now yif thou schuldest use wiseli thise goostli werkis and sikirli travaile in hem, thee bishoveth bigynne right lowe. Thre thinges thee nedith to have first, upon whiche as

here are avarice (*covetyse*), gluttony, lechery, envy, ire, and sloth (*sleughtre*). 338 **haterede**, hatred; **malincolie**, melancholy. 339 **unskilful hevynesse**, unreasonable sadness; **schames**, shames. 340 **stirynges**, stirrings. A frequent term in Hilton, as in other devotional writers; Staley (*Kempe*, p. 236) notes that it could refer to either physical or spiritual arousal; **boyle** ought, boil out. 341 **letten**, obstruct. 342 **cleall**, purely. 343 **yclensid**, cleansed. 344 **bisi**, active. 346 **clene**, pure. 347 **schullen**, shall. 348 **rightwisenesse**, righteousness, justice; in the list of virtues of which this is part are found the four cardinal virtues (justice, fortitude, mercy, temperance) and the three theological virtues (faith, hope, charity). 349 **clennesse**, purity. 353 **entre**, enter. 356–57 **thee bishoveth**, it behoves you [to].

Book I

upon a siker ground thu schalt sitte al thi werk. These three aren mekenesse, siker feith,
and hool entencion to God. First thee bihoveth to have mekenesse in this maner. Thou
360 schalte holde thi silf in thi wille and in thi felynge, yif thou may, unable for to duelle
amonge men or women, and unworthi to serve God in conversacion with his servauntis,
unprofitable to thi even Cristene, wantynge bothe connynghe and myght to fulfile gode
werkes of actif lif in helpe of thyn even Cristene, as othere men and women doot; and
therfore as a wrecche, outcaste and refuse of alle men and women, art spered in an
365 hous aloone, that thou schuldest dere no man ne woman bi yvel ensaumple, sithen thou
canst not profiten hem bi good wirkynge. Over this, thee bihoveth loke forthere that
sithen thou art so unable to serve oure Lord bi bodili werkis outward, hou mykil more
thee bihoveth holde thee unable and unworthi to serve hym goosteli bi inward occupacion.
For oure Loed is a spirit, as the prophete seith: *Spiritus ante faciem nostram Christus
dominans est* (Lamentations 4:20). Bifore oure face a goost is oure Lord Jhesu Crist. And
370 the kyndeli service to Him is goostli, as He seith Himsilf: *Veri adoratores adorabunt
patrem in spiritu et veritate* (John 4:23). Sothfast servauntis schullen worschipen the
fadur in spirit and sothfastnesse. Thanne thou that art so boystous and so lewed, so
375 fleischli, so blynd in goostli thinges, and nameli of thyn owyn soule, which thee bihoveth
first to knowe yif thi schuldest come to the knowynghe of God, hou schuldest thu
thanme fele thisilf able or worthi to have that staat and the likenes of lif contemplatiif, the
which liyf, as y have seid, lith principali in goostli knowynghe and lovynghe of God? This
380 y seie to thee, not for thou schuldest forthynke thi purpos and be myspaide with thyn
enclosynge, but that thu schuldest fele this lowenesse soothfastli, yif thi myght, in thyn
herde, for it is sooth and noo lees. And though thou fele thus, yit schalt thou yeme nyght
and day up thi myght for to come as neer as thou myght to the staat that thou hast
taken, trowand stedefastli that it is best to thee bi the merci of God for to travaile inne.
And though it be so, that thu myght not come to the fulheed of it heere in this lif, that thu
385 myghtest be here in the bigynnynghe of hit; and trusie sikirli for to have the fulheed of it
bi the merci of God in the blisse of hevene. For soothli that is my liff. I feele me so

358 **siker**, secure. 360 **duelle**, dwell. 361 **conversacion**, community. 362 **wantynge**, lacking;
coanynge, knowledge. 364 **refuse of**, rejected by; **spered**, locked. 365 **dere**, harm; **ensaumple**,
example. 371 **kyndeli**, natural. 372 **Sothfast**, True. 373 **boystous**, unruly; **lewed**, ignorant. 377
lith, lies. 378 **forthynke**, reject; **myspaide**, dissatisfied. 380 **lees**, lies. 381 **up thi myght**,
according to your ability. 382 **trowand**, believing. 384 **sikirli**, certainly; **fulheed**, fulness.

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wrechid, and so freil, and so fleischli, and so fer fro the trewe feelynge fro that that I speke and have spoke, that y ne can not ellis but crie merci, and desire after as y may with hope that oure Lord wol bryng me therto of His grace in the blisse of hevene. Do thou see, and betir, after that God geve thee grace. The felynge of this lowenesse schal putte ous of thyne herte unskilful bihooldynge of othere myslivynge and demynghe of othere mennys dedes, and it schal dryve thee oonli to biholde thisilf, as ther were no man lyvynge but God and thou; and thou schalte deeme and holde thisilf more vile and more wrechid thanne is ony creature that berith liyf, that unnethes thou schal mowe suffre thisilf for mykilnesse of synne and filthe that thu schalt fynde and fele in thisilf.

390 Thus bihoveth thee for to feele sum tyme, yif thou wolt be verili meke; for I telle thee soothli, yif thou wolt be truli meke, thee schal thenike a venial synne more grevous and more peyneful to thee, and gretter schal be in thi sight sumtyme, thanne grete deedli synnes of othere men. And that for this skile, that thynge whiche putteth thi soule or letteth it moost from the felynge of love and knowyng of God, bihoveth to be moost grevous and peynful to thee. But a venyal synne of thisilf letteth thee more fro the felynge and fro the perfit love of Jhesu Crist thanne othere mennys synnes mai do, be it never so mykil. Thanne semeth it that thou schuldest arise up in thyne own herte agens thisilf, for to hate and deme in thisilf al maner of synne which letteth thee from the sight of God, more bisili thanne agens defautes of ony oþer man. For yif thyne herte be cleane of thyne own synnes, sothli the synnes of alle oþere men schullen not dere thee; and therfore yif thou wolt fynde reest here and in the blisse of hevene, up the counsel of oon of the hooli fadres seie every dai, "What am I?" and deme no man.

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Chapter Seventeen

Who schulde blame mennys defautis and deme hem, and who not.

But now seist thou, hou mai this bee, sithen it is a dede of a charit  for to undimene men of here defautis, and for to deme hem for here amendynge, it is a dede of merci. As

386 **freil**, frail. 393 **unnethes**, scarcely. 393–44 **mowe suffre**, be able to bear. 394 **mykilnesse**, greatness. 398 **skile**, reason. 399 **letteth**, hinders. 405 **sothli**, truly; **dere**, harm. 406 **ap.**, upon. 407 **oon of the hooli fadres**, Clark (p. 165n60) cites the *Vitae patrum*, 5.9.5 (PL 73:910); **deme**, judge. 409 **sithen**, since; **undirneme**, reproach.

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to this I answer as me thenketh, that to thee or to ony oþir which hath the staat and the purpos of lif contemplatiſ it fallith not for to leve the kepyng of youreself and underneſe oþir men of here defautis, but it were in wel greet nede, that a man schulde perische but yif he underneſydyd hym. But to men which aren actif and han sovereyné and cure of

415 oþere, as prelatis and curates and swich oþere, thei aren bounden bi there office and by wai of charité for to see and seke and deme rightfulli oþere mens defautis, not of desire and delite for to chastise hem, but oonli for nede, with drede of God and in His name, for love and savacioun of here soulis. Oþere men that aren actif and han no care over oþere men, thei aren boundyn for to undirayme oþere men of her defautis bi wei of charité, oonly thanne whanne the synne is deedli and may not wel be correctid bi noon oþir man, and whanne he troweth that the synnere schulde be amendid bi undiraymyng. Ellis it is betere that he cese. That this is sooth, it semeth bi Seynt Joon, which hadde the staat of contemplatiſ lif, and Seynt Petir, whiche hadde the staat of actif lif. Whanne oure Lord in His late supper with His disciples, ate the peyvey stiryng of Seynt Petir to Seynt Joon, tolde Seynt Joon how Judas schulde bitraie Hym, Seynt Joon tolde it not to Seynt Petir, as he askide, but he turnede him and leide his heed upon Cristis brest and was raveschid bi love into contemplacion of Goddis privatees, and so medfulli to hym he forgaat bothe Judas and Petir — in tokenyng and in techyng of oþere men which wolden ben contemplatiſ that thei schulden dispose hem for to doo the same.

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Thanne seest thou heere sumwhat that thu schalt neither deme oþere men, ne conceyve agens hem wilfulli noon evel suspicion. But thu schalt love hem in thyn herte, siche as ledes in the world actif lif and suffren many tribulacions and greet temptaciones which thu sittyng in thyn hous felist not of. And thei han wel mykil travaille for here own and oþir mens sustenaunce, and manye of hem hadde wel lyvere serve God, yif thei myghten, as thou doost in bodili reste; nevertheless thei in here worldli bisynesse fleeſ many synnes, which yif thou were in here astaats schuldest falle in, and thei doon many good deedes whiche thou kowdest not doo. It is no doute that many doon thus; whiche thei are, thou wost not.

414 *cure*, responsibility. 419 *undirayme*, reproach. 421 *troweth*, believes. 422 *Seynt Joon*, for St. John as type of contemplative life and St. Peter as active life, see Augustine, *Tractatus in Iohannis Evangelium*, 124.5 (Clark, p. 166n63). 424 *sopeer*, supper. 427 *privatees*, secrets. 428 *medfulli*, worthy of reward. 434 *travaille*, trouble. 435 *sustenaunce*, support; *lyvere*, rather. 436 *bisynesse*, activity, fleſe. 437 *astaat*, estate, position. 439 *wost*, know.

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Chapter Eighteen

- 440 Whi meke men schal worschip othere, and lowe hemself in her own herte undir alle othere.

And therfore thou schalt worschipe alle, and sette hem in thy herte al above thee as thi sovereynes, and caste thee doun undir her feet, that thou be vileste and lowest in thy own sight. For it is no drede ne peril to thee, how mykil thou may lowe thiself binethe alle othere, though it were so that in Goddis sight thou hadde more grace than anothir.
445 But it is peril to thee for to highe thee and lifte thiself in thi thought wilfulli above ony oþer man, though he were the mooste wrecche or the most synful caytif that is in erthe. For oure Lord seith: *Qui se humiliat exaltabitur, et qui se exaltat humiliabitur* (Luke 14:11). Whoso highteth hymself, he schal be lowed, and whoso loweth himself, he schal be highed. This partie of mekenesse thee bishoveth for to have in thi bigynnyng, and bi this and bi grace schalt thou come to the fulhede of it and of alle oþere vertues. For whoso hath oon vertu, hath alle. As mykil as thu hast of mekenesse, so mykil hast thou of charité, of pacience, and of oþere vertues, though thei be not alle schewid outward. Be thanne besi for to gete mekenesse and for to holde it; for it is the first and
450 the laste of alle vertues. It is the firste, for it is the ground, as Seynt Austyn seith: *Yif thu thynke to bigge an high hous of vertues, ordeyne thee firste a deep grounde of meknes.* And also it is laste, for it is savynge and kepynge of alle vertues, as Seynt Gregor seith: He that gadreth vertues withouten mekenesse, he is like to hym that maketh and berith poudre of spicerie in the wynde. Doo thou nevere so many good dedis, fast thou or wake thou, or ony good dede that thu doo, yif thu have no mekenesse it is nought that thou doost.
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Chapter Nineteen

Hou men schullen don that wanten the feelynge of mekenes in affeccioun, not dredynge over mykil therof.

440 *lowe*, humble. 446 *highe*, exalt. 447 *mooste*, greatest. 454 *besi*, diligent. 455 Seynt Austyn seith, *Sermo* 69.1.2 (Clark, p. 166n67). 456 *bigge*, build. 457 Seynt Gregor seith, *Homilia in Evangelio*, 7.4 (PL 76:1103) (Clark, p. 166n68). 459 *spicerie*, spices.

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- 465 Nevertheless, yif thou mai not fele this mekenesse in thy herte with affeccion as thu woldest, do as thou may: meke thisilf in wille bi thi resoun, trowynge that it schulde be so as I seie, though thou fele it not. And in that bolde thee a more wrecche, that thou may not feele sothfastli as thou art. And yif thu doo so, though thi fleisch rise thereagen and wole not assente to thi wille, be not to mykil adraad, but thu schalt bere thanne and suffre the fals feelynge of thi fleisch as a peyne. And thou schalt thanne dispise and repreve that feelynge, and breke doun that risyng of thy herte, as though thou woldest be wel gaide for to be troden and spumyd undir every mannys feet as a thynge whiche is outcast. And so bi grace of Jhesu Crist thorugh devoute bholdynge on His manhede and His mekenesse schalt thu mykil abate the stirynge of pride, and the vertu of mekenesse that was first in the nakid wille schal be turmyd into feelynge of affeccion. Withoutin
470 which vertu, either in a trewe wil or in felyng, whoso disposeth hym for to serve God in lif contemplatif, as the blynde he schal stumble and nevere schal he come thereto. The highere he clymbeth bi bodili penaunce and othere vertues and hath not this, the lowere he falleth. For as Gregor seith, he that cannot perfightli dispice hymself, he fond yit nevere the meke wisdom of cure Lord Jhesu.
- 475

Chapter Twenty

- 480 Hous heretikes and ypocrites, for wantynge of mekenesse, highen hemself in herte bifore alle othere.

Ypocrites ne heretikes feele not this mekenesse, neither in good wille, ne in affeccoun; but wel drie and wel cold aren here hertis and here reynes fro the softe feelynge of this vertu; and so mykil thei aren the ferther fro it, that they wenan for to have it. Thei gnawen upoun the drie bark withoutyn, but the swete kirel of it and the ihs savoure may he not come to. Thei schewen outward mekenesse, in habite, in hooli speche, in loweli berynge, and, as it semeth, in many grete bodili and goostli vertues. But nevertheless in the wille and the affeccion of here herte, where mekenesse schulde principali be, it is but feyned. For thei dispisen and settien at nouȝt alle othere men that wolen not doo

465 *trowyage*, believing. 466 *more*, greater. 467 *thereagen*, against it. 468 *adraad*, afraid. 469 *peyne*, punishment. 470 *repreve*, reject. 471 *gaide*, content. 478 *Gregor seith*, *Moralia*, 34.32.43 (Clark, p. 166n69); *dispice*, despise. 483 *reynes*, kidneys, loins. 484 *wenen*, suppose.

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490 as thei doon and techen. Thei holden hem fooles bi unkunnyng, or blyndid bi fleischli likynge; and therfore thei lisen hemself upon high in there own sight, above alle othere, wenynge that thei lyven betere than othere and that they haave oonli the soothfastnesse of good lyvynge and singuler grace of God, bothe in knowynge and goostli feelynge, passyng othere men. And of this sight in hemself riseth a grete delite
495 in here hertes in the which thei worschipen and preisen hemself, as ther were noon but thei. Thei preisen and thanknen God with here lippes, but in her hertis thei stelen as theves the woeschip and the thankynge from God and setten it in hemself. And so thei have neither mekenesse in wille ne in felynge. A fleischli caytif or a synnere which falleth al day, and is sori for that he doth so, though he have not mekenesse in affeccioun,
500 he bath in a gode wille. But an heretik or an ipocrite hath neither, for thei han the condicione of the pharisee, the which com as oure Lord seith in the Gospel with the publican to the temple for to prey. And whanne he com he prayde not ne he askide not of God, for hym thoughte he hadde no nede, but he bigan for to thanke God, and seide thus: "Lord, y thanke Thee that Thu gyvest me more grace thanne another, that y am
505 not as othere men aren, robbours, lecchours, and sich synneres." And he lokide bisides hym, and sigh the publican, whiche he knew for a wrecch, knokkand upon his brest onli, criande after merci. Thanne he thanked God that he was not sich oon as he was. "For Lord," he seide, "I faste twies in the woke, and I paye truli my tithes." And whanne he hadde doon, oure Lord seide he yede hoorn agen withouten grace as he com, and gaat right nougnt. But now seist thou, "Whereinne thanne trespacide this
510 pharisee, sithen he thankid God, and was soth as he seide?" As to this I answeare and seie, that this pharisee trespacide in as mykil as he demede and reprovede in his herte the publican, which was justfyed bi oure Lord. And also he trespacide, for he thanked God only with his mouth, but he delitede willfulli by a prydé pride in hymself of the giftes of God, stelande the worschipe and the loovynge from God and sette it in hymself.
515 This same condicione of this pharisee soothli han heretikes and ipocrites. Thei wolen not gladli prae, and yif thei praien they meke not hemself knowelechynge truli here wrecchidnesse, but thei maken hem by a feynynge for to thanke and loove God, and speken of Hym with here mouth. But her delite is veyn and fals and not in God, and yit

490 *unkunnyng*, ignorance. 491 *likynge*, pleasure. 494 *passyng*, surpassing. 495 *here*, their. 501 in the Gospel, Luke 18:10–14. 502 *not*, nothing. 503 *hym thoughte*, it seemed to him. 506 *sigh*, saw. 507 *criande*, crying. 508 *twies*, twice; *wake*, week. 509 *yede*, went. 510 *gaat*, got. 515 *loovynge*, praising. 517 *knowelechynge*, acknowledging. 518 *loove*, praise.

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- 520 thei wenem not so. They come not love God, for the wise man seith: *Nos est speciosa laus in ore peccatoris* (Ecclesiasticus 15:9). It is neither fair ne semeli praisynge of God in the mouth of a synnere. Wherfor it is profitable to thee and to me, and sich other wrecchis, for to leve the condicion of this pharisee and feyned loyng of God, and folwe the publican first in lowenesse, askynge merci and forgiuesse of synnes and grace of goosteli vertues, that we myght afterward with a clene herte sothfastli thanke Hym and love Hym and gyve Him hooli the worschipe withouten feymynge. For oure Lord asketh bi His propheete thus: *Saper quem requiescat spiritus meus nisi super humiliem contritum spiritu et trementem sermones meos?* (Isaiah 66:2). Upon whom schal My spirit rest? And He answereth Himselv and seith: upon noon but upon the meke, poverli and contrite in herte and dredynge My wordes. Thanne yif thou wolt have the spirit of God ralyng thyn herte, have mekenesse and dreede of Hym.

Chapter Twenty-one

What thinges men owen to trowe bi siker trouthe.

- Secunde thyng which thee bihoveth for to have is a siker trouthe in articlis of the feith and the sacramentes of Holi Chirche, trowand hem stidefastli with al the wille of thyn herte. And though thu feele ony stirynge in thyn herte agens ony of hem bi suggestion of the enemye, for to putte thee in doute and in dweer of hem, be thu stidefast and not to mykil have drede of sich stirynges ne of the feelynge of hem, but foesake thyn own witte withoute disputynge or ransakynge of hem, and sette thi feith generali in the feith of Holi Chirche, and charge not the stirynge of thyn herte whiche, as thee thenkith, is contrarie thereto. For that stirynge that thu felist is not thi feith, but the feith of Holi Chirche is thi feith, though thou neither see it ne fele it. And bere thanne sich stirynges pacienteli as a scourge of oure Lord, bi the which He wole clense thyn herte and make thi feith stidefast. Also thee bihoveth love and worschipe in thyn herte the lawes and the ordenaunces maad bi prelates and rulers of Holi Chirche, either in declaryng of the feith, or in the sacramentis, or in general governance of alle Cristen men.

520 **love**, praise. 523 **loyng**, praise. 526 **love**, praise. 529 **poverli**, poor. 533 **siker**, certain; **trouth**, faith. 536 **dweer**, uncertainty. 538 **witte**, intelligence; **ransakynge**, examining. 543–44 **lawes and the ordenaunces**, Hilton regularly defends orthodoxy and ecclesiastical authority.

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Mekeli and truli assente to hem, though it be so that thou knowe not the cause of here ordenaunce; and though thee thenketh that summe were unskileful, thu schalt not deme hem, ne reprove hem, but receyve and worshipe hem alle, though thei longen but litil to thee; ne thou schalt not resseyve noon opynious, ne fantasie, ne singuler conceynt undir colour of moe holynesse, as summe doon that aren not wise, neither bi thyn owen ymaginacion ne bi kunnynge of noon othr man, whiche is contrarie to the leeste cedenaunce of general techynge of al Holi Chirche.

And over this, thou schalt hopen stedefastli that thou art ordaynyd of oure Lord to be saaf as oon of His chosene, bi His merci, and stire not fro this hope, whatso thou herist or seest, what temptacion thou be inne. And though thou thenke thee so greet a wrecche that thou were worthi to synke to helle for that tha doost no good, ne servest God as thu schuldist doo, yit holde thee in this hope, and aske merci, and al schal be right weel. Yhe, and though alle the develis of helle appereden in bodili likenesse, slepyng or wakynge, seiden to thee that thou schulde not be saaf, or alle men lyvynge in erthe or alle the angelis in hevene, yif it myght be seid to thee the same, thou schulde not leve hem, ne bee myche stirid fro this truthe and hope of salvacioun. This y seie to thee, for summe aren so weyke and so symple, that whanne thei have gyven hem al hooli to serve God up here kunnynge, yif thei feelen ony styringe withinne bi incastynge of the enemye, or fro withouten of ony word of the deuelis prophetis, whiche men callen soothscieris, that thei schulde not bee saaf, or here astaat or maner of lyvynge were not plesant to God, thei ben astonyed and stired with sich wordis, and so for unkunnynge thei fallen sum tyme into grete hevynesse, and as it were into dyspeir of savacioun. Wherfore as me thenketh it is spedeful to everi creature whiche bi grace of oure Lord Ihesus Crist is in ful wille to foorsake synne, and as clerli as his conscience telleth hym he suffreth no deedli synne reste in hym that he ne schryveth hym sone therof, andmeketh hym to the sacramentis of Holi Chirche, for to have a trust and hope of savacion. And mykil more thanne they

547 *thee thenketh*, it seems to you; *unskileful*, unreasonable; *deme*, judge. 548 *reprove*, reject; *longen*, belong. 549 *conceynt*, conception. 551 *kunnynge*, knowledge; *leeste*, least. 553 *hopen*, think. 554 *saaf*, saved; *hope*, expectation; *herist*, hear. 557 *hope*, expectation; *Yhe*, Yea. 558 *appereden*, appeared. 560 *leve*, believe. 562 *weyke*, weak. 562–63 *up here kunnynge*, according to their knowledge. 563 *incastynge*, insertion. 565 *astaaat*, condition; *plesant*, pleasing. 566 *astonyed*, astonished; *unkunnynge*, ignorance. 567 *hevynesse*, gloom. 568 *spedeful*, advantageous. 570 *schryveth hym sone*, confesses himself immediately; *meketh*, humbles. 571 *thanne*, then.

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that gyven hem hooli to God, and flen venyal synnes up here myght. And on the contrarie wise, as perilous it is to hym whiche lieth wityngeli in a deedli synne for to haue truste of savacion, and in hope of that trust wole not foorsake his synne, ne lowe him trewli to God and to Hooli Chirche.

Chapter Twenty-two

How a stable entent is nedefulle to thise that schal plesse God and discrecion in bodili werkes.

The thridde thynge whiche is nedeful thee to have in the bigynnge is an hool and a stable entencion, that is for to seie, an hool wille and a desyre oonli to plesse God. For

580 that is charisē, withoute whiche al were not that thou doost. Tha schalt sette thyn entente alwey for to seke and traveile how thou myghttest plesse our Lord Jhesu Crist, no tyme for to cese wilfulli of good occupacion either bodili or gostli. For thu schalt not sette in thyn herte a tyme, as thus longe thou woldest serve God, and sithen to suffre thyn herte wilfulli to falle down into veyn thoughtes and ydel occupacions, wenande that it were nedeful to thee for savynge of thi bodili kynde, levynge the kepynge of thy herte and gode occupacion, sekynge reste and confort oughtward bi the bodili wittes or in worldeli vanytees, as it were for recreacion of the spirit, that it schulde be moree scharp afterward to goostli travaile. For y trowe it is not sooth. I seie not that thou schal mowen in deede ay performe thyn entent; for ofte sithes thi bodili nede in etynge, 585 slepyng, and spekyng, and the freeltē of thi fleisch schal lette thee and hyndre thee, be thu nevere so busy. But I wolde that thyn entente and thi wille were alwey hool for to traveil bodili or goostli, and no tyme to be ydel, but alwey liftinge up thyn herte bi desire to thy Lord Jhesu Crist and to the blisse of hevene, whethir thu ete or drynke, or ony other bodili travaile that thu usist, as mykil as thou mai wilfulli leve it not. For yif thou 590 have this entent, it schal make thee ay quyk and scharp in thi traveile; and yif thou falle

572 **flea**, flee; **up here myght**, according to their ability. 573 **hafe**, have. 580 **not**, nothing. 582 **no tyme**, at no time. 583 **sithen**, since. 584 **wenande**, supposing. 588 **trowe**, believe; sooth, true; **seie**, say. 589 **mowen**, be able to; **ofte sithes**, often times. 590 **freeltē**, frailty. 594 **usist**, practice; **leve**, leave.

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bi freelté or negligence to ony idel occupacion, or in veyn speche, it schal smyte upon
thyne herte scharpeli as a prikke and make thee for to yrke with alle vanitees, and for to
turne agen hastili into inward beholdinge of Jhesu Crist bi peieres or bi summe gode
dede or occupacion. For as anemptis thi bodili kynde, it is good to use discretion in
etynge, and drynkynge, and in slepyng, and in alle maner bodily penaunce, or in longe
praier bi speche, or in bodili feelyng bi greet fervour of devocioun, eyther in weepynge
or in swiche othere, and also in ymagynynge of the spirit. Whan a man feeleth no grace
in alle thise werkes, it is good to kepe discretion and for to breke of summe tymse, for
the mene is the beste. But in destroyynge of synne bi kepyng of thyne herte fro alle
maner of unclenesse, and in ay lastynge desire of vertues, and of the blisse of hevene,
and for to have the goostli felyng and lovyng of God, halde thou noo meene, for the
more it is of this, the betere is it. For thu schalt hate synne, and alle fleischli loves and
dredis, in thyne herte withouten cesynge, and thou schalt love vertues and clenesse,
and desire hem withouten stintynge, yif thou myghtest. I sey not that this is nedful to
savacion, but y hope that it ys spedeful; and yif thou kepe it thou schalt profit more in
a yeer in vertues thanne thu schalt withoutin this entent profit in sevene.

Chapter Twenty-three

Of a lilit rehersyng of thynges biforseid, and of makynge offryng of that schulde be
offrid to God.

Now have y tolde thee first of the ende which thou schalt biholde in thi desire and
drawe toward as myche as thou may. Also y have seide of the bigynnyng, what thee
nedeth for to have, as mekenesse, siker trowth, and an hool entente to God, upon
whiche ground thou schalt sette thy goostli hous, bi praier and meditacioun and othere
goostli vertues. Thanne sei I to thee thus: prai thou, or thenke thou, or ony oþir deede
that thou doost, good bi grace or badde bi synne or bi thin owne freelté, or what that
thou feelist, seest, or smellest or savoures, withouten in thi bodili wittes, or withinne in
ymagynynge or feelyng in thi resoun or knowyng: bryng hit al withynne the trowth

597 yrke, be annoyed with. 599 as anemptis, in regard to; kynde, nature. 602 swiche, such.
603 of, off. 604 mene, mean. 606 halde, keep. 610 spedeful, helpful. 612 that, what. 616 siker
trowth, certain faith; hool, whole. 618 sei, say.

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and rulis of Holi Chirche and caste it al in the morter of mekenesse and beeke it smal
with the pestel of drede of God, and throw the pouder of alle thise in the fier of desire,
and offre it soo to thi Lord Jhesu Crist. And y telle thee forsothe, wel schal that offryng
625 like in the sight of oure Lord Jhesu, and swete schal the smoke of that ilke fier smelle in
the face of thi Lord Jhesu. This is for to seie, drawe al this that thou felist withinne the
trowthe of Holi Chirche and breeke thisilf in mekenesse, and offre the desire of thin herte
oonli to thi Lord Jhesu Crist, for to have Hym and not ellis but Hym. And yif thou doo
thus, I hope bi the grace of Jhesu Crist thou schalt nevere be overcomen with thy
630 enemye. Thus techeth us Seynt Poul, whanne he seide thus: *Sive manducatis, sive
bibitis, sive quicquid aliad faciatis, omnia in nomine domini facite* (1 Corinthians 10:31).
Whether ye eten or ye drynken or what maner of dede that ye doon, dooth al in the
name of oure Lord Jhesu Crist, forsakynge youresilf, and offreth up to Hym. Menes
whiche thu schalt most use, as I have biforesaid, aren praier and meditacion. First I schal
635 schewe thee a lilit of praier, and sithen of meditacion.

Chapter Twenty-four

Of praier that is spedful to gete cleennes in herte and vertues.

Preyer is profitable and spedful to use for to gete cleanness of herte bi distroyng of
synne and receyvynge of vertues. Not for thou schuldest bi thi praier kerne oure Lord
what thou desirdest, for He knoweth wel ynowgh al that thee nedeth; but for to make
640 thee able and redi bi thi praier that thou myght receyve as a clene vessel the grace that
oure Lord wole freli gyve to thee, whiche grace mai not be felid til thou be purified bi
fier of desire in devotee praier. For though it be so that praier is not the cause for
whiche our Lord geveth grace, nevertheless it is a weie bi the whiche grace freli gyven
cometh to a soule.

645 But now desirest thou peraventure for to knowe hou the schuldest prai and upon
what thyngē thu schal sette the poyst of thi thought in thi praier, and also what peccier
were best to thee for to use. As unto the first, I answere and seie thus: That whan thou
art waken of thi sleep and art redi for to prese, thou schalt fele thisilf fleischli and hevy

625 like, please; like, same. 629 hope, expect; with, by. 633 Menes, Means. 636 spedful,
useful. 639 ynowgh, enough. 642 fier, fire. 645 peraventure, perhaps.

The Scale of Perfection

and ai downward into veyn thoughtes, either of dreemes or of fantasies, or unskillful
650 bisynesse of the world, or of thi fleisch. Thanne bishoveth thee for to quykene thyn
herte bi praiier and stire it als mykil as thou mai to sum devocioun.

Chapter Twenty-five

Hou men schulde praise, and whereon the poynct of the thought schal be sette in prayere.

And in thi praiier thou schalt not sette thyn herte in ony erthly thyng, but al thi travail
schal be for to drawe in thi thoughtis fro alle bihooldynges of alle erthli thinges, that thi
655 desire myght be, as it were, bare and nakid from alle ertheli thinges, evermore upward
stiynge into Jhesu Crist as yif thu were in His presence whom thou may neither see
bodili as He is in His Godhede, ne bi bodili liknes in ymagination; but thou may thorough
devout biholdyng of His precious manhede fele His godenesse and the grace of His
Godhede, whanne thi desire is esid and holpen and as it were maad free and myghti
660 from alle fleschli thoughts and affeccions, and is mykil lifted up bi a goostli myght into
gosteli savour and delite of His goostli presence, and holde stille thereinne mykil of the
tyme of thi praiere, so that thou hast no grete mynde of noon ertheli thyng, or elles the
mynde dereth thee but lisl. Yif thou praye thus, than can thou preyen wel; for praiier is
not ellis but a stiynge desire of the herte to God bi a withdrawinge of thi mynde from
665 alle ertheli thoughtes. And so is praiier likenyd to a fier whiche of the owen kynde
leeveth the lowenesse of the erthe and alwei stieth up into the eir. Right so desire in
praiier, whanne it is touchid and lightned of the goostli fier whiche is God, it is ay
upstyande to Hym kyndeli whom it com fro.

Chapter Twenty-six

Of the fier of love.

649 **unskillful**, unreasonable. 650 **bisynesse**, activity; **quykene**, enlivens. 656 **stiynge**, ascending. 659 **esid**, eased; **holpen**, helped. 663 **dereth**, harms. 666 **stieth**, ascends. 667 **lightned of**, illuminated by. 668 **upstyande**, ascending; **kyndeli**, by nature; **fro**, from.

Book I

- 670 Alle men and women that spaken of the fier of love knowe not wel what it is, for what
it is I can not telle thee, save this may I telle thee, it is neither bodili, ne it is bodili feelid.
A soule mai fele it in peaiere or in devocioun, whiche soule is in the bodi, but he felith it
not bi no bodili witt. For though it be so, that yif it wirke in a soule the bodi mai turne
into an heete as it were chafid for likynge travaille of the spirit, nevertheless the fier of
675 love is not bodili, for it is oonly in the goostli desire of the soule. This is no doute to no
man ne woman that felith and knoweth devocion, but summe aren so symple and
wenen bicause that it is callid fier that it schulde be hoot as bodili fier is. And forthi I seie
that I have seid. Now as to that othir, for to knowe what prayer were best for to use, y
schal seie as me therkith. Thou schalt undirstonde that there are thre maner of praieres.

Chapter Twenty-seven

- 680 That certayn praier in speche ordeyned of God and of Holi Chirche is best to hem that
aren bounden and ordeyned thereto, and to hem that gyven hem newli to devocion.

The first is praier of speche maad speciali of God, as is the Pater Noster, and maad also
more generali bi the ordenaunce of Holi Chirche, as mateyns and evesonge and hours;
and also maad bi devout men of othere special seiynges, as to oure Lord and oure Ladi,
685 and to His seytis. As unto this matier of praier, whiche is callid vocal, me thenketh unto
thee that art religious, and bi custum of rule art bounden for to seie mateyns and hours,
I holde it moost spedful for to seie hem as devouteli as thou mai. For whanne thou seist
thi mateyns, thou seist also thi Pater Noster principali; and over more to stire thee to
690 more devocioun was it ordeyned for to seie psalmys and ymprys and siche othere
whiche are maad bi the Holi Goost, as the Pater Noster is. And therfore thou schalt not
seie hem gredili ne reklesli, as thou were yvel paid that thou art bounden with hem, but
thou schalt gadre thyn affeccions and thi thought for to seie hem more sadli and more
devouteli than ony othir special praier of devocioun, trowande for sothe, that sithen it is

671 **bodili feelid**, felt in the body; see also *Scatle*, Book I, chapter 11, for similar analysis. 673
witt, sense. 674 **chafid**, warmed; **likynge**, pleasant. 677 **wenen**, suppose. 683 **mateyns . . . and
hours**, matins, evensong, and hours, regular times of public prayer appointed by the Church.
686 **religious**, in religious orders. 687 **spedful**, helpful. 688 **Pater Noster**, the Lord's Prayer.
689 **ymprys**, hymns. 691 **gredili**, greedily; **yvel paid**, ill-satisfied. 692 **sadli**, seriously.

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the praiere of Holi Chirche there is no praiere so profitable to thee whiche is vocale for to
695 use comounli as that is. And so schalt thou put awey al the hevynesse, and bi grace thou
schalt turne thi nede into good wille and thi boond into gret freedom, that it schal no
lettynge be to thee of goostli occupacion. And after thise, yif thou wolte, thou mai use
700 othere, as the Pater Noster or ony swiche othir. And in thise, in whiche thou felist most
savour and most gostli confort, inne that holde y best for thee. This maner of praiere is
spedful to everi man comonli in the bigynnyng of his conversioun, for to use most of
ony othir goostli occupacioun. For a man in the bigynnyng is rude and boistous and
fleiscli, but yif he have the more grace, and cannot thenke gostli thoughtis in meditacioun,
for his soule is not yett clensed from olde synne. And therfore y hope it is most spedful
705 to use this maner of praiere, as for to seie his Pater Noster and his Ave Marie and rede
upon his sautier and sich othere. For he that cannot renne lightli bi goostli praiere, for his
feet of knowynge and loyng are syke for synne, hym nedeth for to have a siker staaf
for to holde him bi. This staaf is special praiere of speche ordayneid of God and of Holi
Chirche in helpe of menys soulis, bi the whiche praiere a soule of a fleischli man that is
710 alwei fallynge downward into worldli thoughtis and fleischli affeccions schal be liftid up
from hem, and holden bi hem as bi a staaf, feed with suete wordis of the praiere as a
childe with mylk, and rulid bi it that he falle not in errors ne fantasies bi his veyn
meditacioun. For in this maner of praiere is no disceite, whoso wole stedefastli and
mekeli travaile thereinne.

Chapter Twenty-eight

What peril it is to men that in the bigynnyng of here tumyng to God leeven to sone the
715 comone praiere of the ordenaunce of Holi Chirche and gyven hem to meditacion hooli.

Thanne mai though bi this see, that thise men, yif ony ben siche, that in the bigynnyng
of here conversioun or soone aftir, whanne thei han felid a litil of goostli comfort either
in devocion or in knowynge, and not aren stablid yit therinne, thei leuen siche praiere

697 **lettynge**, hindrance. 698 **swiche**, such. 701 **boistous**, rough. 702 **fleiscli**, fleshly. 705
sautier, psalter. 706 **staaf**, staff. 710 **suete**, sweet. 712 **disceite**, deceit. 714 **te**, too. 716
though, you; yif, if; siche, such. 718 **stablid**, established.

Book I

- 720 vocal to sone, and oþere bodili exercise, and gyven hem hooli to meditacion. Thei aren not wise, for ofte in reste of here meditacion thei ymagen and theriken of gostli thinges after here owen wittes, and folwen here bodili felyng, and han not yit receyved grace therto. And therfore thei bi undiscrecion, ofte sithes overtravailen hire wittes and breken here bodili myght, and so thei fallen into fantasies and singulere conceites, or into open errours, and letten the grace that God gyveth hem bi sich vanytees. The cause of al this
725 is a preevi pride and presumption of hemself, as whanne thei han felid a litil grace thei wenent that it is so mykil, passand oþere, that thei fallen in veylglorie and so thei leesen it. Yif thei wisten how litil it were that thei feelen in regard of that God geveth or mai geven thei schulde be ashamed for to speke ought therof, but if it were in grete node. Of this maner of peaiere bi speche speketh David in sautier thus: *Voce mea ad dominum clamavi; voce mea ad domineum deprecans sum* (Psalms 141:2). David the prophete, for to stire oþere men bothe with herte and with mouth seide: With my vois I criede to God, and with my speche y bisoughte oure Lord.

Chapter Twenty-nine

Of the secunde maner of praiere, that is in speche not certayn, but folweth the stirenges that aren in devocioun.

- 735 The secunde maner of praiere is bi speche, but it is not of noon certayn special seiynge; and this is whanne a man or a woman felith grace of devocioun bi the gifte of God, and in his devocioun speketh to Hym as yif he were bodili in presence, with sich wordis and acordande most to his stirynge for the tymc as comen to his mynde after sondri rewardes which he felith in his herte, either rehersyng hise synnes and his wrecchidnesse or the malice and the sleights of the enemye, or ellis the godenesse and the merci of God. And with that he crieth with desire of herte and with speche of his mouth to oure Lord for socour and help, as a man that were in peril amoung his enemyes or as a man in sikenesse, schewynge his sooris to God as to a leche, seiynge thus: *Eripe me de inimicis*
740

720 *reste*, quiet. 722 *oft* *sithes*, often times; *overtravailen*, overburden. 724 *letten*, hinder.
725 *preevi*, secret. 726 *passand*, exceeding; *leesen*, lose. 727 *wisten*, knew. 728 *ought*, anything.
729 *sautier*, psalter. 738 *rewardes*, concerns. 740 *sleights*, tricks. 743 *leche*, physician.

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meis, deus meus (Psalms 58:2) Loed, delyvere me fro myn enemyes, or ellis thus: *Sana, domine, animam meam, quia peccavi tibi* (Psalms 40:5). A, Lord, heele my soule, for I have synned agenys Thee, or sich othere that come to mynde. And also hym thenketh so mykil godenesse, grace, and mercy in God, that hym liketh with grete affeccioun of the herte for to love Hym and thanke Hym by siche wordes and psalmys as acorden to the loyngre and preisynge of God, as Davyd seith: *Confitemini domino, quoniam bonus, quoniam in seculum misericordia eius* (Psalms 135:1). Loveth and preiseth oure Lord for He is good and merciful, and bi siche othere as he is sterid for to seie.

Chapter Thirty

That this maner of praier pleseth moche God, and maketh a man to have him as he were drocken, and maketh his soule to be woundid with the suerd of love.

This maner of praier mykil pleseth God, for it is oonli in the affeccion of the herte, and therfore it goth nevere awey unsped withoutin sum grace. This praier longeth to the secunde partie of contemplacioun, as I have bifore seide. Whoso hath this gift of God ferventli, hym bihoveth for the tyme flee presence and cumpayne of alle men and to be alone that he be not lettid. Whoso hath it, holde it while he may, for it mai not longe laste in the fervour. For yif grace come plenteuousli, it is traveilous wondirfulli to the spirit, though it be likande; and it is mykil wastande the bodili kynde, whoso mykil useth it, for it maketh the bodi, yif grace come myghtili, for to stire and turne heer and ther as a man that were mad or dronken and can have noo reste. And this is a poynt of the passion of love, the whiche bi grete violence and maistrie breketh doun alle lustis and likynges of alle ertheli thinges, and it woundeth the soule with the blisful swerd of love, that the bodi faileth and falleth down and mai not bere it. This touchynge is of so grete myght that the moste vicious or fleschli man lyvand in erthe, yif he were wel touchid ones myghtili with this scharpe suerd, he schulde be right saad and sobre a grete while after, and lothe alle likynges and the lustis of the fleisch, and of alle ertheli thinges whiche he hadde bifore most likyng inne.

752 **have him**, conduct himself. 753 **suerd**, sword. 755 **unsped**, unsuccessful. 759 **plenteuousli**, copiously. 760 **likande**, pleasant; **wastande**, wasting. 767 **saad**, serious.

Chapter Thirty-one

- 770 Hou fier of love wasteth alle fleischli lustes, as other fier wasteth alle bodili thynges here.

Of this maner of felynge speketh the prophete Jeremye thus: *Et factus est in corde meo quasi ignis estuans, claususque in ossibus meis, et defecci, ferre non sustinens* (Jeremiah 20:9). This is thus mykil to undirstonde: The love and the felynge of God was maad in myn herte not as fier, but as fier glowand; for as bodili fire brenneth and wasteth al

- 775 bodili thyng where it cometh, right so gosteli fier, as is love of God, brenneth and wasteth fleischli loves and likynges in a manrys soule, and this fier is stokyn so in my boonys, as the prophete seith of himself. That is for to seie, this love filleth ful the myghtes of the soule, as mynde, wille, and resoun, of grace and goostli swettenesse, as marwe filleth fulle the boon; and that is withinne, not withouten in the wittis. Nevertheoles,
- 780 it is so myghti withinne that it smyteth oute into the bodi, and dooth al the bodi quake and tremble, for it is so feir from the bodili kynde and so uncouthe that he can no skile of it and mai not bere it, but faileth and falleth dous, as the prophete seide. Therfore oure Lord temprith it and withdraweth the fervour and suffreth the herte for to falle into sobirté of mor swettenesse. Whoso can preie thus ofte, he spedeth swithe in his travaile.
- 785 He schal gete more of vertues in a litil tyme thanne sum man withoutyn this, or another as gode schal doo in a longe tyme, for al the bodili penaunce that he myght doo; and whoso hath this, it nedeth not to charge the bodili kynde with more penance than he bereth yif he have it ofte.

Chapter Thirty-two

Of the thridde maner of praiers, oonli in herte withouten specche.

- 790 The thridde maner of praiers is oonli in herte withoute specche, bi grete reste of the bodi and of soule. A clene herte him bihoveth for to have that schulde peai wel thus, for it is of sich men and women that bi longe travaile bodili and goostli, or ellis bi swich smert

776 **stokyn**, stuck. 781 **feir**, far; **uncouthe**, unknown; **can**, knows; **skile**, reason. 784 **sobirté**, soberness; **spedeth swithe**, succeeds greatly. 786 **as gode schal doo**, as good shall do. 787 **charge**, burden. 792 **smert**, smart.

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smytynges of love, as I bifore seide, comen into reste of spirit, so that here affeccions
is turnyd into goostli savoure, that thei moun neir contynueli peiae in here herte, and
795 love and praise God withoutyn grete lettyng of temptacions or of vanitees, as I bifore
seide in the secunde partie of contemplacioun. Of this maner of preier seith Seynt Poul
thus: *Nam si oren lingua, spiritus meus orat, mens autem mea sine fructu est. Quid ergo? Orabo spiritu, orabo et mente, psallam spiritu, psallam et mente* (1 Corinthians
14:15). This is thus mykil for to seie: Yif y praeie with my tange oonli, bi wille of spirit
800 and bi traveil, the preier is meedful, but my soule is not fed, for it felith not the frught
of goostli swettenesse bi understandyng. What schal y thanne doo? seith Seynt Poul.
And he answereth and seith: I schal praeie bi travaile and bi desire of the spirit, and I
schal pray also more inward in my spirit withouten travaile, bi felinge of goosteli savour
805 and the swettenesse of the love and the sight of God, bi the whiche sight and felyng of
love my soule schal be fed. Thus, as y understande, Seynt Poul cowde preie. Of this
maner of preier speketh oure Lord in Holi Writ bi figure thus: *Ignis in altari meo semper
ardebit, et condile sacerdos surges mane subicit ligna, at ignis non extinguanur* (Leviticus
6:12). This is for to seie thus mykil: The fier of love schal be ay light in the soule of a
810 devoute man or woman, the whiche is the autier of oure Lord, and the prest schal every
dai at morwe lei to stikkies and norissch the fier. That is to seie, this man schal bi hooli
psalmes, clene thoughtes, fervent desires, norische the fier of love in his herte, that it
goo not out noo tyme. This reste oure Lord geveth to summe of Hisse servauntis, as it
were for a reward of here traveyle and a shadwe of the love whiche thei shullen have in
the blisse of hevene.

Chapter Thirty-three

815 How men schal do that aren traveyld with veyn thoughtes in her preier.

But now seist thou that y speke over highe to thee in this manere of praeier, for it is no
maistrie to me for to seie it, but for to doo it is the maistrie. Thoa seist that thu cannot

794 **moun**, are able. 800 **meedful**, worthy of reward; **frught**, fruit. 801 **swettenesse**, swet-
ness. 805 **cowde**, could. 808 **light**, lit. 809 **autier**, altar. 810 **morwe lei to**, morning lay on. 813
here **traveyle**, their labor. 817 **maistrie**, feat of skill.

- so hoolili ne thus devoutli prai in thyn herte as y speke of. For whanne thou woldest have the mynde of thyn herte upward to God in peauer, thou felist so many veyn thoughtis
 820 of thyn owen deedis before doon, or what tha schalt doon, or of othir mernys dedis,
 and siehe many othire lettynge and taryyng thee, so that thou mai nevere fele savor ne
 reste in thi priaire ne devocioun in thi seiyng. And ofte sithes the more thu traveilest to
 kepe thyn herte, the ferthere it is fro thee and the hardere, sumtyme fro the bigynnyng
 to the laste ende, that thee thenketh it is but loste, al that thou doost. As unto this that I
 825 speke to highe to thee of priaier, I graunt wel that y speke othirwise than y can do or mai
 do. Nevertheles y sei it for this entent, that tha schuldest knowe how we oure to peiae
 yif we dede wel. And sithen we mowen not do so, that we knowe thanne mekeli oure
 feblenesse and crie God merci. Oure Lord seide so himself whan he seide: *Diliget dominum tuum ex tote corde tuo, et ex tota anima tua, et ex omnibus viribus tuis* (Luke
 830 10:27). Thou schalt love God of al thyn herte and al thi soule and al thi myghtis. It is
 impossible to ony man for to fulfille this biddynge soo fulli as it is seid, lywyng in erthe,
 and yit nevertheles oure Lord bad us for to love soo; for this entent, as Seynt Bernard
 seith, that we schulde knowe therbi oure feblenesse and thanne mekeli crie merci and
 we schul have it. Nevertheles, I schal telle thee as me thenketh in this askyng.
 835 Whenne thu schalt priaie, make thyn entente and thi wil in the bigynnyng as hool
 and as cleue to God as thou mai schorteli in thi mynde, and than bigynne and do as thou
 mai; and though thou be never so mykil lettid agens thi first wil, be not to mikil adreed,
 ne to angri with thisilf, ne unpacient agens God, that he gyveth not thee that savour and
 goostli swettenesse with devocioun as thee thenketh that he gyveth to oþere creatures.
 840 But se therbi thyn owen feblenesse and bere it esili, holdynge in thyn owyn sight thi
 priaier, simple as it is, with mekenesse of herte, trustynge also sikirli in the merci of oure
 Lord, that He schal make it good more thanne thou knowyste or feeliste. And yif thou
 doo thus, al schal be wel. For wite thou weel that thou art excusid of thi dette, and thou
 845 schalt have meede for it as for another good dede that thou doost in charité, though thyn
 herte were not thereupon in the doyng. Therfore doo thou that longeth to thee, and
 suffre oure Lord to gyve what He wole, and kenne Hym not; and though thee thenketh

821 taryyng, troubling. 822 seiyng, saying. 826 oþate, ought. 827 mowen, are able. 832-33 Seynt Bernard seith, *In Cast.* 50.1.2 (see Clark, p. 169n115). 834 askyng, request. 835 hool, whole. 838 unpacient, impatient. 843 wite, know; dette, debt. 844 meede, reward. 845 longeth, belongs. 846 keane, teach.

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thee rekles and negligent, and as thou were in greet defautis for sich thinges, yit
850 neverthelees schalt tha for this defaute and for alle othere veniales, whiche moun not
alle been eschewed in this wrecchid lif, lift up thyn herte to God, knowelechynge thi
wrecchid-nesse, and erie merci with a good truste of forgyvenessee, and God schal
forgyve thee. Stryve no more therewith, ne hange noo lenger therupon, as thou woldest
bi maistrie not fele siche wrecchidnesse. Leve of and goo to sum good deede, bodili or
855 goostli, and thenke to doo betere another tyme. But though thou falle another tyme in
the same, yhe an hundred tymes, a thousand tymes, yit doo as I have seid, and al schal
be wel. For ther is many a soule that never mai fynde reste of herte in praiere, but al
here liflyme aren stryvande with here thoughtis and taried and troblid with hem. Yif thei
kepe hem in mekenesse and charité in oþer sides, thei schal have wel mykil mede in
hevene for here gode travaile.

Now of meditacion schal y telle thee as me thenketh. Thou schalt understande that
860 in meditacion mai no certayn rule be sette ai a man for to kepe, for thei aren the free gift
of oure Loed, aftir the sondrie disposynges of chosen soules and aftir the staat that thei
ben inne. And also aftir that thei profiten in vertues and in here astaat, so He encreseth
here meditacion, in goostli knowynge and lovyng of Him; for whoso is ai likewise in
865 knowinge of God and of goosteli thinges, it semeth he wexith but litil in the lovyng of
God. And that mai be schewid opynli in the apostelis, whanne thei in the dai of Pente-
cost weren fulfilled with beennyng love of the Holi Gost; thei weren noo foolis ne
fooltes, but thei were maad wondir wise in knowynge and spekynge of God and goostli
thinges, als mykil as a man might have in fleshly lyvynge. Thus seith Holi Writ of hem:
870 *Repleti sunt omnes spiritu sancto et ceperant loqui magnalia dei* (Acts 2:4, 11). Thei
weren fulfillid of the Holi Goost, and thei bigan to speke the grete merveiles of God.
And al that knowynge thei hadden bi ravyschynge of love of the Holi Goost.

Chapter Thirty-four

Of meditacion of synful men, aftir that thei ben turned hooli to God.

847 thee rekles, yourself reckless. **849 knowelechynge,** acknowledging. **852 maistrie,**
force, of, off. **854 yhe,** yea. **856 taried,** disturbed. **857 sides,** aspects. **862 profiten,** advance;
astaat, estate. **864 wesith,** grows. **867 fooltes,** fools.

Book I

Sundrie meditacions ther aren whiche oure Lord putteth in a manrys herte. Sum
schal y telle thee, as me therketh, for this entent, yif thou fele ony of hem, that thou
schulde the betere travaile in hem. In the bigynnyng of conversioun of siche a man as
875 hath ben mykil foulid with worldli or fleschli synnes, comounli his thought is most upon
his synnes, with gret compunction and sorwe of herte, grete wepynges and many teiris
of the iye, mekeli and bisili askyng merci and forgivnesse of God for hem. And yif he
be touchid scharpeli, for oure Lord wole make him soone cleane, hym schal thenke that
880 in his sight his synnes aren ai so foule and so horrible that unnethes schal he mowe bere
himself for hevynesse of synne. And though he schryve him never so clearli, yit schal he
fynde bitynge and fretyng of conscience, that him schal thynke that he is not schreiven
aright. And unnethe schal he mowe have ony reste, in so mykil that he schulde not
endure in siche traveile, ne were it that oure Lord of his merci comforteth him sum
885 tyme as He wole, bi grete devocioun of His passioune or bi sum othir wai. Upon this
maner werketh oure Lord in sum mennys hertis, more or lasse as He wole. And this is
the grete merci of oure Lord, that not oonli wole forgive the synne and the trespace,
but He wole forgive bothe trespass and peyne for it in purgatorie, for siche a litol peyne
890 here of bityng of conscience. And also yif He wole dispose a man for to receyve ony
special gift of His lofe, him bihovedh first to be scound and clensid bi siche a fier of
compunction for alle the grete synnes bifore doon. Of this maner of traveile speketh
David in many psalmes of the sautier, and speciali in the psalme *Miserere mei deus,*
secundum magnam misericordiam tuam (Psalms 50:3).

Thanne after this traveile, and sum tyme with alle, sich a man or ellis another, whiche
895 bi grace of God hath ben kepid in innocence, oure Lord gyveth a meditacion with gret
compunction and with plente of teiris of His manhede, as of His birthe or of His
passioun, or of the compassioun of oure Ladi Seynt Marie.

Chapter Thirty-five

That the meditacion of the manhede of Crist or of His passion is gyven of God, and how
it schal be knownen whanne it is geven.

877 **compunction**, compunction. 878 **iye**, eye; **bisili**, diligently. 879 **soone cleane**, immediately
pure. 880 **unnethes**, scarcely; **mowe**, be able to. 881 **schryve**, confess. 882 **fretyng**, cating.
883 **unnethe**, scarcely. 885 **wole**, will. 890 **lufe**, love. 896 **teiris**, tears.

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- 900 Whanne this meditacion is maad bi the Holi Goost, thanne it is right profitable and
gracious, and that schalt thou wite bi this tokene: whanne it is so that thou art stired to
devocion, and sodeynli thi thought is drawnen up from alle worldli and fleischli thinges,
and thee thenketh as thu seighe in thi soule thi Lord Jhesu Crist in bodili liknesse as He
was in erthe, how He was taken of the Jewes and bounden as a theef, beten and
905 dispisid, scourgid and demed to the deeth; houmekeli He baar the Cros upon his bak,
and hou crueli He was nailed therupon; also of the crowne of thornes upon His heed,
and upon the scharpe spore that stonge Him to the herte. And thou in this goostli sight
thou felist thyn herte stired into so greet compassioun and pitie of thi Lord Jhesu that
910 thou moest, and wepist, and criest with alle thy myghtes of thi bodi and of thi soule,
wondryng the goodness and the love, the pacience and the mekenesse of oure Lord
Jhesu, that He wolde for so synful a caitif as thou art suffre so mykil peyne. And also
over this thou felist so mykil goodnessse and merci in oure Lord that thi herte riseth up
into love and glaadnesse of Him with manye swete teeris, havynge greet trust of
915 forgyvenessee of thi synnes and of savacioun of thi soule bi the vertu of this precious
passioun. Thanne whanne the mynde of Cristis passioun or ony poynt of His manhede
is thus maad in thi herte bi siche goostli sight, with devout affeccioun answerynge
thereto, wite thou wel thanne that it is not thyn ownen werkynge, ne feynynge of noo
wikkid spirit, but bi grace of the Holi Goost, for it is an openyng of the goostli iye into
Cristis manhede. And it mai be called the fleischli love of God, as Seynt Bernard callith
920 it, in as mekil as it is set in the fleischli kynde of Crist. And it is right good, and a greet
help in distroyngre of grete synnes, and a wei for to come to vertues. And so affir to
come to contemplacioun of Jhesu Crist in His Godhed. For a man schal not come to
goostli delite in contemplacioun of His Godhede, but yif he come first in ymaginacion
bi bitimesse and compassioun and bi stable trouthe and stidefaste mynde of His manhede.
925 Thus Seynt Poul dide. For first he seide thus: *Nichil iudicavi me scire inter vos, nisi*
Jesum Christum, et hunc crucifixum (I Corinthis 2:2). I schewed yow right nought
that y couthe, but oonli Jhesu Crist and Him crucified. As yif he had seid: My knowynge
and my trust is oonli in the passioun of Crist. And therfore seide he thus also: *Michi*
autem absit gloriari, nisi in cruce domini nostri Jhesu Christi (Galatians 6:14). Forbed be

900 profitabile, profitable. 903 seighe, see. 907 stonge, pierced. 911 caitif, wretched. 918 iye, eye. 919–20 Seynt Bernard callith it, *In Corin. 20.2.3–5.9* (Clark, p. 169n120, with other references). 920 kynde, nature. 924 trouthe, faith; mynde, thought. 927 couthe, knew.

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- 930 it fro me al maner of joie and of likynge, but in the Cros and in the passioun of oure Jhesu Crist. And afterward he said thus: *Predicamus vobis Christum dei virtutem, et dei sapientiam* (1 Corinthians 1:24). As who seie: First he prechid to yow of the manhed and of the passion of Crist; now y preche to yow of the Godhede and Cristis myght and the eendelis wisdom of God.

Chapter Thirty-six

- 935 That the meditacion of the passioun of Crist is withdrawn from hem that it is gyven to ofte sithes for divers skyles.

This maner of meditacion with gracious compunction a man hath not alwei whan he wolde, but whanne oure Lord wole gyve it. Unto sum men and women He geveth it al here lyvetyme, bi sithes whan He visiteth hem; as summe devout men and women aren so tendre in here affeccion that whanne thei here men speke or ellis that thei thenken of this precious passioun, her hertis melten in devocion and thei are fed and confortid bi vertu of it agens al maner temptacions of the enemye, and that is a grete gift of God. To summe men He gyveth it first plenteousli, and afterward He withdraweth it for dyverse causis, either yif a man wex proud of it in his owen sight, or for sum othir synne bi the whiche he maketh himself unable for to resseyve the grace; or ellis oure Lord withdraweth it and al othir devocion sumtyme from a man or a woman, for He wole suffre hem for to be assaied bi temptacions of His enemye, and so wole He dispose a man for to knowe and fele Him more goostli. For he seide so Himsilf to His disciples: *Expedit vobis ut ego vadam; si enim non abierto, paracitus non venier ad vos* (John 16:7). It is spedful to you that y goo fro yow bodili; for yif y goo not, the Holi Goost mai not come to yow. For as longe as He was with hem, thei loyld Him mykil, but it was flesschli oonli in the manhed; for thei trowed not fulli that Jhesu man was God, and therfore it was spedful to hem that He schulde drawe the bodili forme from here sight that the Holi Goost myght come to hem, and kenne hem for to love Him and knowe Hym as God more

932 As who seie, As if to say. 934 eendelis, endless. 936 ofte sithes, often times; skyles, reasons. 939 bi sithes, at times. 943 plenteuousli, plentifully. 945 resseyve, receive. 947 assaied, tested. 949 spedful, advantageous. 953 drawe, withdraw. 954 kenne, teach.

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955 goostli, as He dide on the dai of Pentecost. Right so it is spedeful to summe that oure Lord withdrawe a litil the bodili and the fleschli likenesse from the iye of her soule, that the herte myght be set and fiochid more bisili in gosteli desire and felyng of His Godhed.

Chapter Thirty-seven

Of divers temptacions of the feend of helle.

960 Neverthelees it bihoveth a man for to suffre many temptacions first, and thise temptacions fallen ofte sithes to sum men and women after whanne comfort is withdrawnen upon divers maneres bi the malice of the enemye, as thus. Whanne the devyl perceyveth devocioun mykil withdrawnen, that the soule is left as it were nakid for a tyme, thanne he sendeth to summe men temptacions of lechicer or glotonye, so hoot and so brensyng that hem schal thenke thei felid nevere noon so grevous in al here lif before whanne thei gave hem to synne most. In so mykil that thei schul thenke it impossible for to stonde longe and suffre, that thei ne schul nedynge fall but yif thei have helpe. And therfore han thei than mykil sorwe, bothe for lakkynge of comfort and devocioun that thei weren wonte to have, and mykil drede of falling from God bi siche open synnes. And al this worcheth the devel for to doo hem forthenke here good purpos and tume agen to synne as they were wont to doo; but whoso wole abide awhile and suffre a litil peyne, the hande of oure Lorde is ful neir and helpeth swithe soone. For He kepereth hem wel sikirli, and thei wot not how; as the prophete David seide in the persoone of oure Lord: *Cum ipso sum in tribulacione, eripiam eum et glorificabo eum* (Psalms 90:15). I am with him in tribulacion and in temptation; I schal delivere him and y schal make him glorieous in my blisse. Sum men he tempteth bi gosteli synnes maliciousli, as of mystrowynge of the articles of the feith or of the sacrament of Goddis bodi, also dispeir or blasphemye in oure Lord or in ony of His seytis, or lothynge of here lif, or bittimesse and unskilful hevynesse, or to mykil drede of hemself or of here bodi, yif thei patten

956 *iye*, eye. 957 *fiochid*, fixed. 963 *host*, hot. 966 *nedynge*, necessarily. 969 **worcheth**, works; **doo hem forthenke**, cause them to reject. 971 **swithe**, very. 972 **sikirli**, securely. 975-76 **mystrowynge**, disbelieving; the items of doubt enumerated here — about the eucharist and devotion to the saints — were among those characteristic of the Lollard movement, the heretical outgrowth of the teachings of John Wycliffe; see Clark, p. 170n131, 132.

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hem hooli to Goddis service. Sum men he tempteth also, and nameli solitarie men and women, bi dreedes and uglynnesse and quakynges and schakynges, either apperynge to hem in bodili liknesse or ellis in ymagynng, sleepynge and wakynge, and tarieth hem so that thei mai unnethes have ony reste. And also on many othere wises he tempteth mo than I can or mai seie.

Chapter Thirty-eight

Of sere remedies agennes temptaciounes of feend.

985 Remedye unto siche maner of men and women that aren thus travaled, or ony oþer wise, mai be this: first that thei wolen putten al hire trust in oure Lord Jhesu Crist and bringe thanne to mynde His passioun and His peynes that He suffride, and that thei trowe thanne stidefastli that al this sorwe and traveile that thei suffren in siche temptacions, whiche to an unkunyng man semeth forsakynge of God, is no reprovyng of God, ne non forsakynge, but assayyng for here betere, either for clensyng of here synnes bifore doon, or for grete encresyng of here mede, or for greet disposynge to mykil grace, yif thei wole abide and suffre a litil while and stonde faste with a nakid trouthe and stidefaste mynde of Jhesu Crist, so that thei turne not wilfulli agene to synne. Another remedye is that thei drede not ne sette not at herte siche malicious stirynges of despise or blasphemye, or of the sacrament or ony siche oþere that were uggly to here, for the felyng of thise temptacions foulen the soule no more than yif thei herde an hound berke or felid a flee bite. Thei tarie the soule, but thei apeire not the soule, yif a man wolde despise hem and sette hem at nouȝt. It is not good to stryve with hem, for to putte hem ought bi maistrie; for the more that men stryven with siche thoughtes the more thei cleve to hem. And therfore thei schullen as mykil as thei moun drawe oute the thought from hem, as yif thei chargiden hem not, and sette it to summe

980 **uglynnesse**, frightfulness. 981 **tarie**, troubles. 982 **unnethes**, scarcely; wises, manners. 984 **sere**, various. 989 **unkunyng**, ignorant; **reprovyng**, blaming. 990 **assayyage**, testing. 991 **mede**, reward; **disposynge**, disposition. 993 **trouthe**, faith. 996 **uggly**, horrible. 997 **tarie**, trouble; **apeire**, injure. 998 **despice**, despise. 1000 **moun**, are able. 1001 **chargiden**, concerned.

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other good ocupacion. And yit yif thei wolen ai hange upoun hem, thanne it is good to hem that thei ben not angri ne hevy for to fele hem, but that thei with a good trust in God wole bere hem as it were a bodili peyne and a scourge of oure Lord for cleasynghe
1005 of here synnes, as longe as He wole. And over this it is good to hem, to schewe hire hertes to sum wise man in the bigynnyng before thei ben rooted in the herte, and that thei leve here owen witte and folwe the counsel of him; and that thei schewe hem not lightli to noon uncouth man, that is to seie, to noon unkunynge man and worldli, which never hadde felid siche temptacions, for thei myghte lightli bringe a symple soule into
1010 desperi bi unkunynge of hemself. Of this maner of temptacions, bi the whiche a man semeth forsaken of God and is not, in comfort of hem that aren temptid oure Lord seith thus bi His prophete: *In modico dereliqui te et in memento indignacionis mee percussi te, et in miseracionibus meis multis congregabo te* (Isaiah 54:7). In a lilit y forsook thee, that is for to seie, I suffrid thee for to be taried a lilit, and in a poynt of my wraththe y
1015 smoot thee, that is to seie, al the penaunce and the peyne that thou suffrest heire is but a poynt of my wraththe in reward of peyne of helle or of purgatorie. And yit in my manyfold mercies y schal gadre thee togodre, that is for to sai, whanne that thee theenketh that thou art forsaken, thanne schal y of my greet merci gadre thee agen to me, for thanne whanne that thy wenest that thou art but lost, thanne schal oure Lord helpe thee,
1020 as seith Job: *Cum te consumptam putaveris, orieris ut lucifer et habebis fiduciam* (Job 11:17). That is for to seie, whanne thou art brought so lowe bi traveil in temptation that thee thenketh noon help ne comfort, but as it were a fordoon man, yit stond stifli in hope, and prai God, and sotheli thou schalt sodaynli springe up as the dai sterre in gladnesse of herte, and have a veri trust in God, as Job seide.

Chapter Thirty-nine

1025 Hou God suffreth hem that He cheseth for to be tarid and temptid; and afirwarde He comfortith hem and stableth hem yn grace.

1008 uncouth; ignorant; unkunynge, unknowing. 1009 felid, felt; lightli, easily. 1016 poynt, small amount; reward of, comparison to. 1022 fordoon, ruined; stifli, resolutely. 1023 sterre, star. 1025 tarid, troubled. 1026 stableth, establishes.

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And also in confort of sich men that thei schulde not despeire, the wise man seith thus of oure Leed: *In temptatione ambulat cum eo. In primis eligit eum. Timorem et metum et approbacionem inducit super illum; et cruciabit illum in tribulacione doctrine sue.*

- 1030 *donec temptet illum in cogitationibus suis, et credat anime illius, ad iter directum adducet illum et firmabit illum et letificabit illum; et denudabit abscondita sua illi, et thesaurizabit super illum scienciam et intellectum iusticie* (Ecclesiasticus 4:18–21). This is thus mykil for to sai: The wise man, for he wolde not that men schulde dispeire in temptation, in comfort of hem he seith thus: In tribulacion, ne in temptacion oure Lord foersaketh not a man, but He goth with him fro the bigymyng to the laste ende, for He seith, first He cheseth him, and that is whanne He draweth a man to him bi confort of devocion; and afirward sorwe and drede and assaiynge He bringeth upon him, and that is whanne He withdraweth devocion and suffreth him to be temptid. Also He seith He tormenteth him in tribulacion, until He hath assaied hym wel in his thoughtis, and til a man wole putte al his trust fulli in Him. And thanne aftir this oure Lord bringeth hym oute to the right wai and festeneth him to Hym, and gladith hym, and sithen scherweth him His prystees, and geveth him His tresour of knowyng and undirstandinge and rightwisenesse.

- Bi thise wordes of Holi Writ mai thou see that these temptacions, or ony othere, be thei nevere so uggli to a man that bi grace is in ful wille to foersake synne, aren spedful and profitable, yif he wole suffre as he mai and abide Goddis wille, and not turne agen to synnes which he hath forsake for no sorwe ne peyne ne drede of siche temptacion, but ai stondeth stille in travaile, and in prasere. Oure Lord of His endeles godenesse, havynge pitie and merci of alle His creatures, whanne He seeth tyme He leith to His hond, and smyteth doun the devel and al his power; and eseth hem of here travaile, and putteth awai dredis and sorwes and merkenesse oute of here hertes and bringeth into hire soules light of grace, and openeth the sight of here soule, gyvynge hem a newe goostli myght to agenstonde al the fondynges of the fende and alle deedli synnes withoutin gret travaile, and ledeth hem into saddenesse of good vertues lyvynge. In the which, yif thei be meke, He kepeth hem to here laste ende, and thanne taketh He hem al hooli to Hym. This thyng y seie to thee, yif thou be taried or traveiled with ony siche manere of temptacions, be not to mykil adred, but doo as I have seide, and betere yif thou may; and y hope bi the grace of Jhesu Crist thou schal never be overcome with thyn enemy.

1041 **festeneth**, fastens; **gladith**, cheers. 1044 **eggli**, horrible; **spedful**, useful. 1047 **stille**, constantly. 1050 **merkenesse**, darkness. 1052 **agenstonde**, resist; **fondynges**, temptations. 1053 **saddenesse**, firmness; **vertues**, virtuous. 1057 **hope**, expect.

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Chapter Forty

That a man schulde not geve him to idelnesse ne lightli leve the grace that were gyven to him of God.

- 1060 After this, whanne thou hast ascapid siche temptacions, or ellis oure Loed hath so kepid thee, as He hath doon many of His merci, that thou hast not ben mykil taried with non siche, thanne it is good to thee that thou turne not thi reste into idelnesse; for there is many man that taketh reste upon Him to sone. But thou schalt, yif thou wolt, bigynne a newe travaile, and that is for to entre into thyn ownen soule bi meditacion, for to knowe what it is,
1065 and bi the knowynge therof for to come to the goostli knowynge of God. For as Seynt Austyn seith: "Bi the knowynge of myself, I schalle gete the knowing of God." I seie not that it is nedeful to thee and dette for to travaile so, ne to noon othir man, but yif he fele him stired bi grace and as it were callid thereto. For oure Lord gyveth sundri giftes whereso He wole, not oon man al, ne alle men oon, outaken charitē whiche is comyn to alle. And therfore, yif a man or a woman have receyved a gifte of oure Lord, as devocion in praiser or in the passion of Crist, or ony othir be it nevere so litil, leve it not to soone for noon othir, but yif he felid sothfastli a betere, wharne God wole give it. Neverthelees afterward yif hit be withdrawen sumwhat, and he see a betere and felith his hert stired thereto, tharne semeth it a callynge of oure Lord to the betere, and thanne is tyme for to folwe aftir for to gete it.
1070

Chapter Forty-one

- 1075 That a man schulde knowe the mesure of his gifte, and evere desire more, and take a betere, whanne God wole gyve it.

Oure holi fadres heere bifore kenned us that we schulde knowe the mesure of oure gifte, and up that werk, not takynge upon us bi feynynge more thanne we han in felyng. We moun ai desire the beste, but we moun not ay werke the beste, for we han not yit receyved the grace. An hound that renneth aftir the hare oonli for he seeth othir

1060 *ascapid*, escaped. 1065–66 *Seynt Austyn seith*, Soliloquia, 2.1.1; see Clark, p. 171n144.
1067 *dette*, debt. 1069 *outaken*, except for. 1077 *kenned*, taught. 1078 *up that werk*, work according to that. 1079 *moun*, are able to; *werke*, perform. 1080 *An hound*, the story of the hound and the hare is common, based on *Vitae patrum*, 5.7.35 (PL 73:901) (Clark, p. 171n146).

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boundes renne, whanne he is weli he resteth him and turneth hym agen. But yif he
renne for he seeth the hare, he wole not spare for werynesse til he have geten it. Right
so it is gosteli. Whoso hath a grace, be it never so litil, yif he leve wilfulli the werkynge
of it, and make himself for to traveile in another whiche he hath not yit, oonli for he seeth
1085 or heereth that othere men doo soo, sothli he may renne a while til he be weli, and
thanne schal he turne him agen, and but yif he be waer, he mai hurte his feet bi sum
fantasies, or thanne he come hoom. But he that worcheth in siche grace as he hath,
and desireth mekeli and lastandli aftir more, and aftir felith his herte stired for to folwe the
grace whiche he hath desired, he mai sikirli renne, yif he kepe mekenesse. And therfore
1090 desire of God as mykil as thou mai, withoutyn mesure or discreciooun, of alle that
longith to His love, and to the blisse of hevene; for woso can best desire of God, most
schal fele of Hym. But worche as thu mai, and crie God merci for that that thou mai not.
Thus it semeth Seynt Poule seide: *Unusquisque habet donum suum a deo, alius autem*
1095 *sic, alius vero sic* (1 Corinthians 7:7). Item: *unicuique nostrum datus est gratia secun-*
dum mensuram donacionis Christi (Ephesians 4:7). Item: *divisiones graciaram sunt,*
alii datur sermo sapientie; alii sermo scientie (1 Corinthians 12:4, 8). Item: *ut sciamus*
que a deo donata sunt nobis (1 Corinthians 2:12). Seynt Poul seith that everi man hath
his gift of God, oon thus, and another thus. For to everi man that schal be saaf is geven
1100 grace aftir the mesure of Cristis gifte, and therfore it is spedful that we knowe the giftis
whiche are gyven us of God, that we myght worche in hem, for bi hem we schullen ben
saaf; as summe bi bodili werkes and bi dedes of merci, summe bi grete penaunce, summe
bi sorwes and wepyngis for here synnes al here lyflyme, sum bi prechynge and techynge,
sum bi divers graces and giftes of devocioun schullen ben saaf and comen to blisse.

Chapter Forty-two

That a man schulde travaile for to knowe his owen soule and the myghtes of it, and
1105 breke down the ground of synne therinse.

1081 *weli*, weary. 1086 *bat* yif, unless; *waer*, wary. 1087 *or* thanne, before; *worcheth*, works.

1088 *lastandli*, constantly. 1091 *wese*, whoever. 1098 *saaf*, saved.

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Neverthelees, there is oon werke whiche is nedful and spedful for to traveile inne. And that is a man for to entre into himself, for to knowe his own soule and the myghtes therof, the fairenesse and the foulenesse therof. In this inward biholdinge thou schalt mow see the worschipe and the dignitē whiche it hadde bi kynde of the firste makynge, and thou schalt see also the wrecchidnesse and the myschief of synne whiche thou art fallen in. And of this sight schal come grete desire with longyng in thyn herte for to receyve agen that clennesse and that worschipe whiche thou hast lost. Also thou schalt fele a lothyng and a grisynge of thisilf, with a grete wil for to distroie and bere doun thisilf and al that synne that letteth thee fro that dignitē and fro that clennesse. This is a goostli travaile hard and scharp in bigynnyng, whoso wole quylki travayle thereinne, for it is a traveile in the soule agens the ground of al synnes litil or mykil, which ground is not ellis but a fals mysrulid love of a man to himself. Oute of this love, as Seynt Austen seith, speyngeth alle manere of synne deedli and venial; and sothli until this ground be wel ransakid and depe dolven, and as it were up dried bi outecastyng of alle 1110 worldli and fleischli loves, a soule mai nevere fele goostli the brennande love of oure Loed Jhesu Crist, ne have hoemlinesse of His gracious presence, ne cleer sightis of goostli thinges bi light of understandyng. This is the travaile that a man bihooveth drawe out his herte from the fleischli love of alle ertheli creatures and from veyn love of himself, that his soule schulde no reste fynde in noo fleischli thought, ne in eertheli 1115 affeccion. And yif he doo thus, thanne in as mykil as the soule mai not fynde redili his goostli reste in the love and in the hoomli presence and in the sight of Jhesu, it schal nedynge fele peyne. This travaile is sumdel streit and narwgh, and neverthelees it is a wai whiche Crist techid to hem that wolden ben His perfligt folweres in the Gospel, seiande thus: *Contendite intrare per angustum portum: quoniam arta est via que ducat ad vitam, et pauci inveniant eam* (Luke 13:24; Matthew 7:13–14). Stryve ye for to entre bi this streite gate, for the wai that ledeth to hevene is narw, and fewe men fynden it. And hou streite this wei is, oure Lord tellith in another place thus: *Si quis vult post me venire, abveget semetipsum, et tollat cracem suam, et sequatur me* (Matthew 16:24).

1106 **nedful**, necessary; **spedful**, helpful. 1107 **estre**, enter. 1109 **mow**, be able to. 1112 **clennesse**, purity; **worschipe**, respect. 1113 **grisynge**, horror. 1117–18 **Seynt Austen seith**, possible reference to *De civitate dei*, 14.28; see Clark, p. 172n158. 1119 **ransakid**, examined; **dolves**, dug. **outecastyng**, casting out. 1120 **brennande**, burning. 1127 **nedysnge**, necessarily; **narwgh**, narrow. 1129 **selande**, saying. 1131 **narw**, narrow.

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Item: qui odit animam suam in hoc mundo, in vitam eternam custodit eam (John 12:25).

- 1135 That is for to seie: Whoso wole come aftir Me, forsake hymself and hate his owen soule.
That is for to seie: Forsake alle fleischli love and hate his owen fleischli lif and the likyng
of alle his fleischli wittis for the love of Me; and take the Cros, that is to seie suffre the
peyne of this for awhile, and thanne folwe, that is to seie in contemplacion of My
manhede and of My Godhede. This is a streit weie and narwe, for it is a sleynge of alle
1140 synnes, as Seynt Poul seith: *Morifificate membra vestra, que sunt super terram, im-
mundicium, libidinem, concupiscentiam malam* (Colossians 3:5). Slee youre membris
upoun erthe — not youre membris of bodi, but the membris of thi soule, as unclenne
lust and unskilful love to youreself and to erthili thinges. Therfore as thi travaille hath ben
here bifore for to agenstonde grete bodili synnes and open temptacions of the enemye
1145 as hit were fro withoutin, right soo thee bishovedh now in this godli werk withinne thisilf,
biganynge for to distroie and breke down the ground of synne in thisilf, as mykil as thou
mai. And that thou myghtest redili bringe it aboute, I schal telle thee as me thenketh.

Chapter Forty-three

Hou a man schal knowe the worthinessse and the worshipe of his soule that it owe to
have bi kynde, and the wrochidnessse and myschief that it is fallen in thorw synne.

- 1150 The soule of a man is a lyf, made of thre myghtes — mynde, resoun, and wille — to the
ymsage and the likenes of the blissid holi Trinité, hooli perflight and rightwise. In as
myche as the mynde was maad myghti and stidefasti bi the Fadir almyghti, for to holde
Hym withouthte forgetynge, distractynge, or lettynge of ony creature, and so it hath
the likenes of the Fader. The resoun was maad cleer and bright withouten errour or
1155 derkenesse, as perflightli as a soule in a bodi ungloefiede myght have; and so it hath the
likenes of the Sone, whiche is endelees wisdom. And the love and the wille was maad
clene, brenynge into God withouten beestly lust of the fleisch or of ony creature, bi

1139 **sleynge**, slaying. 1143 **unskillful**, unreasonable. 1144 **agenstonde**, resist. 1148 **worshipe**,
respect. 1149 **kynde**, nature. 1150 **lyf**, life; **myghtes**, powers; **mynde**, **resoun**, and **wille**, the
influential association of these powers of the soul with the persons of the Trinity is found in
Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 10.11.17–12.19; see Clark, p. 168n108 and p. 172n167. 1151 **perflight**,
perfect; **rightwise**, righteous. 1153 **withouthte**, without.

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sovereynesse of God; and so it hath the likenes of the Hooli Goost, the whiche
is blissid love. So that a manys soule, whiche mai be callid a maad trinitye, was fulfillid
1160 in mynde, sight, and love, of the unmaad blissed Trinité, whiche is oure Lord. This is
the dignité, the state and the worshipe of a manys soule, bi kynde of the firste makyng.
This staat haddest thou in Adam bifore the first synne of man; but whanne Adam
synnede, chosynge love and delite in himself and in creaturis, he loste al this worshipe
and his dygnyté and thou also lostest it in hym and felle from that blissid Trinité into a
1165 soule merk wrecchid trinité, that is into forgetynge of God and unknowyng of him,
and into beestis likynge of thisilf, and that skilefulli, for as David seith in the sautier:
Homo, cum in honore esset, non intellexit; comparatus est iumentis, et similis factus est illis (Psalms 48:21). A man whanne he was in worshipe, he knewe it not, and therfore
he loste it and was maad like to a beest. See now thanne the wrecchidnesse of thi soule,
1170 for as thi mynde was sum tyme stable in God, right so now it hath fogeten Hym, and
seketh his reste in creatures now froo oon to another, and never may fynde ful reste,
for he hath lost Him in whom is ful reste. And right so it is of the resoun and of the
love also, whiche was clene in goostli savoure and suetteresse; now it is turned into
1175 foule beestli lust and likynge into thisilf and into creatures and in fleischli savoures,
bothe in the wites, as in glotonye and leccherie, and in the ymagynynge, as in peide,
veynglorie and covetise — in so mykil that thou mai unnethes doo ony good dede but
yif thou be defouled by veynglorie, ne thou may not wel use noon of thi five wites
cleenli in noon creature delitable but yif thyn herte be take and gleymed with veyn lust
1180 and likynge of it, whiche patteh oute the love of God from the herte, as in felynge and
the goosteli savour, that it may not come therinne. Everiche man that lyveth in spirite
knoweth wel al this. This is the wrecchidnesse of thi soule and the myschief for the
firste synne of man, withouten al othr wrecchidnesse and synnes whiche thou hast put
thereto wilfulli. And wite thou wel, though thou hadde nevere doo synne with thi bodi
1185 deedli ne venyal, but onli this that is callid origynal — for it is the first synne, and that is
not ellis but the loesynge of thi rightwisenesse whiche thou were maad inne — yit
schuldest thou nevere have ben saaf yif oure Lord Jhesu Criste bi His preecious passioun
hadde not delyvered thee and restored thee agen.

1159 maad, made. 1160 of, by. 1165 merk, mark. 1166 skilefulli, reasonably. 1168 worshipe,
honor. 1176 unnethes, scarcely. 1178 cleall, purely; delitable, delightful; take, taken; gleymed,
smeared. 1182 withouten, except for. 1183 wite, know. 1185 loesynge, losing. 1186 saaf,
saved.

Chapter Forty-four

Hou everi man mai be saved bi the passioun of Crist, be he never so wrecchid, yif he
aske it.

- 1190 And therfore yif thou therke that y have heere before spoken over highe to thee, for thou
mai not take it ne fulfille it as y have seid or schal seie, I wole fal doun to thee as lowe
as thou wolt, as wel for my profight as for thyn. And than I seie thus, that be thou
nevere so mykil a wrecche, have thou doon never so mykil synne, forsake thisilf and al
thi werkes goode and badde, crie merci and aske oonli savacious bi the vertu of His
1195 precious passion mekeli and trustili, and withoute doute thou schalt have it. And for this
origynal synne and all othere that thou hast doon, thou schalt be saaf, as ankir include;
and not oonli thou, but alle Cristene soulis whiche trusten upoun His passioun and
mekan hemself, knowelechynge her wrecchidnesse, askynge merci and forgyvenesse,
by the fruit of His precious passioun oonli, lowynge hemself to the sacramentis of Holi
1200 Chirche. Though it be so that thei han ben encorbrid with synne al here liyftyme and
nevere hadden felynge of goostli savour or swetenesse or gostli knowynge of God, thei
schullen in this feith and in here good wille, bi vertue of this precious passioun of oure
Loed Jhesu Crist, be saf and come to the blisse of hevene. Al this knowist thou wel, but
1205 yit me liketh for to seie it. See here the endeles merci of oure Lord, how lowe He falleth
to thee and to me and to alle synful caityves. Aske merci and have it. Thus seide the
prophete in the persone of oure Loed: *Omnis enim quicunque invocaverit nomen do-*
mini, salvus erit (Joel 2:32). Everi man, whatevere he be, calle the name of Jhesu, that
is to seie aske savacion bi Jhesu and bi His passioun, he schal be saaf. This curtesie of
oure Loed summe men taken wel, and ben savyd therbi, and summe in truste of merci
1210 and of this curtesie liyn stille in here synne, and wen for to have it whanne hem list.
And thanne mowe thei not, for thei aren taken or thei witen, and so thei dampnen
hemself.

1192 profight, profit. 1195 trustili, trustingly. 1196 ankir include, enclosed anchorite. 1198
mekan, humble; knowelechynge, acknowledging. 1199 lowyng, humbling. 1203 saf, saved.
1205 caityves, wretches. 1210 liyn, lie. 1211 er, before. 1212 hemself, themselves.

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But than seist thou: "Yif this be sooth, thanne wondre y greteli for that y fynde writhen
in summe hooli mentys sawes. Sume seyn, as I undirstonde, that he that cannot love
1215 this blissid name Jhesu, ne fynde ne fele in it goostli joie and delitablete with wondirful
swettenesse in this lif here, fro the sovereyn joie and goostli swettenesse in the blisse of
hevene he schal be aliene, and nevere schal he come thereto. Sothelli thise wordes, whanne
I hem rede, stoneth me and maketh me greteli afred; for y hope, as thou seist, that many
1220 bi the merci of oure Lord schullen ben saaf bi kepyng of Hise comaundementis and by
veri repentaunce for here yvel lif beseice doon, the whiche felid nevere goostli swetenesse
ne inly savoure in the name of Jhesu or in the love of Jhesu. And forthi I mervaile me
the more that thei seie contrarie hereto, as it semeth."

As unto this y mai seie as me thenketh, that there seiynge, yif it be wel undirstonde,
is sooth, ne hit is not contrarie to that that y have seid. For this name Jhesu is not ellis
1225 for to seie upon Ynglisch but heelere or hele. Now every man that lyveth in this wrecchid
lif is goostli sike, for there is no man that lyveth withoutin synne, the whiche is goostli
sikenesse, as Seynt Johun seith of hymself and oþere perfight men thus: *Si dixerimus
quia peccatum non habemus, ipsi nos seducimus, et veritas in nobis non est* (1 John
1:8). Yif we seyn that we have noo synne, we bigile oureself and there is noo soothfastnes
1230 in us. And forthi he mai nevere fele ne come to the joie of hevene unto he be first maad
hool of this goostli sikenesse. But this goostli heele mai noo man have that hath use of
resoun but yif he desire it and love it and have delite thereinne, in as michel as he hopith
for to gete it. Now the name of Jhesu is nothyng ellis but this goostli hele; wherfore it
is sooth that thei seyn, that ther mai no man be saaf but yif he love and like in the name
1235 of Jhesu, for there mai no man be goostli hool but yif he love and desire goosteli heele.
For right as yif a man were bodili sike, there were noon ertheli thyng so dere ne so
nedeful to hym, ne so mykil schulde be desired of him as bodili heele, for though thou
woldest geve hym alle the rychesse and worshippis of this wrold and nought make
1240 hym hool, yif thou myghtest, thou plesist hym not. Right soo it is to a man that is sike
goostli and felith the peyne of goostli sikenesse. Nothinge is so dere, ne so nedeful, ne

1213 **But than**, From this point to the end of the chapter is the "Holy Name" section, omitted from several MSS; Gardner (1936, pp. 20–23) argues for its authenticity. See Textual Notes.

1214 **sawes**, sayings. 1215 **delitablete**, delightfulness. 1217 **aliene**, cast out; **Sothelli**, Truly.

1218 **stoneth**, astonishes; **afred**, afraid. 1221 **inly**, inward. 1223 **undirstonde**, understood.

1225 **heelere or hele**, healer or health. 1227 **perfight**, perfect. 1231 **heele**, health.

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so mykil coveited of hym, as is goostli heele; and that is Jhesu, withouten which alle the joies of hevene mai not like hym.

And this is the skile, as I hope, whi oure Lord whanne He took mankynde for oure savacion, He nolde not be callid bi noon name that bitokenyd His endelesseyng, or
1245 His myght, or His wisdom, or His rightwisenesse, but oonli bi that that bitokened the cause of His comyng and was savacion of mansys soule, which savacion was most dere and most nedeful to man. And this savacion bitokeneth this name Jhesu. Thanne bi this it semeth sooth that there schal no man be saaf, but yif he love Jhesu; for there may no man be saaf but yif he love savacion oonli, for to have it thorugh that blissid persone
1250 Jhesu bi the mekenesse of His manhede and by the merite of His passioune, whiche love he may have that lyveth and dieth in the lowest degré of charité. Also y mai seie, on anothir manere, that he that cannot love this blissid name Jhesu with goostli mirthe, ne enjoie in it with heveneli melodie here, he schal nevere have ne fele in hevene that fulled of sovereyne joie the whiche he that myght in this liyf bi habundaunce of perfight
1255 charité enjoie in Jhesu schal fele and have, and so mai here seiynge ben undirstande.

Neverthelees he schal be saaf and have ful mede in the sight of God, yif he in this liyf be in the lowest degré of charité bi kepinge of Goddis comaundementis; for oure Lord seith Hymself thus: *In domo patris mei multe mansiones sunt* (John 14:2). In My Fadris hous aren many sere dwellynges. Summe are for parfite soules, the which in this liyf were fulfilled of grace of the Holi Gost and songen loovynge to God in contemplacion of Hym, with wondirful swettenesse and heveneli savour. Thise soules, for thei hadden moost charité, schullen have highest mede in the blisse of hevene, for thise are callid Goddis derlyngges. Othere soules that are not disposid to contemplacion of God, ne hadden not the fulled of charité as apostoles or martyres hadden in the bigynsynge of
1265 Hooli Chirche, schullen have the lower mede in the blisse of hevene, for these are callid Goddis fresdes. Thus calleth oure Lord in Holi Writ chosen soules, seiynge thus: *Comedit, amici, et inebriamini, carissimi* (Canticle 5:1). Mi frendes, etc yee, and my derlynges, be yee dronken. As yif oure Lord seid thus: Yee that aren My frendes, for yee kepid My comaundementis and sette My love before the love of the world, and loved Me more
1270 thanne ony erthli thyng, yee schullen be feed with goostli foode of the breed of liyf. But ye that aren My derlynges, that not oonli keped My comaundementis, but also of youre

1241 of, by. 1242 like, please. 1243 skile, reason. 1254 habundaunce, abundance. 1259 sere, various. 1260 loovynge, praise. 1262 mede, reward. 1263 derlyngges, darlings.

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owen fire wil fulfilleden My conceils, and over that ye loveden Me oonli and entierli with
alle the myghtis of youre soule, and beenneden in My love with goostli delite, as diden
1275 principali the apostoles and martires and alle othere soules that myghten bi grace come
to the gifte of perfecciou: yee schullen be maad dronken with the highest and freschest
wyn in My celere, that is, the sovereyne joie of love in the blisse of hevene.

Chapter Forty-five

That a man schulde be besi for to recovere agen his worthynesse, and reforme in him
the ymage of the Trinité.

Neveretheles though this be sooth of the endeloes merci of God unto thee and to me
1280 and al mankynde, we schullen not therfore in trust of this be the more rekles wilfulli in
oure lyvynge, but more bisi unto plese Hym, nameli now, syn we aren restorid agen in
hope bi this passioun of oure Lord to the dignité and to the blisse whiche we hadden
lorn by Adammys synne. And though we myghten severe geete it here fulli, yit we
1285 schulde desire that we myght recovere here lyvand a figure and a likenesse of that
dignité, that oure soule myght be reformed, as it were in a schadewe, bi grace to the
ymage of the Trinité, whiche we hadden bi kynde and aftir schullen have fulli in blisse.
For that is the lif that is veri contemplatif, unto bigynne here in that felynge of love and
goosteli knowyng of God bi openyng of the goostli iye, whiche schal nevere be loste
ne bi taken away, but the same schal be fulfilled oþerwise in the blisse of hevene.
1290 This bihight oure Lord to Marie Mawdeleyn, whiche was contemplatiif, and He seide
thus of here: *Maria optimam partem elegit, que non auferetur ab ea* (Luke 10:42), that
Marie hadde chosen the beste partie, that is the love of God in contemplacion, for it
schal nevere be taken away fro hire. I seie not that thou mai here lyvande recovere so
1295 hool ne so parfight clemnesse, as innocence, knowyng and lovyng, as thou haddest
first, ne as thou schalt have; ne thou may not eschape alle the wrecchidnessis ne the
peynes of synne, ne thou lyvande in dedli fleisch may distroie and quenche al hooli the

1276 celere, cellar. 1277 besi, diligent. 1280 rekles, careless. 1281 syn, since. 1283 lora,
lost. 1287 unto, to. 1290 bihight, promised; Marie Mawdeleyn, Mary Magdalene; for her as
contemplative, see *Scale*, 1.263. 1295 eschape, escape. 1296 peynes, punishments.

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veyn fals love of thisilf, ne flee alle venial synnes, that thei ne wole — but yif thei ben
stopped bi grete fervour of charité — alwey spryngyn oute of thyn herte, as watir
renneth oute from a stynkinge welle. But I wolde yif thou myght not fulli quenche hit,
1300 that thou myghtest sumwhat sleke it and come to that cleanness as nygh as thou mai.
For oure Lord bighigne the children of Israel whanne He ledde hem into the lond of
biheste, and in figure of hem to alle Cristene men thus: *Omnis quod calcaverit pes tuus
nam erit* (Deuteronomy 11:24). That is for to seie, as mykil as thou may trede upon
with thi foot of verrey desire herte, so mykil schalt thou have in the lond of bihest, that
1305 is in the blisse of hevene whanne thou comest thider.

Chapter Forty-six

Hou Jhesu schal be sought, desired, and founden.

Seke thanne that thou hast lost, that thou myght fynde it. Wel y woot, whoso myght
oones have an inward sight a litil of that dignité and that goosteli fairenesse whiche a
soule hadde bi kynde of the firste makyng and schal have bi grace, he schulde lothe
1310 and dispice in his herte alle the blisse, the likynge, and the fairnesse of al this world as
stynk of carious; and he schulde nevere have wil to doo othir dede nyght ne dai —
savyng the frechté and the bare nede of the bodili kynde — but desire, morte, prai, and
seke hou he myght come agen thereto. Nevertheoles, in as moche as thou hast not yet
1315 fulli seen what it is, for thi goostli yye is not yet openyd, I schall telle oon word for alle
whiche thou schalt seke, desire, and fynde, for in that word is al that thou hast loste.
This word is Jhesu. I mene not oocly this word Jhesu peynted upon the wal, or written
bi letres on the book, or fourmed bi lippes in soun of the mouthe, or feyned in the herte
bi traveil of mynde; for on this maner wise may a man oute of charité fynde Hym. But
1320 I mene Jhesu Crist, that blissid persoone, God and man, son of Marie, that glorious
virgyne, that is al goodnesse, endeles wisdom, love, and swettenesse, thi joie, thi
worshippe, and thyn ai lastynge blisse, thi God, thi Lord, and thy savacioun.

Thanne yif it be so that thou felist grete desire in thyn herte to love and to plesse Jhesu,
either bi the mynde of this name Jhesu, or bi mynde or seynge of ony othir woord, or
prayer, or in ony dede that thou doost, whiche desire is so mykil that hit putteth ought as

1299 renneth, runs. 1300 sleke, slake. 1302 bihest, promise. 1312 frechté, frailty.

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1325 it were bi strengthe alle othere thoughtes and desires of the world and of the fleisch,
that thei moun not reste in thyne herte, thanne sekest thou wel Jhesu. And whanne thou
felist this desire to God, to Jhesu Crist (al is oon) hoolpen and comfortid bi goostli myght
thorugh light of Goddis grace so mykil that it is turnsyd into love and into affeccioun,
gosteli savour, and swettenesse, into light and knowynge, into soothfastnesse — so
1330 mykil that for the tyme the poynt of thi thought is sette upon noon erthe thi thynge, ne
felith no stirynge of veynglorie, ne non oþir yvel affeccioun (for thei moun not appere
that tyme), but oonli is enclosid, rested, softed, annoynted, and comfortid thorugh gra-
cious presence of oure Lord Jhesu Crist, thanne hast thou founden sumwhat of Jhesu.
Not yit Hym fulli as he is, but a schadewe of Hym; for the betere that thou fyndest
1335 Hym, the more schalt thou desire Hym. Thanne bi what maner of praiers or meditacionis
or occupacion that thou mai have grettest desire to Hym, and have most felynge of
Hym, bi that occupacion thou sekest Hym best and best fyndest Hym. Therfore yif it
come to thy mynde as it were askand what hast thou lost and what sekest thou, lift up
the mynde and the desire of thyne herte to thi Lord Jhesu Crist, that blissid maidens
1340 sone, though thou be blynd and not mai see of His Godhede, and seie Hym hast thu lost,
and Hym wolde thou have, and nothyng but Hym, noon oþir joie, blisse in hevene ne
in erthe, but Hym, to be with Hym wharsoe He is, and to see Hym and love Hym. And
though it be so that thou fele a litil His goostli presence in devacion or in knowynge, or
1345 in ony oþir gifte what it be, reste not therinne as though thou haddest fulli founden
Jhesu and wolt no more seken aftir Hym, but ai be desirande aftir Jhesu more and more
for to fynde Hym betere, as thou hadde right nought. For wite thou wel, what that thou
felist of Hym, be it nevere so mykil, yhe, though thou were ravesched into the thridde
hevene with Poule, yit haste thou not fulli founden Jhesu as He is in His joie. Knowe
1350 thou or fele thou never so mykil of Hym here in this liyf, He is yit above it. And therfore
yif thou wolt fulli fynde Hym as He is in the blisse, cese nevere while thou lyvest of
praiers and of goostli desyryng.

Chapter Forty-seven

What profit is to have the desire of Jhesu.

1326 *moun*, are able to. 1327 *hoolpen*, helped. 1342 *wharsoe*, wherever. 1347 *yhe*, yea.

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- Sotheli y hadde lever feele and have a soothfast desire and a clene love longyng in myn
herie to my Lord Jhesu, though y myghte not seen of His Godbede with my goostli iye,
1355 thanne for to have withoutin this desire alle bodili penaunce of alle men lyvynge, alle
visiounis or revelacionis of angels apperynge, songes and sownes, savours or smelles,
brennynges and ony likynge, bodili felande, and schortli for to seie, alle the joies of
hevene and of erthe whiche y myght have withouten this desire to my Lord Jhesu.
David the prophete felid as y seie, as I understande, whanne he seide thus: *Quid enim
michi est in celo. et a te quid volui super terram?* (Psalms 72:25). Lord, what thyngis is
1360 to me in hevene, or what wolde y, withouten Thee above the erthe? As yif he seide thus:
Lord Jhesu, what heveneli joie is likynge to me, withouten desire of Thee whiles y am in
erthe, or withouten love of Thee whanne I come to hevene? As who seith, right noon.
Thanne yif thou woldest fele onythynge of Hym bodili or goostli, coveite not but for to
1365 fele soothfasteli in thyn herte a desire of His grace and of His merciful presence that
thee thenketh that thyn herte mai fynde noon othir reste in nothyng but in Hym. Thus
covetide David whanne he seide thus: *Concupivit anima mea desiderare iustificationes
tuas in omni tempore* (Psalms 118:20). Lord, my soule covetide the desire of Thi
rightwisenesse in every tyme. Seke thanne, as David dide, desire bi desire; and yif thou
1370 mai fele bi thi desire in thi praieres and in thy meditacions the horli and the merciful
presence of thi Lord Jhesu Crist in thi mynde, bynde thyn herte feste thereto, that thou
faile not from Hym, and yif thou stumble, that thou myght fynde Hym soone agen. Seke
thanne Jhesu, whom thou haste loste, as He sought thee. He wole be sought and He mai
sumdel be founde, for He seith hymself: *Omnis qui querit, inveniet* (Matthew 7:8). Every
1375 man that seketh schal fynde. The sekynge is traveilous, but the fyndynge is blissful. Doo
therfore aftir the conceile of the wise man, yif thou wilt fynde Hym: *Si quisleris quarti
pecuniam sapienciam, sicut thesaurum effoderis illam; nunc intelliges timorem domini,
et scienciam invenies* (Proverbs 2:4-5). Yif thou seke wisdom (which is Jhesu) as
silver and gold, and delf deepe therafter, thou schalt fynde it. Thee bishoveth for to delve
1380 deepe in thyn herte, for thereinne He is hid, and east ought clenli alle loves and likynge,
sorwes and dredis of alle ertheli thynges; and so schalt thou fynde wisdom, Jhesu.

1356 sownes, sounds. 1362 likynge, pleasing. 1363 As who seith, As one says. 1375
traveilous, laborious. 1379 delf, delve. 1380 ought, cut.

The Scale of Perfection

Chapter Forty-eight

Where and wherewith Jhesu schal be sought and founden.

- Be thou like thanne to the woman of the Gospel, of the whiche oure Loed seith thus:
1385 *Quia mulier habens dragmas decem, et si perdididerit unam, nonne accendit lucernam, et evertit dominum suum et querit diligenter, donec invenerit illum? Et cum invenerit, convocat amicos suos, dicens, congratulamini michi, quia inventi dragmam, quam perdidera* (Luke 15:8–9). What woman is that whiche hath lost a dragne, that sche ne wole lightne a lanterne and caste hir hous upsideoun and seke it til sche fynde it? As who seith, noon. And whanne sche hath founden hit sche calleth hire frendis to hire, and
1390 seith to hem thus: "Makith mirthe with me and melodye, for I have founden the dragne that I had lost." This dragne is Jhesu, whiche thou hast lost; yif thou wilt fynde Hym, light up a lanterne, whiche is Goddis word, as David seith: *Lacerna pedibus meis verbu* *nrum* (Psalms 118:105). Lord, Thi word to my feet is a lanterne. Bi this lanterne schalt thou see where He is, and hou thou schalt fynde Hym; and yif thu wilst, thou mai
1395 with this light opyn another lanterne, that is the resoun of thi soule, for oure Lord seith: *Lacerna corporis tui est oculus tuus* (Matthew 6:22). The lanterne of thi bodi is thi bodili iye. Right so it mai be seid that the lanterne of thi soule is resoun, bi the whiche the soule mai see alle gosteli thinges. Bi this lanterne mai thou fynde Jhesu, and that is soth yif thou holde the lanterne up fro undimethe the busschel, as oure Lord seith: *Nemo accendit lucernam et ponit eam sub modio, sed super candelabrum* (Matthew 5:15). There is no man that lighteth a lanterne for to sette it undir a busschel, but upon a candelstike; that is to seie, thi reson schal not be overleid with worldli bisinesse, ne veyn thoughtes and fleischli affecções, but as upward above alle etheli thynges, as mykil as thou may into biholdyng of Jhesu Crist; and yif thou doo soo, thou schalt thanne see bi Hym (for
1400 1405 He is light) alle the mulle and the filthe and smale motes in thy hous, that is to seie, alle flesschli loves and dredis in thi soule. Not al, as David seith: *Delicta quis intelligit?* (Psalms 18:13). Who mai knowe alle his trespasses? As who seith, no man. And thou schalt cast oute of thyn herte alle siche synnes, and swepe thi soule clene with the besome of the drede of God, and with watir of thyn iyen wassch it; and so schalt thou

1387 **dragne**, drachma. 1388 **upsodeoun**, upside down. 1388–89 **As who seith**, As one says.

1397 **eye**, eye. 1405 **malle**, rubbish. 1409 **bessome**, broom; **iyen**, eyes.

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- 1410 fynde thi dragme Jhesu. He is dragme, He is peny, and He is thyn heritage. This dragme
wole not be founde so lightli as it mai be seid; for this werk is not of oon hour, ne of
oon dai, but many daies and yeeris with mykil swete and swynke of the bodi and traveile
of the soule. And yif thou cesist not, but sekest bisili, sorwe and seke depe, morne stille,
and stoupe lowe til thyn iyen wateren for anguysche and for peyne for thou hast loste
1415 thi tresoure Jhesu; and at the laste, whanne that He wole, wel schalt thou fynde thi
dragme Jhesu. And yif thou fynde as I have seide, that is, yif thou may in cleernesse and
clennesse of conscience fele the hoomli and the peesful presence of Jhesu Crist mercifulli
schewande Hym to the face of thi soule as a schadewe or a glymerynge, thou mai, yif
thou wolt, calle thi frendes to thee for to make mirthe with thee, for thou hast founden
1420 thi dragme Jhesu.

Chapter Forty-nine

Where Jhesu is loste and founden thorugh His mercy.

- Se now thanne the curtesie of Jhesu and the merci of Hym. Thou haste loste Hym, but
where? Soothli in thyn hous, that is in thi soule. Yif thou haddest lost Hym oughte of
thyn hous, that is to seie, yif thou haddest lost al the resoun of thy soule bi thi first
1425 synne, thi soule schulde nevere have founden Him agen; but He lefte to thee thi resoun,
and so He is in thi soule and nevere schal be lost oute of hit. Neverthelees, thou art
nevere the neer to Hym til thou have founden Him. He is in thee, though He be lost fro
thee; but thou art not in Hym til thou have founden Hym. Thanese was this His merci,
that He wold suffre Hym be loste onli where He mai be founden. It nedeth not to renne
1430 to Rome ne to Jerusalem for to seke Hym there, but turne thi thought into thyn owen
soule, where He is hid — as the prophete seith, *Vere tu es deus absconditus* (Isaiah
45:15), Soothli Lord, thou art an hid God — and seke Hym there. Thus seith Hymself in
the Gospel: *Simile est regnum celorum thesauro abscondito in agro: quem qui invenerit*
1435 *homo, pre gaudio illius vident, et vendit universa que habet, et emit agram illum* (Matthew 13:44). The kyngedom of hevene is like to tresoure hid in a feld, whiche, whanne
a man fyndeth, for joie of it he goth and selleth al that he hath, and bieth that ilke feeld.

1412 swynke, tol. 1413 bisili, diligently. 1418 Hym, Himself. 1423 Soothli, Truly. 1436
bieth, buys; ilke, same.

The Scale of Perfection

- Jhesu is tresoure hid in thi soule; thanne yif yow fynde myght Hym in thi soule, and thi soule in Him, I am siker for joie of it thou woldest gyve alle the lkynges of alle ertheli thinges for to have it. Jhesu slepeth in thyn herte gosteli, as He dide sumtyme whanne
1440 He was in the schip with Hese disciplis, but thei for drede of perisschynge wakeden Hym, and as tite He savyd hem from tempest. Doo thou so stire Him bi praiere and waken Hym with criyng of desire, and He schal ryse sone and helpe thee.

Chapter Fifty

What letteth a man to heere and see Jhesu withinne hymself.

- Neverthelees, I hope betere that thou slepist to Hym and not He to thee; for He calleth thee wel ofte with His swete prevy vois and stireth thyn herte wel stilli, that thou schuldest leve alle othere jangelynge of vanitees in thi soule and oonli take keep to Him for to heere Him speke. Thus seith David of oure Lord: *Audi, filia, et vide, et inclina aures tuas, et obliviscere popularem tuam, et dominum patris tui* (Psalms 44:11). Mi doughtier, heere and see and bowe thyn ere to me, and forgete the folk of thy worldeli thoughts and the hous of thi fleischli and kyndeli affeccions. Loo, here mai thou see how oure Lord calleth thee and alle othere whiche wolen herkene to Hym. What letteth thee thanne, that thou mai neither see Hym ne heere Him? Sotheli there is mykil dene and criyng in thyn herte of veyn thoughtes and fleischli desires, that thou mai neither heere Hym ne see Him; and therfore put away unrestful dene and breke the love of synne and of vanité, and bringe into thyne herte love of vertues and ful charité, and thanne schalt thou here thi Lord speke unto thee. For as longe as He fyndeth not His ymage reformed in thee, He is straunge and fer fro thee.

1438 **siker**, certain. 1440 **Hese**, His. 1441 as tite, immediately. 1442 **sone**, at once. 1443 **letteth**, hinders. 1444 **hope**, suppose. 1445 **prevy**, secret; **stilli**, quietly. 1446 **take keep**, pay attention. 1450 **kyndeli**, natural. 1452 **dene**, din. 1457 **strange**, estranged.

Book I

Chapter Fifty-one

That mekenesse and charité are the special lyveré of Jhesu, thorough the whiche manys soule is reformed to the liknes of Him.

- 1460 Forthi schape thee for to be atraied in His likenes, that is in mekenesse and charité, whiche is His lyveré, and thanne wole He hoomli knowe thee and schewe to thee His privytee. Thus seide Himsilf to His disciplis: *Qui diligir me, diligetur a patre meo, et manifestabo ei meipsum* (John 14:21). Whoso loveth Me, schal be loved of My Fadir, and I schal schewe Mysilf unto Him. There is no vertu ne werk that thou mai doo mai make thee like to oure Lord, withouten mekenesse and charitee; for thise aren special Goddis lyveré. And that semeth wel in the Gospel, where oure Lord speketh of mekenesse thus: *Discite a me, quia misericordiam et humilitatem corde* (Matthew 11:29). Lereth of Me, He seith, not for to goo baarfoot ne for to goo into desert and faste fourti daies, ne for to cheese yow disciplis, but lerith of Me mekenesse, for I am mylde and meke of herte.
- 1465 1470 Also of charitee He seith thus: *Hoc est preceptum meum: ut diligatis invicem sicut dilexi vos. Item: in hoc cognoscent homines quia discipuli mei estis, si dilectionem habueritis ad invicem* (John 13:34–35). This is My biddynge, that yee love you togedere, as I have loved you; for in that schal men knowe yow for My disciples. Not for ye worchen miraclis or casten out deuelis, or prechen or techen, but yif eche of you love other in charité. That charité is that thou coudest als wel love thyne even Cristene as thisilf.
- 1475

Chapter Fifty-two

Hou a man schal see the groound of synne in hymself.

- Now hast thou herd a litil what thi soule is, and what worschipe it hadde, and how he loste it; and also y have told thee that this worschipe myght bi grace and bisi travaille sumwhat be recovered agen in partie of felyng. Now schal I telle thee febli as y can 1480 hou thou schalt now entre into thisilf, for to se the ground of synne and for to distroie it as mykil as thou may, and so schalt thou mowe recovere a partie of thi dignité. Thou

1458 lyveré, livery. 1461 hoomli, familiarly. 1462 privytee, mystery. 1467 Lereth of, Learn from. 1472 togedere, each other. 1480 mow, be able to.

The Scale of Perfection

- schalt cese for a tyme from alle bodili werkes, from al outward besinesse as thou mai wel. Thanne schalt thou drawe into thisilf thi thought from thi bodili wittes, that thou take noo kepe what thou hearest or seest or felist, so that the poynt of thyne herte be not 1485 flochid in hem. Aftir this drawe inner thi thought from al ymaginynge, yif thou mai, of ony bodili thynge, and from alle thoughtis of thi bodili dedis before doon, or of othere menys dedis. This is a litil maistrie for to doo whanne thou hast devocioun; but thou schalt doo thus as I seie whanne thou hast no devocioun, for thanne is it mykil the hardere. And sette thyne entent and thi purpos as thou woldest not seke, ne fele, ne 1490 finde, but upon thi leed Jhesu oonly, the grace and the presence, the techynge and the comfort of thi Leed Jhesu Crist. This is traveilous, for veyn thoughtis wolen alwei presen to thyne herte thikke, for to drawe thi thought doun to hem. But thou schalt with stable mynde of Jhesu Crist with besinesse in priseres agenstonde hem, and yif thou doo thus, thou schalt fynde sumwhat — not Jhesu whom thou sekest. What thanne? 1495 Sotheli, right nought but a merk ymage and a peynful of thyne own soule, whiche hath neither light of knowynge ne felyng of love ne likynge. This ymage yif thou biholde it wittirly, is al bilappid with blake stynkande clothis of synne, as pride, envie, ire, accidie, glotonye, and lecherie.

Chapter Fifty-three

Unto what thinge is the ymage of synne like, and what it is in itself.

- 1500 This is not the ymage of Jhesu, but it is an ymage of synne; as Seynt Poul calleth hit, a bodi of synne and a bodi of deeth. This ymage and this blak schadewe thou berist aboughte with thee wherever thou goost. Out of this springen many grete stremes of synne, and smale also. Right as out of the ymage of Jhesu, yif it were reformed in the beemes of goostli light, schulde steme up to hevene and brenmyng desires, cleane 1505 affecions, wise thoughtis, and alle honeste of vertues; right so out of this ymage

1485 flochid, fixed. 1487 maistrie, feat of skill. 1489 not, nothing. 1491 traveilous, difficult.

1492 presen, press. 1493 besinesse, diligence; agenstonde, resist. 1495 merk, dark. 1497 wittirly, surely; bilappid, surrounded; accidie, sloth. 1497–98 pride . . . lecherie, a list of the seven capital sins with the omission of avarice. 1500 Seynt Poul calleth hit, see Romans 6:6.

1504 steme, blaze (see Textual Notes).

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springen stiryngis of pride, of envie, and sich othere, whiche casten thee doun from the honestē of man into a beestis likenesse. But peraventure thou bygynnest for to thenke unto what thyngē this ymāge schulde be like; and therfore that thou schuldest not longe studie thereaboughte, I telle thee it is like to no bodili thing. "What is it thanne?" seistow.

- 1510 Sothli it is not, and that may thou fynde yif thou wilt assaie as y have seid to thee. Drawe into thisilf thi thought from alle bodili thynges, and thanne schalt thou fynde right not whereinne thi soule mai reste. This nouȝt is nothynge ellis but a lackynge of love and of light, as synne is not ellis but a wantynge of God.

Yif it so were that the ground of synne were mykil abatid and dried up in thee, and thi soule were clensid and refoemyd lighlī to the ymāge of Jhesu, thanne yif thou drowgh into thisilf thyn herte thou schuldest not fynde nouȝt, but thou schuldest fynde Jhesu — not oonli the nakid mynde of His name, but thou schuldest fynde light of undirstondyng bi Hym, and no merkenesse of unknowyng; thou schuldest fynde love and likynge of Hym, and noo peyne of bitternes ne bityng. But for thou art not yit reformed, therfore whanne thi soule cometh in fro al bodili thyngē, and fyndeth not but merkenesse and hevynesse, hym therketh an hundrid wynter til he be out agen bi sum bodili delite or veyn thought. And that is no wonder; for whoso come to his hous and founde nothynge therinne but stynkyng smoke and a flityng wif, he wolde sone renne ous of it. Right so thi soule, whanne it fyndeth noo comfort in the silf but blak smoke of goostli blyndenesse and grete flityng of fleischli thoughtes cryng upon thee that thou may bee in noo pees, soothli it is sone irke til it be ous agen. This merkenesse is that ilke nouȝt the whiche y spak of and the ymāge.

Chapter Fifty-four

Whoso wole fynde Jhesu, hym bihoveth abide and traveile in this goostli merkenesse of this ymāge of synne.

1509 **thereaboughte**, thereabout. 1510 **not**, nothing. 1512 **not**, nothing. 1513 **God**, see Textual Notes. 1515 **lightlī**, easily; **drowgh**, drew. 1518 **merkenesse**, darkness. 1523 **flityng**, contentious; the aphorism in this sentence is a commonplace; see Proverbs 21:9, and Chaucer, The Wife of Bath's Prologue (*The Canterbury Tales*, III[D]278-80), where smoke is also mentioned. 1524 **the silf**, the self; possibly to be construed as *herself*, thyself. 1526 **irke**, irksome.

The Scale of Perfection

- 1530 Neverthelees, in this nought bihoveth thee to swynke and swete; that is to sai, thee
bihoveth drawe in thi thought from alle bodili thynges as moche as thou may. And thanne,
whanne thou fyndest right nouit but sorwe and peyne and blyndenesse, yif thou
wolt fynde Jhesu, the peyne of this nought bihoveth thee to suffre, and abide in this
merkenesse and arise in thi thought agens this ilke merkenesse, bi fervent desire to God;
1535 not settynge the poynt of thi thought in that ilke nought, but in Jhesu whiche thou
desirest, as thou woldest bere it doun, and goo thorough it. Thou schalt grise and lothe
this nought right as it were the devyl of belle, and thou schalt despice it and al tobreke
it; for al withinne this nought is Jhesu hid in His joie, whom thou mai not fynde bi thi
seykyng, but yif thou passe thorough this merkenesse of this nought. This is that goosteli
1540 traveile that I spak of; and this travaile is a cause of al this writynge, for to stire thee
thereto yif thou feele grace. This nought that y speke of is the ymage of the firste Adam.
Seynte Poul knewe it wel, for he seid thus of it: *Sicut portavimus ymaginem terreni
hominis, ita portemus ymaginem iam et celestis hominis* (1 Corinthians 15:49). As we
han here bifrom born the ymage of an ertheli man (that is, the firste Adam), right so that
1545 we myght now bere the ymage of the heveneli man, whiche is Jhesu, the secunde
Adam. He baar this ymage wel often ful hevye, for it was so comberous to hym that he
criede oute of it seyng thus: *O quis me liberabit de corpore huius mortis?* (Romans
7:24). A, whoo schal delyvere me fro this bodi and ymage of deeth? And thanne he
comforteth hymself and othere thus: *Gracia dei per Jesum Christum* (Romans 7:25), the
1550 grace of God bi Jhesu Crist.

Now have y tolde thee a litil of this ymage, how it is nought. Neverthelees, yif it be
feer fro thi knowynge hou it myght be sooth that y sai, that nought myght be an ymage,
for nought is but nought; and so that thou mai lightli undirstande it, I schal telle thee
more opynli of this ymage as me therketh.

Chapter Fifty-five

- 1555 What propirli is the ymage of synne and what cometh thereof.

1530 **swynke**, toil. 1534 **merkenesse**, darkness; ilke, same. 1536 **bere it doun**, bring it down;
grise, feel horror. 1537 **despice**, despise; **tobreke**, break in pieces. 1552 **feer**, far.

Book I

This ymage is a fals mysuled love unto thisilf. Oute of this love cometh al maner of synnes bi sevēne ryveres, the whiche aren thise: pride, envie, ire, accedie, coveitise, glotony, and leccherie. Loo, this is sumwhat that thou may see and feele, that bi oon of these ryveris renneth out al maner of synne and putteth thee out of charité yif it be 1560 deedli, or it letteth the savour of charité yif it be venial.

Now mai thou grope that this ymage is nougnt, but is moche of badde; for it is a grete springe of love unto thisilf with sich sevēne ryveris as I have seid. But now seist thou, "How mai this be sooth? I have forsaken the world and am stokyn in an hous; I deele with no man. I flite not, ne I stryve not, I neither bie ne selle, ne have no wordeli 1565 bisynesse, but bi the merci of God y kepe me chaste. I withhalde me from delites; and over this I preie, y wake, y travale bodili and goostli as y mai. How thanne schulde this ymage be thus moche in me as thou seist?"

As unto this I graunte and awnswere to thee that I hope that thou doost alle this werkis and many mo thereto, and yit mai hit be sooth that I seie. Thou art besi up thi 1570 myght for to stoppe the ryveres withoute, but inhap the spryne withinne thou levest al opyn. Thou art like to a man whiche hadde in his gardyn a stinkyng welle with many ryveres fro it. He wente and stopped the ryveres and left the spryne hool, and wende al hadde be siker. But the water spronge up atte the ground of the welle and stood stille, so moche that it corruptid al the fairnesse of the gardyn, and yit ran there no watir out. 1575 Right so it mai be with thee, yif it be soo that thou hast bi grace stopped the ryveris of this ymage withouten. So moche it is wel, but bewaar of the spryne withinne. Soothli, but yif thou stoppe and clese that as moche as thou mai, it wole corrupte alle the floures of the gardyn of thi soule, schewe thei nevere so faire outward in sighte of men. But now seist thou: "Wherbi schal I knowe that the ground is stoppid, yif y 1580 traveile aboute it?" As unto this y schal telle thee bi asai, hou thou schalt knowe this image yif it be in thee, and hou moche it is in thee, and therbi thou schalt knowe how moche it is stoppid in thee, and how litil also. And in as moche as pride is the principal ryvere, I schal telle thee therof first.

1557 **sevēne ryveres**, i.e., the seven capital sins; the list that follows is complete (compare Scale, I.1497-98). 1561 **grope**, grasp. 1563 **stokyn**, inserted. 1564 **flite**, contend; **bie**, buy. 1568 **hope**, suppose. 1572 **wende**, supposed. 1573 **siker**, secure. 1577 **corrumpe**, corrupt. 1580 **asai**, testing.

The Scale of Perfection

Chapter Fifty-six

What pride is and whanne it is synne.

- 1585 Pride is not ellis, as clerkes tellen, but love of thyn owen excellencie, that is, of thyn
owen worshipe. Thanne the more thou lovest and likest in thyn owen worshipe, the
more is thi pride, and so the more is this ymage in thee. Yif thou fele in thyn herte a
stirynge of pride, that thou art holier, wisere, betere, and more vertuous than an nothir
is, that God hath geven thee grace for to serve Hym betere than othir doon, and thee
1590 thenketh alle othire bine the thee and thee above hem, or ony othir thought of thisilf
whiche schewith to the sight of thi soule ony excellencie, and an overpassyng of othir
men or of women, and of this stirynge thou felist a love and a delite, and a veyn
plesyng in thi silf that thou art so: this is a tokene that thou berist this blak ymage,
which though it be prevei in mannys iye, he schewith him opynli in Goddis sight. But
1595 now seist thou, that thou mai not flee siche stirynges of pride. For ofte sithes thou
felist hem agens thi wil, and therfore thou holdest hem no synne, or if thei be synne, thei
are not but venial synne. As unto this I seie thus, that the felyng of thise stirynges of
pride or of ony othir sich springen out, either of the corrupcion of this foule ymage or
bi incastynge of the enemye, it is no synne, in as moche as thou felist hem. And that is
1600 a grace and a peivelege bi vertu of the passioune of Jhesu Crist grantid to alle Cristene
men baptizid in watir and in the Hooli Goost; for sothli to Jewes or Sarzyne, whiche
trowen not in Crist, alle siche stirynges aren deedli synnes to hem. For Seynt Poul seith:
Omne, quod non est ex fide peccatum est (Romans 14:23). Al that is doon withouten
1605 trouth in Crist is deedli synne. But we Cristene men have this privelegie of His merci,
that sich felynges aren no synne, but thei are peyne of origynal synne. Neverthelees
whanne bi negligencie of thisilf and blyndenesse of thisilf this felyng is receyved unwarli
in thi thought and turned into love and a likynge, thanne is ther synne more or lasse affir
the mesure of the love sumtyme venyal and sumtyme deedli. Whanne it is venial and
whanne deedli, fulli I cannot wel telle thee.

1591 **overpassyng**, surpassing. 1598 **either**, either. 1599 **incastynge**, injection. 1601 **Jewes or Sarzyne**, Jews or Saracens (Muslims); Clark (p. 178n251) describes Hilton's severe view of the status of the unbaptized as "ultra-Augustinian." 1604 **trouth**, faith. 1605 **peyne of**, punishment for.

Chapter Fifty-seven

1610 Whanne pride is deedli synne, and hou it is in fleischli lyvande men deedli synne.

Nevertheles, a litil schal I telle thee, as me therketh. Whanne the stiryne of pride is receyved and turned into a likynge, so moche that the herte chesith hit for a ful reste and a ful delite, and seketh noon othir reste, but oonli likynge thereinne, thanne pride is deedli synne; for he maketh and cheseth this delite as his God, withouten agenstandynge 1615 of resoun and of wille, and therfore it is deedli synne. But now seist thou: "What fool is he that wole chese pride for his God? No man that lyveth wolde doo so." As unto this I seie y ne cannot, ne wole not, telle thee in special who doth so, ne who synneth so in pride deedli, but in general I schal seie thee ther is two maner of pride, oon is bodili pride, and another is gostli pride.

1620 Bodili pride is of fleischli lyvynge men; goestli pride is of ypoerites and heretikes. Thise thre synnen dedli in pride. I mene of siche a fleischli lyvynge man as Seynt Poul speketh of thus: *Si secundum carnem vixeritis, moriemini* (Romans 8:13). Yif ye lyven aftir youre fleisch, ye schal die. Thanne seie y thus, that a worldli man whiche lyveth and seketh principali the worschipe of himself, and cheseth the likynge of it as a reste of 1625 his herte and the ende of his blisse, he synneth deedli. But now seist thou: "Who wolde chese love of his worschipe instide of God?" As unto this I sai that he that loveth his worschipe, as for to seme betere and grettere of staat, richere and highere than anothir, and travaleth aboue it as moche as he mai, yif he love it so moche, that for the getynge 1630 of it, the kepyng of it, and the savynge of it, he beeketh the comaundement of God, or beeketh love or charité to his evene Cristene, or is redi and in ful wille for to breke it rathere thanne he schulde forbere his worschipe, or his name or his fame or his staat or of fulfillynge of his wil, soothli he synneth deedli, for he loveth his worschipe and chesith it more than the love of God and of his even Cristene. And yit nevertheles this man that synneth thus deedli, he wolde seie with his mouth that he wolde not chese 1635 pride for his God; but he bigileth himself, for he chesith it before in his dede. Nevertheles, anothir worldli man that loveth worschipe of hymself and pursueth thereaftir, yif he loveth it not so moche that noithir he wold for the getynge or for the savynge of it doo a deedli synne or ellis breke charité to his even Cristene, he synneth not deedli but

1614 agenstandynge, resistance. 1620 ypoerites, hypocrites. 1623 aftir, according to. 1637 noithir, neither.

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1640 venyali, more or lasse aftir the mesure of his love and his likynge, with othire circumstancis.

Chapter Fifty-eight

Hou pride is in heretikes deedli synne.

An heretike synmeth deedli in pride, for he chesith his reste and his delite in his owen opynyoun and in his owen seiynge, for he weneth it is sooth that opymyon or seiynge whiche is agens God and Hooli Chirche. And therefore synmeth he in pride deedli, for he loveth himself and his owen wil, and with so moche that though it be opynli agens ordenaunce of Hooli Chirche, he wole not leve it, but reste thereinse, as in a ful soothfastnesse, and so maketh he it his god. But he bigileth himself, for God and Holi Chirche are so onyd and acordid togidere that whoso dooth agen that oon, he dooth agen that othir and so he doth agens bothe. And therfore who that seith he loveth God and kepit his biddynge, and dispiceth Hooli Chirche, and setteth at nought the lawes and the ordenaunce of it maad bi the heed and the sovereyn in governaunce of alle Cristen men, he lieth. He chesith not God, but he cheseth the love of himself, whiche is contrarie to the love of God, and so he synmeth deedli. And in that, that he weneth most for to plese God, he most displeseth him, for he is blynde and wole not see. Of this blyndenesse and of this fals restyng of heretikes in here owen felynge speketh the wise man thus: *Est via que videtur homini recta; et novissima eius ducunt ad mortem* (Proverbs 14:12). There is a wai whiche semeth to a man rightful, and the laste ende of hit bringith him to endeles deth. This wai speciali is called heresie, for othir fleischli synnes that synnen deedli and lyen stille thereinse comonli supposen evre amys of hemself, 1650 and felen bityng in conscience that thei goo not the right wai. But an heretik supposith evre that he dooth wel and techeth wel, and so he weneth that his wai were the right wai, and therfore felith he no bityng of conscience ne mekenesse in herte. And sothli 1655 but God sende hym mekenesse while he lyveth heire, of His merci, at the laste ende he

1642 As heretike, this chapter reflects the growing concern about heresy in Hilton's England; see Clark, p. 178n257. 1643 weneth, supposeth. 1648 onyd, united. 1655 restyng, remaining. 1661 weneth, supposeth.

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goth to helle, and neverthelees yit weneth he for to have doon weel and geten him the
1665 blisse of hevene for his techyng.

Chapter Fifty-nine

Hou pride is in ypcrites deedli synne.

The ypcrite also synneth deedli in pride. He is an ipocrite that cheseth veyn joie of himself as the reste and ful delite of his herte, upon this manere wise: whanne a man dooth many good dedes bodili and goostli, and aftir is yput to his mynde by suggestioun of the enemye a bboldyne of hymself and of his good dedes, how good, how holi he is, how worthi in mennes doom, and hou high in Goddis sight above othere men, he percoeyveth this styringe and resseyveth it wilfulli, for he weneith it be gode and of God in as mykil as it is sooth, for he dooth alle thise good dedes betere thanne othere men. And whanne it is receyved thus bi assent of his wil as good, thanne riseth therof a love and a delite in his herte of himself that he is so good and so hooli and so moche grace hath, that it neer hande ravesschith his mynde out of alle othere thoughtis, bothe goostli and fleischli, for the tyme, and settith it in this veyn joie of himself as in a reste of his herte. This ravyschynge in goostli pride is delectable, and therfore he kepith it, holdeth it, and norischith it as moche as he mai; for this love and this veyn delite he praieth, he 1670 waketh, he fasteth, he wereth the heire, and othere afflictions, and al this greveth hym but litil. He looveth and thanketh God sumtyme with his mouth and sumtyme wringeth out a teer of his iyen, and thanne hym thenketh al saaf inowgh. But soothli al this is for love of hymself, which he cheseth and resseyveth it as it were love and joie in God. And in that is al the synne. He cheseth not synne wilfulli as for synne, but he cheseth 1675 1680 1685 this delite that he deliteth inne, this joie, as for god, as the reste of his soule, withouten displesynge or agenstondynge of wille, for he weneth it were joie in God. And it is not so, and therfore he synneth deedli. Job seith thus of an ypcrite: *Gaudium ypcrite ad instar puncti. Si ascendit in celum superbia eius, et caput eius nuber tetigerit, velat sterquilinium in fine perdenar* (Job 20:5-6). The joie of an ypcrite is no more thanne a

1668 reste, goal. 1669 yput, put. 1671 doom, judgement. 1680 heire, i.e., the hairshirt, the traditional garment of the penitent. 1681 looveth, praises. 1682 iyea, eyes; inowgh, enough. 1685 god, good. 1686 agenstondynge, resistance.

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- 1690 poynt, for yif he stye into hevene with risyng of his herte, and his hed touche the skies, at the laste ende he is cast oute as a dosgeheep. The joie of an ypocrite is but a poynt, for though he worshipe hymself nevere so moche and joie in hymself al his liffyme, and depeynte hymself with alle hise good deedes in sight and lovyng of the world, at the laste it is not but sorwe and peyne. But now seist thou, there are fewe sich
1695 or ellis noon that is so blynd that wolde chese veyn joie in hymself as for the joie in God. As unto this I cannot seie, ne wole not yif I knew; but oo thynge I telle thee, there be manye ypocrites, and neverthelees thei wene thei been none, and there ben many that dreden as ypocrites themself, and soothli thei ben none. Which is oon and whiche is other, God knoweth and noon but He. Whoso wil mckeli drede, he schal not be bigiled,
1700 and whoso weneth to be siker he mai lighth falle; for Seynt Poul seith: *Qui existimat se aliquid esse, cum nichil sit, ipse se seducit* (Galatians 6:3). Whoso weneth hymself to be caught whanne he is right nought, he bigileth hymself.

Chapter Sixty

Hou stirynges of pride and veynglorie in good men are but venial synne.

- Neverthelees, a man or a woman whiche disposes hym to lif contemplatif, yif it be so
1705 that he forsake hymself as in his wille and offre hym hooli to God with a ful general wil
that he wolde not synne in pride wityngeli, ne have no veyn joye in hymself wilfulli, but
oonli in God, yif he coude and myght; and aftir this ful wille offred hym to God he felith
manye stirynges of veynglorie and deliteth in hem for the tyme, for he perceyveth hit
not; this likyng is but venyal synne. And nameli yif it be so that whanne he cometh to
1710 himself he perceyveth this veyn likyng, he reproveth hymself and agenstondeth this
stiryng with displesyng of wille, and asketh merci and helpe of God, thanne the
likyng that was bifore synne, oure Lord of His merci soone for geveth it. And yit he
schal have meede for his good travaile in the agenstondynge. And that is the curtesie of
1715 oure Lord to alle thou that aren speciali Hise seruauntis and more hoomli of His court, as
alle thou aren whiche for His love foersaketh in gode trewe wille alle worldli and fleischli

1690 *stye*, ascend. 1693 *depeynte*, depict; *lovyng*, praise. 1706 *wityngeli*, consciously.

1711 *displesyng*, displeasure.

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synnes, and gif hem hooli, bodi and soule, unto His service up her myght and her knowyng, as ankeris enclosed and also trewe religious men, whiche principali for the love of God and savacioun of here soules entreden ony religion approuid bi Hooli Chirche. Or ellis yif it be so that they entre religion first for a wordli cause, as for here bodili sustenaunce or ony othir siche, yif thei repente hem and turne it into a goosteli cause, as for the service of God, thise, as longe as thei kepe this wille and pursue it as thei mai up here myght for frelté, thei are trewe religious. Also what man or woman that it be, in what degree he bee in Holi Chirche, preest, clerk, or lewed man, widue or wif or mayden, that wole for the love of God and salvacion of his soule forsake alle the 1720 worschippis and likynge of the world in his herte trewli and fulli bitwixe God and hym, and al wilfull bisynesse of ertheli thynges unto bare nede, and offre his wille entierli for to be his servaunt up his myght, bi devote peieres and hooli thoughtes with othere gode deedis that he mai doon bodili or goosteli, and kepeth this wille hool to God stedefastli — alle these aren special Goddis servauntes in Holi Chirche. And for this good wille and 1725 this good purpoos that thei have of the gift of God, thei schal encreese in grace and charité here lyvynge, and thei schal have for this special wille a special grace and a mede in the blisse of hevene before othere chosen soulis the whiche offrid not hooli here wille and here bodi to Goddis service, neithir opynli ne privelé, as thei diden. Alle thise, 1730 whiche y speke of and calle Goddis servauntes, and of His court more speciali, though thei bi frelté or bi unconnyng whanne thei feele sich stirynge of veylglorie, for the tyme delite therinne, and perceyve not it, for here resoun of here wille is letted bi the likynge that thei feele, that it mai not see the stirynge — thei synnen not deedli in this likynge of veylglorie. For that wille that they have sette general in here herte before unto plesse God and for to forsake synne, yif thei knewe hit, kepith hem there in siche stirynges, 1735 and in alle othere that comen of frelté, that thei synnen not deedli, and schal kepe hem as longe as the ground of that wille is keped hool.

1716 **gif hem**, give themselves. 1716–17 **up her myght and her knowyng**, according to their ability and knowledge. 1717 **religious**, in religious orders. 1718 **religion**, religious order. 1722 **frelté**, frailty. 1723 **lewed**, ignorant. 1735 **frelté**, frailty; **unconnyng**, ignorance. 1736 **letted**, hindered.

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Chapter Sixty-one

Hou sere states in Holi Chirche schalle have sere medes in the blisse of hevene, and of two medes, sovereyn and secundarie.

1745 And overe this I seie more, in comforde of thee and of alle othere havynge the staat of anker incloos, and also bi the grace of God in comfort of hem alle that entren ony religioune approved bi Holi Chirche, that alle tho that bi the merci of oure Lord schal be savyd, thei schal have special mede and a singuler worschipe in the blisse of hevene for here staat of lyvynge, before othere soulis that hadden not that staat in Holi Chirche, though thei be nevere so hooli. Whiche worschipe is betere thanne al the worschipe of 1750 this world withouten ony comparison, for yif thou myghte see what it were, thou woldest not for al the worschipe of this world, though thou myghtest have it withoutin synne, chaunge thi staat either of ankir or of religious, ne leese that syngulere mede in the blisse of hevene, whiche is called accidental meede.

Neverethelees, that othere men mystake not this that y seie, therfore I schal seie it 1755 more opynli. Thou schalt undirstonde that there are two meedis in the blisse of hevene, whiche oure Lord geveth to chosen soulis. The toon is sovereyn and principal, as is love and knowynge of Hym aftir the mesure of charité geven of God to a soule lyvynge in deedli fleisch. This meede is best and sovereyne, for it is God Himsilf; and it is comone to alle soulis that schul be saaf in what staat or gree that thei ben lyvynge in 1760 Holi Chirche, more or lasse aftir the quantité and the mychilheid of here charité. For he that most loveth God in charité here in this liyf, what degree he be in, be he lewid or lerid, seculer or religious, he schal have most mede in the blisse of hevene, for he schal most love God and knowe Hym, and that is the sovereyne meede. And as for this meede, it schal falle that sum wordli man or woman, as a lord or a ladi, knyght or 1765 squyer, marchaunt or plowman, what degree he be in, man or woman, schal have more meede than sum peest or frere, monke or chansoun or ankir incloos. And whi? Soothli for he lovede more God in charité of His gifte. An nothir meede there is, that is secundarie,

1742 **sere**, various. 1745 **anker incloos**, enclosed anchorite. 1747 **special mede**, the doctrine of graduated heavenly rewards is found in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1, q.12, a.6 (Clark, p.178n264). 1756 **toon**, one. 1759 **saaf**, saved; **gree**, rank. 1760 **mychilheid**, greatness. 1761–62 **lewid or lerid**, ignorant or learned; here: lay or clergy. 1762 **seculier or religious**, living in the world or a member of a religious order. 1766 **chansoun**, canon.

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whiche oure Lord geveth for special good deedes that a man dooth wilfulli over that he
is bounden to doo. Of three deedis principali doctours of Holi Chirche maken mynde of,
1770 as of martiedom, prechynge, and maydenhed. Thise three werkes as for an excellencie,
in as moche as thei passe alle othere, thei schullen have a special meede, whiche thei
calle auriele, and that is not ellis but a synguler worshipe and a special tokene ordeyned
of God in reward of that special deede, bifore othere men that diden not so, over the
sovereyne meede of the love of God whiche is comoun to hem and to alle othere. Right
1775 so is it of othere special gode dedis, the whiche yif thei be doo soothfastli aren speciali
acceptable in the sight of God, and in the doom of Hooli Chirche thei are excellente; as
are enclosynges of ankeris doon bi auctorite of Holi Chirche, also entrynges into ony
religioun approved, and the streightere that the religioun is, the more excellent is the
meede in the doom of Hooli Chirche. And also aftir thise and binethe thise, the takynge
1780 of the ordre of prest for cure of mennys soulis, and for to ministre the sacraments of
Holi Chirche, or ellis for singuler devocioun for to please God and profiten here even
Cristene bi the sacrifice of the precious bodi of oure Lord Jhesu Crist. Sothli thise aren
special deedis and excellent, opynli schewid in the doom of Hooli Chirche and in the
sight of oure Lord, whanne thei aren doon soothfasteli for God; and thei schal have a
1785 special meede, ech man in his degree, in the blisse of hevene. The staat of bischop and
of prelates is aboven alle thise deedes as for this accidental meede. That this is sooth it
semeth bi Holi Writte in the peoplyte Daniel, where he seith thus: *Tu autem, vade
prefinitionem tempus, et requiescer, et stabis in sorte tua in fine dierum* (Daniel 12:13).
This is thus moche to scie: The angel whanne he hadde schewed to Daniel the prystees
1790 of God, he seide to hym thus: Go thou to the reste of thi bodili deeth, and thou schalt
stonde in thi soort as a prophete. And sothli as Daniel schal stonde as a prophete at the
day of doom, and have the worshipe and the excellencie as a prophete over the sovereyne
blissid mede of the love and the sight of God, right soo schalt thou stonde in thy sorte
as an anker, and a religioun in the sort of religioun, and so have othere excellent dedes,
1795 and so have a synguler worship paasyng othere men at the dai of doom.

1770 **maydenhed**, virginity. 1772 **auriele**, aureole, crown, halo; on this doctrine, see Clark, p. 179n266. 1778 **religioun**, religious order; **streightere**, stricter. 1779 **meede**, reward; **doom**, judgment. 1789 **prystees**, mysteries. 1791 **soort**, lot.

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Chapter Sixty-two

A schort stirynge to mekenesse and to charité.

Now bi this that I have seid, thou mai, yif thou wole thorough it, conceyve comfort for thi degree of lyvynge and also maner of mekenesse. For though it so be that thou schalt have thus moche mede special for thi staat of lyvynge, yif thou be saaf, neverthelees it
1800 mai be that many a wif and many a wordli woman schal be neer God than thou, and more schal love God and betere schal knowe Him than thou, for al thi staat, and that oweth to be schame to thee but thou be besi to gete love and charité of the gifte of God as he or sche hath that dwelleth stille in the wordli besynesse. For yif thou mowe have as moche charité of the gifte of God as sche or he hath that dwellith in wordli besynesse,
1805 thou schalt have as moche of sovereyne meede as he or sche schal have. And thou schalt have over that, for that staat whiche thou hast taken, have singuler mede and a worshipe whiche he schal not have. Thanne yif thou wolt doo wel, forgete thi staat, as hit were right nouȝt, for it is sooth, bi itselv it is nouȝt; and loke that al thi desire be
1810 therin liyth al.

Chapter Sixty-three

Hou a man schal knowe hou mykil pride is in hym.

I have nygh forgoete this ymage, but now I turne agen thereto. Yif thou wolt wite hou
moche pride there is in thee, thou mai assaie thiselv thus. Loke now wiseli, and flatere
not thiselv, yif lovynge, praisynge or worship or fleischli favour of wordli men or of
1815 oþere be likyng to thyn herte, and turneth it into veyn gladnesse, and holde thee wel
apaid of thiselv, thenkynge stilli in thin herte that men schulde preise thi liyf, and rewarde
thi speche more thanne another; also, on the conterarie wise, yif it be so that men reprove
thee and sette thee at nouȝt, holde thee but a fool or an yþocrite, or yif thei sclaundre

1803 besynesse, activity; mowe, are able. 1810 lyth, lies. 1812 nygh, almost. 1814 lovynge, praise. 1815 likyng, pleasing. 1816 apaid, satisfied. 1818 sclaundre, slander.

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thee or speke yvel of thee falsli, or in ony oþir wei that thei dispice thee or diseſe thee
1820 unskilfulli, and therfore thou felist in thyn herte anguisch hevynesse agens the persoones
and a greet risyng in thyn herte with agenſtodynge for to suffre ony schame or
vilonye in sight of the world; yif it be thus with thee, this is a tokene that there is moche
pride in this merke ymage, seeme thou nevere so hooli in the sight of men. For though
1825 thise stirynges be not but litil or venial, nevertheless thei schewe wel that ther is moche
pride hid in the grunde of thyn herte, as a fox daareth in his den.

These stirynges and many moo springen out of this image, so moche, that it mai
unmethis doo ony good deede but it schal be medeled with sum pride or sum veyn delite
in thisilf, and so with thi pride thou defoulest thy good dedes and makest hem wlatsum
in the sight of thi Lord. I seie not that thei aren lost for thei are medelid with this pride,
1830 but I seie that thei are not so plesaunt to thi Loed as thei schulde bee yif thei were symple
and rooted in mekenesse. And therfore yif thou wolt have mekenesse and clennesse of
herte for to come to the love of God, thee bihoveth not oonli flee reste of thyn herte in
veynglorie bi wilful assentyng to pride, and also the rekles likynge thereinne of frehlé,
though it be agen thi wille; but also the feelyngs of pride thou schalt flee and eschewe as
1835 moche as thu mai. But that may tha not doo but yif thou be ful quyk and redi aboughte
the kepyng of thyn herte, as I schal telle thee aftir.

Chapter Sixty-four

Of envie and ire and of here braunchis, and hou sumtyme instide of synne manrys
persoone is hated.

Turne this image upsodoun and loke wel therinne, and thou schal fynde two membris
1840 of envie and ire fastned thereto, with many branches spryngynge ought of hem, the
whiche letten the love and charité that thou schuldest have to thyn even Cristene. The
braunchis of envie and ire aren thise: haterede, yvel suspecioun, fals and unskilful demyng,

1819 *diseſe*, cause distress. 1820 *unskilfulli*, irrationally. 1821 *agenſtodynge*, opposition.
1822 *vilonye*, villainy. 1823 *merke*, dark. 1825 *daareth*, lurks, is concealed. 1827 *unmethis*,
scarcely; *medeled*, mingled. 1828 *wlatsum*, disgusting. 1835 *aboughte*, about. 1841 *letten*,
binder. 1842 *unskilful*, unreasonable; *demyng*, judging.

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malencolie, risyng of herte agens hem that dispisen thee or spaken yvel agens thee, a gladnesse of here diseise, and a felnesse agens synful men that wole not doo as thee
1845 thenketh thei schulde doo, with gret desire of thyn herte undir colour of charité and rightwesnesse desirest that thei were wel ponysschid for here synne. This stiryng semeth good, neverthelees it is, yif thou ransake it wel, more fleischli agens the persoone thanne goostli agen the synne. Thou schalt love the man, be he severe so synful, and thou schalt hate synne in even man what that he bee. Manye aren bigiled in this, for thei
1850 sette the bittir instide of the swete, and taken myrkenesse instide of light, as the prophete telleth: *Ve vobis, qui dicitis malum bonum, et bonum malum; ponentes lucem tenebras et amarum dulce* (Isaiah 5:20). Woo bee to hem that seyn yvel is good and good is yvel, and setteth light as myrkenesse, and bittir instede of swete. Thus doon alle thoo that whanne thei schulden hate the synne of here even Cristene and love the persoone, thei
1855 hate the persoone instide of synne, and wene that thei hate the synne. Wherefore it is a craft bi hitsilf, whoso cowde doon it wel.

Chapter Sixty-five

That it is mykil maistrie sothfastli to love men in charité and hate here synne.

It is no maistrie for to wake and faste til thyn heed wirke and thi bodi waike, ne for to
1860 goo to Rome and to Jerusalem upon thi bare feet, ne for to sterte aboute and preeche as thou woldest turne alle men bi thi peechyne; ne it is noo maistrie for to make chirches and chapeles, for to feede pore men and make hospitailes. But it is a greet maistrie for a man to kunne love his even Cristene in charité, and viseli hate the synne of him and love the man. For though it be soo that alle thise deedis toforeseide aren goede in hemself, neverthelees thei aren comone to gode men and women and also to badde, for eche man
1865 mai doo hem yif he wolde and hadde wherof, and forthi for to doo that ech man mai doo, I holde no maistrie. But for to love his even Cristene in charité and hate his synne,

1844 **diseise**, distress; **felnesse**, fierceness. 1847 **ransake**, examine. 1848–49 **love the man . . . hate synne**, an Augustinian idea, expressed in *De doctrina christiana*, 1.27–28, and elsewhere; see Clark, p. 180n294. 1853 **myrkenesse**, darkness. 1858 **maistrie**, fear of skill; **wirke**, ache; **waike**, weakness. 1859 **sterite**, start. 1860 **turne**, convert. 1862 **kunne**, know how to; **viseli**, wisely.

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mai there no man doo but gode men oonli, whiche have it of the gift of God and not of her owene travaile, as Seynt Poule seith: *Caritas dei diffusa est in cordibus vestris per spiritum, qui datus est vobis* (Romans 5:5). Love and charité is sched and speed in
1870 youre hertis bi the Hooli Goost, whiche is gyven to you, and therfore it is the more precious and the more deynst̄ for to come bi.

Chapter Sixty-six

That for the same deedis outewarde sere men schal have seere medis.

Allie othere gode deedis withouten this maketh not a man good, ne worthi the blisse of hevene, but this aloone, and oonli it, maketh a man good and alle his good deedis medeful.
1875 Allie othere giftis of God and werkes of man are comoun to gode and to basidle, but this gifte of charité is oonli to gode and chosen soulis.

A good man for the love of God he fasteth, he waketh, gooth on pilgrimage, and forsaketh the likynge of the world soothfasteli in his herte withoutin feynynge. Hee schal have his meede in the blisse of hevene. An ypocrite for veynglorie of himself dooth
1880 the same deedis and receyveth his meede heire. Also a verry prechour of Goddis word, fulfilled of charité and of mekenesse, sent of God, and of Holi Chirche resseyved, schal have a special mede, that is the auriol, for his prechynge. An ypocrite or an heretik, that nevere hadde mekenesse ne charité, ne aren not sent off God ne of Holi Chirche, thei have here mede heire. Also a gode man in wordli staat, for love of God maketh chirchis
1885 and chapeles, habbeies, hospitailes, and othere good deedis of merci. He schal have his mede in the blisse of hevene, not for the deede in himself, but for the good wil and the charité that he hadde of the gifte of God for to doo thoo gode deedes. Another man for vanité of himself and worshipe and praisynge of the world and his owene name dooth
1890 the same good deedis and hath his meede heire. The cause is, in al thise, that the ton hath charité and the tothir hath noon. Whiche is oon and whiche is othir, oure Lord knowith and noon but He.

1871 deynst̄, valuable. 1872 sere, various; medis, rewards. 1874 medeful, worthy of reward.
1881 resseyved, received. 1882 auriol, aureole. 1885 habbeies, abbeys. 1889 ton, one. 1890 tothir, other.

The Scale of Perfection

Chapter Sixty-seven

That alle menys good deedis schal be appreve that hath likenes of good, save of the opyn heretik and the opyn cursid man.

And therfor we schulden love and worschipe alle men in oure hertis, and receyve alle
1895 heere dedes that have the likenes of godenesse, though the doocres in Goddis sight be
badde, save of the opyn heretike and the opyn cursid man. Of thise two speciali we
schullen flee and eschewe the presence and the comonynge with hem, and we schulde
reprove and refuse here deedes, seme thei nevere so goode, as longe as thei are rebel to
God and to Holi Chirche. As yif a wordli cursid man make a chirche, or feode a pore
1900 man, thou mai sikirli holde it nought and deme it as it is. Also yif an opin heretike,
whiche is rebel to Holi Chirche, preche and teche, though he converte an hundrid
thousand soulis, halde the dede as to himself right nought. For thise men aren opinli oute
of charité, withouten whiche al is nought that a man doth; and therfore seie I it is a grete
1905 maistrie a man for to kynne love his even Cristene in charité. Al this seiynge mai opynli
be proved bi Seynt Poulis wordis thus: *Si linguis hominum loquar, et angelorum, caritatem*
non habuero, nichil sum; et si habuero omnem fidem, ita ut montes transferam, caritatem
non habeam, nichil sum. Et si noverim mysteria omnia, nichil sum; et si distribuero
omnes facultates meas in cibos pauperum, et tradidero corpus meum igni ut ardeam,
caritatem non habuero, nichil michi prodest (1 Corinthians 13:1–3). Seynt Poul in
1910 preysynge of charité seith thus: Yif I speke the langage of men and angelis also, and I
have no charité, I am right nought. And yif I have so moche feith that y mai turne hillis
and bere hem away, and I have no charité, yit am I nought. And also yif I hadde
knowynge of alle pryyttees, withouten charité I am nought. And yif I gyve al that y have
1915 to pore men, and my bodi to the fier to be brent, and y have no charité, it profiteth me
nought. Heere it semeth wel bi Seynt Poulis wordis that a man mai doo alle bodily gode
deedis withoute charité, and that charité is not ellis but for to love God and his even
Cristen as himself.

1896 cursid, excommunicated. 1897 comonynge, association. 1898 reprove, condemn. 1900
sikirli, certainly. 1902 halde, consider. 1904 maistrie, difficulty; **kunne**, know how to. 1913
pryyttees, mysteries.

Book I

Chapter Sixty-eight

That no good deede mai make a man sikir withoute charité; and that charité is oonli had of the gifte of God to hem that are meke, and who is parfightli meke.

- 1920 How schulde thanne ony caytif lyvynge in erthe, what that he be, have delite or trust or
sikimesse in himself for aughte that he can doo or mai doo with alle his bodili myghtes
and al his kyndeli reson, sethen al is not worth withouten love and charité to his even
Cristene? And this charité mai not be geten bi no woerchinge of hymself, for it is a free
gift of God sent to a meke soule, as Seynt Poul seith. Who daar seie hardili, "I have
1925 charité," or "I am in charité"? Sothli no man mai seie it sikirli, but he that is perfightli and
sothfastli meke. Othir men mai trowe and hope of hemself that thei ben in charité bi
tokenes of charité, but he that is perfightli meke feleth it, and therfore mai he seie it.
Thus meke was Seynte Poul, and therfore he seide thus of himself: *Quis me separabit a
caritate dei? Tribulacio, an anguscia?* (Romans 8:35). Who schal departe me fro the
1930 charité of God? Tribulacion or anguisch? And he answerith hymself and seith, that there
schal no creature putte me from the charité of God whiche I have in Crist Jhesu.

- Many man dooth deedis of charité and hath no charité, as I have seide. For to re-
prove a synner for his synne into his amendynge and in covenable tyme, it is a deede of
charité, but for to hate the synnere instide of synne, it is agens charité. He that is verili
1935 meke can departe the toom from the tothir, and no man but he; for yif a man hadde alle
morale vertues of al philosophie, also yif man hadde knowyng of cleergie and of al
dyvynyte and is not sothfastli meke, he schal erre and stumble and take the toon for the
tothir; but mkenesse is worthi to receyve a gifte of God, the whiche mai not be leered
bi techynge of man. And therfor he that is meke can hate the synne and truli love the man.
1940 But now peraventure thou bigynnest for to dreede, for I seide that charité mai not be
geten bi no werk of man that man mai doo. Hou thanne schal thou do? As unto this I
seide that there is nothinge so harde for to gete as is charité; this is sooth, as with thyn
owne traveile. Also, on the contrarie wise, there is no gift of God mai be hadde so lightli
as charité, for oure Lord gyeveth noo gifte so freeli, ne so glaadli, ne so comonli as He

1918 **sikir**, secure. 1919 **parfightli**, perfectly. 1920 **caytif**, wretch. 1922 **kyndeli**, natural.
1925 **sikirli**, certainly. 1926 **trowe**, believe. 1933 **covenable**, suitable. 1936 **knowyng**, know-
ledge. 1938 **leered**, learned. 1941 **do**, act. 1943 **lightli**, easily.

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- 1945 dooth charité. "Hoa schal y have it?" seist thou thanne. Be meke and lowe in spirite and thou schalt have it; and what is lightere for to doo thanne for to be meke? Sotheli noo thyng. Thanne semeth it that there is nothyng that mai so lightli be had as charité, and therfore be not thou to moche adrad; be meke, and have it. Thus seide Seynt Jame the Apostel: *Deus superbis resistit, humilibus dat gracion* (James 4:6). Oure Lord, he seith,
1950 agenstondeth proude men, but to meke men He geveth grace. Whiche grace is propirli charité, for aftir the mesure of thi mekenesse so schal thu have charité.

Yif thou have mekenesse unperfightli, oocul in thi wille not in thyn affeccion, than schalt thou have unperfight charité. This is good, for it sufficeth to savacioun, as David seith: *Imperfectionum meum viderunt oculi tui* (Psalms 138:16). Lord with thyn iyen of
1955 merci thou seest my unperfeccion. But yif thou have mekenesse perfightli, than thou schalt have perfight charité, and that is the beste. The tothir behoveth us to have yif we wolen be saaf, and this we schullen desire. Than yif thou aske me who is perfightli meke, thou schalt no more have at this tym of me of mekenesse but this: he is meke that soothfastli knoweth and felith himself as he is.

Chapter Sixty-nine

- 1960 Hou a man schal wite hou moche ire and envie is hid in the ground of hys herte.

Now turne agen to this image, yif thou wole asaie hou moche ire and envie is hid in the ground of thyn herte that thou felist not. Loke wel and bholde thiself visili whanne siche stirynges of envie and ire agens thyn even Cristen spryngen out of thyn herte. The more arisynge that thou hast, and the more stired that thou art bi malencolie bittimesse
1965 or wiikid wil agens hem, the more is this image in thee; for the more thou gruechist bi unpaciencie either agens God for tribulacion or sikenesse or for bodili disese sent of God, or agens thyn even Cristene, for ought that thei dooth agens thee, the lasse is the image of Jhesu reformed in thee.

1948 **adrad**, afraid. 1950 **agenstondeth**, resists. 1952 **unperfightli**, unperfectly. 1954 **iyen**, eyes. 1957 **saaf**, saved. 1962 **visilli**, wisely. 1965 **gruechist**, complain.

Book I

Chapter Seventy

Bi what tokenes thou schalt wite yif thou love thyn enemye and what ensample thou

1970 schalte take of Crist for to love Hym also.

I seye not that siche maner of grucchynges or fleischli angres aren deedli synnes; but I
seie that thei letten clennesse of herte and pees of conscientie, that thou mai not have
ful charité, bi the which thou schuldest come to lif contemplatif. For that ende is the
cause of al my seiynge, that thou schuldest not oonli clese thyn herte from deedli
synnes, but also of venyal, as moche as thou mai, that the ground of synne myght bi
grace of ihesu Crist be sumwhat quenchid in thee. For though it be so that thou feelist
noon yvel wil agens thyn even Cristen for a tyme, yit art thou not sikir that the ground
of ire is quenchid in thee, ne yit arte thou not lord of the vertu of charité. For suffre him
touche thee a litil bi ony angrynesse or a schrewid word, and thou schalt feele anoon yif
1980 thyn herte be yit maad hool bi fulhede of charité. The more that thou art stirid and yvel
willed agens the persone, the ferther art thou from perfight charité of thyn even Cristene
and the lasse that thou art stirid, the neer art thu to charité.

And yif thou be not stirid agen the persoone bi angir or bi feel cheer outward, ne bi
no privey hate in thyn herte for to dispice hym or deme hym or for to sette him at
nought; but the more schame and velanye he doth to thee in word or in dede, the more
pité and the more compassioun thou haste on hym, as thou woldst of a man that were
oute of his mynde. And thee thenketh that thou cannot fynde in thyn herte for to hate
hym, for love is so good in the sylf, but prae for hym and helpe hym and desire his
amendynge, not oonli with thi mouth as ypcrites doon, but with thyn herte in affeccioun
1990 and love. And thanne hast thou perfight charité to thyn even Cristene. This charité had
Seynt Stevene perflightli whanne he preide for hem that stooned him to the deeth. This
charité councelide Crist to alle tho that wolden be his perfite folwers whanne he seide
thus: *Diligite inimicos vestros, benefacite hiis qui odierunt vos, orate pro persecutis
vos* (Matthew 5:44). Love youre enemys and dooth good to hem that haten you; praieth
1995 for hem that pursue you. And therfore yif yee wolen folwe Crist, be like to Hym in this
craft. Leere for to love thyne enemys and synful men, for alle thise been thyn even
Cristene. Looke and bithenke thee how goodli Crist was to Judas, hou benynghe, hou

1975 ground, foundation. 1979 schrewid, wicked. 1991 Seynt Stevene, see Acts 7:54-60.

1995 pursue, persecute. 1996 Leere, Learn. 1997 beaysge, benign.

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curteis, and how loweli to hym that He knewe dampnable. And nevertheles He chees him to His apostel, and sente him for to preche with oþere apostelis. He gaaf hym powere to worche myracles, He schewed to him the same good chiere in woerde and in deede as He didde to the tothire apostoles. He bewreied hym not, ne spak sevère yvel of hym; and yit though He hadde doon alle thiise, He had seid noþynge but sooth. And overmore, whanne Judas toke Hym, He kissid hym and called hym His frend. And al this charité schewed Crist to Judas, whiche He knewe for dampnable, in no manere of flateringe ne feynyng, but in soothfastnesse of good love and cleane charité. For though it were so that Judas were unworthi for to have had ony gift of God or ony signe of love for his wikkiddenesse, neverthelees it was worthi and skilful that oure Lord schulde schewe as He is. He is love and goodnes to alle Hise creatures, as He was to Judas. Folwe aftir sumwhat if thou may, for though thu be stoken in an hous with thi bodi, neverthelees in thyn herte, where the stide of love is, thou schulde mow have part of siche love to thyn even Cristen as y speke of. Whooso weneth thanne hymself for to be a perfighte lovere and a folwer of Cristis techynge and His lyvynge (as sum man weneth that he is, in as mykil as he prechith and techith and is pore of wordli goodis as Crist was), and cannot folwe Crist in this love and in this charité for to love his evene Cristene, ecche man, good and badde, frendes and foos, withoutin feynyng or flateringe, dispisyng in his herte agens the man, angrynesse, and maliciousli reprovyng, sothli he bigileth hymself. For the ner that he weneth for to bee, the ferther he is; for Crist seide Himsilf to hem that wolden be His folweres and His disciples thus: *Hoc est preceptum meum, ut diligatis invicem, sicut dilexi vos* (John 13:34). This is My biddynge, that ye love you togidre, as I lovede you. For yif ye love as I lovede, thanne are ye My disciplis.

But now, seist thou, how schal y love him that is badde als wel as him that is gode? As unto this I seie, that thou schalt love bothe in charité, but not for the same cause; as I schal telle thee hou thou schalt love thyne evene Cristene as thyself. Now thou schalt love thyself oonli in God, or ellis for God. In God thou loveste thisilf whanne thu art rightfel bi grace and vertues; and thou lovest not thisilf, but oonli for that rightwisenesse and vertu that God gyveth thee. Thanne lovest thou thisilf in God, for thou lovest not thisilf but God; also for God thou lovest thisilf, as yif thou were in deedli synne and

2001 *bewreied*, revealed. 2003 *Judas*, see Matthew 26:47–50. 2009 *stoken*, inscribed. 2010 *stide*, place; *mow*, be able to. 2011 *weneth*, suppose. 2013 *wordli*, worldly (frequently spelled *thus*). 2016 *reprovyng*, blaming. 2017 *ner*, nearer. 2020 *togidre*, each other. 2025 *rightfel*, righteous.

Book I

woldest be maad rightful and vertuous; thanne louest thou thisilf not as thou art, for thou art unrightful, but as thou woldest be. Right so schalt thou love thyn even Cristene.

- 2030 Yif thei ben goode and rightful, thou schalt love hem bi charité in God, oonli for thei ben goode and rightful; for thanne louest thou God in hem, as goodnesse and rightwisenesse, more thanne hem yif thei ben badde and in deedli synne, as thyn enemyes that haten thee or othere of the whiche thou haste ful evidence that thei aren not in grace. Yit schalt thou love hem not as thei aren, ne as good men and rightful, for thei are badde and
2035 unrightful, but thou schalt love hem for God, that thei myght be gode and rightful. And so schalte thou nothyng hate in hem, but the thyng that is contrarie to rightwisenesse, and that is synne. This is as I undirstonde the techyng of Seynt Austyn, for to departe the love of the man fro the hate of the synne in the love of thyn evene Cristene. He that is sothfastli meke, or wolde be meke, can love his evene Cristene, and noon but he.

Chapter Seventy-one

- 2040 Hou a man schal knowe hou mochel coveytise is hid in hys herte.

Lift up this image and loke wel al aboughne, and thou schalt mowe see covetise and love of erthely thyng occupie a greet partie of this ymage, though it seme litil. Thou hast forsaken the richesse and moche avere of this world, and art sperid in a dongoun; but hast thou forsaken the love of al this? I hope not yit; it is lasse maistrie for to forsake
2045 goodis of the world thanne for to forsake the love of hem. Peraventure thou hast not forsake coveitise, thou hast chaunged fro grete thyngis into smale, as from a pound to a peny and from a silveren pece into a dische of an halpeny. This is a symple chaunge; thou art no good marchant. Thise ensamples aren childisch; neverthelees thei bitoken more. Yif thou trowe not me, assaie thisilf yif thou have love and delite in the havynge
2050 and in the bisholdynge of ony thyng that thou haste, swich as it is, with the whiche love thou feedist thyn herte for a tyme or yif thou have desire and yeerne for to have sum-thyng that thou haste not, with siche desire thyn herte is traveiled bi unskilful bisynesse, that the elene desire of vertues and of God mai not restre thereinne. This is a tokene that

2037 *techyng of Seynt Austyn*, *De doctrina christiana*, 1.27–28; see Scale J.1848–49 and gloss; **departe**, separate. 2043 **avere**, possessions; **sperid**, locked. 2044 **hope**, suppose; **maistrie**, difficulty. 2052 **traveiled**, troubled; **unskillful**, irrational; **bisynesse**, activity.

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- there is coveitise in this ymage, and yif thou wole assaie betere, loke yif onythinge that
2055 thou haste be taken awai from thee, bi maistrie or bi boewynge or bi ony oþir wise, and
thou mai not geten it agen, and forthi thou art disesid in thy herte, and angrnd and
tobelid in thy herte; boþe thee wanteth that thymge that thou wolde have and mai not
gete it, and also agen hym that hath it thou art stired, for he myght restore it agen and
wole not. This is a tokene that thou lovest wordli goodes, for thus doon wordli men.
- Whaen that heer good and her richessee is taken from hem, thei aren hevy, sori, and
2060 angry, and flite and stryve agens hem that han it, openli with word and bi deede; but
thou doost alle thise in thy herte prycli, where God seeth. And yit arte thou in more
defaute thanne a wordli man, for thou hast foesaken in likenesse the love of alle wordli
thynges; but a wordli man hath not so, and therfore he is excusid though he stryve and
2065 pursue bi lawful weies for to have hem agen. But now seist thou, that thee bishoveth
have thy necessaries of siche thinges as longeth to thee, as wel as a wordli man. I
graunte wel thereto, but thou schuldest not love hyt, ne noo likynge have in the bishoveth
and in the kepynge of it, ne sorwe ne hevynesse fele in the leesynge or in the withdraw-
ing of it; for, as Seynte Gregor seith, as moche sorwe as thou hast in the lesynge of a
2070 thymge, so moche love haddest thou in the kepynge. And therfore yif thy herte were
maad hool and thou hadde soothfastili felid a desire of goostli thynges, and hadde thereof
a sighte of the leste goostli thymge that is, al the love and likyng of ony ertheli thymge
thou schuldest sette it at nouȝt, it schulde not cleve on thee. For to love and for to have
more thanne thee nedeth skilfulli, it is a grete defaute. Also for to love that thing that
2075 thee nedeth is defaute, but not so greet; but for to have and use that thee nedeth withoutin
love of it is no defaute. Soothli manye that han the staat and the likenesse of povertee
aren moche blyndid in this poynt and hyndred froo the love of God. But I accuse no
man, ne no staat reprove, for in every astaat summe aren goode and sume aren oþir.
But oo thymge I seie to eche man and woman whiche hath take the staat of poverté
2080 wilfulli, whethir he be religious or seculer, or what degree he be inne: As longe as his
affeccioun is bounden, festened, and as it were gleywid with the love of ony oþir ertheli
thymge that he hath or ellis wolde have, he mai not have ne feele soothfastili the clene
love and the clear sight of goostli thyngis.

2055 *maistrie*, force. 2056 *disesid*, distressed. 2057 *thee wanteth*, is lacking to you. 2061
flite, contend. 2063 *defaute*, fault. 2065 *pursue*, follow. 2068 *leesynge*, losing. 2069 *Seynte
Gregor seith*, see *Moralia*, 1.5.7 and 31.13.21 (Clark, p. 181n298). 2081 *glewid*, glued.

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For as Seynt Austyn seith to oure Lord thus: "Lord, he loveth Thee but litil, that loveth
2085 ony thyng with Thee." For the moe love and coveitise of ony ertheli thinge is in thee,
the lasse is the love of God in thy herte. For though it be soo that this love of ertheli
thinge putte hem not oute of charité, but it be so moche that it strangle the love of God
and of here even Cristen, sothely it hyndreth hem and leseth thee from the fervour of
charité, and also from that special meede that thei schulde have in the blisse of hevene
2090 for perfight poverté. And that is a grete losse yif they myght see it; for whooso myght
knowe goosteli mede, how good, and how precious, and how worthi it is ay lastynge,
he wolde not for al ertheli joie, or al ertheli thyng, though he myght have it withouten
synne, lette ne leese the leeste meede of the blisse of hevene, whiche he myghte have yif
that he wolde. I speke furthere thanne y can do, but I pray thee thorugh the grace of
2095 God, doo soo yif thou mai, or ony othir whose wole; for that were a comfort to me,
that though y mai not have it in myself as I sei, that I myght have it in thee, or in ony
othir creature whiche hath receyved of oure Lord more plenté of His grace thanne y.
But see now thanne, hou coveitise in the nakid ground letteth a man or a woman so
2100 moche from the goosteli felynge of the love of God, how moche more it letteth thanne
and encombrith wordli men and women whiche, bi alle here wites and bisynesse,
nyght and dai studie and travaile hou thei myght gete richesse and plenté of wordli
goodis. Thei kurme noon othir delite have but in wordli thynges, ne thei wole not, for
thei seke it not. I sei no more at this tyme of hem, for in this writynge y speke not to
hem; but this I sei, yif thei myght see and wold see what thei doo, thei schulde not
2105 doo so.

Chapter Seventy-two

Hou a man schal knowe whanee he synneth not in etynge and drynkynge and whanee
he synneth deedli and whan venali.

Yit mai thou see more in thys image, though it be myrk; and that is fleischli love to thisilf
in glotonie, sleuthe, and lecherie. Thise fleischli likynges maken a man wel beestli, and

2084 *Seynt Austyn seith*, *Confessioner*, 10.29.40 (Clark, p. 181n302). 2093 *lette ne leese*,
prevent nor lose. 2108 *myrk*, dark. 2109 *sleuthe*, sloth.

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2110 fer from inli savour of the love of God and from the clear sight of goostli thingis. But now seist thou, that y seie that thee bihoveth nedelynges ete and drynke and slepe, and that mai thou not doo withoute likynge, therfore thee thenketh this likynge is no synne.

As unto this I answer, yif thou kepe in etyne and drynskyng and in othir nedeful thinges to the bodi mesure, up thi nede as resoun asketh, and thou resseyvest no more thanne kynde asketh, and al this thou doest for thi goostli delite whiche thou felist in thi soule, I graunte for sothe that thou thanne synnest right nought. For thanne can thou wel ete and slepe, sothli and withoutin doute. I am ful fer from that knowynge, and ferthere from the wirkynge; for to ete I have bi kynde, but for to kunne ete I mai not but bi grace. Seynt Poul hadde bi grace this knowynge as he seide of himself thus: *Ubique et in omnibus institutas sum; et scio satiari, et esurire, habundare, et penuriam pati. Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat* (Philippians 4:12–13). I am enformed and taught in alle thinges, for I can hungre and can ete, I can with plenté and I can with poverté. I mai al in Him that strengtheth me.

Seynt Austyn seid to oure Lord thus: "Lord, Thou hast taughte me that I schulde take mete as medicene." For honger is a sikenesse of kynde, and mete is medicyn thereto and therfore the likynge that cometh withal, in as moche as it is kyndeli and nedefulle, it is no synne; but whanne it passith into luste and into wilful likynge, thanne it is synne. And therfore, there lieth al the maistrie, for to kunne departe visili the nede fro the lust and wilful likynge. Thei aren so knettid togedre, and that oon cometh so with the tothir, thanne it is hard to receyve that oon as the nede and repeove the tothir as wilful likynge and luste, whiche ofte tymc cometh undir colour of nede. Yif a man wolde oonli take mete and drynke as medicyn for sikenesse, he schulde kunne departe wel the luste from the nede. Nevertheless, syn it is so that nede is the ground of this synne, and that neede is no synne. For be a man nevere so hooli, hym bihoveth ete and drynke and slepe, therfore the lust and the likynge that cometh undir colour of this nede and passeth this nede is the lasse synne.

For a man comonli synnethe not deedli in glotonye, but he be cumbred with othere deedli synnes bifore doon. Thanne mai he the lightliere synne deedli in this. For this is

2110 **inli**, inward. 2111 **nedelynges**, necessarily. 2114 **up**, according to. 2115 **asketh**, requires. 2118 **kynde**, nature. 2123 **strengtheth**, strengthens. 2124 **Seynt Austyn seid**, Confessions, 10.31.44 (Clark, p. 181n306). 2125 **mete**, food. 2128 **maistrie**, difficulty; **kunne departe visili**, know how to separate wisely. 2129 **likyng**, pleasure. 2137 **cumbred**, encumbered.

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sooth, he that chesith the luste and the likyng of his fleisch in delices and welfare of
2140 mete and drinke as a ful reste of his herte, nevere to have othir joie ne othir blisse, but to
lyve ay in siche lustis of his fleisch, yif he myght, hit is no doughte but that he synmeth
deedli, for he loveth his fleisch more than God. But he that lieth in deedli synne as pride
or envie or siche other, he is blynde and so bounden to the devel that for the tyme he
2145 hath not the power clensi of his free wille; and therefore he mai not weel agenstonde
fleischli likynges, but falleth doun wilfulli into hem, as a beest doth upoun a carioun.

And in as moche as he hath noo general wille bifore to God principali, because that he
is in deedli synne, therfore the lust of glotonye whiche he falleth inne is lightli to hym
2150 deedli synne, for he maketh noon agenstondynge, general ne special. But another man or
woman whiche is in grace and in charité hath alwei a good general wille to God in hisse
soule, whether he slepe or wake, ete or drinke, or what dede that he dooth, so that the
dede be not yvel in the silf; bi the whiche wille he chesith and desireth God aboven alle
2155 thynges, and he hadde wel levere forbere al the likyng of this world thaen his God, for
the love of Him. This wille, though it be but general, it is of so greet vertu bi the grace
of oure Lord Jhesu, that though he falle bi freelté in luste and likyng of mete and
drinke, or in siche other sikenessis, othir in excesse of to moche etyng, or to often, or
2160 to gredili, or to lustli and delicath, or to soone in untyme, it saveth and kepit hym from
deedli synne. And this is soth, as longe as he is in charité bi other good deedis and
kepit this general wille hool in al that he dooth; and nameli yit, yif he knowe amonge his
owen wrecchidnesse, and crieth God merci, and is in purpos speciali for to agenstonde
alle siche lustis fleischli.

Oure Lord is good and merciful, and thise venyal synnes of glotonye He forgiveth
sone to a meke man; for the stirynges and the likynges of glotonye, in as moche as thei
ben hardest for to flee because of nede of the bodili kynde, amonge alle other synnes
2165 aren most excusable and lest perilous. And therfore thou schal not rise agens the ground
of this synne as thou schalt agenes alle other synnes. For the ground of this synne is
oonli nede, whiche mai not be eschewid but yif thou wolt doo wors and slee the nede,
as many foolis doo, whiche schulden slee the theef and spare the trewe man, that is to
seie thei schulde slee the unskilful lust and the wilful likyng, and spare and kepe the

2139 **likyng**, pleasure. 2140 **reste**, resting place. 2141 **doughte**, doubt. 2144 **agenstonde**,
resist. 2152 **levere forbere**, rather forgo. 2155 **to**, too. 2156 **in untyme**, at the wrong time.
2168 **unskillful**, irrational.

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2170 bodili kynde. But agen alle othere synnes thou schalt arise for to distroie; not oonli the gret deedli and the grete venyal synnes, but also agens the ground of hem in as moche as thou mai.

See bi this skile, thou mai not lyve withoute mete and drinke; but thou mai lyve withoute leccherie yif thou wole, and nevere be but the betere. And therfore thou schalt not oonli flee the dede in the silf, whiche is deedli synne, and also the wilful likynge of it in thyn herte withoutin dede, whiche is venial, and sumtyme it is deedli; but also thou schalt arise agen the ground of it, for to distroie the risyng and the felyng and the fleischli stirynges.

Chapter Seventy-three

The ground of leccherie schulde be distroied with goostli travaille and not with bodili.

But this travaille agen the ground of leccherie nameli schal be goostli, as bi peayers and goostli vertues, and not bodili bi no bodili penaunce. For wite thou wel, though thou wake and faste and scourge thisilf and doo al that thou can, thou schal nevere have the cleannessse and that chastite withoute the gifte and the grace of mekenesse. Thou schulde mowe rathere slee thisilf thanne thou schuldest slee fleischli stirynges and likynge of lustis of leccherie, other in thi herte or in thi fleisch, bi ony bodili penaunce. But bi the 2185 grace of Ihesu in a meke soule, the ground mai be stoppid and distroied, and the springe mai be dried and that is veri chastite in bodi and soule.

And the same manere mai be seid of pride, coveitise, and siche othere; for thou myghtest lyve though thou were neither proud ne covetous, and therfore thou schalt distroie alle the felynges of hem as moche as thou myght. But in glotonye thou schal arise and smyte away alle unskilful stirynges, and save the ground hool. And therfore he that riseth agens the feelynge of fleischli likynge in mete and drinke more fulli and more scharpli thanne agen the feelynge and the stiryne of pride, for thei seme faire and are not lightli reprevyd, or of envie, ire, coveitise, or leccherie, I seie that he is half blynd. For he seeth not yit goostli the unclennesse of pride and envie, how foul it is in Goddis

2172 **skile**, reason. 2180 **wite**, know. 2183 **mowe**, be able to. 2190 **unskillful**, irrational. 2191 **mete**, food. 2193 **lightli** reprevyd, easily rejected. 2194 **unclennesse**, impurity.

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2195 sight. I hope yif a man myght see with his goostli iye hou foule pride and coveitise aren in the sight of God, and hou contrarie to Him, he schulde more lothe the stirynge of pride and the veyn delite of it; and also he schulde more agrise and arise agen an yvel wil of envie or ire to his even Cristene, thanne agens many stirynges and likynges, oithir of glotonye or lecherie. Nevertheles, alle men wesen not so, for comonli men aren more
2200 arwgh for to fele a stirynge of fleischli synne, and have for it more hevynesse, thanne for grete likynges in veynglorie or othere goostli synnes. But thei aren not wise, for yif thei wole undirstonde Holi Writ and doctours sawes thereof, schulde thei fynde as I saie, whiche y ne mai ne wole not reherce now.

Chapter Seventy-four

That a man schulde be bisi for to putte awai alle stirynges of synne but more bisili
2205 goostli synnes than bodili.

I ne wole not excuse hem that fallen in likynges of glotonye and lecherie, that thei synnen not; for I woot wel that alle the spices of hem aren synne more or lasse, after the mesure of the lust and wilful likynges, with othere circumstaunces of hem. But I wolde that thou knewe and chargid eche a synne as it is: more or lasse the more, as aren alle
2210 goostli synnes, the lasse as aren alle fleischli synnes. Yit schal thou neverthelees hate and flee alle bodili and goostli synnes up thi myght; for wile thou wel, that fleischli desires and unskilfulle likynges in mete or drinke, or ony likynges that longen to the bodi passyngre resonable nede, though thei be not ay grete synnes to hem that aren in charité, neverthelees to a soule that desireth cleannessse and goostli felynge of God, thei aren fal
2215 hevy and bittir, and moche for to eschewe. For the spirit mai not fele hys kyndeli savour withinne of the gostli presence of Jhesu Crist til the fleisch have lost moche of his bestli savoure withoute; and therfore yif thou wole come to cleannessse in herte, thee byhoveth agenstonde unskilful stirynges of fleischi desires. But agen the ground of it that is nede, as kyndeli honger whiche thou schal nedelynges fele and tente thertoo in tyme, and

2195 *goostli iye*, spiritual eye. 2197 *agrise*, be horrified. 2199 *wesen*, suppose. 2200 *arwgh*, frightened. 2202 *sawes*, sayings. 2207 *spices*, species. 2211 *up thi myght*, according to your ability. 2212 *unskilfulle likynges*, irrational pleasures. 2215 *kyndeli*, natural. 2218 *fleischi*, fleshly. 2219 *nedelynges*, by necessity; *tente*, tend.

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- 2220 helpe thisilf agens it bi medicyn of mete as thou woldest helpe thisilf resonabli agens
bodili sikenesse, that thou myght eate and the more freli serve thi God bodili and goostli.

Chapter Seventy-five

That hunger and oþere peynes of the bodi letteth moche goostly wirkynge.

- For wite thou wel that what man or woman schal ben occupied in goostli thoughts,
unskilful peyne of hungir wilfulli taken, or sikenesse in the stomach or in the heed or in
2225 ony oþer partie of the bodie, for the defaute of thisilf bi to moche fastynge or in ony
oþer wise, schal moche lette the spirit and moche hyndre him from the knowynge and
the beholdynge of goosteli thynges, but he have more grace. For though it be so that
bodili peyne, oþer of penaunce oþer of siknesse, or ellis bodili occupacion, sumtyme
2230 letteth not the fervour of love to God in devocioun but often encresith it. Sothli y hope
that it letteth the fervour of lust in contemplacion, whiche mai not be had ne felid sadli,
but in gret reste of bodi and soule. Forthi doo thou skilfulli that longeth to thee and kepe
thi bodili kynde up resoun and suffre than til God sende what He wole, be it heele or
sikenesse. Take it generali and grucche not agens God wilfulli.

Chapter Seventy-six

What remedie a man schal use agenes defaune maad in etynge and drinkynge.

- 2235 Doo thanne as I seie thee: take thi mete, and ordeyne for it yif nede it be up resoun, and
take it gladli as for nede. But beware of lust that cometh with the nede; eschew to
moche as wel as to litil. And whanne thou hast doon, and it cometh to thi mynde bitynge
in conscience that thou hast eten to moche or to litil, and bigynnest to tarie and drawest
2240 thee to over moche bittimesse, lift up thi desire of thyn herte to thi good Lord Jhesu,
and know thisilf for a wrecche and a beeste, and aske Him foergevenessee bi His merci.
And whanne thou hast doon thus, the schortliere the levere, leve of thanne and tarie no

2226 *lette*, hinder. 2231 *skilfulli*, reasonably; *longeth*, belongs. 2233 *grucche*, complain.
2235 *mete*, food. 2238 *tarie*, trouble. 2241 *levere*, better; *of*, off.

Book I

lengere withal, ne stryve not to moche as thou wolde distroie it uttirli, for it is not for to
doo. Thou schal never brysgage it so aboate. But redili ordeyne thee to sum other
occupacions bodili or gostli, aftir thou felist thee dispositid, that thou mightest the more
profite in othire vertues, as mekenesse and charité.

For wite thou wel, he that hath in his desire and in his travaille noon othir reward to
noon othir thinge but to mekenesse and charité, ai cravynge aftir hem how he myght
gete hem, he schal in that desire with worchynge folwynge aftir, profite more and waxe
in alle other vertues, as in chasitée, abstinence, and siche othire, though he have but litil
reward to hem, more in a yeer thanne he schulde have withouten this desire profite in
sevene yeer, though he stryve with glotonye and leccherie and siche othire contynueli
and bete himself eche dai with scourgis from moewe til evesong tyme.

Chapter Seventy-seven

That thorwgh besi desire and travaille in mekenesse and charité, a man cometh sunnere
to othere vertues to travaille in himself.

Gete to thee thanne mekenesse and charité, and yif thou wole travaille and swyrke bisili
for to have hem, thou schal mowe have inow fœ to doo in getynge of hem. Thei schal
rule and mesure thee ful prveli, hou thou schalt ete and drynke and socoure al thi bodili
node, that ther schal no man wile it but yif thou wole, and it schal not be in perplexité,
ne in dwere, ne in angimesse and hevynesse, but in a pees of glaad coonscience with a
sad restfulnessse. I speke forther thanne I thought for to have spoken in this matier, but
neverthelees doo, yif thou mai, as y sai, and I hope God schal make al wel.

Bi this thanne that I have seid mai thou sumdel see in this ymage of synne hou moche
it letteth thee. The Gospel seith how Abraham spak to the riche man that was biried in
helle on this wise: *Est chaos magnum inter nos et vos firmatum, ut hic qui volunt*
transire ad nos, non possunt, nec hoc transire (Luke 16:26). There is a gret chaos
(that is a grete myrkenesse to sai) is bitwix us and yow, that we moun not come to you
ne yee to us. This myrke image in thi soule and in myn also mai be callid a greet chaos,

2243 **ordeyne**, dispose. 2246 **reward**, regard. 2253 **sunnere**, sooner. 2256 **inow**, enough.
2259 **dwere**, doubt. 2260 **sad**, resolute. 2262 **sumdel**, somewhat. 2266 **myrkenesse**, dark-
ness.

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for it letteþ us that we moun not come to Abraham, whiche is Jhesu, and it letteþ him that he wole not come to us.

Chapter Seventy-eight

- 2270 What cometh of the merkenese of the image of synne and what cometh bi the wyndowes thereof.

Lifte up this lanterne and see in this ymage fyve wyndowis bi the whiche synne cometh into thi soule, as the prophete seith: *Mors ingreditur per fenestras nostras* (Jeremiah 9:21). Deeth cometh in bi oure wyndowes. Thise wyndowes aren oure fyve wittes, bi 2275 the whiche oure soule gooth out from himself and sicheþ his delite and his foedyng in etheli thynges, agens his owen kynde: as bi the sight, for to se corious and faire thynges; bi the eere, for to heare wondres and newe tdynges; and so of the oþere wittes. Bi unskilful usyng of thise wittes into vanytē wilfulli, the soule is moche letted from the goostli wittys withinne; therfore thee bihoveth stoppe the wyndowis and spere 2280 hem, but oonli whanne nede asketh for to open hem. And that were litil maistrie yif though myghtest oones see thi soule bi cleer undiestoodynge, what it is, and hou faire it is in his owen kynde, ne were that it is overlaid with a blaak cloude of this foule ymage.

Chapter Seventy-nine

That a soule for defaute of knowynge of hitsilf wendith out bi the fyve wittes for to sek liking outward.

- 2285 But now for thou knowest it not, therfore thou levest the inti sight of thisilf and sekest thi mete from withoutin as a beest unresonalble. Thus seith oure Lord to a chosen soule in Hooli Writ: *Si ignoras te, o pulcra inter mulieres, egressere et abi post vestigia gregum sodalium tuorum, et pasce edos tuos* (Canticle 1:7). Thou faire amonȝe women, if thou knowe not thisilf, goo oute and walke aftir the steppis of the flok of thyne felawes and

2274 wittes, senses. 2275 sicheþ, seeks. 2276 kynde, nature. 2278 unskilful, irrational.
2279 spere, lock. 2285 inti, inward. 2286 mete, food.

Book I

- 2290 feede thy kedis. And it is thus moche for to seie: Thou soule faire in kynde, maad to the likenesse of God, frell as woman in thi bodi for thi first synne, because that thou knowist not thisilf, that aungels foode schulde be thi delites withinne, therfore thou goost out bi thi bodili wittes and sekest thi mete and thi likynge as a beest of the flock, that is, as oon of the reprooved; and therwith thou fedist thi thoughtes and thyn affecciouns,
2295 whiche aren unclene as kides.

Chapter Eighty

That a soule schulde not seke withoute, but aske withinne of Jhesu, al that it nedeth.

- This is a schame to thee for to do so. And therfore turne agen hom into thisilf, and holde thee withinne and seke no more withouten, and nameli swynes mete; for yif thou algate
2300 be a beggere, aske and crave withinne of thi Lord Jhesu, for He is riche inow, curtais and free inow, and gladliere wole gyve thanne thou wolt aske. And renne no more out as a beest of the flock, as a wordli man or woman that hath no nothir delite but in his bodili wittes. And yif thou do thus, thy Lord Jhesu wole gyve thee al that thee nedeth, for He hath
2305 many tonnes, whiche thee liketh best. Thus a chosen soule, joynge in Holi Writ, seith to oure Loed: *Introduxit me rex in cellam vinarium* (Canticle 2:4). A kynge ledde me into his wyne seler. And that is for to sai: In as moche as I forsook the dronkennesse of fleschli lustes and wordli likynges, whiche aren bittere as wormode, foethi the kynge of blisse, oure Loed Jhesu ledde me in; that is to saie, first into myself for to biholde and
2310 knowe myself, and aftir He ladde me into his seler, that is to seie, above myself bi overpassyng oonli into Hym, and gaf me assaie of His wyne, that is to saie, a taast and a liknesse of goostli swettenesse and beveneli joie. Thise aren not wordes of me, a wrecchid caitif lyvynge in synne, but thei aren the wordes of the spouse of oure Loed in Hooli Writte. And thise wordes I seie to thee, that thou myght drawe in thi soule fro
2315 withoutin and folwe aftir as as thou may.

2290 **kedis**, kids. 2291 **frell**, frail. 2300 **inow**, enough. 2301 **renne**, run. 2304 **seler**, cellar; **assaie**, test. 2305 **tonnes**, vessels. 2308 **wormode**, wormwood. 2311 **overpassyng**, passing over.

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Chapter Eighty-one

That the hoole of ymagination nedeth to be stopped, als wel as the wyndowes of the wittes.

But now seist thou, that thou doost soo. Tha seist thou hast no wordeli thinges, ne heerist, ne hast nooc use of the bodili wittes more thanne nede asketh, and forthi thou art enclosid. As to this I seie: Yif thou doo thus, thanne hast thou stopped a grete wyndowe of this image. But yit art thou not siker, for thou hast not stopped the privey hoolis of this image in thyn herte. For though thou see not me with thi bodili iye, thou may see me with thi soule bi imaginacion; and so mai thou doo of alle othere bodili thinges. Than yif thi soule be feed wilfulli bi imagynynge in vanitees of the world, in desiryng of wordeli thyng for a wilful comfort and delite, sothli though thi soule be withinne as for thi bodili wittes it is neverthelees ful feir withoute bi sich veyn ymagination.

But now askist thou for it be ony gret synne, a soule for to occupie him in sich vanitees, eithir in wittis or in ymagynynge. As unto this I wolde thou schuldest nevere aske no man this questioun, for he that loveth God or wole love soothfastli, he askith not whethir this is gretter synne. For him schal thenke what thyng letteth hym fro the love of God is gret synne, and hym schal thenke no synne but that thyng that is not good and letteth him fro the love of God. What is synne but a wantynge and a forberynge of God? I seie not that it schal be peynful to hym as a deedli synne or a venial schulde be, ne I seie not but that hee knowe deedli from a venyal.

Chapter Eighty-two

2335 Whanne the use of the wittes and of the imaginacion is deedli synne, and whanne venyal.

Neverthelees, sumdeel schal y seie to thi questioun, for thi desire draweth oute of myn herte more thanne I thought for to have seid in the bigynnyng. Oure Loed seith in the Goospel thus: *Homo quidam fecit cenam magnum et vocavit multis. Et misit servum*

2321 **siker**, certain. 2322 **hoolis**, holcs. 2332 **wantynge**, lacking; **forberynge**, forgoing. 2333 **peynful**, punishable. 2337 **sumdeel**, somewhat.

Book I

- 2340 *suam dicere invitatis ut venirent. Primus dixit: Villum emi; rogo te, habe me excusationem.*
Secundus dixit: Iuga boum emi quinque, et eo probare ea. Et tertius dixit: Uxorem duci,
et ideo non possum venire (Luke 14:16–20). A man made a gret sooper and called many
thero, and sent his seruaunt at sooper tyme to hem that weren praled. The first excuside
hym that he myght not come, for he hadde bought a tour; the tothir also excuside hym
2345 that he myght not come, for he hadde bought fyve yokkes of oxsen and yeede for to
assiae hem; the thridde excusid hym for he hadde wedded a wif. I leve for to speke of
the firsfe and of the laste, and telle the myddel, of hym that boughte the oxen.

Thise fyve yokkes of oxen bitoken the fyve wittes, whiche aren beesteli, as an oxe.
Now this man that was callid to the sooper was not reproved for he boughte the oxen,
2350 but for he yeede for to assiae hem, and so he wolde not come. Right so y seie to thee,
for to have thy wittes and use hem in nede, it is no synne; but yif thou goo for to assiae
hem bi veyn delite in creaturis, thanne it is synne. For yif thou chese that delite as a fynal
2355 teste of thi soule and as a ful likynge, that thou kepit noon nother blisse have but sich
othir woedli vanyté, thanne it is deedli synne. For thou chesist it as thi God, and so schal
thou be putte fro the sooper. For the wise man forbide us that we schulde not assiae
oure wittes so, whanne he seide thus: *Nos exitis post concupiscentias vestras* (Ecclesiasticus 18:30). Thou schalt not goo aftir thi lustes, ne wilfulli assiae thyn likynges.
A man or a woman that is encorbed with deedli synnes schal not ascape deedli synne
2360 in this, though he see it not; but I hope that it toucheth not thee. Neverethelees, yif thou
bi freelté delite thee in thi wittes and in sich vanyté, but with that, thou kepit thee in
chanté in othir sides, and thou chesist not that delite for a ful reste of thi soule, but thou
settest ai God bifore al thyng in thi desire, this synne is venyal, aftir the circumstaunces
2365 more or lasse. Ne thou schalt not for thise venyal synnes be putte fro the sooper in the
blisse of hevene, but thou schal wante the tastynge and the assaiynge of that delicat
sooper lyvynge in erthe, but yif thou be bisie with alle thi myghtes for to agenstondc
sich venyal synnes. For though it be soo that venial synnes breketh not charité, soothli
thei lette the fervour and the goostli felynge of charité.

2342 **sooper**, supper. 2343 **praled**, invited. 2344 **tour**, farm. 2345 **yokkes**, yokes; **yeede**,
went. 2346 **assiae hem**, try them out. 2367 **sette**, obstruct.

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Chapter Eighty-three

Hou an ankir schal have hir to hem that comen to hir.

But now seist thou that thou mai not kepe thee from heerynge of vanytees, for divers
2370 worldli men and othere that coenen ofte tyme for to speke with thee, and telle thee
sumtyme talis of vanite. As unto this y seie thus, that comenyng with thyn evene
Cristene is not moche agens thee, but helpith thee sumtyme yif thou worche visili. For
thou mai assaie therbi the mesure of thi charité to thyn evene Cristene, whethir hit be
2375 moche or litil. Thou art bounden, as eche man or woman is, to love thyn evene Cristene
principal i in thyne herte, and also in deede for to schewe hym tokenes of charité as
resoun asketh, up thi myght and up thi knowing.

Now syn it is so that thou owest not to goo oute of thyne hous for to seche occasiou
how thou myght profite thyne evene Cristene bi deedis of merci, for thou art inclose,
neverethelees thou art bounden for to love hem alle in thyne herte, and to hem that
2380 coenen to thee for to schewe hem tokenes of love sothfastli. And therfore whoso wole
speke with thee, what that he be, or in what degree that he be, and thou knowe not what
he is, ne whi that he cometh, be soone redi with a good wille for to wite what his wille
is. Be not daungerous, ne suffre him stonde longe for to abide thee, but loke hou redi
2385 Soo redi and so buxum be thou in wille for to speke with thyne even Cristene whanne he
cometh to thee. For thou wost not what he is, ne what he wolde, ne what nede he hath
to thee, ne thou of hym, til thou have assaied hym.

And though thou be in preiere or in devocioun, that thee thenketh looth for to breeke
of, for thee thenketh thou schuldest not leve God for mannys speche; me thenketh it is
2390 not so in this caas; for yif thou be wise, thou schal not leve God, but thou schal fynde
Hym and have Hym and see Him in thyne evene Cristene as wel as in praiere. Yif thou
coude wel love thyne evene Cristene, but schulde not hyndre thee for to speke with hem
discretli. Discrecioun schalt thou have upon this manere as me thenketh. Whoso cometh
to thee, aske hym mekeli what he wole; and yif he come to telle his disease and to be

2368 **have hir**, conduct herself. 2372 **visili**, wisely. 2376 **up thi myght**, according to your
ability; **up thi knowing**, according to your knowledge. 2377 **syn**, since; **seche**, seek. 2383
daungerous, standoffish. 2385 **buxum**, obedient. 2389 **of**, off. 2394 **disease**, distress.

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- 2395 comfortid of thi speche, heere him glaadi, and suffre him to seie what he wole for ese
of his owen herte. And whanze he hath doon, conforte hym goodli and charitabli, and
sone beeke of. And thanne aftir, yif he wole falle into idel tales or vanytees, or of othere
mennys deedis, ansuere hym not but litil, ne feede not his speche; and he schal soone be
irke and sone take his leve.
- 2400 Yif it be another man that cometh to knowe thee, as a man of Holi Chirche, heere hym
loweli with reverence for his ordre, and yif his speche conforte thee, aske of hym,
and make thee not for to teche hym. For it falleth not to thee for to teche a prest, but
in nede. Yif his speche conforte thee not, answere but litil, and he wole soone goo his
wai. Yif it be another man that cometh for to gyve his almasse or ellis for to heere thee
2405 speke, or for to be knownen of thee, speke mekeli and goodli to him withal. Repreve no
man of his defautis; it falleth not to thee, but yif he be the more boormli with thee, that
thou wite wel that he wole not take it agreef. And schoerteli for to seie, as moche as thou
conceyvest that schulde profite thyn evene Cristene goostli, mai thou seie yif thou can
and he wil take it. And of alle thynges kepe silence as moche as thou mai, and thou schal
2410 have litil prees in schort tyme that schal lete thee. Thus thenketh me; doo betere yif
thou mai.

Chapter Eighty-four

Of the myrke image of synne and of the clothinge therof.

- Bi this that y have seide mai thou see a litil the myrkennesse of this ymage; nought for y
have discreyed it to thee for fulli as it is, can y not. Nevertheless bi this litil mai thou see
the more yif thou loke wel. But now seist thou: "Wherbi knowest thou that I bere siche
2415 an ymage abouate with me as thou spekest of?" As unto this I answere: y mai take upoun
me a woord of the prophete, and is this: *Avrent idolum michi* (Hosea 12:8) This is thus
mykil to seie, I have founden a fals ymage, that men calle a mawmet, in myself, wel
foule disfigured and forschapen with wrecchidnesse of alle thise synnes whiche I have
2420 spoken of, bi the whiche I am cast doun into many wrecchidnessis more thanne y can

2398 **ansuere**, answer. 2402 **teche**, teach. 2404 **almasse**, alms. 2406 **boormli**, familiar. 2407
agreef, amiss. 2410 **prees**, crowd. 2418 **mawmet**, idol; from Mohammed, associated by medi-
eval Christians with idolatry. 2419 **forschapen**, deformed.

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or mai seie; that me thenketh yvel fore and repente and crie merci. Bi this wrecchidnesse
that y feele in myself, moche more than I have seide, mai I the betere telle thee of thyne
image. For alle comen we of Adam and of Eve, cloothid with clothis of a beestis hide,
as Hooli Writt seith of oure Lord thus: *Fecit dominus Ade et uxori eius tunicas pelliceas*
2425 (Genesis 3:21). Oure Lord maade to Adam and to his wif clothis of a beestis hide, in
tokene that for synne he was forschapen like to a beest; with whiche beestli clothis we
alle aren born, and umbilapped and disfigured from oure kyndeli schaap.

Chapter Eighty-five

Whiche aren the lymes of the ymage of synne.

Thanne is this an uggli ymage for to loke upon. The heed is pride, for pride is principal
2430 and the firste synne, as the wise man seith: *Inicium omnis peccati superbia* (Ecclesiasticus
10:15). The bigynnyng of al maner synne is pride. The baak and the hyndre part of it
is coveitise, as Seynt Poul seith: *Quae retro sunt obliviscens, in anteriora me extenderam*
2435 (Philippians 3:13). I schal forgete alle wordli thynge whiche aren bakward, and I schal
strike me forward to endeles thynge. The brest, in whiche is the herte, is envie, for it
is noo fleischli synne, but it is a develis synne, as the wise man seith: *Invidia diaboli*
2440 *mors intravit in orbem terrarum. Imitantur illum omnes qui ex parte eius sunt* (Wisdom
2:24–25). Bi envie of the devil deeth com into al the world; forthi al tho that aren of his
part folwen hym thereinne. The armes of it aren wraththe, in as moche as a man
wreketh hym with his armes of his wraththe, agens Cristis forbodynge in the Gospel: *Si*
2445 *quis percauserit te in unam maxillam, prebe sibi et alterum* (Matthew 5:39). Yif a man
smyte thee upon the ton cheke with his hond, thou schalt not smyte hym agen, but
offre hym that othir cheke. The beli of this image is glotonye, as Seynt Poul seith: *Esca*
ventri, et venter escis; deus hunc et has destruer (1 Corinthians 6:13). Mete serveth to
the beli, and the beli serveth for to gete mete; but God schal distroie bothe the beli and
the mete. That schal be in the laste ende, in the fulle reformynge of chosene, and in the
demynge of the reproved. The membris of hit aren lecherie, of the whiche Seynt Poul
seith thus: *Nos exhibeatis membra vestra arma iniquitatis ad peccatum* (Romans 6:13).
Yee schullen not gyve youre membris, speciali youre pryste membris, to be armes to

2427 **umbilapped**, surrounded; **kyndeli**, natural. 2439 **wreketh**, avenges. 2441 **ton**, onc.

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- synne. The feet of this ymage aren accidie, and therfore the wise man seith to the slowe
2450 for to stire him to goode werkis thus: *Discurre, festina, suscita amicu[m] n[ost]ru[m]* (Proverbs
6:3). That is to seie, renne quykli aboue to good werkes, and haste thee swithe, for the
tyme passeth; and reise up thi freend, whiche is Jhesu, bi devoute praiere and meditacioun.

Chapter Eighty-six

Whereof the image of Jhesu is maad, and the ymage of synne and hou we aren passynge
forth by the image of synne.

- 2455 This is not the ymage of Jhesu, but it is likere an image of the devyl; for the ymage of
Jhesu is maad of vertues with mekenesse, parfite love, and charité. But this ymage is of
fals fleschli luste to thisilf, with alle thise membris festned thereto. This ymage berist
thou aboue, and eche man, what that he be, until bi the grace of Jhesu it be sumdel
destroied and broken doun. Thus it semeth that David seith in the sautier: *Verumptamen*
2460 *in ymagine pertransit homo; sed et frustra conturbatur* (Psalms 38:7). This is for to
seie, though it so were that a man were maad in the bigynnynge to the ymage of God,
stable and stedefast, nevertheless because of synne he firste passith lyvynge in this
world, in this image of synne, bi the whiche he is unstable and trobiled in veyn. Also
Seynt Poule speketh of this ymage thus: *Sicut portavimus ymaginem terreni hominis, sic*
2465 *portemus ymaginem celestis hominis* (1 Corinthians 15:49). That is to seie, yif we wolen
come to the love of God, as we have bore before the ymage of the ertheli man, that is of
the first Adam, that is this ymage of synne, right so now that we myght bere the ymage
of the heveneli man Jhesu, whiche is the image of vertues.

- What schalt thou thanne doo with this ymage of synne? Unto this I answere thee bi
2470 the word that the Jewes seiden to Pilat of Crist: *Tolle, tolle, crucifige eum!* (John
19:15). Take this bodi of synne and doo hym on the Cros, that is for to seie, beeke doun
this image and slee the fals love of synne in thisilf. As Cristis bodi was slain for oure
trespace, right so thee bishoveth, yif thou wole be like to Crist, slee thi bodili feelyng
2475 and fleschli luste in thisilf. Thus seid Seynt Poul: *Qui autem Christi sunt, carnem suam*
crucifixerunt cum viciss et concupiscencialis (Galatians 5:24). Ye that aren Cristis folweres

2449 accidie, sloth. 2451 swithe, greatly. 2455 likere, more similar to. 2458 sumdel, some-
what. 2459 sautier, psalter. 2471 doo, put.

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have crucified and slain here fleisch, that is the image of synne, with alle the lustis and the unskilful likynges of it.

Slee thanne and breke doun pride and sette up mekenesse; also breke doun ire and envie and reise up love and charité to thyn even Cristene; also in stide of coveitise, 2480 poverté in spirite; in stide of accidie, fervour of devocious with a glaad redynesse to alle good deedes; and in stide of glotonye and leccherie, sobirté and chastité in bodi and in soule. Thus councileth Seynt Poul whanne he seid thus: *Deponentes veterem hominem cum suis actibus, qui corrumpitur secundum desideria erroris; et induite novum hominem, qui secundum deum creatus est in sanctitate et iusticia* (Ephesians 4:22, 24). Ye 2485 schal put doun the olde man, that is the ymage of the olde Adam with alle his membris, for he is roten in desires of errour, and ye schal schape you and clothe you in a newe man, whiche is the ymage of God, bi holynesse and rightwisenesse and fulheid of vertues. Who schal helpe thee to beeke doun this ymage? Sothli thi Lorde Jhesu. In the virtue and in the name of Hym schal thou breke doun the mawmet of synne. Prai Hym 2490 bisili, and desire, and He schal helpe thee.

Chapter Eighty-seven

What profiteth cometh of the kepynge of the herte, and hou moche the soule is.

Gadere thanne thyn herte togidre and doo aftir the conceile of the wise man, whanne he seith thus: *Omní custodia serva cor tuum, quoniam ex ipso procedit vita* (Proverbs 4:23). With al thi businesse kepe thyn herte, for out of it cometh liyf; and that is soth 2495 whanne it is wel kepid, for thanne wise thoughtes, clene affections, and brennyng desires of vertues and of charité and of the blisse of hevene comen oute of it, and maketh the soule for to lyve a blissid lif. Also upoun the contrarie wise, yif it be not wel kepid, thanne as oure Lord seith in the Gospel: *De corde exirent cogitationes male, que conquirant hominem* (Matthew 15:19–20). Badde thoughtes and unclene affections 2500 comen oute of the herte, the whiche filen a man, as oure Lord seith. Thei owthere bynemen the liyf of the soule bi deedli synne, or ellis thei feble the soule and maketh it seek, yef thei ben venial. For what is a man but his thoughtes and his loves? These

2479 *stide*, place. 2481 *sobirté*, soberness. 2489 *mawmet*, idol. 2500 *filen*, defile. 2501 *bynemen*, destroy; feble, enfeeble. 2502 *seek*, sick.

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maken a man oonli good or badde. As moche as thou lovest thi God and thyn even
Cristene and knowest Hym, so moche is thi soule; and if thou litil love Hym, litil is thi
2505 soule; and yif thou nought love Hym, nout is thi soule. It is nought as for good, but it is
moche as for synne. And yif thou wolt wite what thou lovest, loke whereupoun thou
thenkest; for where thi love is, there is thyne iye; and where thy likynge is, there is most
thyne herte thynkyng. Yif thou moche love God, thee liketh to theske moche upon
Hym. Rule wel thi thoughtes and thyne affeccions, and thanne art thou vertuous.

Chapter Eighty-eight

2510 Hou the ymage of synne schal be broken doun.

Bigyn thanne on, and breke this image. Whanne thou hast inwardli bithought thee of
thisilf and of thi wrecchidnesse as I have seid — how proud, hou veyn, how envious,
how malicious, how covetous, and how fleischli and how ful of corruptiou; also of
2515 how litil knowynge, felynge, or savour thou hast in God; how wise, how quyk, and
how moche savour thou hast in ertheli thynges; and schorteli that thee thenketh thee as
ful of synne as the hide is ful of fleisch — be thou not adreed to moche, yif thee
thenketh so of thisilf. And whanne thou hast don thus, lift up thi desire and thyn herte to
thei Lord Jhesu Crist, and prey Hym of helpe. Crie to Him bi greet desire and sighynges,
2520 that He wole helpe thee to beeke the charge of this veyn image, or elles that He wole
beeke it. Thenke also that sich a schame it is to thee to be feed with swynes mete of
fleischli savouris, that schuldest feele a goostli savour of heveneli joie. Yif thou doo
thus, thanne bigynnest thou for to arise agen the hool ground of synne in thee; and it mai
so be that thou schal feele peyne and sorwe, for thou schalt undirstonde that there mai
no soule lyve withoute greet peyne, but he have reste and deelite in his creatour or in his
2525 creaturis.

Thanne whanne thou arisest agens thisilf bi a fervent disire to feele of thi Lord Jhesu,
and for to drawe thi love from al bodili thinge, in so moche that thou art encombred of
thisilf and thee thenketh that alle cratures risen agen thee and alle thyng whiche thou
hadde deelite in bifore turneth thee to peyne; and whanne thou forsakest thus thisilf and

2507 for where thi love is, there is thyne iye. Proverbial. See Whiting, L558. 2519 charge,
burden. 2528 creatures, creatures.

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- 2530 thou mai fynde no confort in God: nedelynges thi soule schal suffre peyne. Nevertheless,
I hope whoso wolde suffre this peyne awhile, stidefastli clevynge upon that desire that
he wolde have not but his Lord Jhesu, and falle not lightli therfro ne seeke no confort
outward for a tyme, for it lasteth not longe, oure Lord is neer and soone schal eese thyn
herte. For He wole helpe thee to bere thi bodi ful of corrupcioun, and He wole brecce
2535 doun this image of love in thisilf; not al at oonys but litil and litil, til thou be sumdel
reformed to His liknesse.

Chapter Eighty-nine

How a man schal have hym agens stirynges of pride and of alle other vices.

- Aftir sich an hool risyng agen thisilf, whanne it is passid thou schal the more sobirli
and more esili rule thisilf and sette thee more saadli for to kepe thisilf and thi thoughties
in thyne affeccioun, for to knowe hem whethir thei ben good or badde. Thanne yif
2540 thou feele a stiryng of pride, or ony oþer spice of it, be soone waer yif thou mai, and
suffre hit not lightli passe awai, but take in thi mynde and rende it, breke it and dispice
it, and doo al the schame that thou mai thereto. Loke that thou spare it not, ne trowe it
not, speke he nevere so faire, for it is fals though it seme sooth, as the prophete seith:
2545 *Popule meus, qui beatum te dicunt ipsi te decipiunt, et in errorem te ducent* (Isaiah
3:12). This is to saie thus: Thou man of my peple, thei that seyn thou art blissid and holi,
thei bigile thee and bryng thee into errour. And yif thou doo ofte thus bisili, thou schalt
bi grace of Jhesu withinne schort tyme stoppe moche of the spryng of pride and moche
2550 abate the veyn delite therof, that thou schal unnethis fele it. And whanne thou felest it,
it schal be so weyke, and as it were neerhande deed, that it schal not moche deere thee.
And thanne schalt thou now have a goostli sight of mkenesse, hou good and hou faire
it is, and thou schalt desire it and love it for the goodnessse of itself, that thee schal like
for to biholde as thou art, and yif nede be for to suffre gladli dispite and reprof for the
love of rightwisenesse. Upon the self maner whanne thou feelist stirynges of ire, and
2555 malicious risyng of herte, or overmoche yvel wil agens thyn even Cristene for ony

2530 *nedelynges*, of necessity. 2541 *spice*, species; *waer*, aware. 2542 *lightli*, easily. 2547
bisili, diligently. 2549 *unnethis*, scarcely. 2550 *neerhande*, almost. 2551 *naw*, be able to.
2554 *self*, same.

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maner of cause, though it seeme resonable and for charité, bewaar of it and be redi with thi thought for to refreyne it, that hit turse not into fleschli appetite. Agenstonde it, and folwe hit not neither in word ne in deede, as moche as thou mai, but as he riseth smyte him doun agen; and so schalt thou slee it with the swerd of drede of God, that it schal not dere thee. For wite thou wel in alle thise stirynges of pride, envie, veylglorie, or ony other, that as sone that thou perceyvest it, and with displesynge of thi wille and of thi reson thou agenstondist it, thou sleest it, though it so be that it cleve stille upon thyn herte agens thi wille, and wole not lightli passe awai. Drede it not; for it letteth thi soule from pees, but it defouleth not thi soule. Right so upon the same wise schalt thou doo agens alle yvele stirynges of covetise, accidie, glotonye, and lecherie, that thou schal be ay redi with thy reson and with thi wille for to reprove hem and despice hem.

Chapter Ninety

What thyng helpith most a manrys knowynge, and geteth him that hym wanteth, and distroioith synne in hym.

And thanse mai thou doo the more redili and betere, yif thou be besi for to sette thyn herte most upon oon thyng. And that thyng is not ellis but a gosteli desire to God for to love Him, for to knowe Hym, for to see Hym, for to have Him heer bi grace in a litol felynge, and in the blisse of hevene a ful beyng. This desire, yif thou kepe, it schal wele telle thee whiche is synne and whiche is noon, and whiche is good and whiche is bettere good. And if thou wilt festyn thi thought thereto, it schal teche thee al that thee nedeth, and it schal gete thee al that thee wanteth. And therfore, whanne thou schal arise agens the ground of syene in general, or ellis agens ony special synne, hange faste upon this desire and sette the poynct of thi thought more upon God whom thou desirdest thanne upon the synne whiche thou reprovest; for yif thou doo so, thanse feighteth God for thee and He schal destroie the synne in thee. Thou schalt moche sooner come to thi purpos yif thou soo doo thanne yif thou lose this felynge and this meke desire to God principali, and wole sette thyn herte oonli agen stirynges of synne, as thou woldest destroie it by maistrie of thisilf. Thou schalt nevere brynge it so aboute.

2557 **Agenstonde**, Resist. 2561 **displesynge**, disapproval. 2572 **beyng**, being. 2579 **sooner**. 2582 **maistrie**, power.

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Chapter Ninety-one

Hou a man schal be schapen to the image of Jhesu, and Jhesu schapen in hym.

But doo as I have seid, and betere yif thou may, and I hope bi grace of Jhesu thou schal
2585 make the devel aschamed, and alle sich wickid stirynges thou schalt breke adoune, that
thei schal not moche dere thee. And upon this maner wise mai this image of synne be
broken doun and destroed in thee, bi the whiche thou art forschapen fro the kyndeli
schap of the ymage of Crist. And thanne schalt thou be schapin agen to the ymage of
2590 Jhesu bi mekenesse and charité; and thanne schalt thou be ful schapen to the image of
God, heere lyvynge bi a schadewe in contemplacion, and in the blis of hevene be ful
sothfastnesse.

Of this schapyng to the ful liknesse of Crist speketh Seynt Poul thus: *Filioli, quos iterum parturio, donec Christus formetur in vobis* (Galatians 4:19). Mi dere children,
whiche y bere as a woman berith a child, unto Crist be agen schapen in you. Thou hast
2595 conceived Crist bi truthe, and He hath liyf in thee in as moche as thou hast a good wille
for to serve Hym and please Hym, but He is not yit ful schapen in thee, ne thou in Him
bi fulheid of charité. And therfore Seynt Poul baar me and thee and othere also with
traveile, as a woman bereth a child, unto the tyme that Crist hath His ful schap in us and
we in Hym.

2600 Whoso weneth for to come to the working and to the ful use of contemplacion and
not bi this way, that is for to sai not bi fulheid of vertues, he cometh not in bi the dore,
and therfore as a theef he schal be caste out. I seie not but that a man bi gifte of God mai
have bi tymes a taastynge and a glymerynge of lif contemplatif, sum man in the
2605 bigynnyng, but the saad feelynge of hit schal he not have. For Criste is the doore and
porter, and withoute His leve and His lyveray mai there no man come in, as He seith
Hymself: *Nemo venit ad patrem nisi per me* (John 14:6). No man cometh to the Fadir but
bi Me. That is for to seie, no man mai come to the contemplacion of the Godhead but he
be first reformed bi fulheid of mekenesse and charitee to the liknesse of Jhesu in His
manhede.

2586 **dere**, harm. 2587 **forschapen**, deformed; **kyndeli**, natural. 2589 **schapen**, formed. 2590
bi, by; he, by. 2604 **saad**, serious. 2605 **lyveray**, livery.

Chapter Ninety-two

- 2610 Hereinne is told the cause whi this writynge is maad, and hou sche schal have hire in the redyngē that it was maad unto.

Lo, I have tolde thee a litil, as me thenketh, first of contemplacions, what it is, and sithen of the weies that bi grace ledem thereto. Not for I have it in felyngē and in worshynge as I have it in seilyngē; nevertheless I wolde bi thise wordes, siche as thei aren, first stire 2615 myn own negligence for to doon betere than I have doon, and also my purpos is for to stire thee or ony oþir man or woman that hath take the staat of contemplatiſ liyf for to traveile more bisili and more mekeli in that maner of lif bi siche simple woedes as God hath gyven me grace for to seie. And therfore yif ony word be thereinne that stireth or conforteth thyn herte more to the love of God, thanke God, for it is His gift and not of 2620 the word. And yif it conforteth thee nought, or ellis thou takeſt it not redeli, studie not to longe theraboute, but lei hit bïſide thee til another tyme, and gyve thee to praier or to oþir occupacion. Take it as it wole come, and not al at onys.

Also thise wordes that I write, take hem not to streiteli, but there as thee thenketh bi good avysement that I speke to schorteli, oþir for lackynge of Ynglisch or wantynge 2625 of resoun, I prey thee mende it there nede is oonli. Also thise woedis that y write to thee longen not alle to oon man whiche hath actif lif, but to thee or to another whiche hath the staat of liyf contemplatiſ.

The grace of oure Lord Jhesu Crist be with thee. Amen

2610 **have hire**, conduct herself. 2613 **sithen**, afterwards; **worshynge**, doing. 2617 **bisili**, diligently. 2623 **streiteli**, strictly. 2624 **oþir**, either.

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Book II

Chapter One

This chapitle scheweth that a man is seid the image of God aftir the soule and not aftir the bodi.

For as moche as thou coveitest greteli and askest it pur charité for to heere more of an image the whiche y have bifore tymes in partie discried to thee, therfore I wole gladdi
5 with drede falle to thi desire; and helpyng the grace of oure Loed Jhesu Crist, in whom
I fulliche truste, y schal opene to thee a litil more of this image. And in the bigynnyng,
yif thou wole witen pleyali what I mene bi this image, I telle thee forsothe that y
undirstonde not ellis but thyn ownen soule; for thi soule and my soule and everi resonable
10 soule is an image, and that a worthi image, for it is the ymage of God, as the apostel
seith: *Vix est ymago dei* (1 Corinthians 11:7). That is, man is the image of God and maad
to the image and to the liknesse of Him, not in bodili schap withoutin, but in the myghtes
of it withinne, as Holi Writ seith: *Formavit deus hominem ad similitudinem suam* (Gen-
esis 1:27). That is, oure Lord God schoop in soule man to the ymage and the liknesse of
15 Him. This is the ymage that I have spoke of and schal speken of. This ymage, maad to
the liknesse of God in the first schapynge was wondirli faire and bright, fulle of brennyng
love and goostli light. But thorugh synne of the first man Adam it was disfigured and
forschapen into another liknesse, as y have bifore seid. For it fel from that goostli light and
that heveneli foode into that peynful myrkenesse and beestli lust of this wrecchid liyf,
exild and flemed out fro the heritage of hevene that it schuld han had yif it hadde

1 chapitle, chapter; **seid**, said to be; **aftir**, according to. 3 **coveitest**, desire; **pur**, by. 4 **partie**, part; **discried**, described. 5 **falle**, consent. 6 **fulliche**, completely. 7 **yif**, if; **wole**, will; **witen**, know; **forsythe**, in truth. 11 **schap**, form; **myghtes**, powers. 13 **schoop**, formed. 15 **schapynge**, forming; **wondirli**, wonderfully; **brennyng**, burning. 16 **goostli**, spiritual. 17 **forschapen**, deformed. 18 **myrkenesse**, darkness. 19 **flemed**, driven; **han**, have.

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20 stonden, into the wrecchidnesse of this erthe, and aftyrward into the prisoun of helle,
ther to have ben withouten ende. Fro the whiche prisoun to that heveneli heritage it
myght nevere have comen agen, but yif it hadde be reformed to the first schap and to
the first liknesse. But that reformynge myght not ben had by noon ertheli man, for
everiche man was in the sam meschief, and noon myght suffice to helpe hymself, and
25 so mykil lasse ony oþer man. Therfore it nedide bi doon by Hym that is more thanne a
man, and that is oonli God; and that was skilful, that He schulde reforme and restoren
man to blisse yif he schulde be saaff, whiche of His eendeles goodnesse schoop him
thereto. Hou thanne hit myght be reformed, and hou it is reformed to the firste likenesse
bi Him that first formed it, bi the grace of God schal I telle thee, for that is the entente
30 of this writinge.

Chapter Two

Hou it nedide to mankynde that oonli thorugh the passioune of oure Lord it schulde be
restorid and reformed that was foesaken bi the first synne.

The rightwisenesse of God asketh that a trespaas doon be not forgyven but yif amendis
be maad for it, yif it mai be doon. Now is it sooth mankynde, that was hool in Adam the
first man, trespaced agens God so wondir grevousli whanne hit forfeitide the special
biddynge of God and consentide to the fals concile of the feend, that it deservide
rightwiseli for to have be departid from Him and dampsed to helle withouten ende — so
fer forth, that stondinge the rightwisenesse of God, the trespaas myght not be forgeiven
40 but yif amendis and ful satisfaccioun were first maad therfore. But this amedes myght
no man make that was man oonli and come out of Adam by kyndeli generacion, for this

20 stonden, stood. **24 sam meschief**, same misfortune. **25 mykil**, much; **nedide bi doon**,
needed to be done. **26 skilful**, reasonable. **27 saaff**, saved; **schoop**, created. **31 schulde**,
could. **33 rightwisenesse**, righteousness; **but yif**, unless. **34 sooth**, true; **hool**, whole. **35**
agens, against. **36 biddynge**, command; **concile**, counsel; **feend**, i.e., devil (here and through-
out). **37 rightwiseli**, justly; **departid**, separated. **37–38 so fer forth**, to the extent. **38 stondinge**
the rightwisenesse of God, were the justice of God to stand. **39 but yif**, unless; **ful satisfaccioun**,
the doctrine of the atonement in this chapter is based on Anselm, *Cur deus homo*, especially
1.20, 2.8–11; see Clark, p. 303n3. **40 kyndeli**, natural.

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skile, for the trespass and the unworschipe was endeles gret, and therfore it passide manrys myght for to make amendis for it. And also for this skile: he that hath trespassed and schal make amendis, hym bihoveth gyve to hym that he trespacide unto al that he oweþ though that he hadde not trespassed, and also over that, hym bihoveth gyve him sumwhat that he oweþ not, but oonli for that he trespacid. But oonly mankynde hadde not wherwith he myght paie God for his trespaas, over that he ought Hym. For what good dede that man myght doon in bodi or in soule, it was but his dette. For everi man oweþ, as the Gospel seith, for to love God with al his herte and al his soule and alle his myghtes; and betere myght he not doo than this. And nevertheless this deede sufficed not to the refoemyng of mankynde, ne this myght not he doon but yif he hadde first be reformed. Than nedid it that yif manrys soule schulde be reformed and the trespaas maad good, that oure Lord God Hymself schulde reforme this image and make amendis for this trespaas, syn that no man myght. But that myght He not doo in His Godhede, for He myght not, ne ought not, make amendis bi suffryng of peyne in His own kynde.

Therfore it nedide that He schulde take the same mankynde that hadd trespassed, and bosome man; and that myght He not by the comon lawe of kyndeli generacion, for it was impossible Goddis sone to be born of a touchid woman. Therfore He moste bosome man thorough a gracious generacion, bi wirkynge of the Holi Goost, of a clene gracious maiden, oure Ladi Seynt Marie. And so was it doon. For oure Lord Jhesu Crist, Goddis sone, bicom man, and thorough His precious deeth that He suffride made amendis to the Fadir of hevene for manrys gilt. And that myght He wel doon, for He was God, and He oughte not for Hymself, but for as mykil as He was man born of the same kynde that Adam was that first trespacide. And so, though He ought not for His owen persone, for Himself myght not synne, nevertheless He ought it of His free wille for the trespass of mankynde, the whiche kynde He took for savacioun of man of His endeles merci. For sooth it is ther was nevere man that myght yelde to God onythinge of his owene that he ought not, but oonli this blissid man Jhesu Crist. For He myght paien thingis that He

41 **skile**, reason; **unworschipe**, dishonor; **passide**, surpassed. 42 **myght**, power, skile, reason. 43 **hym bihoveth gyve**, it is necessary for him to give. 44 **over**, beyond. 45 **sumwhat**, something; **bat oonli**, only because. 46 **not**, nought; **ought**, owed. 48 **oweþ**, is obliged. 50 **ne**, nor; **yif**, if. 51 **nedid it**, it was necessary. 53 **syn**, since. 54 **kynde**, nature. 56 **kyndeli**, natural. 57 **touchid**, touched (sexually). 58 **gracious**, through grace; **clene**, pure. 61 **maanyys**, man's. 62 **oughtis**, owed; **kynde**, nature. 65 **savacioun**, salvation. 66 **sooth**, truth. 67 **ought**, owed; **paien**, pay.

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oughte not as for Himsilf, and that was not but o thyng: and that was for to gyve His
70 preciouuse liyf by wilfull takynge of deeth for love of sothfastnesse. This ought He nouȝt.

As mykil good as He myght doo to the worshipe of God in His liyf, was al but dette.
But for to take deeth for love of ryghtwisenesse, He was not bounden thereto.

He was bounde to righfulnesse, but He was not bounden to dyen. For deeth is onli
a peyne ordeyned of God to man for his owen synne; but oure Lorde Jhesu synned
75 nevere, ne He myght not synnen, and therefore He oughte nought for to dien. And yit
wilfulli He diede, than paid He to God more thanne He oughte. And syn that was the
beste manere deede and most woethi that evere was doon, therfore was it resonable that
the synne of mankynde schulde be forgyven, in as mykil as mankynde had founden a
man of the same kynde withoutin weem of synne, that is Jhesu, that myght make
80 amendis for the trespass doon and myght paies oure Lord God al that he oughte, and
overmore, that he oughte not. Thanne siththe oure Lord Jhesu, God and man, diede
thus for savacion of manrys soule, it was rightful that synne schulde be forgyven and
manrys soule, that was His image, schulde mow be reformyd and restorid to the first
likenesse and to the blisse of hevene.

This passioun of oure Lord and this precious deeth is the ground of al the reformynge
85 of mannes soule, withouten whiche myght nevere manrys soule have be reformed to
the liknes of Him, ne come to the blisse of hevene. But blissid mot He be in al His
wirkynge. Now is it so, that thorough vertu of His passioun the brennyng suerd of
cherubyn that droof Adam ought of paradise is now put awei, and the eendeles gates of
hevene aren opened to ilk man that wole entre in thereto. For the persone of Jhesu is
90 bothe God and kynge, evene in blisse to the Fadir, and as man He is portour at the gate
redi to receyve ilke a soule that wole be reformed heire in this liyf to His liknesse. For
now mai ilke a soule, yif that he wole, be reformed to the liknesse of God, sith that the
trespaas is forgeven and the amendis bee maad thorough Jhesu for the first gilt.
Neverethelees, though this be sooth, alle soules have not the profite ne the fruit of His
95 precious passioun, ne aren refcoemed to the liknes of Hym.

68 o, onc. 69 liyf, life; sothfastnesse, truth; ought He nouȝt, owed He not. 70 worshipe, honor.
73 peyne, punishment. 74 oughte, was obliged. 75 oughte, owed; syn, since. 76 manere, kind
of. 77 mykil, much. 78 weem, blemish. 80 overmore, moreover; siththe, since. 82 mow be, be
able to be. 86 mot, may. 87 wirkynge, working; brennyng suerd, burning sword. 88 droof,
drove; ought, out. 89 wole, will. 90 evene, equal. 91 ilke a, each. 92 yif, if; sith, since. 94
sooth, true; profite, benefit.

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Chapter Three

That Jewes and paynymes and also fals Cristene men are not reformed effectuall thorough
vertu of this passioun for here owen defaute.

Two maner of men aren not reformed bi vertu of His passioun. Oon is of hem that
troweth it not; another is of hem that loven it not. Jewes and paynymes han not the
100 benefetes of this passioun, for thei trowen it not. Jewes trowen not that Jhesu man,
the sone of the Virgine Marie, is Goddis sone of hevene. Also paynmes trowen not that
the sovereyn wisdom of God wolde become sone of man, and in manhede suffre the
peynes of deeth. And therfore the Jewes holden the prechynge of the Croos of the
passioun of Crist not but sclaundre and blasfemye, and the paynemys holden it but
105 fantom and folie. But trewe Cristen men holden it the sovereyne wisdom of God and His
grete myght. Thus Scynt Poul seide: *Predicamus vobis Christum crucifixum, Iudeis quidem scandalum, gentibus autem stultitiam: ipsis autem vocatis Iudeis, atque Grecis, Christum dei virtutem* (1 Corinthians 1:23–24). That is: We prechen to you that we
110 trowen, that Jhesu Crist crucified, the sone of Marie, is Goddis sone, sovereyne vertu
and wisdom of God. The whiche Jhesu to Jewes and to paynemys that trowen not in
Hym is but sclaundre and folie. And therfore thise men bi there untrouthe putten hemself
fro the reformyng of her owen soule, and stondyng there untrouthe, schullen thei
never be saaf ne come to blisse of hevene. For sooth it is, fro the bigynnyng of the
115 world unto the laste ende, was there nevere man saaf, ne schal be saaf, but yif he hadde
or have trouthe general or special in Jhesu Crist, other comende or comen. For right as
alle chosen soulis that weren before the incarnacioun undir the Eelde Testament hadden
trouthe in Crist, that He schulde come and reforme manrys soule, either openli, as
patriarkes and prophetes and othire holi men hadden, or elles priveli and generali, as
children and othire simple and imperfyt soulis hadden that knownen not speciali the
120 prystees of the incarnacioun, right so alle the chosen soulis undir the Newe Testament

96 paynymes, pagans. 97 here, their; defaute, fault. 99 troweth, believes; paynemes, pagans.
100 benefetes, benefits. 104 sclaundre, scandal. 105 fantom, phantom; folie, folly. 109
trowen, believe. 111 untrouthe, unbelief. 112 fro, from; her, their; stondyng there untrouthe,
their unbelief contyning. 113 saaf, saved; sooth, true. 114 bat yif, unless. 115 comende,
coming; comen, having come. 116 Eelde, Old. 117 trouthe, belief. 118 priveli, secretly. 119
imperfyt, imperfect. 120 prystees, mysteries.

han trowed in Crist that He is coesen, oithir openli and felyngeli, as gosteli men and wise
 men han, or ellis generali, as children that dien cristened and othere symple and lewed
 soulis han that aren norischid in the bosom of Holi Chirche. Syn this is sooth, thanne
 125 thynketh me that thise men gretli and grevousli erron that seyn that Jewis and Sarcenys
 and paynemes, bi kepynge of hire own lawe, mown be maad saaf, though thei trowen
 not in Jhesu Crist as Holi Chirche troweth and as Cristen men doon, in as mykil as thei
 wene that her own trouth is good and siker and sufficient to here savacion, and in that
 trouthe thei doon, as hit semeth, many good deeds of rightwisenesse, and peraventure
 130 yif thei knewen that Cristen feith were betere than here is, thei wolde take it and leve
 here own, that thei therfore schulde be saaf. Nai, it is not ynowgh so. For Crist, God
 and man, is bothe wei and eende, and He is mediatour atwix God and man, and withouten
 Him mai no soule be reconciled ne come to blisse of hevene. And therfore thei that
 135 trowen in Hym that He is not bothe God and man mowen nevere be saaf ne come to
 blisse. Othere men also, that loven not Crist ne His passioun, aren not reformed in hire
 soule to the liknesse of Hym; and thise men aren fals Cristen men, the whiche are out of
 charite and leven and dien in deedli synne. Thise men trowen wel, as it semeth, that
 140 Jhesu is Goddis sone, and that His passioun sufficeth to savacious of manrys soule,
 and thei trowen also alle the articles of the feith, but it is an unschapli trouthe, and a
 deed, for thei loven Him nought, ne thei chese not the fruit of His passioun, but thei
 liggen stille in here synne, and in here fals love of this world unto here laste eende. And
 so be thei not reformed to the liknes of God, but goon to peynes of helle eendelessh, as
 Jewes and Sarcomes doon, and into mykil more pyne thanne thei, in as mykil as thei

121 **han trowed**, have believed; **felyageli**, in feeling; **gosteli**, spiritual. 122 **han**, have; **lewed**, ignorant. 124 **thynketh me**, it seems to me; **Sarcenys**, Saracens. 125 **mown be**, are able to be. 126 **mykil**, much. 127 **wene**, suppose; **siker**, certain. 128 **rightwisenesse**, righteousness; **peraventure**, perhaps. 129 **here**, theirs. 130 **schulde be saaf**, the salvation of the heathen was a topic of lively interest in the later Middle Ages; for Langland's more generous view, see *Piers Plowman*, B.11.62-69; Cindy L. Vito, *The Virtuous Pagan in Middle English Literature*; George H. Russell, "The Salvation of the Heathen: The Exploration of a Theme in *Piers Plowman*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 29 (1966), 101-16; and Clark, pp. 303-04 (ms 7 and 8); **ynowgh**, enough. 131 **atwix**, between. 133 **mowen**, can. 136 **leven**, live. 138 **unschapli**, misshapen. 139 **nought**, not. 140 **liggen stille**, lie constantly. 142 **pyne**, pain.

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hadden the trouthe and kepte it not; for that was more trespace than yif thei nevere hadde had it.

- 145 Thanne yif thou wolt wite whiche soules aren reformede heere in this liyf to the image of God thorugh vertu of His passioun, sothli oonli tho that trowen in Him and loven Hym. In the whiche soulis the ymage of God, that was thorugh synne forschapen as it were into a foule beestis liknesse, is restored and reformed unto the first schap, and into the worthynesse and worschipe that hit hadde in the bigynnyng, withoutin whiche reformyng in feith schal nevere soule be saaf ne come to blisse.

Chapter Four

Of two maner reformyng of this image, oon in fulnesse and oþir in partie.

- Now, seist thou, "Hou mai this be sooth that the image of God, the whiche is manys soule, myghte be reformed here in this liyf to His liknesse in ony creature?" It semeth nai, it myght not ben. For if it were reformed, thanne schuilde hit have stable mynde, 155 cleer sight, and clene brennyng love in God and in goostli thinges ai lastandli, as it had in the bigynnyng. But that is in no creature, as thou trowest, lyvynge in this liyf. For as agentis thisilf, thou canst wel sai thou thenkest thee ful feir thereffro. Thi mynde and thi resoun, and the love of thy soule aren so mykil sette in bihaldynge and in the love of ertheli thynges, that of goostli thinges thou felist right litil. Thou feelist no reformyng in 160 thisilf, but art soo umbilapped with this blak image of synne, for aught that thou maist doon, that upon what side thou turnest thee thou feelist thisilf defouled and spotted with fleischli stirynges of this foule ymage. Oþir chaungynge feelist thou noon fro fleischliheed into goostlinessse, neither in the privei myghtis of thi soule withinne, ne in bodili feelynge withoute. Wherfore thou thenkest that it myght not be that this image myght be reformed; or ellis yif it myght be reformed, thanne askest thou hou it myght be reformed.

To this y answerē and seie thus. There is two maner of reformyng of the ymage of God, the whiche is manys soule. Oon is in fulnesse, another is in partie. Reformyng in

145 **wite**, know. 147 **forschapen**, deformed. 153 **ony**, any. 155 **brennyng**, burning; goostli, spiritual; **ai lastandli**, everlasting. 157 **agentis**, concerning; feir, far. 158 **bihaldynge**, beholding. 160 **umbilapped**, surrounded. 162 **fleischliheed**, state of being fleshly. 163 **goostlinessse**, state of being spiritual; **privel**, secret. 167 **partie**, part.

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fulnes mai not be had in this lif, but it is delayed after this lif to the blisse of hevene,
where manmys soule schal fulli be reformed; not to that staat that it hadde atte the feste

170 bigynnyng bi kynde, or myght have hadde thorough grace yif it hadde stonde hool, but
it schal be restored to mykil more blisse and mykil more highere joie thorough the mykil
merci and eendeles goodnesse of God thanne it schulde have had yif it nevere had
fallen. For thanne schal the soule resseyven the hoole and the fulfillyng of God in alle
175 myghtis of it, withouten medlere of ony othr affeccioun; and it schal seen mankynde in
the persoone of Jhesu above the kynde of angelis ooned to the Godhede. For than schal
Jhesu, bothe God and man, ben al in al, and oonli He and noon othr thanne He, as the
prophete seith: *Dominus solus exaltabitur in die illa* (Isaiah 2:11). That is, oure Lord
Jhesu in that dai that is the ai lastande dai schal be higged ooceli, and noon but He. And
also the bodi of man schal thanne be glorified, for it schal receyve fulli the riche dowarie
180 of undeedlinesse with al that longeth thereto. This schal a soule han with the bodi, and
mykil more thanne I can seyn; but that schal ben in the blisse of hevene, and not in this lif.

For though it be soo that the passioum of oure Loed bi cause of this ful reformynge of
185 manmys soule, neverthelees it was not His wille for to graume this ful reformynge
anoon after His passioum to alle chosen soulis that were lyvande in tyme of His passioum,
but He delayed it unto the laste day, and for this skile. Sooth it is that oure Lord Jhesu of
His merci hath ordayneid a certayn nombre of soulis to savacion, the whiche nombre
was not fulfilled in tyme of His passioum, and therfore hit nedide that bi the lengthe of
tyme thorough kynedeli generacion of men it schulde be fulfilled. Thanne yif it hadde so
190 ben that as tite after the deeth of oure Lord, everi soule that wolde have trowed in Hym
schulde anoon sodeynli have ben blissid and be ful reformed withoutyn ony othr abidynge,
there wolde noo creature that lyvede thanne that he ne wolde have resseyved the feith,
for to have ben maad blissid. And thanne schulde generacion have ceesid, and so
schuld wee that been now lyvynge, chosen soules, and oþere soulis that comen after
us, not have ben born, and so schulde oure Lord have failid of his nombre.

170 **stonde hool**, stood whole. 173 **resseyven**, receive. 174 **myghtis**, powers; **medlere**, ming-
ling. 175 **kynde**, nature. 176 **ben**, be. 178 **ai lastande**, everlasting; **higged**, exalted. 179 **dowarie**,
dowry. 180 **undeedlinesse**, immortality; **longeth**, belongs. 182 **bi cause**, because. 184 **anoon**,
at once; **lyvande**, living. 185 **skile**, reason. 187 **hit nedide**, it was necessary. 188 **kynedeli**,
natural; **it schulde be fulfilled**, the doctrine of the chosen in these paragraphs is based on
Anselm, *De concordia*, q. 3, c. 9; see Clark, p. 304n13. 189 **as tite**, immediately. 190 **abidynge**,
waiting. 191 **resseyved**, received.

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195 But that may not ben. And therfore oure Lord purveyede for us mykel betere, in that
that He delaide the ful reformynge of manrys soule unto the laste eende, as Seynt
Poule seith: *Deo pro nobis melius providente, ne sine nobis consummarentur* (Hebreus
11:40). That is, oure Lord purveyed betere for us in delaiyng of the ful refoemynge thanne
yif He hadde grauntid it thanne, for this skile: that the chosen soules hecre before schulden
200 not maken an ende withoutin us that comen aftir. And another skile is this: for syn that a man
in his first formyng of God was sette in his free wil and hadde free chesynge whethir he
wolde have fulli God or noon, it was therfore resonable that syn that he wolde not chese
God thanne, but wrecchidli fle from Hym, yif he schulde afterward be reformed, that he
schulde be sette ageyn in the same free cheesynge that he was first inne, wethir he wolde
205 have the profite of his reformynge or noo. And this mai be a skile why manrys soule was
not fulli reformed anoon aftir the passioune of oure Lord Jhesu Crist.

Chapter Five

That the reformynge in partie is on two maneres. Oon in feyth, another in feith and in
felynge.

210 Another reformynge of this image is in partie, and this refoemynge mai be had in this lyf;
and but yif it be had in this lyf, it schal nevere be had, ne the soule schal nevere be saaf.
But this reformynge is on two maneres. Oon is in feith oonli, another is in feith and in
felynge. The firste, that is the reformynge in feith, sufficeth to savacions; the secunde is
worthi to have passande mede in the blisse of hevene. The firste mai be had lightli and
215 in schort tyme. The secunde mai not soo, but thorough lengthe of tyme and mykil gosteli
traveile. The firste mai be had with the feelynge of the ymage of synne, for though a
man fele nothynge in himself but alle stirynges of synne and fleischli desires, yet he mai,
not withstandyng al that felynge, yif he wilfulli assente not therto, ben reformed in
feith to the liknesse of God. But the secunde reformynge putteth out the likynge and the
220 feelynge of fleischli stirynges and worldly desires, and suffreth noon sich spottis abiden
in this image. The firste reformynge is oonli of bigynnynge and profitynge soulis, and of

195 **purveyede**, provided. 199 **skile**, reason. 201 **chesynge**, choosing. 203 **fle**, flee. 206
206 **anoon**, immediately. 209 **partie**, part. 210 **saaf**, saved. 213 **passande mede**, surpassing reward.
220 **profitynge**, proficient.

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actif men. The secunde is of perflight soulis and of contemplatiſ men. For bi the firſte refoemyng the ymage of synne is not diſtroied, but it is left as it were al hool in felyng. But the secunde reformyng deſtroieth olde feelynges of thiſ image of synne, and bringeth into the ſoule newe gracious feelynges thorough wirkyng of the Holi Gost. The firſt is good, and the secunde is betere, but the thridde, that is in the bliſſe of hevene, that is alderbest. First bigynne we to ſpeken of that toon and ſiththen of the tothir, and ſo ſchul we comen to the thridde.

Chapter Six

That thorough the sacrament of baptym that is groundid in the paſſiouſ of Crist thiſ image is reformed fro the original synne.

- 230 Two maner of synne makēn a ſoule to leſe the ſchap and the liknesſe of God. That oon is callid original, that is the firſt synne. That othr is callid actuel synne, that is wilfulli doon. Thiſe two synnes putten a ſoule fro the bliſſe of hevene and dampnen it to the eendeles pyne of helle, but yif it be thorough grace of God reformed to His liknesſe, or it pasſe hens out of thiſ lif. Neveretheleſ, two remedies there aren agens thiſe two synnes, 235 bi the whiche a forſchafen ſoule mai be reſtored ageyn. Oon is the sacrament of baptym agens the origynal synne; another is the sacrament of penaunce agens the actuel synne. The ſoule of a childe that is born and is uncriftened, because of the origynal synne hath no liknesſe of God; he is not but an image of the feend and a brond of helle. But as ſoone as it is criftened, it is reformed to the ymage of God, and thorough vertu of feith of Holi 240 Chirche ſodeynli is turned fro the liknesſe of the feend and maad like to an angel of hevene. Also the ſame fallich to a Jewe or in a Sarceyn, whiche or thei be criftened aren not but manciples of helle, but whanne thei forſaken ther error and fallen mekeſli

221 *actif*, active; *perflight*, perfect. 226 *alderbest*, best of all; *toon*, one; *tothir*, other. 227 *the thridde*, the threefold division of stages of the spiritual life as *bigynnyng*, *profityng*, *perflight* ("beginning, proficient, perfect") is conventional; see Gregory, *Moralia*, 24.11.28 (Clark, p. 304n17). 228 *baptym*, baptism. 231 *actuel*, actual, i.e., sins actively committed, as opposed to inherited original sin. 233 *pyne*, pain; *or*, before. 235 *forſchafen*, deformed; *baptym*, baptism. 238 *brond*, freebrand. 241 *falleth*, happens; *or*, before. 242 *manciples*, stewards; *ther*, their (see Textual Notes).

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to the trouthe in Crist, and receyven the baptym of water in the Holi Goest, soothli
245 withouten ony taryyinge thei aren reformed to the liknesse of God — so fulli, as Hooli
Chiche troweth, that yif thei myghten as swithe affir baptym passen ought of this
world, thei schulden streite fleen to hevene withoutyn ony more lettynge, hadde thei
doo nevere so moche synne bifore in tyme of here untrouthe, and nevere schulde thei
feele of the peyne of helle ne of purgatorie. And that pryylege schulen thei have bi the
merite of the passioune of Crist.

Chapter Seven

250 That thorough the sacrament of penaunce that stondeth in contricion and in confessioun
and in satisfaccioun this image is reformed fro actuel synne.

Also what Cristen man or woman that hath loste the liknesse of God thorough deedli
synne, brekyng Goddis comaundementis, yif he thorough the touchynge of grace
soothfastli forsake his synne with sorwe and contricioun of herte, and be in ful wil for
255 to amende hym and turne hym to God and to good lyvynge, and in this wil he receyveth
the sacrament of penaunce, yif that he mai, or ellis yif that he may not, he is in ful wille
thereto — sotheli y seie that this manrys soule or womannys, that was forschapen first
to the liknesse of the devel thorough deedli synne, is now bi the sacrament of penaunce
restored and schapen ageyn to the image of oure Lord God. This is a greet curtesie of
260 oure Lord, and an endeles merci, that so lightli forgyveth al manere synne, and so
sodeynli geveth plenté of grace to a synful soule that asketh merci of Hym. He abideth
no grete penaunce-doyng ne peynful fleischli suffryng, or He forgyve it, but He asketh
a lothyng of synne and a ful forsakynge of it in wille of the soule for love of Hym, and
a tumyng of the herte to Hym. This asketh He, for thus gyveth he. And thanne, whanne
265 He seeth this, withouten ony delaiynge He forgyveth the synne and reformeth the soule
to His liknesse. The synne is forgyven, that the soule schal not be dampned. Neverthelees,
the peyne dettid for the synne is not yit fulli forgeven but yif contricion and love be the

244 *taryyunge*, delay. 245 *troweth*, believes; *as swithe*, immediately; *ought*, out. 246 *streite*,
straightaway; *lettynge*, hindrance. 247 *untrouthe*, unbelief. 259 *curtesie*, graciousness. 260
lightli, easily. 261 *geveth*, gives; *plenté*, fullness; *abideth*, waits for. 262 *or*, before. 267 *dettid*,
owed; *forgeven*, forgiven.

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more. And therfore schal he goon and schewen hym and schryven him to his gosteli fadir, and receyven penaunce enjoyned for his trespace and gladli fulfille it, soo that bothe the synne and the peyne mai be doon away, or he passe hens. And that is the skileful ordenaunce of Holi Chirche for gret profite of mannes soule, that though the synne be forgeven thoough veri contricoun, neverthelees in fulfillynge of mekenesse and in makynge hool satisfaccioun, he schal yif he mai schewe to his prest plener confessioune. For that is his tokene and his warant of forgevenesse agens alle his enemyes, and that is nedeful for to have.

For yif a man had forfeited his lif agens a kynge of this erthe, it were not know to hym as ful sikernessee for to have oonli forgyvenesse of the kynge, but yif he have a chartre, the whiche mai be his tokene and his warant agens alle othere men. Right so mai it be seid goostli, yif a man have forfeited agens the kyng of hevne his lif thorugh deedli synne, it is not ynow to hym to ful sikernessee for to have forgyvenesse of God oonli bi contricion atwix God and hym, but yif he have a chartre maad bi Holi Chirche, yif he may come therto. And that is the sacrament of penaunce, the whiche is his chartre and his tokene of forgevenesse. For sith he forfeitteth bothe agens God and Holi Chirche, it is skilful that he have forgevenesse for that oon and a warant for that othir. And this is a skile whi that confession is nedeful.

Anothir skile is this, that syn the reformyng of the soule stondeth in feith oonli, not in felyng, therfore a fleschli man that is rude and boistous and cannot demen lightli, but outward of bodily thinges, schuld not mowe han trowed that his synnes hadden ben forgeven, but yif he had sum bodili tokene. And that is confessioune, thorugh the whiche tokene he is maad as siker of forgevenesse, yif he doo that in him is. This is the trouthe of Holi Chirche, as I undirstonde.

Also anothir skile is this. Though the ground of forgevenesse stonde not principali in confessioune, but in contricion of herte and forthenking of synne, neverthelees I hope that there is many a soule that schulde nevere have feelid veri contricoun, ne had ful forsakynge of synne, yif confession had not ben. For it falleth ofte sithes that in tyme of

268 **schewen hym**, reveal himself; **schryven him**, confess himself. 271 **skileful**, reasonable.
272 **veri**, true. 273 **plener**, full. 276 **agens**, to; **isow**, enough. 277 **sikernessee**, security;
chartre, charter; that is, the legal document recording an official action or an agreement. 284
skilful, reasonable. 287 **rude**, rough; **boistous**, crude; **lightli**, easily. 288 **mowe**, be able to.
290 **siker**, certain. 293 **forthenking**, repenting; **hope**, suppose. 294 **feelid**, felt. 295 **ofte**
sithes, often.

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300 schrifte grace of compunction cometh to a soule that before nevere feelid grace, but ai
was coold and drie, and feir from feelynge of grace. And forthi, syn schrift was so
profitable to the more part of Cristene men, Holi Chirche ordeyned it for more sikimesse
generali to alle Cristene men, that everiche man or woman schulde oones in the yeer atte
the leste be schriven of alle here synnes that comen to ther mynde to ther goostli fadir,
though thei han had never so mykil contricion before tyme.

305 Nevertheles, I hope wel that yif al men had ben as bisi aboughte the kepyng of
hemself in feelynge of al maner synne, and had come to as grete knowyng and felyng
of God as sum man is, that Holi Chirche schulde nevere have ordeynede the tokene of
confessioun as for a needful bond, for hit had not nedid. But for alle men aren not so
perflighe, and peraventure mykil of the more partie of Cristene men is unperflighe, therfore
Holi Chirche ordeyned confessioun in wei of general bond to alle Cristene men that wole
knownen Hooli Chirche as her moder and wolen ben baxum to hir biddinge. Yif this be
sooth, as I hope it is, thanne erreth he greteli that generali seith that confessioun of
310 synne for to schewe to a prest is neither nedeful to a synnere ne bihoveful, and no man
is bounden thereto. For bi that that I have seid, it is bothe nedeful and spedful to alle
soulis that in this wrechid lif aren defouled thorough synne, and nameli to thoos that aren
thorough deedli synne forschapen from the liknesse of God; the whiche mow not be
reformed to His liknes, but bi the sacrament of penaunce, that principali standeth in
315 confessioun and sorwe of herte, and secundariili in schrift of mouth folwande astir, yif it
mai be had. Upoun this manere, bi the sacrament of penaunce, is a synful soule re-
formed to the ymage of God and to His likenesse.

Chapter Eight

Hou in the sacrament of baptym and of penaunce thorough a privei unperceivable wirkynge
of the Hooli Goost this image is reformed though it be not seen ne feelid.

297 **schrift**, confession. 298 **more**, greater. 302 **aboughte**, about. 306 **perflighe**, perfect;
peraventure, perhaps. 308 **baxum**, obedient. 309 **hope**, expect. 310 **scheme**, reveal; **nedeful**,
necessary; **bihoveful**, obligatory; **neither nedeful . . . ne bihoveful**, Hilton's sharp rejection of
the Wycliffite position on confession is notable; see Clark, p. 305n27. 311 **spedful**, advanta-
geous. 312 **thoo**, those. 313 **mow**, can. 314 **standeth**, consists.

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- 320 But this reformynge stondeth in feith and not in feelynge; for right as the propirtee of feith is for to trowen that thou seest not, right soo it is for to trowen that thou feelist not. But he that is reformed in his soule bi the sacrament of penaunce to the image of God, he feeleth noo chaungynge in himself, neithir in his bodili kynde withoutin, ne in the privé substance of his soule withinne, oþer than he dide. For he is as he was unto 325 his feelynge, and he feelith the same stirynges of synne and the same corrupcion of his fleisch in passions and worldli desires risyng in his herte as he dide bifore. And yit neverthelees schal he trowe that he is thorough grace reformed to the likenesse of God, though he neithir feele it ne see it. He mai feele wel sorwe for his synne, and a turmyng of his wil fro synne to clennesse of lyvynge, yif that he hath grace and take good keep of himself. But he mai neithir seen ne feele the reformynge of his soule, hou it is wondirfulli and unperceyvabli chaunged from filthe of the feend to the faireheed of an angel thorough 330 a privei gracious wirkinge of oure Lord God. That mai he not seen, but he schal trowe it; and yif he trowe it, thanne is his soule reformed in feith. For right as Holi Chirche troweth bi the sacrament of baptym soothfastli resseyved, a Jewe or a Sarasyn or a child born is reformed in soule to the likenesse of God thorough a privé unperceyvable wirkynge of the Hooli Goost, not agenstondynge alle the fleschli stirynges of his bodi of synne, the whiche he schal feelen aftir his baptym as wel as he dide bifore; right so bi 335 the sacrament of penaunce mekeli and truli resseyved, a fals Cristen man that hath ben encombrid with deedli synne al his lyftyme is reformed in his soule withinne unperceyvabli, outtaken oonli a turmyng of his wille thorough a privé myght and a gracious wirkynge of the Holi Gost, that sodaynli wirketh and in tym of a moment or a twynkelyng of an iye righteth a foward soule, and turneth it from goostli filthe to fairenesse unseable, and of a servant of the feend maketh a sone of joie, and of the prisoner of helle maketh a partener of heveneli heritage, not agenstondande al the fleischli 340 feelynge of this synneful image that is the bodili kynde.
- 345 For thou schalt undirstonde that the sacrament of baptym or of penaunce is not of that vertu for to lette and destroie uttirli alle the stirynges of fleischli lustes and peynful passiouns, that a man schulde nevere feele no manere risyng ne stiryng of hem no

320 **stondeth**, consists. 324 **privé**, secret. 329 **clennesse**, purity; **keep**, care. 331 **faireheed**, fairness. 332 **wirkinge**, working. 336 **agenstondynge**, despite. 340 **outtaken**, except. 342 **foward**, unruly. 343 **unseable**, invisible. 344 **partener**, partner (see Textual Notes). 347 **vertu**, power; **lette**, prevent.

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tyme. For if it were so, thanne were a soule fulli reformed here to the worshipe of the
350 first makynge; but that mai not be fulli in this lif. But it is of that vertu that it clenseth the
soule from alle the synnes bifor door; and yif it be departed from the bodi, saveth it
from dampnacioun; and yif it duelle in the bodi, it geveth the soule grace for to agenstondre
the stirynges of synne. And it kepith it in grace also, that no maner stiryng of lust or of
passioune that it felith in the fleisch, be it nevere so grevous, schal dere it, ne departen it
355 from God, as longe as it wilfulli semeth not therto. Thus Seynt Poul menede whan he
seide thus: *Nichil dampnacionis est hitz qui sunt in Christo, qui non secundum carnem
ambulant*, etc. (Romans 8:1). That is: Thise soules that aren reformed to the ymage of
God in feith, thorugh the sacrament of baptym or of penaunce, schal not be dampned
for feelynges of this ymage of synne, yif it so be that thei goo not aftir the stirynges of
360 the flesch bi fulifillynge of deede.

Chapter Nine

That we schul trowe stidefasteli reformynge of this image, yif oure conscience wittenesse
us a ful forsakynge of synne and a trewe turnynge of oure wil to good lyvynge.

Of this reformynge in feith speketh Seynt Poul thus: *Iustus autem ex fide vivit* (He-
breus 10:38). The righewise man lyveth in feith. That is, he that is maad righful bi
365 baptym or penaunce, he lyveth in feith, the whiche sufficeth to savacion and to heveneli
pees, as Seynt Poul seith: *Iustificati ex fide, pacem habemus ad deum* (Romans 6:1).
This is, we that aren righted and reformed thorugh feith in Crist han pees and accord
maad atwixe God and us, not agenstondynge the vicious feelinges of oure bodi of
synne.

370 For though this reformynge be privei and mai not wel be feeld here in this liyf,
neverthelees whoso troweth it stidefasteli and schape his werkes bisili for to acorde to
his trouthe, and that he turne not ageyn to deedli synne, sothli whan the houre of
deeth cometh and the soule is departed from this bodili liyf, thanne schal he fynde it

349 **worshippe**, honored status. 352 **duelle**, dwell; **agenstonde**, resist. 354 **dere**, harm;
departen, separate. 355 **seateth**, consents; **menede**, meant. 364 **righewise**, righteous; **right-
ful**, just. 367 **righted**, justified. 368 **agenstondynge**, notwithstanding. 372 **trouthe**, faith.

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sooth that I seie now. Thus Seynt Joon seide in confort of chosen soulis that lyven here

- 375 in feith undir the feelynge of this peynful image: *Karissimi, et nunc sumus filii dei; sed*
nunc apparuit quid erimus. Scimus autem quantum cum apparuerit, nunc apparebimus
cum eo, similes ei in gloria (1 John 3:2). That is: Mi dere frendis, we aren right now
380 whiles that we lyven here the soones of God, for we aren reformed bi feith in Criste to
His liknesse; but it schewith not yit what we aren, but it is al privei. Nevertheless we
knowen wel that whanne oure Lord schal schewe Him atte the laste dai, thanne schal
we appere with Hym like to Hym in endeles joie.

Yif thou wolt witen thanne yif thi soule be reformed to the image of God or noo, bi
that that I have seid thou maist have an entré. Ransake thyn ownen conscience and loke
what thi wille is, for therinne stondeth al. Yif it be turned from al deedli synne, that
385 thou woldest for nothyng wityngeli and wilfulli breke the comaundement of God, and
for that thou hast mysdoon here bifore agens his biddynge, thou haste beschreven
mekeli, with ful herte to leve it and with sorwe that thou dedest it, I seie thanne sikirli
that thi soule is reformed in feith to the likenesse of God.

Chapter Ten

That alle the soules that lyven mekeli in the trouthe of Holi Chirche and han here trouthe
390 quykemed with love and charité aren reformid bi this sacrament, though it so be that thei
mown not fele the special gift of devocion or of goostli feelynge.

In this reformyng that is oonli in feith, the most parte of chosen soules leden heer lyf,
that setten her wil stedefast for to fleen alle manere deedli synnes, and for to kepen
hemself in love and charité to here evene Cristen and for to kepe the comaundement of
395 God aftir hir kunsyng. And whanne it so is, that wikked stirynges and yvel willis risen
in here hertis, of pride or of envie, of ire or of leccherie, or of ony oþir heved synne,

374 **Joon**, John. 383 **entré**, entrance; **Ransake**, Examine. 385 **wityngeli**, consciously. 386
mysdoon, misdone; **beschreven**, confessed. 387 **sikirli**, certainly. 391 **mown**, can. 394 **evene**,
fellow. 395 **aftir hir kunsyng**, according to their knowledge. 396 **heved**, chief, capital; the
reference is to what are commonly called the seven deadly sins; in addition to the four sins
mentioned here, the seven capital sins include sloth, gluttony, and avarice.

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thei agenstonden hem and striven agens hem bi displesyng of wille, so that thei folwe
not in deede thise wikkid willis. And neverthelees, yif it so be that thei falte lightli as it
were agens here wille, thorugh freelté of unkunnynge, as tite here conscience greveth
400 hem and gyneth hem so grevousli that thei mown have noo reeste til thei ben schryven
and may have forgyvenes. Sothli alle thise soules that thus lyven, as y hope, aren
reformed in feith to the image of God. And yif thei lasten in this reformynge, or be
founden thereinne in the hour of deeth, thei schullen be saaf and coome to the ful
reformynge in the blis of hevene, though it be soo that thei nevere myghten have goosteli
405 felynge ne inli savour ne special grace of devocioun in al her liyftime. For ellis yif thou
sai that no soule schal be saaf but yif it were reformed into goostli felynge, that it myght
feele devocioun and gosteli savour in God, as some soulys doon thorugh special grace,
thanme schulden fewe soulis be saaf in reward of the multitude of othere.

Nai, it is not likli for to trowe that, that for thoo soulis that aren oonli devoute, and bi
410 grace comen to goosteli felynge, and for no mo, oure Lord Jhesu schulde have taken
mankynde and suffind hard passioun of deeth. It had bee but a litol purchace to Hym for
to have come fro so feer to so neer, and fro so high to so lowgh, for so fewe soulis. Nai,
His merci is spred largere than so. Neverthelees, on the contrarie wise, yif thou trowe
415 that the passioun of oure Lord is so precious and the merci of God is so mochil that ther
schal no soule be damped, and nameli of no Cristen man, doo he nevere so ille, as
summe foolis wenien, sotheli thei erren gretli. Therfore goo in the mene and helde thee
in the myddis, and trowe as Holi Chirche troweth. And that is that the moste synful man
that lyveth in erthe, yif he turne his wil thorwgh grace from deedli synne with soothfast
420 repentaunce to the servyce of God, he is reformed in his soule, and yif he die in that
estate he schal be saaf. Thus behight oure Lord bi His profete, seiande thus: *In quacunque
hora conversus fuerit peccator et ingenuerit, vita vivet et non morietur* (Ezekiel 18:21).
That is: In what tyme that it be that the synful man is turned from synne to God and he
have sorwe therfore, he schal lyven and he schal not dien endelesli. Also on that othir
side, whoso liggeth in deedli synne, and wole not leve it ne amende hym therof, ne

397 **agenstonden**, resist; **displeyng**, displeasure. 399 **freelté**, frailty; **unkunnynge**, ignorance; **as tite**, immediately. 400 **pyneth**, pains; **mown**, can; **schryven**, confessed. 403 **saaf**, saved. 405 **inli**, inner. 408 **reward**, regard. 409 It is not likli, Hilton's stress on the availability of salvation to all, not just the perfect or contemplatives, is notable, as is the emphasis on orthodox belief. 411 **purchace**, atonement. 412 **lowgh**, low. 414 **mochil**, great. 416 **wenien**, suppose. 420 **behight**, promised.

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- 425 receyve the sacrament of penance, and though he receyve it he taketh it not soothfastly
for the love of God, that is for love of vertu and cleanness, but oonli for drede of
schame of the world, or ellis for drede oonli of the peynes of helle — he is not reformed
to the likenesse of God. And yif he die in that plignt he schal not be saaf. His trouthe
schal not save hym, for his trouthe is a deed trouthe and lakketh love, and therfore hit
430 serveth him of nought.
- But thei that han trouthe quykened with love and charité aren reformed to the likenesse
of God, though it be but the leste degré of charité, as aren symple soulis, the whiche
feelen not the gifte of special devocion ne gostli knowynge of God, as some gosteli men
doon, but trowen generali as Holi Chirche troweth, and witen not fulli what that is, for
435 it nedeth not to hem. And in that trouthe thei kepen hem in love and charité to here even
Cristen as mykil as thei moun, and felen alle deedli synnes aftir her counynge, and doon
the dedes of merci to here even Cristene. Alle thise longen to the blisse of hevene, for it
is writhen in the Apocalipsis thus: *Qui timetis deum, pusilli er magni, laudate eum* (Revelations 19:5). This is: Ye that dreden God, bothe grete and smale, thanketh Him.
- 440 Bi grete aren undirstonde soulis that aren profitande in grace, or ellis in love perfight
of God, the whiche aren reformed in goosteli feelynge. Bi the smale aren understanden
soulis unperfite, of worldli men and women and othere, that han but a childisch knowynge
of God and ful litil feelynge of Hym, but aren brought forth in the bosom of Holi
Chirche and norischid with the sacrament as children aren fed with mylk. Alle thise
445 schullen thanke God and loven Hym for savacions of here soules bi His endeles merci.
For Holy Chirche, that is moder of alle thise and hath tendir love to alle hir childrin
goostli, peaieth and asketh for hem alle tendirli of hir spouse (that is, Jhesu), and geteth
hem heele of soule thoerugh vertu of His passioun, and nameli for hem that counen not
speken hemself bi goostli prasere for here owen nede.
- 450 Thus I fynde in the Gospel that the woman of Chanane askide of oure Lord heele to
hir daughter that was traveiled with a feend, and oure Lord maad daunger bicausche sche
was an alien. Neverthelees, she ceeside not for to crien til oure Lord hadde grauntid to

426 cleanness, purity. 428 trouthe, belief. 434 witen, know. 436 moun, are able; aftir her
counynge, according to their knowledge. 437 longen, belong. 440 profitande, advancing.
442 unperfite, imperfect. 444 fed with mylk, a common image for spiritual beginners derived
from 1 Corinthians 3:1-2; used also in Scale Book I, chapter 9, Book II, chapter 31. 448 heele,
health; counen, can. 451 traveiled with, troubled by; maad daunger, made difficulty, was
reluctant. 452 ceeside, ceased.

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hire hire askynge and seide to hire thus: "A, woman, mykil is thi trouthe; be it doon to thee right as thou wolt." And in the same hour was hir daughter maad hool. This
455 woman bitokeneth Holi Chirche, that asketh helpe of oure Lord for symple unconsynge
soules, that aren traveilid with temptacioun of the world and kunnent not speken perfligiti
to God bi fervour of devocioun ne breannande love in contemplacion; and though it seme
that oure Lorde make daunger first because that thei aren as hit were alienes fro Hym,
neverthelees for the grete trouthe and the desert of Holi Chirche he graunteth hire al that
460 sche wole. And so aren thise simple soulis, that trowen stedefasteli as Holi Chirche
troweth, and putteth hem fulli in the merci of God and meken hem undir the sacraments
and lawes of Holi Chirche, maad saaf thorough the praiere and the trouthe of hir goostli
modir, that is Holi Chirche.

Chapter Eleven

That soules reformed neden ai for to fighten and stryven agen stirynges of synne whiles thei
465 lyven heer, and hou a soule mai witen whanne he assenteth to ille stirynges and whanne not.

This reformyng in feith mai lighteli be geten, but it mai not so lighteli be holden. And therfore what man or woman that is reformed to the liknesse of God in trouthe, mykil
470 traveile and bisynesse hem bishoveth to have, yif thei wolen kepe this image hool and
clene, that it falle not doun ageyn thorough wekeynesse of wille to the ymage of synne.
He mai not be idel ne rekles, for the ymage of synne is so neer festned to hym, and so
475 contynueli preseth upon hym bi divers stirynges of synne, that but yif he be right waer
he schal ful lightli thorough asent falle ageyn thereto. And therfore hym nedeth ay be
stryvynge and fightynge ageyn wilked stirynges of this ymage of synne, and that he
make noon accord therwith, ne take noo frendschipe with it, for to be buxum to his
unskilfulle biddynge, for yif he do, he bigileth hymself. But sothli yif he stryve with
hem, hym nedeth not mykil to drede of assentyng, for strif breketh pees and fals
accord. It is good that a man have pees with al thyng, outetaken with the feend and with

453 trouthe, faith. 455 unconsynge, ignorant. 457 breannande, burning. 459 desert, merit.

461 meken, humble. 465 witen, know. 466 getes, obtained; holden, kept. 468 traveile, trouble;

bisynesse, activity; hem bishoveth, they must. 469 wekeynesse, weakness. 471 waer, aware.

474 buxum, obedient. 475 unskilfulle, irrational. 477 outetaken, except.

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this image of synne, for ageyns hem it nedeth ai feigten in his thought and in his werk
until he hath geten over hem the maistrie. And that schal nevere ben fulli in this lif, as
longe as he berith and felith this ymage. I sei not but that a soule mai thorough grace have
the hyghere hand over this ymage, so fer forth that it schal not folwen ne senten to the
unskilful stirynges of it. But for to ben so cleene delivered fro this ymage, that hit schulde
feele no suggestioun ne jangelynge of noo fleschli affeccion, ne of veyne thought noo
tyme, may no man have in this lyf.

I hope that a soule that is reformed in feelynge by ravyschyng of love into
contemplacion of God mai be so feer fro the sensualit  and fro the veyn imaginacion,
and soo feer drawnen oute and departid from the fleschli feelynge for a tyme, that it
schal not feelen but good; but that lasteth not alwai. And therfore seie I that every man
bihoveth strive ageyns this ymage of synne, and nameli he that is onli reformed in feith,

that so lightly mai be disseyved therwith. In the persones of the whiche men Seynt Poul
seith thus: *Caro concupiscit adversus spiritum et spiritus adversus carnem* (Galatians
5:17). That is, a soule reformed to the liknesse of God fighteth ageyn the fleschli stirynges
of this image of synne, and also this ymage of synne striveth ageyn the wille of the
spirit. This maner of fightyng in this duble ymage Seynt Poul knew weel whanne he
seide thus: *Inveni legem in membris meis, repugnans item legi mentis mee, et captivum me
ducentem in legem peccati* (Romans 7:23). That is: I have founden two lawes in myself,

o lawe in my soule withinne, and another lawe in my fleschli lymes withoute fightyng
ageyns hit, that often ledeth me as a wrecchid prisoner into the lawe of synne. Bi thise
two lawes in a soule I understand this double image: bi the lawe of the spirit I undirstonde
the resoun of the soule wharene it is reformed to the image of God; bi the lawe of the
flesch I undirstonde the sensualit , whiche I calle the ymage of synne. In thise two

lawes a soule reformed ledeth his lif, as Seynt Poul seith: *Mente enim servio legi dei,
corne vero servio legi peccati* (Romans 7:25). In my soule, that is, in my wil and in my
resoun, I serve to the lawe of God; but in my flesch, that is, in the feelynge of my
fleschli appetite, I serve to the lawe of synne. Nevertheless, that a soule reformed

schulde not dispeire, though he serve to the lawe of synne bi feelynge of the vicious
sensualit  ageynes the wille of the spirit because of corrupcion of his bodili kynde,
Seynt Poul excuseth it, seiande thus of his own persoone: *Non enim quod volo bonum*

478 *werk*, deed. 481 so fer forth, to the extent; *seaten*, consent. 482 *unskilful*, irrational.

483 *jangelynge*, disruption. 486 *feer*, far. 497 *lymes*, limbs. 500 *resoun*, reason. 506 *dispeiren*,
dispar. 508 *selande*, saying.

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510 *hoc ago; sed malum quod odi, hoc facio. Si autem malum quod odi facio, iam non ego
operor illud, sed quod habitat in me, peccatum* (Romans 7:19–20). I do not that good
that I wolde doon, that is, I wolde feele noon fleschli stiringe, and that do y not; but I
doo the yvel that I hate, that is, the synful stirynges of my flesch. I hate and yit I feele
hem. Neverethelees, syn it is so that y hate wikkid stirynges of my flesch, and yit y fele
hem and ofte delite in hem agens my wille, thei schal not be arected agens me for
dampnacion, as yif y hadde doon hem. And whi? For the corrupcion of this image of
synne dooth hem, and not I.

515 Loo, here Seynt Poul in his own persone conforteth alle soulis that aren thorough
grace reformed in feith, that thei schuld not to mykil drede the berthene of this ymage
with the unskilful stirynges thereof, bi so that thei sente not wilfulli thereto. Neverethelees
520 in this poynyt many soulis that aren reformed in trouthe aren ofte sithis mykil tormentid
and trobelid in veyn. As thus: whanne thei han feelid fleschli stirynges of pride, of envie,
of covetise, or of lecherie, or of ony oþer heed synne, thei witen not sumtyme whether
525 thei sentiden to hem or noo. And that is no grete wondir, for in tyme of temptation a
freel mannes thought is so troubled and so overleid that he hath no cleer light ne fredom
of himself, but is taken often with likynge unwarli, and goth forth with it a grete while
or thanne he perceyve it. And therfore fallen summe of hem in doute and in dwere
whether thei synneden or not in the tyme of temptation.

530 As anemptis this poynyt I seie as me thenketh, that a soule mai have assaiyng on this
manere whether he assenteth or noo. Yif it so be that a man be stired to ony maner of
synne, and the likynge is so grete in his fleschli felynge that it trobleth his resoun and
as it were thorough maistrie occupieth the affeccioun of the soule; neverthelees he kepit
535 hym, that he folweth not in dede, ne he wolde not though he myght, but it is rathere to
hym peyneful for to feelen the likynge of that synne, and fayn he wolde putten hit awai
yif he myght; and thanne whanne the stiryng is overpassid he is glaad and wil paied
that he is delyvered of it and that he feelith no more of it — bi this assai mai he witen that
were the likynge nevere so grete in the fleschli feelynge, that he assentide not, ne synnede
not, nameli deedliche.

514 *arected*, accounted. 518 *berthene*, burden. 519 *unskilful*, irrational; *bi so*, as long as.
520 *trouthe*, faith; *ofte sithis*, often. 522 *heed*, capital; see the list in chapter 10, above; *witen*,
know. 523 *sentiden*, conscripted. 524 *freel*, frail. 526 *or thanne*, before; *dwere*, doubt. 528
anemptis, concerning. 531 *affeccioun*, emotion, feeling. 534 *wil paied*, well satisfied.

- Nevertheles, a remedie there is that is sikir and certayn to siche a symple soule that
 540 is marred in itself and cannot helpin itself: that he be not to bold in himself, utirli wenande
 that siche fleschli stirynges with likynges aren no synnes, for he myght so fallen into
 recchelesnesse and into a fals sikernes, ne also that he be not to dredful ne to symple
 in witte, for to demen hem alle as deedli synnes, or elles as grete venyal, for neithir is
 sooth. But that he holde hem alle as synne and wrecchidnesse of hymself, and that he
 have sorwe for hem, and that he be not to bisi for to deme them neithir deedli ne venyal.
 545 But yif his conscience be gretli greved, that he hasteli goo and schewe to his confessour
 in general or in special siche stirynges, and nameli that ilke stiryng that bigynneth
 fastne roote in the herte and most often occupieth it, for to drawen it doun to synne and
 wordli vanitié. And whanne he is thus schryven of thise in general or in special, trowe
 550 thanne stedefastli that thei aren forgyven, and dispute no more aboughte hem that aren
 passid and forgyven, whethir thei weren deedli or venial, but that he be moore besi for to
 kepen him betere agens hem that aren comynge. And yif he doo thus, tharne mai he
 come to reste in conscience.

But tharne are some so fleschli and so unkunnyng that thei wolden feele or seen or
 555 heren the forgifnesse of hire synnes, as openli as thei moun feelen or seen a bodili
 thyng; and for as mykil as thei feelyn it not, so thei fallen often in siche dweris and
 doutes of hemself and nevere moun come to reste. And in that be thei not wise, for feith
 goth bifore felynge. Oure Lord seide to a man that was in the palsie whanne He heeld
 hym thus: *Confide fili, remittuntur tibi peccata tua* (Matthew 9:2). That is: Sone, trowe
 560 stedefastli thy synnes aren forgeven thee. He seide not to him, see or feele how thi
 synnes aren forgeve thee, forgifnesse of synne is doon goostli and unseabli thorough
 grace of the Holi Goost, but bileve it. Right upon the same wise, every man that wole
 come to reste in conscience, him bihoveth first yif he doo that in him is trowen withouten
 goostli feelyng forgiennesse of his synnes; and yyf he first trowe it, he mai afterward
 565 thoroush grace feele it and understande it, that it is so. Thus seide the apostil: *Nisi crederitis,*
non intelligetis (compare Isaiah 7:9) But yif ye first trowen, ye moun not understande.

538 *sikir*, certain. 539 *to*, too; *wenande*, supposing. 541 *recchelesnesse*, carelessness;
sikernes, security. 542 *witte*, intelligence. 544 *bisi*, concerned. 545 *schewe*, show. 549
aboughte, about. 550 *besi*, active. 553 *unkunnyng*, ignorant. 554 *moun*, are able to. 555
dweris, doubts. 560 *unseabli*, invisibly. 561 *wise*, manner. 562–63 *yif he doo . . . synnes*, to do
 what is in him to believe, without spiritual feeling, in the forgiveness of his sins. 565 *moun*,
 may.

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Trouthe goth bifore and undirstondinge come aftir. The whiche undirstondynge, that I calle the sight of God yif it be gracious, a soule mai not have but thorough grete cleanness, as oure Lord seith: *Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi deum videbunt* (Matthew 5:8). Blissed ben clene of herte, for thei schul see God — not with heer fleschli iye, but with the innere iye, that is, undirstondynge cleansid and illumined thorough grace of the Holi Gost for to seen soothfastnesse. The whiche cleanness a soule mai not feele but it have stable trouthe goyng before, as the apostil seith: *Fide mundans corda eorum* (Acts 15:9). That is, oure Lord clenseth the hertis of His chosen thorwgh feith. Therefore it is nedeful that a soule trouwe first the reformynge of himself maad thorough the sacrament of penaunce, though he see it not, and that he dispose him fulli for to lyven rightwiseli and vertuousli as his trouthe asketh, so that he mai aftir that come to the sight and to the reformynge in feelyng.

Chapter Twelve

That this image is bothe fair and foule whilis it is in this lif, though it be reformed; and of diversité of felyng priveli had atwixe thise soulis that aren reformede and othere that aren nougnt reformed.

Fair is mannys soule, and foule is a mannys soule. Fair in as mykil as it is reformed in trouthe to the liknesse of God, but it is foule in as mykil as it is yit medelid with fleschli felynges and unskilful stirynges of this ymage of synne. Foule withouten as it were a beest, faire withinne like to an angel. Foule in feelyng of the sensualité, fair in trouthe of the resoun. Foule for the fleschli appetite, faire for the good wil. Thus fair and thus foule is a chosen soule, seyng Holi Writ thus: *Nigra sum, sed formosa, filie Jerusalem sicut tabernacula cedar et sicut pellis Salomonis* (Canticle 1:4). I am blak, but I am fair and schapli, yee daughteris of Jerusalem, as the tabernaculys of cedar and as the skynnes of Salomoun. That is: Yee angelis of hevene, that aren doughteres of the highe Jerusalem, wondreth not on me, ne dispice me not for my blak schadwe, for though I be blak

567 **gracious**, of grace; **cleanness**, purity. 569 **clene**, pure; **iye**, eye. 571 **soothfastnesse**, truth. 582 **medelid**, mingled. 583 **unskillful**, irrational. 589 **That is**, Hilton's exposition of the Canticle in this chapter is indebted to Bernard, *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, 25–27; see Clark, p. 306em57–59. 590 **dispice**, despise.

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withoutte bicause of my fleschli kynde, as is a tabernacle of cedar, nevertheles I am ful fair withinne as is the skyn of Salomon, for y am reformed to the likenesse of God. Bi cedar is undirstonde myrkennesse, and that is the devyl. Bi tabernacle of cedar is undirstonde a reprevid soule, the whiche is a tabernacle of the devyl. Bi Salomon, that bitokeneth peseble, is undirstonden oure Loed, for He is pees and pesible. Bi the skyn of Salomon is undirstonden a blissid aungel, in whom oure Lord woneth and is hid, as lif is hid withinne the skyn of a quyk bodi, and therfore is an angel likened to a skyn.

Thanne mai a chosen soule with meke trust in God and gladnesse in herte seie thus:

Though I be blak bicause of my bodi of synne, as is a reprevid soule that is the tabernacle of the feend, nevertheles I am withinne wel faire thorough trouthe and good wille,

like to an angil of hevene. For so seith he in another place: *Nolite considerare me quia fusca sum, quoniam decoloravit me sol* (Canticle 1:5). That is: Biholde me not for y am swart, for the sunne hath defaded me. The sunne maketh a skyn swart onli withoutte and not withinne, and it bitokeneth this fleschli liyf. Therfore seith a chosen soule thus:

"Repreve me not for y am swart, for the swartenesse that y have is al withouten, of touchynge and of berynge this ymage of synne. But it is nothinge withinne." And therfore soothli, though it be so that a chosen soule reformed in feithe dwelle in this bodi of synne, and feele the same fleischli stirynges and use the same bodili werkes as doth a tabernacle of cedar, so fer forth that in mannes dome ther schulde no difference be

bitwixe that oon and that tothir — nevertheles withinne in herte soules is there ful grete diversité, and in the sight of God is there ful grete twynnyng. But the knowynge of this, whiche is oon and which is othr, is oonli kept to God, for it passeth mannys doom and mannys feelyng. And therfore we schal no man demen as ille for that thinge that

mai be usid bothe yvel and weel. A soule that is not reformed is taken so fulli with the love of this world, and so mykil overleid with the likyng of his flesche in al his sensualité, that he cheseth it as a ful reste of his herte; and in his privei menyng hee wolde not ellis have, but that he myght ay be siker therof. He feleth noo licour of grace stiryne hym to lothe this fleschli liyf ne for to desiren heveneli blisse.

And therfore I mai seie that he bereth not this ymag of synne, but he is born of it, as

a man that were sike and so weike that he myght not beren hymself, and therfore is leid

593 **myrkennesse**, darkness. 594 **reprevid**, condemned. 595 **peseble**, peaceable. 596 **woneth**, dwells. 597 **quyk**, living. 603 **swart**, dark; **defaded**, faded. 609 **so fer forth**, to the extent. 611 **twynnyng**, separation. 612 **doom**, judgment. 616 **cheseth**, chooses. 617 **siker**, certain.

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in a bed and born in a liter. Right so siche a synful soule is so weike and so unmyghti for lakkynge of grace, that it mai neither stiren hand ne foot for to doon ony good dide, ne foragenstonde bi displesyng of wille the leeste stiryng of synne whanne it cometh, but it falleth doun thereto as dooth a beest upon a carion. But a soule that is thorugh grace reformed, though he use his fleischeli wittis and feele fleischli likynge, nevertheless he lotheth hem in his herte, for he nolde for nothinge fulli resten in hem. But he feelith the reste in hem as the bityng of an eddre, and he hadde lyvere han his reste and the love of his herte in God, yif that he coude; and sumtyme desireth thereto, and often irketh of the likynge of this lyf for love of the lyf ai lastande.

This soule is not bore in this image of synne as a sike man, though he feele it; but he bereth it. For thorugh grace he is maad myghti and stronge for to suffren and beren his bodi with alle the stirynges of it, withouten hurtyng or defoulyng of himself; and that is in as mykil as he loveth hem not, ne folweth hem not, ne senteth not to hem, the whiche aen deedli synne, as another dooth. This was bodili fulfilled in the Gospel of a man that was in the palsie and was so feble that he myght not goon, and therfore was he leid and born in a lighter and brought to oure Lord, and whanne oure Lord sigh hym in myschief, of His goodnessse He seide to hym thus: *Surge et tolle grabanum tuum, et vade in domum tuum* (Mark 2:11). That is: Rise up and take thi bed and goo into thi hous. And so he dide, and was hool. And sothli right as this man baar upon his bak whanne he was made hool the bed that before baar hym, right so it mai be seide goosteli, that a soule reformed in feith bereth this image of synne, in the whiche he was born in bifor.

And therfore be not adred to mykil of thi blakkenesse that thou haste of beryng of this ymage of synne. But agens the schame and the discomfort that thou haste of the biholdynge of it, and also agens the upbreidynge that thou feelist in thy herte of thi goostli enemyes, whanne thei seyn to thee thus: "Where is thi Lord Jhesu? What feelist thou? Where is the fairhede that thou spekest of? What feelist thou ought but blyndenesse of synne? Where is the image of God that thou seist is reformed in thee?" Comforte thee thanne bi trouthe stilli, as I have before seid; and yif thou doo soo, thou schalt bi this trouthe destroien alle temptaciones of thyne enemyes. Thus seith the apostle: *Accipe scutum fidei, in quo tela hostis nequissima poteris extingware* (Ephesians 6:16). That is:

621 liter, litter; weike, weak. 623 foragenstonde, resist; displesyng, disapproval. 627 eddre, adder. 628 irketh, worries. 629 ai lastande, everlasting. 633 seateth, consents. 636 lighter, litter; sigh, saw. 637 myschief, misfortune. 646 fairhede, fairness. 648 stilli, constantly.

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Take to thee a schelde of stedefast trouth, thorugh the whiche thou schalt moun quench
alle the beenmyng daarteres of thyn enemye.

Chapter Thirteen

Of thre maner of men, of the whiche summe aren not reformed, and summe ben
reformed oonli in feythe, and summe in feithe and in feelynge.

655 Bi this that I have before seid maist thou seen that aftir diverse parties of the soule aren
dyvers staatis of men. Summe aren not reformed to the liknesse of God, and summe
aren refoemed oonli in feith, and summe aren reformed in feith and in felynge.

For thou schalt undirstonde that a soule hath two parties. The toon is called the
sensualité; that is the fleschli feelynge bi the fyve outward wittes, the whiche is comoun
to man and to beest. Up the whiche sensualité, whanne it is unskilfulli and unoerdynateli
rulid, is maad the image of synne, as I have before seid, for than is the sensualité synne,
whanne it is not rulid aftir reson. That tothir partie is callid reson, and that is departid
on two — the overe partie and the nethere partie. The overe is likned to a man, for it
schulde be maister and sovereyne, and that is propirli the ymage of God, for bi that
oonli the soule knoweth God and loveth God. And the nethere is likned to a woman, for
it schulde be buxum to the overe partie of reson, as a woman is buxum to man. And
that liyth in knowynge and rulyng of ertheli thinges, for to use hem discreteli aftir nede
and for to refuse hem whanne it is no nede; and for to have ai with it thyn iye upward
to the overe partie of reson, with drede and with reverence for to folwe it.

670 Now mai y seie that a soule that lyveth aftir likynges and lustis of the flesch, as it
were an unskilfull beest, and neither hath knowynge of God ne desire to vertues ne
good lyvynge, but is al blynded in pride, freten in envy, overlaid with coveitise, and
defouled with lecherie and othere grete synnes, it is not reformed to the ymage of God.
For it lieth and resteth fulli in the ymage of synne, that is the sensualité. Another soule

651 trouth, faith; moun, be able to. 655 aftir, corresponding to; parties, parts. 658 two
parties, the definition of the soul that follows is based on Augustine, *De trinitate*, 12.3–14, as
elaborated by medieval theologians; see Clark, p. 307n65. 659 wittes, senses. 660 Up, Of;
unskilfulli, irrationally. 662 tothir, other. 663 overe, upper; nethere, lower. 666 buxum,
obedient. 668 iye, eye. 672 freten, eaten.

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675 that dredeth God and agenstondeth deedli stirynges of the sensualit  and folweth hem
not, but lyveth resonabli in rulynge and governaunce of wordli thinges, and setteth his
entent and his wille for to plesen God bi his outward werkes, is reformed to the
liknesse of God in feith, and though he feele the same stirynges of synne as that oþir
dide, it schal not dere hym, for he resteth not in hem as that tothir dooth. But another
680 soule that fleeth thorugh grace alle deedli steringes of sensualit  and venyalis also, so fer
forth that he felith hem not, it is reformed in feelynge. For he folweth the over partie of
resoun in bialdyng of God and of heveneli thinges, as I schal telle thee aftir.

Chapter Fourteen

Hou men thoreugh synne forschapen hemself into seere bestis liknesse and thise aren
callid the loveres of this world.

685 A wrecchid man is he thanne that knoweth not the worthinesse of his soule, ne wole not
knowe it — hou it is the moste worthi creature that evere God made, outaken an angil
whom it is like to, high aboven alle oþir bodili kynde, to the whiche nothinge mai
suffisen as ful reste but oonli God. And therfore he schulde noo thinge loven and liken
but oonli God, ne coveiten ne seken but hou he myght be reformed to His liknesse. But
690 for he knoweth not this, therfore he seketh and coveiteth his reste and his likynge
outward in bodili creaturis wexe tharne hemself is. Unkyndeli he dooth, and unresonalib
he werketh, that loveth not the sovereyne good and ai lastande liyf that is God unsought
and unloved, unknownen and unworschippid, and cheseth his reste and his blisse in a
passyng delite of an ertheli thinge. Neverthelees thus don alle the loveres of this world,
695 that han her blisse and her joie in this wrecchid liyf.

Summe han it in pride and veylorius of hemself, that whanne thei have loste the drede
of God thei traveilen and studien nyght and dai how thei myght come to worschipe and
praisynge of the world, and maken no force hou so be thei myghien comen therto and
overpassen alle oþere men either in clergie or in crafte, in name or in fame, in richesse

675 *agenstondeth*, resists. 679 *dere*, harm. 680 *venyalis*, venial sins (in contrast to deadly
sins). 683 *forschapen*, deform; seere, various. 686 *outaken*, except. 692 *ai lastande*, everlasting.
698 *maken no force*, take no care. 699 *either*, either; *in clergie or in crafte*, in learning or
in a skill.

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700 or in reverence, in sovereyné and in maistirschipe, in high estate and in lordeschipe. Sum men han heer delite and here reste in richesse and in osteragious aver of ertheli godes, and setten her hertis so fulli for to getin it that thei seken not ellis but hou thei myghten comen therto. Summe han heer likyng in fleschli lustes of glotonye and leccherie and othir bodili unclermesse, and summe in oo thyng and summe in anothir.
705 And thus wrecchidli thise that doon thus forschapen hemself fro the worthiness of man and turnen hem into dyvers beestis liknesse.

The proude man is turned into a lion for pride, for he wolde be dred and worschiped of alle men, and that noo man ageynstond the fulfillynge of his fleschli wille, in word ne deede; and yif ony man wole letten his proud wille, he wexeth fel and wrooth, and
710 wole be vengid of him as a lion vengeith him on a litil beest. This man that doth thus is now no man, for he dooth unresonabli agen the kynde of man, and so he is turned and transformed into a lioun. Envious and angri men aren turned into houndes thorugh wraththe and envye, that berken agen hir even Cristene, and biten hem bi wikkid and malicious wordes, and greven hem that not trespasseden with wrongeful deedis, harmynge
715 hem in bodi and in soule agens Goddis biddynge. Summe men aren forschapen into assis, that aren slowe to the service of God, and unwilling for to doon ony good deede to here evene Cristene. Thei aren redi now for to renne to Rome for wordli profite or for ertheli worschipe, or for plesance of an ertheli man, but for goostli mede, for helpe of
720 heer owen soules, or for worschipe of God, thei aren soone irke. Thei wole not therof, and yif thei ought doon thei goon but a paas and yit with a foward wille. Summe aren turned into swyne, for thei are so blynde in witte and so beestli in maneres, that thei han no drede of God, but folwen oonli the lustes and the likynges of heer flesch, and han no rewarde to honesté of man, for to rulen hemself aftir the biddynge of resoun, for
725 to restreyne the unskilful stirynges of the fleschli kynde; but as soone as ony fleschli stiryng of synne cometh, thei aren redi for to falle therto, and folwe it as a swyn doth. Summe men are turmyd into wolfes that lyven bi raveyn, as a fals covetous man dooth that thorugh maistrie and overledyng robbeth his even Cristene of here wordli goodes. Summe into foxis, as fals men and disceyvable that lyven in trecherie and in gile.

701 **aver**, possession. 706 **beestis liknesse**, the association of the seven deadly sins with animals is a commonplace in the Middle Ages; compare Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, 1.4.18–37. 709 **letten**, obstruct; **fel**, fierce. 711 **agen**, against. 717 **inaw**, enough. 718 **mede**, reward. 719 **heer**, their; **irke**, wearied. 720 **paas**, pace. 721 **witte**, intelligence. 723 **rewarde**, regard. 726 **wolfes**, wolves; **raveya**, rapine. 727 **maistrie**, force; **overledyng**, deceit; **wordli**, worldly.

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Alle thise and many othere moo, that lyven not in drede of God but breken His
730 commaundementis, forschapen hemself from the liknesse of God and maken hem like
unto beestis. Yhe, and worse than beestis, for thei aren like unto the feend of helle. And
therfore sothli, thise that lyven thus, yif that thei ben not reformed whanne the hour of
735 deeth cometh and the soules of hem aren departed from the bodies, than schal her iyen
ben openyd that is now stoppid with synne, and thanne schal thei feelen and fynden the
peyne of here wikkidnesse that thei lyveden inne here. And for as mykil as the image of
740 God was not reformed thorugh the sacrament of penaunce in hem, neithir in feith ne in
feelynge heere in this lif, thei schullen ben acursid, kest oute from the blissid face of
oure Creatour, and thei schal be damped with the devel into the depnesse of helle, there
fore to ben ai withouten ende. Thus seith Seynt Johan in the Apocalips: *Timidis, et*
incredulis, execratis, et homicidis, fornicatoribus, veneficis et ydolatriis et omnibus
mendaecibus, pars illorum erit in stangno ardenti igne et sulphure (Revelations 21:8).
That is, to proude men and mystrowande, to cursid and to mansleers, to lechouris and
745 to covetous, to poysoneris, woeschiperis of maumetis, and to alle fals lieres, dool schal
ben with the devyl in the pitte of helle beenmyng with fier and bremston. Yif the loveris
of this world wolden often thenke on this, hou al this world schal passen and drawen to
an-ende, and hou alle wikkid love schal ben hard ponyshed, thei schulde withinne
schort tyme lothe worldli lust that thei now moste liken. And thei schulde listlen up here
herte for to love God, and besili seken and traveilen hou thei myghten be reformed to
His liknes or thei passiden hens.

Chapter Fifteen

750 Hou loveris of this world unable hemself on seere wise to the reformynge of here own
soulis.

But now seyn summe of hem thus: "I wolde fayne love God, and ben a good man and
forsake the love of the world yif that I myght; but y have no grace thereto. Yif I hadde

731 *Yhe*, Yea. 733 *iyen*, cys. 737 *kest*, cast. 739 *fore to ben*, to be. 742 *mansleers*, murderers. 743 *maumetis*, idols; see the gloss to Scale, 1.2418; *dool*, sorrow. 749 *er*, before. 750 *seere wise*, various ways.

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755 the same grace that a good man hath, y schuld doo as he dooth; but for I have not, therfore y may not, and so it is not me to witen, but I am excusid." Unto thise men y seie thus: Sooth it is as thei seyn, that they have no grace and therfore thei liggen stille in here synne and moun not risen oute. But that availeth hem right nought, it excuseth hem not agens God, for it is heer owene defaute. Thei unablen hemself bi dyvers weies so mykil, that the light of grace mai not schynen to hem ne resten in here hertes. For summe aren so froward that thei wolen noo grace han, ne thei wolen no good men ben; for thei witen wel yif thei schulden be good men, hem bishoveth nodes forberon and leven the grete likyng and the luste of this world that thei han in ertheli thinges. And that wolen thei not, for thei therken it so swete that thei wolde not forgoon it. And also thei moste take werkes of penaunce, as fastynge, wakynge, praiyng, and othere good-deedes-doyng in chastizyng of here fleisch, and in withdrawyng of her fleischly wille; and that moun thei not doon, for it is maad so scharpe and so pyneful to hire thenkyng that thei uggle and lothen for to thenken therupon, and so cowardeli and wrecchidli dwellen thei stille in there synne.

770 Some wolden have grace, as it semeth, and thei bigynnen for to ablen hem therto; but here wille is wondir weik, soe as soone as ony stiryng of synne cometh, though it be contrarie to the biddynge of God, thei fallen as tite therto, for thei aren so bounden thorugh custum bi ofien fallinge and ofte assentynge to synne bifore, that hem thesketh it impossible for to agenstonde it, and so feyned hardenesse of performynge weiken her wille and smyten it doon agen. Summe also feelen stiryng of grace, as whanne thei han 775 bityng of conscience for here yvele lyvynge, and that thei schulden leve it. But that is pyneful to hem and so hevy, that thei wole not suffren it ne abide with it, but thei flee therefro and forgeten it yif thei moun, so fer forth that thei seken likyng and comfort outward in fleschli creaturis, so that thei schuld not feelen this bityng of conscience withinne her soule.

780 And overmore summe men aren so blynde and so beesteli that thei wenēn that there is noon othir liyf but this, ne that there is no soule of man othir than of a beest, but that the soule of man dieth with the bodi as doth the soule of a boeste. And therfore thei seyn, "Ete we and drynke we, and make we merie heere, for of this be we siker. We

755 **witen**, know. 756 **liggen**, lie. 757 **moun**, can. 758 **defaute**, fault. 760 **froward**, contrary. 761 **hem bishoveth**, they must. 767 **ugglen**, abhor. 769 **ablen**, crable. 771 **as tite**, immediately. 772 **hem thesketh**, it seemeth to them. 776 **hevy**, distressing. 777 **so fer forth**, to the extent. 780 **evermore**, moreover; **wesen**, suppose. 783 **siker**, certain.

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- seen noon othir hevene." Sotheli summe aren siche wrecchis that seyn thus in her hertis, though thei seyn it not with her mouth. Of the whiche men the prophete seith thus: *Dixit insipiens in corde suo, non est deus* (Psalms 13:1). That is, the unwise man seide in his herte, ther is no God. This unwise man is eveni wrecchid man that liketh and loveth synne and cheseth the love of this wrold as reste of his soule. He seith there is no God; not with his mouth, for he wole speken of Him sum tyme whanne he fareth wel fleischli, as it were in reverence, whanne he seith, "Blissid be God," summe in despite whanne he is angry agens God or his even Cristene, and swerith bi His blissid bodi or ony of His membris. But he seith in his thought that there is no God, and that is eithir for that he weneth that there is noon othir liyf than this or ellis yif he wene that there is another liyf.
- 795 Neverthelees he weneth that God seth not his synne, or that He wole not ponyssche it so harde as Holi Writ seith, or that He wole forgyve hym his synne though that he flee it not, or ellis that there schal no Cristen man be dampned doo he nevere so ille, or ellis yif he faste oure Ladi faste, or seie everi dai a certeyn orisoun, or heere everi dai two massis or thre, or do a certeyn bodili dede as it were in the worshipe of God, he schal nevere goo to helle, doo he nevere so mykil synne, though he forsake it not. This man seith in his herte that there is no God, but he is unwise as the prophete seith. For he schal feelen and fynden in peyne that He is God whom he forgaat and sette not bi in welthe of this world, as the prophete seith: *Sola venatio dabit intellectum* (Isaiah 28:19). That is, oonli peyne schal geve undirstondynge; for he that knoweth not this heere, schal wel knownen it whanne he is in peyne.

Chapter Sixteen

A litil conceile hou loveres of this world schullen doon yif thei wolen be reformed in heer soules biforn that thei passen hennys.

784 **noon othir hevene**, the ideas in this paragraph were associated in the Middle Ages with the pagan philosophy known as Epicureanism; **Sotheli**, Truly. 793 **weneth**, supposes. 796 **forgyve**, forgive. 798 **oure Ladi faste**, the regular Saturday fast in honor of the Virgin; **orisoun**, prayer.

Book II

These men, though that thei witen weel that thei ben oute of grace and in deedli synne,
thei han no care ne sorwe ne thought therfore. But thei maken fleschli mserthe and
wordli solas as mykil as thei mowen, and the ferthere that thei ben from grace, the more
mirthe thei maken. And perchance some hoolden hem wel paied that thei have no grace,
so that thei mowen more fulli and freli folwe the likynge of fleschli lustes, as though
God were on slepe and might not seen hem. And this is oon of the moste defaute. And
so bi her owen frowardenesse thei stoppe the light of grace from her owen soule that it
may not resten thereinne; the whiche grace, in as mykil as in it is, schyneth to alle
gosteli creatures, redi for to entren in there it is resseyved, as the sunne schyneth over
alle bodili creatures there it is not letted. Thus seith Seynt Johan in the Gospel: *Lux in
tenebris facit, et tenebre eam non comprehendunt* (John 3:5). That is, the light of
grace schyneth in merkenesse, that is, to mensys hertis that aren merke thorough synne,
but the merkenesse taketh it not. That is, thise blynde hertis receyven not that gracious
light ne han not the profite of hit. But right as a blynde man is al umbilappid with light of
the sunne whan he stondeth therinne and yit seeth he it not, ne hath no profite therof for
to goon therbi, right so goostli a soule blysadid with deedli synne is al unbilappid with
this goostli light, and yit is he nevere the betere. For he is blynde and wole not seen ne
knowen his blyndenesse, and that is oon of the moste lettynges of grace, that a wikkid
man wole not be aknowe his owen blyndenesse for pride of himself; or ellis yif he
knowe it, he chargeth it not but maketh myrthe and game as he were over al siker.

Therfore unto alle thise men that aren thus blyndid and bounden with the fals love of
this world and aren so foule forschapen from the fairehede of man, I seie and concile
that thei thenken on her soule, and that thei able hem to grace as mykil as thei mowen,
and that mowen thei doon upon this wise, yif thei wolen. Whanne that thei feelen hem
oute of grace and overleid with deedli synne, thanne that thei thenke what meschief and
peril is to hem for to ben oute of grace and be departid from God as thei be, for there is
nothynge that holdeth hem from the pitte of helle that thei ne schulden as tite fallen
therinne, but oo baare sngle threed of this bodili lif wherby thei hangen, that lightliere
mai be lost thanne a sngle threed mai be broken on two. For were the breeth stoppid in

808 witen, know. 809 mserthe, happiness. 810 solas, delight. 811 paied, satisfied. 813 moste
defaute, greatest faults. 814 frowardenesse, perversity. 817 letted, prevented. 819 merke,
dark. 821 umbilappid, surrounded. 825 moste lettyng, greatest obstructions. 826 aknowe,
aware of. 827 chargeth, accounts; siker, secure. 830 mowen, are able. 831 upon this wise, in
this manner. 834 as tite, immediately. 835 lightliere, more easily.

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the bodi, and that mai lightli fallie, her soule schulde passe forth and anoon ben in helle withouten ende. And yif thei wolden thenken thus, thei schulden quaken and schaken for drede of the rightwise domes of God and of the harde penitencyng of synne; and thei schulden morne and sorwe for here synne and for thei han no grace.

And thanne schulde thei crien and praien that thei myghten have grace, and yif thei doon thus, thanne schulde grace fallen in hem, and putten oute myrkenesse and hardenesse of herte and weikenesse of wille, and geven hem myght and strengthe for to forsake the fals love of this world as mykil as is deedli synne. For ther is noo soule so feer from God thorugh wikkidnesse of wille in deedli synne, I oughtake noon in this bodi of synne, that he ne mai thorugh grace be rightted and reformed to clennesse of good lyvynge, yif he wil bowen his wil to God with mekenesse for to amenden his liyf, and herteli aske grace and forgyvenesse of Hym, and excusen oure Lord and fulli accusen himself. For Hooli Writ seith: *Nolo mortem peccatoris, sed magis ut convertatur et vivat* (Ezekiel 33:11). That is, oure Loed seith: "I wil not the deeth of a synnere, but I wole more that he be turned to me and lyve." For oure Lord woleth that the mooste foward man that lyveth forschapen thorugh synne, yif he turne his wille and aske grace, that he be reformed to His likenesse.

Chapter Seventeen

That reformynge in feith and in feelynge mai not sodeynli be geten, but thorugh grace and mochil traveile bodili and goostli.

This reformynge is in feithe, as I have bifore seid, that lighteli mai be had, but aftir this cometh refoemyng in feith and in feelynge, that mai not lightli be geten, but thorugh longe traveile and mykil bisynesse. For reformynge in feith is comone to alle chosen soulis, though thei ben but in the lowest degree of charité, but reformynge in felynge is speciali of thise soulis that mowen come to the staat of perfeccioum, and that mai not sodeynli be had. But aftir grete plenté of grace and mykil goostli traveile a soule mai come thereto; and that is whanne it is firste heeled of goostli sikenesse, and whanne alle

837 *anoon*, at once. 840 *for*, because. 843 *weikenesse*, weakness. 845 *oughtake*, except. 856 *lighteli*, easily. 861 *pleaté*, plenty.

Book II

bitter passions and fleschli lustis and othere oolde feelynges aren brente oute of the herte
with fier of desire, and newe gracious feelynges aren brought in with brenzyng love
and goostli light. Than neightheth a soule to perfeccion and to reformyng in feelyng.

For sooth it is, right as a man that is brought neigh to the deeth thorugh bodili sikenesse,
though he resseyve a medycyn bi the whiche he is restorid and sikir of his liyf, he mai
not for it as tite risen up and goon to werke as an hool man mai for the feblenesse of his
bodi holdeth hym doun, that hym bihoveth to abiden a good while, and kepen hym with
medycynes, and dioten hym with mesure aftir the techyng of a leche til he mai fulli
recovere bodili heele. Right so goostli: he that is brought to goostli deeth thorugh deedli
synne, though he thorugh medycyne of the sacrament of penaunce be restorid to lif, that
he schal not be dampned, neverthelees he is not as tite hool of alle his passiouans and of
his flesschli desires, ne able to contemplacion. But him bihoveth abiden a grete while
and taken good kepe of himself, and rulen him so that he myght recovere ful heele of
soule. For he schal langure a grete while or thanne he be fulli hool. Neverthelees, yif that
he take medycynes of a good leche and use hem in tyme with mesure and descrecion, he
schal mykil the sunnere be restorid and reformyd to his goostly strengthe and come to
the reformyng in feelyng.

For reformyng in feith is the lowest staat of alle chosen soulis, for binethe that
myght he not wel ben, but reformyng in feelyng is the highest staat in this liyf that the
soule mai come to. But fro the loweste to the higheste mai not a soule sodeynli sterte, ne
more than a man that wole clymbe upon an high laddre and setteth his foot upon the
lowest stele mai atte the nexte fleen up to the higheste; but hym bihoveth bi processe
gon oon aftir another, til he mai come to the overeste. Right so it is goostli: no man is
maad sodeynli sovereyne in grace, but thorugh longe exercise and sligh wirkynge a
soule mai come thereto, nameli whanne he helpeth and techeth a wrechid soule in
whom al grace liggeth. For withoute special helpe and inli techyng of hym mai no
soule come thereto.

863 **brente**, burnt. 868 as tite, immediately. 869 **hym bihoveth**, he must. 870 **dieten**, feed; **leche**, physician. 878 **sunnere**, sooner. 882 **stirte**, start. 883 **laddre**, as Clark notes (p. 308n82),
this is the only reference to the ladder metaphor, despite the title *Scale* (i.e., "Ladder") of
Perfection. 884 **stele**, rung. 888 **liggeth**, lies; **inli**, inward.

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Chapter Eighteen

- 890 On encheson whi so fewe soulis as in regarde of the multitude of oþere comen to this reformynge in feith and in feelynge.

But now seist thou, syn oure Lord is so curtais of His goodnesse, and of His gracious giftes so free, wondir it is tharne that so fewe soules, as it semeth in reward of the multitude of oþere, moun come to the refoemyng in feelynge. Hit semeth that He were daungerous, and that is not soþ; or that He took no reward of His creaturis, the whiche bi takynge of feith aren bicomen His servauntis. Unto this I mai ansaere and seyn as me thenketh, that oon chesoun is this. Many men that aren reformed in feith settin not here herte for to profite in grace, ne for to seken noon higher staat of good lyvynge thorugh besi traveile in praiyng and thenkyng and oþere bodili and goostli workyng; but hem thenketh it hem inowgh for to kepe hem from deedli synne, for to stande stille in that plight as thei aren inne. For thei seyn that it is yinowgh to hem for to ben saaf and have the leeste degree in hevene; thei wolen coveiten no more.

Thus perchaunce doon summe of the chosen soules that lyven in the world actif byf, and that is litil wondir of hem, for thei aren so occupied with wordli besynesse that nedan to be doon, that thei moun not fulli settin here herte to profiten in goosteli wirkynge. And neverthelees it is perilous to hem, for thei fallen often and al dai, and aren now up and now doon, and mowe not comen to stableness of good lyvynge. Neverthelees they aren sumwhat excusable, of here staat of lyvynge. But oþere men and women that aren free fro worldli besynes yif thei wolen, and moun han here nedeful sustenaunce withoutre grete bodili bisynesse, as speciali religious men and women moun that bynden hemself to the staat of perfeccions bi takynge of religious, and oþere men also in seculere staat that han mochil resoun and grete kyndeli witte, and myghten yif thei wolde disposen hem thereto come to mychil grace — thise men are more for to blamen, for thei stondeth stille as thei weren idel, and wolen sought profit in grace, ne no ferthere seken for to comen to the love and to the knowynge of God.

890 **On encheson**, One reason; **in regarde of**, in respect to. 892 **curtais**, courteous. 893 **is reward of**, in regard to. 895 **daungerous**, niggardly; **reward**, regard. 897 **chesoun**, reason. 898 **profile**, advance. 900 **inowgh**, enough. 901 **yinowgh**, enough; **saaf**, saved. 905 **profiten**, advance. 908 **of**, because of. 910 **religious**, members of a religious order. 911 **takynge of religious**, entering a religious order.

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For soothli it is perilous to a soule that is reformed oonli in feith, and wole no more seken ne profiten ne geven to bodili and goosteli traveile, for he mai so lighteli leese that he hath and fallen to deedli synne. For a soule mai not stonde stille alwei in oo staat while that he is in the flesch, for it is eithir profetyng in grace or ellis peirynge in synne.

920 For it fareth bi hym as it dooth yif a man were drawnen oute of a foule pit, and whanne he were uppe, he wolde no ferther goon thanne the pittis brinke. Soothli he were a mykil fool, for a litil puff of wynde or an unaware styringe of himsilf schulde caste him doun ageyn worse than he was before. Nevertheless yif he flee from the brinke as feer as he mai, and goo forthe on the erthe, thanne, though there come a grete storm, he is more siker, for he fallith not agen into the pitte.

925 Right so goostli: he that is drawnen oute of the pitte of synne thorugh reformyng of feith, and whanne he is oute of deedli synne hym thenketh hym siker inowgh, and therfore he wole not profiten but wole holden him stille as he is bi the pittis beynde as neer as he mai. Soothli he is not wise, for at the leeste temptation of the enemy or of his flesch he falleth into synne agen. But nevertheless yif he flee fro the pytte, that is, yif he sette his herte fulli for to come to more grace and for to travaille bisili hou he mai come therto, and gyve him herteli to praiynge, thenkyng, and othere good-werkes-doyng, thanne though grete temptacions risen agennys him, he fallith not lightli to deedli synne agen.

930 935 And soothli it is wonder to me, that syn grace is so good and so profitable, whi a man whanne he hath but a litil therof, yhe, so litil that he myght noo lasse have, that he wole seyn, "Hoo! I wil no more of this, for I have ynowgh." Whanne I see a wordli man, though he have of wordli good moche more thanne hym nedeth, yit he wole nevere seyn, "Hoo! y have inowgh, I wole no moee of this." But he wole ai coveite more and more, and travailen alle hise witties and his myghties, and nevere wole stynten of his covetise til he mai have more. Mikil moee thanne schulde a chosen soule coveiten goostli good, for that is ai lastande and maketh a soule blissid, and he nevere schuld ceese of his yernynge, yif he dide wel, gete what he gete myghte. For he that most coveiteth, moste schal have; and soothli yif he dide thus, he schulde profiten and wesen in grace greteli.

919 **profetyng**, advancing; **peirynge**, growing worse. 923 **feer**, far. 925 **siker**, secure. 929 **the enemy**, i.e., the devil (this is Hilton's regular usage). 936 **yhe**, yea. 940 **stynten**, stop.

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Chapter Nineteen

Anothir encheson of the same, and hou wilful bodili custum undiscreteli rewarded and usid, sumtyme hyndren soulis fro felinge of more grace.

Another enchesoun is this. Sum men that aren reformed in feith in the bigynnyng of here turmyng to God settin hemself in a certeyn manere of doyng, whethir it be bodili or goostli, and thenken for to kepen ai that manere of forth werkynge, and not for to chaungen it for noon othir that cometh thorough grace, though it were betere. For thei wenen that that doyng schulde be beste for hem alweie for to holden; and therfore thei resten hem therinne, and thorough custum thei bynden hem so therto, that whan thei han fulfillid it thei thenken hem wondir weel esid, for thei wene that thei han doon a grete thynge to God. And perchaunce yif it falle that thei ben lettid from here custom, though it be for a skileful cause, thei ben hevy and angri and han trobelynge of conscience, as yif thei hadde doon a grete dedli synne. Thise men hyndren hemself sumwhat fro feelyng of more grace, for thei settin here perfeccion in a bodili werk, and so thei maken an ende in the myddis of the weie, where noon eende is.

For whi, bodili customs that men usen first in hire bigynnyng are goode, but thei aren but meenes and weies, ledande a soule to perfeccion; and therfore he that setteth his perfeccions in a bodili werke, or in ony goostli werk that he feleth in the bigynnyng of his turmyng to God, that he wole no ferthere seken, but ai reste therinne, he hyndreth hemself gretely. For it is a sympil craft that apprentice is alwei alike wise inne, and that can on the first dai as mykil of it as he can twenti yeer aftir; or ellis yif the crafte be good and sotiel, he is of a dul witte or ellis of an yvel wille, that profiteth not therinne. But thanne is it sooth that of alle craffts that aren, the service of God is moste sovereyn and moste sotil, the highest, the hardeste for to come to the perfeccions of it, and also it is moste profitable and moste of wynnyng to him that mai soothfasteli performe it. And therfore it semmeth that the prentis of it that is ai like ferforth in the leernynge, othir he is dul-witted or ellis ille-willid.

946 **encheson**, reason. 952 **wenen**, suppose. 954 **esid**, at ease. 955 **lettid**, prevented. 956 **hevy**, doleful. 961 **ledande**, leading. 964 **apprentice**, an apprentice. 966 **sotiel**, difficult; **profiteth**, advances. 968 **sotil**, intricate, difficult. 970 **prentis**, apprentice.

Book II

I repreve not thise customes that men usen in the staat of bigynnyng, whethir thei
ben bodili or goostli, for y seie that thei aren ful goode and spedeful to hem for to usen.
But y wolde that thei heelden hem not but as a wei and an entré towarde goosteli
feelinge, and that thei usiden them a covenable mene, until a betere come, and that thei
in waynge of it coveitide aftir betere; and thanne yif a betere come that were more
goostli and more drawande in the thought from fleischlinessse and from the sensualité
and veyn ymaginacioun, and that schuld be lettid bicause of oþir wilful custum, that
thei leve thame here custom, whanne it mai be left withoutte sclaundre or disease of
oþere, and folwe that thei feelen. But yif neither lette oþir, thanne that thei use boþe yif
that thei mai. I mente not of costous nedeful thorough bond of lawe, or of rule, or of
penaunce, but of oþere wilfulli taken. Thus techeth the prophete in the sautier, seyng
thus: *Etenim benedictionem dabit legislator, abant de virtute in virtatem, et videbitur*
deus deorum in Syon (Psalms 83:8). Soþli the bringere of the lawe schal geve his
blissynge, thei schulen goon fro vertu to vertu, and God of goddis schal be seyn in
Syon. The bringere of the lawe, that is oure Lord Jhesu Crist, schal gyve His blissynge,
that is, schal gyve His gifles of grace to His chosen soules, callende hem from synne
and rightynge hem bi gode werkes to His liknesse; thorough whiche grace thei schullen
profiten and wexen from vertu to vertu until thei comen to Syon; that is until thei come
to contemplacion, in the whiche thei schullen see God of goddis; that is, thei schullen
see wel that ther is non but oon God, and thei schullen see that there is not but God.

Chapter Twenty

Hou that withouten moche bodili and goostli busynesse and withoute moche grace of
mekenes of soulis mowen not be reformed in feelinge ne be kept in it whan thei mai
come thereto.

Now, seist thou, syn it so is that reformynge in feith is so lowgh and so perilous for to
reste inne, bicause of drede of fallynge agen to deedli synne, and reformynge in feelynge
is so high and so siker, whoso myghte come thereto — thanne coveitest thou for to wile

972 **repreve**, blame. 973 **spedeful**, advantageous. 974 **entré**, entrance. 975 **covenable mene**,
suitable manner. 977 **drawande**, drawing. 979 **disease**, discomfort. 980 **lette**, hinder. 982 **sautier**,
paultier. 985 **seyn**, seen. 995 **lowgh**, low.

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what manere of traveile were most spedeful for to usen, bi the whiche a man myghte
1000 geofiten inne and come thereto, or yif there were ony certeyn traveile or special deede bi
the whiche a man myght come to that grace and to that reformynge in feelynge. As unto
this I seie thus: Thou wost wel what man or woman wole dispose him for to come to
clennesse of herte and to feelyng of grace, hem bihoveth have mykil traveile, and grete
frightynge in wille and in werk lastyngeli agens the wikkid stirynges of alle the heed
synnes, not oonli agens pride or envie, but agens alle oþere, with alle the spices that
1005 comen oute of hem, as I have seid heer bifore in the firste partie of this writynge. For
whi, passions and fleschli desires letten the clennesse in herte and pees in con-
science. And hem bihoveth also traveile for to geten alle vertues; not oonli chastite
and abstinence, but also pacience and myldenesse, charite and mekenesse, and alle
1010 the oþere. And this mai not be doon bi oo maner of werk, but bi diversis werkes and
manye, aftir dyverse disposyngis of men, as now praiyng, now thenkyng, now
wurkyng sum gode deede, now assaiyng hemself in dyverse weies; in hungir and in
thurste, in coolde and suffryng of schame and dispote yif nede be, and in oþere bodili
diseisis for love of vertu and soothfastnesse.

This knowest thou wel, for this redist thou in every book that techeth of good lyvynge.
1015 Thus seith also everi man that wole stire manrys soule to the love of God. And so it
semeth that there is no special traveile ne certeyn dede thorough the whiche oonli a soule
myghte come to that grace, but principali thorough grace of oure Loed Jhesu Crist, and
bi many deedis and grete in al that he mai doon, and yit al is litil ynowgh. And o skile mai
be this. For sithen oure Lord Jhesu Hymself is special maister of this craafe, and also
1020 special leche of goostli sikenesse, for withouten Him al is nouȝt; therefore it is resonable
that aftir He stireth and techeth, so a man folwe and wirke. But he is a sympil maister
that cannot kenne his disciple while he is in leernynge but ai oon lesson, and he is an
unwise leche that bi oon medycyn wole heele alle soris. Therfore oure Loed Jhesu, that
1025 is so wise and so good, for to schewe His wisdom and His godenesse He techeth sundri
lessones to His discipulis, aftir that they profiten in here lyvynge, and gyveth to sundri
soulis sundri medycynes aftir the felyng of hire sikenesse. And also another skille is this:
yif that there were oon certayn dede bi whiche a soule myghte come to perfylte love
of God, thanne schulde a man wene that he myght come thereto bi his ownen werke and

998 **spedeful**, advantageous. 1003 **heed**, capital. 1004 **spices**, species. 1006 **clennesse**, purity. 1008 **myldenesse**, gentleness. 1010 **disposyngis**, dispositions. 1018 **skile**, reason. 1019 **sithen**, since. 1020 **leche**, physician. 1022 **keane**, teach.

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thorough his own traveile, as a marchaunt cometh to his mede bi his own traveile oonli,
1030 and bi his werke. Nai, it is not soo goostli of the love of God. For he that wole serve
God wiseli and come to perfite love of Hym, he schal coveiten for to han noon other
mede than Him oonli. But thanne, for to have Hym mai no creature deserve oonli thorough
his owene traveile, for though a man myghte travelen bodili and gosteli as mykil as alle
creatures that evere were myghten, he myghte not deseruen oonli bi his werkes for to
have God for his mede. For He is sovereyn blisse and eendeles goodnesse, and passith
withoute comparisoun alle mennys desertis; and therfore He mai not be getin bi noo
mannys special werk, as bodili mede mai. For He is free and geveth Himsilf where He
wole and whanne He wole, neithir for this werke ne for that, ne this tymse ne aftir this
tymse; for though a soule werke al that he can and mai al his lyftyme, perfighte love of
1040 Jhesu schal he nevere have, til oure Lord Jhesu wole freeli gyven it. Neveretheles oon
that other side y seie also, that I hope that He geveth it not, but yif a man wirke and
traveile al that he may and can, yhe til hym thenketh that he mai no more, or ellis be in
ful wille thereto yif that he myghte.

And soo it semeth that neithir grace oonli withouten ful wirkynge of a soule that is it
1045 is, ne wirkynge alocene withouten grace, bryngeth not a soule to refoemyng in feelynge,
the whiche refoemyng stondeth in perfite love and charité. But that oon joyned with
that other — that is, grace joined to werke — bryngeth into a soule the blissid feelynge
of perfite love, the whiche grace may not resten fulli but on a meke soule that is ful of
dreede of God. Therefore I seie that he that hath not mekenesse, ne dooth not his
1050 bisynesse, mai not come to this refoemyng in feelynge. He hath not ful mekenesse that
cannot felen of himself soothfasteli as he is, as thus: he that dooth al the good deedes
that he can, as in fastynge, wakynge, werynge of the heire and alle othere suffryng
of bodili penaunce, or dooth alle the outward werkes of merci to his evene Cristene, or
ellis inward as praiyng, wepyng, sighhyng, and thenkyng: yif he reste ai in hem,
1055 and lene so mykil to hem, and rewarde hem so greteli in his owene sight that he presumeth
in his owen desetes, and thenketh himsilf ai riche and good and holi and vertuous —
sothli as longe as he feelith thus, he is not meke inow. Ne though he seie or thenke that
al that he dooth is of Goddis grace and not of hymself, he is not yit meke inow, for he
mai not yit make himself nakid from al his good deedes, ne make hymself pore soothfastli

1029 **mede**, reward. 1041 **hope**, expect. 1042 **yhe**, yea; **hym thenketh**, it seems to him. 1046
stondeth, consists. 1050 **bisynesse**, activity. 1052 **heire**, hairshirt, the traditional garment of
the penitent. 1055 **rewarde**, regard.

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1060 in spirit, ne feelen himself nought, as he is. And soothli, until a soule can felabli thorough
grace nougten himself, and baaren himself from al the good that he doth thorough
biholdynge of soothfastnesse of Jhesu God, he is not perfighteli meke.

For what is mekenesse but soothfastenesse? Soothli, not ellis. And therfore he that
thorough grace may see Jhesu, hou He dooth al, and hymself dooth right nought but
1065 suffreth Hym werken in hym what Him list, he is meke. But this is ful harde and as it
were impossible and unresonable to a man that wirketh al bi mannys resoun and seeth
no ferthere, for to doon many gode dedes and thanne for to arrete hem alle to Jhesu, and
setten hymself at not. Nevertheless whoso myght have a gosteli sight of soothfastenes,
be schulde thenke it ful true and ful resonable to doon so. And soothli he that hath this
1070 sight he schal nevere doo the lasse, but he schal be stired for to traveile bodili and
goostli mykil the more and with mykil the betere wil. And this mai be o cause whi that
summe men peraventure swynken and sweten and pynen here wrecchid bodi with
outeragious penaunce al here liyfyme, and aren ai seiynge orisons and sautiers and
1075 biddynge many othere bedis, and yit mowen thei nou come to that goostli feelynge of
the love of God, as it semeth sum men doon in schortere tyme with lasse peyne, for
thei han not that mekenesse that y speke of.

Also on that othir side I seie, he that dooth not his bisynesse mai not come to the
felyng of grace. He dooth not his bisynesse that thenketh thus: Whereto schulde I
1080 traveile? Wherto schulde I peiae or thenken, fasten or waken, or ony bodili penaunce
doon for to come to siche grace, syn it mai not be geten ne had, but oonli of the free gift
of Jhesu? Therfore I wole umbiden in fleischlihede right as I am, and right not doon of
siche werkis bodili ne gosteli until he geve it. For yif he wole gyve it, he asketh no
wirkynge of me. Whatso that I doo, and hou litil that y doo, I schal have it. And yif he
1085 wole not gyve it, traveile I nevere so faste for it, I geve it nevere the more. He that seith
thus mai not come to this reformynge, for he draweth himself wilfulli to ydelnesse of
fleschlihede, and unsablit hym to the gifte of grace, in as mykil as he putteth from him
bothe inward werkynge that stondeth in lastynge desire and in longynge to Jhesu, and
outward werkynge bi traveile of his bodi in goode outward deedes. So mai he not
have it.

1060 **felabli**, in the senses, palpably. 1061 **noughten**, make nothing. 1062 **perfighteli**, perfectly. 1067 **arrete**, account. 1068 **not**, nought. 1072 **swynken**, work. 1073 **orisons**, prayers; **sautiers**, psalters. 1074 **biddynge**, praying; **bedis**, prayers. 1077 **bisynesse**, activity. 1081 **umbiden**, remain; **fleschlihede**, fleshiness. 1086 **unsablit**, disables.

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1090 Therfore I seie that he that hath not trewe mekenesse ne ful herteli bisynes mai not come to the reformynge in feelynge. For withoute bisynesse — either inward oonli bi grete fervour and lastinge desire and bisi praiere and thought in God, or ellis bothe inward and outewarde — mai he not come to this goosteli reformyng of this image.

Chapter Twenty-one

1095 That a man that wil come to Jerusalem, that is undirsonde to the cité of pees, the which is contemplacion, muste hoolde him lowe in mekenesse and in feith, and suffir disese bothe bodili and gosteli.

1100 Nevertheless, for thou coveitest to have sum maner wirkynge bi the whiche thou myghtest the rathere neighen to that reformynge, I schal seie thee as me thenketh bi the grace of oure Lord Jhesu, the schorste and the redioste helpe that I knowe in this wirkynge. And hou that schal be, I schal tolle thee bi ensample of a good pilgryne, upon this wise.

1105 There was a man that wolde goon to Jerusalem, and for that he knewe not the weie, he come to another man that he hopid coude the weie thider, and askid whethir he myght not come to that cité. That othir man seide to him that he myght not come thidir withoute grete disese and grete traveile, for the wei is longe and the perilis aren grete for theves and robberes, and many othere lettyngis ther ben that fallen to a man in the goynge. And also there are many sundri weies, as it semeth, ledynge thedirward, but men al dai are slayn and spoiled and mowen not come to that place that thei coveiten. Nevertheless, there is o weie, the which weie whoso wolde take it and hoolde it, he wolde undirtake that he schulde come to the cité of Jerusalem, and he schulde nevere 1110 lesen his liyf ne be slayn, ne dien for defaughte. He schulde ofte be robbid and yvel beten, and suffre mykal disese in the goynge, but he schulde have his liyf saaf.

1090 **herteli**, hearty. 1095 **disese**, discomfort. 1098 **rathere neighen**, sooner approach. 1100 **ensample**, example; **pilgryne**, pilgrim; **wise**, manner. 1102 **coude**, knew. 1103 **to that cité**, Clark suggests (p. 309n102) that Hilton follows a specific source for his exposition of the commonplace of the Christian life as a pilgrimage to the heavenly Jerusalem, namely Bernard, *Sermo in quadragesima* 6. 1104 **disese**, discomfort; **for**, because of. 1105 **lettyagis**, obstacles. 1107 **spoiled**, despoiled. 1110 **lesen**, lose; **defaughte**, fault. 1111 **disese**, discomfort.

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Thanne seith the pylgume: "Bi so y mai ascape and have my liyf saaf and come to that place that I coveite, I charge not what myschief I suffre in the goynge; and therfore seie me what thou wolt, and soothli I bihote thee for to doon theraftir." That othir man
1115 answierith and seith thus: "Loo, I sette thee in the right weie." This is the weie, and that thou kepe this lernynge that I kenne thec. Whatsoo thou herest or seest or feelist that schulde lette thee in thi weie, abide not with it wilfulli, tarie not for it restfulli, biholde it not, like it not, drede it not; but ai go forth in thi weie, and thenke that thou woldest not ellis but bee at Jerusalem. For that thou coveitest, that thou desirest, and not ellis but
1120 that. And yif men robbent thee and spoilen thee, scorne thee, beten thee, and despice thee, stryve not ageyn yif thou wolt have thi liyf, but holde thee with the harm that thou hast and goo forth as nouȝt were, that thou take no more harm. And also yif men wolen tarie thee with tales and fage thee with leesynges for to drawe thee to myrthis and to leve thi pylgrimages, make deef eere and ansuere not agen, seie not elles but that thou
1125 woldest ben at Jerusalem. And yif men profre thee giftis and wole make thee riche with wordli goodes, tende not to hem; thenke ai on Jerusalem. And yif thou wolte holden this weie and doon as I have seide, I undirtake thi liyf thou schalte not be slayn, but thou schalt come to that place ther tha coveitest.

Goosteli to oure purpos, Jerusalem is as mykil for to say as sight of pees, and it
1130 bitokeneth contemplacion in perfighte love of God. For contemplacion is not ellis but a sight of Jhesu, the whiche is veri pees. Than yif thou coveite for to come to this blissid sight of veri pees and be a trewe pylgrym to Jerusalemward, though it be so that I were nevere there, nevertheless as ferforth as I can I schal sette thee in the weie thedirwaed. The bigynnyng of the high weie in the whiche thou schalt goon is reformyng in feith,
1135 groundidmekeli in the feith and in the lawes of Holi Chirche, as I have seid before. For truste sikirli, though thou have synned here before, yif thou be now reformed bi the sacrament of penaunce aftir the lawe of Holi Chirche, that thou arte in the right weie. Now thanne, syn thou art in the siker weie, yif thou wilt sped in thy goynge and make good jornés, thee bihoveth holden thise two thinges often in thi mynde, mkenesse and
1140 love. That is, I am nouȝt, I have nouȝt, I coveite nouȝt, but oon. Thou schalt have

1112 **ascape**, escape. 1114 **bihote**, promise. 1116 **kenne**, teach. 1117 **lette**, obstruct. 1120
spoilen, despoil; despice, despise. 1123 **tarie**, trouble; fage, deceive; **leesynges**, deceptions.
1132 **veri**, true; to **Jerusalemward**, toward Jerusalem. 1133 **as ferforth**, to the extent. 1136
sikirli, certainly. 1138 **spede**, thrive. 1139 **jornés**, journeys.

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the memyng of thise wordes in thynt entente and in habite of thi soule lastanli, though thou have not thise wordes speciali formed ai in thi thought, for that nedeth nougnt. Mekenesse seith, I am nougnt, I have nougnt. Love seith, I coveite nougnt but oon, and that is Jhesus.

1145 These two strynges, wel festened with mynde of Jhesus, maken good acced in the harpe of thi soule, whanne thei ben craftli touchid with the fyngrs of reson, for the lowere thou smytest upon that on, the highere souneth that tothir. The lasse thou felist that thou art or that thu hast of thisilf thorough mekenesse, the more thou coveitest for to have of Jhesus in desire of love. I mene not oonli of that mekenesse, the whiche a soule feeleth in sight of his own synne or frieltees or wrecchidnesse of this liyf, or of the worthinessse of his evene Cristene. For though this mekenes be soothfast and medicynable, nevertheles it is boistous and fleschli as in regard, not clene ne softe ne loveli. But I mene also this mekenesse that the soule feeleth thorough grace, in sight and biholdinge of the endeles beyng and the wondirful goodnessse of Jhesus; and yif thou mowe not seem it yit with thi goostili iye that thou trowe it. For thorough sight of His beyng, either in ful feith or in feelynge, thou schalt holden thisilf not oonli as the moste wrecche that is, but also as nougnt in substance of thi soule, though thou haddest doo nevere synne. And that is loveli mekenesse, for in reward of Jhesus that is soothfastli al, thou art right nougnt. And also that thou therlike that thou haste right nougnt, but arte as
1150 a vessel that stondeth ai tome or voide as nougnt were thereinne, as of thisilf. For doo thou nevere so manye good deedes outward or inward, until thou have and feele that thou hast the love of Jhesus, thou hast right nougnt. For with that precious licour oonli, mai thi soule be fulfilled, and with noon othir. And for as mykil as that thyng aloone is so precious and so worthi, therfore what thou haste or what thou doost, holde it as
1155 right nougnt as for to resten inne, withoute the sight and the love of Jhesus. Keste it al bihynde thee and forgeve it, that thou myghnest have that that is beste of alle.

Right as a trewe pilgrym goyng to Jerusalem leveth bihynde him hoss and lond, wif and childe, and maketh hemself pore and bare from al that he hath, that he myght goo lightli withoute lettynge: right so yif thou wolt ben a goostli pilgrim, thou schalt make
1160 thisilf naked from al that thou haste, that are bothe gode dedes and badde, and casten alle bihynde thee, that thou be so pore in thynt own feelynge that ther be nothing of thy
1165 Keste, Cast. 1169 lettynge, hindrance.

1141 **lastanli**, lastingly. 1146 **craftli**, skillfully. 1150 **frieltees**, frailties. 1152 **medicynable**, medicinal; **boistous**, unruly; regard, aspect. 1160 **tome**, empty. 1165 **Keste**, Cast. 1169 **lettynge**, hindrance.

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1175 owen wirkynge that thou wolt lene upoun restandeli, but ai desiryng more grace of
 love and ai sekynge the goosteli presence of Jhesu. And yif thou doo thus, thanne schalt
 thou sette in thin herte fully and booly that thou woldest ben at Jerusalem, and at noon
 other place but there. And that is, thou schalt settien in thy herte fulli and hooli, that thou
 woldest nothynge have but the love of Jhesu and the goostli sight of Him as He wole
 schewen Him; for to that oonli thou art maad and bought, and that is thi bigynnynge and
 thynde ende, thi joie and thi blisse. And therfore, whatsoevere that thou have, be thou
 nevere so riche in othere dedis bodili and goostli, but yif thou have that, and knowe and
 feele that thou hast it, holde that thou hast right nouȝt. Prente wel this resoun in the
 menyng of thy herte, and cleve sadli thereto; and hit schal save thee from alle perilis in
 thy goynge, that thou schalt not perischen, and it schal save thee fro theves and robbours,
 the whiche I calle unclene spiritis, that though thei spoile thee and bate thee thorough
 dyvers temptaciouns thi liyf schal be ai saaf. And schorteli yif thou kepe it as I schal seie
 thee, thou schalt ascape alle periles and myschevys and come to the cité of Jerusalem
 withinne schort tyme.

Now thou art in the weie and knowest what the place highte and whidir thou schalt
drawe to. Bigyn than for to goen forth in thy jorne. Thi forthgoynge is not ellis but
1190 goostli werkes, and bodili also whanne that it nedeth, whiche thou schalte usen with
 discrecioun upon this wise. What werk that it be that thou schuldest doon, aftir the
 degree or staate asketh that thou stondest inne, bodili or goostli, yif it helpe this gracious
 desire that thou hast for to love Jhesu, and make it more hool and more esi, and more
 myghti to alle vertues and to al goodnessse, that werke holde I best; be it praiynge, be it
 thenkynge, be it redynge, be it wirkynge; and as longe as that werk strengtheth moste
 thy herte and thi wille to the love of Jhesu, and ferthest draweth thy affeccion and thi
 thought from wordli vanit , it is good for to use it. And yif it be so, that thorough use
 savour of that lasseth, and thee thenketh another werk saveureth thee more, and thou
 feelist more grace in another, take another and leef that. For though the desire and the
 yemynge of thy herte to Jhesu schulde ai be unchaungeable, nevertheless thi goostli
 werkes that thou schalt usen in praiynge or in thenkynge for to feeden and norischen

1174 *thin*, your. 1177 *schewen* Him, reveal Himself. 1180 *Preat*, Print. 1185 *ascape*, escape;
 myschevys, misfortunes. 1187 *highte*, is called. 1188 *jorne*, journey. 1190 *upon this wise*, in
 this manner. 1190–91 *aftir the degree . . . goostli*, such phrases imply that Hilton intended his
 work for a wider audience than enclosed anchoresses; see Clark, p. 310n113. 1192 *esi*, com-
 forting. 1196 *wordli*, worldly.

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this desire mowen be dyvers, and moun ben wel chawngid aftir that thou feelist thee disposed thorough grace and appliynge of thyn own herte.

For it farith bi werkes and by disire, as it dooth bi stikkis and bi a fier. For the mo stikkis are leid to the fier, the gretttere is the flawme and the hattere is the fier. Right so the more dyverse goosli werkynge that a man hath in his thought for to kepen hool his desire, the myghtiere and the more brennande schal be his desire to God. And therfore loke wisely what werk thou canst best doon, and that moste helpeth thee for to save hool this desire to Jhesu (yif thou be free, and arte not bounden but undir the comoun lawe), and that do. Bynde thee not to wilful customs unchaungeabli, that schulde lette the fredom of thy herte for to love Jhesu yif grace wole visite thee speciali. For I schal telle thee whiche customs aren ai goode and nedeful to be kepte. Loo, siche a custom is ai good for to ben holden that stondeth in getynge of vertu and lettynge of synne, and that custom schulde nevere be left, for thou schalt ai be meke and pacient, sobre and chaste, yif thou wel doo, and so of alle othere vertues. But the custom of another thyng
1210
1215
1220
1225
that letteth a betere is for to leven whanne tyme is, there a man mai. As thus, yif a man have in custom for to seyn thus many bedes, or for to thenken oonli this manere thought and thus longe tyme, or for to waken or knelen thus longe, or ony oþer bodil deede, this custom is for to leve sum tyme whan resonable cause leneth, or ellis yif more grace come on oþer side.

Chapter Twenty-two

1220 Of a general remedie agens wikkid stirynges and peynful tarynges that fallen in here hertis of the fleisch, the world, and the feend, and hou a stidefast desire to Jhesu maynstened and strenghed with devout praire and bisi thenkynge on Him is a sovereyn remedye.

Now art thou in the weie, and thou wost hou thou schalt goon. Now beware of enemyes that wolen be bisie for to lette thee yif thei mowen, for al here entente is for to putten oute of thy herte that desire and that longyng that thou hast to the love of Jhesu, and

1201 **mowen**, can; **moan**, can. 1209 **lette**, hinder. 1216 **bedes**, prayers. 1220 **tarynges**, troubles. 1225 **lette**, prevent.

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for to dryve thee hoom ageyn to love of worldli vanyté. For ther is nothyng that
1230 greveth hem so mykil. Thise enemyes aren principali fleschli desires and veyne dredes,
that risen oute of thi herte thorugh corrupcion of thi fleschli kynde, and wolde lette the
desire of the love of Jhesu, that thei myghten fulli and restefulli occupien thyn herte —
these aren thi neste enemyes. Also othere enemyes there aren, as unclene spirates that
1235 aren bisi with sleightes and wiles for to disseyven thee. But o remedie schal thou have
that I seide before — whatso it be that thei seyn, trowe hem not, but holde forth thy
weie, and oonli desire the love of Jhesu. Ansvere ai thus: I am sought, I have sought, I
coveite not, but oonli for to love Jhesu.

Yif thyne enemyes seyn to thee first thus, bi stirynges in thyn herte, that thou arte not
schryven aright, or there is sum olde synne hid in thin herte that thou knowest not, ne
were not schryven of, and therfore thou mostist turne hoom agen and leve thi desire,
1240 and goo first and schrywe thee betere: trowe not this seiyinge, for it is fals, for thou arte
schryven. Truste sikirli that thou art in the weie, and thee nedeth no more ransakynge of
schrifte for that that is passid. Hold forthe thi wey and thenke on Jerusalem. Also yif
thei seyn that thou arte not worthi for to have the love of God, wherto schalt thou
1245 coveite that thou myght not have, ne arte not worthi thereto, trowe hem not, but goo
forth, and seie thus: "Not for I am worthi, but for I am unworthi, therfore wolde I love
God. For yif I hadde it, that schulde make worthi me. And syn I was maad thereto,
though I schuld nevere have it, yit wole I coveite it, and therfore wole I praien and
thenken that I myght geten it." And thanne yif thyne enemyes seen that thou bigynnest to
1250 wexen bold and wel willed to thi werk, thei bigynne to wexe aferd of thee.

Neverthelees, thei wolen not ceesen of tariyng whanne thei mowen as longe as thou
1250 art goynge in the weie, what with drede and manassynge on that toon side, what with
flaterynge and fals plesynge on that oþer side, for to doo thee breke thi purpos and
turnen hoom agen. Thei wolen seie thus: "Yif thou holde forth this desire to Jhesu so
1255 fulli traveilynge as thou bigynnest, thou schal falle in sikenesse, or in fantasies, or into
frenesies, as thou seest that sum men doon, or thou schalt fallen in poverté and bodily
myschef, and no man schal wille helpe thee; or thou myght falle into privei temptacions
of the feend, that thou schalt not come helpe thisilf innie. For it is wondir perilous ony

1231 *neste*, closest. 1233 *trowe*, believe. 1248 *aferd*, afraid. 1249 *tariyng*, troubling. 1250
manassynge, menacing; *taos*, onc. 1254 *frenesies*, frenzies. 1255 *myschef*, misfortune; *schal*
wille, will want to.

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man to gyve him fulli to the love of God, and leve al the world, and nothyng coveiteyng
but oonli Him and the love of Him, for so many periles mowen falle that a man knoweth
not of. And therfore tume hoom agen and leef this desire, for thou schalt never bryng
1260 it to a good ende, and doo as othere wordli men doon." Thus seyn thyn enemyes, but
trowe hem not, but holde ai forth thi desire, and sei not ellis but that thou woldest have
Jhesu, and ben at Jerusalem. And yif thei perceyve thanne thi wille so strenthid that thou
wolt not spare for symme ne for sikenesse, for fantasye, ne frenesie, for doughtes ne for
deedes, ne for gosteli temptacions, for myschef ne for poverté, for liyf ne for deeth; but
1265 ai forth thou wolte with oo thyng, and no thinge but oon, and makest deef eere to hem
whatsoevere thei seyn as though thou herdest hem not, and holdest forth stilli in thyn
praieres and in thi othere goostli werkes withouten stintinge, and thou dost with discretion
affir conceil of thi sovereyne or thi goostli fadir; thanne bigynne thei for to be wrooth
and to goon a litil neer thee. Thei bigynne for to robbe thee and bete thee and doo thee
1270 al the shame that thei mowen. And that is, whanne thei make that alle thi deedes that
thou doost, be thei nevere so weel doon, aen demed of othere men as ille and turmyd
into wers partie. And whatsoevere it be that thou woldest have doon in helpe of thi bodi
or of thi soule, it schal be lettid and hyndrid bi othere men, so that thou schalt be put fro
thi wille in alle thinges that thou skilfuli coveitest. And al this thei doon that thou schuldest
1275 be stired to ire or malencolie or yvel wil agens thyn even Cristene.

But agens alle thise deseases and alle othere that mowen fallen, use this remedie. Take
Jhesu in thy mynde, angre theo not with hem, tarie not with hem, but oonly on thi
lesson. That is, thou arte not, thou hast not, thou maist not leesen of ertheli good, thou
1280 coveitest nought but the love of Jhesu, and holde forth thi weie to Jerusalem, with thyn
occupacion. And neverthelees yif thou be taried sum tyme thorough frielté of thisilf with
sich deseases that fallen to thi bodili liyf thorough yvel wil of man or malice of the foend,
as soone as thou maist come agen to thisilf, and leve of the thenkyng of that desease and
go forth in thi werk. Abide not to longe with hem for drede of thyn enemyes.

1258 **mowen**, care. 1263 **doughtes**, doubts. 1268 **wrooth**, angry. 1269 **neer**, nearer to. 1270
mowen, care. 1271 **ille**, evil. 1272 **wers**, worse; partie, part. 1276 **diseases**, discomforts. 1277
tarie, trouble. 1278 **not_{ellis}**, sought. 1280 **occupacion**, attention; frielté, frailty. 1281 **diseases**,
discomforts.

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Chapter Twenty-three

Hou thou that art thus in this weie and wolt not be put out bi no diseses; thyne enemyes
1285 wolen than forgen thee and sette thee before alle thi good deedes and commende thee of
hem and hou than thou schalt putte hem away.

And aftir this, whanne thyne enemyes seen that thou art so wel-willed, that thou art not
angri ne hevy ne wrooth, ne mykil stired agen no creature for ought that thei mowen
doon or spoken agens thee, but settest thyn herte fulli for to suffren al that mai falle,
1290 eese and uneese, praisyng or lackyng, and that thou wolt charge nothinge with thi, that
thou myghtest kepe thi thought and thi desire hool to the love of God, thanne are thei
mykil abashed. But thanne wolen thei assaie thee with flaterie and plesyng, and that is
whanne thei bringen to the sight of thi soule alle thi good deedis and thi vertues, and
1295 beeren upon thee that alle men peisen thee and spoken of thyn holinesse and hou alle
men loven thee and worschipen thee for thi hooli lyvynge. This doon thyne enemyes that
thou schuldest thenke here seiyng sooth, and han delite in this veyn joie and reste thee
therin. But yif thou doo wel, thou schalt holden al siehe veyn jangelynge as falsheed
and flaterie of thyne enemye, that profreth thee venym to dryskien tempered with hony.
Therefore refuse it and seie thou wolt not therof, but thou woldest ben at Jerusalem.

1300 Siehe lettynge thou schalt feilen or elles oþere like, what of thi flesch, what of the
world, what of the feend, mo than I mai reherce now. For a man as longe as he suffrieth
his thought wilfulli rennen al aboughte the world in bisholdinge of sundri thynges, he
perceyveth fewe lettynge. But as soone as he draweth al his thought and his yemyng
unto oo thyng oonli, for to have that, for to see that, and for to knowe that, and loven
1305 that, and that is oonli Jhesu, than schal he wel feelyn manye peynful lettynge, for every
thought that he feleth and is not that that he coveiteth is lettynge to him. Therfore I have
tolde thee of summe speciali, as for exsample. And overmore I seie generali, that what
stirynge that thou feelist of thi fleische or of the feend, plesant or peynful, bittir or
swete, likynge or dredeful, gladsum or sorweful, that wolde drawe doun thi thought
1310 and thi desire from the love of Jhesu to woedli vanite and lette uttirli thi goostli covetise

1285 **forgen thee**, scheme against you. 1289 **suffres**, endure. 1290 **charge nothinge with thi**,
concern yourself about nothing. 1294 **beeren upon thee**, emphasize to you. 1297 **jangelynge**,
jangling. 1300 **lettynge**, hindrances. 1309 **gladsum**, joyous.

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that thou hast to the love of Him, and that thyne herte schuld be occupied with that stirynge restandli: sette it at nought, receyve it not wilfulli, tarie not therewith to longe.

But yif it bee of a wordli thynge that bishoveth nedes to be doon unto thisilf or to thyne evene Cristene, spedee thee soone of it, and beyng it to an ende that it hange not on thyne

1315 herte. Yif it be another thynge that nedeth not, or ellis it toucheth not thee, drede it not, like it not, but smyte it out of thyne herte redili. And seie thus: "I am nought; I have nought; nought I seke ne coveite but the love of Jhesu." Knyt thi thought to this desire, and strenghe it with praiere and with oþir goostli werk that thou forgete it not, and it schal leede thee in the right weie and save thee from alle periles, that though thou feele hem thou schal not perischen; and I hope that it schal bryng thee to the perfight love of oure Lord Jhesu.

Neverthelees on that oþir side I saide also, what werk or what stirynge it be that mai helpe thi desire, strenthe it and norische it, and make thi thought ferthest from the love and mynde of the world, more hool and more brennande to the love of Jhesu, whethir 1325 it be praiynge or thenkyng, stillenes or spekynge, reedyng or heeryng, oonlynes or comonyng, goynge or sittynge — kepe it for the tyme and wirke thereinne as longe as savour lasteth, bi so that thou take therwith mete and drynke and slepe as a pilgrym dooth, and kepe discretion in thi wirkynge aftir conceile or ordenaunce of thi sovereyne. For have he nevere soo grete haste in his goynge, yit he wole in tyme eie and drynken and 1330 slepen. Do thou so. For though it lette oon tyme, it schal fortherene thee anothir tyme.

Chapter Twenty-four

Hou a soule whan it is hid thorough grace fro the vyle noise and besynesse of the world is a gode nyght and a lighti merkenesse, for thane may it freli praien and thenken on Jhesu.

Yyf thou wilte witen thane what this desire is, sotheli it is Jhesu. For He maketh this 1335 desire in thee and He geveth thee it. He it is that desiroth in thee and He it is that is desired. He is al and He dooth al, yif thou myght seen Hym. Thou doost nought, but suffrist Hym

1312 **restandli**, constantly. 1314 **spede**, hasten. 1325 **oonlynes**, solitude. 1326 **comonyng**, community; goynge, walking. 1330 **fortherene**, advance. 1334 **witen**, know.

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werken in thi soule and assentest to Hym with grete gladenesse of herte that He voucheth
saaf for to doo so in thee. Thou art not ellis but a resonable instrument whereinne that
He werketh. And therfore whanne thou feelist thi thought bi touchyng of His grace bi
1340 taken up with this desire to Jhesu with a myghti devote wille for to plesen Him and
loven Him, thynke thanne that thou haste Jhesu; for He it is that desireth. Biholde Him
wel, He goth before thee, not in bodili liknesse, but unseabli bi privei hid presence of His
goostli myght; therfore see Hym gostly yif thou myght, or ellis trowe Him and folwe
1345 Him whidirso He goth; for He schal leode thee in the righte weie to Jerusalem, that is,
the sight of pees in contemplacioun. Thus praeide the prophete to the Fadir of hevene,
seiyng thus: *Emitte lucem tuam et veritatem tuam ipsa me deduxerunt, et adduxerunt*
in montem sanctum tuum, et in tabernacula tua (Psalms 42:3). That is: Fader of hevene,
sende oure Thi light and Thi soothfastenesse, that is, Thi sone Jhesu; and He schal leode
me bi desire in me into Thi hooli hille and into Thi tabernaculus, that is, to the feelyng of
1350 perfithe love and heigthe in contemplacioun.

Of this desire speketh the prophete thus: *Memoriale tuum domine in desiderio anime*
meae. Anima mea desideravit te in nocte, sed et spiritus meus in pectorali meo (Isaiah
26:8-9). That is: Lord Jhesu, the mynde of Thee is peinted in desire of my soule, for my
soule hath desired Thee in the nyght and my sprite hath coveited Thee in al my thenkyng.
1355 And whi the prophete seith that he desired God al in the nyght, and what he meneth
therbi, schal I telle thee. Thou woste wel that the nyght is a tymeful space atwixe to
daies; for whanne oo dai is ended, another cometh not as tite, but first cometh nyght and
departeth the daies, sumtyme longe and sumtyme schort, and thanne after that cometh
another dai. The prophete menede not oonli of this maner nyght, but he menede of the
1360 goostli nyght. Thou schal undirstande that there ben two daies or two lightes; the first
is fals light, the secunde is a trewe light. The fals light is the love of this worlde, that a
man hath of himself of correspencion of his fleisch; the trewe light is the perfithe love of
Jhesu feelid thorough grace in a manrys soule. The love of the world is a fals light, for it
passeth awey and lasteth not, and so it performeth not that it highte. This light byhighte
1365 the feend to Adam, whanne he stired hym to synne, and seide thus: *Aperientur oculi*
vestri et eritis sicut dii (Genesis 3:5). That is: Youre iyen schullen ben opened and ye
schullen ben as goddis. And he seide soth there; for whanne Adam hadde synned,

1342 *unseabli*, invisibly. 1356 *tymeful*, temporal, durational; *atwixe to*, between two. 1357 *as*
tite, immediately. 1359 *menede*, meant. 1364 *brighte*, promised; *byhighte*, promised.

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anoon his innere iye was spred and goostli light withdrawen, and the utterere yyes
were opened, and he felte and sigh a newe light of fleschli knowynge and wordli love
1370 that he sigh not before. And so sigh he a newe dai, but this was an ille dai; for this dai
was it that Job wariede whanne he seide thus: *Pereat dies in qua natus sum* (Job 3:3).
That is: Perische mote the dai in whiche I was born. He wariede not the dai remyng in
the yeere that God maade, but he wariede this dai that man maade, that is, the
concupiscence and the love of the world in the whiche he was born, though he felte it
1375 not thanne. This dai and this light he askide of God that it schulde perischen and no
lengere lasten.

But the love of Jhesu is a trewe dai and a blessed light, for God is bothe love and light,
and He is ai lastynge, thus Seynt Johan seith: *Qui diligit deum manet in lumine* (1 John
2:10). That is: He that loveth God duelleth al in light. Than what man that perceyveth
1380 and seeth the love of this world fals and failande, and forthi he wole forsake it and seke
the love of God; he mai not as tite feele the love of Hym, but him bihoveth a while abiden
in the nyght, for he mai not sodeynli come from that oon light to that othir, that is, fro
the love of the world to the perfite love of God. This nyght is not ellis but a foreberysge
1385 and a withdrawynge of the affeccioun and the thought of the soule from ertheli thynges,
bi gret desire and yemyng for to seen and felen and loven Jhesu and gosteli thinges.
This is the nyght; for right as the nyghte is myrke and an hidynge of alle bodili creatures
and a restynge of alle bodili deedes, right so a man that setteth him fulli for to thenken
1390 on Jhesu, and desiren oonli the love of Him, is besi for to hidien his thought from veyn
biholdynge and his affeccion from fleischli likynge of alle fleschli creatures, so that his
thought be maad free, not sicched, ne his affeccion bounden, ne trobed in nothinge
lowere ne wese thanne hymself. And yif he mai doo so, thaen is it nyght with him,
for thanne is he in myrkennesse.

But this is a good nyght and a lighti merkenesse, for it is a stoppynge ought of fals
love of the world, and it is a neighyng to the trewe dai. And sotheli the merkere that the
1395 nyght is, the nerrere is the trewe light of the love of Jhesu; for the more that a soule mai
thorugh longyng to God be hid fro noise and deene of fleschli affecciones, worldli
desires, and unclene thoughtes, the nerrere is it for to feelen the light of the love of Hym,

1368 spred, closed; **utterere yyes**, outer eyes. 1369 sigh, saw. 1371 wariede, cursed. 1372
mote, may; remyng, current. 1381 as tite, immediately; **him bihoveth**, he must. 1383
foreberysge, withholding. 1386 myrke, dark. 1390 sicched, fixed. 1393 ought, out. 1394
merkere, darker. 1396 deene, dir.

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for it is evene at it. Thus semede that the prophete menede whanne he seide thus: *Cum
in tenebris sedeo, dominus mea lux est* (Micah 7:8). Whanne I sitte in myrkennesse oure
1400 Lorde is my light; that is, whanne my soule is hid from alle stirynges of synne as it were
in sleep, thanne is oure Lord Jhesu my light, for thanne neigheth He of his grace for to
schewe me of His light. Neverthelees this nyght is sumtyme peynful and sumtyme it is
esi and confortable. It is peynful firste whanne a man is mykil foule and is nouȝt
1405 thorugh grace usid for to ben often in this myrkennesse, but wolde fayne have it, and
therfore he setteth his thought and his desire to Godward as mykil as he may, that he
wolde not feelen ne thenken but oonli on Hym.

And bicause that he may not lightli have it, therfore it is peynful. For the custom and
the hoomlynesse that he hath had before with synne of the world, and fleschli affecciones
1410 and ertheli thynges, and his fleschli deedes, presen so upon him and ai smyten in bi
maistrie and drawnen doun alle the soule to hem, that he mai not wel ben hid from hem
as soone as he wolde ben. And therfore is this merkenesse peynefull to hym, and nameli
whanne grace toucheth him nouȝt abondauntli. Neverthelees, yif it be so with thee, be
not to hevy ne strive not to mykil, as yif thou woldest thorugh maistrie putten hem
1415 ought of thi thought; for thou may not doom so. But abide grace, suffre esili, and breek
not thisilf to mochil and silih yif thou maist drawe thi desire and thi goostli bisholdynge to
Jhesu, as yif thou woldest not charge hem.

For wite thou wel, whanne thou woldest desire Jhesu and oonli thenken on Him, and
thou mai not freli for presyng in of swilk wordli thoughts, sothli thou art outward of
the fals dai, and thou art entred into this myrkennesse. But thi merkenesse is not restefulle,
1420 bicause of disease and unconnyng and unclennesse of thisilf. And therfore use it often,
and it schal bi processe thorugh feelyng of grace be more esi and more restful to thee.
And that is whanne thi soule thorugh feling of grace is maad so free and so myghti and
so gadred into hisilf, that it leseth to thenke on right nouȝt, and that it mai withoute
1425 lettynge of ony bodili thyng thenke on right nouȝt: than is it in a good myrkennesse.

This nouȝt I mene thus: that a soule mai thorugh grace be gadred into itsilf and
stonde stille in itsilf freli and hooli, and not be dryven agens his wil ne drawnen doun bi

1398 **menede**, meant. 1403 **esi**, easy. 1405 **to Godward**, toward God. 1408 **hoomlynesse**,
familiarity. 1409 **presen**, press; in, inward. 1410 **maistrie**, force. 1411 **merkenesse**, darkness.
1415 **to mochil**, too much; silih, cleverly. 1416 **charge**, be concerned about. 1417 **wite**, know.
1418 **freli**, freely; presyng, pressing; swilk, such. 1420 **unconnyng**, ignorance; unclennesse,
impurity. 1421 **esi**, comfortable. 1423 **leseth**, desires. 1424 **nouȝt**, nothing.

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maistrie for to thenken or liken or loven with chesinge of affeccioun ony synne, or
veylli or ertheli thyng. Than thenketh the soule nougnt, for thanne thenketh it on no
ertheli thyng clevandeli. This is a riche nougnt. This nougnt and this nyght is a grete
eese for a soule that desireth the love of Jhesu. It is in eese as for thought of ertheli
thyng, but not as for Jhesu; for though the soule thenke not of ony ertheli thyng,
neverethelees it is ful bisi for to thenken on Him.

What thinge thanne maketh this merkenesse? Sothli not ellis but a gracious desire for
to have the love of Jhesu. For that desire and that longyng that it hath that tyme to the
love of Jhesu, for to seen Hym and han Hym, dryveth ouate of the herte alle wordli
vanytees and fleschli affecciones, and gadreth the soule into itslf and occupieth it oonli
for to thenke hou it myght come to the love of Him, and so bryngeth into this riche
nougnt. And sothli it is not al myrke ne nougnt whanne it thenketh thus; for though it
bee myrke from fals light, it is not al merke fro the trewe light. For Jhesu that is bothe
love and light is in this merkenesse, whethir it be peynful or resteful. He is in the soule
as travailande in desire and longyng to light; but he is not yit as restande in love, ne as
schewende his light. And therfore it is called nyght and merkenesse, in as mykil as the
soule is hid fro the fals light of this woorld and hath not yit fulli felynge of trewe light,
but is in abidyng of the blissid love of God that it desireth.

Thanne yif thou wolt wite whanne thou arte in this syker merkenesse and whanne
not, thou myght assaie thus, and seke no ferthere but thus. Whanne thou feelist thyn
entente and thi wille fulli sette for to desiren thus God and thenke oonli on Hym, thou
maight as it were first examyne thysilf in thi thought, whethir thou covete for to have
onythymge of this liyf for love of itslf, or for to have the use of ony of thi bodili wites
in ony creature. And thanne yif thyne iye bigynne and ansuere thus, I wolde see right
nougnt; and aftir that thyn eere, I wolde heire right nougnt; and thi mouthe, I wolde
savoure right nougnt, I wold speke right nougnt of ertheli thyng; and thi nose, I wolde
smelle right nougnt; and thi bodi, y wolde feele right nougnt; and aftir, yif thyn herte
seith, I wolde thenke right nougnt that is of ertheli thyng, ne of bodili deede, ne I wolde
have affeccioun fastned fleschli in no creature, but oonli to God and to Godward, yif
that y coude. And whanne thei ansuere alle thus to thee, and that is doon ful redili yif
grace touche thee, thanne art thou entred sumwhat into merkenesse.

1427 **maistrie**, force; **chesinge**, choosing. 1429 **clevandeli**, in a clinging way. 1430 **eese**,
comfort. 1441 **travailande**, laboring. 1450 **iye**, eye. 1455 **to Godward**, toward God. 1456
coude, was able to.

The Scale of Perfection

For though thou feele and perceyve glynnynges and proferynges of veyn thoughtes
and presynge in of fleschli affeccions, neverthelees thou art in this profitable myrkenesse,
1460 bi so that thi thought be not fliccid on hem. For siche veyn ymaginacions that fallen in
the herte unaviseli troblen this merkenesse and pyne the soule sumwhat, bicause that it
wolde ben hid from hem and mai not. But thei doon not awai the peofite of this myrkenesse,
for the soule schal bi that weie come to reestful myrkenesse. And thanne is this
1465 myrkenesse restful, whanne the soule is hid for the tyme fro the pyneful feelynge of alle
siche veyn thoughtes, and oonli is rested in desire and longynge to Jhesu with a goosteli
biholdynge of Hym, as it schal be seid aftir. But it lasteth but a while hool; neverthelees
though it be but a schort tyme, it is ful profitable.

Chapter Twenty-five

Hou that desire of Jhesu soothfastli feelid in this lightli myrkenesse sleeth alle stirynges of
synne, and ableth the soule for to perceyve goostli lightnynges for the goostli Jerusa-
1470 lem, that is Jhesu.

Thanne sithen this merkenesse and this nyght is so good and so restful, though it be
schorte, that stondeth oonli in desire and longynge to the love of Jhesu with a blynde
thynkyng of Him — hou good thanne and hou blissid is it for to feelen His love and for
to be illumyned of His blissid unseable light for to seen soothfastenesse, the whiche light
1475 a soule resseyveth whanne the nyght passeth and the dai springeth. This I hope was the
nyght that the prophete menede whanne he seide: "My soule hath desired thee in the
nyght" (Isaiah 26:9), as I bifore seide. It is mykil betere for to ben hid in the myrke
nyght fro biholdynge of the world, though it were peyneful, than for to ben oute in the
fals likynge of this world that semeth so schynande and so comfortable to hem that are
1480 blynched in knowynge of gosteli light. For whanne thou art in this merkenesse thou art
mykil neer Jerusalem than whanne thou art in myddis of that fals light.

1458 proferynges, offerings. 1460 fliccid, fixed. 1461 unaviseli, unprompted. 1465 siche,
such. 1469 lightnynges, illuminations. 1471 sithen, since. 1472 stondeth, consists. 1474
unseable, invisible. 1476 menede, meant. 1477 myrke, dark. 1479 schynande, shining. 1481
neer, nearer.

Book II

Therfore applie thyne herte full to the stirynge of grace, and use thee for to wosten in this myrknesse, and bi often assayynge to be hoomli thereinne, and it schal soone be maad resteful to thee and the trewe light of goosteli knowyng schal spryngen to thee;

- 1485 not al at oonys, but peyveli bi litil and litil, as the prophete seith: *Habitantibus in regione umbra mortis, lux orta est eis* (Isaiah 9:2). To hem that wosten in the contré of the schadwe of deeth, light was srongen. That is, light of grace was srongen and schal spryng to hem that can wosten in the schadwe of deeth, that is, in this merkenesse that is like to doeth. For as deeth sleeth a lyvynge bodi and al fleschli feelynge of it, right so
1490 desire to love Jhesu fel in this myrkenesse sleeth alle synnes, alle fleschli affeccions and unclene thoughties for the tyme, and thanne neigheste thou faste to Jerusalem. Thou art not yit at it, but bi smale sodeyn lightnynges that gliteren oute thorugh smale cranés fro the cité schalt thou mowen see it from feer, or thou come thereto. For wite thou wel, though thi soule be in this resteful myrkenesse withoute troblynge of wordli
1495 vanyté, it is not yit there it schulde be; it is not yit clothid al in light, ne turned al into the fier of love; but it feeleth wel that there is sumwhat aboven issilf that it knoweth not ne hath not yit, but it wolde have it, and beennandli yerneth it. And that is not ellis but the sight of Jerusalem withoutforth, the whiche Jerusalem is like to a cité that the prophete Ezechiel sawgh in his visions.

- 1500 He seith that he sawgh a cité sett upon an hil heldande to the thought, that to his sight was no more whanne it was meten on lengthe and in beede than a rodde that was sixe cubites and a palme on lengthe; but as soone as he was brought into that cité and lokide abouchte him, thanne thoughte him that it was wondir moche, for he seigh many halles and chamberis bothe open and privey. He sai bothe gates and porches, uttarwarde and
1505 innerward, and mychil more biggyng than y seie now, on lengthe and on brede many hundrid cubitis. Thanne was this wondir to hym, hou this cité withinne was so longe and so large, that was so litil to his sight whanne he was withoute. This cité bitokeneth the perfight love of God, set in the lyf of contemplacioun the whiche unto the iye of a

1482 **wosten**, dwell. 1483 **hoomli**, familiar. 1491 **neigheste**, approach. 1492 **lightnynges**, illuminations. 1493 **cranés**, crannies. 1495 **there**, where. 1499 **Ezechiel**, see Ezekiel 40; the following exposition is from Gregory, *Homilia in Ezech. 2.5.1* (Clark, p. 312n147). 1500 **heldande**, inclining; **thought**, see Textual Notes for a better reading. 1501 **meten**, measured; **brede**, breadth; **rodde**, rod, i.e., the measuring reed of Ezechiel 40:5. 1502 **cubites**, the biblical cubit is thought approximately equal to 18 inches; the palm, about four inches. 1503 **seigh**, saw. 1504 **uttarwarde**, outside. 1505 **biggyng**, buildings. 1508 **iye**, eye.

The Scale of Perfection

1510 soule that is withoute the feelyng of it, and traveileth in desire toward it, semeth sumwhat,
but it semeth but a litil thinge, no moore thanne a reed, that is, sixe cubitis and a palme on
lengthe. Bi sixe cubites is understande perfecccion of manys werk, bi this palme a litil
touchinge of contemplacioun. He seeth wel there is siche a thinge, that passeth the
dissert of wirkynge of man a litil, as the palme passeth overe the sixe cubites, but he
seeth not withinne what that is. Nevertheles yif he may come withinne the cité of
1515 contemplacioun, thanne seeth he moche more thanne he sawe fyrste.

Chapter Twenty-six

Hou a soule mai knowe fals illuminacions feyned bi the feend fro the trewe light of
knowing that cometh oute of Jhesu; and bi what tokenes.

But now beware of the myddai feend, that feyneth light as it come oute of Jerusalem
and it is not so. For the feend seeth that oure Lord Jhesu scheweth to Hise loveris light
1520 of sothfastenesse; therfore in disceyvynge of hem that aren unwise he scheweth a light
that is not trewe undir colour of trewe light, and so disceyveth hem. Nevertheles, hou
a soule mai knowe the light of sothfastnes, whanne it schyneth fro God, and whanne it is
feyned of the enemye, schal I seie thee as me therketh bi ensample of the firmament.

Sumtyme in the firmament scheweth a light from the sunne and semeth the sunne and
1525 is not, and sumtyme scheweth the trewe sunne treuli. A knowyng of that oon from
that othr is this. The feynede sunne schewith him not but atwixe tweyne blake reyny
cloudes: than, bicause that the sunne is ney, there schyneth oute a lite from the cloudes
as it were the sunne, and is noon. But the trewe sonne scheweth hym whanne the
1530 firmament is clear or mykil clered from blake cloudes. Now to oure purpos. Sum men,
as it semeth, forsaken the love of this world and wolden come to the love of God and to
the light of understandyng of Him, but thei wole not come thorough this myrkenesse
that I have spoken of before. Thei wolen not knowe hemself trul nemekeli, what thei

1510 **reed**, the unit (six cubits and a palm) measured by the rodde, above. 1513 **dissert**, merit.

1518 **myddai feend**, midday devil; see Psalms 90:6. See John Block Friedman, *Orpheus in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 188–89, for discussions of the midday fiend in the Middle English *Sir Orfeo* and elsewhere. 1523 **of**, by; **enemye**, the devil. 1528 **noon**, none.

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han ben, ne what thei aren yit thorough synne, ne hou sought thei aren in hire own
kynde anemptis God. Thei aren not bisi for to entre into hemself, alle othere thinges left,
1535 and felen alle wikked stirynges of synne that risen in here hertis, of pride, of envie, ire,
and othere synnes, thorough lastende desire to Jhesu, in praynge and in thenkyng, in
silence and in wepyng, and in othere bodili exercise and goosteli exercise as devoute and
holi men han doon. But as tite as thei han forsaken the world as it were outward in
liknesse, or ellis soone after, thei weneth that thei aren holi and able for to have the goosteli
1540 undirstondynge of the Gospele and of Holi Writ. And nameli yif thei mowen fulfile
litterallly the commaundementis of God and kepe hem from bodili synnes, thanne thei
weneth that thei loven God perfitel; and therfore thei wolen as tite prechen and techen
alle othere men, as though thei hadde receyved grace of undirstondynge and perfecciooun
1545 of charité thorough special grace and gifte of the Holi Gooste. And also thei aren mykil
the more stired thereto, for as myche as thei feelen sumtyme moche knowinge, as it
were sodeynli gyven to hem withoute grete studie before-goyng, and also mykil fervour
of love, as it semeth, for to preche truthe and rightwisenesse to here evene Cristene.

Therfore thei holden it as a grace of God, that visiteth hem with His blessed light
1550 before othere soulis. Neverethelees yif thei wolen loken wel abouthe hem, thei schullen wel
seen that this light of knowynge and the heete that thei feelen cometh nougnt of the trewe
sunne, that is oure Loed Jhesu; but it cometh fro the myddai feend that feyneth light and
likneth him to the sunne. And therfore schal he be knownen bi the ensample before seid.

Light of knowynge that is feyned bi the feend to a myrke soule is ai schewed betwix
two blake reyny cloudis. The overe cloude is presumpciooun in an highinge of himself;
1555 the nethere cloude is doon-puttyng and a lowynge of his evene Cristen. Than what
light of knowynge or feolyng of fervour that it be that schyneth to a soule, with
presumpciooun and highinge of itslf and disdeyn of his evene Cristene the silf tyme felt,
it is not the light of grace geven of the Holi Goste, though the knowynge in itself were
soothfast; but it is either of the feend yif it come sodeynli or ellis of a manys owen wille
1560 yif it come thorough studie. And so mai it wel be knownen that this feyned light of
knowynge is not the light of the trewe sunne.

1534 *kynde*, nature; *anemptis*, in respect to; *bisi*, active; *hemself*, themselves. 1538 *as tite*
as, as soon as. 1539 *wenen*, suppose. 1542 *as tite*, immediately. 1546 *bifore-goyng*, preceding.
1554 *overe*, upper, *highinge*, exaltation. 1555 *doon*, down; *lowyng*, humiliating.

The Scale of Perfection

For thei that han this knowynge on this manere aren ful of goostli pride and seen it not. Thei aren so blynt with this feyned light that thei holden the highenesse of here own herte and unbuxumnesse to the lawis of Hooli Chirche, as it were perfite mekenesse 1565 to the Gospel and to the lawes of God. And thei wenēn that the folwyngē of here own wille were fredom of spirit, and therfore thei bigynne to reyne as blake cloudis watir of errosures and heresies, for the wordes that thei reynen bi prechynge sounen al to backebitynge, to stryvynge, and to discord-makynge, reprevynge of states and of persones; and yit thei seyn that al this is charité and zele of rightwisenesse. But it is not 1570 sooth, for Seynt Jame the apostil seith thus: *Ubi enim zelus et contencio, ibi inconstancia et omne opus pravum. Non est hec sapiencia desursum descendens a patre luminum, sed terrena animalis et diabolica* (James 3:16, 15). That is: Wherso that envie is and flityng, ther is unstabilnesse and al yvel werk. And therfore that knowynge that bryngeth forth siche synnes cometh not fro the fadir of lightes, that is God, but it is ertheli, beestli and 1575 feendli.

And so bi thise tokenes, that aren pride, presumpcion, unbuxumnesse, indignacion, bac-bitynge, and othere siche synnes (for thise folwen aftir the fendas), thus may the fendas light be knownen from the trewe. For the trewe sunne scheweth him not bi spicial visitacioun for to gyve light of undirstondynge or perfite charité to a soule, but 1580 yif the firmament be first maad bright fro blake cloudis; that is, but yif the conscience be maad clene thorough fier of beennyng desire to Jhesu in this merkenesse, the whiche fier wasteth and brenneth alle wikked stirynges of pride, veylorie, ire, envie, and alle othere synnes in the soule, as the prophete seith: *Ignis ante ipsum precedet, et inflammabit in circuitu inimicos eius* (Psalms 96:3). Fier schal goo before him; that is, desire of love 1585 schal goo before Jhesu in manrys soule and it schal brennen alle his enemys, that is, it schal waste alle synnes. For but yif a soule be first amyten douā fro the heighe of itselv bi drede, and be wel examyned and brent in this fier of desire, and as it were purified from al goostli filthe bi longe tyme in devotee praieres and othere goostli exercises, it is not able to suffre the schymynges of goostli light, ne for to receyven the precious licour 1590 of the perfite love of Jhesu. But whanne it is thus purified and maad sutil thorough this

1563 **blynt**, blinded. 1564 **unbuxumnesse to the lawis of Hooli Chirche**, disobedience to the laws of Holy Church; possibly a reference to Lollardy; see Clark, p. 313n153. 1565 **wenēn**, suppose. 1567 **sounen**, tend. 1568 **states**, conditions. 1572 **flityng**, contention. 1576 **unbusumnesse**, disobedience. 1590 **sutil**, rarefied.

Book II

fier, than mai it receyve the gracious light of understandyng and the perfection of love, that is the trewe sunne. Thus seith Hooli Writ: *Vobis qui timetis dominum orientur sol iusticie* (Malachi 4:2). The trewe sunne of rightwisenesse, that is, oure Lord Jhesu, schal springe to yow that dreden Him; that is, to meke soulis that meke hemself undir her even Cristene bi knowyng of here owen wrechidnesse, and casten hemself doun undir God bi noghtyng of hemself in here owen substaunce thorough reverente drede and goostli biholding of Him lastandli, for that is perfight mkenesse.

Unto thise soulis the trewe sunne schal risen, and illumynen here resoun in knowyng of soothfastnesse and kyndele here affeccioun in brennyng of love: and than schal thei bothe beinnen and schynen. Thei schullen thorough vertu of this heveneli sunne brennen in perfite love, and schynen in knowyng of God and goostli thynge, for than ben thei reformid in feling. Therfore he that wole not be desceyved, I hope it is good to hym to drawe doun hemself and hidin him in this merkenes, first fro entermetyng of othere men, as I have before seid, and forgete al the world yif he mai; and folwe Jhesu with lastyng desire offrid in praire and thenkyng of Him. And thanne I trowe that the light that cometh aftir this myrkenesse is siker and soothfast, and that it schyneth out of the cité of Jerusalem fro the trewe sonne to a soule that traveileth in myrkenesse and crieth aftir light, for to wissen it the weie and comforten it in traveile. For I hope aftir trewe myrkenes before cometh nevere feyned light. That is, yif a man treuli and fulli sette hym for to forsake the love of the world, and mai thorough grace come to feelyng and knowyng of hemself and holdenmekeli in that feelyng, he schal not be desceyved with noon errours, ne heresies, ne ypocrisies, ne fantasies, for alle thise comen into a soule bi the gate of pride. Thanne yif pride be stopped oute, ther schal noon sich resten in a soule, and though thei come and profren hem, thei schul not entre. For the grace that the soule feeleth in this meke merkenesse schal teche the soule soothfastenesse, and scheue to it that alle siche proferynges aren of the enemye.

1596 **noghtyng**, rendering as nothing. 1597 **lastandli**, constantly; **perfight**, perfect. 1603 **entermetyng of**, buying oneself with. 1606 **siker**, certain; **soothfast**, true. 1608 **wissen**, guide. 1614 **profren hem**, offer themselves.

The Scale of Perfection

Chapter Twenty-seven

Hou grete profite it is to a soule for to be brought thorough grace into this lighti merkenes,
and hou a man nedeth to dispose him yif he wole come thereto and hou it is oonli the gate
and the entré to contemplacioun.

- 1620 Ther are manye devote soules that thorough grace comen into this myrkenesse and
feelen the knowyng of hemself, and yit witen thei not fulli what it is; and that unkunmyng
in partie hyndreth hem. Thei feelen wel often her thought and her affeccioun drawen
oute and departid from the mynde of ertheli thynge, and brought into grete reste of
delitable softenesse withoute peynful trobelyng of veyn thoughtes or of her bodili wittes;
1625 and they feelen that tyme so grete fredom of spirit that thei thenken on Jhesu pesibili and
offren here praiers and here psalmes myghtili savourli and sweteli to Him as longe as
frielté of the bodeli kynde mai suffre it. Thei witen weel that this feelynge is good, but
thei witen not what it is. Therfore to alle siche soules I seie as me thenketh, that this
1630 maner of feelinge, though it be but schort and bot seldom, is soothfastli this myrkenesse
that I speke of; for it is a feelynge of hemself first, and a risyng above hemself thorough
brennande desire to the sight of Jhesu; or ellis yif I schal seie more sooth, this gracious
felyng is a gosteli sight of Jhesu. And yif thei mowen kepe hem in that reste, and
bryngre thorough grace into custum so that thei myghten lightli and freli have it whan hem
lust, and holden hem thereinc, thei schulde nevere be overcome bi temptacion of the
1635 feend ne of the flesch, ne bi errour ne heresie; for thei are set in the gate of contemplacion,
able and redi for to receyve the perfithe love of Jhesu. Therfore he that hath it, it is
good that he knowe it mekeli, kepe it tendirli, and pursue it ferventli; that no creature
lette hym uttirli fro it that he ne folw it whan he mai, and that he forgete and sette at
nought al thynge that schuld put him fro this, yif he be free of himself and mai goo
1640 where he wole withouten scalaundir or disese of his evene Cristen. For me thenketh he
mai not come to this reste lightli, but yif he have grete plenté of grace and sette himself
for to folwe afir the stirynge of grace; and that oweth he for to doon, for grace wolde
ai be free, and nameli fro synne and fro wordli bisynesse, and from alle othere things
that letten the werkynge of it, though thei be no synne.

1617 **lightli**, lightened. 1628 **pesibili**, peacefully. 1627 **frielté**, frailty. 1638 **folw**, follow. 1640
scalaundir, slander; disese, discomfort. 1644 **letten**, hinder.

Book II

1645 Neverthelees, anotherre soule that hath not yit receyved this fulnesse of grace, yif he desire to come to this goostli knowinge of Ihesu, as moche as in him is, him bihoveth to ablen himself to it, and putten awei alle lettynges that stoppen grace as moche as he mai. Him bihoveth lerne for to dye to the world and forsake the love of it truli. First pride, bodili and gosteli, that he desire aber no worschipe of the world ne prasinge, name ne fame, staat ne degré, maistrie ne lordeschipe, wordli connynge ne wordli crafte, benefices ne richesse, precious clothinge ne wordli array, ne nothinge wherborugh he schulde ben worshiped above othere men. He schal coveiten noon of al this, but yif thei ben put on him; he schal take hem with drede, so that he be bothe pore outewarde and inwardre, or ellis fulli inwardre in herte; and that he coveite for to be forgeten of the 1655 worlde, that men rewarde him no more, be he nevere so riche or so connynge, than the porest man that lyveth. Also that he suffre not his herte resten in biholdynge of his owen good dedes or of his vertues, wensyng that he dooth betere than another for he forsaketh the world and othere doo not so, and therfore lete wel bi himself.

Also him bihoveth leven alle risynges of herte and yvel willes of ire and envie agens 1660 his evene Cristene, and that he disese no man, ne angre hem unskilfulli in worde ne in dede, ne gyve ony man matier wherborugh he myghte skilfulli ben angered or stired; so that he myght be free from every man, that no man have to doone with him ne be with ony man. Also that he forsake covetise, that he coveite right nougnt of etheli good, but oonli aske his bodli sustenaunce as him nedeth, and holde him paid whan God stireth 1665 othere men for to gyve him. And that he putte no manere trusste in avere of etheli good, ne in helpe or favour of ony wordli frend, but principali and fulli in God, for yif he doo otherwise he byndeth hymself to the world, and he mai not therfore be free for to thenken on God. And also glotonye and lecherie, and othere fleschli unclennesse utirli 1670 him bihoveth to leven, that the affeccion be not bounden to no woman by fleschli love or fleschli hoomlynesse. For it is no doute that siche blynd love that is sunstyme atwixe man and woman, and semeth good and honeste for as moche as thei wolden not synnen in deede, in the sight of God it is ful unclene and grete synne. For it is a gret synne that

1645-47 **him behoveth to ablen**, he must crable. 1647 **lettynges**, hindrances. 1650 **staat ne degré**, condition nor rank; **connynge**, knowledge. 1652 **coveiten**, desire. 1657 **wensyng**, supposing. 1658 **lete**, esteem. 1660 **disese**, discomfort; **unskilfulli**, unreasonably. 1661 **matier**, matter. 1664 **paid**, satisfied. 1665 **avere**, possession.

The Scale of Perfection

a man schal suffre his affeccion, that schuld be festened to Jhesu, and to alle vertues
and to al goostli cleannessse, for to be bounden with ony fleschli love of ony creature
1675 witfulli; nameli yif it be so mykil that it bereth down his thought and maketh it unrestful,
that he mai no savour have in God. Thus I holde it wilfulli that a man doth it and seith it
is no synne, or ellis it is so blent with it that he wole not seen it. And also coveite no
delices of metes and drynkes oonli for lust of his flesch, but holde him paied with sich
mete as he mai esili have withoute grete bisynes; nameli if he be hool, what mete it be
1680 that wole doon awai the hungir and kepe the bodi in comoun strengthe unto the service
of God; and than he grucchith not, strive not, angre not for his mete, though he be not
served sumtyme as the flesch wolde.

Alle thise synnes and alle othire him bishoveth forsake uttirli in his wille and in his
dedes whanne he mai, and alle othere thynges that letten him, so that he mai dispose him
1685 to thenken freli on Jhesu. For as longe as thise lettyngis and siche othere hangen
upon hym he mai not dien to the world, ne come into the myrkenesse of knowynge of
himsilf; and therfore that he myght come thereto him bishoveth for to doon al this as
Seynt Poul dide, seiynge thus of himsilf: *Michi mandus crucifixus est, et ego mundo*
(Galatians 6:14). The world is slayn and crucified to me, and I to the world. That is, he
1690 that forsaketh the love of the world in worshipes and richesses, and in alle worldli
thyngis before seid for love of God, and loveth it not, ne desireth it not, ne pursueth it
not, but is weel paied that he hath right nougnt of it, ne wolde have it though he myght
— sotheli to him the world is deed, for he hath no savour ne delite therinne. Also yif the
world sette him at nougnt and hath no rewarde to him, doth him no favour, ne worship,
1695 setteth no price bi hym, but forgeteth him as a deed man, thareme is he deed to the world.
And in this plight was Seynt Poule sette perfightli, and so bishoveth to another man in
partie that wolde folwen and come to the perfite love of God. For he may not lyven to
God fulli, until he die first unto the world.

This dyng to the world is this myrkenesse, and it is the gate of contemplacion and
1700 to reformynge in feelyng, and noon othir than this. Ther mowen ben many dyverse
weies and seere werkes ledynge dyvers soules to contemplacion; for aftir sundri
disposynges of men, and aftir sundri statis, as are religious and seculeres, that thei acen
inne, aren divers exercises in wirkynge. Neverthelees, ther is no gate but oon; for what

1677 **bleat**, blinded. 1678 **delices**, delights; **metes**, foods; **paied**, satisfied. 1679 **bisynes**, activity. 1681 **grucchith**, complains. 1687 **him bishoveth for to**, he must. 1692 **paied**, satisfied. 1693 **deed**, dead. 1694 **rewarde**, regard. 1701 **seere**, various. 1702 **disposynges**, dispositions.

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1705 exercise it be that a soule have, but yif he mai come bi that exercise to this knowyng
and to a meke feeling of himself, and that is that he be mortified and dead to the world
as in his love, and that he mai feele himself sette sumtyme in this reestful myrkenesse bi
the whiche he mai be hid fro vanitee of the world and seen himself what he is, soothli he
is not yit comen to the reformyng in feelyng, ne hath not yit fulli contemplacion. He
is ful feer therfro. And yif he wole come bi ony oþer gate, he is but a theef and a brekere
1710 of the wal, and therfore he is unworthi he schal be caste oute. But he that can bryng
himself firste to nougat thorough grace of mekenesse and dien on this maner, he is in the
gate, for he is dead to the world and he lyveth to God. Of the whiche Seynt Poul
speketh thus: *Mortui enim estis, et vita vestra abscondita est cum Christo in deo*
(Colossians 3:3). Ye are deede, that is, ye that for the love of God forsaken al the love
1715 of the world aren dede to the worlde, but youre lyf is hid with Crist in God. That is, ye
that leven goosteli in love of God, but that lif is hid from worldli men as Crist lyveth and
is hid in His Godhede fro the love and the sight of fleschli loveris.

This gate oure Lord Himself schewed in the Gospel whanne He said thus: *Omnis qui
reliquerit patrem aut matrem, fratrem aut sororem propter me, centuplam accipiet, et
1720 vitam eternam possidebit* (Matthew 19:29). Every man that forsaketh for My love fadir
or modir, suster or brother, or ony ertheli good, he schal have an hundredfoold in this
lyf and afterward the blisse of hevene. This hundredfolde that a soule schal have yif he
forsake the werlde is not ellis but the profight of this lighti merkenesse, that I calle the
gate of contemplacion. For he that is in this myrkenesse and is hid thorough grace from
1725 wordli vanite, he coveiteth not of wordli good, he seketh it not, he is not taried withal,
he loketh not thereaftir, he loveth it not, and therfore hath he an hundredfoold more than
the kynge hath or than he hath that most coveiteth of ertheli good. For he that nougat
coveiteth but Jhesu hath an hundredfoold, for he hath more reste, more pees in herte,
more verey love and delite in soule in o dai, thanne he hath that most coveiteth of the
1730 world and hath al the welthe of it undir his wille in al his lyffyme.

This is thanne a good myrkenesse and a riche nougat, that bringeth a soule to so
mykil goostli eese and so stille softenes. I trowe that the prophete David menede of this
nougat whanne he seide thus: *Ad nescium redactus sum, et nescivi* (Psalms 72:22).
That is: I was broute to nougat, and I wiste nougat. That is, the grace of oure Lord
1735 Jhesu sent into myn herte hath slain in me and brent to nougat al the love of the world,

1709 feer, far. 1725 taried, troubled. 1729 verey, true. 1731 nougat, nothing. 1732 eese, comfort; menede, meant.

The Scale of Perfection

and y wiste not how. For thorough no wirkynge of myself ne bi myn owen witte I have
it not, but of the grace of oure Loed Jhesu Crist. And therfore, me therketh, he that
wole have the light of grace and fulsumli feele the love of Jhesu in his soule, hym
bihoveth forsaken al the fals light of wordli love, and abiden in this merkenesse. And
1740 neverthelees yif he be adred first for to wone therinne, tume not ageen to love of the
world, but suffre awhile and putte al his hope and his truste in Jhesu, and he schal not
longe be withoute goosteli light. Thus biddeth the prophete: *Qui ambulat in tenebris, et*
non est fumen ei, speret in domino, et innitatur super deum suum (Isaiah 50:10). Whoso
1745 gooth in myrkenesse and hath no light, that is, whoso wole hidin him fro love of the
world and mai not redili feele the light of goostli love, despeire not, ne tume not ageen to
the world but hope in oure Lord, and lene upon Hym, that is, truste in God and cleve
sadli to Him bi desire andmekeli abide awhile, and he schal have light. For it fareth bi it
1750 as it dooth bi a man that hadde ben in the sunne a gret while, and aftir that come
sodeynli into a merk hous there no sunne schyneth. He schuld first be as he were blynd
and seen right nought; but yif he wole abide awhile he schal mowe soone seen aboute
him, first grete thingis and afterward smale, and sithen al that is in the hous. Right so
goostlic: he that forsaketh the love of the world and cometh to himself into his owen
1755 conscience, it is myrk first sumwhat and blynd to his sight. But yif he stande stille and
holde foeth with bisi peaire and often therkenge the same wille to the love of Jhesu, he
schal mowen seen afterward grete thynges and smale, also that he first knewe not. Thus
semede it that the prophete bihighte, seiynge thus: *Orietur in tenebris lux tua, et tenebre*
tua erunt sicut meridies. Et requiem dabit tibi dominus deus tuus, et implebit animam
tua splendoribus (Isaiah 58:10-11). Light schal springen to thee in merkenesse. That
is, thou that forsakest soothfastli the light of al worldeli love and hideste thi thought in
1760 this myrkenesse, light of blissid love and goosteli knowyng of God schal sprengi to
thee. And thi merkenesse schal be as myddai. That is, thi mirkenesse of travailande
desire and thi blynd trust in God that thou haste firste schal tume into cleer knowyng
and into sikernes of love. And thi Lord God schal geve reste to thee. That is, thi
fleschli desires and thi peynful dredis and doutis, and wikked spirites that han contynueli
1765 bifore traveiled thee, alle thise schullen weiken and leesen moche of here myght; and
thu schalt be maad soo stronge that thei schal not deren thee, for thou schalt be hid in
reeste from hem. And thanne schal oure Lord Jhesu Crist fulfille thi soule with

1738 *fulsumli*, copiously. 1740 *adred*, afraid; *wone*, dwell. 1747 *sadli*, firmly. 1756 *bihighte*,
promised. 1765 *weiken*, weaken; *leesen*, lose. 1766 *deren*, harm.

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schynnyngges. That is, whanne thou arte brought into this goostli reste, thanne schalt thou more esily tende to God, and not ellis doon but love Him. And thanne schal He bi
1770 beemys of goostli light fulfile alle the myghtes of thi soule. Have thou no wonder, though I calle the forsakynge of wordli love myrkenesse, for the prophete calleth it soo,
sclymge to a soule thus: *Intra in tenebris tuas, filia Caldeorum* (Isaiah 47:5). Goo into thi myrkenesse, thou daughter of Caldee. That is, thou soule, thou arte as a daughter of Caldee for love of the world, forsake it and goo into thi myrkenesse.

Chapter Twenty-eight

1775 That in reformyng of a soule the wirkynge of oure Lord is departed in foure tymes, that aren callynge, rightynge, magnifyng, and glorifyng.

Lo I have seid a litil yif thou coveite for to be reformed in feelynge, how thou schalt dispose thee toward thi forthgoyng. Nevertheless, I scie not that thou maight doon thus of thyself, for I wot wel that oure Loed Jhesu bringeth al this to the ende, whereso
1780 He wole. For He oonli thorugh His grace stireth a soule, and bryngeth it into this myrkenesse first, and sithen into light, as the prophete seith: *Sicut tenebre eius, ita et lux eius* (Psalms 138:12). That is, right as the light of knowynge and the feelynge of goosteli love is of God, right so the myrkenesse (that is, the forsakynge of wordli love) is of Hym. For He dooth al; He formeth and He reformeth. He formeth oonli bi Hymself,
1785 but He reformeth us with us; for grace gaven, and applyng of oure wille to grace, werketh al this. And upon what maner wise He dooth that, Seynt Poul reherseth thus: *Quos deus preservat fieri conformes imaginis filii eius, hos vocavit; et quos vocavit, hos iustificavit; quos iustificavit, hos magnificavit; quos magnificavit, hos glorificavit* (Romans 8:29–30). Thise that God knew before, that schulde be maad schapli to the
1790 image of His Sone, thise He callide, and thise He righted, thise He magnified, and thise He glorified.

Though alle these wordes mowen be seid of alle chosen soulis in the lowest degree of charitē, that aren oonli reformed in feith, nevertheless thei mowen ben undirstonde more speciali of these soulis that are reformed in feelynge, unto the whiche oure Lord

1778 *forthgoyng*, way forward, progress. 1779 *af*, by. 1785 *gaven*, given. 1789 *schapli*, conforming. 1790 *righted*, justified. 1793 *mowen ben*, can be.

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- 1795 Jhesu schewith moche plenté of grace, and dooth moche more bisynesse aboughte
been. For thei aren His owen soones speciali, that beren the ful schap and the liknesse of
His sone Jhesu. In the whiche wordis Seynt Poul departeth the wirkynge of oure Lord
into foure tymes. First is the tyme of callynge of a soule from wordli vanytee, and that
tyme is often esy and comfortable. For in the bigynnyng of turmyng siche a man that is
1800 disposid to mykil grace is so quylki and so felandeli inspired and feelith ofte so grete
suettenesse in devocion, and he hath so manye teeris in compunction, that he thenketh
him sumtyme as he were half in hevene. But this softnesse passeth awai after for a
while; and thanne cometh the secunde tyme, that is tyme of rightynge. That is traveilous;
for whan he bigynmeth for to goo forth myghtili in the weie of rightwisenesse and
1805 setteth his wille fulli agens alle synnes withouten and withinne, and streccheth out his
desire to vertues and to the love of Jhesu, than feeleth he mykil lettyng and hardenesse,
bothe withinne himself, of fowardnesse of his owen wille, and fro withoute, of
temptacions of his enemye, that he is often in ful grete torment.
- And that is no wondir, for he hath ben so longe crooked to the fals love of the world,
1810 that he mai not be maad right and evene withoute grete beykyng and bowynge, right as
a crooked staaf mai not be maad evene, but yif it be cast and beyked in the fier. Therfore
oure Lord Jhesu, seynge wel what thynge is bihofful to a foward soule, suffrieth it to
be taried and traveiled with sundri temptacions, and for to be wel examyned thorough
goostli tribulacions til al the ruste of unclennesse myght be brent ought of it.
- 1815 And that schal be bothe withinne, of dredis and doughtis and perplexitees, that it schal
neerhande fallen into dispeir; for it schal seemen as it were forsaken of God and left al
in the handis of the feend, outaken a litil privei trust that it schal have in the goodnessse
of God and his merci. For that privei trust oure Lord Jhesu leveth in siche a soule, goo
he nevere so feir fro it, bi the whiche the soule is ai born up from dispeire and saved
1820 from goostli myschief. And also withouten itself schal it be mortfied and pyned in
sensualit. Eithir bi dyvers sikenesse or bi feleable turments of the feend, or ellis thorough

1795 **bisynesse**, activity; **aboughte**, about. 1803 **rightynge**, justification; **traveilous**, difficult.
1806 **lettyng**, hindrance. 1807 **fowardnesse**, perversity. 1809 **crooked**, crooked. 1810 **right**,
straight; **beykyng and bowynge**, smelting and bonding. 1812 **bihofful**, necessary; **foward**,
perverse. 1813 **taried**, troubled. 1814 **breat ought**, refined (burnt). The use of metallurgic
metaphors for the refining of the soul are well suited to a penitential, purgatorial religion. See
II.2278–82, below. 1815 **dredis and doughtis**, fears and doubts. 1816 **neerhande**, almost. 1817
outaken, except for. 1820 **mortfied**, made dead; **pyned**, tormented. 1821 **feleable**, palpable.

Book II

a privé myght of God, the seli soule bi feelynge and berynge of the wrecchid bodi schal so be pyned, for it schal not wite where ne how that it schulde not mowen suffre for to ben in the bodi, ne were that oure Lord Ihesu kepith it therinne.

- 1825 And yet nevertheles hadde the soule levere for to ben in al this pyne thanne for to be blyndid agen with the fals love of this world. For that was heille to siche a soule; but the suffryng of this manere pyne is not but purgatorie, and therfore he suffreth it gladli, and he wolde not putte it awai though he myght, for it is so profitable. Al this dooth oure Lord in grete profite of the soule, for to dryve it out fro the reste in fleschli feelynge, 1830 and departen it fro luste of the sensualit , that it myght receyve goostli light. For aftir this, whanne the soule is thus mortified and brought from worldli love into this myrkennesse, that it hath no more savour ne delite of wordli likynge than of a stree, but he thenketh it bittir as wormwood; than cometh the thridde tyme of magnyflyinge. And that is whanne the soule is reformed in felynge in partie, and receyveth the gifte of 1835 perfeccioun and the grace of contemplacioun and that is a tyme of grete reste. And aftir this cometh the ferthe tyme, of glorifyng; that is whanne the soule schal be fulli refoemed in the blisse of hevene. For thise souls that aren callid from synne and thus righted or ellis on oþir manere likli, dyversli assaiande bothe thorough fier and watir, and aftirward aren thus magnyfied, schullen be glorified. For oure Lord schal gyve hem fulli 1840 that thei coveitide, and more thanne thei coude coveiten. For He schal receyve up hem above oþere chosen soulis to the evenchede of Cherubyn and Seraphyn, syn thei passiden alle oþere in knowynge and love of God heire in this liyf.

- Therfore he that wole come to this magnyfyinge drede not the rightynge, for that is the weie. For oure Lord seide bi His propheete a word of grete comfort to alle siche 1845 soules that aren examyned thorough fier of tribulacions, thus: *Puer meus non timere, si transieris per ignem, flamma non nocebit te* (Isaiah 43:2). That is: My childe, yif thou passe thorough fier, drede not, for the flamme schal not dere thee. It schal clese the soule from al fleschli filthe and make it able for to receyve goosteli fier of the love of God. And that nedeth for to be doon fierst. For as I have bifor seid, it mai not ellis be 1850 reformed in feelynge.

1822 *seli*, innocent. 1823 *wite*, know. 1825 *levere*, rather. *pyne*, pain. 1830 *departen*, separate. 1832 *stree*, straw. 1833 *wormwood*, wormwood. 1838 *assaiande*, testing. 1841 *evenchede*, equality; *passiden*, surpassed. 1847 *dere*, harm.

The Scale of Perfection

Chapter Twenty-nine

Hou it falleth sumtyme that soulis bigyntryng and profitynge in grace han more fervour of love as bi outward tokenes than sum men han that are perfite and neverthelees yit is it not so.

But now sciest thou: "Hou mai this be sooth?" For there are many soulis newli turned
1855 that have manye goosteli feelynges. Sum han grete compuncions of here synnes, and sum men han grete devocions and fervoures in praiere, and han ofte sundri touchynges of goostli light in undirstondynge; and summe han othere manere feelynges of comfortable heete or grete suettenesse. And neverthelees this soule come nevere fulli in this resteful myrkenesse that y speke of, with fervent desire and lastende thought in God.
1860 Than askist thou whethir thise soules be reformed in feelynge or not? It semeth yhis, in as mykil as thei han siche grete goosteli feelynges that othere men that stonden oonli in feith feelen not of.

Unto this I may scien, as me thenketh, that this goostli feelynges, whethir thei stonde in compuccion or devocion, or in goostli imaginacion, aren not the goosteli felynges
1865 which a soule schal have and fele in the grace of contemplacioun. I seie not but that thei aren soothfaste and graciousli goven of God, but thise soulis that feelen sich aren not yit reformed in feelynge, ne thei han not yit the gifte of perfecciooun ne goosteli the brennyng love of Jhesu, as thei mai come to. And neverthelees often it semeth otharwise,
1870 that siche soulis felten more of love of God than othere that han the gifte of perfeccion,
1875 in as mykil as the feelynge scheweth more outward bi fervour of bodili tokenes, in wepynge and sighinge, praiyng, knelynge, and spekyng, and othere bodili stiryng, so fer forth that it semeth to another man that thei weren ai ravesched in love. And though me thenketh it not so, wele y woot that these maner felynges and fervours of devocion and compuccion that thise men feelen aren gracious giftes of God sent into chosen soulis, for to drawen hem oute of worldeli love and fleschli luste that han be longe tym rooted in here herte, fro the whiche love thei schulde not ben drawen ought but bi siche feleable stirynges of grete fervours.

Neverthelees, that the fervour is so moche in outward schewyng it is not oonli for mykilnesse of love that thei han, but it is for linlnesse and weikenesse of hire soulis, that

1857-58 comfortable, comforting. 1858 suettenesse, sweetness. 1860 yhis, yes. 1863 stonde, consist. 1864 compuccion, compunction. 1872 so fer forth, to the extent. 1873 woot, know.

Book II

- 1880 mowen not beren a litil touchynge of God. For it is yit as it were fleschli, festened to
the flesch, and nevere was yit departed fro it thorough goostli mortiflyng; and therfore
the leeste touchynge of love and the leesste sparle of goosteli light sent from hevene
into siche a soule is so moche, so comfortable, so swete and so delitable, over al the
likyng that evere it felte before in fleschli love of ertheli thyng, that it is overtaken with
1885 it; and also it is so newe and so sodeyn and so uncouth that it mai not suffren for to
beren it, but bersteth and schewith it out bi wepynge, sobbyng, and oþere bodili
stirynge. Right as a costret that is olde, and resseyveth newe wyne that is fresch and
myghti, the costret bolneth out and it is in poynt for to cleven and bresten, until the
wyne hath boiled and spourged out al the unclennesse. But as sone as the wyne is fyned
1890 and clered, than stant it stille, and the costreet hool. Right so a soule that is olde thorough
synne, whanne it receyveth a litil of the love of God, that is so fresch and so myghti that
the bodi is in poynt for to cleven and bresten, ne were that God keþith it hool. But yit it
bersteth out at the iyen bi wepynge and aþe the mouth bi spekyng, and that is more for
1895 weikenesse and feblenesse of soule than for mykilnesse of love. For aftirward, whan
the love hath boiled out al the unclennesse of the soule bi sich grete fervours, than is the
love cloet and stondeth stille and thanne is boþe the bodi and the soule mochil more in
poes, and yit hath the selve soule moche more love thanne it hadde before, though it
schewid lasse outward. For it is now al hol in reste withinne, and not but litil in
outward schewynge of fervour.
- 1900 And therfore I seie that thise soulis that feelen sich grete bodili fervours, though thei
ben in mochil grace, aren not yit reformed in feelyng, but thei aren greteli disposyd
toward. For I trowe siche a man, nameli that hath ben greteli defouled in synne, schal
not come to reformynge in feelinge, but yif he be beent first and purified with sich grete
1905 conpunccions goyng before. Another soule that nevere was mykil defouled with love of
the world, but hath ai be kepid fro grete synnes in innocence, mai lightliere and more
pryveli, withoute grete fervour schewed outward, come to this reformynge. Thanne is
this sooth, as I hope, that siche confortes and fervours that a soule feeleth in the staat
of biginnynge or of profitynge aren as it were his goostli foode sent fro hevene, for to

1885 **uncouth**, unknown. 1887 **costret**, cask; **newe wyne**, see the parable of the wineskins,
Matthew 9:17. 1888 **bolneth**, swells; **bresten**, burst. 1889 **spourged**, fermented; **uncleanness**,
impurity. 1894 **mykilnesse**, greatness. 1897 **selve**, same. 1905 **kepid**, kept. 1907 **hope**, sup-
pose. 1908 **profitynge**, proficiency.

The Scale of Perfection

- strengthen him in his traveile. Right as a pilgrym that traveileth al dai meteles and
1910 drynkeles, and is neerhande overcomen with werynesse, falleth at the laste to a good
inne, and there hath he mete and drynk and is wel refresched for that tyme: right so
goosteli a devoute soule that wole foesake the love of the world, and wolde fayn love
God and setteth alle his besines thereto, praieth and traveileth al dai gosteli and bodili, and
sumtyme feeleth no savour ne comfort in devocion. Thanne oure Lord havyng pite
1915 over al His creatures, that it schulde not perischen for defaute, ne turne into hevynesse
or gruechynge, sendeth it amoung His goestli foode, and comforteth it in devocioun as
He vouchith saaf. And whanne the soule feeleth ony gosteli comfort, thanne he hooldeth
him weel apaied of al his traveile and al his disease that he hadde on the day, whanne he
fareth wel at even bi feelyng of ony grace.
- 1920 The selve wise falleth it of oþere soulis that aren profitande and fer forth in grace.
Thei feelen ofte sithes gracious touchynges of the Holi Goost in here soulis, bothe in
understandinge and sighte of goosteli thingis, and in affeccioun of love. But yit ben thei
not reformed in felyng, ne thei are not yit perfight. For whi, alle such feelynges comen
1925 to hem in that staat as it were unwarli, for thei comen or they witen it, and goon from
hem or thei witen it, and thei cannot come thereto agen, ne thei knownen not where thei
schullen seken it ne where they schullen fynde it. For thei han yit noon hoomlynesse
with hem, but sodeynli goon and sodeynli comen. Thei are not yit maad lordes of
hemself bi stablnessse of thought and lastynge desire to Jhesu, ne the iye of here soule is
not yit opened to behooldynge of goostli thynges, but they neighen faste toward. And
1930 therfore thei are not yit reformed in feelyng, ne thei han not yit the ful gifte of
contemplacion.

Chapter Thirty

On what manere a man schal have the knowing of his own soule and hou a man schal
setten his love in Jhesu God and man, oo persone and neverthelees yit is the love that is
caused of bisholdynge of Him as God and man worthiere and betere than that that is
1935 causid of Him oonli as man.

1910 **neerhande**, nearly. 1913 **besines**, activity. 1915 **defaute**, defect; **hevynesse**, gloom.
1916 **gruechynge**, complaining. 1918 **apaied**, satisfied; **disease**, discomfort. 1920 **profitande**,
proficient. 1924 **or they witen**, before they know. 1929 **neighen**, approach.

Book II

Hit nedeth to a soule that wolde have knowynge of goestli thynges, for to have first knowynge of itself. For it mai not have knowynge first of a kynde aboven itself but yif it have a knowynge of itself; and that is whanne the soule is so gadred into itself, and departed from biholdynge of alle ertheli thynges and fro the use of the bodili wittes, that

- 1940 it feelth itself as it is in the owen kynde withoute a bodi. Thanne yif thou coveite for to knownen and seen thi soule what it is, thou schalt not torme thi thought to thi bodi for to seken and feelen it, as it were hid withinne in thi fleschli herte as thyn herte is hid and hoolden withinne thi bodi. Yif thou seke so, thou schalt nevere fynde it in itself. The more thou sekest for to fynden and feelen it, as thou woldest feelen a bodili thynge, the ferthere thou art therfro. For thi soule is no bodi, but a lyf unseable; not hid ne hoolden in thi bodi as a lasse thynge is hid and hoolden withinne a more, but it is holdande and quykenande thi bodi, mykil more thanne the bodi is of myght and vertu.

- 1945 Than yif thou wolte fynden it, withdrawe thy thought from al bodili thynge outward and fro mynde of thyn owen bodi also, and from alle thy fyve wittes as mykil as thou maist; and thenke on the kynde of a resonable soule goostli, as thou woldest thenken for to knownen ony vertu, as soothfastnesse or mekenesse or ony vertu. Right so thenke that a soule is a lyf, undeedli and unseable, that hath myght in itself for to seen and knownen the sovereyn soothfastnesse, and for to love the sovereyn goodnesse that is God. Whan thou seest this, than thu felist sumwhat of thisilf. Seke thisilf in noon othr place; but the more fulli and the more cheerli that thou maight thenken on the kynde and the weorthynesse of a resonable soule, what it is, and what is the kyndeli werkynge of it, the betere thou seest thisilf.

- 1950 It is ful hard for a soule that is rude and mykil in the flesch for to have sight and knowynge of itself thus, for whanne it wolde thenke on itself or of angil, or of God, it falleth as tine into ymaginacion of a bodili schap, and it weneth bi that for to have the sight of itself, and so of God and othere goostli thynges. And that mai not ben; for alle goostli thynges are seen and knownen bi understandyng of the soule and not bi ymaginacion. Right as a soule seeth bi understandyng that the vertu of rightwisenesse is for to yelden to ilke a thynge that it oweith for to han, ryght so on siche a manere bi understandyng mai the soule seen itself.

1937 **kynde**, nature. 1938 **soule**, for the commonplace ideas following, see Augustine, *De quaestione animae*, 13.22 (Clark, p. 315n194). 1945 **unseable**, invisible. 1946 **holdande**, maintaining. 1947 **quykenande**, giving life to. 1949 **wittes**, senses. 1952 **undeedli**, immortal. 1960 **as tine**, immediately.

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Neverthelees, I seie not that thi soule schal reste stille in this knowynge, but it schal be
this seken highe knowynge aboven itself, and that is the kynde of God. For thi soule is
but a myroure, in the whiche thou schalt seen God goostli. And therfore thou schalt
first fynden thi myroure and kepen it bright and clene from fleschli filthe and wordli
vanyté, and holden it wel up from the erthe, that thou mai seen it, and oure Lord
1970 theninne also. For to this ende travelen alle chosen soulis in this liyf, in here menynge
and in here entente, though thei have not speciali the feelynge of this. And for that is it
as I have seid bifore, that many soulis bigynnynge and profitynge han gret fervour and
mykil suettenesse in devocion, and as it semeth brense al in love, and yit han thei not
1975 perflight love, ne goosteli knowynge of God. For wite thou wel, feele a soule nevere so
mykil fervour, so mykil that him therketh the bodi mai not bere it, or though he melte al
into wepynge, as longe as his thenkyng and his biholdynge of God is al in imaginacion
and not in undirstondynge, he come not yit to perflight love ne to contemplacion.

For thou schalte understande that the love of God is on three maner wise and al is
good, but ilke is betere than othir. The first cometh oonli with feith, withouten gracious
imaginacioun or goostli knowynge of God. This love is in the leste soule that is re-
formed in feith, in the lowest degree of charité; and it is good, for it sufficeth to savacioun.
The secunde love is that a soule feeleth thorugh feith and by imaginacion of Jhesu in His
manhede. This love is betere than the firste, whan the imaginacioun is stired bi grace,
1985 and for whi, the gostli iye is opened in biholdynge of oure Lordis manhede. The thridde
love is that a soule feeleth thorugh gosteli sight of the Godhede in the manhede as it may
been sen heere. This is the beste and the moste worthi, and that is perflight love. This
love a soule feeleth not til it be reformed in feelynge. Soulis bygynnande and profitande
han not this love, for thei kunne not thenke on Jhesu ne love Hym Godli, but as it were
1990 al manli and fleschli aftir the condicions and the liknes of man. And upon that reward
thei schapin al her werkynge, in here thoughtis and in here affeccions. Thei dresen Him
as man, and worshipen Hym and loven Hym principali in manli ymagineacioun, and
goon no ferthere. As thus: yif thei have doon amys and trespassed agens God, thei
1995 thenken thanne that God is wrooth with hem as a man schulde be yif thei hadde
trespassed agens hym, and therfore thei falle doun as it were to the foot of oure Lord
with sorwe of herte and crien merci. And whanne thei han don thus thei han a good

1966 *be, by*. 1967 *kynde*, nature. 1971 *travelen*, labor. 1974 *suetenesse*, sweetnes. 1975
perflight, perfect. 1980 *ilke*, each. 1985 *for whi*, because. 1990 *reward*, regard. 1991 *schapis*,
shape. 1994 *wrooth*, angry.

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trust that oure Lord of His merci wole forgyve hem here trespass. This manere of
doyng is right good, but it is not goostli as it myght ben.

Also whanne thei wole worshipe God thei presenten hemself in here thought as it
2000 were in bodili liknes before the face of oure Lord and ymagynen a wondirful light there
oure Lord Jhesu is, and thanne thei reverencen Hym, worshipen and dreden Hym, and
fulli putten hem in His merci for to don with hem what He wole. And also whanne thei
wolen loven God, thei biholden Him as a man, not yit as God in man, eithir in His
passiouen or in sum othir thynge of His manhede. And in that biholdynge thei feelen ther
2005 hertis moche stired to love of God. This maner of werkynge is gracious, but it is moche
lasse lowere than is the wirkynge of usdirstondynge; that is whann a soule graciously
biholdeth God in man. For in oure Lord Jhesu aren to kyndes, the manhede and the
Godhede oonend togidere. For mankynde was taken up in the persoone of Jhesu and is
ooned to the Godhede. Than right as the Godhede is more sovereyne and more worthi
2010 than is the manhede, right so the goostli biholdynge of the Godhede in Jhesu man is
more worthi, moe goosteli, and more medful than biholdynge of the manhede aloone,
whethir he biholde the manhede as deedli or as glorified. And right so bi the same skile
the love that the soule felith in thenkynge and bihooldynge of the Godhede in man, whan
it is graciously schewid, is worthiere, goostliere, and moe medful than the fervour of
2015 devocion that the soule feellith bi imaginacion oonli of the manhede, schewe it nevere so
mykil oateward. For in reward of that, this is but manli; for oure Lord scheweth Him
not in ymaginacion as He is, ne that He is, for the soule myght not that tyme for frechē
of fleschlihede suffren Him so.

Nevertheloes unto sich soulis that kunne not thenken on the Godhede goostli, that thei
2020 schulde not erron in here devocion, but that thei schulden ben conforted and strengthed
thorugh sum manere inward bihooldynge of Jhesu, for to forsake synne and the love of
the worlde — therfore oure Lord Jhesu tempereth His unseable light of His Godhede,
and clothid it undir bodili liknesse of His manhede, and scheweth it to the innere iye of
the soule and fedeth it with the love of His precious flesch goostli, the whiche love is of
so greet myght that it sleeth al wikked love in the soule and strengthed it for to suffre
2025 bodili penance and othir bodili disese in tyme of neede for love of Jhesu. And this is the
schadwyng of oure Lord Jhesu ouere a chosen soule. In the whiche schadwyng the

2000 *there, where*. 2006 *whanne, when*. 2007 *to, two*. 2008 *ooned, united*. 2010 *manhede, humanity*. 2012 *deedli, mortal*; *skile, reason*. 2014 *medful, worthy of reward*. 2016 *reward, regard*. 2022 *unseable, invisible*. 2025 *strengthed, strengthened*.

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soule is kept fro brennyng of wordli love, for right as a schadwe is maad of a light and
2030 a bodi, right so this goostli schadwe is maad of the blissid unseable light of the Godhede,
and of the manhede ooned thereto, and is schewed to a devote soule. Of the whiche
schadwe the prophete seith thus: *Spiritus ante faciem nostram Christus dominus: sub
uebra eius visus est inter gentes* (Lamentations 4:20). Oure Lord Crist biforn oure face
is a spirit; undir His schadwe we schullen lyve amonge folkes. That is, oure Lord Jhesu
in His Godhede is a spiret, that mai not be seen of us lyvand in flesch as He is in His
2035 blissid light. Therfore we schulle lyven undir the schadwe of His blissid manhede as longe
as we aren heere. But though this be sooth that this love in ymaginacion bi good, nevertheless
a soule schulde desiren for to have goostli love in understandynge of the Godhede, for that
is the ende and the ful blisse of the soule, and alle othere bodili beholdynges aren but
meenes ledynge a soule to it. I seie not that we schulden departe God fro man in Jhesu,
2040 but we schullen love Jhesu bothe God and man — God in man, and man in God; goostli,
not fleschli.

Thus kennede oure Lord Marie Magdaleyn, that schulde be contemplatiif, whanne He
seide to hire thus: *Noli me tangere, nonsum enim ascendi ad patrem meum* (John 20:17).
Touche me not, I am not yet stied up to my Fader. That is for to seie, Marie Magdelene
2045 lovede brennandeli oure Lord Jhesu biforn the tyme of His passioun, but here love was
moche bodili and litil goostli. Sche trowed wel that He was God, but sche loyyd Him litil
as God, for sche coude not thanne, and therfore sche suffrider al hire affeccioun and
hire thought fallen in Him as He was in forme of man. And oure Lord blamede here not
thannte, but praside it moche. But aftir whanne He was risen from deeth and He apperde
2050 to hire, sche wolde have woschipide Him with sich maner of love as sche dide biforn;
and thanne oure Lord forbede hire and seide thus, "Touche me not." That is, sette not
the restynge ne the love of thy herte in that forme of man that thou seest with thi
fleschli iye oonli, for to resten therinne; for in that forme I am not stied up to My Fader.
That is, I am not evene to the Fadir, for in forme of man I am lasse than He. Touche me
2055 not so, but sette thi thought and thi love into that forme in the whiche I am evene to the
Fader (that is, the forme of the Godheede), and love Me, and knowe Me, and woschipe

2030 ooned, united. 2036 bi, be. 2039 departe, separate. 2042 kennede, taught; contemplatiif, on Mary Magdalene as a contemplative, see Scale, Book I, chapter 11; the classic expression of the idea is in Gregory, *Homiliae in Ezech. 2.2.7–12* (PL 76:952–55). 2044 stied, ascended. 2046 trowed, believed. 2047 suffrider, allowed. 2053 stied, ascended. 2054 evene, equal.

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- Me as a God and man godli, not as man manli. So schalt thou touche Me, for syn I am
bothe God and man, and al the cause whi y schal be worshiped and loved is for I am
God, and for y took the kynde of man; and therfore make Me a God in thyne herte, and
2060 in thi love, and woeschipe Me in thyn undirstondynge as Jhesu God in man, sovereyn
soothfastnesse, and as sovereyne goodenesse and blissid liyf, for that am I. Thus kennede
oure Lord hire as I undirstonde, and also alle othere soulis that aren disposid to
contemplacion and able thereto, that thei schulden doon so.
- Nevertheless, othere soulis that aren not sotel in kynde, ne are not yit maad goostli
2065 thorough grace, it is good to hem that thei kepe forth here owen wirkynge in imaginacion
with manli affeccions, until more grace come freli to hem. It is not sikir to a man for
to leuen a good werk uttri until he see and feele a betere. Upon the same wise it mai be
seide of othir manere feelynges that aren like to bodili thynges, as heeryng of delitable
2070 songe, or feelyng of comfortable heete in the bodi, or seynge of light, or swettenesse
of bodili savour. Thise aren not goosteli feelynges, for goostli feelynges aren felt in the
myghtis of the soule, principali in undirstondynge and in love and litil in imaginacion;
but thise feelynges aren in imaginacion, and therfore thei aren not goostli feelynges, but
whan thei are best and mooste trewe yit aren thei but outward tokenes of inli grace that
is felt in the myghtis of the soule. This mai be openli prived bi Holi Writ seiyng thus:
- 2075 *Apparuerunt apostolis dispertere lingue tanquam ignis, sed itaque super singulos eorum*
spiritus sanctus (Acts 2:3). The Holi Gooste apperede to the apostolis in the dai of Pentacost
in liknesse of brennyng tungen, and enflamede alle here hertis and sante upon ilke of
hem. Now sooth it is the Holi Gost, that is God Himsilf unseable, was not that fier ne the
tungen that weren seen, ne the brennyng that was felt bodili, but He was unscabli felt
2080 in the myghtis of hire soulis, for He lightned here resoun and kyndelide here affeccions
thorugh His blisside presence so clearerli and so brennandeli, that thei hadden sodeynli the
goostli knowynge of soothfastenesse and the perfeccion of love, as oure Lord bilihighte
hem, seyyng thus: *Spiritus sanctus docebit vos omnem veritatem* (John 16:13). The
Holi Goost schal teche you al soothfastenesse. Thanne was that fier and that brennyng
2085 not ellis but a bodili tokene, outward schewid in wittenessyng of that grace that was
inwardeli felt. And as it was in hem, so is it in othere soulis that aren visited and

2061 kennede, taught. 2064 sotel, refined. 2066 manli, human. 2068 delitable, delightful. 2069
swettenesse, sweetness. 2073 inli, internal. 2074 prived, proved. 2080 lightned, illuminated
(ignited). 2082 bilihighte, promised.

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lightned withinne of the Holi Goste, and han with that siche outward feelynges in comfort and willinessyng of the inward grace. But that grace is not, as I hope, in alle soulis that aren perfite, but there oure Lord wole. Other soules unperfite that han siche feelynges
2090 outewarde and han not yet receyved the inward grace, it is not good to hem for to resten in siche feelynges to mykil, but in as mykil as thei helpen the soule to more stablenessse of thought in God and to more love. For summe mowen ben trewe and summe mowen be feyned, as I have seide before.

Chapter Thirty-one

Hou this maner of spekyng reformyne of a soule in feelyng and in what wise it is
2095 reformed is fousden in Seynt Poules wordis.

Now I have seide to thee a litil of reformyne in feith, and also I have touched thee a litil
of the forthgoyng from that reformyne to the higheste reformyne that is in feelyng.
Not in that entente as I wolde bi thise wordes setten Goddis werkinge undir a lawe of
my spekyng, as for to seyn, thus wirketh God in a soule and noon othirwise. Nay, I
2100 meene not soo: but y seie aftir my symple feelyng that oure Lord Jhesu werkith thus in
summe creatures as I hope. And I hope wel that He werketh otherewise also, that
passith my witte and my feelyng. Neverthelees, wheer he werke thus or othirwise, bi
sundry menys, in lengere tyme or in schooter tyme, with mykil traveile or litil traveile,
yif al come to oon eende, that is to perfite love of Hym, than is it gode inowgh. For yif
2105 He wole geven a soule on o day the ful grace of contemplacion and withouten ony
travaile, as He weel mai, as good it is to that soule as yif he had ben examyned, pyned
and mortified, and purified twenti wyntir tyme. And therfore upon this manere wise
take thou my setyng, as I have said; and namely as I thenke for to seyn. For now bi the
grace of oure Lord Jhesu schal y speke a litil as me thenketh more openli of reformyne
2110 in feelyng — what it is and how it is maad, and whiche aren goostli feelynges that a
soule receyveth.

Neverthelees first, that thou take not this maner of spekyng of reformyne of a soule
in feelyng as feynynge or fantasie, therfore I schal grounden it in Seynt Poules wordis,

2088 **hope**, believe. 2101 **hope**, suppose. 2102 **wheer**, whether.

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where he seith thus: *Nolite conformari huic seculo, sed reformamini in novitate vestrae vestri* (Romans 12:2). That is: Ye that are thorough grace reformed in feith, conforme yow not henefoward to maneres of the world, in pride, in covetise, and in oþere synnes; but be ye reformed in newehede of youre feelynge. Loo, heere thou maist see that Seynt Poul speketh of reformynge in feelynge; and what that newe feelynge is he expounneth in another place thus: *Ut impleamini in agnitione voluntatis eius, in omni intellectu et sapientia spirituali* (Colossians 1:9). That is: We praien God that ye mowen ben fulfilled in knowynge of Goddis wille, in al undirstondyng and in al maner goostli wisdoes; that is, in reformynge in feelynge. For thou schalt undirstonde that the soule hath two maneres of feelynges: on withoute of the fyve bodili wites, another withinne of the goostli wites, the whiche are propirli the myghtis of the soule, mynde, reson, and wille. Whanne thorough grace thise myghtes are fulfilled in al undirstondinge of the wille of God and in goostli wisdom, than hath the soule newe gracious feelynges. That this is sooth, he schewith in another place thus: *Renovamini spiritu mentis vestre, et induite novum hominem, qui secundum deum creatus est in iusticia, sanctitate, et in veritate* (Ephesians 4:23-24). Be yee now renewed in the spirit of youre soule; that is, ye schullen ben reformed not in bodili feelynge ne in imaginacion, but in the overe partie of youre reson. And clothe yow in a newe man, that is schapen aftir God in rightwisenesse, holinesse, and soothfastnesse. That is, your reson, that is propirli the ymage of God thorough grace of the Holi Goost, schal be clothid in a newe light of soothfastenesse, holynesse, and rightwisenesse and thanne is it reformed in feelynge. For whanne the soule hath perflight knowynge of God, than is it reformed. Thus seith Seynt Poul: *Expoliantes veterem hominem cum actibus suis; induite novum, qui renovatur in agnitione dei, secundum ymaginem eius qui creavit eum* (Colossians 3:9-10). Spoile youself of the olde man with alle his deedis; that is, casteth fro yow the love of the world with alle wordli maseris. And clothe you in a newe man; that is, ye schullen be renewed in the knowynge of God aftir the liknesse of Hym that made yow.

Bi thise wordes maist thou understanden that Seynt Poul wold have mennys soulis reformed in partie knowynge of God, for that is the newe feelynge that he speketh of generali. And therfore upon his word I schal seyn more pleynli of this reformynge, as God geveth me grace. For ther is two maner of knowynge of God. On is had principali in imaginacion, and litil in undirstondynge. This knowynge is in chosen soulis bigynnynge

2117 newehede, newness. 2131 overe partie, upper part. 2138 Spoile, Despoil.

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and profitynge in grace, that knownen God and loven Hym al manli not goostli, with
manli affeccions and with bodili liknesse, as I have bifore seid. This knowynge is good,
and it is likned to mylk bi the whiche thei aren tendirli norischid as children, til thei ben
able for to come to the fadris boord and taken of his hande hool breed. And that oþer
2150 knowynge is principally felt in undirstondynge, whanne it is comforted and illumyned bi
the Hooli Goost, and litol in imagynacion. For the undirstondynge is ladi, and ymaginacion
is a maiden, servande to the undirstondynge whanne nede is. This knowynge is oolde
beued, mete for perfite soulis, and it is reformynge in feelynge.

Chapter Thirty-two

Hou grace openeth the innere iye of a soule into goostli biholdyng of Jhesu, and hou
2155 there is thee maner of knowynge of Jhesu bi example of thee men stondynge in the
sunne, on blynd, another hath his iyen sperid, and the thridde forth lokynge.

A soule that is callid fro the love of the world, and aftir that it is righted and assaied,
mortefied and purifid, as I have bifore seid, oure Lord Jhesu of His merciful goodnessse
reformeth it in feelynge whanne He vucheth saaf. He openeth the innere iye of the soule
2160 whanne He lightneth the reson thorough touchynge and schymynge of His blyssid light,
for to seen Hym and knowe Him; not al fulli at oones, but litol and litol bi dyverse tymes,
as the soule mai suffre Hym. He seeth Hym not what He is, for that mai no creature doon
in hevene ne in erthe; ne he seth Him not as He is, for that sight is oonli in the blisse of
hevene. But he seth Him that He is: an unchaungeable beyng, a sovereyn myght, sovereyn
2165 soothfastnesse, and sovereyne goodnessse, a blyssid lyf, and an eendelees blisse. This
seeth the soule, and moche more that cometh withal; not blyndli and savourli, as dooth
a clerk that seeth Hym be clergie oonli thorough myght of his naked resoun, but that oþer
seeth Hym in undirstoedynge that is comforted and lightned by the gifte of the Hooli
Goost with a wondirful reverence and a privei brennande love, with goostli savour and
2170 heveneli delite, more cleerli and more fulli than mai be wrtten or seid.

2156 *on*, one; *sperid*, closed. 2157 *righted*, justified. 2160 *lightneth*, illuminates. 2167 *be
clergie*, by learning.

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This sight, though it be schoetli and litil, is so worthi and so myghti that it draweth and ravescheth al the affeccion of the soule therto from biholdynge and the mynde of al ertheli thyng, for to reste therinne everemore yif that it myghte. And of this maner sight and knowynge the soule groundeth al his inward wirkynge in alle the affeccions.

- 2175 For thanne it dredeth God in man as soothfastnesse, wondreth Him as myght, loveth Him as goodnesse. This sight and this knowynge of Jhesu, with the blissid love that cometh oute of it, mai be called the reformynge of a soule in feith and in feelynge that I speke of. It is in feith, for it is myrk yit as in reward of that ful knowynge that schal ben in hevene. For than schullen we seen Hym not oonli that He is, but even as He is; as
2180 Seynt Joon seith: *Tunc videbitur eum sicut est* (1 John 3:2). That is: Thanne schulle we seen Him as He is. Neverthelees, it is in feelynge also, as in reward of that blynde knowynge that a soule hath stondynge oonli in feith. For this soule knoweth sumwhat of the kynde of Jhesu God thorough this gracious sight, but that oþer knoweth it not, but oonli troweth it, this is sooth.

- 2185 Neverthelees, that thou mowe the betere conceyve that I meene, I schal scheue thee thre manere reformynge of a soule bi ensample of three men stondynge in light of the sunne. Of the whiche three, oon is blynd, and another mai seen but he hath hise iyen spered, the thridde loketh forth ful sight.

- The blynde man hath no maner knowynge that he is in the sunne, but he troweth it yif
2190 a trewe man tellie hym; and he bitokeneth a soule that is oonli reformed in feith, that troweth in God as Holi Chirche techeth, and woot not what. This sufficeth as for savacion. The tothir seeth a light of the sunne, but he seeth it not clearli what it is, ne as it is, for the liddes of his iyen letteth him that he mai not, but he seeth thorough the liddes of his iyen a glymerynge of a greet light. And he bitokeneth a soule that is reformed in
2195 feith and in feelynge, and so is contemplatiif. For he seeth sumwhat of the Godhede of Jhesu thorough grace; not clearli ne fulli, for the iyen liddes, that is his bodili kynde, is yit a wal atwixe his kynde and the kynde of Jhesu, and letteth him fro the clear sight of Him. But he seeth thorough this wal, aftir that grace toucheth him more or lasse, that Jhesu is God and that Jhesu is sovereyne goodnesse, and sovereyne beyng, and a
2200 blissid liyf, and that al other goodnesse cometh of Him. This seeth the soule bi grace, notwithstanding alle the bodili kynde; and the more cleane and solil that the soule ys maad,

2178 **myrk**, dark; **reward of**, regard to. 2184 **this**, that this. 2188 **spered**, closed. 2190 **trewe**, true. 2192 **tothir**, other. 2193 **letteth**, hinder. 2196 **kynde**, nature. 2197 **atwixe**, between. 2199 **beyng**, being. 2201 **agenstondyng**, withstand; **cleane**, pure; **solil**, subtle.

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the more it is departid from fleschlihede, the scharpere sight it hath and the myghtiere
love of the Godbede of Jhesu. This sight is so myghti that though no man lyvand wolde
trowe in Jhesu, ne love Him, he wolde trowe nevere the lesse ne love Him the lasse; for
2205 he seeth it so soothfastli thorough grace that he mai not untrowe it.

The thridde man, that hath ful sight of the sunne, he troweth it not for he seeth it fullic;
bitokeneth a ful blissid soule that withouten ony wal of bodi or synne seeth openli the
face of Jhesu in the blisse of hevene. There is no feith, and therfore he is fulli reformed
in feelynge.

2210 There is no staat above the secunde reformynge that a soule mai come to heere in this
liyf; for this is the staat of perfeccion, in the weie to heveneward. Nevertheles alle the
soulis that aren in this staat are not alle ilike ferforth. For summe have it litil, and schorthi
and seldom; and summe lengere, clerere and oftennere; and summe han it clerest and
lengest, aftir the habundynge of grace; and yit alle thise han the gifte of contemplacioun.
2215 For the soule hath not perfighte sight of Jhesu al at onys, but first a litil, and aftir that it
profiteth and cometh to more feelynge, and as longe as it is in this lyf it mai wesen more
in the knowynge and in this love of Jhesu. And sothli I woot not what were more leef to
siche a soule that hath a litil felt of it, than utirli alle othire thynges left and sette hem at
nought, and oonli tende thereto for to have clerere sight and clennere love of Jhesu, in
2220 whom is al the blissid Trynyte.

This manere of knowynge of Jhesu, as I undirstonde, is the openynge of hevene to
the iye of a cleene soule, of the whiche holi men spaken of in here writynge. Not as
summe wenien, that the openynge of hevene is yif a soule myght seen bi imaginacion
2225 thorough the skyes above the firmament, hou oure Lord Jhesu sitteth in His majesté in a
bodili light as mykil as an hundred sunnes. Nai, it is not soo: ne though he see nevere so
highe on that manere, sothli he seeth not the goostly hevene. The hiere he stiyeth above
the sonne bi sich imagynacion for to see Jhesu God, the lowere he falleth bynethe the
sunne. Neverthelees this maner sight is suffrable to symple soulis, that kunne no betere
seke Hym that is unseable.

2212 **ilike ferforth**, alike advanced. 2217 **leef**, preferred. 2219 **clennere**, purer. 2223 **wesen**,
suppose. 2226 **hiere**, higher; stiyeth, climbs. 2228 **suffrable**, permissible; **kwane**, know how
to.

Chapter Thirty-three

- 2230 Hou Jhesu is hevene to the soule; and hou a soule schal seke Jhesu above itself and withinne itself; and whi Jhesu is callid fier and light.

What is hevene to a resonable soule? Sothli, not ellis but Jhesu God. For yif that be hevene oonli that is above a thynge, than is God oonli hevene to manys soule. For He is oonli above the kynde of a soule. Thanne yif a soule mas thorugh grace have knowyng of that blissid kynde of Jhesu, sothli he seeth hevene, for he seeth God.

Therfore ther are many men that erren in undirstondynge of summe wordes that aren seid of God, for thei undirstonden hem not goostli. Hooli Writte seith that a soule that wole fynde God schal liften upward the innere iye and seke God above itself. Thanne summe that wolde doon aftir this seyng undirstonden this word "aboven hemself," as 2240 for higher settynge in stide and for worthiere of place, as oon element or oon planetē is above another in settynge and in worthiness of bodili place; but it is not so goostli. For a soule is above a bodili thynge not bi settynge of stide, but bi sutilē and worthiness of kynde. Right so, in the selve wise, God is above alle bodili and goostli creaturis, not bi settynge of stide, but thorugh sutilē and worthiness of His unchaungeable blissid 2245 kynde. And therfore he that wole wisili seke God and fynden Him, he schal not renne ouse with his thought as yif he wolde clymbe above the sunne and persen the firmament, and imagyne the majestē as it were a light of an hundred scories. But he schal rathere drawe down the sunne and al the firmament, and forgeten it and casten it binethen hym ther as he is, and settē al this and al bodili thinge also at nouȝt, and thenken 2250 thanne yif he can goostli, bothe of himself and of God also. And yif he doo thus, thanne seeth the soule aboven himself and thanne seeth it hevene.

Upon this self manere schal this word "withinne" be undirstonden. It is comonli seid that a soule schal see oure Lord withinne al thynge and withinne itself. Sooth it is that oure Loed is withinne alle creatures, not on that manere as a kernel is hid withinne the schale of a note, or as a litil bodili thinge is hid and holden withinne another mykil. But He is withinne alle creatures as hooldynge and kepynge hem in here beyng, thorugh sutilē and thorugh myght of His blissid kynde and clennesse unseable. For right as a thynge

2240 *stide*, place. 2242 *sutilē*, subtlety. 2244 *stide*, place. 2246 *persen*, pierce. 2255 *schale*, shelf; *note*, nat. 2256 *beyng*, being.

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that is most precious and moste clene is leid innerest, right so bi that liknesse it is seid
the kynde of God (that is most precious and most clene and most goostli, feerhest
2260 from bodilihede) is hid withinne alle thynges. And therfore he that wole seke God
withinne, he schal forgete first al bodili thynge (for al that is withouten) and his owen
bodi; and he schal forgeten the thenkynge of his owen soule and thenken on that unmaad
kynde that is Jhesu, that made him, quykeneth him, and holdeth him, and gyveth hym
2265 reson and mynde and love; the whiche is withinne hym thorough His privei myght and
sovereyne soutilé. Upon this manere schal the soule doo whanne grace touchith hym,
ellis it wole but litil availe to seken Jhesu and fynde Him withinne itsilf and withinne alle
cretures, as me therketh.

Also it is seide in Holi Writ that God is light. So seith Seynt Joon: *Dux lux est* (1 John
1:5). That is, God is light. The light schal not ben undirstonden as for bodili light, but it
2270 is undirstonden thus: God is light, that is, God is truthe and soothfastnesse, for
soothfastnesse is goostli light. Than he that most graciously knoweth soothfastnesse, beest
seeth God. And neverthelees it is likned to bodili light for this skile. Right as the sunne
scheweth to the bodili iye itsilf and al bodili thynge bright, right so soothfastnesse, that
2275 is God, scheweth to the reson of the soule itsilf first, and bi itsilf alle othere goostli
thynge that nedeth to be knownen of a soule. Thus seith the prophete: *Domine, in lumine tuo videbimus lumen* (Psalms 35:10). Lord, we schullen see light bi Thi light. That is,
we schullen seen Thee, that art soothfastnesse, bi Thisilf.

On the selve wise it is seid that God is fier: *Deus noster ignis consumens est* (Hebrews
12:29). That is: Oure Lord is fier wastande. That is for to seyn, God is not fier elementarie,
2280 that heteth a bodi and brenneth it, but God is love and charité. For as fier wasteth al
bodili thinge that mai be wasted, right so the love of God wasteth and brenneth al synne
oute of the soule and maketh it clene, as fier maketh clene al manere metal. Thise
wordis, and alle othere that aren spoken of oure Lord in hooli writynge bi bodili liknesse,
2285 moste nedis ben undirstonden goostli, ellis there is no savour in hem. Neverthelees, the
cause whi sicke maner wordis aren seid of oure Lord in Holi Writ is this. For we aren so
fleschli that we conne not of God, ne undirstonde of Hym, but yif we bi sicke wordes
first ben entred in. Neverthelees, whanne the innere iye is opened thorough grace for to
han a litil sight of Jhesu, thanne schal the soule turne lightli inowgh alle sich wordes of
bodili thyngis into goostli undirstondynge.

2263 quykeneth, gives life to. 2271 beest, best. 2272 skile, reason. 2273 soothfastnesse,
truth. 2278 selve wise, same manner. 2286 conne not, know nothing. 2288 inowgh, enough.

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- 2290 This goostli openyng of the innere iye into knowyng of the Godhede y calle
reformynge in feith and in feelyng. For thanne the soule sumwhat feelth in undirstandinge
of that thynge that it hadde bifore oonli in nakyd trowing. And that is bigynnyng of
contemplacion, of the whiche Seynt Poul seith thus: *Non contemplabitur nobis que
videtur, sed que non videtur; quia que videtur, temporalia sunt, que autem non
videtur, eterna sunt* (2 Corinthians 4:18). That is: Oure contemplacion is not in thinges
that are seen, but it is in thinges unseable. For thynges that are seen aren passyng, but
thinges unseable aren ai lastande. To the whiche sight every soule schulde desire for to
come, bothe heere in partie, and in the blisse of hevene fulli. For in that sight and in that
knowyng of Jhesu is fulli the blisse of a resonable soule, and endeles liyf. Thus seith
2300 oure Lord: *Hec est autem vita eterna: ut cognoscant te verum deum, et quem misisti
Iesum Cristum* (John 17:3). That is: Fadir, this is endeles liyf; that Thi chosen soulis
knowe Thee and Thi Sone Jhesu Crist whom Thou hast sent, oon soothfast God.

Chapter Thirty-four

- 2305 Of two maner of love formed, what it meemeth, and unformed; and hou we aren bisholden
for to love Jhesu moche for oure makynge, but moche more for oure blyng, but most
for oure ful savynge whanne He geveth the Holi Goost to us and maketh us saaf thorough
love,

- But now, wondrist thou, syn this knowyng of God is the blisse and the ende of a soule,
whi thanne have I seid heere before that the soule schal not ellis coveiten but oonli the
love of God; but I spak nothynge of this sight, that a soule schulde coveite this?
- 2310 Unto this I mai seyn thus: that the sight of Jhesu is ful blis of a soule, and that is not
oonli for the sight, but it is also for the blissid love that cometh oute of the sight.
Neverthelees, for love cometh oute of knowyng and not knowyng of love, therfore it
is seid that in syght peincipali of God with love is the blisse of a soule, and the more He
is knownen the betere He is loved. But for as mykil as to this knowyng, or to this love
2315 that cometh of it, mai not the soule come withoute love; therfore seide I that thou
schuldest oonli coveiten love. For love is cause whi a soule cometh to this sight and to

2292 trowing, belief. 2304 blyng, being.

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this knowynge; and that love is not the love that a soule hath in itself to God, but the love
that God hath to a symple soule that can right nought loves Him is cause whi this soule
cometh to this knowynge and to this love that cometh of it. And on what manere that is,
2320 I schal telle thee more openly.

Holi writeres seyn, and sooth it is, that there is two maneres of goostli love. On is
callid unformed, another is called formed. Love unformed is God Himsilf, the thridde
persoone in Trinitate; that is, the Holi Goost. He is love unformed and unmaad, as Seynt
Joon seith thus: *Deus dileccio est* (1 John 4:8). God is love, that is, the Holi Goost. Love
2325 formed is the affeccion of a soule, maad bi the Holi Goost of the sight and the knowynge
of soothfastenesse (that is God oonli) stired and sette in Hym. This love is callid formed,
for it is maad bi the Holi Goost. This love is not God in Himsilf, for it is maad, but it is
the love of the soule, felt of the sight of Jhesu and sterid to Hym oonli. Now maist thou
see that love formed is not cause whi a soule cometh to goostli sight of Jhesu, as sum
2330 men wolden thenke, that thei wolde love God so bremandli as it were bi there oren
myght, that thei were worthi for to have the more goostly knowing of Hym. Nai, it is
not so. But love unformed, that is, God Himsilf, is cause of al this knowynge. For a blynde
wrecchid soule is so feer from the clear knowynge and the blissid feelyng of His love
2335 thorugh synne and freeche of the bodili kynde, that it myght nevere come to it, ne were
the endelesse mokenesse of the love of God. But thanne bicause that He loveth us so
muche, therfore He geveth us his love, that is, the Holi Goost. He is bothe the gifte and
the gyvere, and maketh us thanne bi that gifte for to knownen Him and loves Him. Loo,
this is the love that I spaak of, that thou schuldest oonli coveiten and desiren this
unformed love that is the Holi Goost. For sothli a lasse thyng or a lasse gift than He is
2340 mai not availe us for to bringen us to the blissid sight of Jhesu. And therefore schullen
we fulli desiren and asken of Jhesu oonli this gift of love, that He wolde for the mykilnesse
of His blissid love touchen oure hertis with His unseable light to the knowynge of Him,
and departen with us of His blissid love, that as He loveth us that we myght love Him
agen. Thus seith Seynt Joon: *Nos diligamus deum, quoniam ipse prior diluxit nos* (1
2345 John 4:19). That is: Love we now God, for He first loved us. He loved us mykil whanne
He maade us to His liknesse, but He loved us more whanne He boughte us with His
precious blood thorugh wilful takynge of deth in His manhede fro the power of the

2321 **Holi writeres seyn**, Clark (p. 317n235) suggests Augustine, *De trinitate*, 15.18.32 and
15.19.37, as well as Bernard and William of St. Thierry. 2333 **feer**, far. 2343 **departen**, share.
2347 **manhede**, humanity.

Book II

freend and from the peyne of helle. But He loveth most us whan He geveth us the gifte
of the Holi Goost, that is love, bi whiche we knownen Him and loven Hym, and are maad
2350 siker that we aren His sones chosen to savacion. For this love aren we more bounden to
Him than for ony oþer love that evere He schewed for us, either in oure makynge or in
oure biyng. For though He hadde made us and bought us, but yif He save us wthal,
what profite is it ellis to us oure makynge or oure biyng? Sothli right noon.

Therfore the mooste tokene of love schewed to us, as me thenketh, is this: that He
2355 geveth Himsilf in His Godhede to oure soulis. He gaf Himsilf in His manhede first to us
for oure raunsom, whanne He offride Himsilf to the Fader of hevne upon the autier of
the Cros. This was a fair gifte, and a grete tokene of love. But wheine He gyveth Himsilf in
His Godhede goosli to oure soulis for oure savacion, and maketh us for to knownen Him
and loven Hym, thanne loveth He us fulli. For thanne gyveth He Himsilf to us, and more
2360 myght He sought gyven us, ne lasse myght not suffisen to us. And for this skile it is
said that the rightyng of a synful soule thorough forgifnesse of synnes is arrested and
appropriid principali to the wirkynge of the Holi Goost; for the Holi Goost is love, and
in the rightyng of a soule oure Lord Jhesu scheweth to the soule most of His love, for
He doth awai al synne and oneth it to Hym. And that is the beste thynge that He mai
2365 doon to a soule, and therfore it is appropried to the Holi Goost.

The makynge of a soule is appropried to the Fadir as for sovereigne myght and powere
that he schewith in makynge of it. The biyng is arectid and appropriid to the Sone, as
for the sovereyne witte and wisdom that he schewid in his manhede; for he overcam
2370 the feend principali thorough wisdom and not thorwgh strenthe. But the rightyng and
the ful savyng of a soule bi forgivnesse of synnes is appropried to the thridde persone,
that is, the Holi Goost. For therin schewith Jhesu most love unto a manys soule, and
for that thynge schal He most sovereynli be loved agen of us. His makynge is comyn to
us and to alle unresounable creaturis. For as He mad us of nought, so He made hem; and
therfore is this werk grettest of myght, but it is not most of love. Also the biyng is
2375 comone to us and to alle resonable soulis, as to Jewes and to Sarsenes and to fals
Cristene men. For He died for alle soulis ilike and boughte hem, yif thei wolen han the
profite therof; and also it sufficeth for the biyng of alle, though it so be that alle han it
not. And this wirkynge was mooste of wisdom, and not most of love. But the rightyng
2380 siker, secure. 2382 blyage, buying, i.e., redemption. 2386 autier, altar. 2386 skile,
reason. 2381 arrested, accounted. 2382 appropriid, appropriated. 2384 oneth it, conjoins it
(the soul). 2388 witte, intelligence. 2394 blyng, redemption. 2395 Sarsenes, Saracens.
2397 blyng, redemption. 2398 rightyng, justification.

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and the halewinge of oure soulis thorugh the gifte of the Holi Goost, that is oonli the
2380 wirkynge of love; and that is not comone, but it is a special gifte oonli to chosen soulis.
And sothli that is the wirkynge of most love to us that aren His chosen children.

This is the love of God that I speke of, which thou schalt coveiten and desiren; for
this love is God Himsilf and the Holi Goost. This love unformed, whan it is geven to us,
it wirketh in oure soulis al that good is, and al that longeth to goodnesse. This love
2385 loveth us er than we loven Him. For it clenseth us first of oure synnes, and maketh us
for to loven Him, and maketh oure wille stronge for to agenstonden alle synnes, and it
stireth us for to assaien oureself thorugh diverse exercises bothe bodili and goostli in alle
vertues. It stireth us also for to forsake the love and the likynge of the world; it sleeth in
2390 us alle wikkid stirynges of synnes and fleschli affeccions and wordli dredis; it kept us
from alle malicious temptacions of the fend; and it dryveth us from bisynesse and from
vanite of the world, and fro conversacioun of wordli loveris. Al this dooth the love of
God unformed, whanne He geveth Himsilf to us. We doon right nought but suffre Him,
and assente to Him, for that is the moste that we doon, that we assente wilfulli to His
2395 gracious werkynge in us. And yit is not that wille of us, but of His makynge, so that me
thenketh He dooth in us al that is wel doon, and yit we seen it nought. And not oonli
dooth He thus, but aftir this love dooth more. For He openeth the iye of the soule and
scheweth to the soule the sight of Jhesu wondifulli, and the knowynge of Hym, as the
soule mai suffre it thus bi litol and bi litol; and bi that sight He ravescheth al the affeccion
of the soule to Him.

2400 And thanne bigynneth the soule for to knownen Him goostli, and brennandli for to love
Him; than seeth the soule sumwhat of the kynde of the blisside Godhede of Jhesu, hou
He is al and He werketh al and that alle good dedis that aren doon and good thoughtis
aren oonli of Him. For He is al sovereyn myght and al sovereyn soothfastnesse and al
sovereyn goodnesse; and therfore everiche good dede is doon oocells of Him and bi Him,
2405 and He schal oonli have the worschipe and the thanke for alle good deedis, and nothyng
but He. For though wrechid men stolen His worschipe from Him heire for awhile,
neverthelees atte laste ende schal soothfastnesse schewe wel that Jhesu dede al and that
man dide right nought of himself; and thanne schullen theves of Goddis good that aren
nought acordid with Him heire in this lif for here trespace be demed to the deeth, and

2379 halewinge, making holy. 2386 agenstonden, resist. 2391 conversacioun, manner of living. wordli loveris, lovers of the world.

Book II

- 2410 Jhesu schal fulli be worshipped and thanked of alle blissid creatureis for His gracious wirkynge.

This love is not ellis but Jhesu Himsilf, that for love wirketh al this in manrys soule and reformeth it in feelynge to His liknesse, as I have before seid, and sumwhat as I schal seyn. This love bringeth into the soule the fulhede of alle vertues, and maketh hem alle clene and trewe, softe and esi, and tumeth hem alle into love and in likynge; and on what manere wise he dooth that, I schal telle thee a litil afterward. This love draweth the soule from fleschlihede into goostlinesse, from erthli feelyng into heveneli savour, and from veyn bihooldyng of wordli thinges into contemplacion of goostli creatureis and of Goddis privetrees.

Chapter Thirty-five

- 2420 Hou sum soulis loven Jhesu bi bodili fervours, and bi ther own affeccions that aren stired bi grace and bi resoun; and sum loven Jhesu more restfulli, bi gostli affeccions onli, stired inward thorough grace of the Hooli Gost.

Thanne mai I seyn that he that hath most of this love heire in this lif most pleseth God, and most cleer sight schal have of Him in the blisse of hevene: for he hath the most gifte of love here in erthe.

- 2425 This love mai not be had bi a manrys traveile ownen, as sum men wenen. It is freeli had of the gracious gifte of Jhesu, aftir moche bodili and goostli traveile goyng bifore. For there aren summe loveres of God that maken hemself for to love God as it were bi here own myght; for thei streynen hemself thorough grete violence, and parten so strongli 2430 that thei bersten al into bodili fervours as yif thei wolden drawe down God from hevene to hem, and thei seien in her hertis and with her mouth, "A, Lord, I love Thee, and I wole love Thee. I wolde for Thi love suffre deeth." And in this maner wirkynge thei feelen grete fervour and mykil grace. And sooth it is, as me thenketh, this wirkynge is good and meedful, yif it be wel temprid with mekenesse and with discretion. But 2435 neverthelees thise men loven not the gifte of love on that manere as I speke of, ne thei asken it not so. For a soule that hath the gifte of love thorough gracious bihooldyng of

2414 fulhede, fullness. 2426 weuen, suppose. 2434 meedful, worthy of reward.

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Jhesu as I moene, or ellis yif he have it not yet but wolde have it, he is not bisi for to streyne itself over his myght, as it were bodili strenth, for to han it bi bodili fervours and so for to feelen of the love of Jhesu. But him thenketh that he is right not, and that he can doo right not of hymself, but as it were a deed thynge oonli hangyng and born up bi the merci of God. He seeth wel that Jhesu is al and doth al, and therfore asketh he not ellis but the gifte of His love. For syn the soule seeth that his owen love is nought, therfore it wold have His love, for that is inowgh. Therfore praieth he, and that desireth he, that the love of God wolde touche him with his blissid light, that he myght seen a liti of Him bi schewynge of His gracious presence, for thanne schulde he love Him; and so bi this weie cometh the gifte of love, that is God, into a soule.

The more that the soule nougnteth itself thorough grace bi sight of this sothfastnesse — sumtyme withoutin ony fervour schewed outward — and the lasse it thenketh it loveth or seeth God, the nerrere neightheth it to persevve the gifte of the blissid love. For thanne is love maister, and wirketh in the soule and maketh it for to forgeten himself, and for to seen and biholden oonli hou love dooth. And thanne is the soule more suffryng than droyng, and that is clene love. Thus Seynt Poul mened whanne he seide thus: *Quicumque spiritu dei aguntur, hi sunt filii dei* (Romans 8:14). Alle thise that aren wrought with the spirit of God aren Goddis sonnes. That is, thise soulis that aren maad so meke and so buxum to God that thei wirke not with hemself, but suffren the Holi Goost ai stiren hem and wirke in hem feelynges of love with a ful swete accord to His stirynge, thise aren special Goddis sonnes, most like unto Him.

Othere soulis that kunne not loven thus, but traveilen hemself bi here owen affeccions and stiren hemself thorough thenkyng of God and bodili exercise for to drawen out of hem bi maistrie the feelyng of love, fervours and othere bodili signes, loven not so goostli. Thei doon wel and medefulli, bi so that thei wolen knowe mekeli that here wirkynge is not kindeli the gracious feelyng of love, but it is manli doon bi a soule at the biddynge of resoun. And neverthelees thorough the goodenesse of God, bicause that soule doth that in it is, thise manli affeccions of the soule stirred into God bi manrys wirkynge aren turned into goostli affeccions, and aren maad medful as yif thei hadde be doon goostli in the first bigynnyng. And this is a greet curteisie of oure Lord, schewed unto a meke soule, that tumeth alle thise manli affeccions of kyndeli love into

2437 *bisi*, busy. 2449 *neightheth*, approaches. 2455 *buxum*, obedient. 2458 *kunne*, know how to. 2460 *maistrie*, force. 2461 *medefulli*, in a manner worthy of reward. 2465 *medful*, worthy of reward; yif, if.

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affeccioun and into the mede of his own love, as yif he hadde wrought hem alle fulli bi himself. And so thise affecciouns so turned moun ben called affecciouns of goostli love
2470 thorough purchase, not thorough kyndeli bryngynge forth of the Holi Goost. I seye not that a soule mai wirken siche manli affecciouns oonli of itsilf withouten grace, for I woot weel that Seynt Poul seith that we mous right nought doon ne thenken that good is of ouresilf withouten grace. *Nunquid sumus sufficientes cogitare aliquid ex nobis, sed sufficiencia nostra ex deo est* (2 Corinthians 3:5). That is: We that loven God wenien not
2475 that we suffisen for to love and thenken good of ouresilf onli, but oure sufficience is of God. For God wirketh in us al, bothe good wil and good werk, as Seynt Poul seith: *Dominus est qui operatur in nobis et velle et perficere pro bona voluntate* (Philippians 2:13). That is: God that wirketh in us bothe wil and fillynge of good wille. But I seie that siche affecciouns aren of God, maad bi the mene of a soule after the general grace that
2480 He gyveth to alle His chosen soulis; not of special grace maad goostli bi touchinge of His gracious presence, as He werketh in His perfite loveris, as I have before seid. For in unperfite loveres of God love werketh al ferli, bi the affecciouns of man; but in perfite loveres, love werketh veryli, bi his owen goostli affecciouns, and sleeth for the tyme in a soule alle othere affecciouns bothe fleschli and kyndeli and manli. And that is propirli
2485 the wirkynge of love bi himself. This love mai be had a litil in partie heire in a clese soule, thorough goostli sight of Ihesu; but in the blisse of hevene it is fulfillid bi clear sight of Ihesu in His Godhede, for there schal noon affeccion be left in a soule, but al godli and goostli.

Chapter Thirty-six

That the gifte of love amoung alle the giftes of Ihesu is worthiest and most profitable;
2490 and hou Ihesu doth al that is wel don in His chosen onli for love. And hou love maketh the usyng of alle vertues and alle good dedis, light and esy.

Aske thou thanne of God nothinge but this gifte of love, that is, the Holi Goost. For amoung alle the giftes that oure Lord geveth ther is noon so good ne so profitable, so worthi ne excellent, as this is. For there is no gifte of God that is bothe gifte and the

2469 **moun**, may. 2482 **ferli**, from a distance. 2483 **veryli**, truly.

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2495 gyvere, but this gifte of love; and therfore it is the beste and the worthieste. The gift of profesie, the gifte of myracles-werkynge, the gift of grete kunnynge and conceilynge, and the gift of grete fastynge or of grete penaunce-doyng, or ony oþir siche, aren grete giftes of the Holi Goost, but thei aren not the Holi Goost, for a repreved soule and a dampnable myght have alle these giftes as fulli as a chosen soule.

2500 And therfore al these manere of giftis aren not moche to be desired, ne greteli for to chargen. But the gifte of love is the Holi Goost, God Himsilf, and Him mai no soule have and be dampned with Him, for that gifte oonli saveth it fro dampnacion, and maketh it Goddis sone, partenere of heveneli heritage. And that love, as I have bifore seid, is not the affeccioun of love that is foemed in a soule, but it is the Holi Goost Himsilf, that is 2505 love unformed, that saveth a soule. For He gyveth Himsilf to a soule first, or the soule loveth Him; and He formeth affeccion in the soule and maketh the soule oonli for to loven Him oonli for Himsilf. And not oonli that, but also bi this gifte the soule loveth itsilf and alle his evene Cristene as himself, onli for God; and this is the gifte of love that maketh schedynghe atwixe chosen soulis and the repreved. And this maketh ful pees 2510 atwixe God and a soule and oneth alle blissid creatures holli in God; for it maketh Jhesu to loven us, and us Him also, and eche of us for to loven oþir in Him.

Coveite this gifte of love principal, as I have seid. For yif He wole of His grace gyve it on that manere wise, it schal openen and lightsen the resoun of thi soule for to seen sothfastnesse, that is, Jhesu and goostli thynges. And it schal stire thyn affeccions holli 2515 and fulli for to loven Him and it schal werken in thi soule oonli as He wole, and thou schalt bitholden Him reverentli with softnesse of love and seen hou He dooth. This biddeth He bi His prophete that we schulde doo, seiynge thus: *Vocate, et videte quoniam ego sum deus* (Psalms 45:11). Ceese yee, and seeth that I am God. That is, ye that aren reformed in feelynge and han youre innere iye opened into sight of goostli thinges, ceese yee sum tyme of outward wirkynge, and seeth that I am God. That is, "Seeth onli hou I, Jhesu, 2520 God doo; bihalde yee Me, for I doo al. I am love, and for love I doo al that I do, and ye do nought. That this is sooth y schal schewe yow, for there is no good deede doon in yow ne good thought felt in yow, but yif it be doon thorough Me, that is, thorwgh myght, wisdom and love, that is mightili, wittili, and loveli, ellis it is it no good deede. Now is it 2525 sooth that I, Jhesu, am bothe myght, wisdom, and blissid love, and ye nought; for y am

2496 *kunnynge*, knowledge. 2498 *repreved*, condemned. 2501 *chargen*, value. 2503 *partenere*, partner; see Textual Notes. 2509 *schedynghe*, separation. 2510 *oneth*, unites. 2513 *lightsen*, illuminate. 2524 *loveli*, lovingly.

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God. Than mowe yee wel seen that y oonli doo alle youre good deeds, and youre good thoughts, and good loves in yow, and ye dor right sought. And yit neverthelees are thise good deedis called your, not for yee wirken hem principali, but for I geve hem to yow for love that y have to you. And therefore, syn I am Jhesu, and for love do al this,
2530 ceese ye thanne of bihaldynge of yoursilf and setteth yoursilf at nought, and looketh on Me and seth that I am God, for y doo al this." This is sumwhat of the menyng of the vers of David before seide.

See thanne and bihoorde what love werketh in a chosen soule that He reformeth in feelynge to His liknesse, whanne the reson is lightned a litil to the goostli knowinge of

2535 Jhesu and to the feelynge of His love. Thanne bringeth love into the soule the fulheid of vertues, and turneth hem alle into likynge and softenesse as it were withoute wirkynge of the soule; for the soule striveth not mykil for the getynge of hem as it dide before, but it hath hem esili and felith hem restfulli, oonli thorugh the gifte of love that is the Holi Goste. And that is a wel greet comfort to the soule and a gladnesse unspecable, wharine
2540 it feeleth sodeynli, and woot nevare hou, that vertu of mekenesse and pacience, sobimesse and sadnessse, chastite and cleannessse, lovereden to his even Cristene, and alle othr vertues, the whiche weren sumtyme travelous, pyneful, and hard to him for to kepen, aren now turned into softenesse and likynge, and into wondirful lightnesse — so fer forth that hym thenketh it no maistrie ne hardenesse for to kepen ony vertu, but it is
2545 most likynge to him for to kepen it. And al this maketh love.

Other men that stonden in the comoun weie of charite, and aren not yit so fer forth in grace, but wirken undir the biddynge of resoun, striven and fighten al dai agens synnes for the getynge of vertues, and sumtyme ben aboven and sumtyme binethen, as wrasteleres aren. Thise men don ful wel. Thei han alle vertues oonli in resoun and in
2550 wille, not in savour ne in love, for thei fighten hemself as it were bi here own myghtes for hem. And therfore mowe they not have ful rest ne fulli the highere hand. Neverthelees thei schullen han moche meede, but thei aren not yit meke inowgh. Thei han not yit put hemself al fulli in Goddis hand, for thei seen Him not yit.

But a soule that hath goostli sight of Jhesu taketh no grete keep of strivynge for vertues, it is not biss abouten hem speciali; but it setteth al her bysynessee for to kepe that sight and that bihaldynge of Jhesu that it hath, for to halde the mynde stabeli thereto, and

2534 *lightned*, illuminated. 2535 *fulheid*, fullness. 2539 *unspecable*, unspeakable. 2541 *sadnesse*, resolve; *cleannessse*, purity; *lovereden*, love. 2551 *highere*, upper. 2556 *stabeli*, steadily.

The Scale of Perfection

bynde the love oonli to it that it falle not fro it, and forgeteth alle othere thynges as mykil
as it mai. And whanne it dooth thus, than is Jhesu soothfastli maister in the soule and the
2560 soule is fulli baxum to Him and tharne fighteth Jhesu for the soule agens alle synnes,
and umbischadueth it with His blissid presence, and geteth it alle vertues; and the soule
is so comforted, and soo born up with the soft feelynge of love that it hath of the sight
of Jhesu, that it feeleth no grete disese outward. And thus sleeth love generali alle
synnes in a soule, and reformeth it in newe feelynge of vertues.

Chapter Thirty-seven

2565 Hou love, thoru a gracious biholding of Jhesu, sleth alle stirynges of pride and maketh
the soule perfitelie meke; for it maketh the soule for to lese savour and delite in al ertheli
worship.

Neverthelees, hou love sleeth synnes and reformeth vertues in a soule more speciali
schal y seyn; and firste of pride, and of mekenesse that is contrarie thereto. Thou schalte
undirstonden that there is two maner of mekenesse. Oon is had bi wirkynge of resoun,
2570 Another is feelt bi special gifte of love. But bothe aren of love. But that oon love wirkeith
bi resoun of the soule; that other wirkeith bi himself. The firste is imperficht, that other is
perficht.

The first mekenesse a man feelith of bishaldynge of his owen synnes and of his owen
wrecchidnesse, thorough which biholdynge he thenketh himself unworthi for to have
2575 ony gifte or grace or ony meede of God; but he thenketh it inowgh that He wolde of His
grete merci graunte hym forgevenessee of his synnes. And also he thenketh hym because
of his owene synnes that he is wers than the moste synnere that lyveth, and that everi
man doth betere than he. And so bi siche biholdynge casteth himself doun in his thoughtis
undir alle men; and he is bisse for to agenstonde the stirynges of pride as mykil as he
2580 mai, bothe bodili pride and goostli, and disposeth himself, so that he assenteth not to the
feelynges of pride. And yif his herte be taken sumtyme wiþ it, that it be defouled with
veyn joie or worshipe or of connynge or of peesynge or of ony other thinge, as sone as

2569 **baxum**, obedient. 2570 **umbischadaeth**, overshadows. 2572 **diseise**, discomfort. 2574
sleth, slays. 2579 **agenstonde**, resist. 2582 **connyage**, knowledge; **preisynge**, praising.

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he mai perceyve it, he is yvel paid with himself, and hath sorwe for it in herte, and asketh forgynnesse for it of God and schewith him to his confessour; and he accusith 2585 himselfmekeli, and receyveth his penaunce. This is good mekenesse, but it is not yit perfite, for it is of soulis that are bigynnende and profitende in grace, causid of bihooldynge of synnes. Love werketh this mekenesse bi reson of the soule.

Parfite mekenesse a soule feeleth of the sight and the goostli knowyng of Jhesu. For whanne the Holi Goost lightneth the reson into the sight of soothfastenesse, hou Jhesu 2590 is al and that He dooth al, the soule hath so grete love, and so grete joie in that goostli sight, for it is soothfaste that it forgetteth itself and fulli leneth to Jhesu with al the love that it hath for to beholden Hym. It taketh no kepe of the unworthiness of itself ne of synnes before doon. But setteth at nought itself with alle the synnes and alle the good deedis that evere he dide, as yif there were nothinge but Jhesu. Thus meke was David 2595 whanne he seide thus: *Et substantia mea tanquam nichilum ante te* (Psalms 38:6). That is: Lord Jhesu, the sight of Thi blissid unmaad substance and Thyn endeles beyng scheweth wel unto me that my substance and the beyng of my soule that is chaungeable is as nought agens Thee. Also anemptis his even Cristene he hath no reward to hem, ne demyng of hem, whethir thei ben betere or wrose thanne himself is. For he hooldeth 2600 himself and alle othere men as it were evene, slike nought of hemself anemptis God; and that is sooth, for al the goodnessse that is doon in himself or in hem is onli of God, whom he beholdeith as al. And therfore setteth he alle othere creatures at nought, as he dooth himself. Thus meke was the prophete whanne he seide thus: *Omnis gentes quasi non sint, sic sunt coram eo, et quasi nichilum et inane ita reputari sunt* (Isaiah 40:17). Alle 2605 men aren before oure Lord as nought and as veyn and nought thei aren accountid to Him. That is, anemptis the endeles beyng and the unchaungeable kynde of God mankynde is as nought. For of nought it is maad, and into nought it schulde turnen, but yif he kepide it in the beyng that made it of nought. This is soothfastenesse, and this schulde make a soule meke yif it myght see thorough grace this soothfastenesse. Therefore 2610 whanne love openeth the innere iye of a soule for to seen this soothfastenesse with othere circumstaunces that cometh withal, thanne bigynneth the soule for to be soothfasteli meke. For thanne bē the sight of God it feeleth and seeth itself as it is; and thanne

2583 **yvel paid**, ill-satisfied. 2591 **leneth**, inclines. 2596 **unmaad**, uncreated. 2598 **agess**, is comparison with; **anemptis**, in respect to; reward, regard. 2600 **evene**, equal; alike, alike. 2605 **accountid**, accounted. 2606 **kynde**, nature. 2608 **beyng**, being.

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foesaketh the soule the bihooldynge and the lenyng to itself, and fulli fallith to the
2615 bihooldynge of Hym. And whanne it dooth so, thanne setteth the soule right nougnt bi al
the joie and alle the worschipe of this world; for the joie of woordli worschipe is so lilit
and so nougnt in regarde of that joie and that love that it feeleth in the goostli sight of
Jhesu and knowynge of soothfastnesse, that though he myght have it withouten ony
synne, he wolde not of it. Ne though men wolde worschipen him, preisen hym, favoren
hym, and sette hym at greet staat, it liketh hym right nougnt, ne though he hadde the
2620 kunyng of alle the sevne artis of clergie, and of alle craftes undir sunne, or hadde
powere for to wirke alle maner miraclis, he hath no more deyntē of al this, ne more
savour of hem, thanne for to gnawen upon a drie stikke. He hadde wel levere forgeten
al this and for to ben alone out of the sight of the world, than for to thenken on hem and
be worschiped of alle men. For the herte of a trewe lover of Jhesu is maad so mykil
2625 and so large thorugh a lilit sight of Him and a lilit feelynge of His goostli love, that al the
likyng and al the joie of al erthe mai not suffisen for to fillen oon corner of it. And
thanne semeth it wel that thise wrecchid wordli lovers that aren, as it were, ravysched
in love of here own worschipe, and pursuen afir it for to han it and with al the myght
2630 and al the witte that thei han, thei have no savoure in this mekenesse, thei aren wondir
fer therfro. But the lover of Jhesu hath this mekenesse lastandeli, and that not with
hevynesse and stryvynge for it, but with likyng and goostli gladnesse, the whiche
gladnesse it hath, not for it foesaketh al the worschipe of this world, for that were a
proude mekenesse that longeth to an ypoerite, but for he hath a sight and a goostli
2635 knowynge of soothfastnesse and of worthiness of Jhesu thorugh gifte of the Hooli
Goost.

That reverent sight and that loveli bihaldynge of Jhesu conforteth the soule so
wondirfulli and berith it up so myghtili and so softili, that it mai not liken ne fulli resten in
noon ertheli joie, ne it wole not. He maketh no fors whether men lakken him or preisen
2640 hym, worschipen him or despisen hym as fore hymself. He setteth it not at herte neithir
for to be wel paied yif men despisen him, as for more mekenesse, ne for to be yvel
paied that men schulde worschipe hym or praise him. He hadde wel levere forgete bothe
that oon and that othr, and oonli thenken on Jhesu, and gete mekenesse bi that weie;

2613 *lenyng*, inclination. 2618 *not*, nothing. 2619 *liketh*, pleases. 2620 *kunyng*, knowledge;
sevne artis of clergie, i.e., the seven liberal arts. 2621 *deyntē*, valor. 2622 *levere*, rather. 2631
hevynesse, gloominess. 2638 *maketh no fors*, has no concern; *lakken*, blame; *preisen*, praise. 2639
despisen, despise; *as fore hymself*, as far as he is concerned. 2640 *paied*, satisfied. 2641 *levere*, rather.

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and this is mykil the sikerere weie, whoso myght come thereto. Thus dide David whanne
he seide thus: *Oculi mei semper ait dominum, quoniam ipse eveller de laqueo pedes*
2645 *meos* (Psalms 24:15). That is, myn iyen aren ai upon Jhesu my Lord, for whi He schal
kepe my feet from the snaris of synne. For whanne he dooth so, thanne forsaketh he
utriusque himself and undircasteth hym hooli to Jhesu. And thanne is he in a siker warde,
for the schelde of soothfastenesse, that he biholdeth, kepeth hym so wel that He schal
not ben hurt by no stirynge of pride as longe as he holdeth hym withinne the
2650 schelde.

As the prophete seith: *Scuto circumdabit te veritas etiam; non timebis a timore nocturno*
(Psalms 90:5). Soothfastenesse of God schal umbiclippe thee with a scheeld, and that is
yif thou, alle othere thynges lefe, oonli biholde Hym. For thanne schalt thou not dreden
2655 for the nyghtes drede, that is, thou schalt not dreden the spirit of pride, whethir he come
by nyght or bi dai, as the next vers seith thus: *A sagitta volante in die* (Psalms 90:6).
Pride cometh bi nyght for to assaile a soule, whanne it is despiced and repreved of
other men, that it schulde bi that falle into hevynesse and into sorwe. It cometh also as
2660 an arwe fleynge in the dai, whanne a man is worschipid and peyzed of alle men,
whethir it be for wordli doyng or for goostli, that he schulde have veyne joie in hymself
and fals gladdenesse restyngli in a passynge thynge. This is a scharp arwe and a perili-
ous arwe; it fleeth swifeli, it stinketh softeli, but it woundeth deedli.

But the lovere of Jhesu, that stabli biholdeth Hym bi devote praieres and bisili thenkyng
on Hym, is so umbilapped with the siker schelde of soothfastenesse that he dredeth not,
2665 for this arwe mai not entren into the soule; ne though it come, it hurteth not, but glenteth
away and passeth forth. And thus is the soule maad meke, as I understande, bi wirkynge
of the Holi Gost, that is, the gifte of love; for he openeth the iye of the soule for to seen
and to loven Jhesu, and he kepit the soule in that sight restfull and sikerly, and he sleeth
alle the stirynges of pride wondir priveli and softeli, and the soule woot nevere how, and
2670 he also bringeth in bi that wai soothfasteli and loveli the vertu of mekenesse. Al this
doth love, but not in alle hise loveres ilikeful. For sum men han this grace but schorteli
and litil, as it were yit in the bygynnyng of it, and a litil assaiynge towarde it, for her

2643 **sikerere**, more certain. 2647 **undircasteth**, casts beneath; **siker**, secure; **warde**, guardianship. 2650 **schelde**, shield. 2652 **umbiclippe**, embrace. 2656 **despiced**, despised; repreved, condemned. 2658 **fleynge**, flying. 2660 **restyngli**, continuously. 2662 **stabli**, steadily. 2663 **umbilapped**, surrounded. 2664 **glenteth**, glances. 2670 **ilikeful**, to the same extent.

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conscience is not yet full clensed thorough grace. And sum men han it more fulli, for thei
has clerere sight of Jhesu, and thei feele more of His love. And sum men han it most
fulli, for thei han the ful gifte of contemplacion. Nevertheles he that leste hath on this
2675 manere as I have seid, sothli he hath the gifte of perfite mekenesse, for he hath the gifte
of perfighte love.

Chapter Thirty-eight

Hou love sleeth alle stirynges of ire and envie softeli, and reformeth in the soule the
virtues of pees and pacience and of perfite charité to his even Cristene, as he deede
speciali in the apostolis and martyres.

2680 Love wirketh wiseli and softeli in a soule there he wole, for he sloeth myghtili ire and
envie and alle passions of angrinesse and malincolie in it, and brengeth into a soule
virtues of pacience and myldenesse, pesibilité and lovereden to his even Cristene. It is
ful gret maistrie and grete hardenesse to a man that stondeth oonli in the wirkynge of his
ownen resoun for to kepen pacience, oonli reste and softnesse in herte, and charité
2685 anemptis his even Cristen yif thei disease him unskilfulli and doon hym wrong, that he ne
schal doees sumwhat agens hem thorough stiryng of ire or of malencolie, either in
spekyng or in wirkynge or in bothe. And nevertheles, though a man be stired or trobeled
in himself and be maad unrestful, bi so that it be not to mykil, passende over the boundis
of resoun, and that he kepe his hand and his tunge and be redi for to forgyve trespace
2690 whanne merci is askid, yit this man hath the vertu of pacience, though it be but weikeli
and nakidli; for as mykil as he wolde have it, and travayleth bisili in refreyntyng of his
unskilfullie passiouns that he myght have it, and also is soni that he hath it not so as he
schulde. But to a trewe lovere of Jhesu it is no grete maistrie for to suffren al this, for
whi love feighteth for him, and sleeth wondir softeli siche risynges of wraththe and al
2695 malencolie, and maketh his soule so esi, so pesible, so suffrande, and so goodli thorough
the goostli sight of Jhesu, with the feelyng of His blissed love, that though he be dispiced

2676 **perfighte**, perfect. 2682 **pesibilité**, peaceability; **lovereden**, love. 2683 **maistrie**, feat of
skill. 2685 **anemptis**, in respect to; **disease**, disturb; **unskilfulli**, unreasonably. 2690 **weikeli**,
weakly. 2692 **unskilfullie**, irrational. 2693 **maistrie**, feat of skill. 2695 **pesible**, peaceable;
suffrande, tolerant.

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or reproved of oþere men, or take wronge or harm, or schame or velamy, he chargeth it not. He is not mykil stired agens hem, he wil not ben angrid ne sterid agens hem; for yif he were mykil stired he schaide forbeeren the confort that he feeleth withinne in his soule, but that wole he not. He mai lightiere forgeten al the wronge that is doon to hym, thanne another man mai forȝeven it, though merci were asked. And so he hadde ful lyvere forgeten than foegyven it, for him thenketh it so mooste eese to hym.

And love dooth al this, for love openeth the rye of the soule to the sight of Jhesu, and stablith it with the likynge of love that it feelith bi that sight, and conforteth it so myghtili that it taketh no kepc; whatso men jangelen or don agens him, it hangeth nothynge upon him. The mooste harm that he myght have were a forberynge of the goostli sight of Jhesu. And therfore it is levere to him to suffren alle oþere harnes than that aloene. Al this mai a soule doo wel and esil, withoute grete trobelynge of the goostli sight, whanne disese falleth al withouteforth and toucheth not the bodi, as is bakbytyng or scormynge or spoilyng of siche as he hath. Al this greveth not. But it goth sumwhat neer whanne the flesch is touchid, and he feele smert; thanne it is hardere. Neverthelees, though hit be hard and impossible to the frele kynde of man for to suffre bodeli peyne gladii and pacientli, withouten bittir stirynges of ire, angir, and malencoche, it is not impossible to love (that is, the Holi Gooste) for to werke this in a soule there He toucheth with His blissid gifte of love. But He geveth to a soule that is in that pligti myghti feelynges of love, and wonderfulli fasteneth it to Jhesu, and departeth the soule wondir feer fro the sensualit  through His privei myght, and conforteth it so sweteli bi His blissid presence that the soule feelith litil peyne or ellis noon of the sensualit ; and this is the special grace goven to the holi martires. This grace hadden the apostelis, as Holi Writte seith thus of hem: *Ibant apostoli gaudentes a conspectu consilit, quoniam digni habuit sunt pro nomine Iesu contumeliam pati* (Acts 5:41). That is, the apostelis yeeden joande fro the conceil of the Jewes whanne thei weren beten with scourges, and thei weren glaad that thei weren worthi for to suffre ony bodeli disese for the name of Jhesu. Thei weren not stired to ire ne to felnesse, for to ben venged of the Jewes that beten hem, as a wordli man wolde ben whanne he suffreth a litil harm, be hit never so litil, of his even Cristen.

2697-98 **he chargeth it not**, it does not concern him. 2702 **lyvere**, rather, **eese**, comfort. 2706 **harm**, injury. 2707 **levere**, more desirable. 2709 **disese**, trouble; **falleth**, occurs; **withouteforth**, externally. 2710 **neer**, nearer. 2719 **goven**, given; **holi martires**, see Pseudo-Augustine, *Sermo de natiuitate S. Laurentii* 206 (PL 39:2127); Clark, p. 321n288. 2721 **yeeden**, went. 2724 **felnesse**, fierceness.

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Ne thei were not stured to pride and to heighnesse of hemself and to disdeyn and to demyng of the Jewes, as ipocrites and heretikes aren that wolen suffre mykil bodili peyne, and aren redi sumtyme for to suffre deeth with grete gladnesse and with myghti wille as it were in the name of Jhesu, for the love of Hym. Soothli that glaadnesse and
2730 that love that thei han in suffryng of bodili meschēf is not of the Holi Gost. It cometh not fro the fier that brenneth in the highe autier of hevene, but it is feyned by the feend enflawmed of helle. For it is menged with the highest of pride and of presumpcioun of hemself, and dispute and demyng and disdeyn of hem that thus ponesche hem. And thei wesen yit that al is charité and that thei suffre al that wronge for the love of God, but
2735 thei aren bigiled bi the myddai feend. A trewe lovere of Jhesu, whanne he suffreth harm of his even Cristene, is so strengthed thorugh grace of the Holi Goost, and is maad so meke, so pacient, and so peseble, and that sothfastli, that what wronge or harm what it be that he suffre of his even Cristene, he kepereth ai mekenesse. He dispiceth him not, he demeth him not, but preyth for hym in his herte and hath of hym pitē and compassioun,
2740 moche more tendirli thanne of another man that nevere dide hym harm; and sothli betere loveth him and more ferventli desireth the savacion of his soule, because that he seeth that he schal have so mykil goosteli profite thorugh his yvel dede, though it be agens his wille. But this love and this mekenesse wirketh oonli the Holi Goost, above the kynde of man, in hem that He maketh trewe loveres of Jhesu.

Chapter Thirty-nine

2745 Hou love sleeth coveitise, leccherie, glotonye, and accidie, and the fleschli savour and delite in alle the fyve bodili wittes in the perfite love of Jhesu softli and esili thorugh a gracious biholdynge of Hym.

Coveitise also is slain in a soule bi the wirkynge of love, for it maketh the soule so covetous of goostli good and to heveneli richesse so ardent, that it setteth right sought
2750 bi al ertheli richesse. It hath no more deynitē in havynge of a precious ston than on a chalke stoon; ne no more love hath he in an hundred pounde of gold thanne in a pounds

2726 **heighnesse**, exaltation. 2727 **demyng**, judgment. 2731 **autier**, altar. 2732 **menged**, mingled. 2734 **wesen**, suppose. 2735 **myddai feend**, midday devil; see also *Scale*, II.1518, above. 2750 **deynitē**, value.

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of leed. It setteth al thynges that schal perisschen and passen at oo price; no more chargedeth that oon than that othir as in his love. For it seeth wel that alle thise ertheli

- 2755 thynges that wordli loveris han in so greet price, and loven so deynteli, schullen passen
awey and turne to nougat, bothe the thyng in itself and the love of it. And therfore he
bryngeth it in his thought bityme in that plight that it schal ben aftir, and so he accounteth
it at nougat. And whan wordli loveres striven and pleton and fighten fore wordli good,
who mai first have it, the lovere of Jhesu stryveth with no man, but keþeth himself in
pees and holdeth hym paied with that that he hath, and he wole stryve for no more; for
2760 hym thenketh hym nedeth no more of alle the richessis in erthe thanne a scant bodili
sustenaunce for to save the bodili liyf withal, as longe as God wole, and that mai he
lightli have, and therfore wole he no more han. He is wel at ese whanne he hath no more
than scanteli him nedeth for the tyme, that he mai be freeli discharged from bisynesse
aboute the kepynge and the dispendyng of it, and fulli geven his herte and al his besynesse
2765 aboute the sekynge of Jhesu, for to fynde Hym in cleanness of spirit. For that is al his
coveitise, for whi, oonli clene of herte schullen seen Hym.

Also fleschli love of fadir and of modir and of oþere wordli frendis hangeth not up
hym. It is evene kut from his herte with the swerde of goostli love, that he hath no more
affeccioun to fadir ne to modir or to ony wordli frend than he hath to another man, but
2770 yif he see and feele in hem more grace and more vertu than in oþer men. Outetaken this,
that hym were levere that his fadir and his modir hadden the selve grace that summe
oþere men han; but neverethelees yif thei ben not so, thanne loveth he oþere betere
than hem, and that is charité. And so sleeth the love of Jhesu coveitise of the world and
bringeth into the soule poverté in spirit.

- 2775 And that dooth love not oonli in hem that han right nougat of wordli good, but also in
some creatures that aren in greet wordli estate and have dispendyng of ertheli richesse.
Love sleeth in summe of hem coveitise, so fer forth that thei han no likyng ne savoure
in havynge of hem more than in a stree. Ne though thei ben loste for defaute of hem that
schulde kepe hem, thei sette not therbi; for whi, the herte of Goddis lovere is thorough
2780 gift of the Holi Goost taken so fulli with the sight and the love of anothire thyng, that

2753 chargeþ, values. 2754 price, value; deynteli, preciously. 2757 pleton, debate. 2764
dispeadyng, spending. 2766 coveitise, desire; for whi, for the reason that. 2767 sp., spon.
2770 Outetaken, Except. 2771 hym were levere, he would rather. 2776 dispendyng, spend-
ing. 2778 stree, straw; defaute, fault.

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is so precious and so worthi, that it wole receyve noon oþir love restyngli that is contrarie thereto.

- And not onli dooth love this, but also it sleeth the likyng of lecherie and al oþir bodili unclennesse, and bringeth into the soule veri chasit , and turneth hit into likyng.
2785 For the soule feeleth so grete deline in the sight of Jhesu that it liketh for to be chaste, and it is no grete hardenesse to it for to kepe chasit , for it is the moste eese and the moste reste.

And upon the selve wise the gifte of love sloeth fleschi lustis of glotonie, and maketh the soule sobre and temperat, and berith it up so myghtli that it mai not resten in likyng of mete and drynke, but it taketh mete and drynke, what it be that leest agreveth the bodili complecciooun, yif he mai lightli have it, not for love of itsilf, but for love of God. And on this maner wise the lovere of Jhesu seeth wel that hym nedeth for to kepen his bodili liyf with mete and drynk as longe as God wole suffren hem to be togedre. Thanne schal this be the discreciooun of the lovere of Jhesu, as I understande, that hath feelynge and wirkynge in love; that upon what manere that he mai most kepen his grace hool, and lest be letted fro the wirkynge in hit thorough takyng of bodili sustenaunce, so schal he doo. That maner of mete that lest letteth and leest troblith the herte and mai kepe the bodi in strengthe — be it fleisch, be it fischt, be it breed and ale — that I trowe the soule chesith for to have yif it mai esily come therbi. For al the besynesse of the soule is for to therken on Jhesu with reverent love, ay withoute lettynge of onythyng, yif it myght. And therfore syn that it bihoveth sumwhat be letted and hyndred, the lasse that it is letted and hyndred bi mete and drynk, or bi ony oþir thyng, the leverere it is. It hadde leverer taken and usen the beste mete and most of price that is undir sunne, yif it lesse letted the kepyng of his herte, than for to take but breed and watir, yif that letted him more; for he bath no reward to geten him greet mede for the peyne of fastynge and be put therbi from softenesse in herte. But al his besynesse is for to kepen his herte as stabli as he may in the sight of Jhesu and in the feelyng of His love. And sotheli, as I trowe, he myght with lasse likyng usen the beste mete that is good in the owen kynde, than another man that wirketh al in resoun withoute the special gifte of love schulde mowe usen the wersste, outetaken mete that thorough craft of curie is oonli maad for lust: that manere of mete mai he not weel acorden withal. And also on that oþir side, yif litil mete,

2791 **complecciooun**, constitution. 2794 **discreciooun**, careful judgment. 2799 **besynesse**, activity. 2802 **leverere**, more desirable. 2805 **reward**, regard. 2806 **stabli**, steadily. 2810 **outetaken**, except for; **curie**, cooking.

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as conli breed and ale, most helpeth and eseth his herte and kepereth it most in pees, it is thanne most beef to him for to use it so, and nameli yif he feele bodili strengthe oonli of the gifte of love withal.

2815 And yit dooth love more, for it sleeth accidie and fleischli ydelnesse, and maketh the soule lissli and spedi to the service of Jhesu, so fer forth that it coveteth al to ben occupied in goodnesse, nameli inward in bholdynge of Him, bi the vertu of whiche sight the soule hath savour and goostli deline in praiyng and thenkyng, and in al oþer maner wirkynge that nedeth to be doon, aftir the staat and degree that he stondeth inne

2820 asketh (whethir he be religious or seculer), withouten hevynesse or peynful bittimesse.

Also it sleeth the veyn likynges of the fyve bodili wittes. First the sight of the iye, that the soule hath no likyng in the sight of ony ertheli thymge, but it feelith rathere pyne and disese in bholdynge of it, be it nevere so faire, ne so precious, ne so wondirful. And therfore as weedli loveres rennen oure sumtyme for to seen newe thynge, for to wondren in hem, and so for to feden her herte with the veyn sight of hem; right so a lovere of Jhesu is bisi for to rennen awai and withdrawn hym from the sight of sich maner thynge, that the innere sight be not letted, for he seeth goostli another manere thymge that is fairere and more wondirfull, and that wolde he not forbere.

Right on the selve wise it is of spekyng and herynge. It is a peyne to the soule of a lovere of Jhesu for to speke or heare onythynge that myte leten the fredom of his herte fro thenkyng of Jhesu. What songe or melodie or mynstralsie outward that it be, yif it lette the thought that it mai not freli and restfulli prayen or thenken on Jhesu, it liketh right nouȝt; and the more delitable that it is to oþere men, the more unsaveri it is to him. And also for to heeren ony manere spekyng of oþere men but it be sumwhat touchynge the wirkynge of his soule in the love of Jhesu, it liketh him right nouȝt. He is ellis right soone irke of it. He hadde wel levere ben in pees and speke right nouȝt, ne heare right nouȝt, than for to heare the spekyng or the techynge of the grettest clerke on erthe, with alle the resonis that he coude seyn to him thorough manrys witte onli, but yif he coude speke felandli and stirendli of the love of Jhesu. For that is his craft principalli, and therefore wolde he not ellis heren ne seen, but that myght helpen him and fortheren him into more knowynge and to betere feelyng of Him. Of wordeli speche it is no doute that he hath no savour in spekyng ne in heeryng of it, ne in wordli talis, ne in tydynge, ne in noon siche veyn jangelynge that longeth not to him.

2815 **accidie**, sloth. 2816 **lissli**, lively; **spedi**, hastening. 2817 **nameli**, especially. 2822 **pyne**, pain. 2823 **disese**, trouble. 2836 **irke**, disgusted. 2841 **wordeli**, worldly.

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And so it is of smellynge and savouryng and touchynge; the more that the thought
2845 schulde be distracte and broken of goostli reste bi the use eithir of smellynge or of
savouryng or of ony of the bodili wittes, the more he floeth it. And the lasse that he
feeleth of hem, the levere is hym, and yif he myght lyven in the bodi withoute the
feelynge of ony of hem, he wolde nevere feelen hem. For thei troblen the herte ofte
2850 sithes and putten oute fro reste, and thei mowen not ben fulli eschewed. But nevertheless,
the love of Jhesu is sumtyme so myghti in a soule that it overcometh and sleeth al
thyng that is contrarie to it.

Chapter Forty

What vertues and graces a soule receyweth thorugh openyng of the innere iye into the
gracious beholdynge of Jhesu, and hou it mai not be geten oonli thorugh mannes traveile,
but thorugh special grace and traveile also.

2855 Thus werketh love outward in a soule, openyng the goostli iye into beholdynge of
Jhesu bi inspiracion of special grace, and maketh it clene, sotil, and able to the werke of
contemplacioun. What this openyng of this goostli iye is the grettest clerk in erthe
coude not ymagene bi his kyndeli wit, ne schewe fulli bi his tung. For it mai not be
geten thorugh studie ne bi mannys traveile conli, but principali thorugh grace of the
2860 Hooli Goost and with traveile of man. I drede moche for to speke ought of it, for me
thenketh y can nougnt; it passeth myn assay, and my lippes aren uncleane. Nevertheless,
for I hope love asketh and love biddeth, therfore I schal seyn a litil more of it as y hope
love techeth. This openyng of the goostli iye is that lighti merkenesse and that riche
2865 nougnt that I spak of before, and it mai be callide purite of spirit and gosteli reste, inward
stillenesse and pees in conscience, highnesse or deepnesse of thought and oonlynesse
of soule, a liyli feelynge of grace and privete of herte, the waker sleep of the spouse
and a taastynge of heveseli savour, brennyng in love, schynynge in light, entré of
contemplacion and reformyng in feelynge. Alle thise resouns aren seid in holi writyng
bi dyvers men, for eche of hem spak of hem aftir his feelynge in grace, and though thei

2848-49 *ofer sithes*, often. 2856 *sotil*, subtle. 2858 *kyndeli*, natural. 2862 *hope*, expect.
2863 *lighti*, light-filled; *merkenesse*, darkness. 2864 *nought*, nothing. 2865 *oonlynesse*,
solitude. 2866 *liyli*, lively; *waker*, wakeful.

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2870 aren dyvers in schewyng of wordes, neverethelees thei aren alle oon in sentence of sothfastnesse.

For a soule that thorugh visitynge of grace hath oon, hath alle; for whi, a sighthende soule to see the face of Jhesu, whanne it is touched thorugh special grace of the Hooli Goost, it is sodeynli chaunged and turned from the plight that it was inne to another maner feelynge. It is wondirfulli departed and drawen first into itsilf from love and likyng of al ertheli thynge, so moche that it hath lost savour of the bodili liyf and of al thynge that is, save oonli Jhesu. And thanne it is clene from al the filthe of synne, so fer forth that the mynde of it, and of alle usordinat affeccions to ony creature, is sodeynli wasschen and wiped awai, that there is no mene lettyng atwixe Jhesu and the soule, 2880 but oonli the bodili liyf. And thanne is it in goostli reste; for whi, alle the peynful doutes and dredis and othere temptacions of goostli enemyes aren dryven oute of the herte, that thei troule it not ne synke not thererine for the tyme. It is in reste fro the noie of wordli besynesse, peyneful tarlyng of wikkid stirynges, but it is ful bisi in the free goostli wirkynge of love, and the more it traveileth so, the more reste it foileth.

2885 This resteful traveile is ful fer fro fleischli ydilnesse, from blynd sikimesse. It is ful of goostli werk, but it is called reste, for grace looseth the hevy yook of fleschli love fro the soule, and maketh it myghti and free thorugh the gifte of goostli love, for to wirken gladli, softeli, and delitabli in al thynge that grace stireth it for to wirken inne. And therfore it is callid an hooli ydelnesse and a reste most bisi, and so it is, in stilnesse fro 2890 the grete cryyng and beestli noise of fleschli desires and unclene thoughts.

This stilnesse maketh the inspiracion of the Hooli Goost, in biholdynge of Jhesu. For whi, His vois is so swete and so myghti that it putteth silence in a soule to jangelynge of alle othere spekeris; for it is a vois of vertu, softeli sowned in a clene soule, of the whiche the prophete seith thus: *For dominum tuum vixit* (Psalms 28:4). That is: The vois of oure Lord Jhesu is in vertu. This vois is a liyfli word and a spedi, as the apostol seith: *Vixit est sermo domini et efficax, penetrabilior omni gladio anticipata* (Hebreews 4:12). That is: Quyk is the word of Jhesu and spedi, more persyng than ony sword is. Thorugh spekyng of this word is fleschli love slayn, and the soule keped in silence from alle wikkid stirynges. Of this silence it is seid in the Apocalips thus: *Factum est silencium in celo, quasi dimidia hora* (Revelations 8:1). Silence was maad in hevene as it were half an hour. Hevene is a clene soule, thorugh grace lifted up from ertheli love to heveneli

2876 liyf, life. 2877-78 so fer forth, to the extent. 2882 noie, noise. 2883 tarlyng, distress.

2885 sikimesse, certainty. 2895 spedi, advantageous. 2897 persyng, piercing.

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conversacioun, and so it is in silence; but for as moche as that silence mai not lasten
hool contynuelli, for corrupcion of bodily kynde, therfore it is likned but to the tyme of
half an hour. A ful schort tyme the soule thenketh that it is, be it nevere so longe, and
2905 therfoore it is but as half an hour. And thanne hath it pees in conscience; for whi, grace
putteh oute gnawynge and prickynge, stryvynge and flitynge of synnes, and bringeth
in pees and accord, and maketh Jhesu and a soule bothe at oon in ful accordaunce of
wille. There is noon upbraidinge of synnes, ne sharp reprevyng of defautes maad
2910 that tyme in a soule, for thei aren kyssed and frendes — al is forgeven that was
mysdoon.

Thus feellith the soule thanne with ful meke sikirmesse and greet goostli gladdenesse,
and it conceyveth a ful greet boldenesse of savacioun bi this acord-makynge, for it
heerith a privei wittenessyng in conscience of the Hooli Goost, that he is chosen sone
to heveneli heritage. Thus Seynt Poule seith: *Ipse spiritus testimonium perhibet spiranti*
2915 *nostro, quod sumus filii dei* (Romans 8:16). That is: The Hooli Goost bereth wittenesse
to oure spirit, that we aren Goddis sones. This wittenessyng of conscience, sothfastli
feeldi thorugh grace, is the veri joie of the soule, as the apostil seith: *Gloria mea est*
2920 *testimonium conscientiae mee* (2 Corinthians 1:12). That is: My joie is the wittenessyng
of my conscience, and that is whanne it wittenesseth pees and accord, trewe love and
frendeschipe bytwixe Jhesu and a soule. And whanne it is in this pees than is it in
highnesse of thought.

Whanne the soule is bounden bi love of the world, it is thanne binethe alle creatures;
for eche a thynge overgooth it and bereth it doun bi maistrie, that it mai not freeli sen
Jhesu ne loven Him. For right as the love of the world is veyn and fleischli, right so the
2925 biholdynge and the thenkyng and the usyng of creatures is fleschli; and that is the
thraldom of the soule. But thanne thorugh openyng of the goostli yye into Jhesu, the
love is turned and the soule is raised up aftir here owen kynde above alle bodily crea-
tures; and thanne the biholdynge and thenkyng and usyng of hem is goostli, for the
2930 love is goostli. The soule hath thanne ful grete undeynté for to be busum to love of
bodily thynges, for it is highe sette aboven hem thorugh grace. It setteth right nougnt bi
al the world, for whi, al schal passen and perischen. Unto this highnesse of herte, while
the soule is keped thereinne, cometh noon errour ne disceyte of the feend, for Jhesu is
sothfastli in the sight of the soule that tyme and al thynge bynethen hym. Of this

2906 **flitynge**, contention. 2923 **overgoeth**, overcomes; **maistrie**, force; **sen**, see. 2926 **yye**,
eye. 2929 **undeynté**, disdain; **busum**, obedient.

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speketh the prophete thus: *Accedat homo ad cor altum; exaltabitur deus* (Psalms 63:7-

- 2935 8). Come man to high herse and God schal be higged. That is, a man thorough grace cometh to highnes of thought, schal seen that Jhesu is oonli higged aboven alle creatures and he in Hym.

And thanne is the soule aloone, moche straunged fro felawshippe of wordli loveres, though here bodi be in myddis amouge hem, ful fer departed from fleschli affeccions of creatures. It chargeth not though it nevere sighe man, ne speke with him, ne hadde confort of hym, yif it myght ay be so in that goostli feelynge. It feelith so grete oomlynesse bi the blissid presence of oure Lord Jhesu, and so moche savour of Hem, that it mai lightli for His love forgeten the fleschli affeccioun, and the fleschli mynde of alle creatures. I sei not that it schal not loven ne thenken of othere creatures. But y seie that it schal thenken on hem in tyme, and seen hem and loven hem goostli and freli, not fleschli ne peynfulli as it dede bisore. Of this oonlynesse speketh the prophete thus: *Ducam eum in solitudinem, et loquar ad cor eius* (Hosea 2:14). I schal ledien hire into an oonli stide, and I schal speken to hire herte. That is, grace of Jhesu ledeth a soule from noious compaignie of fleschli desires into oonlynesse of thought, and maketh it forgete the likynge of the world and sounmeth bi swettenesse of His inspiracion wordis of love in eeres of the herte. Olli is a soule whanne it loveth Jhesu and tendeth fulli to Hym, and hath lost the savour and the confort of the world; and that it myght the betere kepe this oonlynesse it floeth compayne of alle men yif it mai, and seketh oonlynesse of bodi, for oonlynesse of bodi moche helpith to oonlynesse of soule and to the free wirkynge of love. The lasse lettynge it hath withouteforth of veyn carpynge, or withinne of veyn thenkyng, the more free it is in goostli bisholdynge, and so it is in privete of herte.

Al withoute is a soule while it is overleid and blynded with woedli love; it is as comone as the highwai. For eche a stiryng that cometh of the flesch or of the feende synketh in, and gooth thorough it. But thanne thorough grace is it withdrawn into privei chambee into the sight of oure Lord Jhesu, and hereth His pryy conceiles and is wondirfulli comforted in the heerynge. Of this speketh the prophete thus: *Secretum meum misi; secretum meum misi* (Isaiah 24:16). Mi privete to me, my pryytē to me. That is, the lovere of Jhesu, thorough inspiracion of His grace taken up from outward feelynge of wordli love and ravyssched into privete of goostli love, yeeldeth thankynge and seiyinge to Hym thus: Mi pryytē to me. That is, my Lord Jhesu in privete is schewed to me and

2936 **higged**, exalted. 2938 **straunged**, estranged. 2940 **sighe**, saw. 2942 **oomlynesse**, familiarity. 2946 **oonlynesse**, solitude. 2948 **oonli stide**, solitary place. 2949 **soloes**, hurtful.

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pryveli hid fro alle the loveres of the world, for it is called hid manna, that mai lightliere
be askid than teeld what it is. And that oure Lord Jhesu bishodith to His lovere thus: *Dabo
tibi manna absconditum, quod nemo novit, nisi qui accipit* (Revelations 2:17). That is:
I schal geven manna hid that no man knowith but he that taketh it. This manna is
2970 heveneli mete and angelis foode, as Holi Writ seith. For angelis aren fully feed and filled
with cleer sight and bremysinge love of oure Lord Jhesu, and that is manna. For we
moun aske what it is, but not wite what it is. But the lovere of Jhesu is nat filled yit
heere, but he is feed bi a litol taastyng of it whiles he is bounden in the liyf of his bodi.

This tastynge of manna is a liyfli feelynge of grace, had thorough openyng of the
2975 goostli iye. And this grace is not another grace than a chosen soule feelith in the bygymyng
of his conversiou; but it is the same and selve grace, but it is oþerwise schewid and
feelid in a soule. For whi, grace wexeth with the soule and the soule wexeth with grace,
and the more clene that the soule is, fer departid fro love and likyng of the world, the
more myghti is the grace, more inward and more goostli schewand the presence of
2980 oure Lord Jhesu. So that the same grace that turneth hem first from synne and makith
him perfite bygynnyng and profitynge bi gifles of vertues and exercise of good werkes,
maketh hem also perfite, and that grace also is called a liyfli feelynge of grace, for he
that hath it feeleth it wele and knoweth it weel bi experience that he is in grace. It is ful
lifli to hym, for it quikeneth the soule wondirli and maketh it so hool that he feelith no
2985 peynful diseise of the bodi, though it be feble or sekely. For whi, thanne is the bodi
mightyest, most hool, and most resteful, and the soule also.

Without this grace the soule cannot lyven but in peyne, for it thenketh that it myght
ai kepe it and nothyng schulde putte it awai. And nevertheless, yit is it not so, for it
passeth awai ful lightli; but nevertheless though the sovereyne feelynge of it passe awai
2990 and withdrawe, the releef leveth stille, and kepeth the soule in sadnessse and maketh it
for to desiren the comynge agen. And this is also the waker sleep of the spouse, of the
which Holi Writ seith thus: *Ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat* (Canticle 5:2). I slepe and
myn herte waketh. That is, I slepe goostli, whanne thorough grace the love of the world
is slayn in me, and wikkid stringe of fleschli desires aren deeded and so moche that
2995 unnethis I feele hem; I am not taried with hem. Myn herte is maad free, and thane it
waketh, for it is scharp and redi for to love Jhesu and seen Hym. The more I slepe from
outward thynges, the more waker am y in knowynge of Jhesu and of inward thynges.

2967 **bishodith**, promises. 2985 **sekely**, sickly. 2990 **releef**, remains; **leveth**, lives; **sadnessse**,
firmness. 2994 **deeded**, made dead. 2995 **taried**, troubled.

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I mai not waken to Jhesu but yif I slepe to the world. And therfore, the grace of the
Hooli Goost sperryng the fleschli iye dooth the soule slepen from worldli vanytō, and
3000 openyng the goostli iye waken into the sight of Goddis magestē, helid undir cloude of
His precious manhede, as the Gospel seith of apostelis whanne thei were with oure
Lord Jhesu in His transfiguracion; first thei slepiden and thanne: *Evigilantes viserant
majestatem* (Luke 9:32). Thei that wakeneden sighen His magestē. Bi sleep of the apostelis
is dynge of wordli love bi inspiration of the Hooli Goost; bi heer wakyng, contemplacion
3005 of Jhesu. Thorough this sleep the soule is brought into reste fro dene of fleschli lust; and
thorough wakyng it is reysed up into the sight of Jhesu and of goostli thinges. The
more that the iyen aren spered in this maner sleep fro the appetite of wordli thinge, the
scharpere is the innere sight in loveli biholdyng of heveneli fairheed. This slepyng and
this wakyng love werketh thorough the light of grace in the soule of the lovere of
3010 Jhesu.

Chapter Forty-one

Hou special grace in biholdyng of Jhesu withdraweth sumtyme from a soule, and hou
a man schal han him in absence and presence of special grace, and hou a soule schal
desiren that in it is ai the gracious presence of Jhesu.

Schewe me thanne a soule that thorough inspiracioun of grace hath openyng of the
3015 goostli iye into biholdyng of Jhesu; that is departed and drawnen oute fro love of the
world, so feer forth that it hath puritē and povertē of spirite, goostli reste, inward
silence and pees in conscience, highenesse of thought, onynnesse and privytē of herte,
waker sleep of the spouse; that hath loste likyng and joie of this world, taken with
3020 delite of heveneli savour, ai thistande and sothli sighhande the blissid presence of Jhesu;
and I dar hardili pronouncen that this soule beenneth al in love and schyneth in goostli
light, worthi for to come to the name and to the worshipe of the spouse, for it is
reformed in feelinge, maad able and redi to contemplacion. Thise aren the tokenes of

2999 **sperryng**, closing; dooth the soule slepen, causes the soul to sleep. 3000 **helid**,
concealed. 3003 **sighen**, saw. 3004 **heer**, their. 3005 **dene**, din. 3007 **spered**, closed.
3016 **so feer forth**, to the extent that. 3019 **sighhande**, sighing for.

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inspiracioun in openyng of the goostli iye. For whi, whan the iye is opened the soule is
in ful feelynge of alle thise vertues bifore seid, for that tyme.

- 3025 Neverthelees, ofte sithes it falleth that grace withdraweth in partie, for corruptioun of
mannes frelté, and suffreth the soule falle into itself in fleschlihede, as it was bifore;
and thanne is the soule in sorwe and pyne, for it is blynd and unsaveri and can no good.
It is weike and unmyghti, encombrod with the bodi and with alle the bodili wittes; it
3030 seketh and desireth aftir the face of Jhesu agen, and it mai not fynde it. For Holi Writ
seith of oure Lord thus: *Postquam vultum suum absconderit, non est qui contempletur eum* (Job 34:29). That is: Aftir whanne oure Lord Jhesu had hid His face, there is noon
that mai bilholde Him. Whanne He schewith Him, the soule mai not unsee Him for He is
light; and whanne He hideth Him, it mai not see Him, for the soule is merke. His abidynge
3035 is but a soli assaiyng of a soule; His schewynge is wondir merciful goodnessse in
comforte of the soule.

- Have thou no wondir, though the feelynge of grace withdrawe sumtyme fro a lovere
of Jhesu. For Holi Writ seith the same of the spouse, that sche fareth thus: *Quesivi et non inventi illum; vocavi et non respondit michi* (Canticle 3:1). I sought and I fond not;
I callid Him and He answerid not. That is, whan y falle down to my frelté, than grace
3040 withdrawith; for my fallynge is cause therof, and not His feelinge. But thanne feele I the
peyne of my wrecchidnesse in His absence, and therfore y soughte Hym bi sotilé of
thought ther I had Hym before, and y fonda him nought. I called Him bi greet desirynge
3045 of herte, and He gaf to me no felable ansaerynge. And thanne I cried with al myn herte:
Revertere dilecete mi. (Canticle 2:17). Turne agen, Thou my loved. And yit it semed that
He herde me not. The peyneful feelynge of myself and the assailyng of fleschli loves
and dredis in this tyme, and the wantyng of my goostli strengthe, is a continuell criyng
3050 of my soule to Jhesu; and neverthelees oure Lord maketh straunge awhile and cometh
not, erie I nevere so fast. For He is siker inough of His lovere, that He wil not turne agen
falle to wordli love; He mai no savour have thererinne. And therfore abideth He the lengere.

- 3050 But at the laste, whanne He wole, He cometh agen, fulle of grace and sothfastnesse,
and visiteth the soule that langueschith in desire bi sighthinges of love to His presence,
and toucheth it and annoynteth it wel softeli with the oile of gladnesse, and maketh it
sodeynli hool from alle pyne. And than crieth the soule to Jhesu in goostli vois with a

3025 **ofte sithes**, often. 3026 **frelté**, frailty. 3028 **weike**, weak. 3033 **merke**, dark. 3034 **sotil**,
subtle. 3043 **felable**, capable of being felt. 3046 **wantyng**, deficiency. 3047 **maketh straunge**,
remains remote. 3048 **siker inough**, certain enough.

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glad herte thus: *Oleum effusum nomen tuum* (Canticle 1:2). Oile yoten is Thi name
3055 Jhesu. Thi name is Jhesu, that is heele; tharme as longe as I feele my soule soor and sike
for synne, peyned with the hevy birdyne of my bodi, sori and dredande for peniles and
wrecchidnesse of this liyf, so longe Lord Jhesu, Thi name is oile spared, not oile yoten
to me. But whanne I feele my soule sodaynly towchid with the light of grace, heelid and
softid from alle filthe of synne, conforted in love and in light with goostli strengthe and
3060 gladnesse unspecable, thanne mai y seyn with lusti lovyng and gostli merthe to Thee:
Oile yoten is Thyn name Jhesu to me. For bi the effect of Thi gracious visitynge y feele
weel of Thi name the trewe expounyng. Thou arte, Jhesu, heele. For onli Thi gracious
presence heeleth me fro sorwe and from synne.

Blissid is the soule that is feleabli feed in feelyng of love in His presence, or is born up
3065 bi brennyng desire to Him in his absence. A wise lovere is he, and wel taught, that sadli
and reverenteli hath him in His presence, and loveli bholdeth Him withoute dissolute
lightnesse, and pacientli and esili beereth him in His absence withouten venomous dispeir
and over peynful bittimesse.

This chaungeablete of absence and presence of Jhesu that a soule feeleth is not
3070 perfeccions of the soule, ne it is not agens the grace of perfeccioan or of contemplacioan;
but in so mache, perfeccioan is the lasse. For the more lettynge that a soule hath of itself
fro contynuel feelyng of grace, and though nevertheles yit is the grace in itself grace
of contemplacioan. This chaungeablete of absence and presence fallith as wel in staat
3075 of perfeccioan as in the staat of bigynnyng, but in another manere. For right as ther is
diversite of feelyng in the presence of grace atwixe thise two statis, right so is there in
the absence of grace. And therfore he that knoweth not the absence of grace is redi to
be disseyved, and he that kepit not the presence of grace is unkynde to the visitynge,
whether he be in the staat of bigynneres or of perfite. Nevertheles, the more stabilnesse
3080 that there is in grace, unhurt and unbroken, the loveliere is the soule, more like unto Him
in whom is no maner chaungeablete, as the apostil seith. And it is ful semeli that the
soule-spouse be like to Jhesu-spouse in maneres and in vertues, ful accordande to Him
in stabilnesse of perfite love. But it falleth seldom: nowhere but in the special spouse.

3054 **yoten**, poured. 3054–55 **Thi name Jhesu**, on the association of this verse of the Canticle with devotion to the name of Jesus, see Clark, p. 324n334. 3055 **heele**, health; **sike**, sick. 3056 **birdyne**, burden. 3057 **spared**, reserved. 3059 **softid**, softened. 3060 **unspecable**, unspeakable. 3062 **heele**, healing. 3064 **feleabli feed**, perceptibly fed. 3065 **sadli**, seriously. 3066 **hath him**, behaves. 3067 **beereth him**, conducts himself. 3077 **unkynde**, unnatural.

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For he that perceyveth no chaungeableté in feelynge of his grace, but ay ilike stable
and hool, unbroken and unhurt as him thenketh, he is eithir ful perfight or ellis he is ful
3085 blynd. He is ful perfight that is sequestred from alle fleschli affeccions and comonyngē
of creatures, and alle menes aren broken awai of corrupcion and of synne atwixe Jhesu
and his soule, fulli ooned to Him with softnesse of love. But this is oonli grace above
mannes kynde. He is fulle blynd and feyneth him in grace withoute goostli felinge of
3090 Goddis inspiracion, and setteth himself in manere of a stablenessse, as he were ai in
feelynge and in werkyngē of special grace, demyngē that al is grace that he doth and
feellit, withouten and withinnen, thenkyngē that whatsoevre he doo or speke is grace,
holdynge himself unchaungeable in specialté of grace. Yif there be ony siche, as I hope
there is noon, he is ful blynd in feelynge of grace.

But than myght thou seie thus, that we schulde lyven oonli in truthe and not coveiten
3095 goostli feelynges, ne rewaeden hem yif thei comen, for the apostil seith: *Justus ex fide vivit* (Hebrews 10:38). That is: The rightwise man lyveth in trouthe. Unto this I seie that
bodili feelinges, be thei never so comfortable, we schulle not coveiten, ne mykil rewarden
3100 hem if thei comen. But gostli feelynges, siche as I speke of now, yif thei comen in the
manere as I have seid before, we schulen ai desiren that aren sleynge al wordli love,
openyngē of the goostli rye, puritē of spirite, pees in conscience, and alle othere bifore
3105 seid. We schullen coveiten to feele ai the liyli inspiracion of grace maad bi the goostli
presence of Jhesu in oure soule, yif that we myghten; and for to have Him ai in oure
sight with reverence, and ai feelen the swettenesse of His love bi a wondirful homlinesse
3110 of His presence. This schulde be oure liyf and oure feelyngē in grace, aftir the mesurē
of His gifte in whom al grace is, to somme more and to some lasse; for His presence is
feelid in diverse manere wise as He vouchith saaf. And in this we schullen lyven, and
wirken al that longeth to us for to wirken, for withouten this we schuld not come lyve.
For right as the soule is liyf of the bodi, right so Jhesu is liyf of the soule bi His gracious
presence. And neverthelees this maner of feelyngē, be it nevere so moche, it is yight but
3115 trouthe as in reward of the fulnesse that schal ben of the selve Jhesu in the blisse of hevene.

Loo, this feelyngē schulde we desire, for ecche a soule resonable oweth for to coveiten
with alle the myghtes of it neighyngē to Jhesu and oonyngē to Hym, thorugh feelyngē of
His gracious unseable presence. Hou that presence is feelid, it mai betere be knownen bi

3085-86 **comonyngē** off, communion with. 3094 **truthe**, faith. 3095 **rewarden**, esteem. 3103
homlinesse, familiarity. 3106 **feelid**, felt. 3107 **conne**, know how to. 3109 **yight**, yet. 3110
reward, regard. 3112 **neighyngē**, approaching; **oonyngē**, uniting. 3113 **unseable**, invisible.

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experience than bi oeny writynge; for it is the liyf and the love, the myght and the light,
3115 the joie and the reste of a chosen soule. And therfore he that hath ones soothfastli feelid
it, he mai not forbere it withouten pyne; he mai not undesiren it, it is so good in itself and
so confortable. What is more confortable to a soule heire thanne to be drawen oughte
thorugh grace fro the vile noise of wordli bisynesse and fro filthe of fleschli desires, and
3120 from veyn affeccioun of alle creatures into reste and softenes of goosteli love, prively
perceivynge the gracious presence of Jhesu, feleabli feed with favour of His unseable
blissid face? Sotheli nothyng. Me thenketh nothyng mai make the soule of a lowere ful
merie, but the gracious presence of Jhesu as He can schewen Him to a cleme soule. He
is nevere more hevy ne sori, but thanne, whanne he is with himself in fleschliness; he
3125 is nevere ful glad ne merie, but whanne he is out of himself fer, as he was with Jhesu in
goostlynesse. And yit is that noo ful myrthe, for ai there hangeth an hevy lompe of
bodili corrupcioun on his soule, and bereth it doun and moche letteth the goostli
gladdenesse, and that mote ai be while it is in this lif.

But nevertheles, for I speke of chaungeablete in grace, hoo it cometh and gooth, that
thou mystake it not, therfore y mene not of the comone grace that is had and felt in
3130 trouthe and in good wille to God, withoute the which havynge, and lastynge therinne,
no man mai be saaf, for it is in the leste chosen soule that lyveth. But I mene of special
grace feelt bi inspiracioun of the Hooli Goost, in manere as it is bifore seid. The comone
grace, that is charite, lasteth hool whatsover a man doo, as longe as his wille and his
3135 entente is trewe to God, that he wolde not synne deedli, ne the deede that he dooth
wilfulli is not forbed as for deedli synne, for this grace is not loste but thorugh deedli
synne. And thanne it is deedli synne, whanne his conscience wittenesseth with avisement
that it is deedli synne, and yit neverthelees he dooth it; or elles his conscience is so
blynded that he holdeth it noo deedli synne, though he doo that deede wilfulli, the which
is forboden of God and of Hooli Chirche as deedli synne.

3140 Special grace feelt thorugh the unseable presence of Jhesu, that maketh a soule a
perfite lowere, lasteth not ilike hool in the highnesse of feelynge, but chaungeabli cometh
and gooth, as I have seide. Thus oure Lord seith: *Spiritus ubi vult spirat; et vocem eius
audis, sed nescis unde venias, aut quo vadis?* (John 3:8). The Holi Goost spireth wheer
He wole, and thou hearest His vois, but thou wost not fro whennes He cometh or
3145 whider He gooth. He cometh prively sumtyme whanne thou art leest waer of Him, but

3117 confortable, comforting; oughte, out. 3118 noise, hurt. 3124 fer, far. 3141 ilike, alike.

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thou schalt wel knownen Him or He goo, for wondirfulli He stireth and myghtli He turneth
thy n herte into biholdynge of His goodnesse, and dooth thy n herte meelten delitable as
wex agens the fier into softenesse of His love, and this is His vois that He sowneth. But
3150 thanne He gooth or thou wite it, for He withdraweth Him sumwhat, not al, but from
excesse into sobirté. The highnesse passeth, but the substaunce and the effecte of the
grace duelleth stille, and that is as longe as the soule of a lovere kepereth him cleane and
falleth not wilfulli to reccheleshede or dissolucon in fleschliheed, ne to outewarde
vanyté, as sumtyme it dooth, though it have no delite therinne, for frelté of itself. Of
this chaungeabilité in grace speke I of now.

Chapter Forty-two

3155 A commendacion of praire offrid to Jhesu in a soule contemplatif, and hou stablenesse
in praire is a siker werk to stonden in, and hou every feelynge of grace in a chosen
soule mai be seid Jhesu, but the more cleane that the soule is, the worthiere is the
grace.

3160 The soule of a man, whilis it is not touchid thorugh special grace, is blont and boistous
to goostli werk, and can not thereon. It mai not therof for weikenesse of itself. It is
bothe cold and drie, undevout and unsavori in itself. But thanne cometh the light of
grace, and thorugh touchynge maketh it scharpe and sotiel, redi and able to gostels
werk, and geveth a greet fredom and an hool redynesse in wille for to be buxum to alle
3165 the stirynge of grace, for bi openyng of the goostli iye it is applied al fulli to grace, redi
to werken aftir that grace stireth. And thanne fallith it so somtyme, that grace stireth the
soule for to praien; and hou the soule praieth thanne schal I telle thee.

The most special praire that the soule useth and hath most confort in, I hope, is the
Pater Noster, or elles psalmes of the sautier; the Pater Noster for lewid men, and psalmes
and ympnes and oþere servyce of Holi Chirche for letted men. The soule praieth

3146 **or**, before. 3147 dooth, causes. 3148 sowneth, sounds. 3149 wite, know. 3150 sobirté,
soberness. 3151 duelleth, dwells. 3152 reccheleshede, recklessness. 3159 blont, dull, sta-
pid, morally blind, boistous, rough. 3160 can not, knows nothing. 3161 cold and drie, domi-
nated by bile. 3162 sotiel, keen. 3163 buxum, obedient. 3164 iye, eye. 3168 sautier, psalter;
lewid, ignorant.

3170 thanne not in manere as it dide before, ne in comone manere of oþere men by highnesse
 of vois or bi renable spekyng oute; but in ful greet stillesse of vois and softenesse of
 herte. For whi, his mynde is not troubled ne taried with outward thynge, but hool
 gadred togodre in itself, and the soule is sette as hit were into goostli presence of Jhesu;
 and therfore everiche silable and every word is sowned savourli, sweteli and delitabli,
 3175 with ful accord of mouth and of herte. For whi, the soule is turned thanne al to fier of
 love, and therfore eche word that it privali praieth is like unto a sparkle springyng out
 of a fierbrond, that clanseth alle the myghes of the soule and turneth hem into love, and
 lightneth hem so confortabli that the soule list ai for to prasen and to doo noon oþere
 thynge. The more it praieth, the betere it mai, the myghtiere it is. For grace helpeth the
 3180 soule weel, and maketh al thynge light and easi, that it list right weel for to psalmen and
 syngen the lovynges of God with goostli myrthe and heveneli delite.

This goostli werk is the foode of the soule. And this praiere is of moche vertu, for it
 wasteth and bringeth to nought alle temptacions of the feend, prive and apeert, it sleeth
 alle the mynde and likynge of the world and of fleschli synnes, it bereth up the bodi and
 3185 the soule from peynful feelyng of wrecchidnesse of lyf, it kepeth the soule in feelyng
 of grace and wirkynge of love and norischeth ai dlike hoot and fresch as stikkis norischen
 the fier. It putteth awai al irkyng and hevynesse of herte, and hooldeth it in myrthe and
 goosteli gladnesse. Of this praiere speketh David thus: *Dirigatur oratio mea sicut incensio
 in conspectu tuo* (Psalms 140:2). That is: Dressed be my praiere, Lord, as encense in Thi
 3190 sight. For right as encense that is caste in the fier maketh swete smel bi the reek
 stiynge up to the iye, right so a psalme savourli and softeli songen or seid in a beennande
 herte yeldeth up a swete smel to the face of oure Lord Jhesu and to al the corte of
 hevene.

There dare no flesch flie resten upon the pottis brynde boiland over the fier; right so
 3195 mai ther no flesch flie delite resten on a clene soule that is lapped and warmed al in fire
 of love, boilende and plaiand psalmes and lovynges to Jhesu. This is verray praiere. This
 praiere is evermore herd of Jhesu, and receyveth grace agen. It maketh a soule horli
 and felawli with oure Lord Jhesu, and with alle angeles of hevene. Use it whoso mai, the
 werke is good in itself and ful gracious.

3171 renable, eloquent. 3172 taried, disturbed. 3181 lovynges, praisings. 3183 apeert, open.
 3187 irkyng, annoyance. 3189 Dressed, Directed. 3190 reek, smoke. 3191 stiynge, rising;
 iye, eye. 3192 swete, sweet. 3194 flesch flie, fly (the insect). 3195 lapped, surrounded. 3196
 plaiand, playing; lovynges, praisings. 3197 horli, familiar. 3198 felawli, companionable.

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- 3200 And this maner praire, though al it be not ful contemplacioun in itself, ne wirkynge of love bi itself, nevertheless it is a partie of contemplacioun. For whi, it mai not be doon on this manere wise but in plenté of grace thorugh openyng of the goosteli iye, and therfore a soule that hath this fredom and this gracious feelynge in praiser, with goosteli savoure and heveneli delite, hath the grace of contemplacioun in manere as it is.
- 3205 This prasere is a riche offryng filled al in fattenesse of devocion, reseyved bi angelis and presented to the face of Jhesu. The praire of oþere men that are besied in actif werkes is maad of two wordes. For thei ofte sithes formen in here hertis o word thorugh thenkyng of wordli bisynesse, and sownsen in here mouth another word of the psalme songen or seid; and nevertheless yif her entent be trewe, yit is here praire good
- 3210 and medeful, though it lakke savour and swettenesse. But this manere praire offred of a man contemplatiif is maad but of o word. For as it is formed in the herte, right so soothli it sowneth in the mouth, as it were but o thynge that formeth and sowneth. And soothli no more it is, for the soule thorugh grace is maad hool in itself, so fer forth departid from fleschliede that it is maister over the bodi; and than is the bodi not ellis but as an
- 3215 instrument and a trompe of the soule, in whiche the soule bloweth swete nootes of goostli lovynges to Jhesu.

This is the trumpe that David speketh of thus: *Buccinate in neominea tuba, insigni die solemnitatis vestre* (Psalms 80:4). Blowe yee in a trompe in the newe moone. That is, ye soulis that aren reformed in goostli liyf thorugh openyng of the innere iye, blowe yee devouteli, sownyng psalmes with the trumpe of youre bodili tunge. And therefore, syn this praire is so plesante to Jhesu and so profitable to the soule, than is hit good to him that is newe turned to God, what that he be, that wolde plesen Hym and coveiteth for to have sum queynte feelynge of grace, for to coveite this feelynge, that he myght thorugh grace come to the liberté of spirit, and offre in his praiers and his psalmes to Jhesu contynueli, stabli, and devouteli, with hool mynde and brennand affeccioun in Him, and han it neer hand in custom whanse grace stireth him thereto.

This is a siker feelynge and a soothfast. Yif thou may come thereto and holden it, thee þar not neden to renne aboune heer and there and aske questions of ech goostli man what thou schalt doon, hou thou schalt love Jhesu, and how thou schalt serve Hym, and speke of goostli materes that passen the knowyng, as perhaunce some doon. That manere of doyng is not ful profitable, but yif more neede make it. Kepe thee to thi

3202 **plenté**, fullness. 3206 **besied**, occupied. 3215 **trompe**, trumpet. 3216 **lovynges**, praises.

3223 **queynte**, elegant. 3227–28 **thee þar**, it is necessary for you.

Book II

praieris stifi, first with travaille that thou mightest come afterward to this reestful feelynge
of this goostli praiere, and that schal teche thee wisdom inowgh sothfasteli, withoute
feynynge or fantasie. And kepe it forth yif thou have it, and leve it not; but yif grace
3235 come othirwise and wil reeve it fro thee for a tyme and make thee for to werken in
another maner, thanne maight thou leve it for a tyme and aftir tume agen thereto. And he
that hath this grace in praiere asketh not wheereupon he schal sette the poynt of his
thought in his praiere, whether upon the wordes that he seith, or elles on God or on the
name of Jhesu, as some men asken. For the feelynge of grace techeth hem wel inowgh.
3240 For whi, the soule is turned al to the iye and scharpeli bholdeth the face of Jhesu, and
is maad ful siker that that is Jhesu that he feeleth and seeth. I mene not Jhesu as He is
in Himself in fulnesse of His blissid Godhede, but I mene Jhesu as He wole schewe Him to
a clene soule holden in bodi, aftir the clennessesse that it hath. For wite thou weel, that ecche
3245 a feelynge of grace is Jhesu and mai be called Jhesu; and aftir that the grace is more or
lasse, so feeleth the soule and seeth Jhesu more or lasse. Yhe, the firsste feelynge of
special grace of conpunction and contricion for synnes is verili Jhesu. For whi, He
maketh that contricion in a soule bi His presence. But Jhesu is thanne ful boistousli and
3250 nudeli feelid and seen, ful fer from His goostli sotilté, for the soule can no betere for
unclemnessesse of itself thanne. Neverthelees aftirward yif the soule profiteth and encreseth in
virtues and in clennessesse, the same Jhesu and noon othir is seen and feelid of the selve
soule whanne it is touchid bi grace. But that is more goostli, nemore to godli kynde of
Jhesu.

And soothli that is the most thyng that Jhesu loveth in a soule, that it myght be maad
goostli and godli in sight and in love, like to Hym in grace, to that that He is bi kynde; for
3255 that schal be the ende of alle loveris. Than mait thou be siker that what tyme thou feelest
thi soule stired bi grace, speciali in that manere as it is bifore seid, bi openyng of the
goostli iye, that thou seest and feelest Jhesu. Hoolde Him faste whiles thou maiste, and
kepe thee in grace, and late Him not lightli fro thee. Loke aftir noon nothir Jhesu but the
3260 same, bi feelynge of the selve grace more godli, that it myght wexe more and more in
thee; and drede thee nought, though that Jhesu that thou feeliste be not Jhesu as He is in
His ful Godheed, that thou schuldest therfore now ben disseyved yif thou loned to thi
feelynge. But truse thou weel, yif thou be a lovere of Jhesu, that thi feelynge is trewe

3235 **reeve**, rob. 3241 **siker**, certain. 3243 **wite**, know. 3246 **conpunction**, compunction. 3247
boistousli, roughly. 3248 **feelid**, felt. 3250 **selve**, same. 3255 **mait**, might; **siker**, certain. 3261
now, be able to be; **loned**, inclined.

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and that Jhesu is truli feelid and seen of thee thorough His grace, as thou maist seen him here. And therefore lene fulli to thi feelynge whanne it is gracious and goostli, and kepe
3265 it tendirli and have grete deymé, not of thi silf, but of it, that thou myghtest seen Jhesu
ai betere and betere. For grace schal evene teche thee bi itself yif thou wolte falle thereto
mekeli, til the ende.

But perchance thou bigynnest to wondren whi y seie o tyme that grace wirketh al
this, and anothir tyme I seie that love werketh, or Jhesu werketh, or God wirketh. Unto
3270 this y seie thus, that whanne I seie grace wirketh I meene love, Jhesu, and God: for al
is oon, and not but on. Jhesu is love, Jhesu is grace, Jhesu is God; and for he wirketh
al in us bi His grace for love as God, therfore may I usen what word I wole of thise
four, aftir my stirynge, in this writyng.

Chapter Forty-three

Hou a soule thorough openyng of the gosteli iye receyveth a gracious ablenesse for to
3275 undirstonden Holi Writ, and how Jhesu, that is hid in Holi Writte, scheweth hym to Hise
loveris.

Whanne the soule of a lovere feelith Jhesu in praire in manere before seid, and thenketh
that it wolde nevere feelen otherwise, nevertheless it fallicheth that some tyme grace putteth
silence in a soule to vocal praiyng and stireth the soule for to seen and feelen Jhesu in
3280 other maner. And that manere is first for to see Jhesu in Holi Writte; for Jhesu, that is
al sothfastnesse, is hid and helid therinne, wounden in a soft sendel under faire wordis,
that he mai not be knownen ne feelid but of a clene herte. For whi, sothfastnes wole not
3285 schewe itself to enemys, but to frendes that loven it and desiren it with a clene meke
herte. For sothfastnesse and mekenesse aren ful trewe sistris, festened togidre in love
and charité; and for thi is ther no laynyng of conceiles atwixe hem two. Mekenesse
presumeth on soothfastnesse, and nothyng of itself, and sothfastnesse trusteth wel on
mekenesse, and so thei accorden wondir weel. Therne for as moche as the soule of a
lovere is maad meke thorough inspiracion of grace bi openyng of the goostli iye, and
seeth that it is not in itself, but oonli hangeth on the merci and the goodnessse of God,

3265 *deymé*, value, 3271 *on*, one, 3281 *helid*, concealed; *sendel*, rich cloth, 3285 *laynyng*,
concealment, 3289 *not*, nothing.

Book II

- 3290 and lastyngeli is born up bi favour and helpe of Hym oonli and truli desirynge His presence: therfore seeth it Jhesu, for it seeth soothfastnesse of Holi Writte wondirfulli schewed and opened, aboven studie and traveile and reson of mannes kyndeli wit. And that mai wel be called the feelynge and the perceyvynge of Jhesu, for Jhesu is welle of wisdom, and bi a litil heldynge of His wisdom into a clene soule He maketh the soule wise ynowgh
3295 for to undirstonde alle Hooli Writte — not alle at ones in special biholdynge, but thorugh that grace the soule receyveth a newe ablenesse, and a gracious abite for to undirstonde it speciali whanne it cometh to mynde.

This openyng and cleernessee of wit is maad bi the goostli presence of Jhesu. For right as the Gospel seith of two discipulis goynge to the castel of Emaus, brennande in desire and spekyng of Jhesu, oure Lord Jhesu appered to hem presenli as a pylgrime and taughte hem the prophecies of Himsilf, and as the Gospel seith: *Apparuit illis serum, ut intellegirent scripturas* (Luke 24:45). He opened to hem cleernessee of witte that thei myten undirstonden holi writynges. Right so the goostli presence of Jhesu openeth the witte of His louere that brenneth in desire to Him, and bryngeth to his mynde
3300 bi mysterie of angelis the wordes and the sentence of Holi Writ, unsought and unavised, oon aftir another, and expouneth hem redili, be thei nevere so hard or so privei. The hardere that thei ben and the ferther fro menys resonable undirstondynge, the more delitabile is the trew schewynge of it whan Jhesu is maister. It is expouned, declared litterali, morali, mistili, and heveneli, yif the mater suffre it. Bi the lettred, that is lightest
3305 and most playn, is the bodili kynde conforted; bi moralit of Hooli Writ, the soule is enformed of vices and vertues, wiseli to kunne departe the toon from the tother; bi mystihede it is illumined for to seen the werkes of God in Holi Chirche, redili for to applien wordes of Holi Writ to Crist oure heved and to Holi Chirche that is His mystik bodi; and the furthe, that is heveneli, longeth oonli to the werkynge of love, and that
3310 3315 whanne al soothfastenesse in Hooli Writte is applied to love, and for that is most like to heveneli feelynge, therfore I calle it heveneli.

The louere of Jhesu is His frende, not for he hath deserved it, but for Jhesu of His merciful goodnesse maketh him His freend bi trewe accord, and therfore as to a trewe frend that pleseth Hym with love, not serveth Him bi drede as a thrall, He scheweth His

3296 **abite**, habit. 3307 **resonable**, rational. 3309 **litterali, morali, mistili, and heveneli**, literally, morally (or tropologically), mystically (or allegorically), and heavenly (or anagogically); the traditional four senses of scripture; **suffre**, allow. 3311 **kunne departe**, know how to separate; **toos**, one; **tother**, other. 3312 **mystihede**, the mystical.

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- 3320 priveté. Thus He seith Himsilf to Hise apostolis: *Iam vos dixi amicos, quia quicunque credidi a patre meo, nota feci vobis* (John 15:15). Now y seie that ye aren frendes, for I make knownen to yow alle thynges that I have herde of My Fader. To a clene soule that hath the palet purified from filthe of fleschli love, Hooli Writ is liyfli foode and sustenaunce delitable. It savoreth wondir sweteli whanne it is weel chewid bi goostli undirstondynge.
- 3325 For whi, the spirit of liyf is hid thereinne, that quykeneth alle the myghtes of the soule and filleth hem ful of swettenesse of hevenli savour and goosteli delite. But sotheli him nedeth for to han white teeth and scharpe and wel piked that schulde biten on this goostli breed, for fleschli loveres and heretikes mowe not touche the inli flour of it. Here teeth aren blodi and ful of filthe, and therfore aren thei fastynge from feelynge of this breed. Bi teeth aren undirstonden inli vertues of the soule, the whiche in fleschli loveres and in heretikes aren blodi, ful of synne and of wordli vanyté; thei wolden, and thei kunnen not, come bi the curiouste of her kyndeli wit to the sothfast knowynge of Holi Writ. For here witt is corrupt bi the original synne and actuel also, and is not yett heilid thorugh grace, and therfore thei don but gnawen upon the bark withoute. Carpe thei nevere so moche thereof, the inli savoure withinne thei feelen not of. Thei aren not meke, thei aren not clene for to seen it; thei aren not frendis to Jhesu, and therfore He scheweth hem not His conceil.
- 3330
- 3335

The priveté of Holi Writ is closid undir keie seelid with a signet of Jhesuis fygir, that is the Holi Goost; and forthi, withouten His love and His leve mai no man come in. He hath oonli the keie of connyng in his kepyng, as Hooli Writ seith; and He is keie Himsilf and He leteth in whom He wole thorugh inspiracioun of His grace, and bæketh not the seel. And that dooth Jhesu to His loveres; not to alle ilike, but to hem that aren speciali enspired for to seken sothfastnesse in Hooli Writ, with gret devocion in praiyng and with moche busynesse in studiyng goyng before. Thise moun come to the fyndyng whan oure Loed Jhesu wole schewe it.

Se now thanne how grace openeith the goostli iye, and clereth the wit of the soule wondirli above the freelté of corrupt kynde. It geveth the soule a newe ablenesse, whethir it wole reden Holi Writ or heeren or thenken it, for to undirstonde truli and

3323 **palet**, palate. 3327 **white teeth**, see Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, 2.6.7; Clark, p. 326n373. 3328 **inli**, inner. 3332 **kennen**, know how to; **kyndeli**, natural. 3333 **actuel**, actual. 3334 **Carpe**, Speak. 3338 **Jhesuis**, Jesus'. 3340 **connyng**, knowledge. 3347 **freelté**, frailty; **ablenesse**, capability.

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3350 savourli the soothfastnesse of it in the manere before seid, and for to turnen redili alle
resones and wordes that aren bodili seid into goostely understandyng. And that is no
gret mervaille, for the same spirit expouneth it and declareth it in a clene soule in confort
of it, that first made it; and that is the Holi Goost. And this grace mai be, and is, as wel
in lewed as in letted men, as anemptis the substaunce and the trewe feelynge of
soothfastnesse and of goosteli savour of it in general, though thei se not so manye
3355 resonis of it in special, for that nedeth not. And whanne the soule is thus ablid and
lightned thorugh grace, thanne it liste for to ben aloone sumtyme, out of lettynge or
comonyng of alle creaturis, that it myght freli assaien his instrument, that I calle his
resoun, in bihooldyng of soothfastnesse that is conteyned in hooli writyng. And ther
falleth to mynde wordes and resouns and sentence inowgh to occupien it ful ordinatli
3360 and ful sadli.

And what confort and goostli delite, savour and swettenesse, a soule mai feele thanne
in this goosteli werk thorugh divers illuminacions, inli perceyvynges, privei knowynges,
and sedayn touchynges of the Hooli Goost, bi assai the soule mai witen and elles not.
And I hope that he schal not erren, bi so that his teeth, that aren his inli wittes, be kepid
3365 white and clene from goostli pride and from curiouste of kyndeli witte. I hope that
David feelte ful grete delite in this maner werk whan he seide thus: *Quam dulcia fascibus*
meis eloquia tua, super mel ori meo (Psalms 118:103). Hou swete aren thi spekynges,
Lord Jhesu, to my chekes, or above hony to mouth. That is: Lord Jhesu, Thyn holi
wordes, endited in Hooli Writ, brought to my mynd thorugh grace, aren suettere to my
3370 chekes (that aren affections of my soule) than hony is to my mouth. Sothli this is a
faire werke and an honest withoute pyneful travaille, for to seen Jhesu thus.

This is oo maner sight of Jhesu, as I seide bifoore: not as He is, but clothed undir
likenesse of werkes and of wordes, *per speculum in eternitate* (1 Corinthians 13:12), bi
3375 a myrore and likenesse, as the apostil seith. Jhesu is eendelees myght, wisdom and
goodnesse, rightwysenesse, soothfastnesse, hooliness, and merci. And what this Jhesu
is in Himsilf mai no soule seen hoere, but bi the effecte of His wirkynge he mai seen
thorugh the light of grace, as thus: His myght is seen bi makynge of alle creatures of
nought, His wisdom in ordinat disposynge of hem, His goodnesse in savynge of hem,
His merci in forgyvynge of synnes, His hooliness in gifthes of grace, His rightwisnes in

3353 **anemptis**, concerning. 3355 **ablid**, empowered. 3356 **lightned**, illuminated; **lettynge**,
hindrance. 3357 **comonyng**, community. 3359 **ordinatli**, regularly. 3360 **sadli**, seriously.
3364 **bi so**, because. 3369 **suettere**, sweeter. 3378 **ordinat**, well ordered.

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- 3380 hard ponyschinge of synne, His soothfastnesse in trewe rewardynge of good werkes.
And al this is expressed in Holi Writ, and this seeth a soule in Holi Writ with alle othere
accidentis that fallen thereto. And wite thou wel that siche gracious knowynges, in Holi
Writ or in ony oþer writynge that is maad thorough grace, aren not ellis but swete lettres,
sendynges maad atwixe a lovend soule and Jhesu loved; or ellis yif y schal seie sothiere,
3385 atwixe Jhesu the trewe lovere and the soulis loved of Him. He hath ful grete tendirnesse
of love to alle His chosen children, that been heere closid in clei of this bodili liyf; and
therfore, though He be absent from hem, high hid aboven in bosom of the Fadir, fulfilled
in delices of His blissid Godheid, neverthelees yit He thenketh of hem and visiteth hem
ful ofte thorough His gracious goosteli presence, and conforteth hem bi His lettres of
3390 Holi Writ, and dryveth out of here hertes hevynesse and irkenesse, doutes and dredis,
and maketh hem glaad and merie in hem, truli trowande to alle His bhetynge and
mekeli abidynghe the fullfilynghe of His wille.

Seynt Poul seith thus: *Quocumque scripta sunt, ad nostram doctrinam scripta sunt, ut per consolacionem scripturarum, spem habeamus* (Romans 15:4). Al that is written, to
3395 oure techynge it is written, that bi confort of writynge we mai have hope of savacioun.
And this is another werk of contemplacion, for to seen Jhesu in Scripturis, affir openynghe
of the goosteli iye. The clessnere that the sight is in bheldynge, the more conforted is the
affeccioun in the taastynge. A ful litil savour, feelt in a clene soule of Holi Writ in this
manere before seid, schulde make the soule sette litil price by knowynghe of alle sevene
3400 artes or of alle wordli connynges. For the ende of this knowynghe is savacion of a soule
in al lastynge liyf; and the ende of oþere as for himself is but vanite and a passynge
delite, but yif thei be turned thorough grace to this ende.

Chapter Forty-four

Of the privei vois of Jhesu sounned in a soule, wherebi it mai be knownen; and hou alle
the gracious illuminaciouns maad in a soule aren called the spekynges of Jhesu.

- 3405 Loo, thise aren newe feelynges in a clene soule, and yif a soule were fulfilled in siche, it
myght be seid, and sothili, that it were sumwhat reformed in feelynge, but yit not fulli.

3386 *clei*, clay. 3388 *delices*, delights. 3390 *irkenesse*, weariness. 3391 *bhetynge*, promises. 3399 *price*, value. 3400 *connynges*, knowledge. 3405 *clene*, pure.

Book II

For whi, yit Jhesu scheweth more and ledeth the soule innere, and bigynneth to speke
more hosseli and more loveli to a soule, and redi is the soule thanne for to folwe the
feelynge of grace. Fo. the propheete seith: *Quocumque ibit spiritus, illuc gradiebantur et*
3410 *rote sequenter eam* (Ezekiel 1:20). Whidirso yeede the spirit, thider yeeden the wheles
folwynge hym. Bi wheles aren undirstanton trewe loveres of Jhesu, for thei aren
round in vertues withouten angil of fowardnesse, and lightli whirland thorugh redynesse
of wille to stiryng of grace. For aftir that grace stireth and toucheth, so thei folwen and
so thei werken, as the propheete seith. But thei han first a ful myghti assai and a trewe
3415 knowynge of the vois of grace, or thei mowen doo so, that thei be not disseyved bi ther
owne feynynge, or bi the myddai fend. Oure Lord Jhesu seith thus: *Oves mee vocem*
meam audierunt, et cognosco eum, et cognoscant me moe (John 10:27, 14). Mi scheep
heeren My vois, and I knowe hem and thei knowe Me. The peivei vois of Jhesu is ful
trewe, and it maketh a soule trewe. Ther is no feymynge in it, ne fantasie, ne pride, ne
3420 ypcrisie, but softenesse, mekenesse, pees, love, and charité, and it is ful of lif and of
grace. And therfore whanne it sowneth in a soule it is of so greet myght sumtyme, that
the soule sodenly leith of hande al that there is — praiyrge, spekyng, redynge, or
thenkynge in manere before seid, and al maner bodili werk — and lesteneh therto falli,
berende, perceyvande in reste and in love the swete stevene of this goostli vois, as it
3425 were ravesched fro the mynde of alle ertheli thynges. And thanne sumtyme in this pees
scheweth Jhesu Him, sumtyme as an eighful maister, and sumtyme as a reverent fadir,
and sumtyme as a loveli spouse. And it kepeth the soule in a wondirful reverence and in
a loveli bihooldyng of Hym, that the soule liketh weel thanne and nevere so weel as
thanne. For it feeleth so moche sikemesse and so grete reste in Jhesu, and so moche
3430 favour of His godnesse, that it wolde ai be so and nevere doon othir werk. It thenketh
that it toucheth Jhesu, and thorugh vertu of that unspeable touchynge it is maad stable
and hool in itslf, reverentli biholdynge oonli Jhesu as yif there were nothyng but Jhesu
oo thyng, and it anothir, born up bi the favour and the wondirfull goodnesse of Hym;
o thyng that it seeth and feeleth.

3435 And this feelynge is ofte tyme withoute special biholdynge of Holi Writte, ne but with
fewe wordes formed in the herte; not but thus among fallen in swete wordes acordynge

3410 **Whidirso yeede.** Wherever went; **wheles.** wheels. 3412 **fowardnesse,** perversity. 3413
aftir that, according to how. 3414 **assai,** test. 3415 **mowen,** are able to. 3416 **myddai fend,** see
gloss on II.1518. 3422 **leith of hande,** puts aside. 3424 **berende,** hearing; **stevene,** sound.
3426 **Him,** Himself; **eighful,** terrible.

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to the feelynge, eithir lovende or wondrende, or oþerwise sounnende as the herte liketh.
The soule is ful moche departed fro love or likyng of the world thorough vertu of this
gracious feelynge, and also fro mynde of the world moche in the meene tyme; it taketh
3440 noon heede therof, for it hath no tome thereto. But than sumtyme aftir with this fallen
into a soule dyvers illuminacions thorough grace, the whiche illuminacions I calle the
spekynges of Jhesu and the sight of goostli thynges. For wite thou weel that al the
bisynesse that Jhesu maketh aboue a soule is for to make it a trewe spouse to Him in
the highnesse of love. And for that mai not be doon sodeynly, therfore Jhesu, that is love
3445 and of alle loveres the wisest, assaieth bi many wises and bi wondirful menes or it mai
comen aboue; and therfore that it myght come to effect of trewe spousage, He hath
sich gracious spekynges in likenesse of a wower to a chosen soule. He scheweth His
prives jewelis, moche thinge He geveth and more bisheth, and curtais daliaunce He
scheweth. Often He visiteth with moche grace and goosteli confort, as I have biforn
3450 seid. But hou He dooth this in special al fulli can y not telle, for it nedeth not. Neverthelees
sumwhat schal I seien, aftir that grace stireth.

The drawynge of a soule fulli to perfite love is first bi the schewynge of goostli
thynges to a clene soule, whanne the gosteli iye is opened: not that a soule schuld rest
thereinne, and make an ende there, but bi that yit seeke Him and loven Him oonli that is
3455 highest of alle, withouten ony bihooldynge of ony oþer thyng than Himsilf is. "But
what aren thise goostli thinges?" seist thou; for y speke ofte of goostli thynges. To this
I answere and seie that goostli thyng Mai be seid al the sothfastnesse of Holi Writte.
And therfore a soule that thorough the light of grace mai seen the sothfastnesse of it, it
seeth goostli thynges, as I have biforn seid.

Chapter Forty-five

3460 Hou thorough openyng of the goostli iye a soule is maad wise, mekeli and sothfastli for
to seen Holi Chirche as travalyng and as blissid, and for to seen angelis kynde repreved
for ther malice.

3437 *lovende*, praiung; *wondrende*, wondering. 3440 *tome*, leisure. 3445 *or*, before. 3447
wower, woer.

Book II

Neverthelees, othere goosteli thynges ther ben also, the whiche thorough light of grace
aren schewed to the soule and aren thise: the kynde of alle resonable soules, and the
gracious wirkynge of oure Lord Jhesu in hem; the kynde of aungelis, blissid and repreved,
and hire wirkynge; and the knowynge of the blissid Trinité, aftir that grace teceth.

- Holi Writ seith in the Book of Songes thus: *Surgam, et circumbo civitatem; et queram*
quem diligit anima mea (Canticle 3:2). I schal risen and I schal goon abouthe the cité,
and y schal seken him that my soule loveth. That is, I schal risen into highnesse of
thought and goon abouthe the cité. Bi this cité is understande the université of alle crea-
tures bodili and goostli, ordyned and ruled undir God bi lawes of kynde, of resoun, and
of grace. I umgo this cité, whanne I biholde the kyndes and the causis of bodili crea-
tures, the giftes of graces and blissis of goosteli creatures; and in alle I seke him that my
soule loveth. It is fair lokynge with the innere iye on Jhesu in bodili creatures, for to
seen His myght, His wisdom, and His goodnesse in ordenaunce of here kynde, but it is
muche fairer lokynge on Jhesu in goosteli creatures. Firste in the resonable soules,
bothe of chosen and reproved, for to seen the merciful callyng of Him to Hise chose;e;
hou He turneth hem from synne bi light of His grace; hou He helpeth hem, teceth hem,
He chastiseth hem, He conforteth hem; He righteth hem, He cleseth hem, He fedeth
hem; hou He maketh hem brennende in light bi plenté of His grace. And this dooth He
nought to oon soule onli, but to His chosen, aftir mesure of His grace. Also of the
reproved, hou rightfulli He forsaketh hem and leveth hem in here synne and doth hem
noo wronge; hou He rewardeth hem in this world, suffryng hem for to have fulfilyng
of here wille, and aftir this for to ponymsch hem endelesli.
- Loo, this is a litil beholdynge of Holi Chieche whilis it is traveilynge in this liyf; for to
seen hou blak and hou foule it semeth in soulis that aren repreved, hou fair and hou
lovely it is in chosen soules. And al this goostli sight is not ellis but the sight of Jhesu; not
yit in Himself, but in merciful pryvey werkes and in His hard rightwise domes, ilke a dai
schewed and renued to resonable soules. Also over this for to seen with the goostli iye
peynes of the reproved and the joie and the blisse of chosen soules, it is ful comfortable.
For sothfastnesse may not be seen in a clene soule withouten greet delite and wondirful
softenesse of beennynge love.

Also the sight of angelis kende; first of the damgned, and aftir that of the blessed. It is
a ful faire contemplacioun of the feend in a clene soule, whanne grace bringeth the feend

3470 université, totality. 3472 umgo, go about. 3475 ordenaunce, ordered plan. 3488 domes,
judgments. 3490 comfortable, comforting. 3493 kende, nature.

The Scale of Perfection

- 3495 to the sight of the soule as a clumsid caitif bounden with the myght of Jhesu, that he mai not deren. Tharne the soule bisholdeth hym, not bodili but goostli, seyng his kynde and his malice, and turneth him upsodoun, or spoileth him and rendeth him al to nought. It scorneth him and dispiseth hym and setteth nought bi his malice. Thus biddeth Hooli Writ whan he seith thus: *Verte impium, et non erit* (Proverbs 12:7). Turne the wikked,
3500 that is the feend, upsodoun, and he schal be as nought. Moche wondir hath the soule that the feend hath so moche malice and so litil myght. Ther is no creature so unmyghti as he is, and therfore it is grete cowardise that men dreden him so moche. He mai nothyng doon withouten leve of oure Lord Jhesu, not so moche as entre into a swyne, as the Gospel seith. Moche lasse mai he thanne noien ony man.
- 3505 And thanne yif oure Lord Jhesu geve him leve for to tarie us and troble us, it is ful worthili and mercifulli doon that oure Lord Jhesu dooth. And therfore welcome be oure Lord Jhesu, bi Himself and bi alle His messangeres. The soule dredeth no more thanne the blusterynge of the feend thanne the stirynge of a mous. Wondir wrooth is the feend yif he durste seie nai; but his mouth is stopped bi his owen malice, his handes aren bounden
3510 as a sheep woerhi to ben demed and hanged in helle, and thanne the soule accuseth hym and rightfulli deemeth him aftir he hath disserved. Wondre not of this seiynge, for Seynt Poul mened the same whanne he seide thus: *Fratres, nescitis quoniam angelos indicabimus?* (1 Corinthians 6:3). Bretheren, wile ye not weel that we schullen deeme angelis, that aren wikked spirates thorough malice, that were maad good aungeles bi
3515 kynde, as who seith. This deemyng is figurid before the doom in contemplatiſ soulis, for thei feelen a litil tastynge, in likenesse of al that schal be doon and afterward openli bi oure Lord Jhesu in soothfastenesse.
- Schamed and schent is the feend in himself greteli whanne he is thus faren with of a clene soule. He wolde fayn flee away and he mai not, for the Holi Goost hooldeth hym
3520 stille, and that deereth him more thanne al the fier of helle. Wondir mekeli falleth the soule to Jhesu thanne, with herteli loovynghes and thankynghes that He so myghtili saveth a sympil soule fro al the malice of so fel an enemy thorough His grete merci.

3495 *clumsid caitif*, clumsy wretch. 3496 *deren*, harm. 3497 *upsodoun*, upside down; spoileth, despoils. 3503 *entre into a swyne*, see Mark 5.11–13. 3504 *noien*, harm. 3510 *demed*, judged. 3513 *wile*, know. 3518 *schent*, injured; *faren*, dealt; of, by. 3520 *deereth*, harms. 3521 *loovynghes*, praisings.

Chapter Forty-six

Hou bi the selve light of grace the blissed aungeles kynde mai be seen; and hou Jhesu as man aboven alle creatures, and as God aftir that the soule mai seen hym heire.

- 3525 And thanne aftir this bi the selve mai the soule seen goosteli the fairheed of angelis, the worthiness of hem in kende, the sotilité in substauce, the consermyng of hem in grace, and the fulnesse of eendeles blisse; the sondrihood of ordres, the distinccion of persoones, hou thei leven al in light of endeles sothfastnesse and hou thei brennen al in love of the Hooli Goost aftir the worthynesse of ordres, hou thei seen and loven and preisen Jhesu in blissed reste withouten ceesynge. There is noo sight of bodi ne figure in ymaginacion in this maner wirkynge, but al goosteli of goosteli creatures.

- 3530 Thanne bigynneth the soule for to have grete aqueyntaunce of his blissid spritis, and grete felawschipe. Thei aren ful tender and ful bisy abouthe sich a soule for to helpen it, thei aren maistres for to kenne it, and often thorough hire goostli presence and touchynge
3535 of her light dryven oute fantoms fro the soule and mynistren to it al that it nedeth. This Seynt Poule seide of hem: *Nonne omnes sunt administratori spiritus, missi propter eos qui hereditatem capiunt salutem?* (Hebreews 1:14). Wite ye not wel that alle holi spritis aren ministris, sent of Jhesu for hem that taken the heritage of helthe? Thise aren chosen soulis. As who seith, yhis; for wite thou weel, that al this goosteli wirkynge of
3540 wordes and of resounes broughte to the mynde, and sich fair liknesse, aren maad bi the ministerie of aungelis, whan the light of grace abundauneli schyneth in clene soulis. It mai not be teeld bi tunge the feelynges, the lightrynges, the graces, and the comfortes in special, that clene soulis perceyven thorough favourable felawschipe of blissed aungeles.
3545 The soule is wel at ese with hem for to bihoolden hou thei doon, that it wolde tende to not elles.

- But thanne with helpe of aungelis, yit the soule seeth more. For the knowyng riseth aboven al this in a cleene soule, and that is to bihoolden the blissed kynde of Jhesu. First of His glorious manheede, hou it is worthili higged above angelis kynde; and than aftir of His blessed Godheede, for bi knowyng of creatures is knownen the creatour. And
3550 thanne bigynneth the soule for to perceyven a litil of the privetees of the blissid Trinité.

3527 *sondrihood*, diversity. 3534 *kenne*, teach. 3539 *yhis*, yes. 3542 *teeld*, told; *lightrynges*, illuminations. 3545 *not*, nothing. 3547 *kynde*, nature. 3548 *higged*, exalted.

The Scale of Perfection

It mai weel inowgh, for light of grace gooth bifore sche schal not erren as longe as sche hooldeth hire with the light.

3555 Tharne is it opened soothfastli to the iye of the soule the oonheid in substancialle and distinccion of personnes in the blissed Trinité, as it may be seen here, and moche othir soothfastnesse of the blissid Trinité pertynent to this matier, the whiche is openli declared and schewed bi writyng of holy doctours of Hooli Chirche. And wite thou weel that the same and the self soothfastnesse of the blisside Trinité that thise hooli doctours, 3560 enspired thorugh grace, writen in her bookes in strengthyng of oure trouthe, a clene soule mai seen and knownen thorugh the self light of grace. I wole not expresse to moche of this matier here, for it nedeth not.

3565 Wonder grete love feeleth the soule with hevenli delite in bialdyng of this soothfastnesse, whan it is maad thorugh special grace, for love and light goon bothe togidre in a clene soule. There is no love that riseth of knowynge and of special bihooldyne that mai touchen so neer oure Lord Jhesu, as thes love mai; for whi, this knowynge is worthiest and highest of itsilfoonli of Jhesu God and man, yif it be speciali schewed bi the light of grace. And therfore is the fier of love flaumyng of this more brennende, than it is of knowynge of ony creature bodili or gosteli.

Alle this gracious knowynge feelid in a soule of the université of alle creatures, in manere bifore seid, and of oure Lord Jhesu, makere and keper of al this faire université — I calle hem faire wordes in swete spekynges of oure Lord Jhesu to a soule that He wole make His trewe spouse. He scheweth privatees and profreth nicle giftes of tresour, and arraieth the soule with hem ful honesteli. Sche daur not be aschamed with the company of hire felawes for to apperen afterward to the face of Jhesu spouse. Alle thise loveli daliaunces of privei speche atwixe Jhesu and a soule mai be called an hid word, of 3575 the whiche Holi Writ seith thus: *Porro ad me dictum est verbum absconditum, et venas susurri eius percepit auris mea* (Job 4:12). Sotheli to me is seid an hid word, and the veynes of his rownynges myn eere hath perceyved. The inspiracion of Jhesu is an hid word, for it is hid from alle the loveres of this world, and schewed to His loveres, thorugh the whiche a clene soule perceyveth redili the veynes of His rownynges, that 3580 aren special schewynges of His soothfastnesse. Or eche a gracious knowynge of soothfastnesse, felt with inli savour and goostli delite, is a privey rownyng of Jhesu in the eere of a clene soule.

3553 oonheid, unity. 3555 matier, matter. 3558 trouthe, faith. 3564 for whi, because. 3569 université, totality. 3571 privatees, secrets. 3577 rownynges, whisperings.

Book II

Him nedeth for to han myche cleanness in soule, in mekenesse and in alle oþere
vertues, and to ben haalf deeff to noyse of wœdli janggelynge, that schuld wiseli perceyven
3585 thise swete goostli rounynges. This is the vois of Jhesu, of the whiche David seith thus:
Vox domini preparantis cervos, et revelabit condensu (Psalms 28:9). The vois of ouse
Loed Jhesu greithynge hertis, and He schal schewe thikke. That is, the inspiracion of
Jhesu maketh soulis light as hertes that stirten fro the herthe of bussches and breres of
alle wordli vanite; and He scheweth to hem the thikke, that aren Hise privytees, that
3590 moun not be perceyved but of a scharp iye. Thise bihooldynges maken a soule wise and
brennyng in desire to the face of Jhesu. Thise aren the goostli thinges that I spak of
bifore, and thei mai be callid gracious feelyngges. And I doo but touche hem a litil, for
wissynge of thy soule. For a soule that is clene, stirred bi grace to use of this wirkynge,
mai seen more in an hour of siche goosteli matier than myght be writyen in a grete book.

3587 **greithyng**, preparing; **hertis**, harts; **thikke**, thicket. 3588 **stirten**, start. 3589 **thikke**,
thicket; **privytees**, secrets. 3593 **wissynge**, guidance.

Textual Notes

In the following notes, MS indicates the manuscript used in preparing the text of this edition, London, Lambeth Palace, MS 472; C indicates Cambridge, University Library, MS Additional 6686; B indicates Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 100.

Book I

- 4 *thyne*. C: *the*.
79 *desirynge*. C: *yernyng*.
90 *brennyng*. C adds: *love*.
94 *maner*. C: *mater*.
106 *oute*. C omits.
 good. Inserted above the line; C omits.
132 *name*. C adds: *of*.
142 *phalmynge*. For the spelling, see MED under *psalme(e)*, n.
155 *bigynnyng*. MS: *bigynnyg*.
170 *dearkenesse*. C: *merkenes*.
179 *contynueli it*. C: *it comonly*.
181 *alle*. Inserted above the line.
209 *bi*. C: *be*.
230 *it*. C omits.
233 *from bisholdinge of oure Lord Jhesu Crist and*. C omits.
240 *yif*. C: *thogh*.
245 *dere*. C: *hyndre*.
254 *biginnynge*. C adds: *when it comes*.
257 *the*. C adds: *comforthe or*.
258 *God*. C adds: *schewed eithir*.
260 *love of*. C: *loving*.
 a. C: *bodyly*.
261 *ernest*. C: *erly*.
262 *blisse*. C adds: *of heven*.
264 *visited, whanne sche was*. C omits.
266 *legend*. C: *historie*.
274 *for so love and*. C omits.

The Scale of Perfection

- 274 *blisse.* C adds: *gostly.*
275 *goostli that he desireth.* C: *that this desire is.*
275–76 *he desireth.* C: *the desire is.*
277 *fro stable mynde of Jhesu Crist.* and. C omits.
278 *Hym.* C: *Jhesu.*
280 *revelacion.* C adds: *by an angel.*
284 *thyng.* C: *felinge.*
 felinge. C omits.
286 *sette not to mykil.* C: *thou schalt noght cleve the thought of.*
287 *hem.* C adds: *but thou schalt foryete hem if thou myght.*
288 *knowe.* C adds: *and fele.*
300 *thise.* C adds: *foare.*
 of. C adds: *alle.*
303 *braviam.* C adds: *thus mykel is this for to sey.*
304 *hyndward.* C adds: *or bakward.*
 unto. C: *out.*
306 *alle,* MS: *alld or allr;* C: *alle.*
311 *it.* C adds: *is or.*
314 *he.* C: *if it.*
320 *bi strengthe and.* C: *only by.*
325 *swete.* C omits.
326 *intro.* C adds: *verrey.*
341 *renne.* C adds: *out.*
343–44 *thorugh stedefaste trouthe. . . other good werkes.* C omits.
345 *felyng of Hym.* C: *knowyng of God.*
363 *helpe.* Following *helpe* MS has *yng* inserted above the line; C: *helpe.*
375 *knowyng.* MS: *keowyng.*
384 *here.* Inserted above the line; C omits.
399 *of love.* C omits.
418 *no.* C omits.
428 *and.* C adds: *Seint.*
 in tokenyng and. C omits.
472–73 *thorugh devoute bikholyng on His markede and His mekenesse.* C omits.
478 *as.* C adds: *Seint.*
500 *hath,* C adds: *it.*
525 *herie.* MS: *hte;* C: *hert.*
533 *in.* C adds: *alle.*
537 *have drede.* C: *adred offelyng.*
 ne of the feelyng of hem. C omits.

Textual Notes to Book I

- 543 *and worshipe.* C omits.
554 *hope.* C: *trouth.*
557 *this.* C adds: *trouth and in this.*
563 *or.* C adds: *elles.*
571 *and hope.* C omits.
581 *ouare Lord Jhesu Crist.* C: *hym.*
592 *bodili or.* C omits.
593 *thy Lord Jhesu Crist.* C: *God.*
597 *prikke.* C: *hamere.*
to, C adds: *stirte and.*
598 *into inwardre bitholdynge of Jhesu Crist bi praieres ar.* C omits.
bi, C: *to.*
599 *dede or.* C omits.
604–05 *fro alle maner of unclennesse.* C omits.
606 *felynge.* C: *knowyng.*
624 *thi Lord Jhesu Crist.* C: *God.*
640 *praiier.* MS: *praiew;* C: *preyere.*
653 *any erthly.* C: *a bodily.*
654 *erthly.* C: *bodily.*
656 *Jhesu Crist as yif thi were in His presence.* C: *God.*
657 *as He is in His Godhede.* C omits.
657–58 *thorugh devout bitholdynge of His precious manbede.* C omits.
658–59 *of His Godhede.* C omits.
661 *His goostli presence.* C: *God.*
664 *of thi mynde.* C omits.
665 *praiier.* C: *it.*
685 *matier.* C: *maner.*
686 *of.* C: *and.*
699 *best.* A preceding *the* has been erased.
700 *bigynnyng.* MS: *bigynnyg.*
731 *to,* MS: *to to.*
752 *him.* C adds: *unwhile finj his bodie.*
760 *it,* MS: *hit with h expunged.*
792 *swert.* C: *scharp.*
807 *ligna.* MS: *lingua;* C: *ligna.*
812–14 *This reste ouare Lord . . . in the blisse of hevene.* Inserted from margin in a different
hand; C omits.
882 *fynde.* C: *fele.*
895–96 *with gret conpunccions and with plente of teoris.* C omits.

The Scale of Perfection

- 903 *Jhesu Crist.* C omits.
921–22 to come to. C: into.
922 *Jhesu Crist in His.* C: the.
 come. C adds: comuly.
923 contemplacione. An unusual spelling, but see also *contemplanf* in chapter 92 (line
 2627), below and compare the scribe's common variation *confort/comfort*.
924 and bi stable trouthe and stidefast mynde. C omits.
930 oure. C adds: Lord.
951 oonli. C omits.
952 for thei trowed nor fulli that Jhesu man was God. C omits.
956 a lini. C omits.
985 maner of. C omits.
986–87 putten al hire trust . . . and that thei. C omits.
992 lini. C omits.
992–93 with a nakiid trouthe and stidefast mynde of Jhesu Crist, so. C omits.
996 foulen. C: filen.
1002 good. C omits.
1008 secouath. C adds: or worldly.
 that is to seie, to noon unkumyng man and worldli. C omits.
1022–23 stond stigli in hope, and. C omits.
1057 *Jhesu Crist.* Written following an expunged God.
1063 bigynne. C adds: a new gamen and.
1072 whanne God wole give it. Inserted from margin; C omits.
1086 him. C: home.
1106 iww. C adds: and I hope an heghe plein wey, als mykel as may lye in mannes werk
 to contemplacione.
1110 of sywe. C omits.
1112 cleanness. C: dignitē.
1114 al. C adds: thynge.
 fro that cleanness. C: that joye.
1120–21 oure Lord Jhesu Crist. C: God.
1121 we have boomlinesse of His gracious presence. C omits.
1123 our. Marginal gloss: or to drawe up; C: sp.
 love. C adds: and felyng of hymself.
1123–24 of alle ertheli creatures and from veyn love of himself. C omits.
1124 schalde. C adds: mo.
1126 and in the boomli presence. C omits.
 Jhesu. C: God.
1136 hate. C adds: alle.

Textual Notes to Book I

- 1136–37 *the likyng of.* C: *his bodily felyng for.*
1138–39 *My manhede and of My Godhede.* C: *me.*
1139 *narwe.* C adds: *that no bodily thynge may passe thorogh it.*
1155 *derkenesse.* C: *merknes.*
1158 *of God.* God added above the line; C omits *of God.*
and. MS: *an.*
so. C omits.
1196 *saaf.* C adds: *yee and thou schalt be saafe.*
1199 *by.* C: *and.*
1212 *hemself.* Added in margin: *From this to the ende of this chapitille is more than
other bookys have.* (the scribe's notice of the so-called Holy Name passage).
1248 *Ihesu.* C: *savaciour.*
1248–50 *for there may no man be saaf. . . by the merite of His passioun.* C omits.
1253 *in,* C adds: *the blis of.*
1263 *are.* C adds: *in this life imperfite and are.*
1309 *of the firste makynge.* C omits.
1319–20 *Crist, that blissid persoone . . . virgynne, that is.* C omits.
1322 *love and to plesse.* C omits.
1323 *othir.* C omits.
1328 *thorugh light of Goddis grace.* C omits.
1329 *into,* C: *of.*
1330 *ertheli.* C omits.
thynge. C adds: *that is made.*
1332 *anoynted.* C adds: *in Ihesu.*
1332–33 *and comfortid thorugh gracious presence of oure Lord Ihesu Crist.* C omits.
1339 *the mynde and.* C omits.
1339–40 *thi Lord Ihesu Crist, that blissid maidens sonc.* C: *Ihesu.*
1340 *His Godhede.* C: *him.*
1341 *jole.* C adds: *non other.*
1342 *to be with Hym wharso He is, and to see Hym and love Hym.* C omits.
1343 *a litil His goostli presence.* C: *him.*
1345 *and wolt no more seken aftir Hym, but.* C: *bor foryete that thou has founden and.*
1348 *in His jole.* C omits.
1350 *blisse.* C adds: *of loving.*
1351 *prayers and of.* C omits.
1353 *love.* C omits.
1354 *myghte not seen of His Godhede.* C: *see ryght nocht of him.*
1357 *ony.* C omits.
1365 *His grace and of His merciful presence.* C: *him.*

The Scale of Perfection

- 1366 *Hym.* C: *that desire.*
1370 *bi thi desire.* C: *it.*
1370–71 *in thi prateres . . . Lord Jhesu Crist in thi mynde.* C omits.
1372 *from Hym.* C: *therfro.*
Hym. C: *it.*
1373 *as He sought thee.* C omits.
1379 *and,* MS: *and erased;* C: *and.*
1390 *the dragne.* C omits.
1391 *lost.* C adds: *that is for to sey the dragne.*
1404 *into bisholdynge of Jhesu Crist.* C omits.
1404–05 *bi Hym (for He is light).* C omits.
1416–18 *that is, yif thou may . . . to the face of thi soule.* C omits.
1418 *gwyerynge.* C adds: *of him.*
1444 *beterē.* MS: *betetere.*
1458 *lyverē.* C: *lovers;* on C's erroneous reading, see Clark, p. 175n218.
1461 *lyverē.* C: *lovere.*
1463 *of.* MS: *of of.*
1466 *lyverē.* C: *lovers.*
1490–91 *upon thi Lord Jhesu onely . . . Lord Jhesu Crist.* C: *only Jhesu.*
1492–93 *with stable mynde of Jhesu Crist with besynesse in prateres.* C omits.
1494 *sekest.* Following *sekest* MS has expunged: *but oonli a nakid mynde of his name.*
1504 *steme.* Some MSS (not C) have *stien* ("ascend"), which makes better sense; see
Clark, p. 176n232.
1505 *yimage.* MS: *yma;* C: *image.*
1512 *luckynge.* Marginal gloss: *merknesse of consciens.*
1513 *God.* C: *gode* ("good"), perhaps a more satisfactory reading; see Clark, p. 176n235.
1515 *cleusid and.* C omits.
1516–17 *Jhesu — not oonli . . . thou schuldest fynde.* C omits.
1518 *bi Hym.* C omits.
1519 *of Hym.* C omits.
1524 *smoke.* C: *reke.*
1530 *noughr.* Marginal gloss: *merknes of consciens.* The same marginal gloss is found for
wought in lines 1533, 1537, 1539, and 1541.
1535–36 *not settynge the poynt . . . whiche thou desirtest.* C omits.
1543 *hominis.* C omits.
1571 *opyn.* C: *hole.*
1594 *he.* C: *nevertheles it.*
1605 *of.* C adds: *the first.*
1606 *felyng.* An illegible mark after *g* may be a final *e.*

Textual Notes to Book I

- 1606 *unwarly*. C omits.
1613 *reste*. C: *end*.
1617 *doth so, ne who*. C omits.
so. C omits.
1627 *richere and highere than another*. C: *then oþhere*.
1629 *comaunderement*. MS: *comaunderedement*.
1631 *or*, C adds: *lese it eithere of*.
1637 *nothir*. C omits.
1645 *with*. C omits.
1648–49 *he dooth agen that oþhir and so*. C omits.
1652 *Cristen*. MS: *Criste*; C: *Cristen*.
1653 *and so he synneth deueli*. C omits.
1656 *homyn*. sic MS.
1659 *stille*. C omits.
1661 *evere*. C omits.
1663 *while he lyveth hevere*. C omits.
1673 *it is sooth, for*. C omits.
men. C adds: *for that is sooth*.
1676 *neer hunde*. C omits.
1685 *that he deliteth ioure*. C: *and*.
as, C: *that he feles*.
god. C: *gode*.
soule. C adds: *whilk is sywne*.
1691 *is*, C: *schal be*.
1695 *wolde*. C adds: *hold and*.
1711 *and helpe*. C omits.
1717 *as*. C adds: *dowȝ principally*.
also. C omits.
mew. C omits.
1722 *myght for*. C omits.
religious. MS: *religigious*.
1731 *grace and a*. An attempt has been made to erase, but still clearly visible; C omits.
1734 *speke of and*. C omits.
1736 *resoun*. MS: *rosoun*.
of. C: *and*.
1739 *forsake*. C adds: *al manere of*.
1750 *ony*. C omits.
1751 *of*. C adds: *alle*.
1767 *God*. C adds: *more*.

The Scale of Perfection

- 1774 *the love of God.* C: *love.*
1775 *is it.* C: *it may be said.*
1788 *prefinitum tempus.* C: *ad tempus prefinitum.*
1791 *prophete,* C adds: *at the last day.*
 the, C adds: *last.*
1793 *in thy sorte.* C omits.
1795 *worship.* C adds: *ie.*
1797 *this that I have said.* C: *these words.*
 thorough it. C: *trowe hem.*
1802-03 *of the gifte of God as he or sche hath that dwelleth stille in the worldi besynesse.* C:
 als fully and als perfite as a worldly man or woman.
1804 *dwellith,* C adds: *stille.*
1805 *or sche schal have.* C: *schul.*
1806 *have,* C omits.
1807 *wel.* C adds: *meke thyselv and*
1808 *it,* C adds: *ryght.*
 loke, C omits.
1809 *to.* C adds: *destre synnes and for to.*
1815 *holde thee.* C omits.
1819 *or diseise thee.* C omits.
1820 *angutsch.* C: *angrynes and*
 the persoones. C: *hem.*
1831 *and,* C adds: *trewly.*
 in. C adds: *virtue of.*
 mekenesse and, C omits.
1843 *herte.* C adds: *despyng, bakkbyng, unskafulle blamynge, misseyng, unkyndnes,*
 mislikyng, angrynes and hevynes.
1844 *men.* C adds: *and othere.*
1846 *pomysschid.* C adds: *and chartised.*
1847 *wel.* C adds: *thow schalt fynd it summe tyme*
1860 *preckynge.* MS: *prchyng.*
1862 *bonne.* C omits.
1864 *and women.* C omits.
1868 *vestris.* MS: *vestrs.*
1869 *spiritum.* C adds: *sanc*tum*.*
1875 *bodde.* C adds: *to chosen and to reproved.*
1881 *resseyved.* C adds: *if he precke and teche Goddes worde he.*
1883 *Chirche.* C adds: *if thei prechen.*
1894 *and,* C adds: *approve and.*

Textual Notes to Book I

- 1910 *of,* C adds: *alle.*
1912 *hadde.* C adds: *alle manere of.*
1920 *ony.* C adds: *wrecched.*
1927 *he,* C adds: *sikerly.*
1936 *philosophie.* C: *philosophers he couthe nocht do this; he schuld kun hate the synne
of al othere men for he hates it in hymself, but he couthe nocht love the man in
charité for al his philosophie.*
of, C adds: *alle.*
1939 *teckynge.* C: *kenwyng.*
1943 *wise.* C adds: *I sey that.*
1945 *y.* C: *thou then.*
1958 *mekenesse.* C adds: *at this tyme.*
1962 *visit.* C: *wisely.*
1967 *for ought that thei dooth agens thee.* Inserted from margin.
1971 *manner of.* Added above the line; C omits.
1974 *cause.* C: *purpose.*
1976 *quenchid.* C: *slekned.*
1977 *wil.* C omits.
1983 *or bi feel.* C omits.
1989–90 *thy herte in affeccioun and love.* C: *affeccioun of love in thi hert.*
1993 *persequenteribus.* C adds: *et calumpnianibus.*
1995 *pursue.* C adds: *and sclaundren.*
1997 *goodli.* C omits.
was to. C: *loved.*
Judas. C adds: *whilk was bothe his dedly enemy and a synfull caytif, how godely
Crist was to hym.*
benyng. C: *benigre.*
1999 *apostelis.* C adds: *He wesched his fete and fede hym with his preciouose bodie, and
preached hym als he did to othere apostoles.*
2001 *not.* C adds: *openly for it was pryyd, ne mysseid hym nocht ne despised hym.*
2002 *nodkyng.* C omits.
2008 *goodnes.* C adds: *and forthi it falles to hym to schene love and godenes.*
Judas. C adds: *I sey nocht that Crist loved hym for his synne, ne he loved hym nocht
for his chosen as he did Seint Petre, bot he loved hym in als mykel as he was his
creature and schewed hym tokenes of love if he wold have ben amended thereby.*
2012 *lovere and a.* C omits.
2016 *maliciousli.* C: *malencolious.*
2028 *thiself.* MS: *sif,* with a preceding caret for an addition, but none is supplied.
2044 *forsaken.* C adds: *clenly.*

The Scale of Perfection

- 2052 *traveiled*. C adds: *and trobled*.
2056 *in thyw herte*, *and*. C omits.
2058 *gete it*. C omits.
for. C adds: *to stryve and flite with hym for*.
2065 *pursue*. C adds: *for his godes*.
2067 *hyt*. C adds: *for itself*.
2074 *skilfulli*. C adds: *only for lust and likyng*.
love. C: *flicke thi love upon*.
2075 *nedith*. C adds: *for itself*.
that. C adds: *thyng that*.
2076 *it*. C adds: *more then kynde or nede asketh withouten whilk the thyng may not be used it*.
Soothli. C adds: *in this poynt as I trow*,
and the likenesse. C omits.
2077 *blyndid in this poynt*. C: *letted*.
2080 *his*. C adds: *love and his*.
2081–82 *the love of any oþir ertheli thyng*. C: *covetise of earthly gode*.
2082 *ellis*. C omits.
2085 *thee*. C adds: *that he loves noȝht for the*.
2087–88 *it be so moche . . . even Cristen, soþely*. Inserted from margin.
2088 *thee*. C: *hem*.
2092 *or*. C adds: *avere of*.
2095 *me*. C: *my hert*.
2100 *and*, C adds: *bodily*.
2109 *sleathe*. C: *accidie*.
2114 *more*. C adds: *likyng*.
2131–33 *If a man wolde oonli take . . . Juste from the nede*. C omits.
2140 *herte*. C adds: *that he wold in his hert*.
2145 *likynges*. C adds: *when thei comen*.
2150–51 *so that the gode be not yvel in the silf*. C omits.
2159 *God merci*. C: *afterre merci specialy*.
2160 *fleischli*. C omits.
2161 *forgyveth*. C adds: *swythe*.
2170 *ages*. MS: *aȝes*.
2175 *venial*. C adds: *synne*.
2176 *arise*. C: *travaile*.
and the, C: *of*.
2180 *no*. C omits.
2183 *slee fleischli*. C: *flee*.

Textual Notes to Book I

- 2185 *be.* C adds: *mykel*.
2191 *fulli.* C: *felly*.
2197 *delite.* C: *likyng*.
agrise. C: *ugge*.
2200 *it.* C adds: *more soroe and*.
2209 *or lasse.* C omits.
2210 *synnes, the lasse.* C: *lesse the lasse*.
2215 *hevy.* C adds: *peynfullie*.
2216 *of the gostli presence of Jhesu Crist.* C omits.
2218 *agen.* C adds: *the ground thou schalt noght aryse as I have seid before for*.
that. C omits.
2224 *or,* C adds: *bodily*.
2225 *thisilf.* C: *gode rewlyng of hymself*.
2230 *lust.* C: *love*.
2233 *generali.* C: *gladly*.
2235 *mete.* C adds: *as it comes*.
2240 *forgeveresse.* C adds: *and sey thou wilt amend it and trust of forgyvener*.
2248 *more and waxe.* C: *and kepe*.
2249 *and.* MS: *an*.
2256 *hem,* C adds: *and if thou may gete hem*.
2259 *hevynesse.* C adds: *ne in lust ne in lyghtnes*.
2266 *grete.* C: *thik*.
2267 *chaos.* C adds: *a grete merknes*.
2272 *Lifte.* C: *Lyght*.
2276 *sight.* C: *eye*.
2277 *tydylnges.* C: *thynges*.
2282 *cloude.* C: *maniel*.
2284 *ourward.* Written in margin; C omits.
2286 *Lord.* C adds: *manassond*.
2290 *kedis.* C: *gaytes*.
2295 *kides.* C: *gayste*.
2296 *seke.* MS: *begge* inserted over *seke*, apparently as an alternate reading; *begge* is
 found in other MSS; see Underhill, p. 193.
 withoute. *forth* added above the line; not in the chapter heading in the Table at the
 beginning of the book; not in C.
2299 *seke.* C: *beg*.
2300-01 *curtais and free inow.* C omits.
2307 *dronkennesse.* C: *drynkes*.
2308 *kynge.* C: *likyng*.

The Scale of Perfection

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|---------|--|
| 2320 | thus. C adds: as I hope thou dos. |
| 2325 | <i>delite.</i> C: <i>an ese.</i> |
| 2329 | <i>lovest God or wole love soothfastli.</i> C: <i>wil soothfastly love God.</i> |
| 2334 | <i>veryal.</i> C adds: <i>and more fle it.</i> |
| 2345 | <i>that he myght not come.</i> C omits. |
| 2346 | <i>excusid hym.</i> C omits. |
| 2347 | <i>oxen.</i> C adds: <i>for he is to this purpose.</i> |
| 2351 | <i>to,</i> C adds: <i>wiffully.</i> |
| 2355 | <i>the wise man.</i> C: <i>Saint Paule.</i> |
| 2379 | <i>love,</i> C omits. |
| 2386 | <i>ne what he wolde.</i> C: <i>ne whi he comes.</i> |
| 2387 | <i>hym,</i> C omits. |
| 2396 | <i>hym,</i> C adds: <i>if thou canst.</i> |
| 2397 | <i>vanytees.</i> C adds: <i>of the world.</i> |
| 2400 | <i>knowe.</i> C: <i>kenne.</i> |
| 2402 | <i>teche,</i> C: <i>kenne.</i> |
| | <i>teche,</i> C: <i>kenne.</i> |
| 2403-04 | <i>goo his wai.</i> C: <i>take his leve.</i> |
| 2405 | <i>knowen.</i> C: <i>kenned.</i> |
| | <i>him withal.</i> C: <i>hew alle.</i> |
| 2407 | <i>agreef.</i> C: <i>of the.</i> |
| 2409 | <i>alle.</i> C adds: <i>othere.</i> |
| 2420 | <i>into many wrecchidnessis.</i> C: <i>in many fleshly lilynges and worldly vanities fro
clennes of hert and fro the felyng of gosly vertus.</i> |
| 2421 | <i>thenketh yvel fore and.</i> C omits. |
| 2424 | <i>Writt.</i> MS: <i>writt;</i> C: <i>writt.</i> |
| | <i>dominus.</i> C: <i>deus.</i> |
| 2430 | <i>firste.</i> C adds: <i>and the principale.</i> |
| 2432 | <i>extendam.</i> C: <i>extendo.</i> |
| 2441 | <i>ton.</i> MS: <i>to.</i> |
| 2452 | <i>meditacion.</i> C adds: <i>here has thou herd the membres of this ymage.</i> |
| 2456 | <i>ymage.</i> C omits. |
| 2457 | <i>fuste.</i> C: <i>love.</i> |
| 2469 | <i>of synne.</i> C omits. |
| 2485 | <i>of.</i> C adds: <i>synne and.</i> |
| 2497 | <i>lyve.</i> Possibly corrected from <i>have.</i> |
| 2500 | <i>comen.</i> C: <i>spryngen.</i> |
| | <i>filen.</i> C: <i>defoulen.</i> |
| 2503-04 | <i>and thyne even Cristene.</i> C omits. |

Textual Notes to Book I

- 2509 *Hym.* C adds: *and if thou love hym litel then litel thyndes thou on hym.*
2512 *hou weyr.* C omits.
2513 *malicious.* C: *maleſcolioſ.*
2519 *to breke the charge of this weyr.* C: *bere this hevy bithen of this.*
2523 *sorwe.* C adds: *I hope thou feled nevere more.*
2527 *thinge.* C adds: *and fro rest in thiſ ouſ bodily felyng.*
2530 *fynde no.* C: *noght lightly fynde.*
2535 *this.* C adds: *false.*
2540 *in.* C: *and.*
2550 *neerhande.* C: *haft.*
2554 *of,* C: *off.*
2555 *malicious.* C: *maleſcolioſ.*
overmoche. C: *any.*
2570 *to,* C adds: *plese hym, for to.*
2574 *teche,* C: *kenne.*
2580 *this felynge and.* C omits.
2585 *alle.* C omits.
adowne. C: *awey.*
2589 *of.* C adds: *þheru.*
2590 *be.* Possibly *bi;* C: *bi.*
2592 *ful.* C omits.
2593 *Christus.* C omits.
2594 *child.* C: *barn.*
2612 *contemplacion.* C: *contemplatiſ life.*
2617 *of lif.* C: *of,* partially erased.
2619 *thyn herre.* C: *the.*
2620 *it,* C adds: *be so that it.*
2628 *thee.* C adds: *and with hym that writes thiſ boke.*

Book II

- 9 *and that a worthi image.* B omits.
13–14 *of Him.* B omits.
14 *and schal speken of.* B omits.
15 *liknesse.* B: *ywage.*
18 *myrkenesse.* B: *derknesse;* B consistently uses *derk-* where MS has *myrk-* or *merk-*; *beestli.* B omits.
27 *goodnesse.* B adds: *ferst.*

The Scale of Perfection

- 38 *the trespasser*, B: *hit*.
40 *of*, MS: *of of*.
44 *oweth*, B adds: *of daystē or dette*.
48 *alle*, B omits.
49 *deede*, B: *deth*.
56 *kynself*, B omits.
59 *Crist*, B omits.
67 *man*, B omits.
 thingis, B: *God on thyng*.
72 *He was bounde to righfulnesse, but*. Inserted from margin.
 dyer, B: *deth*.
76 *manere deede*, B: *mannes deth*.
86 *His*, B adds: *preciosse*.
99 *troweth*, B: *leeveth* (B regularly uses *leeveth* where MS has *trowen*).
111 *untrouthe*, B: *anbyleeve* (here and elsewhere).
115 *other comende or comen*, B: *comande as in the olde lawe or comen as now*.
125 *and paynemē*, B omits.
 kelynge, B: *knowyng*.
126 *and as Cristen men doon*, B omits.
143 *trouthe*, B: *seyth* (here and elsewhere).
149 *whiche*, B adds: *restorynge and*.
150 *in feith*, B omits.
174 *medlere*, B: *medlyng*.
184 *to alle chosen soulfis that were lyvande in tyme of His passioun*. Added from margin.
192 *maad*, B omits.
212 *feith*, B adds: *only*.
214 *thorugh lengthe*, B: *by processe*.
216 *yit he mai*, B omits.
217 *not withstandyng al*. Following *withstandyng*, MS has *synne*, which seems to be
 expunged; B: *aȝeynstandyng*.
222 *reformyng*, MS: *reformyge*.
241 *whiche*. Preceding *whiche* is a decorative filler.
242 *ther*. The scribe's usual usage is the southern forms, *herfej*, *hire*.
245 *as swithe*, B: *anoon*.
247 *untrouthe*, B adds: *of byleeve*.
272 *mekenesse*, B: *mekenesse and obediencē*.
291 *Churche*, B adds: *and the seyth*.
297 *schrift*, B: *confessioun*.
340 *oonli*, B omits.

Textual Notes to Book II

- 343 *useable*. B: *that is gosly and invisble*.
- 344 *partener*. Hussey (1992, pp. 103–04) suggests the reading *percenter* ("sharer"); see the same phrase below in chapter 36 with note.
- 348 *man*. B: *manner soule*.
- 372 *trouthe*. B: *feyth*.
- 396 *ire*. B: *wreththe*.
- heved. B: *capital*.
- 399 *as tate*. B omits.
- 409 *folkt*. B omits.
- 435 *trouthe*. B: *leve or feyth*.
- 445 *merci*. B adds: *and godnesse*.
- 459 *desert*. B: *desire*.
- 468 *hem bihoveth*. B: *moste they*.
- 470 *neer*. B omits.
- 473 *fightyng*. B: *chydynge*.
- 475 *he*, MS: *he* preceded by an expunged *thou*.
- 477 *outetaken*. B: *save*.
- 478 *werk*. B: *dede*.
- 486 *feer*. B: *free*.
- 487 *feer*. B: *free*.
- 499 *double*. B: *deadly*.
- 500 *resoun*. Capitalized in MS here and elsewhere, but not consistently. See also, for example, line 2080.
- 524 *light*. B: *sight* (perhaps correctly).
- 535 *and that he feelith no more of it*. B omits.
- 538 *and certayn*. B omits.
- 560 *thee*. B adds: *for* (almost required by the sense).
- 567 *yif it be gracious*. MS: *yif it be gracicious*; B omits.
- 569 *God*. B adds: *that is, they ssal see God*.
- 583 *this*. B adds: *foule*.
- 603 *defaded*. B: *defaced*.
- 620 *weike*. B: *fable*.
- 625 *likynges*. B: *styrenges*.
- 628 *irketh*. B: *weryeth*.
- 632 *the*. B adds: *evelē*.
- defoulynge*. MS: *defoulige*.
- 641 *in the whiche he was born in*. B: *the wiche bar hym*.
- 645 *feelist*. B: *sekest*.
- 648 *trouthe stilly*. B: *feyth styfly*.

The Scale of Perfection

- 651 *trouth.* B: *byleve, that is trewē feyth.*
665 *God.* B: *kym.*
673 *ywage.* B: *lyknesse.*
682 *heveneli.* B: *gostly.*
692 *lovethe not, not written above line.* B: *leeveth.*
709 *proud.* B: *mysproude.*
716 *unwillid.* B: *evelē willed.*
741 *stango.* Perhaps an error, but more likely a possible spelling of Vulgate *stagnō.*
743 *worschiperis of maumetis.* Inserted from margin.
dool. B: *here part.*
767 *ugglen.* B: *abhorreth.*
796 *flee.* B: *leeve.*
805 *peyne.* B adds: *he ssal knownen ir.*
814 *stoppe.* B: *stoppeth.*
840 *thei han no.* B: *laklyngē of.*
854 *Thar.* MS: *That crossed out.*
863 *brente.* B: *brought.*
876 *schal langure.* B: *be feble and syklich.*
878 *and reformyd.* B omits.
884 *stele.* B: *gree.*
913 *come to mychil grace.* B omits.
917 *gever.* B adds: *kym besyly.*
920 *faule.* B omits.
943 *yernyngē.* B: *covetyngē.*
957 *dedli.* MS: *deeli;* B: *dedly.*
960 *first.* Inserted above the line; B omits.
978 *othir wilful custome.* B: *here customes.*
996 *to deedli synne.* B omits.
1019 *and.* MS: *and and.*
1022 *kenne.* B: *teche.*
1025 *lyvynge.* B: *lernyngē,* perhaps correctly
1033 *mykil as.* B omits.
1062 *God.* B omits.
1067 *dedes.* MS: *des;* B: *dedys.*
1074 *biddynge.* B omits.
1099 *the schorteste and the redieste helpe that I knowe in this wirkynge.* B omits.
1134 *bigynnyngē.* MS: *bigynnyngē* (otiose abbr. stroke).
1142 *speciali.* B omits.
1145 *strynges.* MS: *stirynges.*

Textual Notes to Book II

- 1147 *that*, MS: *that that*.
1160 *some or voide*, B: *empty*.
1172 *fene*, B: *abyde*.
1204 *flawme and the hattere is the*, B omits.
1230 *of the love of Jhesu*, B: *fro the love of God*.
1235 *for to love*, B: *the love of*.
1239 *first and*, B omits.
1260 *a good*, B: *the*.
1277 *oonly*. Inserted above the line; B: *thensk oonly* (perhaps rightly).
1292 *and*, B adds: *veyn*.
1315 *thee*, B adds: *charge hit noct, jangle noct therwyth, ne angre the noct*.
1318 *strengthe it*, B adds: *and meysteyne hit*.
1328 *wirkynge*, MS: *wirkye*.
1343 *therfore see Hym gostly yif thou myght*. Inserted from margin.
1368 *spered*, B: *closed*.
1369 *knowyng*, B: *likyng*.
1378 *thus*, B: *and therfore he that loveth hym he is in lyght everlastynge, as*
1381 *him bikhoveth a while abiden*, B: *he moste abyde a wyle*.
1384 *the affeccion and*, B omits.
1385 *and loven*, B omits.
1389 *fleschlit*, B: *bodily*.
1390 *bounden*, B adds: *ne peyned*.
1395 *light*, B: *day*.
1396–97 *worldli desires*, B omits.
1422 *feling of*, B omits.
1427 *chesinge*, B: *clefynde*.
1437 *bryngeth*, B adds: *hir* (perhaps rightly).
1457 *merkenesse*, MS: altered from *mekenesse*; *ir* inserted above the line between *e* and
 k.
1474 *unreable*, B: *invisible*.
1482 *thee*, B omits.
1486 *To hem that wanen*, B: *that is, wotyng*.
 the fals inserted here from margin, but expunged.
1500 *thought*. Marginal gloss: *inere* ("inner"); B: *sowth*. Despite the gloss, B's reading
 is better (see Ezekiel 40:2).
1501 *rodde*, B: *reed*.
1505 *biggyng*, B: *heldenges*.
1508 *lyf*, B: *hyllie*.
 ye, B: *syght*.

The Scale of Perfection

- 1509-10 *semeth somewhat, but it.* B omits.
- 1523 *of the enemye.* MS: *of enemye.* Emendation may be unnecessary; see the heading for L984 (chapter 38), for *feend* without the article.
- 1527 *ney, nay* inserted above the line preceding an expunged *newe*; B omits *newe*.
- 1533 *bey.* B adds: *byfore.*
- 1534 *hemself.* Corrected from *himself.*
- thinges.* B adds: *outward.*
- 1537 *wepyng.* B: *wakynge.*
- 1539 *holi and.* B: *holly.*
- 1545 *knowinge.* B: *cawynge.*
- 1553 *knowynge.* MS: *knowyge.*
- 1561 *knowynge.* MS: *knowyge.*
- 1564 *and.* B: *thorugh.*
- 1569 *zele.* B: *love.*
- 1572 *fitynge.* B: *chydynge.*
- 1573 *that knowyng.* B: *sach canynge.*
- 1574 *God.* MS: *good,* with the second *o* expunged; B: *God.*
- 1577 *the fenes.* B: *comynly.*
- 1578 *fenes.* B: *feyned.*
- 1580 *blake.* B omits.
- 1591 *understandinge.* B: *gostly knowyng.*
- 1598 *risew.* B: *spryngyn.*
- 1599 *kyndese.* B adds: *or tenden.*
- 1612 *ne ypoocrisies.* B omits.
- into a soule.* B: *in.*
- 1613 *resten.* B: *rysten.*
- 1639-40 *go where.* B: *do what.*
- 1656 *resten.* B: *rysten.*
- 1684 *mai.* B adds: *maght.*
- 1700 *dyverse.* B: *sondry.*
- 1701 *seere.* B: *diverse.*
- 1703 *gate.* B: *way* (and elsewhere in this chapter).
- 1716 *lyf.* B: *love.*
- 1733 *nought.* B: *nyght.*
- 1735 *brent.* B: *brought.*
- 1747 *sadli.* B omits.
- mekeli.* B omits.
- fareth bi it.* B: *falleth therby.*
- 1753 *and.* MS omits; B: *and.*

Textual Notes to Book II

- 1762 *knowyng*, MS: *knowyge*.
1783 *forsakynge*, MS: *forsakye*.
1799 *bigrunnyng*, MS: *bigrunygg*.
1801 *in conpunction*, B: *of contemplacion*.
1810 *beykyng*, B: *bebyng*.
1811 *stauf*, B: *stylke*.
1814 *brent*, B: *brought*.
1823 *for it schal not wite where ne how*, Inserted from margin.
1829 *feelynge*, B: *lyvynge*.
1830 *luste*, B: *the love*.
1840 *receyve up hem*, B: *rysen up*.
1842 *knowyng*, MS: *knowyge*.
1847–48 *the soule*, B: *thee*.
1888 *holneth*, B: *swelleth*.
1920 *falleth*, B: *faryth*.
1948 *thought*, B: *body*.
1953 *and for to love the sovereyn goodnesse*, Inserted from margin.
1962 *understandyng*, MS: *undirstondyng*.
1977 *thenkyng*, MS: *thenkyge*.
2001 *worshipen*, B omits.
2005 *is*, B adds: *good and*.
2006 *lass*, B adds: *and* (perhaps rightly).
2017 *in*, MS: *in in*.
2042 *contemplatif*, MS: *conceplatif*.
2068 *heeryng*, MS: *heerryg*.
2096 *reformynge*, MS: *reformyge*.
2103 *schorter*, Last two letters illegible; B: *schortere*.
2149 *hool*, B: *holy*.
2152 *oold*, B: *holy*.
2166 *blyndli*, B adds: *and nakedly*.
2180 *cum*, Not in MS; see 1 John 3:2.
2188 *spered*, B: *yclosed*.
2197 *Ihesu*, B adds: *God*.
2205 *thorugh grace*, B omits.
2212 *ferforth*, B: *forward*.
2221 *openyng*, MS: *openyge*.
2240 *worthiere*, B: *worthynesse*.
2264 *privel*, B omits.

The Scale of Perfection

- 2271 *sotfuscumesse*. MS: *sosfuscumesse*.
2286 *nor*. B adds: *speken*.
2296 *arew*. B adds: *temporal and*.
2299–2300 *Ther seith oure Lord*. B omits.
2302 *Ihesu Crist*. B omits.
2306 *love*. A following of *Ihesu* is expunged.
2313 *thar*. B adds: *in knowynge*.
2318 *symply*. B: *synful*.
2335 *mekenesse*. B: *mochelnesse*.
2343 *departen*. B: *share*.
2370 *forgyvnesse*. MS: *forynesse*.
2377 *bynge*. Corrected from *biggyng* (i.e., "buying").
2406 *wrecchid*. B: *wykke*.
2429 *streywen*. B: *steren*.
2439 *Ihesu*. B: *God*.
2445 *schewynge of*. B omits.
2460 *fervours*. B: *by fervours*.
2478 *bothe*. B: *god*.
2479 *of God*. B: *goode*.
2483 *for the tyme*. B omits.
2503 *partenere*. B: *takere*; Hussey (1992, pp. 103–04) suggests *percenere* ("sharer"); compare the same phrase above in chapter 8; and see Clark, p. 319n263.
2509 *schedynge*. B: *disseveraunce*.
2515–16 *and it schal werken . . . schalt biholden Hlow*. Interpolated from the margin; B: . . .
 biholden Ihesu.
2518 *Ceese yee*. B: *Taketh heede*.
2521 *God*. B: *God and man*.
2540 *pacience*. B: *of penaunce*.
2549 *alle*. Inserted above the line.
2564 *biholding*. MS: *biholdig*.
2580 *disposeth*. B: *dispyseth*.
2584 *forygnesse*. MS: *forynesse*.
2605 *veyn*. Written over erasure.
2607 *into*. MS: *into into*.
2611 *circumstances*. MS: *circumstances*.
2636 *bihaldynge*. MS: *bihaldyge*.
2645 *ai upon*. B: *evere opene to*.
2646 *swaris*. B adds: *or greves*.
2652 *of God*. B omits.

Textual Notes to Book II

- 2660 *passyngē*. B adds: *and weyward*.
2694 *risyngē*. B: *stirynge*.
2698 *he wil not ben angriid ne sterid agens hem*. Inserted from margin.
2721 *yeeden*. B: *wende or yeeden*.
2734 *wronge*. B omits.
2742 *thorugh his*. B: *of the*.
dede. B adds: *of that other man*.
2752 *and passen*. B omits.
2773 *the love of Jhesu*. B: *Godes love*.
2792 *Jhesu*. B: *God*.
2815 *accidie*. B: *slouthe*.
2840 *heren*. B: *spekyn, huyren*.
2865 *or deepesse*. B omits.
2895 *apostil*. B: *gospel*.
2896 *ancipiti*. B omits.
2906 *flitynge*. B: *clydynge*.
2929 *andeyntē*. B: *dedeyn*.
2946 *ne peynfulli*. B omits.
oonlynesse. B: *wyldernessee*.
2947 *an*. B: *wyldernessee or*.
2949 *of thought*. B: *or wyldernessee*.
2954 *oonlynesse of bodi*. B: *that*.
2965 *ir*. B: *thy*.
2973 *the lyf of his bodi*. B: *this bodily lyf*.
2975 *byggynge*. MS: *bygynge*.
2978 *and likynge*. B omits.
2981 *perfite*. B omits.
byggynge. MS: *bygynng*.
3003 *that wakeneden*. B: *wakynge*.
3004 *is*. B: *is understanden*.
3005 *dene*. B: *dyngē*.
3007 *wordli*. B: *erthly*.
3019 *sothli*. B: *softly*.
3023 *openyngē*. MS: *openyge*.
3033 *abidynge*. B: *hydynge*.
3040 *feelingē*. B: *fleyngē*.
3043 *herte*. B: *soule*.
3045 *lover*. B: *lustys*.
3049 *to wordli love*. B omits.

The Scale of Perfection

- 3058 *sodaynly*. MS: *sorodaynly*; so *sodaynly* makes sense, but the second *so* begins the verso and is thus more likely to be a repetition error.
- 3060 *merthe*. B: *myght*.
- 3064 *felicabli*. B: *evere*.
- 3065 *bremwyng*. B omits.
- 3072 *grace*. B adds: *the lassys the grace*.
- 3103 *reverence*. MS: *rereverence*.
- 3120 *faavour*. B: *savour*.
- 3124 *fer*. B: *fre*.
- 3139 *and of Hooli Chirche*. B omits.
- 3169 *lettered men*. B: *lettered*.
- 3190–91 *reek stynge*. B: *smoke rysyng*.
- 3191 *eye*. B: *eyre*.
- 3194 *flesch flie*. B: *fleschly*.
- 3196 *plaiand*. B: *reckyng*.
- Jhesu*. B adds: *hit yeldeþ grace to Jhesu*.
- 3219 *openyng*. MS: *openyge*.
- 3229 *Jhesu*. B: *God*.
- Hym*. B: *God*.
- 3246 *special*. B omits.
of conpucion. B: *in a bygynne, that is called grace of contemplacion*.
- 3248 *and seen*. B omits.
goostli. B: *godly*.
- beter*. B adds: *ne may no betere*.
- 3261 *loned*. B: *loved*.
- 3265 *seen*. B adds: *and felon*.
- 3267 *mekeli, n̄l*. B: *n̄l thou come to*.
- 3269 *love*. B: *grace*.
- 3272–73 *I wole of thise four*. B: *of these four that me last*.
- 3279 *to*. MS: *fro* added above the line after *to*, perhaps as an alternative.
- 3283 *a clese*. B omits.
- 3286 *trustesh*. B: *trowneth or byleveth*.
- 3289 *God*. B: *Jhesu*.
- 3290 *faavour*. B: *feravour*.
- 3305 *mysterie*. B: *misstryng*.
- 3330 *vermer*. B: *swetnesse*.
- 3388 *neverthelees yir*. B: *noght for than*.
- 3405 *arew*. B adds: *fayre*.
- 3409 *feelyng*. B: *styronges*.

Textual Notes to Book II

- 3413 *stirynge*. B: *the stondynge*.
toucheth, B: *secheth*.
- 3414 *myght*. B: *syker*.
- 3433 *favour*. B: *savoure*.
- 3434 *o.* B: *that is, that*.
- 3437 *wondrende*. B: *worschepande*.
- 3443 *spouse*. B: *perfitlyt spouse*.
- 3444 *highnesse*. B adds: *and the fulnesse*.
- 3467 *Songes*. B adds: *of the Spouse*.
- 3472 *amgo*. B: *go aboughte*.
- 3480 *light*. B: *love*.
- 3481 *grace*. B: *mercy*.
- 3496 *deren*. Marginal gloss: *or greve*.
- 3505 *and troble us*. B omits.
- 3509 *is*. MS: *his*; B: *is*.
- 3519 *Holi Goost*. B: *myght of the hygheste*.
- 3524 *heere*. A following in this *liyf* has been expunged; not in the Table of Contents preceding Book II.
- 3525 *selve*. B adds: *lyght*, perhaps correctly.
- 3527 *sondrikeid*. B: *diversite of sondry*.
- 3529 *of the Holi Goost*. B omits.
- 3531 *maner*. B omits.
- 3532 *spirites*. Replaces expunged *creatures*.
- 3535 *soule*. B adds: *and they illumynen the soule gratiously, they conforten the soule with swete wordes sodeynly sowned in a clene herte and yif eny diseise falle gostly they seruen the soule*.
- 3551 *before*. B adds: *and therfore*.
- 3565 *of*. MS: *of in*.
- 3587 *greithynge*. B: *ordeinunge*.
- 3588 *stirten fro the herthe of*. B: *lepen over*.
- 3589 *the thikke, that area*. B omits.
- 3590 *bikooldynges*. B adds: *sothfastliche grounded in grace and mekenesse*.
- 3592 *callid*. B adds: *newe*.

Glossary

adraad afraid	defaughtes faults
agen again, against	delices delights
agenstone withstand, resist	delitabile delightful
anemptis regarding	deme judge (vb.)
anoon at once	dere harm
apaid satisfied	disese discomfort, distress
asketh requires	doom judgment
astaat state, condition	doute doubt
as tite immediately	dredre fear
behight promised	dweer doubt
ben are	dylite delight, pleasure
besi diligent	even Cristene fellow Christians
bisynesse, bisynesse activity, concern	
bihoveth is necessary (impers.)	fiechid fixed
bisilli assiduously, diligently	fleischli carnal
bolneth swells	for thi because
boystous rough	freel frail
brennyng burning	freelté frailty
but yif unless	fulheed fulfillment, fullness
buxum obedient	
bynemen take away	goostli spiritual
caitif wretch	goven given
clene pure	grucchyng grudging
clennesse purity	
commynge ability; knowledge	halden kept
couthe know	halewes saints
coveityse covetousness	han have
daungerous fastidious, haughty, reluctant	heere, here her
deceyvable deceitful	hem them
deed dead	here their; her
	hevynesse sadness
	hire her

Glossary

hit <i>it</i>	meke <i>humble (vb. and n.)</i>
hooli <i>wholly</i>	merke(nesse) <i>dark(ness)</i>
hope <i>expect, think, suppose</i>	mete <i>food</i>
hym <i>how</i>	moun, mowe, mowen <i>can, be able</i>
illike <i>same</i>	mykill <i>much</i>
inli <i>inward</i>	myrke(nesse) <i>dark(ness)</i>
lye <i>eye</i>	myspaide <i>dissatisfied</i>
kenne <i>teach</i>	narwgh <i>narrow</i>
knowelechynge <i>acknowledging</i>	ne <i>not, nor</i>
kunne <i>be able, know how to</i>	nedelynges <i>necessarily</i>
kunmynge <i>teaching, knowledge</i>	neer <i>nearer; near</i>
kynde <i>nature</i>	not <i>wrought, nothing; know not</i>
kyndeli <i>natural</i>	onwyng <i>union</i>
lassed <i>diminished</i>	ooned <i>united</i>
leryd <i>learned</i>	or <i>or; before</i>
letten <i>prevent, obstruct, hinder</i>	ordaynen <i>dispose</i>
leve <i>leave, believe</i>	ought <i>ought, was obliged; owed; out</i>
lever, lyvere <i>rather</i>	paid <i>satisfied, content</i>
lewyd <i>ignorant</i>	partie <i>part</i>
lightli <i>easily</i>	passand <i>surpassing</i>
liketh <i>pleases (impers.)</i>	perflight <i>perfect</i>
liknesse <i>image, likeness</i>	peyne <i>punishment</i>
likyng <i>pleasure, attraction</i>	privetees <i>secrets, mysteries</i>
longeth <i>belongs</i>	proflight <i>profit</i>
lo(o)we <i>praise</i>	pryvey <i>secret, hidden</i>
lo(o)wyng <i>praising</i>	ransake <i>examine</i>
lorn <i>lost</i>	reest <i>quietness</i>
lowenesse <i>humility</i>	reprovede <i>scorned</i>
lust <i>desire</i>	reste <i>resting-place</i>
maistrie <i>difficulty, mastery; fear of skill, force</i>	rewardes <i>concerns, regards</i>
manhede <i>humanity</i>	rightwiseness <i>righteousness</i>
medle <i>mix, mingle</i>	saaf <i>saved</i>
meede <i>reward</i>	sadli <i>soberly</i>
meedful <i>deserving, worthy of reward</i>	sautier <i>psalter</i>

Glossary

schryve confess	
semynge appearance	uggly horrid, frightful
sere various	unscouthe unknown
sich such	underneme rebuke
sigh saw (vb.)	unkunyng unknown, ignorant
siker secure, certain	unnethes scarcely
sikirnesse security, certainty	unskilful irrational, unreasonable
sithen since	up according to, up
sithes times	upsidown topsy-turvy
skile reason	upstiande ascending
sleightes deceptions	
sobirté soberness	verili truly
sone at once; soon	verry true
sooth, soothfaste true	
soothfastness truthfulness	waar aware
spedeful advantageous, profitable	wantynge lacking
speryd locked	wenen, wenynge think, suppose, thinking
staaf staff	supposing
staat estate, standing, status	witem, wost know
stieth rises	wittes faculties, senses
stiyng rising	wordli worldly
stoneth astonishes	worschipe honor (n. and vb.)
styringe stirring	
suerd, swerd sword	yete(de) went
suettenesse sweetness	yhe ye
sumdel somewhat	yif, yyf if
sunnere sooner	yit yet
swiche such	ympnys hymns
swithe much, very	ynewgh enough
swynke work	yvel evil
syn since	yye eye
tarynge irritating, hindering	
thenketh seems (impers.)	
ton the one	
tothire the other	
travail labor; trouble	
trouth belief	
trowand, trowe believing, believe	