‘ALL THE HELTH AND LIFE OF THE SACRAMENTS….I IT AM’:
JULIAN OF NORWICH
AND THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

A THESIS OF 94,167 WORDS BY

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WORCESTER COLLEGE AND
THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGION
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SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

2014

For Jonathan, Katie and Thomas

and

in memory of Amy

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores a long-neglected area of Julian's work, namely her devotional and pastoral understanding of the nature of sin and the sacrament of penance. Her two texts reveal a deep concern, set within the context of a rise in lay penitential piety, for those devout who continued to experience a sense of shame and dread of sin, even after confession to a priest. By means of a close comparative reading of Julian's short and long texts of *A Revelation of Divine Love*, and an examination of a wide range of Middle English devotional texts and manuals, as well as a breadth of Julian scholarship to date, I argue that Julian addresses the devotional and ecclesiastical concerns of late fourteenth-century England in the problem of sin and confession for the ordinary believer. By articulating her revelation in the penitential terms of the manuals of the Church, Julian reveals the extent to which the daily devotional life of 'holy moder church' is the means by which the saving love of Christ is realised and made accessible to the penitent.

Within her writing Julian seeks to reassure her reader that God has dealt with sin and triumphed over the devil but in order to do this she must alter their understanding of a contrition-centred sacrament. For this reason Julian sets up a crisis of understanding within her long text between the 'common teaching of holy church' and her revelation of love. This conflict is deliberately left unresolved in order that, in scholastic terms, two opposing arguments in opposition may jointly illuminate the necessity of sin and penance in bringing the soul to the proper state of humility and the mercy and grace of the loving Lord in forgiveness. In so doing it is argued that, within Julian's writing, the pastoral process of penance is integral to those who desire a more intimate relationship with God.

The thesis consists of four chapters which first, locates Julian's short and long versions of *A Revelation of Divine Love* within the climate of the late-fourteenth century; secondly, it charts the rise of the significance of the role of the penitent within the history of penance which led to an increasing lack of confidence within the late fourteenth century in the ability of the confessional encounter to alleviate the sense of sin experienced by some devout souls; thirdly, I analyse the extent to which Julian's short and long version of a *Revelation of Divine Love* reflect and address this catechetical and penitential climate in her theology of sin and penance; and finally the thesis poses the question of the extent to which Julian's work can be considered as a penitential text which seeks to bring ease and comfort of the assurance of sins forgiven through the everyday practices of the Church. It is concluded that Julian's writing reveals a fascinating and significant contribution to late fourteenth-century thought on penance and brings a fresh reading of Julian's texts.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is the culmination of twenty five years of studying the devotional texts of the late fourteenth century and in particular, the works of Julian of Norwich, therefore my acknowledgements range further than the study of this doctoral work. First, I would like to thank those who first introduced me to the treasures of these texts and gave me the tools to explore them, namely Dr. Marion Glasscoe and, in particular, Professor Avril Henry who, on my graduation from Exeter University, gave me the wise words to 'follow my passion'. I am also very grateful to Sr. Benedicta Ward for all her encouragement and belief that one day I would write something worth reading, and to Professor Marilyn MacCord Adams, for the opportunity to talk Julian with her. This thesis, however, has been shaped and molded by a number of people to whom I will be ever grateful: to Dr Santha Bhattacharji and Elisabeth Dutton who helped me through a time of failure, to Professor Sarah Foot and Dr Annie Sutherland for shaping my work during the confirmation of status process but most of all to Professor Vincent Gillespie who was not only willing to have me as his graduate student, but also has helped me by his wisdom and guidance to produce this thesis, which I had only dreamed of. Finally, I would like to thank those who have loved and believed in me through this time and sacrificially given me the space to study: to Katie and Thomas who have never moaned that mummy is studying once again, to my parents for all their love, to the parishes of Garsington, Cuddesdon and Horspath who have generously allowed me to be a priest theologian, to Dick Smethurst and Dr Sue Gillingham for all their support and, most especially to Jonathan who has held my hand and walked this path with me and helped me over the last hurdle by reading and editing my work. The last word goes to Amy, our cat, whose contributions sometimes needed amending, but whose purring presence on my lap throughout the writing of this thesis gave untold comfort and reassurance.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Add.	Additional
BL	British Library
Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*	Colledge, Edmund and James Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings to the Anchoress Julian of Norwich* (Toronto: Pontifical Institue of Mediaeval Studies, 1978)
ed(s).	edited/editor(s)
EETS	Early English Text Society
fol(s).	folio(s)
Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*	Marion Glasscoe (ed.), *Julian of Norwich: A Revelation of Love* (Exeter: Univeristy Press, 1986)
l.	line
MMTE	Marion Glasscoe and E.A. Jones (eds.) *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England*, Exeter Symposiums I-

VIII, 1980-2013 (Exeter: Univeristy Press, I-II (1980-1982); Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, III-VIII (1984-2013))

MS	Manuscript
NS	new series
n.	note
no(s).	number(s).
OS	original series
r	*recto*
SS	special series
trans.	translated by
v	*verso*
vol.	volume

Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*

Nicholas Watson and Jaqueline Jenkins (eds.), *The*

Writings of Julian of Norwich: A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman and A Revelation of Love

(Pennsylvania: State University Press, 2006)

A NOTE ON TEXT AND VERSIONS

The writings of Julian of Norwich exist in two forms of the text which has come to be referred to as *A Revelation of Divine Love*: the short text or S, and the long text L. S is found in only one extant manuscript, the British Library Add. MS 37790, fols. 97-115, otherwise known as Amherst, or **A** for short. It dates from around the middle of the fifteenth century, making it the earliest manuscript to contain a complete copy of a text by Julian. In contrast L can be found in five variant manuscripts:

S1: London, British Library, Sloane MS 2499

S2: London, British Library, Sloane MS 3705

P: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Fonds Anglais 40

W: London, Westminster Cathedral Treasury, MS 4, fols. 72v-112v

U: Lancashire, St Joseph's College, MS, fols.114r-117v (the Upholland Anthology)

Since Glasscoe's article 'Visions and Revisions', which highlighted the 'problems in establishing a Julian text', scholars have demonstrated the extent to which these five manuscripts contain versions of the text of *A Revelation of Divine Love* that have been altered and adapted by scribes and commentators to make them compatible to their readers.[1] This not only raises the question of 'originality' but whether it is possible to ascertain a datable text by cross referencing between the variant readings of the manuscripts.

Scholars are divided as to which of the manuscripts contains a text that is closest to its compositional original. Glasscoe leads the field in advocating the superiority of the British

[1] Marion Glasscoe, 'Visions and Revisions: A Further Look at the Manuscripts of Julian of Norwich', *Studies in Bibliography*, 42 (1989), pp. 103-20 [hereafter Glasscoe, 'Visions and Revisions'].

Library Sloane MS 2499 or **S1**,[2] which dates from the early seventeenth century and contains solely the long text of *A Revelation of Divine Love* in its entirety. Not only does **S1** retain many of the northern language forms of the late fourteenth century found in **A** but it also 'bears all the evidence of a scribe trying to make a quick and straightforward copy of his source, the odd unsatisfactory reading being simply attributable to human error'.[3] The later British Library Sloane MS 3705, or **S2**, is closely related to **S1** with which it is believed to share a common source rather than being a direct copy, and hence has had little editorial attention.[4]

For Colledge and Walsh, and more recently Watson and Jenkins, it is the Paris manuscript or **P** that holds sway.[5] **P** also dates from the early seventeenth century and contains a modernized version of the long text in its entirety. However, it differs markedly from **S1**.[6] One of these significant differences is the inclusion of additional passages found in **P** which do not occur in **S1**. Whilst Watson and Jenkins point to these inconsistencies as evidence of a more 'intellectually and rhetorically rigorous' transmission of the text, which the rather lax and messy **S1** scribe simply skipped over or excluded, Glasscoe dismisses them as

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[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 106-7.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 119. Nicholas Watson argues that the lack of these language forms in **P** is as a result of 'a systematic, though not quite thorough, process of translation into its current dialect, a version of fifteenth-century East Midlands Standard English' in Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 36. For the Northern features in **A** see Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, pp. 28-32 and their appearance in both **S1** and **P** see Felicity Riddy, 'Julian of Norwich and Self-Textualization' in Ann Hutchinson (ed.), *Editing Women* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998) [hereafter Riddy, 'Julian and Self-Textualization'], p. 111. These differences have not precluded both Glasscoe and Watson perceiving a common, if distant, ancestor to **P** and **S1**, based on the retention of northernisms in **P**, see Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 36 and Glasscoe, 'Visions and Revisions', p. 107.

[4] Julian of Norwich, *A Revelation of Divine Love*, ed. by Marion Glasscoe (Exeter: University Press, 1986) [hereafter Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*], p. x. For **S2** as a direct copy of **S1** see Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, pp. 25-6 and Elisabeth Dutton, 'The Seventeenth-Century Manuscript Tradition and the Influence of Augustine Baker' in *A Companion to Julian of Norwich*, ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008), pp. 127-38 [hereafter Dutton, 'The Seventeenth-Century Manuscript Tradition']. Here at p. 128.

[5] Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Shewings*, pp. 26-27 and Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 40.

[6] Felicity Riddy gives a good summary of the major differences between **P** and **S1**, namely: the northerly language retained in **S1**; the inclusion of chapter headings to **S1**; the more frequent modernizations of language forms in **P**; the lack of a number of **P** passages in **S1**; and disagreement over chapter divisions and numerous minor textual divergences. See Riddy, 'Julian of Norwich and Self-Textualization', pp. 109-10.

wordy scribal interpretations and expansions of the text.[7] **S1** is not without its scribal alterations and additions. The most significant of these is the inclusion of chapter headings. Opinion is divided as to whether they are scribal or added by Julian herself. Watson argues for the latter, pointing to their 'accurate and informative' nature as evidence of their possible composition by Julian.[8] Riddy, however, identifies the emergence of a new voice in the heading to chapter 66 in the explanatory words, 'I suppose was but venial synne', and from this reference to the categories of sin deduces that the voice is that of a cleric.[9] Given that Julian herself, in chapter 52, clearly knows the 'gradations of sin', this evidence is not enough to identify the scribe as clerical, however the consistent reference to the third person throughout the chapter headings gives strength to Riddy's argument.[10] If Elisabeth Dutton's understanding of the headings as devotional guides to the text is also taken into account then it is quite conceivable to imagine a clerical scribe inserting such headings into the text to enable a devotional reading of what is a heady theological work.[11]

The extent to which L has undergone scribal additions and alterations can be seen in the Westminster Cathedral Treasury MS 4, or **W**, and St Joseph's College, Upholland MS, commonly known simply as Upholland or **U**. Whilst **W** is the earliest of the five manuscripts, being a fifteenth-century copy of a compilation, it preserves extracts from the longer version of the text which have been selected to make Julian's work compatible with the writings of Walter Hilton, alongside which it stands.[12] Scholars are divided as to the

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[7] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 40. This was also the reason why Colledge and Walsh preferred the **P** text to **S1** in Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, p. 26; Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p.vii-x and Glasscoe, 'Visions and Revisions', pp. 107-8.
[8] Nicholas Watson, 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*', *Speculum*, 68 (1993), pp. 637-83[hereafter Watson, 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*']. Here at p. 670, n. 79.
[9] Riddy, 'Julian and Self-Textualization', p. 117.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 118.
[11] Dutton, 'The Seventeenth-Century Manuscript Tradition', pp. 132-33.
[12] As Kemptser has pointed out, the scribe has made an interesting editorial selection of extracts taken from the first, second, third, ninth, tenth and fifteenth of Julian's showings in order to incorporate her writing into the thinking of Walter Hilton on the nature of the mixed life. See Hugh Kempster, 'A Question of Audience: The Westminster Text and Fifteenth-Century Reception of Julian of Norwich' in Sandra J. McEntire (ed.), *Julian*

extent to which these extracts relate to the other manuscripts or belong to a separate textual tradition.[13] **U** similarly contains L in extract form. It dates from the late seventeenth century and consists of a number of medieval and post-Reformation extracts from spiritual works selected and translated by Augustine Baker for the nuns at Cambrai. In her article on the extracts, Dutton illustrates the way in which Baker not only selects but also modifies the text to make it compatible with his spiritual teaching.[14] The Upholland manuscript, like **W**, is therefore a later reworking of Julian's text and as such is more important for what it reveals about its reception than for its retention of an 'original' text.

This brief survey of the various manuscripts that contain a version, or extracts, of *A Revelation of Divine Love*, demonstrates the difficulty with which scholars are faced in the attempt to ascertain a compositional date for the text. In addition to the manuscript inconsistencies, the notion of an 'original' text and the sanctity of the author were very different in the medieval times than they are today. In the first part of Wogan-Browne's collaborative anthology of Middle English literary theory, *The Idea of the Vernacular*, she convincingly suggests that authorship was often understood as a participation in a tradition.[15] Hence, the composition of a text was not only attributed to the author, but also to the scribes and compilers that made additions to the text, and hence its tradition. In the

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of Norwich: A Book of Essays (New York and London: Garland, 1998), pp. 257-89 [hereafter Kempster, 'A Question of Audience'], pp. 269-284. See also Marleen Cré, ''This blessed beholdyng': Reading the Fragments from Julian of Norwich's *A Revelation of Love* in London, Westminster Cathedral Treasury, MS 4' in *A Companion to Julian of Norwich*, ed, by Liz Herbert McAvoy (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008), pp. 116-126.

[13] Marion Glasscoe makes this association between **W** and **P** in Glasscoe, 'Visions and Revisions', p. 106, whilst Colledge and Walsh connect **W** with the Sloane tradition. See Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, p. 27. However, this connection has been questioned by Kempster who argues that **W** may have originated from a separate textual tradition: Hugh Kempster, 'Julian of Norwich: The Westminster Text of *A Revelation of Love*', *Mystics Quarterly*, 23 (1997), pp. 177-202 [hereafter Kempster, 'The Westminster Text']; Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 36.

[14] Dutton, 'The Seventeenth-Century Manuscript Tradition', pp. 134-8; Elisabeth Dutton, 'Augustine Baker and Two Manuscripts of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*', *Notes and Queries* 250, 3 (2005), pp. 329-37 [hereafter Dutton, 'Augustine Baker'].

[15] Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor and Ruth Evans (eds.), *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280-1520* (Exeter: University Press, 1999), p. 4.

five variant manuscripts of *A Revelation of Divine Love* we therefore see not so much a corruption of the text by subsequent scribes and interpreters as a developing tradition in which scribes have sought to to clarify Julian's vision of 1373 by making later contributions.

Despite the variance of extant texts, editors are still wooed by the notion of an 'original'. This is especially true of Watson and Jenkins' recent edition where, in an attempt to find Julian's authentic words, have created a sixth version of the text which is a hybrid of **P** and **S1**.[16] Most other scholars base their edition on one of the texts, invariably **S1** or **P**, and use the alternative textual tradition to illuminate omissions and words which are illegible due to the messy nature of the text.[17] The most conservative of these editions is Glasscoe's 1986 *A Revelation of Love*, which uses **S1**, and therefore retains a textual authenticity absent from Watson and Jenkins' edition of **P**, regardless of their theological justification. It is for this reason that this thesis primarily uses Glasscoe's edition as its base text. However, neither do I discard other manuscript traditions in the mistaken belief that **S1** might contain the only 'original' words of Julian. I particularly refer to manuscripts where a scribal 'author' has sought to understand her vision by expanding upon it.

[16] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 40.
[17] Scholars who use **S1** as the base text to their editions include: Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. x; Georgia Ronan Crampton, (ed.), *The Shewings of Julian of Norwich*, TEAMS Middle English Text Series (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1994), p. 22; and Grace Warrack (ed.), *Revelations of Divine Love: Recorded by Julian, Anchoress at Norwich, 1373* (Springfield: Templegate, 2002), p. xiii. Whilst scholars who use **P** as the basis to their editions are: R.F.S. Cressy (ed.), *XVI Revelations of Divine Love, Shewed to a Devout Servant of our Lord, called Mother Juliana An Anchorete of Norwich: Who lived in the Dayes of King Edward the Third* (London, 1670), *passim*; Denise N. Baker (ed.), *The Showings of Julian of Norwich*, Norton Critical Edition (London: Norton, 2005), p. xx; Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, p. 26. The exception is Anna Maria Reynolds and Julia Bolton Holloway whose edition contains all five manuscripts in parallel: *Julian of Norwich: A Shewing of God's Love. The Shorter Version of Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love*, ed. by Anna Maria Reynolds and Julia Bolton Holloway (London: Sheed and Ward, 1958) [hereafter Reynolds and Holloway (eds.), *Julian of Norwich: Shewing of Love*], *passim.*

INTRODUCTION

In chapter 77 of the long version of her text *A Revelation of Divine Love* Julian uses the language of penance. It is a term which is rarely found in Julian's writings, yet in this chapter she articulates her insight into the saving love of God through the discourse of the pastoral office of the church. Standing out amongst the reassuring and comforting words of mercy and forgiveness are these seemingly harsh and cold tones:

> This place is prison, this lif is penance, and in the remedy he will we enioyen.

Disregarding Julian's remedy of the constant presence of the Lord which is 'keping us and leding into fulhed of joy', scholars have wondered what lies behind Julian's stark and seemingly uncharacteristic words. With resonances to the enclosure ceremony that likened the anchorhold to a prison, Julian's image has been taken as a reference to her own life as an anchoress.[1] Such a rare insight into her personal thoughts and feelings seems unlikely, even if it is taken as an ironic statement from one who looks out of her window and sees 'the beauty of this life and the joy of knowing God' as reparation for sin.[2] However, when her words are considered within the context of the penitential and catechetical teaching of the late fourteenth century, a range of allusions and meanings becomes clearly apparent. Both the thirteenth-century guide for anchoresses, the *Ancrene Wisse*, and the penitential vernacular

[1] For an account of the enclosure ceremony of an anchoress, see: E. A. Jones 'Rites of Enclosure: The English Ordines for the Enclosing of Anchorites, S XII-S. XVI', *Traditio*, 67 (2012), pp. 145-235 and Rotha Mary Clay, *The Hermits and Anchorites of England* (London: Methuen & Co., 1914), pp. 193-8. In this appendix, Clay cites the preface to the 1506 Sarum Manual that asserts: 'Let him think that he is convicted of his sins and committed to solitary confinement as to a prison'. Also, on the use of prison imagery see Ann K. Warren, *Anchorites and their Patrons in Medieval England* (London: University Press, 1985), pp. 92-5 and 99-100. Reynolds argues that this is an autobiographical statement in Reynolds and Holloway (eds.), *Julian of Norwich: Shewing of Love*, p. xxxix.

[2] Brant Pelphrey, *Love was his meaning: The Theology and Mysticism of Julian of Norwich*, Salzburg Studies in English Literature, 92:4 (Austria, Salzburg: Institut fur Anglistik und Amerikanistik Universitat Salzburg, 1982) [hereafter Pelphrey, *Love was his meaning*], p. 315.

manual, *The Book of Vices and Virtues* describe the problem of sin in terms of a prison in which we all languish, unable to pay God the great debts we owe.[3] In this light Julian's words are not so much an autobiographical insight, neither are they simply the use of a standard image for life in the world, as Watson and Jenkins suggest, but a realisation of the saving presence and work of God within the pastoral realm of the sacrament of penance.[4]

This thesis explores Julian's use of the language of penance within her long and short versions of *A Revelation of Divine Love* by which she addresses the overwhelming and debilitating sense of sin that resulted in ordinary folk experiencing it as a prison that denied them any sense of God's loving forgiveness. By considering Julian's texts within the context of late fourteenth-century penitential and catechetical teaching as encapsulated within the vernacular manuals and other devotional means, I reveal the extent to which Julian engages with this penitential climate. At a time when the ordinary believer was encouraged to shrive their own hearts, yet the mechanism of confession was increasingly unable to give reassurance of forgiveness, I argue that Julian articulates her revelation in the language of the manuals in order to address this problem. In so doing Julian does not so much present a new theology of love which seeks to overturn the teachings of the church on penance, but rather reveals the saving presence of God within the mechanisms of the church, in order to give comfort and reassurance that confession is an encounter with the Supreme Physician where sinners will receive the medicine of forgiveness for their sins.

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[3] *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. by Robert Hasenfratz, TEAMS Middle English Text Series (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000) [hereafter, Hasenfratz (ed.), *Ancrene Wisse*], p. 162, l. 80; Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson (trans. and intro.), *Anchoritic Spirituality: Ancrene Wisse and Associated Texts* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991) [hereafter Savage and Watson, *Anchoritic Spirituality*], p. 95; W. Nelson Francis (ed.), *The Book of Vices and Virtues: A Fourteenth-Century English Translation of The Somme le Roi of Lorens D'Orleans*, EETS, OS 217 (London: Oxford University Press, 1942) [hereafter Francis (ed.) *The Book of Vices and Virtues*], p. 126, ll. 31-2.

[4] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 364, note 33. Bauerschmidt argues more generally that the statement refers to 'our damaged human nature' but gives no contextual reference to it: Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University Press, 1999) [hereafter Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ*], p. 104.

Part 1 – 'And thou, to whom this booke shall come': Penance and Julian Scholarship

The subject of penance within Julian's texts has largely been overlooked by scholarship.[5] One of the reasons for this has been the categorization of Julian's writings as mystical and herself as a mystic. As Beckwith points out, the modern study of mysticism has had a tendency to disconnect the so-called mystic from the world around them and in particular from the institutional church.[6] This view is encapsulated in Southern's words when he writes: as 'a mystic and contemplative Julian stood somewhat apart from the organised religious society around her'.[7] Tanner continues this assumption when he states that 'her book shows little interest in the institutional church, but a mystical treatise can scarcely be expected to'.[8] Julian has not simply been seen as indifferent to the church, but her texts are often viewed as openly criticising and being in direct conflict to 'the common teachings of holy church'. This has led to viewing Julian's position on the edge of society, as a radical female voice whose vision of love is at odds with the institutional church.[9] In contrast, this

[5] Julian's orthodox understanding of the sacrament of penance has been noted but not fully explored by scholars such as: David Aers, *Salvation and Sin: Augustine, Langland and Fourteenth-Century Theology* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University Press, 2009) [hereafter Aers, *Salvation and Sin*], p. 161; Roger Ellis and Samuel Fanous, '1349-1412:texts' in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mysticism*, ed. by Samuel Fanous and Vincent Gillespie (Cambridge: University Press, 2011), p. 143; Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ*, p. 104.

[6] Sarah Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993) [hereafter Beckwith, *Christ's Body*], pp. 7-21.

[7] R.W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (London: Penguin, 1970), p. 301.

[8] Norman Tanner, *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich, 1370-1532* (Ontario, Canada: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984) [hereafter Tanner, *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich*], p. 64.

[9] Scholars who highlight Julian's conflict with the institutional church include: Lynn Staley, 'Julian of Norwich and the Crisis of Authority' in David Aers and Lynn Staley, *The Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics and Gender in Late Medieval English Culture* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), pp. 107-178 [hereafter Staley, 'Julian of Norwich and the Crisis of Authority']; Grace Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: University Press, 1995) [hereafter Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*], pp. 182-3; Abram Van Engen, 'Shifting Perspectives: Sin and Salvation in Julian's *A Revelation of Love*' in *Literature and Theology*, 23 (2009), pp. 1-17 [hereafter Van Engen, 'Shifting Perspectives']; Christopher Abbott, 'His Body, The Church: Julian of Norwich's Vision of Christ Crucified,' *Downside Review*, 115 (1997), pp.1-22 [hereafter Abbott, 'His Body, The Church']. Scholars who argue against this include: Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ*, pp. 108-13; Barbara Newman, *God and the Goddesses: Vision, Poetry and Belief in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003) [hereafter Newman, *God and the Goddesses*], p. 224.

thesis considers Julian within the context of the late fourteenth-century church and examines the extent to which its teaching on penance influenced and shaped her work. [10]

In his seminal article on 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love',* Watson concludes with the hope that, by demonstrating that 'neither Julian nor her book was impervious to history…new and productive kinds of analysis of this remarkable work' will be possible.[11] This thesis makes a contribution to fulfilling that hope, by exploring a long-neglected area of Julian's work, namely her pastoral understanding of the sacrament of penance. When analysed within the context of late fourteenth-century penitential piety, her short and long texts of *A Revelation of Divine Love* reveal a deep concern for those who continued to experience a sense of shame and dread of sin, even after confession to a priest. By means of a close comparative reading of Julian's two texts, and an examination of a wide range of Middle English devotional texts and manuals, as well as the breadth of Julian scholarship to date, I argue that Julian addresses these pastoral concerns for the ordinary believer.

Despite our desire to know the woman behind the texts of *A Revelation of Divine Love*, 'the ankres at Norwich' has remained consistently elusive to scholars and commentators alike. Apart from a few references within wills and an account within Margery Kempe's book, little else is known of the figure that has come to be widely celebrated today as a great mystic and the first known woman writer in English.[12] All that can be stated of the author must be

[10] More recently scholars such as Watson have sought to locate Julian's texts within an historical setting: Nicholas Watson, 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*', pp. 637-83.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 683. This contextual approach to mystical texts is analysed in Louise Nelstrop with Kevin Magill and Bradley B. Onishi, *Christian Mysticism: An Introduction to Contemporary Theoretical Approaches* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009) [hereafter Nelstrop, *Christian Mysticism*], pp. 11-14.
[12] The name Julian appears in a number of bequests: both Roger Reed, a Norwich rector, in 1393/4 and Thomas Edmund, a chantry priest, in 1404, left a small amount of money to an anchoress who has been identified as Julian of Norwich. Reference to a 'Julian' in John Plumpton's bequest to the anchoress of St. Julian's Church, Conisford and to her maids of 1415 is less certainly identifiable as Julian of Norwich. Likewise, the words

pieced together from the two texts that she left, now only known through copies of the original. From close textual analysis, the image which emerges locates Julian, and her work, within the devotional world of the late-fourteenth century laity. Whilst the religiosity of nuns and devout laity may have barely differed, scholars have been divided as to whether Julian's piety was shaped by the world of the convent or not. It is from the copious inferences to unnamed theological writers and her use of rhetorical devices that Colledge and Walsh imagine Julian's early life being formed by the convent at Carrow which she purportedly entered in her teens and was extensively educated. [13] It was also here that she is thought to have received her visions and after the completion of both of her texts sometime after 1393, entered the anchorhold of St Julian's church which was in the advowson of the convent. [14]

Studies into the vibrant and extensive learning of the pious laity, however, question the assumption that Julian must have been a nun to have possessed such intellectual skill and knowledge. The work of both Meale and Riddy into the oral culture and learning of women in the late fourteenth century reveal a world of conversation which presents a more

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"julian recluz a Norwich" found in the will of Isabel Ufford, daughter of Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, who left twenty shillings in 1416, do not necessarily refer to the Julian who was author of *A Revelaion of Divine Love*: see Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, pp. 33-34 and F.I. Dunn, 'Hermits, Anchorites and Recluses: A Study with Reference to Medieval Norwich' in Frank Dale Sayer (ed.), *Julian and her Norwich* (Norwich: Julian of Norwich Celebration Committee, 1973) pp. 18-26. The only other extant record of Julian, apart from her own text, is that of a visit made to her by Margery of Kempe in 1413/6, reproduced in chapter 80 of Windeatt (ed.), *The Book of Margery Kempe*, pp. 119-22 and 1335-78.

[13] Those who argue that Julian may have been a nun include: Edmund Colledge and James Walsh, 'Editing Julian of Norwich's *Revelations*: A Progress Report', *Medieval Studies*, 38 (1976), pp. 418-419. Watson also argues that Julian was probably a nun in Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 4; Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, p. 44; Denise Baker, *Julian of Norwich's Showings From Vision to Book* (Princeton: University Press, 1994) [hereafter Baker, *From Vision to Book*], p. 34; Joan Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter: The Theology of Julian of Norwich* (New York: Crossroad, 1991) [hereafter Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*], p. 10. Grace Jantzen suggests that Julian was already enclosed at the time of her revelation: Grace Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich Mystic and Theologian* (London: SPCK, 1987) [hereafter Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich Mystic and Theologian*], p. 24.

[14] See the introduction of Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. vii; Benedicta Ward, 'Julian the Solitary' in Kenneth Leech and Benedicta Ward (eds.), *Julian Reconsidered* (Fairacres, Oxford: SLG, 1995), pp. 11-29 [hereafter Ward, 'Julian the Solitary']. Here at p. 20; and Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 4 for the possible links with Carrow. Bhattacharji observes however that there is no record of a Julian at Carrow: Santha Bhattacharji, 'Julian of Norwich', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 30 (Oxford: University Press, 2004), p. 819, citing Walter Rye, *Carrow Abbey* (Norwich: Agas H. Goose, 1889), p. 44.

convincing alternative to that of the scholastic nun. [15] Ward's reading of Julian's deathbed scenario in the short text as taking place at home surrounded by her mother and parish priest succeeds in bringing Julian out of the mystic cold and places her within the very heart of lay devotional life.[16] Even within her anchorhold, where she becomes the living dead, Riddy and Magill have successfully argued that rather than being cut off from the church, Julian entered into its very heart and become the spiritual guide to whom ordinary folk came with their concerns and problems.[17] This thesis considers Julian as embedded within the pastoral life of the fourteenth-century church, whose texts impart a profound understanding of the sacramental nature of the church which has resulted from careful consideration of what she has seen.

With little external evidence of Julian's devotional life, it is therefore through careful analysis of her texts that this thesis argues its point. From such a methodology it soon becomes apparent that Julian's works are not so much a record of 'the feelings, acts and experiences' of a mystic in her solitude but more 'a vast echo chamber of allusion and imitation' which utilises the language, imagery and discourses of the late fourteenth-century to verbalise as

[15] Felicity Riddy, 'Women talking about the things of God': a late medieval sub-culture' in Carole M. Meale (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500* (Cambridge: University Press, 1993), pp.104-12 [hereafter Riddy, 'Women talking about the things of God']; and Carole M. Meale, ''alle the bokes that I haue of latyn, englisch and frensch': laywomen and their books in late medieval England' in Carole M. Meale (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500* (Cambridge: University Press, 1993), pp. 128-158 [hereafter Meale, 'alle the bokes that I haue of latyn, englisch and frensch'].

[16] Ward, 'Julian the Solitary', p. 23, David Knowles also argues that Julian was probably 'still living at home when the 'shewings' of 1373 took place': David Knowles, *The English Mystical Tradition* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), p. 120; from her analysis of the Visitation literature in relation to Julian, Appleford convincingly locates Julian's deathbed scene within late fourteenth-century piety: Amy Appleford, 'The 'Comene Course of Prayers': Julian of Norwich and Late Medieval Death Culture', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 107 (2008), pp. 190-214 [hereafter Appleford, 'The 'Comene Course of Prayers'].

[17] Kevin J. Magill, *Mystic or Visionary* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006) [hereafter Magill, *Mystic or Visionary*]; Felicity Riddy, 'Julian of Norwich and Self-Textualization', pp. 101-124 and Felicity Riddy, ''Publication' before Print: The Case of Julian of Norwich' in Julia Crick and Alexandra Walsham (eds.), *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300-1700* (Cambridge: University Press, 2004), pp. 29-49 [hereafter Riddy, ''Publication' before Print'].

well as comprehend her revelation of love.[18] This sensitivity of Gillespie to the verbal nuances and structural interplay within Julian's texts is reflected in the work of Sutherland and Appleford who reveal the extent to which Julian's writings echo and utilise the language and significance of liturgy and the late-medieval death culture to 'provide a common access point from which readers can approach her original and intricate 'imaginative theology''.[19] This thesis draws on 'the common teaching of holy church' as expressed in the vernacular penitential and catechetical manuals to consider an area of medieval devotional piety which has not been fully explored in Julian's writing, namely penance.

The language and doctrine of the sacrament of penance dominated the devotional climate at the close of the fourteenth century. With its theology, terminology and practice rooted in the Latin and vernacular penitential manuals, the sacrament of penance sought to deal with the daily problem of sin and enable souls to navigate the complex interior world of vice and virtue. As Duffy demonstrates in his study of late-medieval lay piety, its doctrinal constituents of contrition, confession, absolution and penance or satisfaction were transmitted in a myriad of different ways from liturgy, preaching, and confession, to plays, poems and

[18] Quotation from William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (London: Burns and Oates, 1952), p. 31. The image is used by Gillespie: Vincent Gillespie, '[S]he do the police in different voices': Pastiche, Ventriloquism and Parody in Julian of Norwich' in Liz Herbert McAvoy (ed.), *A Companion to Julian of Norwich* (Cambridge, D.S. Brewer, 2008), pp. 192-207 [hereafter Gillespie, ''[S]he do the police in different voices'']. Here at p. 195. See also Vincent Gillespie, 'The Colours of Contemplation' in E.A. Jones (ed.), MMTE, VIII, pp. 7-28 [hereafter Gillespie, 'The Colours of Contemplation'].

[19] Appleford, 'The "Comene Course of Prayers", pp. 190-214; Annie Sutherland, 'Julian of Norwich and the Liturgy' in Liz Herbert McAvoy (ed.), *A Companion to Julian of Norwich* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008), pp. 88-98 [hereafter Sutherland, 'Julian of Norwich and the Liturgy']. See also Sutherland's study on the Bible in Julian's text: Annie Sutherland, ''Oure feyth is groundyd in goddess worde' – Julian of Norwich and the Bible' in E.A. Jones (ed.), MMTE, VII, pp. 1-20. On Julian's use of visual tropes see Alexandra Barratt, ''No such sitting': Julian Tropes the Trinity' in *A Companion to Julian of Norwich*, ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008), pp. 42-52 and Cate Gunn, ''A recluse atte Norwyche': Images of Medieval Norwich and Julian's Revelations,' in Liz Herbert McAvoy (ed.), *A Companion to Julian of Norwich* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008), pp. 116-126. On the term 'imaginative theology' see: Barbara Newman in Barbara Newman, ''What did it mean to say "I saw?"' The Clash between Theory and Practice in Medieval Visionary Culture', *Speculum*, 80 (2005), pp. 1-43 [hereafter Newman, *Medieval Visionary Culture: 'What did it mean to say "I saw?"'*], *passim*; Appleford, 'The 'Comene Course of Prayers'', p. 193.

images which adorned the local parish churches.[20] But, as scholars have noted, there is also reason to believe that during Julian's time the successful self-reckoning which the penitential climate instilled within the ordinary soul led to a scrupulosity regarding sin that undermined the sacrament of penance itself.[21] In my contextual analysis of Julian's writings I demonstrate the extent to which they not only reflect these late fourteenth-century concerns with the problem of sin and penance but also the way in which she utilises the language of penance to articulate her theology of love in order to give ease and comfort with the assurance of forgiveness.

This thesis therefore approaches Julian's text as a work of 'vernacular theology' which categorises 'writing in English which may be called, broadly, theological [and] was not, like that in Latin, made by clerics for clerics but immediately or ultimately for other sections of the community'.[22] This approach brings a new pastoral understanding of her texts as it sets

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[20] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992) [hereafter Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*], p. 3. Scholars who have furthered emphasized the penitential climate include: F.R.H. Du Boulay, *The England of Piers Plowman: William Langland and his Vision of the Fourteenth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1991), p. 77; Mary Flowers Braswell, *The Medieval Sinner: Characterization and Confession in the Literature of the English Middle Ages* (London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1983), pp. 1-69; Ann Eljenholm Nichols, *Seeable Signs: the Iconography of the Seven Sacraments, 1350-1544* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1994) [hereafter Nichols, *Seeable Signs*], pp. 222-41; Jonathan Hughes, 'The Administration of Confession in the Diocese of York in the Fourteenth Century' in David M. Smith (ed.), *Studies in Clergy and Ministry in Medieval England* (York: University Press, 1991), pp. 87-163 [hereafter Hughes, 'The Administration of Confession']; Kathleen Kamerick, *Popular Piety and Art in the Late Middle Ages: Image Worship and Idolatry in England, 1350-1500* (New York: Palgrave, 2002) [hereafter Kamerick, *Popular Piety*], pp. 128-30; Katherine C. Little, *Confession and Resistance: Defining the Self in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University Press, 2006) [hereafter Little, *Confession and Resistance*], pp. 49-77.

[21] Lee Patterson, 'The Subject of Confession: The Pardoner and the Rhetoric of Penance' in *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 367-421 [hereafter Patterson, 'The Subject of Confession']; Nicole Rice, *Lay Piety and Religious Discipline in Middle English Literature* (Cambridge: University Press, 2008) [hereafter Rice, *Lay Piety and Religious Discipline*], p. 2; Jerry Root, *'Space to speke': The Confessional Subject in Medieval Literature* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997) [hereafter Root, '*Space to speke*'], p. 83; Hughes, 'The Administration of Confession', pp. 136-40; Karen Wagner, '*Cum aliquis venerit ad sacerdotem*: Penitential Experience in the central Middle Ages' in Abigail Firey (ed.), *A New History of Penance* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2008), pp. 201-18 [hereafter Wagner, '*Cum aliquis venerit*'], p. 202.

[22] Ian Doyle, quoted in Vincent Gillespie, 'Vernacular Theology' in Paul Strohm (ed.), *Middle English*, Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature (Oxford: University Press, 2009), pp. 401-20. Here at p. 401. For an outline of the term see: Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism (1200-1350)* (New York: Crossroad Herder, 1998), pp. 19-24: McGinn identified 'vernacular theology' as the third form of medieval theology, after monastic and scholastic thought; Nicholas Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology. The Oxford Translation

her sophisticated theology within the context of devotional and pastoral writings of her day, such as *The Book of Vices and Virtues* and *The Prick of Conscience*, in addition to texts such as William Langland's *Piers Plowman* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.[23] In so doing Julian's texts reveal a wealth of engagement with the broad sweep of the vernacular theology of her day which gives new and interesting insights into the nature and purpose of her texts.

As a result of analysing Julian's long text within the context of vernacular manuals I also revisit the question of the didactic quality of Julian's texts in order to consider the extent to which her writing seeks to fulfil a penitential mandate in bringing the struggling soul from a sense of fear at the enormity of sin to the ease and comfort of forgivness.[24] Building on Staley's identification of the example of a lord and a servant as a 'conversion' text I argue that Julian sets up a crisis of understanding within her long text between her revelation and

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Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409', *Speculum*, 70 (1995), pp. 822-64 [hereafter Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change']; Nicholas Watson,'The Politics of Middle English Writing' in Jocelyn Wogan-Browne *et al.*(eds.), *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280-1520*, Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies (Exeter: University Press, 1999), pp. 331-352 [hereafter Watson, 'The Politics of Middle English Writing']; Nicholas Watson, 'Cultural Changes', *English Language Notes*, 44 (2006), pp.127-37; Kate Crassons, 'Performance Anxiety and Watson's Vernacular Theology', *English Language Notes*, 44 (2006), pp. 95-102.

[23] Theological studies of Julian's text include: Denys Turner, *Julian of Norwich, Theologian* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011) [hereafter Turner, *Julian of Norwich, Theologian*], *passim*; Kerrie Hide, *Gifted Origins to Graced Fulfillment:The Soteriology of Julian of Norwich* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2001) [hereafter Hide, *Gifted Origins to Graced Fulfilment*], *passim*; Margaret Ann Palliser, *Christ, Our Mother of Mercy: Divine Mercy and Compassion in the Theology of the Shewings of Julian of Norwich* (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 1992), pp. 14-17; Paul Molinari, *Julian of Norwich: The Teaching of a Fourteenth-Century English Mystic* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1958), *passim.*

[24] For the 'performative' approach to mystical texts see Nelstrop, *Christian Mysticism*. Scholars who highlight this aspect of Julian's text include: Elizabeth Robertson, 'Julian of Norwich's 'Modernist Style' and the Creation of Audience' in Liz Herbert McAvoy (ed.), *A Companion to Julian of Norwich* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008), pp. 139-153 [hereafter Robertson, 'Julian of Norwich's 'Modernist Style'']; Frances McCormack, 'Reading God: visions and revisions in Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love*' in Kathy Cawsey and Jason Harris (eds.), *Transmission and Transformation in the Middle Ages: Texts and Contexts* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), pp. 98-114 [hereafter McCormack, 'Reading God']; Barry Windeatt, 'The Art of Mystical Loving: Julian of Norwich' in Marion Glasscoe (ed.), MMTE, I, pp. 55-71 [hereafter Windeatt, 'The Art of Mystical Loving']; Maggie Ross, 'Behold Not the Cloud Experience' in E.A. Jones (ed.), MMTE VIII, pp. 28-50; Oliver Davies, 'Transformational Processes in the Work of Julian of Norwich and Mechthild of Magdeburg' in Marion Glasscoe (ed.), MMTE, V, pp. 39-52 [hereafter Davies, 'Transformational Processes']; Vincent Gillespie and Maggie Ross, 'The Apophatic Image: The Poetics of Effacement in Julian of Norwich' in Marion Glasscoe (ed.), MMTE, V, pp. 53-77 [hereafter Gillespie and Ross, 'The Apophatic Image']; Nicholas Watson, 'The Trinitarian Hermeneutic in Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*' in Marion Glasscoe (ed.), MMTE, V, pp. 79-100, [hereafter Watson, 'The Trinitarian Hermeneutic'].

the 'common teaching of holy church'.[25] This conflict is deliberately left unresolved in order that, in scholastic terms, two opposing arguments in opposition may jointly illuminate the necessity of sin and penance in bringing the soul to the proper state of humility and the mercy and grace of the loving Lord in forgiveness. In so doing I reveal the extent to which Julian views the pastoral process of penance as integral to those who desire a more intimate relationship with God.

Part 2 – 'A particular of chapters'

The argument is set out in four chapters. The first of these is entitled 'the yeere of our lord 1373' and locates the short and long versions of a *Revelation of Divine Love* within the historical and ecclesiological context of the late fourteenth century. The chapter focusses on the scholarship of Watson and concludes that his contextual thesis is more significant for the issues it raises regarding historical and ecclesiological influences than for positing a compositional date. Highlighting the purely speculative nature of dating both the short and long texts, I contend that Julian probably wrote the short text sometime before 1393 and the long text many years later, possibly as late as the early fifteenth century. The chapter closes by concluding that although it is not possible to posit specific dates from Julian's texts, nevertheless her work engages with the dominant popular discussions regarding sin and confession.

The second chapter outlines the nature of these popular late fourteenth-century penitential discussions and their expression through the pastoral and catechetical teaching of the church.

[25] Lynn Staley, 'The Penitential Psalms: Conversion and the Limits of Lordship', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 37 (2007), pp. 221-269 [hereafter Staley, 'The Penitential Psalms'].

Entitled ‘Than is this the remedy’, it argues that by the fourteenth century the confessional encounter was increasingly unable to alleviate the sense of sin experienced by some devout souls such as Julian. Drawing on the scholarship of the history of penance I chart the rise in the importance of the role of the penitent within confession from its first formulation in private penance of the Irish manuals of the early medieval period, through the penitential theology of the twelfth-century scholastics such as Peter Lombard and Robert Courson, to its standardization at the Fourth Lateran Council. I observe that, by the close of the thirteenth century, whilst the Latin manuals formed the basis of a language and mechanism for naming and dealing with sin through penance, the emphasis on giving a full and true confession no longer rested entirely with the priest but had become the responsibility of the penitent. The second section of the chapter demonstrates the extent to which this focus was fuelled by the rise of vernacular manuals and moral treatises during the fourteenth century that were becoming increasingly accessible to a non-clerical audience. With an awareness of the complexity of sin and its consequences I conclude that, during the period in which Julian wrote her texts, writers and commentators alike were voicing a concern that the apparatus for dealing with sin, namely the confessional encounter, was increasingly unable to alleviate a sense of sinfulness and dread for those who sought a deeper relationship with God.

The extent to which Julian voices a similar concern with the confessional encounter is explored in the third chapter entitled ‘oure kindly penance’. By analysing her short and long version of a *Revelation of Divine Love* within the catechetical and penitential climate of the late fourteenth century Julian’s works reveal a similar depiction of the debilitating and imprisioning effect of sin as found in the vernacular manuals. However, for Julian, this knowledge of sin, which was instilled into the penitent in order to enable a full and true confession, does not lead to the ease and comfort of forgiveness but rather to a sense of dread

and scrupulosity. The sacrament of penance seems of have frequently failed to mediate the medicine of Christ. The third chapter begins by focussing on Julian's own penitential routine and concludes that, like many other devout woman of her time, Julian was steeped in the penitential and catechetical teaching of the vernacular manuals and moral treatises which she would have known and encountered through her own experience of confession, if not directly by reading them. From close textual analysis, the second section of the chapter gives evidence of Julian's concern that the sacrament of penance was unable to alleviate a sense of sinfulness amongst devout souls. The final section analyses Julian's remedy to the confessional problem and is entitled 'he is our medicine'. It focusses on her use of three terms to unfold the penitential significance of her revelation. These terms are: treasure, holy mother church and remedy, each of which has their basis in the catechetical and ecclesiological teaching of holy church. However in the hands of Julian they come to have a depth of meaning which addresses the devotional issues that surrounded the church's mechanism for handling sin and bring a new visionary understanding for the penitent of the process of penance itself.

In the light of my previous findings the fourth chapter considers the nature and function of the long version of a *Revelation of Divine Love* and explores the extent to which it can be regarded as a penitential text. The final chapter, entitled 'a lovely lesson', begins by examining Julian's own motivation for writing and considers the way in which she shifts the focus of her intended audience within the long text to 'mine even cristen' as evidence of her concern to address contemporary issues. Following a survey of the scholarship regarding Julian's relationship with 'oure moder holy church', I argue that Julian sets up an internal conflict between her revelation of divine love and the church's teaching on sin in order to

demonstrate the necessity of both and the integral nature of penance in the mystical 'beholding' of God.

I begin by analysing the scholarship concerning the compositional date of Julian's texts in order to locate her writings within the ecclesiological and devotional context of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century.

CHAPTER 1

'THE YEERE OF OUR LORD 1373': THE COMPOSITIONAL DATE OF JULIAN'S *REVELATION OF DIVINE LOVE* WITHIN ITS FOURTEENTH-CENTURY CONTEXT

Introduction

Any suggestion regarding the compositional dating of Julian's work is inevitably speculative. The only internal reference to a date in *A Revelation of Divine Love* is found at the opening of the second chapter of L, where Julian records the occasion on which she received her series of visions:

> These revelations were shewed to a simple creature that cowde no letter, the yeere of our lord 1373, the viiith day of May. [1]

However, the precise day within the month of May becomes somewhat confused in textual transmission, with **P** differing somewhat to **S1** in citing 'xiii day of May' instead of 'viii'. [2] Despite this anomaly the fact that the scribe of the Sloane manuscript later uses this statement as an opening title to his copy of the text, strongly suggests it held some significance. [3] Unlike Margery Kempe, Julian was not concerned with recording the compositional process but rather with the date on which her revelation was given.[4]

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[1] References to **S1** are taken from Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, and references to the Paris manuscript and short text are from Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*.
[2] As Watson points out, either could be right with 'x' and 'v' equally being misread by either scribe, in Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 387, n. 2.
[3] The only reference to a date within the short text is with regard to Julian's age, which she gives as 'thrittye wintere and a halfe', the age Christ begun his ministry on earth: 'I desirede thre graces be the gifte of God. The first was to have minde of Cristes passion' section 1 line 1, page 63. However, as we have no birthdate for Julian within S, this provides little assistance.
[4] In contrast, the text of Margery Kempe's work is framed by her description of the events which led to its composition: see Margery Kempe, Windeatt (ed.), *The Book of Margery Kempe*, p. 5.

Other references to time similarly exclude any connection with textual composition and instead allude to periods during which Julian considered the events of 1373. The first of these can be found at the end of chapter 86 of the long text in **S1**, where Julian writes:

> And fro that time that it was shewid I desired oftentimes to witten what was our lords mening. And xv yer after and more I was answerid in gostly understonding, seyand thus: "Woldst thou wetten thi lords mening in this thing? Wete it wele: love was his mening."[5]

The second is mentioned in chapter 51 of the same manuscript and describes the length of time Julian spent considering one aspect of her revelatory experience: unable initially to comprehend the example of a lord and a servant, she declared that 'For xx yeres after the tyme of the shewing, save iii monethis, I had techyng inwardly'.[6] Internal evidence therefore locates Julian's revelatory experience and her subsequent reflection upon it to the late fourteenth century. From these few shards of internal references, however, scholars have sought to ascertain the dates when Julian composed S and L in order to locate her writings more precisely within their historical context. This chapter sets out those arguments and concludes that they are more important for the contextual approach they have to Julian's work than for the final compositional dates they seek to posit. I will consider her two texts in turn, beginning with S.

The Short Text (S)

The rubric at the beginning of S within **A** tells the reader that:

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[5] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 102.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

> Here es a vision, shewed be the goodenes of God to a devoute woman. And hir name es Julian, that is recluse att Norwiche and yit is on life, anno domini 1413.[7]

Apart from Julia Bolton Holloway, most scholars interpret this date as referring not to the date of composition, but to the time when the scribe copied it out.[8] It is clear that Julian was still alive at this time, though the extent to which she was known to the scribe is more debatable.[9] Given that the **A** scribe was copying out this version of the text, the manuscript is at best a copy of a copy of the work which is much older.

S therefore can be dated to shortly after Julian received her revelation in 1373, but how soon after is subject to conjecture.[10] Grace Jantzen is not alone in imagining the scenario in which 'it seems likely that, after the visions, Julian recovered quickly from her illness, and wrote down the contents of her revelation soon thereafter'.[11] Benedicta Ward suggests that, given the time it would have taken for Julian to have put her household affairs in order before entering the anchorhold, she was probably at home when she wrote S and possibly L. [12] One of the main arguments for placing the composition of S so close to the

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[7] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 63.
[8] In the introduction to her edition of the short text Julia Bolton Holloway dates it to 1413 as a result of this scribal reference. This has important implications for her understanding of the text, which I will deal with later. Reynolds and Holloway (eds.), *Julian of Norwich: Shewing of Love*, p. 689.
[9] Both Colledge and Walsh and Watson suggest that the scribe knew Julian well enough to state that she was still alive, if not take pride in their joint local celebrity. See the introduction to Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, p. 19 and Watson, 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*', p. 680.
[10] Scholars who uphold this assumption include Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, p. 19. See also J.P.H.Clark, 'Fiducia in Julian of Norwich I', *Downside Review*, 99 (1981), p. 97; Glasscoe, 'Visions and Revisions', p. 104; Valerie M. Lagorio, 'Julian of Norwich' in Joseph R. Stranyer (ed.), *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), 7:180; Christina von Nolcken, 'Julian of Norwich' in A.S. G. Edwards (ed.), *Middle English Prose: A Critical Guide to Major Authors and Genres* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1984), p. 97; Frances Beer, *Women and Mystical Experience in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), p. 132; and Pelphrey, *Love was his meaning*, p. 8. Whilst Simon Tugwell also believes that the short text was written 'within a few years of her showings' he also argues that Julian's reference, in section 11, that it 'has ever beene a comfort' to her that she chose Jesus for her heaven, suggests that some time must have passed between her vision and her writing: Simon Tugwell, *Ways of Imperfection: An Exploration of Christian Spirituality* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1984) [hereafter Tugwell, *Ways of Imperfection*], p. 188 and p. 202 n. 18.
[11] Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich Mystic and Theologian*, p. 3.
[12] Ward, 'Julian the Solitary', p. 27.

reception of the revelation is the nature of the text itself. Frances Beer argues that 'the shewings must have been set down shortly after their occurrence, as the account is so clear and detailed'. [13] For Anna Maria Reynolds this arises from a concern to capture her experience correctly while 'every detail is fresh in Julian's mind'.[14]

In his 1993 article 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's Revelation of Love' Watson highlights the weakness of this view. Drawing on the evidence of *The Book of Margery Kempe* written some twenty years after its recorded events, Watson argues that the highly detailed and vivid nature of Julian's account does not necessarily presume a proximity to the events it describes.[15] Believed to have been written around twenty years later than S, L is comparable to Margery's work in the number of descriptions of her original visions, which have not so much diminished over time as grown in detail and vividness.[16] Barry Windeatt and Barbara Newman explain this embellishment in artistic and stylistic terms, arguing that Julian came to have a fuller understanding of the nature of what she saw and thus expressed it in more visual terms. [17] As a result Nicholas Watson concludes that there 'appear to be no good grounds for thinking that the immediacy some readers find in S implies anything about its date.'[18]

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[13] Frances Beer, *Julian of Norwich's Revelations of Divine Love: The Shorter Version, from B.L. Add. MS 37790*, Middle English Texts, 8 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitatsverlag, 1978), p. 97.
[14] Anna Maria Reynolds, (ed.) *Julian of Norwich: A Shewing of Love The shorter version of sixteen revelations of Divine Love* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1958), p. xiii.
[15] The story of how Margery's book came into being is told in the two proems and the last chapter of Book one of *The Book of Margery Kempe*. Here she specifically states that the text was not written down until 'xx yer or mor fro tym this creatur had forsake the world and besyly clef onto ower Lord': Windeatt (ed.), *The Book of Margery Kempe*, p. 51, line 158-9.
[16] For example in the second showing the short text merely records: 'I saw the bodily sight lastande of the plentyouse of the hede' whilst in the seventh chapter of the long text the same vision is extended by 24 lines to describe the blood falling from his head. See Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 147 for textual comparison.
[17] Barry Windeatt, 'Julian of Norwich and her Audience', *Review of English Studies*, NS, 28 (1977) [hereafter Windeatt, 'Julian of Norwich and her Audience'], p. 9; Newman, *Medieval Visionary Culture*: '*What did it mean to say "I saw?"'*, pp. 1-43.
[18] Watson, 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*', p. 641.

Other scholars have posited an explanation for the personal and immediate nature of S in terms of its function. Marleen Cré describes S as a reconstruction of Julian's visionary experience in which she is primarily concerned with presenting her experiences, how she felt and what she saw.[19] Similarly, Windeatt sees Julian's inclusion of many homely details within S that are subsequently omitted from L, as revealing a concern to give evidence of the genuine nature of her showings.[20] In both cases the motivation for writing the text is disconnected from the time of composition and therefore gives little indication of when that may have taken place.

Watson approaches the question of the compositional dating of S from a completely different perspective. Instead of following the assumption that it must have been written soon after the vision of 1373, he looks for internal evidence to suggest an historical context to its composition.[21] In so doing he singles out the following passage that suggests Julian was writing during a time of religious upheaval when the use of images was being increasingly questioned. Reflecting on her desire to feel more than just a 'grete felinge in the passion of Criste' but to be with those gathered around the cross she writes...

> ...notwithstandynge that I leeved sadlye alle the peynes of Criste as halye kyrke schewes and teches, and also the paintinges of crucifexes that er made be the grace of God aftere the techinge of haly kyrke to the liknes of Cristes passion, als farfurthe as manes witte maye reche - noughtwithstondinge alle this trewe beleve, I desirede a bodilye sight wharein I might have more knawinge of bodeley paines of oure lorde our savioure.[22]

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[19] Marleen Cré, *Vernacular Mysticism in the Charterhouse: A Study of London, British Library, MS Additional 37790, The Medieval Translator*, 9 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006) [hereafter Cré, *Vernacular Mysticism in the Charterhouse*], p. 121.
[20] Windeatt, 'Julian of Norwich and her Audience', pp. 1-2.
[21] Watson, 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*', pp. 637-83. This assumption was held by Colledge and Walsh: see the introduction to Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, p. 19.
[22] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 63, lines 9-14.

Watson acknowledges that Colledge and Walsh had already highlighted the Lollard controversy on image worship as a possible background to this passage.[23] However, he takes this a stage further and argues that, from this allusion, S's composition can be dated to the increasingly turbulent days of the 1380s when the official position against Wycliffe was hardening and the proper veneration of images came to be seen as a mark of orthodoxy.[24] Whilst the 1382 Council of Blackfriars may not have mentioned the denial of image veneration as one of the erroneous beliefs of Wycliffe, nevertheless Watson believes it was, by this time, one of the most common of the Lollard beliefs and points to it increasingly being commented upon by devotional writers and preachers alike.[25] In this context Julian's defence of the proper worship of the crucifix in church along with her other submissions to the 'techyng of holy church' enable him to locate S within the 1380s.

Watson's argument thereby introduces the question of contextual influences to Julian's writing. However, it is debatable whether a compositional date can be obtained from this. The passage he uses as evidence for a 1385 date is not as straightforward as it first appears. Both Ann Hudson and Margaret Aston point to evidence which suggest that attitudes towards images did not become a mark of orthodoxy until the early 1400s.[26] Until the

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[23] Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, p. 202, n. 14.
[24] Watson, 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*', pp. 659-667.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 662. Robert Swanson also points out that 'of the original twenty-four propositions denounced in 1382 only some (principally concerning the mass and transubstantiation) were declared heretical': R. N. Swanson, *Church and Society in Late Medieval England* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 330. For a full discussion of Lollardy and image worship see Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), pp. 143-187. Joy Russell-Smith convincingly ascribes a tract in defence of the veneration of images (*Numquid domini nostri* in BL MS Royal ii B x, fol. 178) to Walter Hilton: Joy Russell-Smith, 'Walter Hilton and a tract in defence of the veneration of images', *Dominican Studies*, 7 (1954), pp. 180-214. Watson's early dating of John Mirk's *Festial* to 1382, also places one of Mirk's sermons to this period of debate: Watson, 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*', pp. 663 and n. 64, a further reference to which can be found in Joyce Bazire and Eric Colledge (eds.), *The Chastising of God's Children and the treatise of Perfection of the Sons of God* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1957) [hereafter Bazire and Colledge (eds.), *The Chastising of God's Children*], chapter xii.
[26] Margaret Aston describes the animated nature of the discussion regarding the precise nature of the worship of the cross, which took place in Oxford during the 1390s. See Margaret Aston, 'Lollards and the Cross' in *Lollards and Their Influence in Late Medieval England*, ed. by Fiona Somerset, Jill C. Havens and Derick G.

Oxford Debates of 1401, Hudson argues, it was still possible openly to debate what would be termed Wycliffite views and not be charged with heresy, the demarcation between Lollardy and orthodoxy being not as clear as it is often portrayed today. It was within this 'grey area' between orthodoxy and heterodoxy that ideas, which would later be called Wycliffite, could still be held without receiving the charge of Lollardy.[27] In her article on 'Lollards and the cross' Aston argues that this was the case for the proper worship of the cross.[28] From the 1370s the schoolmen of Oxford had been debating the complex theological issue of whether *latria* was appropriate to a piece of wood.[29] It was only later, as a result of the iconoclastic acts of the Lollards, that veneration of the cross came to be identified as a characteristic of their belief.[30] If Julian's passage on images reflects a concern for Lollardy, as Watson suggests, then, according to Hudson and Aston's research, such a defence would be more conducive to the early years of the fifteenth century rather than the 1380s.

Scholars have put forward three possible arguments to explain why there is a seemingly fifteenth-century passage, concerning images, at the beginning of a fourteenth-century visionary text. The first of these is that the passage, in fact, dates to the fourteenth century and engages not so much with a fear of heresy as with the devotional concerns of the day. This is the most plausible explanation and evidence to support it can be found by reading

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Pitard (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), pp. 99-113 [hereafter Aston, 'Lollards and the Cross']. Here at p. 105. Hudson states that the hardening of attitudes and the demarcation of the bounds of orthodoxy did not take place in 1382 but nearly 25 years later under Arundel: Anne Hudson, 'The Debate on Bible Translation, Oxford 1401', in *Lollards and their Books* (London: Hambledon Press, 1985), p. 83.

[27] Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 411[hereafter Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*]. The importance of the grey area between heterodoxy and orthodoxy can also be seen in Douglas Gray's introduction to the writing of the period: Douglas Gray, *Later Medieval English Literature* (Oxford: University Press, 2008), pp. 246-252.

[28] Aston, 'Lollards and the Cross', p. 105.

[29] Kamerick, *Popular Piety*, pp. 22-7 and 32-4

[30] For the iconoclastic acts of Lollards and their charges see Norman P. Tanner, *Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Norwich, 1428-31*, Camden Society 4th Series, vol. 20 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977) [hereafter Tanner, *Heresy Trials*], p. 13.

the passage within the context of the rest of S. At the beginning of the first section of S Julian describes three gifts which she asks of God. They act as a prelude, or introduction, to the account of her sickness and ground Julian's revelation in the common practices of the devout. Though Julian is granted the first of these desires by having 'minde of Cristes passion' she still wants more. She wishes to have a 'bodily sight', namely a vision. It is in the midst of this request that she declares her devotion to the paintings of the crucifixion and crucifixes, which are to her the true likeness of Christ's passion. From this perspective Julian's words are not so much a defence as an apologetic for desiring more than was common devotional practice.[31] Although the theological arguments of the time illuminate the meaning of this passage, nevertheless it is questionable whether a compositional date can be distilled from it.

A second and inconclusive explanation suggests that the passage on images was added at a later stage to the only 'official' version of the revelations which was in public circulation during Julian's lifetime. Making the distinction between 'the mere existence of a work and its 'public' existence', John Lawlor raises the question of the censorship of Julian's text.[32] Given the dramatic and apologetic nature of the passage on images found so early on in the text, he argues that the manuscript of S we have today is a later version of a revelatory account which was adjusted to make Julian's position on images clear and orthodox. Whilst this suggestion takes seriously the charge of heresy it not only assumes that either Julian or a later scribe were adjusting S to deflect any accusations but it also enters the

[31] Kathryn Kerby-Fulton similarly identifies this passage as an apologia by Julian and equates it not to her desire for more than common devotional practice, but for the visionary experience connected with church images, in Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion: Censorship and Tolerance of Revelatory Writing in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University Press, 2006) [hereafter Kerby-Fulton, *Books under Suspicion*], pp. 315-323.
[32] John Lawlor, 'A Note on the *Revelations* of Julian of Norwich', *Review of English Studies*, NS, 2 (1951), pp. 256-7.

murky waters of textual adaption and transmission which, in the light of no subsequent copies of the S manuscript, cannot be substantiated.

Despite this fact various scholars have identified aspects of S which suggest that it may well have a complex compositional, if not, textual history. In their introduction to S Colledge and Walsh find evidence that **A** could be a scribal collation of two versions. They point to the error of the repetition of the line 'walde be borne of hir, that was a sympille creature of his makynge' in chapter 6, line 24-30 in **A**, which also occurs in the **P** and **W** as evidence of 'lateral contamination'.[33] The more probable explanation however, is that both **P** and **W** contain a correct version of the passage and that the **A** example is a simple scribal error. Vincent Gillespie argues that S was produced as part of the inquisition process for Julian to become an anchoress and that some kind of visionary document, lies behind S, if indeed it is not the *probatio* document itself.[34] Whilst his argument depends upon a textual history, it does not seek to ascertain a date of compostion from it, but rather to come to a fuller understanding of the nature and function of Julian's initial writing.

In his thesis on the nature of S, Watson similarly envisages it as being altered over time.[35] However, unlike Lawlor, who identifies an external hand at work, Watson believes that the textual changes are by Julian herself. Given the emphasis that Watson places upon the influence of external historical factors, it is interesting that the changes and additions he

[33] Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, p.19; Watson also gives a good summary of this textual problem: Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 34, n. 86.
[34] Vincent Gillespie argues that 'the short text is a *probatio* text produced in connection with the enquiries surrounding her entry into the enclosed life': Gillespie, ''[S]he do the police in different voices', p. 196. Watson also considers the possibility that the short text could have started life as a memorandum written down soon after her revelations in Watson, 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*', p. 667.
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 669.

identifies within her text predominantly result from her subsequent 'revelation' of 1388. The most significant of these is the false peroration in section 23, which seems to end S in a manner equivalent to most devotional texts.[36] He dates the subsequent additions to around the time of 1388 on account of the manner in which they reflect Julian's new insights. It is in relation to this adaption of her text that Watson tentatively associates the passage on images to a later stage in the development of S.[37] Such a hypothesis has implications for the compositional dating of S. It firstly assumes that there is not so much a single compositional date for S as a period of time during which it was written and, secondly, that there are subsequent dates when the text was changed and adapted. If so, it is impossible to substantiate whether the passage on images could have been composed without the existence of an earlier copy of S. It also suggests that Julian's main motivation for adapting her text was her further revelatory insights rather than the specific events of a Council in Blackfriars. Watson's argument for dating the composition of S to around this historic moment therefore becomes less persuasive.

Holloway presents a third explanation as to why S seems to open with a fifteenth-century defence against images amongst a vibrant account of a fourteenth-century vision. Taking the scribal rubric reference to the year 1413 literally, Holloway interestingly locates the text to a time after the Constitutions of Archbishop Arundel in 1409, which introduced a series of regulations including the proper veneration of images, especially the cross, and regulated the use of the vernacular.[38] It is also during this period that heresy trials

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[36] See Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 112, n. 23-31. Scholars who follow this line of thinking include: Liz Herbert McAvoy in her introduction to *A Companion to Julian of Norwich*, ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008), p. 3, and Gillespie, ''[S]he do the police in different voices', p. 197.

[37] Watson, 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*', p. 667.

[38] Reynolds and Holloway (eds.), *Julian of Norwich: Shewing of Love*, pp. xxx and 689; 'by all it shall be commonly taught and preached that the cross and image of the crucifix……are to be worshipped': *Middle English Literature: A Historical Sourcebook*, ed.by Matthew Boyd Goldie (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), p. 247.

increased and the charge of iconoclasm was heard in Norwich.[39] It is therefore not surprising that Holloway concludes that S is an abridgement of the long text created in order to make Julian's work compatible to the regulations of Archbishop Arundel and to escape the charge of heresy.[40] The evidence Holloway draws upon in order to reveal that S comes from a time of anxiety, includes the excising of scriptural allusions from L and references to the *Pater noster* and *Ave Maria* in Latin rather than the vernacular. For instance, the passage on image worship as quoted above along with a general air of nervousness is not found in L.[41] From a contextual point of view, Holloway's arguments seem seductive. They present an answer to the muddling question of why S seems so much more conducive to the fifteenth century than does the long version but her argument does not stand up on either a contextual or a textual basis.

Holloway's argument for a later dating to S is dependent on regarding Arundel's 1409 Constitutions as a turning point which forced Julian to radically alter her text in order to escape scrutiny. Whilst Watson's influential article argues for dramatic consequences to the Constitutions, the impact they had on writers such as Julian has been increasingly, and rightly, questioned.[42] Fiona Somerset, for instance, not only sees Arundel's motivation for his Constitutions as being located in 'shoring up clerical hierarchy and placing it more firmly under his supervision', but also that the prevalence of Wycliffite books amongst the libraries of the gentry question the effects his Constitutions purportedly had.[43] Recently both Michael Sargent and Jeremy Catto have also expressed misgivings of the view that

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[39] Tanner, *Heresy Trials*, p. 13; Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, p. 145 and Norman Tanner, *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich*, p. 163, where he argues that Lollardy was little known in Norwich.
[40] In the introduction to Reynolds and Holloway (eds.), *Julian of Norwich: Shewing of Love*, p. 689.
[41] *Ibid.*, p. 692.
[42] Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change', pp. 822-64.
[43] Fiona Somerset, 'Professionalizing Translation at the Turn of the Fifteenth Century: Ullerston's *Determinacio*, Arundel's *Constitutions*' in *The Vulgar Tongue: Medieval and Postmedieval Vernacularity*, ed. by F. Somerset and N. Watson (Pennsylvania: State University Press, 2003), pp. 152 and 153 respectively.

the Constitutions form a definitive watershed in theological expression and thought.[44] In this light the strength of Holloway's contextual argument becomes questionable. Her thesis for a later dating of the short text is weakened still further when closer analysis of S as an abridged version of L is taken into account and to this I now turn.

The possibility that S could be an abridgement of L was first voiced and refuted by Dundas Harford in 1925.[45] Subsequent research has validated this latter position for a number of reasons. Firstly, Cré's research on **A** strongly suggests that, within the collation of extracts and complete texts, S is one of the latter – that is, a complete text.[46] Secondly, whilst its inclusion in a manuscript of extracts may suggest that S could be an abridged version of L, Glasscoe argues that internal evidence, such as the development of theological thought in the long text, points against this.[47] When S is placed alongside L there are a number of passages in L that theologically develop Julian's revelation. One example of this can be found in chapter 10 of L. It opens with the same showing of the face of Christ on the cross becoming enclosed by dried blood as found in S, but whereas S moves straight to the question of sin, L develops the idea of showing and blindness before contemplating the

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[44] Michael Sargent, 'Censorship or Cultural Change? Reformation in the Spirituality of Late Medieval England' in *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. by Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh, Medieval Church Studies, 21 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 55-72; Jeremy Catto, 'After Arundel: The Closing or the Opening of the English Mind?' in *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. by Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh, Medieval Church Studies, 21 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 43-54.

[45] Dundas Harford (ed.), *The Shewings of Lady Julian Recluse at Norwich, 1373* (Previously entitled *Comfortable Words for Christ's Lovers*), trans. and ed. from earliest known MS (London: 3rd edition, H.R. Allerson, 1925) [hereafter Harford (ed.), *The Shewings of Lady Julian*], p. 8. Other scholars to argue that the short text is not an abridgement include: Pelphrey, *Love was his meaning*, p. 8; Julian of Norwich, *Julian of Norwich: A Shewing of God's Love: The Shorter Version of Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love*, ed. by Anna Maria Reynolds (London: Sheed and Ward, 1958) [hererafter Reynolds (ed.), *Julian of Norwich*], p. xii.

[46] The fact that it starts 'on the first folio of a gathering of eight, followed by another complete authorial text' is good evidence that the short text is complete, Cré, *Vernacular Mysticism in the Chaterhouse*, p. 110, n. 3.

[47] Glasscoe points to a number of differences as evidence that L is a development of S including: chapter 10 of L relates how it is an understanding subsequently granted to the original showing: section 19 in S is expanded in L where Julian is wrestling with problem of wrath in God, her move from a contemplative to a general audience, increased tone of confidence and removal of defensive passages in L. See Marion Glasscoe, *English Medieval Mystics: Games of Faith* (London: Longman, 1993) [hereafter Glasscoe, *Games of Faith*], p. 218.

blood of sin disfiguring the 'fairhede of heavyn'. S may be the distillation of a visionary account from a theological work for a contemplative audience, but it seems more likely that the visionary account came first and the long text followed after. The fact that Julian removes much of the details of the events of her vision in L is seen as evidence of this.[48] Moreover, this argument is strengthened by the existence of a fifteenth-century abridgement of L, which I shall now discuss.

From his work on **W**, Hugh Kempster presents a text that is very different in tone, style and purpose to that of S.[49] Unlike S, **W** contains an adapted version of Julian's work which has a clear editorial voice that manoeuvres the reader around the original text, probably well known to the audience. Much of the visionary material is excised leaving a text that fits in well with the rest of the manuscript and the theme of the life of a righteous person.[50] Cré, in a recent article, demonstrates just how well the compilation has been constructed to reflect the contemplative audience of the **W** fragments.[51] In contrast S, though different in tone to L, retains Julian's voice and style and, apart from the rubric and underscoring, the manuscript lacks any significant scribal addition. It is therefore very unlikely that Holloway's abridgement hypothesis is correct and that S could have been composed in 1413. From the conclusion that S was written before L, scholars have been able to set some parameters for its latest compositional date.[52] As was mentioned earlier one of the few references to time within the text itself is to a period of roughly twenty years when Julian grappled with the significance of the example of a lord and a servant.

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[48] Glasscoe, 'Visions and Revision', p. 104.
[49] Hugh Kempster, 'Julian of Norwich: The Westminster Text of a Revelation of Love', *Mystics Quarterly*, 23 (1997), pp. 177-246 and Kempster, 'A Question of Audience', pp. 257-89.
[50] Kempster, 'A Question of Audience', pp. 271-2.
[51] Marleen Cré, ''This blessed beholdyng': Reading the Fragments from Julian of Norwich's *A Revelation of Love* in London, Westminster Cathedral Treasury, MS 4' in *A Companion to Julian of Norwich*, ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008) [hereafter Cré, ''This blessed beholdyng''], pp. 116-126.
[52] Scholars who agree on this include: Pelphrey, *Love was his meaning*, p. 8, Windeatt, 'Julian of Norwich and her Audience', p. 1; Cré, *Vernacular Mysticism in the Charterhouse*, p. 100, Glasscoe, 'Visions and Revision', pp. 104-5.

As Julian's explanation to this example is found only in L it has therefore been possible to conclude that L was not begun before the year 1393, twenty years after the original vision of 1373, and S would have been in existence by this date.

The question then arises of why Julian wrote another version. For Watson and many other scholars, the short text is an unsatisfactory first draft when viewed in relation to the longer and later text.[53] In the introduction to her translation of S, Frances Beer opines that 'all too frequently ... the short text is treated as a junior first draft, standing in relation to the later masterpiece' whereas it is a 'balanced, terse, elegant, well-structured' work.[54] Considering the extent to which Watson's immense and detailed study has largely helped to reinstate S as a 'mature and carefully thought out attempt to articulate Julian's experience' worthy of study in its own right, his insistence on it being a failure in the light of Julian's revelation of 1388 seems incongruous.[55] Lying behind Watson's eventual dismissal of S is the assumption that because Julian wrote a second text, the first must naturally be superseded by it. Recent scholarship has begun to confront this assumption as S is no longer simply considered in relation to L but as a complete text on its own.[56] Scholars have offered a number of solutions to the problem of why, in the presence of such a superior account of the revelation of Julian of Norwich, a scribe would copy out S. These include the notion that L may not have been in existence or, that if it were in circulation, the regulations of Arundel made it too risky to circulate widely. Both are plausible but what seems more convincing is, as Cré argues, that S has an integrity and purpose of its own which the

[53] A number of scholars describe the short text in terms of a first version or edition of the long text, implying that the Julian came to see it as unsatisfactory. These include: Harford, *The Shewings of Lady Julian*, p. 8; Pelphrey, *Love was his meaning*, p. 8; Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, p.19; Windeatt, 'Julian of Norwich and her Audience', pp. 7-8.
[54] *Julian of Norwich: Revelations of Divine Love, The Motherhood of God an Excerpt*, trans. Frances Beer (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1998), p. 20.
[55] Watson, 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*', p. 674.
[56] These include: Cré, *Vernacular Mysticism in the Charterhouse*, and Kempster, 'A Question of Audience'. Also Cré, ''This blessed beholdyng'', pp. 116-126.

compilers of **A** recognised when they were forming their treatise on the contemplative life and mystical experience.[57]

When read as two separate works it is significant how distinctive S is from L. As Kempster points out, Julian's account of her visionary experiences in S fits well into the visionary narrative genre of the fourteenth century.[58] Along with the content of her visions S contains numerous details of its ecclesiological context: those who were with her at the time of her near death experience and her reception of the last rites. In S Julian offers the reader her immediate response to her visions as well as her understanding of them. In this sense Julian gives us a window into the world of a lay woman in the fourteenth century, not only in events, but also through her thoughts. She not only shows us what the church did but also what she, as a good Christian and daughter of the church, thought. In contrast, L is a very different work which does not so much supersede S as present a theological and ecclesiological understanding of her revelation of 1373 in the light of subsequent insights. It therefore does not necessarily follow that because Julian did not fully understand her revelation 'at the first writing' that she was dissatisfied by her visionary account. Rather, the motivations which lie behind her two texts differ and as a result give rise to two closely related and yet distinct works each with their own intrinsic value.

There is only one version of S in existence and no reference to the date of its composition. Therefore, any dating or notion of textual development is highly speculative and will remain as such. However, considering all the evidence and removing S from its overpowering elder sister, there are some conclusions we can make. Whilst the argument

[57] Cré, *Vernacular Mysticism in the Charterhouse*, p. 122.
[58] Kempster, 'A Question of Audience', p. 270.

for an early compositional date of S had indeed become presumed by scholars, this is not a good reason for dispensing with it. The text is a record of a visionary experience, the time and place of its happening as well as Julian's initial understanding of its meaning. It contains little of the stylistic inter-textual awareness found in L. Therefore, I conclude that it was probably written closer to the time of the revelations than an enhanced visualization of the revelation would suggest.[59] Ward's notion of a lay context is compelling and locates S to a time after the vision but before Julian's enclosure. The earliest will refers to a bequest left to her in 1393. It is therefore plausible that Julian wrote S before 1393 thereby locating her text within the ecclesiological and devotional world of the late fourteenth century. The question of whether she was enclosed at the time is difficult to discern. The fact that she makes reference to her fellow contemplatives within S suggests that she may have been one but it is also as likely to envisage Julian writing at home for an audience of which she intended to become a part. The devotional world of the enclosed and devout were not as dissimilar as supposed, both were deeply rooted in the pastoral and catechetical teachings and life of the church.

From the analysis of the scholarship I therefore conclude that Watson's thesis is more important for the contextual perspective it raises on Julian's work than for trying to posit a specific date of composition from it, but also that a scholar's dating of S is largely governed by their contextual understanding of how and why Julian wrote her texts. This can clearly be seen in the arguments which surround the dating of L, to which we now turn.

[59] Vincent Gillespie identifies this stylistic feature of the long text, which is more conducive to having been written many years after the vision: Vincent Gillespie, 'Dial M for Mystic: Mystical Texts in the Library of Syon Abbey and the Spirituality of the Syon Brethren' in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England, Ireland and Wales*, ed. by Marion Glasscoe (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1999), p. 246.

The Long Text (L)

As we have seen in our analysis of the dating of S, it is often taken as a given that the longer version of *A Revelation of Divine Love* (L) was composed at a date some time after that of S.[60] Holloway stands alone in arguing a date of 1413 for S but the weight of internal evidence goes against her.[61] Until recently, it was assumed that, as S contained no reference to the example of a lord and a servant, L must have been composed soon after 1393 in order to incorporate Julian's twenty odd years of meditation on this mysterious vision.[62] However, following his reassessment of the dating of S and conclusion that it was a work produced under some difficulty, Watson has argued that L became Julian's life work and was not started until many years after 1393 and continued into her old age.[63] Hence he dates the completion of L to the early years of the fifteenth century. In this section I analyse the scholarly arguments for the dating of L and the various factors which have shaped those arguments. One of the most significant aspects of this argument is the existence of five variant manuscript traditions to L. These were outlined within the initial note to this thesis and have important implications for locating a date for L as it presents us with the notion that there is not a single compositional date but rather a sequence of them. It is to the credence of this argument that I begin.

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[60] The majority of scholars agree that L is a development of S, this includes: Barry Windeatt, 'Julian's Second Thoughts: The Long Text Tradition' in *A Companion to Julian of Norwich*, ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008), pp. 101-16 [hereafter Windeatt, 'Julian's Second Thoughts']. Here at p. 101; Watson, 'The Composition of Julian's *Revelation of Love*', p. 679; David Knowles, *The English Mystical Tradition* (London: Burns and Oates, 1961), p. 120; Colledge and Walsh, *A Book of Showings*, p. 19; J.P.H. Clark, 'Fiducia in Julian of Norwich I' *Downside Review*, 99 (1981), p. 97; Valerie Lagorio and Ritamary Bradley, *The Fourteenth-Century English Mystics: A Comprehensive Annotated Bibiliography*, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities vol. 190 (London and New York: Garland Publishing, 1981), p. 105; Colledge and Walsh, 'Editing Julian of Norwich's *Revelations*', p. 404; Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. viii and Glasscoe, *Games of Faith*, p. 217. Bolton Holloway stands alone in seeing the short text as an abridgement of the long: introduction to Reynolds and Holloway (eds.), *Julian of Norwich: Shewing of Love*, p. 1.

[61] Reynolds and Holloway (eds.), *Julian of Norwich: Shewing of Love*, p. 1. See also pp. 38-40 above for the internal evidence against Holloway.

[62] Scholars who follow a 1393 dating of the long text include: Lagorio and Bradley, *The Fourteenth-Century English Mystics*, p. 105; and Pelphery, *Love was his meaning*, p. 52;

[63] Watson, 'The Composition of Julian's *Revelation of Love*', p. 678.

In both **W** and **U** it is clear that the manuscripts contain texts by 'authors' which have selected and adapted Julian's tradition in order to understand and interpret it within their particular context. This is a process which is often assumed to take place once a definitive manuscript is in circulation. However, because of the variant traditions of **P** and **S1** scholars have deduced that there may have been a number of stages or editions within the compositional process itself. In the preamble to her account of the example of a lord and a servant found only in L, Julian admits that it was given so 'mystily' that she could 'not taken therin ful understondyng to myn ese at that tyme'. It was only 'xx yeres after the tyme of the shewing, save iii monthis' of inward teaching that she came to understand what the example shows. From this internal statement it has been conjectured that 1393 is the earliest possible date L could have been written.[64] This date is complicated by the fact that within the 'particular of chapters' to **S1** there is no reference to the example of a lord and a servant. To explain this, a number of scholars, notably Colledge and Walsh, have deduced that Julian composed L in a number of stages or 'editions'.[65] Largely based on the evidence of the list in the first chapter, Colledge and Walsh envisage Julian composing her long text after her revelation of 1388 and then, secondly, expanding it after 1393 in order to incorporate her twenty years of insights into the example.

This understanding has been successfully challenged by both Watson and Riddy who point out that the first chapter is not so much the 'particular of chapters' that the scribal heading

[64] Watson, 'The Composition of Julian's *Revelation of Love*', p. 677.
[65] Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, p. 25 and Edmund Colledge and James Walsh, 'Editing Julian of Norwich's Revelations: A Progress Report', *Medieval Studies*, 38 (1976) [hereafter Colledge and Walsh, 'Editing Julian of Norwich's Revelations'].p. 404. Other scholars who follow Colledge and Walsh include: Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, p.7; Staley Johnson, 'The Trope of the Scribe', p. 829; Reynolds and Holloway (eds.), *Julian of Norwich: Shewing of Love*, p. 5; J.P.H. Clark, 'Fiducia in Julian of Norwich I', *The Downside Review*, 99 (1981), p. 97; Windeatt, 'Julian's Second Thoughts', p. 101; and Baker, *From Vision to Book*, p. 11.

claims but is rather a list of the sixteen revelations.[66] As Riddy points out, this may well have been composed at a much earlier date, when the expansion of S began and was later used as a summary of contents.[67] Watson, on the other hand, explains the exclusion of the lord and the servant passage from the list of revelations as a result of Julian's categorization of it as an 'example' rather than a 'revelation'.[68] Whilst both Riddy and Watson challenge Colledge and Walsh's edition theory they still agree that the compositional history of L was a long and complex one. This challenges the assumption that there is a single compositional date to L, as it envisages the text being written in stages over a period of time and any date given for the text must either be to a period of time or to a final edition.

Another influencing factor which has influenced the scholarly understanding of the compositional dating of L is the manner in which Julian might have composed her text. For some scholars, like Watson, there is no doubt that Julian wrote her own manuscript of the long text, and that she herself altered and adapted it over time.[69] His image of a learned anchoress working away in her cell follows a tradition of thinking that finds its roots in Colledge and Walsh's picture of the scholarly nun.[70] Such a portrayal of Julian

[66] Watson, 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*', p. 676; Riddy, 'Julian and Self-Textualization', p. 115.
[67] *Ibid.,* pp. 115-6.
[68] Watson interprets Julian's description of the *exemplum* as a product of Julian's meditation upon it, by which she no longer saw it as part of the 'original' revelation, and hence excluded it from her list of showings: Watson, 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*', p. 677.
[69] Scholars who argue that Julian was able to write include: Colledge and Walsh who, in the light of her apparent intellectual capacity, largely assume that Julian penned her own texts: Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, p. 24 and 45. Watson similarly takes it as given that most scholars believe Julian wrote her texts: Watson, 'The Composition of Julian's *Revelation of Love*', p. 674, as does Jantzen in Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich: Mystic and Theologian*, p. 17. Nuth highlights the fact that most nuns could not write, yet she still argues that Julian probably could write: Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, p. 10.
[70] Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Shewings*, pp. 44-45.

naturally allows for the possibility that she had a lifetime to edit and improve her work, with the attendant implication that it never fully reached completion.[71]

One of the most significant arguments in favour of this scenario is the complexity of the text itself. Most scholars agree that L is a later version of S, which includes many years of meditation and interpretation of the original vision. But, as Dutton rightly asserts, L is far more than 'an edition of the short text with gloss and commentary' but, through the form of compilation, it adds a theological complexity which illuminates the meaning of images and ideas that seemed straightforward within S.[72] Gillespie has revealed a similar complexity of voices and tones in his close reading of the text which reveal a 'syntactical virtuosity' to her text.[73] Similarly, the structural ordering of the text and internal cross referencing suggests that L must have been altered over time in order to achieve greater clarity of meaning.[74] Whilst the complexity of Julian's text is indisputable, the image of Julian seated in her anchorhold, completing her masterpiece, resonates too much of the ideals of the modern academy than a fifteenth-century anchoress who, as Ward reminds us, was not primarily enclosed to write but to pray.[75] However, the evidence concerning the limitations of female literary skills at the end of the fourteenth century presents a different possibility, and makes it more plausible to envisage Julian using an amanuensis and orally dictating and constructing her text.

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[71] Watson, 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*', p. 682. Lawlor similarly sees the long text as a product of a lifetime and even suggests, from the implication in Julian's words of chapter 86 'this booke shuld be otherwise performed that at the first writing', that she may not have finished it: J. Lawlor, 'A Note on the *Revelations* of Julian of Norwich', *Review of English Studies*, NS, 2 (1951), p. 256. Barry Windeatt also sees the long text as a private working draft which may never have been widely circulated: Windeatt, 'Julian's Second Thoughts', p. 104.

[72] Elisabeth Dutton, *Julian of Norwich. The Influence of Late-Medieval Devotional Compilations* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008) [hereafter Dutton, *Julian of Norwich. The Influence of Late-Medieval Devotional Compilations*], p. 32.

[73] Gillespie and Ross, 'The Apophatic Image', pp. 53-77; Gillespie, ''[S]he do the police in different voices'', pp. 192-207.

[74] Riddy, 'Julian and Self-Textualization', pp. 116-7.

[75] Ward, 'Julian the Solitary', p. 27.

Regardless of whether Julian is believed to have been a scholarly nun or an educated lay woman it is unlikely that she would have been so adept in the skills of manuscript writing as to be able literally to write down L or S. Whilst there is evidence that some women possessed scribal skills in this period, they were invariably employed to manage household affairs and not to construct manuscripts.[76] In his seminal work which has exploded a number of modern perceptions of the medieval mindset, Michael Clanchy similarly argues that, whilst it was very likely for the average person to have known a smattering of Latin and probably be able to read, the process of writing was still predominantly a professional one.[77] The normal process of composition was not so much reading and writing as reading and dictating.[78] The late fourteenth, early fifteenth centuries were still a time dominated by an oral culture where information was shared and books were read socially.[79] Julian's own words reflect this understanding of an oral world in which reading aloud was the

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[76] Rowena Archer argues that noblewomen needed to be literate to a certain extent in order to run their households: Rowena Archer, ''How ladies ... who lived on their manors ought to manage households and estates': Women as Landholders and Administrators in Later Middle Ages' in *Women in Medieval English Society*, ed. by P. J. P. Goldberg (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), pp. 149-81. See also Alexandra Barratt (ed.), *Women's Writing in Middle English* (London: Longman, 1992), p. 2. In her introduction Kimberley Benedict points out that noble and wealthy women might have learnt to write through private tutors, though she still emphasizes that the mechanism of writing was a specialized skill limited to only a small part of the population, which did include nuns: Kimberley M. Benedict, *Empowering Collaborations: Writing Partnerships between Women and Scribes in the Middle Ages* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004) [hereafter Benedict, *Empowering Collaborations*], pp. xiii-xv.

[77] Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to the Written Record: England, 1066-1307* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008, 2nd ed.) [hereafter Clanchy, *From Memory to the Written Record*], p. 194. The extent to which women could read can be calculated from their ownership of books. However, it tells us little about whether they could write as well: see Meale, 'alle the bokes that I haue of latyn, englische and frensch', p. 136 and Tanner, *The Church in Late-Medieval Norwich*, pp. 110-2.

[78] Clanchy, *From Memory the Written Record*, pp. 125-6.

[79] Benedicta Ward argues that Julian's knowledge could have been acquired through 'discussion and table-talk' which took place amongst the increasingly educated laity at the time: Ward, 'Julian the Solitary', p. 26, a view also held by Baker in Baker, *From Vision to Book*, pp. 13-14, and Anna Maria Reynolds envisages Julian discussing theology with her Augustinian neighbours through her anchorhold window in Ann Maria Reynolds (ed.), *Julian of Norwich: A Shewing of God's Love. The Shorter Version of Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1958), p. xx. Felicity Riddy gives the example of Cecily, Duchess of York as evidence for her preference to hear texts read out rather than read them herself: Riddy, 'Women talking about the things of God', p. 111. This is kind of literary engagement was dramatized by Geoffrey Chaucer in *Troilus and Criseyde*, where Criseyde sits with her ladies to hear 'a mayden redden hem the geste/ Of the sige of Thebes': F.N. Robinson (ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer*, third edition (Oxford: University Press, 1989) [hereafter Robinson (ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer*], p. 420.

norm yet writing rare.[80] Not only does she describe hearing the story of St Cecelia narrated to her by a clerk, but her text also conveys idioms of the speaking voice such as 'I say not' and 'I sey to you'.[81] Glasscoe has noticed that 'the rhythms and inflexions of her use of language are often those of the speaking voice'.[82]

In this culture a book such as L 'came out of the sea of talk and was cast back into it', not as personal texts but as social requests that were themselves constructed through a discursive process.[83] Riddy accounts for the complex structuring and variations in tone within L by arguing for the possibility that Julian collaborated with a scribe who assisted her in clarifying and explaining her vision, as well as supplying structuring rubrics to her thought.[84] It is therefore not inconceivable to envisage Julian sharing her revelation and its insights with the lay devout, as did Margery Kempe. Seated beside her anchorhold window, Julian could dictate to a scribe and thus collaboratively construct a manuscript which sought to give a detailed explanation of her former vision.[85] Watson's notion that Julian probably had a drawn up copy of S in her hand as an 'aide memoire' is entirely

[80] For the prevalence of reading aloud see Joyce Coleman, 'Aurality' in *Middle English*, ed. by Paul Strohm, Oxford Twenty-first Century Approaches to Literature (Oxford: University Press, 2009), pp. 68-85 [hereafter Coleman, 'Aurality'].
[81] Kevin Magill also highlights the oral nature of Julian's text in Magill, *Mystic or Visionary*, p. 70.
[82] In the introduction to her edition of **S1** Marion Glasscoe concludes that Julian's writing 'is quite consistent with an oral tradition': Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. xv and vi. Felicity Riddy similarly strongly argues that Julian dictated her texts to an amanuensis and that the compositional process of her work was a collaborative one, perhaps with one of her servants: Riddy, 'Julian and Self-Textualization', pp. 108-9.
[83] Riddy, ''Publication' before Print', p. 47.
[84] Felicity Riddy, 'Text and Self in *The Book of Margery Kempe*' in *Voices in Dialogue: Reading Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Linda Olson and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton (Notre Dame, Indiana: University Press, 2005), pp. 435-453 and Riddy, 'Julian and Self-Textualization', p. 119.
[85] This was not an unusual scenario for visionary writers. Apart from Catherine of Siena, Gertrude the Great and Birgitta of Sweden, most other visionaries dictated all, or some, of their work to scribes: see Valerie M. Lagorio, 'The Medieval Continental Women Mystics' in *An Introduction to the Medieval Mystics of Europe*, ed. by Paul Szarmach (New York: Univeristy Press, 1984), pp. 161-93. Margery Kempe is the closest example to Julian. For her account of the difficulty she had in acquiring a scribe see Windeatt (ed.), *The Book of Margery Kempe*, l. 76-151. Riddy broadens the scope of those who could have helped Julian set down her text to include her servant Alice: Riddy, 'Julian and Self-Textualization', p. 109. However, given the professional nature of writing within the domestic setting this seems unlikely.

consistent with this view.[86] This process of compiling L would naturally have been a finite one governed by the employment of the amanuensis and would place the writing of the text to a period later in Julian's life than in the years immediately following 1393.

Julian's contemporary, Margery Kempe, described the problems she faced in trying to obtain a satisfactory scribe to copy down her book, and it has been suggested that he embellished much of her work in his own hand.[87] It is for this reason that Watson believes it is highly unlikely that, if Julian did use an amanuensis, the scribe would not have been able to keep his presence from being felt.[88] Whilst a comparison between the composition of Julian's and Margery Kempe's text is illuminating, it must be noted, as Diane Watt states, that they were 'contributing to quite different if overlapping modes of discourse' and hence were writing under different circumstances and with differing aims.[89] On the one hand, Margery was writing a prophetic account of her spiritual life which at times needed to be explained and even defended by her scribe. On the other hand, Julian was noted as a figure of spiritual authority even by Margery herself and hence her work must be viewed in a different light. Given these differences it is therefore not surprising that Margery's scribe is so dominant in the shaping of her text, whereas there is no dominate scribal presence within Julian's text. This fact is explained if, as Riddy suggests, the

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[86] Watson, 'The Composition of Julian's *Revelation of Love*', p. 679. Riddy also envisages Julian composing the long text with a marked up copy of the short text in her hand for reference: Riddy, 'Julian and Self-Textualization', p. 115.
[87] John Hirsh, 'Author and Scribe in *The Book of Margery Kempe*', *Medium Aevum*, 44 (1975), pp. 145-50.
[88] Watson, 'The Composition of Julian's *Revelation of Love*', p. 674, n. 87 and Nicholas Watson, 'The Making of *The Book of Margery Kempe*' in *Voices in Dialogue: Reading Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Linda Olson and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton (Notre Dame, Indiana: University Press, 2005), pp. 395-434. Baker also acknowledges Julian's silence regarding the use of a scribe and suggests that it is evidence that Julian penned the texts herself: Baker, *From Vision to Book*, p. 11.
[89] Diane Watt, *Secretaries of God: Women Prophets in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), p. 31.

'publication' of Julian's work as a spiritual authority arose from a personal request from a circle of followers.[90]

It therefore does not necessarily follow that because a scribal voice is not dominant in Julian's text that she must have written her own manuscript out by hand, altering and adapting it over many years as she gained new insights into its meaning. As Kimberley Benedict rightly points out in her study of the partnerships between religious women and their scribes, because a treatise is silent on its collaboration with a scribe it does not necessarily follow that there was none.[91] Instead, she describes this silence in terms of a spiritual strategy, which sought to downplay matters of textual production in order to focus more on the meaning of the text and endue it with authority.[92] Given that Julian is so reticent to speak about herself in general and, in chapter 9 specifically, she purposefully deflects attention away from herself and the process of writing to God, this explanation for the silence of the scribe is convincing.[93] It is therefore quite plausible that Julian worked with a scribe for a set period of time in order to set down her revelation for the benefit of those who respected her spiritual learning and insights.

The question of whether Julian wrote her texts or used an amanuensis has been incorporated into the larger debate concerning the extent of Julian's education.[94] In the

[90] Riddy, ''Publication' before Print', p.48
[91] She gives the example of St Catherine of Sienna who makes no reference in her *Dialogue* to scribal assistance and yet secondary sources reveal that the text required extensive collaboration between herself and three scribes: Benedict, *Empowering Collaborations*, p. 25.
[92] *Ibid*.
[93] The chapter heading in **S1** highlights this fact when it mentions 'the mekenes of this woman'.
[94] Opinion is divided over the extent to which Julian was educated. Colledge and Walsh suggest that Julian received a scholastic education and point to the internal patristic allusions and rhetorical tropes as evidence: Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, p. 45. However, Brant Pelphery argues that Julian suffered from a total lack of education: Pelphrey, *Love was his meaning*, pp. 18-28. Scholars who fall between these two extremes are: Watson, 'The Composition of Julian's *Revelation of Love*', p. 674, Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich: Mystic and Theologian*, p. 17; Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, p. 10; and Baker, *From Vision to Book*, p. 11.

first line of chapter two in **S1** she describes herself as 'a simple creature that cowde no letter'. The scribe to **S1** later picks up this phrase and uses it as an opening introduction to the manuscript, adjusting it to 'one who could not read a letter'. In **P** the phrase is modernized to 'a simple creature unletterde'. Both the **S1** and **P** scribe thereby subtly alter the sense of the phrase from a statement about letters and writing to one about education and learning. Along with Julian's description of herself as 'a woman, lewed (unlearned), febille and freylle' in S, scholars have sought to show that Julian presented a 'misleading picture of herself' partly dictated 'by true Christian humility, partly by an exceptional sound theology of grace, partly by a wholly comprehensible wish not unnecessarily to antagonize her critics by any parade of erudition'.[95] However, if Julian was like most of the population of her day and able to read and not write then it seems quite consistent of her to state, in the sense of **S1**, that she 'cowde no letter'.

A piece of evidence which backs up this simple and straightforward reading of the text can be found by comparing Julian's words with those of one of her contemporaries. Whilst Julian's phrase 'a simple creature that cowde no letter' has been associated with the writings of Richard Rolle and the humility *topos* of affective literature, her words make more sense when read in the light of Nicholas Love's translation of *Meditationes vitae Christi*.[96] In his introduction to the text Love describes not so much the state the soul must

[95] Quotation is from Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, p. 45. Simon Tugwell also follows this line of thinking and points out the claim made by women visionaries to the higher authority of God: Tugwell, *Ways of Imperfection*, p. 188.

[96] In his *Incendium amoris* Richard Rolle states that his book, which was written in Latin, was 'for the attention, not of the philosophers and sages of this world, nor of the great theologians bogged down in their interminable questionings, but of the simple and unlearned, who are seeking rather to love God than to amass knowledge': Richard Rolle, *The Fire of Love*, tr. by Clifton Wolters, (London: Penguin, 1973), p. 127, lines 14-22. Baker also highlights the similarity of Julian's phrase 'symple creature unlettyrde' with the intended audience of Rolle and Love, however she makes no distinction between the varying emphasis of these two descriptions, seeing them both simply as 'conventional signals of devotional discourse': Baker, *From Vision to Book*, p. 11. In her chapter on 'Julian of Norwich and the Crisis of Authority' Lynn Staley demonstrates the extent to which the short text, in contrast to the long, is located by Julian within the school of Rolle: David Aers and Lynn Staley, *The Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics and Gender in Late Medieval*

be in to read this work but rather the group of people for whom he has translated and edited the text. Love describes these people as those 'that bene (of) simple undirstondyng', that is, those who are educated but do not know Latin, hence the need for his translation. His translation is not so much to stir the hearts of his readers as to edify them.[97] By calling herself 'a simple creature that cowde no letter' Julian is similarly not so much making a statement of affective piety, as associating herself and her text with the simple and unlettered, namely the majority of people.[98] This similarity between Julian's use of the phrase and that of Nicholas Love not only allows for a more literal reading of her words but also supports shifting L to a later date than originally conceived.

Despite giving strong textual evidence that L was probably written at a period much later in Julian's life, Watson recognizes that his later dating of the text 'is unlikely to gain easy acceptance, at least among dedicated Julianists'.[99] The reason for this is that the dating of Julian's text to the early years of the fifteenth century has profound implications for the way in which the text is read and what we perceive to be Julian's motivations for writing it. These will now be considered in turn.

The first implication of a later dating to L is that it envisages Julian composing her text well into her old age. Such a scenario fits in well with Watson's thesis that L, like S, is the

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English Culture (Pennsylvania: State University Press, 1996) [hereafter Aers and Staley, *The Powers of the Holy*], p. 113.

[97] 'Wherfore at the instance & prayer of some dououte soules to edification of suche men or women is this drawunge oute of the foreside boke of cristes lyfe wryten in englysche with more putte to in certeyn partes & withdrawing of diuerse auctoritis (and) maters as it semeth to the wryter herof most spedeful & edifying to hem that bene (of) simple undirstondyng': Nicholas Love, *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, ed. by M. Sargent (Exeter: University Press, 2004), p. 10, lines 17-22.

[98] Felicity Riddy also identifies Julian's 'onehede' with all her 'even christen' and argues that her book needs to be positioned within the public sphere rather than being 'in a separate discursive space': Riddy, ''Publication' before Print', p. 47. Watson similarly associates this statement more with a need for Julian to situate herself with her readers following the Oxford debates concern with lay teaching than that of affective piety: Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change', p. 151.

[99] Watson, 'The Composition of Julian's *Revelation of Love'*, p. 678.

product of many years' construction and adaptation. The fact that S was still being written out in 1413 gives Watson further evidence that, even by then, L was still a work in progress.[100] Even if Julian was using a scribe and limited to a tighter period of composition than Watson suggests, it is not inconceivable to imagine Julian being asked, in her twilight years, to set down those insights which had made her famous as a spiritual guide. Glasscoe, however, is not convinced and finds it implausible that 'given her expressed concern to share her experience with her fellow Christians (long text c.9) Julian should delay so long before embarking on this expanded version'.[101] In the passage to which Glasscoe refers, Julian does indeed address her intended audience. But it is not entirely clear that it contains the urgency that Glasscoe suggests. Rather, Julian is more concerned with identifying who her writings are for than the speed of their dissemination. Also Glasscoe does not take into account that Julian was probably already sharing her spiritual insights at the anchorage window and was not dependent upon a written text to speak to her fellow Christians. Her objections to Watson's later date on account of Julian's age and desire to write therefore do not hold sufficient weight to make them plausible.

The second implication of a later dating is that it places L within the turbulent years of the early fifteenth century. Whilst Watson alludes to the 'greater emphasis on the difficulty of Julian's career' that such a compositional date would entail, he ignores the implications of this, preferring instead to stress the access Julian possibly would have had to texts such as Bridget's *Liber celestis* and other vernacular religious texts which would have given her a newly found confidence to write L.[102] This would explain why Julian's apology for desiring a visionary experience at the opening of S, which was beyond what was proper

[100] *Ibid.*, p. 681.
[101] Glasscoe, *Games of Faith*, p. 217.
[102] Watson, 'The Composition of Julian's *Revelation of Love'*, p. 682.

within the devotional life of the fourteenth century, is later excluded from L. In a later article Watson outlines the contextual implications of dating L to a period after the 1409 Constitutions of Arundel.[103] For Watson these Constitutions and the preceding debates of 1401 were a turning point in the form of devotional writing he calls 'vernacular theology'.[104] After 1409, Watson argues, it was no longer safe to write theology in the vernacular or translate scripture when teaching or preaching, especially by a woman, had become authoritatively dangerous. Moreover, the need to affirm the faith of holy mother church was an imperative. Watson therefore argues that 'from a few years after 1410 until the sixteenth century there is a sharp decline both in the quantity of large theological works written in the vernacular and in their scope and originality'.[105] He therefore not only suggests that texts like Julian's *Revelationof Divine Love* had a political dimension that had not been seen before, but he also introduces a definitive date of 1410 around which texts of that period could be composed. [106]

Watson is aware that his emphasis on the effects of Arundel's Constitutions poses some problems for his 1413 dating of L. The first of these is that, if Arundel's prohibitions led to the rapid decline in vernacular theology that Watson claims then the composition of such a text as Julian's L would be impossible during this period. Recognising this implication, Lynn Staley is reluctant to date L within this turbulent time and, instead, explains the historical contextual influences within the text to a period prior to the Constitutions.[107] Watson's footnote response to this problem is to argue that the legislation took effect only slowly and Julian was already well advanced in her project,

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[103] Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change', pp. 822-64.
[104] See also Nicholas Watson, 'Cultural Changes', *English Language Notes*, 44 (2006), pp. 127-137. For an overview of this approach to religious vernacular texts see Vincent Gillespie, 'Vernacular Theology' in *Middle English*, ed.by Paul Strohm (Oxford: University Press, 2009), pp. 401-420.
[105] Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change', p. 832.
[106] See Watson, 'The Politics of Middle English Writing', pp. 331-352.
[107] Aers and Staley, *The Powers of the Holy*, p. 127.

whilst her text has features which could be in response to these Constitutions including the addition of the 1373 date of the revelation to the opening echoes circumventing Arundel's Constitutions found in Lollard texts.[108] Watson thereby implies that Julian was not only aware of the religious debates of her day but specifically self-censored her own text to make it compatible with Arundel's Constitutions.

One area which possibly points to Julian censoring S as a result of the Constitutions is in her use of scripture. As Annie Sutherland points out Julian's text is steeped in the language of the Bible. In three places within S Julian not only echoes Paul's words of Romans 8:38-9 but directly applies them to her own experience.[109] This is closely followed by a second allusion to Peter's words 'Lorde, save me, I perysche' which Colledge and Walsh identify as a conflation of Matthew 8:25, 'Lord, save us, we perish' and Matthew 14:30 'Lord, save me'.[110] Once again Julian takes Peter's words and makes them her own. The third direct reference to scripture is found in chapter 10 of S where Julian refers to Philippians 2:5 in the words:

> Swilke paines I sawe that alle es to litelle that I can telle or saye, for it maye nought be tolde. Botte ilke saule aftere the sayinge of Sainte Paule, schulde "feele in him that in Criste Jhesu".[111]

Unlike the other two references, where scripture expresses standard devotional attitudes of love and humility, this third scriptural allusion encourages the reader to experience that which she is unable to describe, by exhorting them to have the mind of Christ themselves. It is interesting that L still retains the other two references to scripture. If L was written after 1409 and influenced by Arundel restrictions on the quoting of scripture in the

[108] Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change', p. 850, n. 80.
[109] Sutherland, ''Oure feyth is groundyd in goddes worde', p. 19.
[110] Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, p. 46.
[111] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 83, l. 21-23.

vernacular as much as Watson suggests, then we would expect to see not only the Philippians passage excised but also the references to Romans and Matthew.

One explanation for this discrepancy is that Arundel's Constitutions were not the watershed that Watson claims them to be. Neither did they have the far-reaching effect that he envisages. For visionaries such as Julian it was not so much referring to scripture in the vernacular that was the problem as the charge of heresy.[112] In an atmosphere of doctrinal sensitivity it is therefore not surprising that Julian decided to remove her reference to Philippians (which came too close to the speculative and heretical theology of the continental movement known as Free Spiritism for comfort) and simply state that 'for which paines, I saw that alle is to litille that I can sey, for it may not be tolde'.[113] It is more likely that an accusation of Free Spiritism prompted Julian to excise her Philippians reference rather than Arundel's decrees. [114]

Julian's awareness of the doctrinal debates and heretical movements of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries becomes more plausible when we consider another passage which is found within **P** but not in **S1**. In chapter 6 Julian describes the extent to which God, through prayer, enters 'the lowest party of our nede'. In a very striking passage she describes the depth of this descent in the image of

[112] For Margery Kempe's charge of Lollardy in Sarah Rees Jones, ''A peler of Holy Church' – Margery Kempe and the Bishops' in *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain, Essays for Felicity Riddy*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Roselynn Voaden, Srlyn Diamond, Ann Hutchinson, Carol Meale and Lesley Johnson (Turnhout: Brepolis, 2000), pp. 377-391; Lynn Staley, *Margery Kempe's Dissenting Fictions* (Pennsylvania: State University Press, 1994), p. 10. For anchoresses who were questioned or imprisoned for consorting with Lollards see Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, p. 179, n. 88.
[113] For a comparison between Julian and Free Spiritism see Kerby-Fulton, *Books under Suspicion*, pp. 297-301; Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, pp. 19-21.
[114] Sutherland suggests that Julian possibly could have omitted the Philippians passage as a result of Arundel's Constitution regarding scriptural translation: Sutherland, ''Oure feyth is groundyd in goddes worde'', p. 20.

> a man goeth upperight, and the soule of his body is sparede as a purse fulle fair. And whan it is time of his nescessery, it is openede and sparede ayen fulle honestly. And that it is he that doeth this, it is shewed ther wher he seith: "He cometh downe to us, to the lowest parte of oure nede".[115]

Such a graphic and base image for the depth of God's descent into human need seems excessive until considered in the light of Wycliffite teachings on the consecrated host at the time. In her much later testimonial, Margery Baxter incorporated a Lollard view, against the doctrine of transubstantiation, which was prevalent during the early years of the fifteenth century, into her text. In this document she described the ingestion of the host not as an act of union but as a debasement of Christ who passes through the most profane parts of the body and is excreted.[116] Julian clearly shows an awareness of the various religious controversies of the time and her text can easily be misconstrued if it is not read within the context of the teaching of the church. Evidence for this can be found within another passage which occurs in the **S1** manuscript but is not found in **P**, to which I now turn.

We cannot be certain when the scribal injunction at the end of the text was included, but it is very possible that Julian may have known about its addition as it includes her turn of phrase and picks up the theme of 'love, light and truth' from chapter 83. Like other injunctions found in such texts as *The Cloud of Unknowing* and Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of simple souls* this passage instructs the reader on how to read the text within the context of the teaching of the church, as well as how to interpret the text's meaning as a whole.[117] It begins by clearly stating its orthodoxy and that it …

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[115] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich,* p. 143, l. 29-33.
[116]For an account of the testimonial see Tanner, (ed.), *Heresy Trials*, pp. 44-5. This testimonial is also quoted and commented upon in Beckwith, *Christ's Body*, p. 24.
[117] For the associations with Carthusian 'safe reading', see Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, pp. 297-298.

> … com not but to the hands of the(m) that will be his faithfull lovers, and to those that will submitt them to the feith of holy church and obey the holesom understondyng and teching of the men that be of vertuous life, sadde age and profound lernyng.[118]

The scribe states that it 'is hey divinitye and hey wisdam' and therefore warns the reader that 'thou take not on thing after thy affection and liking and leve another, for that is the condition of an heretique'. It is clear from this passage that the scribe is aware, as was Julian, that her text contained a revelation which could easily be misconstrued unless it was read within the context of the teaching of the church.[119] Given that **S1** not only includes an injunction but also excludes the Lollard passage concerning the host, it is possible to argue that, unlike **P**, it was subject to both self and scribal censorship in the early years of the fifteenth century. Whether this was entirely due to Arundel's Constitutions is difficult to establish.

The other problem which arises from Watson's emphasis on the effects that Arundel's Constitutions had on writing after 1410 with regard to L is the confidence with which Julian writes. Given the alleged nervousness that the Constitutions instilled into anyone who was writing vernacular theology during this time, let alone a woman, it is surprising that Julian's explicit denial of her authority as a teacher, in chapter 6 of S, is removed within L. As Kathryn Kerby-Fulton shows Julian's statement 'botte God forbade that ye shulde saye or take it so that I am a techere', reveals the extent to which Julian understood the theological arguments supporting female teaching, but it was a stance which was becoming increasingly difficult in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.[120] Such a subjection to authority therefore seems more conducive to the post Arundel situation

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[118] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 103.
[119] Watson argues that this rubric suggests that the long text was 'prepared for publication' in an atmosphere which implies the necessity of guided reading: Watson, 'The Composition of Julian's *Revelation of Love'*, p. 681.
[120] Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, p. 303.

where teaching and preaching rights were being tightened than to the 1380s. Many scholars have explained the omission of this passage from L as evidence of a new self-confidence by Julian in understanding her vocation to teach and write.[121]

A closer reading of S alongside L demonstrates that, at this point in the text, Julian radically altered it and the manner in which she did so gives us an insight into the reason why this seemingly political defence was no longer appropriate. In section 6 of S Julian is insistent that the revelation she has received is not just for herself but for all. She goes on to demonstrate this fact in a number of ways. Firstly, she emphasizes her own sin and tells the reader to 'leve the behaldinge of the wrechid sinfulle creature that it was shewed unto'.[122] Secondly, she says that the reader experiences her vision as if it were shown to them. This is possible, Julian explains, because of the 'common' nature of the vision itself but also because of the 'anehede of charite with alle mine evencristende' which unites one to another and to God. Thirdly, this revelation comes not from her as a teacher but it is a 'shewing of him that es soverayne techare' and finally, 'charitie stirres me to telle yowe it'. Within S Julian's statement about her own situation is therefore set within a context which turns the reader away from consideration of the visionary to the one who gives the vision and their own reception of it.

In contrast chapter 9 of L has been pared down considerably and, as such, functions differently. Instead of emphasizing Julian's sinful state the text directly addresses the reader, encouraging them to understand that the vision is shown for their 'ese and comfort'. Julian's authorial voice disappears from the text, as she is subsumed into the words 'we arn al one in comfort' and becomes 'right nowte'. In fourteen lines Julian

[121] For example Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich: Mystic and Theologian*, p. 16.
[122] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, pp. 73-4.

repeats the word ‘al’ 12 times and in so doing expands the text to encompass ‘al his evyn cristen’ within ‘al that is’ and locates this ‘al’ within God. The second half of the chapter alters in tone as Julian not only declares her faith in the church and desire ‘never to receive onything that might be contrary therunto’ but also unites her vision with the faith of holy church by stating ‘for in al this blessid shewing I beheld it as one in Gods meneyng’. The section in S similarly ends with a reference to holy church but, rather than being an affirmation of the teaching of holy church, it is a defence that her vision ‘never nathinge therein that stones me ne lettes me of the trewe techinge of halye kyrke’. From a comparison of these two passages it is clear that Julian’s attitude has changed. This results from a different understanding of her revelation in relation to the place and nature of the church.

To a certain extent L, in contrast to S, shows a greater concern with the teaching of holy church in relation to her revelations. In chapter 45 of the long text she writes that

> thow this (revelation) was swete and delectabil, yet only in the beholdyng of this I cowd nowte be full esyd, and that was for the dome of holy church which I had aforn understond and was continuly in my syte. [123]

For this reason many scholars have seen Julian’s references to the faith and teaching of the church as defensive nods towards orthodoxy to make her speculative theology more palatable.[124] Such a stance has greater weight when considered in the turbulent ecclesiastical times of the early fifteenth century. Julian’s carefully placed statements of faith often enable her to not only state her difficulty with the teaching of the church, but

[123] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 48.
[124] Watson interprets Julian’s references to the church as ‘gestures of obedience’ in a text which ‘is in clear opposition to the hierarchic model of Christian society developed by the Oxford conservatives and articulated in less theoretical terms in the Constitutions’: Watson, *Censorship and Cultural Change*, p. 851. Whilst Jantzen identifies protestations of loyalty within the context of her writings, she find her ‘hopelessly at odds with the ideals of her warlike bishop’: Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich: Mystic and Theologian*, p. 10.

also to demonstrate the extent to which her theology differs from it. This approach to Julian's references to the church dismisses them too lightly. I argue that the reason why Julian's L reveals a confidence, especially in relation with the ecclesiastical controversies of the early 1400s, is because her many years of contemplation resulted in an understanding of the nature of the teachings of the church itself which was wholly orthodox and, rather than undermine those teachings with a new speculative theology, affirmed their nature and practice. It was this theological and revelatory insight into the church, during a time of upheaval and instability, that made Julian anxious to write and share her insights for the 'ese and comfort' of all.

To conclude, as with S, there is no reference to a compositional date for L and any suggested date for the text is speculative. The scribal variations and adaptations found within the five seventeenth-century manuscripts means that the text of *A Revelation of Divine Love* has evolved from a manuscript tradition and any notion of finding a compositional date from an 'original' text is impossible. Given the extent of these scribal alterations it is also impossible to ascertain whether there was a series of editions before Julian 'published' her final version or whether these changes occurred during the later reception of the text. Whilst Colledge and Walsh's 'edition' theory seems improbable, the complex nature of the text points to it being composed or constructed over a period of time. If the distinctly oral nature of the late fourteenth century is taken into account, along with Julian's renown as a spiritual guide, it is therefore very likely that Julian decided, possibly at the request of others, to construct her long text with the physical and literary aid of a scribe who enabled her to structure her thoughts and clarify her theology. This process would naturally have been a finite one and so it is probable that L was composed over a defined period rather than a single date. Watson's suggestion that this period be

located within the early years of the fifteenth century is compelling, despite the seeming impossibility of a woman writing speculative vernacular theology at such a time. His thesis that we should approach L as a mystical revelation, set within the context of its time, liberates it from merely one mode of understanding or interpretation. Julian was not simply recounting an experience of God and her theological interpretation of it but writing within a particular place and time that echo and shape her text. The theological and ecclesiastical questions that Julian raises within her text seem entirely conducive to the early fifteenth century. Whilst care should be taken in dating the text around Arundel's Constitutions, the extent to which Julian seeks to understand her revelation in the light of 'the common techyng of holy church' points to a time when such profound questioning was being elicited by historical events and there was a need for the spiritual insight of Julian's revelation to be disseminated. Julian may well have been writing in her old age and at a dangerous time but it is clear from her text that she had a sense of the 'ese and comfort' her revelation would bring to her 'even cristen'. If Julian was completing L around 1413, then these sentiments would indeed make contextual sense.

From this survey of the scholarship around the dating of S and L, I therefore conclude that, though no precise date can be posited for the composition of Julian's two texts, the contextual approach it highlights enables her writings to be located within the latter half of the fourteeth and early fifteenth century. This has important implications for the reading of Julian's writings, for not only does it emphasize the extent to which her thought and texts are shaped by the context in which she is writing, but also that this context is the penitential and catechetical climate of the late fourteenth century. Julian was therefore writing her texts within a period when the provision of sacramental penance was substantial and yet, at the same time, profound questions were being raised as to its

efficacy on both a theological and devotional level, at least amongst those who sought a deeper relationahip with God. As this thesis demonstrates, in L Julian not only reflects the devotional effects of this penitential climate but also addresses it. I now turn to a brief survey of the history of penance in order to chart how the role of confession developed to place substantial emphasis on the responsibility of the penitent and shape the catechetical and penitential climate in which Julian was writing.

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CHAPTER 2

'THAN IS THIS THE REMEDY' – SACRAMENTAL PENANCE AT THE END OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

Introduction

In St Mary's parish church at Binham in Norfolk there is a fifteenth century font which captures in stone the understanding and practice of penance during this period.

Figure 1: The seven sacrament font at St Mary's church, Binham

Its octagonal shape depicts, along with the baptism of Christ, the seven sacraments which were the bedrock of lay catechism from the time of Peter Lombard (*c*. 1096-1160) in the

twelfth century. The panel on penance is a complex composition showing both the external practice of the sacrament along with its internal significance. To the right, the priest is seated on a pew in judgement whilst the penitent kneels before him. With one hand he holds the penitent's hands whilst the other rests on the penitent's head, thereby depicting the moment of absolution and the penitent's words of response '*In manus tuas Domine, commendo spiritum meum*'. Dominating the scene however is an angel. As Nichols points out, this angelic figure represents and authenticates the most important part of the sacrament, *cordis contritio*, expressed by his size within the composition.[1] To the left of the scene stands another figure, waiting in a queue, still to perform his *oris confessio*.

In this popular late-medieval image we see the common teaching of holy church on the sacrament of penance. It not only depicts the public practice of confession to a priest, which had been the dominant form of the sacrament since the thirteenth century but also the theological significance of the act of confession which dealt with the internal problem of sin. It is the extent to which this internal reckoning came to dominate fourteenth-century understanding of penance and the implications of this for devout souls, such as Julian, that this chapter explores. In order to demonstrate the extent to which Julian addresses the penitential aspect of her contemporary catechetical and devotional climate, this chapter focuses on the language and practice of penance in the late-fourteenth century and what shaped it.

This period has often been characterized as an era of internal self scrutiny which produced not only a highly introspective laity, who were obsessed by the state of their heart and soul before God, but also 'left an indelible imprint on Western consciousness, influencing the

[1] Nichols, *Seeable Signs*, p. 176; Duffy argues that the fonts are evidence of the impact of the church's catechetical teaching and reveal the practice of penance in the late-medieval period: Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 65 & 60.

writings of many a novelist, biographer, and auto-biographer in the last two hundred years'.[2] The chapter begins therefore by examining the history of penance from the celtic penitential texts which sowed the seeds of internal reckoning of the heart, through the scholastic writings of Gratian (died *c*. 1159) and Lombard who shaped the language and form of penitential theology and practice and their influence on *ad hoc* writings of Robert Courson (*c*. 1160/70-1219) and William de Montibus (d. 1213) as well as the Latin *summas* of Robert of Flamborough (*c*. 1135-1219) and Thomas of Chobham (*c*. 1160-*c*. 1233/36). The significance of canon 21 of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 is revisited, and its significance in making the encounter between priest and penitent more accessible. The nature of this encounter is analysed from the penitential tracts of Alexander of Stavensby (d. 1238) and Robert Grossteste (1175-1253) that accompanied their synodal statutes, which not only put the Council's decrees into effect, but also gave guidance to the priest on hearing confession. Finally, from an examination of the early thirteenth-century devotional texts *De doctrina cordis* and *Ancrene Wisse*, I consider confession from the perspective of the penitent, and conclude that, whilst the Latin manuals formed the basis of a language and mechanism for naming and dealing with sin through penance, the emphasis on giving a full and true confession shifted the focus within the practice and teaching of penance from the role of the priest to the responsibility of the penitent.

[2] Quote from Alexandra Barratt in A.S.G. Edwards (ed.), 'Works of Religious Instruction' in *Middle English Prose: A Critical Guide to Major Authors and Genres*, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1986), p. 413[hereafter Barratt, 'Works of Religious Instruction']; scholars who argue the introspection of the fourteenth century include: Jean Delumeau, *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture*, trans. Eric Nicholson (New York: St Martin's Press, 1990), p. 197 [hereafter Delumeau, *Sin and Fear*]; Lawrence G. Duggan, 'Fear and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation' *Archiv fur Reformationsgeschichte*, 75 (1984), pp. 153-75; Root, '*Space to speke*'; A. Murray, 'Confession as a historical source in the thirteenth century' in *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages*, Essays presented to Richard William Southern, ed. by R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 275-322, [hereafter Murray, 'Confession as a historical source']. Here at pp. 302-3; Patterson, 'The Subject of Confession, pp. 378-380; Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton: University Press, 1977), p. 249; Hughes, 'The Administration of Confession', p. 135.

The second part of the chapter analyses the extent and nature of this shift through the rise of vernacular manuals during the fourteenth century which were becoming increasingly accessible to a non-clerical audience. With an awareness of the complexity of sin and its consequences, I conclude that, by the late fourteenth century, for those who sought a deeper relationship with God, the apparatus for dealing with sin, namely penance, was increasingly unable to alleviate a sense of sinfulness and dread. It is this aspect of penance that Julian addresses within her long text.

Part 1 - Handling Sin

In the early fourteenth-century translation of the French text *Manuel des Peches* by Robert Mannyng of Brunne, he describes how every day we must handle sin. However,

> A noþyr handlyng þer shulde be,
> wyþ shryfte of mouþe to clense þe.
> Handyl þy synne yn þy þoght,
> Lytyl & mochyl, what þou hast wroght.
> Handyl thy synne to haue drede:
> Noþyng but peyne ys þar fore mede.
> Handyl þy synnys & weyl hem gesse,
> How þey fordoun al þy godenesse.
> Handyl þy synnys alle weyl & euene,
> Elles forbarre þey þe blysse of heuene.
> Handyl hem at onys euerychone,
> Noght one by hymself alone.
> Handyl so to ryse from alle,
> Ƿat none make þe eft falle.
> Wyþ shryfte of mouþe, & wyl of herte,
> And a party wyþ penaunce smerte,
> Ƿys ys a skyle þat hyt may be tolde,
> Handlyng synne many a folde.[3]

[3] Robert Mannyng of Brunne, *Handlyng Synne*, ed. by Idelle Sullens (New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1983), pp. 5-6, ll. 97-114 [hereafter Sullens (ed.), *Handlyng Synne*].

In this passage Manning encapsulates both the official and the common teaching of holy church on how to deal with sin through the mechanism of penance. It reflects many of the catechetical teachings which had shaped the form and practice of penance for the last century. Primarily it constitutes three parts: 'shryfte of mouthe, wyl of herte and penaunce smerte', all of which are necessary for remission of sin. Confession must also be complete without hiding any sins. It comes after a reflective process of considering sins of thought and of deed. The penitent needs to do this in an attitude of dread and contrition or else he foregoes the 'blys of heuene' and will not be cleansed. As sin hangs so closely, this handling must be done often and the focus is on the penitent. In this passage there is no mention of a priest or his obligation to examine the soul, instead the enormity of sin and how to handle it lies with the sinner. This view of penance differed markedly from its older forms.

The Penitential Heritage

Canonical or 'public' penance was shaped by the rituals of the early church. Performed by the penitent, it was only permitted once or twice in extreme circumstances and consisted of a ceremony where the penitents named their sins before a gathered assembly and were dismissed to perform public penance only to be readmitted on Holy Thursday at a ceremony by the bishop who did not so much grant absolution as request it.[4] The severity of this form of penance was so harsh that it has led some scholars to argue it had died out by the sixth

[4] Contrary to Frantzen's confidence that absolution was given during canonical penance: Allen J. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1983), p. 5 [hereafter Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England*]. Both Frantzen and Georgianna point out that the words of absolution did not become standardized until the twelfth century: Linda Georgianna, *The Solitary Self: Individuality in the Ancrene Wisse* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981) [hereafter Georgianna, *The Solitary Self*], p. 133.

century.[5] However, Mansfield has convincingly argued that public penance continued to play a significant role throughout the medieval period and evidence of its use within the thirteenth century can be identified on the continent.[6] Within England, it is believed that this early form of canonical penance was never established to the same extent.[7] Only during the Carolingian reforms of the ninth century did canonical penance come to be used only for more 'public' and extreme crimes.[8] Instead, everyday sins had been dealt with through the so-called Irish or private form of penance.[9]

Believed to have its roots in the Irish monasteries, Irish penitential practice consisted of a private exchange between the penitent and the priest, who then allotted a prescribed penance which could be repeated as often as necessary. Through the penitential books, which gave lists of offences and their allotted penance, this tariff system shaped the practice and understanding of penance from the sixth century, though the extent to which it was practised by the ordinary person remains largely unknown.[10] Penitential texts varied enormously in style and content. As with the earlier canonical form of penance, the focus was on restitution to God and neighbour through abstinence and humiliation. These texts are often seen as having little or no influence on the later manuals that superseded them with a more complex

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[5] Oscar D. Watkins, *A History of Penance. Vol. 2: The Western Church from A.D. 450 to A.D. 1215* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920) [hereafter Watkins, *A History of Penance*], *passim*. Here at p. 752.
[6] For a summary of her argument see the Conclusion to Mary C. Mansfield, *The Humiliation of Sinners: Public Penance in Thirteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 288-91 [hereafter Mansfield, *The Humiliation of Sinners*].
[7] John T. McNeill and Helen M. Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance: A translation of the principle libri poenitentiales and selections from related documents* (New York: Octagon Books, 1979) [hereafter McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*], p. 26 and Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 6.
[8] A good example of this in England during the twelfth century can be seen in the public penance of Henry II in 1170, who walked to Canterbury cathedral in sack cloth and ashes to be flogged by the monks in penance for his part in the murder of Thomas a Beckett recounted in Joseph H. Lynch, *The Medieval Church* (London and New York: Longman, 1992), p. 287.
[9] Kathleen Hughes's definitive article higlights the different aspects of the so-called 'celtic' church and thereby redefines it as either Welsh or Irish: Kathleen Hughes, 'The Celtic Church: is this a Valid Concept?' in *Church and Society in Ireland, A.D. 400-1200*, ed. by David Dumville (London: Variorum Reprints, 1987), pp. 1-20; originally published in *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 1(Cambridge: University Press, 1981).
[10] Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 4.

psychological approach to penance that emerged from the new schools of moral theology during the end of the twelfth century. However, in the following survey of four Irish penitential texts there can be traced an increasing focus on the form of the confession and the state of the penitent's mind.

The first penitential text I shall consider is attributed to St Finnian and dates to around 525-50. It is a good example of what was later described as the tariff system of penance.[11] The text gives a list of different abuses (which range from bad thoughts to the practice of magic and fornication) and their relevant penances, whilst there is little reference to how the act of confession is to take place or what is to be said. The penances often included the eating of bread and water and abstention from meat and wine. For the most heinous of crimes, especially those performed by priests, this could be allotted for the period of three years, as in the case of stealing a hog or sheep from his neighbour.[12] Whilst it may have been made in 'private', there is still the objective reckoning of sins and the focus on making restitution through penance which dominated earlier forms of penance.

In contrast, an early eighth-century penitential text, erroneously attributed to Bede, considers more closely the circumstances of sin and the nature of the penitent. Penances are not allocated automatically for a particular offence, but must be tailored to suit the penitent. Lying behind this approach is the understanding that penance is a remedy for sin administered by Christ, the Physician of the soul, via the priest. With its basis in Biblical texts and Patristic commentaries, the image was developed by Cassian, who constructed his idea of remedy upon the medical notion of opposites.[13] For every bad deed or thought there is its opposite which undoes the wrong. The penitential work opens by stating that this text is

[11] McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, pp. 86-97.
[12] *Ibid*., canon 25, p. 92.
[13] *Collationes*, xix, 14 & 15.

about 'the remedies of sin' and the need of the confessor to appropriate the right penance to the right sin, taking into account the age, sex and condition of the penitent. The penitent is not only to be sorry for their sins but also the physician of the soul must be discerning in the remedies he gives. In this text we find language which was to resonate through the penitential manuals, establishing a fundamental understanding of the nature and role of the confessor within penance which was to shape its practice for the centuries to come.

In the later penitential works the form and nature of the private examination between confessor and penitent becomes more directive and explicit.[14] This can be seen in the so-called *Roman Penitential of Halitgar* dated *c*. 830.[15] The prologue is addressed to the bishop or presbyter who is to receive the penitent. In this passage the writer states that the priest or bishop is to call those who fall into sin to penance and give them advice as well as penance. But in addition, they are also to consider the state of their own souls in this encounter and 'humble themselves and pray with moaning and tears of sadness, not only for their own faults, but also for those of all Christians'.[16] When 'anyone comes to a priest to confess his sins, the priest shall advise him to wait a little, while he enters into his chamber to pray'.[17] A sample prayer is then given so that those who come to penance will be moved and aided in their own confession. In this prologue, not only is the manner in which the confession is to take place of importance, but also the internal state of the penitent who must come with outward signs of his inner contrition.

[14] Driscoll describes this period as one of transition in Michael S. Driscoll, 'Penance in Transition: Popular Piety and Practice' in *Medieval Liturgy. A Book of Essays,* ed. by Lizette Larson-Miller (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1997), pp. 121-63.
[15] McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, pp. 295-313.
[16] *Ibid*., p. 298.
[17] *Ibid*.

This shift towards the form and practice of confession as well as the interior state of the penitent can also be seen in the *Corrector et medicus*, Book XIX of Burchard of Worms' *Decretum*, which gathers together material from the Irish and Anglo-Saxon penitential canons along with the Roman penitential.[18] It dates to around 1008-12 and its form and tone are striking in comparison to the earlier penitential texts. The list of penances is absent. Instead, the text is structured around a conversation, a confession. The book opens with a procedural issue concerning the occasions on which public penance should take place, namely at the beginning of the Lenten fast with a public act of reconciliation, which has 'canonical authority'.[19] A prayer is given, which recognises not only the intermediary nature of the priest in his sacerdotal office, but also his unworthiness and asks that 'the spirit of compunction' may be given to those who come to penance.[20] Whilst the term 'penance' is used in this prayer, it is clear from the title to chapter four that the term here encompasses three elements: confession, penance and reconciliation. The element of confession has become of greater significance than in previous centuries. Hence the priest is encouraged 'softly and gently' to question the penitent on his faith and then to 'affectionately' reassure him that he too is a sinner.

This tone of gentle persuasion, which is intended to enable the penitent to reveal all his hidden sins, is continued in the fifth chapter, where the confessor is encouraged to respond to bashfulness with the following words: 'Perchance, beloved, not all things that thou hast done quite come to memory. I will question thee: take care lest at the persuasion of the devil we

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 321-345.
[19] In later penitential works, especially of the twelfth and early thirteenth century, public or canonical penance clearly sits alongside the more 'private' form of confession and these are seen as solemn and civil for example in Alain de Lille's *Liber poenitentialis* of 1175-1200 and the penitential of Robert of Flamesbury *c.*1207-15 in McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, pp. 351 and 353. Mansfield persuasively argues, from her study of public penance in thirteenth-century France, that the two forms existed side by side well beyond the Fourth Lateran Council reforms: Mansfield, *The Humiliation of Sinners*, pp. 288-91.
[20] McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, p. 324.

conceal anything'.[21] What follows is a list of questions concluding with a recital of the eight principal sins and the virtues which overcome these vices. Rather than a list of penances being given for different offences, there is one penance of fasting assigned, based upon the Roman Penitential. In this penitential text we see a shift away from the lists of penances and a move towards a focus on form and procedure for confession which begins to examine the inner conscience of the penitent, so that he is able to give a full confession. The temptations of the devil are an important factor in preventing this.

These penitential texts formed the bedrock of the mechanism for handling sin during the early medieval period.[22] It has often been implausibly argued, that by the time of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) their rigid tariff system was unable to provide for the new sense of interior reckoning which accompanied 'the golden age of repentance'. [23] The twelfth century has been characterized as the age of the discovery of the self, when tender souls looked within themselves to find God and instead were moved to tears by the state of their own souls.[24] Abelard's *Ethics* is acclaimed by modern scholars to be the voice of the age when he

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 325.
[22] In his survey of manuals Martin states that, in *c*. 998 Ælfric stipulates all priests who are to be ordained, must have a penitential text, as evidence of the long history of manuals of instruction: C.A. Martin, 'Middle English manuals of religious instruction' in *So meny people longages and tonges: philological essays in Scots and mediaeval English presented to Angus McIntosh*, ed. by Michael Benskin and M.L. Samuels (Edinburgh: Benskin & Samuels, 1981) [hereafter Martin, 'Middle English manuals of religious instruction'], p. 283.
[23] Major scholars who discuss this period of penitential history include: Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England*; McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*; Georgianna, *The Solitary Self*, especially chapter 3: 'Self and the Sacrament of Confession', pp. 79-119; Mansfield, *The Humiliation of Sinners*; B. Poschmann, *Penance and the Anointing of the Sick*, transl. Francis Courtney (London: Burns and Oates, 1963) [hereafter Poschmann, *Penance and the Anointing of the Sick*]; C.M. Roberts, *A Treatise on the History of Confession until it developed into Auricular Confession, A.D.1215* (London: C.J. Clay & Sons, 1901) [hereafter Roberts, *A Treatise on the History of Confession*]; Henry Charles Lea, *A History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences in the Latin Church*. Vol. 1: Confession & Absolution (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1896) [hereafter Lea, *A History of Auricular Confession*]; John T. McNeill, *A History of the Cure of Souls* (Harper Torchbooks, New York, Evanston & London: Harper and Row, 1951) [hereafter McNeill, *A History of the Cure of Souls*]; Sarah Hamilton, *The Practice of Penance, 900-1050* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002) [hereafter Hamilton, *The Practice of Penance*]; Thomas P. Oakley, 'Some Neglected Aspects in the History of Penance,' *The Catholic Historical Review*, 24 (1938-9), pp. 293-309 [hereafter Oakley, 'Some Neglected Aspects']; Watkins, *A History of Penance*, *passim*.
[24] Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050-1200* (London: SPCK, 1972) [hereafter Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual*]; John F. Benton, 'Consciousness of Self and Perceptions of Individuality' in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. by Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (Oxford:

called folk to '*scito te ipsum'* or 'know thyself'.[25] With an increase in the understanding of the interior motivation of sin, the century prior to the Fourth Lateran Council is seen as the age in which 'sin is remitted by contrition of the heart' rather than by acts of fasting and shame.[26] Increasingly unable to address this blush of the heart, a new form of literature allegedly emerged at the turn of the thirteenth century which brought 'the final blow to old and established types of penitentials'.[27]

Lying behind this characterization of the demise of the Irish penitential text is the desire to categorize the history of penance into clear stages. However, as Hamilton suggests, such a task is a mixed blessing for, although it may bring clarity to a complex history, such categorization masks the continuity between the different forms of penitential literature and its practice.[28] The seeds for a more internal examination during confession were already sown within the later penitential texts, as we have seen. Robert Grosseteste's early penitential writings, compiled between 1214 & 1235, show evidence of the continuing reliance on the penitential canons long after their purported demise. [29] Not only is much of his *De modo confitendi* based on Burchard's *Corrector*, but within the text he also advocates that priests should vary from the old penitential canons as little as possible. A century later, William of Pagula (d. 1332) thought it inconceivable for a priest to be ignorant of the old

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Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 263-95 [hereafter Benton, 'Consciousness of Self and Perceptions of Individuality']; Caroline Walker Bynum, 'Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?' in *idem, Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University Press, 1982), pp. 82-108; Murray, 'Confession as a historical source', *passim*.

[25] Abelard's theology can be found in *Peter Abelard's Ethics*, ed. and trans. by D.E. Luscombe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). Scholars who highlight the role of Abelard's theology of 'intention' in the growth of self awareness during the twelfth century include: Georgianna, *The Solitary Self*, pp. 95-98; Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual*, pp. 71-73 and Root, '*Space to speke*', especially chapter 2 on 'Abelard and the Morality of Intention', pp. 31-46. Whilst Benton is more cautious of the influence of scholastic thought on shaping society and the extent to which the twelfth century was more self aware, nevertheless he sees economic, political and psychological changes underlying a general shift in perception, in Benton, 'Consciousness of Self and Perceptions of Individuality', p. 287.

[26] Words of Pope Alexander III quoted from Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual*, p. 73.

[27] This is how Boyle describes Robert Flamborough's *Liber poenit* (1956), p. 195.

[28] This approach to the historiography of penance is set out by Hamilton, *The Practice of Penance*, pp. 3-7

[29] Joseph Goering and F.A.C. Mantello, 'The Early Penitential Writings of Robert Grossteste', *Recherches de theologie ancienne et medieval*, 54 (1987), p. 69.

penitential canons and, in an inventory of over 350 Norfolk churches in the late fourteenth century, over 40 % were found to have copies of these canons.[30] It seems therefore that, rather than being superseded, a working knowledge of the old penitential works was expected of priests throughout the medieval period, despite the fact that later copies differed from their early medieval forebears.[31] These lists of canons stand side by side with the new penitential writings emerging from the schools.

The Influence of the Scholastics

As Goering cogently argues, it was not so much the discovery of the individual or the rebirth of conscience during the twelfth century that shaped the language and understanding of penance in the centuries to come, but rather the theological developments that were taking place within the newly formed schools of Europe.[32] In his discussion on penance, he shows how these schools were dominated by two texts: Gratian's *Decretum* (*c*. 1140) and Peter Lombard's *Sentences* (*c*. 1155). Together they were to settle the debate of whether contrition alone was sufficient for forgiveness of sins. Gratian initiated the exploration by setting out the Biblical and Patristic authorities, demonstrating that 'sins can be forgiven without confession to the Church and priestly judgement' [*sine confessione ecclesiae et sacerdotali iudicio*]. [33] From these authorities and others he concludes 'It is as plain as day that sins are forgiven by contrition of the heart and not by confession of the mouth' [*luce clarius constat*

[30] John Shinners and William J. Dohar (eds.), *Pastors and the Care of Souls in Medieval England* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University Press, 1998), p. 124, [hereafter Shinners and Dohar (eds.), *Pastors and the Care of Souls*].
[31] Goering draws attention to the a version of Burchard's Corrector in a fifteenth-century codices which has been heavily adapted and supplemented by later scribes: Joseph Goering, 'The Internal Forum and the Literature of Penance and Confession', *Traditio*, 59 (2004), p. 210, [hereafter Goering, 'The Internal Forum'].
[32] Joseph Goering, 'The Scholastic Turn (1100-1500): Penitential Theology and Law in the Schools', in *A New History of Penance*, ed. by Abigail Firey (Leiden: Brill, 2008), p. 217, [hereafter Goering, 'The Scholastic Turn'].
[33] Quoted from Goering, 'The Scholastic Turn', p. 222.

cordis contritione, non oris confessione peccata dimitti].[34] However, using scholastic methodology, he cites many of the same authorities in order to 'testify to the contrary' and thereby concludes that 'From all these things it is easy to show that without confession no one can merit forgiveness' [*ex his omnibus facile monstratur sine confessione nullum ueniam posse mereri*].[35]

Having laid the arguments before his students, Gratian does not come down on one side or the other. Instead he walks the middle way, by differentiating between internal penance and external penance.[36] This is summed up in the Ordinary Gloss of the *dictum* following canon 87 which states

> In this distinction it is asked whether sins are dismissed through contrition of the heart alone. And one may answer yes, by the intervention of God's grace; but it is nevertheless necessary that confession of the mouth and satisfaction of good works follow, if possible, otherwise the penitent who does not do this will sin gravely through contempt (of the Church).[37]

For Gratian penance consists of an internal change of heart which is initiated by grace, and this is where forgiveness is found. However, for the remission of sin there must also be its external recognition and amendment of life made.

Writing some fifteen years later Peter Lombard (*c*. 1095-1160) continues the distinction Gratian made between internal and external penance, but framed it within a theological language which was to shape its form and practice in the years to come. In the fourth book of

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[34] *Ibid*.
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 223.
[36] Hamilton discusses the distinction between interior and exterior penance in relation to the twelfth-century development in guilt [*culpa*] and penalty due [*poena*] in Hamilton, *The Practice of Penance*, pp. 34-36.
[37] Quoted from Goering,'The Scholastic Turn', p. 223.

his *Sentences* Lombard equates penance with the sacramental signs.[38] However, unlike baptism, 'penance is called both a sacrament and a virtue of the mind' [*sed poenitentia dicitur et sacramentum et virtus mentis*].[39] Confession to a priest and satisfaction to God and the church are the external penance or sacrament, whilst contrition of the heart is the internal penance or virtue of the mind. In distinction 22 he distils this differentiation with the use of technical theological language.[40] Unlike other sacraments, where the outward sign not only signifies but also causes or effects the inner grace, this cannot be said of penance. For it is the contrition of the heart that causes or effects the sacrament, not the other way round.

Faced with this problem of definition Lombard sets out another way of describing the sacrament of penance. Instead of comprising of only two elements he defines it as having three: the sacrament alone [*sacramentum tantum*], the sacrament and the thing signified [*saramentum et res*] and the thing alone [*res tantum*]. Thereby the outward penance is the sign of inner contrition and remission of sins, hence it is the *sacramentum tantum*, with the remission of sins as the thing alone or *res tantum*, whilst inner penance is not only the sacrament or sign of outer penance but also causes and signifies it, the *sacramentum et res*.[41] In this complex definition Lombard was able not only to hold together both the internal and the external elements of penance, but also to intertwine them, so that they became inextricably linked into one sacrament. Where Gratian had concluded that sins are forgiven by God for those who are repentant [*contritio*], confession to a priest [*confessio*] and satisfaction [*satisfactio*] are necessary, now Lombard placed this necessity within the whole sacrament itself. In this way both Gratian and Lombard brought to a close the debate as to where the efficacy of the sacrament lay. No longer was shame sufficient for the remission of

[38] *Peter Lombard: The Sentences.* Book 4: On the Doctrine of Signs, trans. by Guilio Silano, Medieval Sources in Translation, 48 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2010).
[39] *Peter Lombard: The Sentences*, Distinction XIV, chapter 1(74):2, p. 70.
[40] *Ibid.*, Distinction XXII, chapter 1 (125) & chapter 2 (126), pp. 132-3.
[41] Goering, 'The Scholastic Turn', p. 231.

everyday interior sins, now that shame must be voiced to a priest who alone could speak the words of absolution.[42]

This fully formed notion of sacramental efficacy opened up the study of *regimen animarum* within the schools. Of necessity, it placed an *onus* upon the role of the confessor, who was not only to hear a confession and ascribe the appropriate penance, but was also increasingly required to help the penitent search and understand their interior stirrings which led to sin.[43] Much of the *ad hoc* literature that came out of the schools at the close of the twelfth century reflects this dual nature of interior and exterior penance. It sought to bring scholastic learning to bear on the practical questions that arose for the priest when hearing confession, and, through lists of categories of sins and their remedies, discussions on the *Pater noster* and vices and virtues, it set a framework within which to articulate the inner life.

At the forefront of this movement were the Paris schools of law and theology shaped by the mendicant friars. A good example of this scholastic and pragmatic approach to penance can be seen in Robert Courson's *Summa*. A student of Peter Cantor (d. 1197), Courson (*c*. 1160-1219) uses the scholastic model of *questio, obiecto* and *solutio* within his Summa to discuss the many issues which arose from his own experience of hearing confession, including the role of the confessor and the imposing of penances for difficult situations.[44] Equally, the early thirteenth-century didactic poem *Peniteas Cito*, attributed to William de Montibus (*c*. 1140-1213), addressed the important role of preparing the penitent to make a full and proper

[42] Chapter 10 of *De vera et falsa poenitentia* which was written in the second half of the eleventh century seeks to justify confession to laymen, *Patrologia Latina*, 40, columns 1111-1130 and Georgianna, *The Solitary Self*, pp. 94-95.
[43] Hamilton writes that it became 'increasingly difficult to conceive of an interior world wholly beyond the priest's interference' in Hamilton, *The Practice of Penance*, p. 38.
[44] V.L. Kennedy, 'Robert Courson on Penance', *Medieval Studies*, 7 (1945), pp. 291-336, which contains the first fifteen chapters of Courson's *Summa*, and V.L. Kennedy, 'The Content of Courson's *Summa*', *Medieval Studies*, 9 (1947), p. 293, [hereafter Kennedy, 'The Content of Courson's *Summa*'].

confession.[45] This medley of verses brings together, within a manageable working text, a simple exposition of the scholastic principles of the sacrament, along with a devotional discerning of the heart. It was therefore popular with students of the schools as a reading text, in addition to religious, who valued it for its devotional content.[46]

Whilst the didactic nature of these new literary forms, such as *Quaestiones, Distinctiones* and *Summae*, made them 'well suited to the popularization at a pastoral level' of these scholastic teachings, it is debateable whether they were accessible to ordinary clergy.[47] Texts such as Courson's *Summa* presuppose a sophisticated audience of theological students, one of whose tasks it was to hear confession.[48] Whereas the Latin of William de Montibus' *Peniteas cito peccator* may have been simple enough for the least educated to understand, its reputation as encapsulating all that a priest needed to know to fulfil his office of confessor was to come til later.[49] William de Montibus' scholastic didactic poem, along with his other writings, sought to make the teachings of the schools on penance available to those who heard confession, but was probably only accessible to the academic *clerici*.[50]

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[45] For an edition of the text see Joseph Goering, *William de Montibus (c. 1140-1213) The Schools and the Literature of Pastoral Care*, Studies and Texts, 108 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1992), [hereafter Goering, *William de Montibus*].

[46] Vincent Gillespie, *The Literary Form of the Middle English Pastoral Manual with Particular Reference to the Speculum Christiani & some related texts*, Unpublished DPhil Thesis (Oxford, 1981) [hereafter Gillespie, *The Literary Form of the Middle English Pastoral Manual*], p. 85.

[47] Quoted from L.E.Boyle, 'The Inter-conciliar Period 1179-1215 and the Beginnings of Pastoral Manuals' in *Miscellanea Rolando Brandinelli Papa Alessandro III*, ed. by F. Liotta (Siena, 1986), pp. 55-56. Boyle argues that there was a movement to bring the theology of the schools within the reach of ordinary clergy in Leonard E. Boyle, *A Study of the Works attributed to William of Pagula with special reference to the Oculus Sacerdotis and Summa Summarum*, Unpublished DPhil (Trinity, 1956), p. 192. However, Goering is more convincing in his argument that this popularization was limited to the clergy of the schools in Goering, *William de Montibus*, pp. 67-75.

[48] Kennedy, 'The Content of Courson's *Summa*', p. 81 and Goering, *William de Montibus*, p. 82, n. 66.

[49] Gillespie points out the accessibility of the Latin in *Peniteas* in Gillespie, *The Literary Form of the Middle English Pastoral Manual*, p. 85.

[50] Contrary to Mackinnon's view that their audience was the lower ranks of clergy, Goering argues that it is highly unlikely that the parish priest at the time was interested or capable of reading or acquiring such texts: H. Mackinnon, 'Willian de Montibus, a Medieval Teacher' in *Essays in Medieval History presented to Bertie Wilkinson*, ed. by T.A. Sandquist and M.R. Powicke (Toronto: University Press, 1969), p. 33; Goering, *William de Montibus*, pp. 61-63. Clanchy clarifies the term *clericus* as referring to anyone who has a scholastic training regardless of whether they are ordained in Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, pp. 226-230.

The *ad hoc* texts may have had a selective audience, but they can be seen as part of a movement which sought to apply the penitential thought of the schools to those who practised it. An important development in this process is the emergence of a new literary genre, which systematically gathered together teaching and practice into a manual form that was to set the precedent for the following decades. Two influential examples of this type of penitential text or *summa* can be found in Robert of Flamborough's *Liber penitentialis* (1208-13) and Thomas of Chobham's *Summa confessorum* (1214-16).[51] Both men probably studied at the Paris schools and brought to their learning first hand experience of hearing confessions as penitentiaries.[52] Unlike the *ad hoc* material, they set out in systematic form for the confessor the two elements vital to confession: the external practice of penance, along with information on the legal aspects of the sacrament and the framework which enabled an interior psychological reflection by the penitent necessary for a full confession. The first four books of Flamborough's *Liber* deal with the attitude the priest should adopt and the manner in which the confession should take place.[53] The penitent is pictured kneeling before the confessor who is to prevent any eye contact by having his cowl over his head. Sins confessed, questions asked and objections raised, flow in a form of conversation. Only in the final book is the issue of imposing penances addressed, and the words of absolution given.

[51] The dates of Chobham's text vary depending on the extent to which he is seen to write before or after the Fourth Lateran Council. Broomfield's caution in making associations between early thirteenth-century texts and the Council of 1215 have been heeded here, *Thomae de Chobham Summa Confessorum*, ed. by F.Broomfield, Analecta Mediaevalia Namurcensia, 25 (Louvain: Editions Nauwelaerts, 1963) [hereafter Broomfield (ed.), *Thomae de Chobham Summa Confessorum*], p. 48.

[52] Flamborough was canon and then penitentiary at the abbey of St Victor in Paris whilst Chobham was subdean and penitentiary of Salisbury see Goering, 'The Internal Forum', pp. 215-6, Boyle, *A Study of the Works attributed to William of Pagula*, p. 195; Gillespie, *The Literary Form of the Middle English Pastoral Manual*, pp. 98-99.

[53] *Robert of Flamborough Canon-Penitentiary of Saint-Victor at Paris Liber Poenitentialis*, ed. by J.J. Francis Firth (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1971) and outlined in Boyle, *A Study of the Works attributed to William of Pagula*, pp. 195-198.

Likewise, for Chobham, the confession is 'not just a tribunal but also a seat of counsel, a means of instruction, an opportunity for exhortation to courage and virtue'.[54] No longer is penance focussed on ascribing penalties, but about an encounter between priest and penitent, in order to handle sin. He brings a psychological insight into his *Summa Confessorum* which is based upon the different types of sin, from venial to deadly.[55] Using the Ten Commandments and ten plagues of Egypt, he discusses those vices to be shunned and the virtues that must be cultivated in the soul. Finally, his discussion on the sins turns to the seven petitions of the *Pater noster*, the seven beatitudes, the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and the seven theological and cardinal virtues. In each case, Chobham envisages the priest teaching the penitent how to discern sin and also how to avoid it. The role of the priest is to counsel and instruct, but the work of cleansing the soul is that of the penitent, as this extract demonstrates:

> The priest must also know the four cardinal virtues – prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance – so that he will know how to teach the penitent to distinguish good from evil through prudence, how to avoid evil and do the good through justice, how to uproot vices and plant virtues through courage, and, through temperance, how to avoid gluttony and lust.[56]

Whilst this text is written for the confessor, part of the priest's task is to equip the penitent with the means of handling sin. The rest of the text discusses everything the priest ought to know and should take into consideration, in order to be a good and discerning judge. This includes considering the circumstances of the sin and the sinner. He reminds the priest of the quality of nature he should have and gives a summary of what a priest should know, including the seven sacraments. The *summa* concludes with practical advice on

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[54] Quoted from Boyle, *A Study of the Works attributed to William of Pagula*, p. 224.
[55] Broomfield (ed.), *Thomae de Chobham Summa Confessorum*, outlined in Gillespie, *The Literary Form of the Middle English Pastoral Manual*, pp. 99-102 and Goering, *William de Montibus* pp. 83-95.
[56] Broomfield (ed.), *Thomae de Chobham Summa Confessorum*, p. 44, translated in Goering, *William de Montibus*, p. 84.

administering the sacrament. Within this new form of literature both Flamborough and Chobham set out the major elements which were to shape the practice and theology of penance for later centuries. Whilst they are written from the perspective of the confessor and primarily address what he needed to know and do, there is also the sense in which penance was an encounter whereby the priest was educating and directing the penitent into discerning the inner stirrings of their own soul. The importance of this encounter was not lost on Pope Innocent III.

The Fourth Lateran Council and its aftermath

Scholars are divided in their understanding of the motivation which lay behind canon 21, *Omnis utriusque*, of the Fourth Lateran Council held in 1215. [57] Some point to the pastoral

[57] The scholarship on the history of penance is extensive, these are just some of the major English writers who mention the centrality of the Lateran Council in their analysis: John Bossy, 'The Social History of Confession in the Age of Reformation', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth series, 25 (1975), pp. 21-38; Leonard E. Boyle, 'The Fourth Lateran Council and Manuals of Popular Theology' in *The Popular Literature of Medieval England*, ed. by T.J. Heffernan, Tennessee Studies in Literature, 28 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), pp. 279-315 [hereafter Boyle, 'The Fourth Lateran Council']; Marion Gibbs and Jane Lang, *Bishops and Reform, 1215-1272 with Special Reference to the Lateran Council of 1215* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1934) [hereafter Gibbs and Lang, *Bishops and Reform*]; Hamilton, *The Practice of Penance*,; F. Donald Logan, *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages* (London & New York: Routledge, 2002); Mansfield, *The Humiliation of Sinners*; Oakley, 'Some Neglected Aspects', pp. 293-309; Pfander, 'Some Medieval Manuals of Religious Instruction in England and observations on Chaucer's Parson's Tale', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 35 (1936), pp. 243-58 [hereafter Pfander, 'Some Medieval Manuals of Religious Instruction']; B. Poschmann, *Penance and the Anointing of the Sick, passim*; Roberts, *A Treatise on the History of Confession*; G.H. Russell, 'Vernacular Instruction of the Laity in The Later Middle Ages in England: Some Texts and Notes', *The Journal of Religious History*, 2 (1962-3), pp. 98-119 [hereafter Russell, 'Vernacular Instruction of the Laity']; Jane Shaw, 'The Influence of Canonical and Episcopal Reform on Popular Books of Instruction' in *The Popular Literature of Medieval England*, ed. by T.J. Heffernan, Tennessee Studies in Literature, 28 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), pp. 44-60 [hereafter Shaw, 'The Influence of Canonical and Episcopal Reform on Popular Books of Instruction']; Thomas N. Tentler, 'The Summa for Confessors as an Instrument of Social Control' in *The Pursuit of Holiness in late medieval and Renaissance religion*, ed. by Charles Trinkaus and Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden: Brill, 1974), pp. 102-126 [hereafter Tentler, 'The Summa for Confessors as an Instrument of Social Control']; Watkins, *A History of Penance*, pp. 750-771.

nature of the Council which sought to root out the vices that gripped the church.[58] Gibbs and Lang describe the sorry state of the church in the early years of the thirteenth century with a sense of horror, for parish priests 'forgot the very teaching of their religion and could scarcely be distinguished from the ignorant peasants amongst whom they live'.[59] It is from the perspective of reforming zeal, that a number of scholars have concluded that canon 21 alters the regulations relating to confession as part of an educating programme, to ensure that those hearing confession were 'discerning and prudent'.[60] For others, such as Tentler, the obligatory nature of this decree is seen as a form of social control whereby it 'grants a pastoral office to confessors that unequivocally establishes their spiritual authority' and enables them to search into and direct the inner souls of ordinary folk.[61] The medium of this system of control was, for Tentler, the *summa* for confessors, which he mistakenly states had not been written prior to 1215.[62]

Whilst most scholars would not deny the place of the Council in the history of penance, the significance of its role has increasingly been questioned. Rather than a forum of initiation, its importance is seen to lie, not only in the extent to which it consolidates the previous century's debates on penance, but also the way its legislation ensured a confessional encounter between

[58]These include: Boyle, 'The Fourth Lateran Council', pp. 30-1, Hamilton, *The Practice of Penance*, p. 19; Shaw, 'The Influence of Canonical and Episcopal Reform on Popular Books of Instruction', p. 45; Murray, 'Confession as a historical source', pp. 279-80.

[59] Gibbs and Lang, *Bishops and Reform*, p. 95.

[60] Quoted from decree 21 in Norman P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Vol. 1: Nicaea I to Lateran V* (London: Sheed and Ward; Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1990) [hereafter Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*] p. 245.

[61] Quoted from Tentler, 'The Summa for Confessors as an Instrument of Social Control', p. 104. Henry Charles Lea sees the Council as placing the power of the keys into the hands of every parish pries in order to mould the interior and exterior life of the flock: Lea, *A History of Auricular Confession*, p. 228, whilst Roberts states that through the obligatory nature of the decree the Council established the doctrine of auricular confession in Roberts, *A Treatise on the History of Confession*, p. 124.

[62] Boyle argues that, contrary to Tentler's claim that all manuals of confession flowed from Lateran IV, these forms of literature were in existence before 1215: Boyle, 'The Summa for Confessors as a Genre and its Religious Intent', pp. 126-30; he points to Courson and Flamborough as evidence in Boyle, *A Study of the Works attributed to William of Pagula*, p. 195. Tentler's argument can be found in Tentler, 'The Summa for Confessors as an Instrument of Social Control', p. 103. Russell similarly notes the importance of the Council but states that it is the diocesan constitutions which were the stimulus for the output of manuals in Russell, 'Vernacular Instruction of the Laity', p. 98.

priest and people. It also clarified the nature and form of this encounter and the role of both the penitent and the priest within it. This can be seen when we turn to canon 21 itself and consider it in relation to the Council's decrees as a whole.

Studies of the now famous *Omnis utriusque* canon of the 1215 Lateran Council have often stopped with those very words and focussed primarily on the impact that it is considered to have had on 'all the faithful'. The Council was not unique in trying to make confession obligatory and the question of how far the threat of excommunication was carried out is difficult to answer.[63] Broomfield argues that, instead of enforcing a new duty upon the laity, the decree was merely sanctioning a customary relaxation of the previous obligation to confess and receive the sacrament three times a year.[64] Some bishops were later to make the yearly confession a minimum requirement, but expected the faithful to confess frequently through the year, especially at the feasts of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.[65] In many ways, rather than imposing a requirement to confess upon the faithful, the Council's decree can be seen as trying to make that confessional encounter as accessible as possible.

Having stipulated the minimum requirement for the penitent, the rest of the decree turns to the role of the confessor. Whom this exactly relates to is vague from the outset. Canons 50 to 52, which deal with the sacrament of marriage, are addressed to the *parochialis sacerdos*, the parish priest, who is also referred to as the *presbyter parochialis* in canons 53-56 regarding abuses of ecclesiastical tithes. However, Canon 21 uses a more comprehensive

[63] The issue of penance had arisen at the second Lateran Council of 1139. See Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, p. 202 and Mansfield, *The Humiliation of Sinners*, p. 2, who makes the same point. N. P., Tanner, *The Church in the Later Middle Ages* (London: IB Tauris, 2008), p. 78.
[64] In his introduction to: Broomfield (ed.), *Thomae de Chobham Summa Confessorum*, p. 42.
[65] See statute 31 by Bishop Walter de Cantilupe for Worcester in F.M. Powicke and C.R. Cheney (eds.), *Councils and Synods with other Documents relating to the English Church AD 1205-1313*, Part 1: 1205-1265 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964) [hereafter Powicke and Cheney (eds.), *Councils and Synods*], pp. 303-4, and Gibbs and Lang, *Bishops and Reform*, p.123

term for the word priest, *proprius sacerdoti*, one's own or proper priest. For most people this would be their parish priest but the vagueness of the term allows for other alternatives.[66] This allowance is given authority through permission being sought. In a parochial setting, where speaking sins could easily have social repercussions, the Council clears any obstacles that might prevent a full confession by allowing the penitent to have permission to seek another confessor.

The decree then turns to the nature of the confessor and what his role in confession ought to be. Using the language of the penitential texts, *Omnis utriusque*, it reminds the priest that he is to be as a skilled doctor, discerning and prudent, so that he may pour wine and oil on 'the wounds of the injured one'.[67] In many ways this image echoes the old Irish penitential texts but, according to canon 21, no longer is the priest's task primarily to ascribe penance, now he is to 'carefully inquire into the circumstances of the sinner and the sin, from the nature of which, he may understand what kind of advice to give and what kind of remedy to apply'.[68] The heavy penalties imposed upon those who betrayed the confidentiality of confession ensured that penitents were able to make a full confession.

From this review of canon 21 it can therefore be concluded that it was not as coercive and dictatorial as has sometimes been presented in previous scholarship. By stating the minimum requirements for confession, and seeking to ensure that the priest was able to be a skilled physician of the soul, the Council sought to make the encounter between priest and penitent as universal and available as possible. No longer was this encounter to be primarily judicial but the confessor was to guide and counsel the penitent into making a full confession. The decree thereby reflects the gradual shift that had taken place, from a focus on penance, to that

[66] Goering, *William de Montibus*, p. 76, n. 49.
[67] Quoted from Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, p. 245.
[68] *Ibid*.

of confession. Other canons decreed by the Council sought to ensure that clergy were equipped in this serious role. For example, canon 27 states that all prospective ordinands should be properly instructed in the rites and sacraments of the church, whilst canon 10 enabled bishops to appoint fit and holy men to all activities 'which pertain to the care of souls', including the hearing of confessions. By resurrecting the old synodical powers in canon 6, the Council also set in place an apparatus which enabled bishops to interpret and shape this decree as it suited at a local level. Through its legislative powers the Council thereby sought to give the faithful the mechanism to handle their sin.

The question of whether the Council's aims were successful is open to debate. Considering the Fourth Lateran Council from the perspective of its reforming zeal, Gibbs and Lang conclude that Pope Innocent III failed in his ambitions, because the majority of his bishops 'did not share the vision of the great Pope and failed to realise the magnitude of the task entrusted to them'.[69] This could not be said of all the bishops. Others, such as Richard Poore (d. 1237) the bishop of Salisbury, took advantage of the new synodal powers given them and, within five years of the Fourth Lateran Council, had issued diocesan statutes in a number of English dioceses to implement its decrees.[70] The episcopate was not only 'awakening' to its work of instructing the clergy, but the prominence given to penance within these statutes reveals the extent to which 'the Church felt a renewed responsibility for creating in the average Christian that tenderness of conscience that would lead to true contrition, and a complete confession'.[71] In Richard Poore's statutes it is the latter of these concerns that

[69] Gibbs and Lang, *Bishops and Reform*, p. 176.
[70] William de Blois, bishop of Worcester published statutes in 1219 and Peter des Roches for Winchester in 1224. Cheney gives a list of 23 statues produced during the years of 1219 and 1268: C.R., Cheney, *English Synodalia of the Thirteenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1941) [hereafter Cheney, *English Synodalia*], p. 37.
[71] Quoted from Shaw, 'The Influence of Canonical and Episcopal Reform on Popular Books of Instruction', p. 45, whilst Cheney describes the episcopal statutes as resulting from their awakening to the task of guiding the parochial clergy: Cheney, *English Synodalia*, p. 37.

comes to the fore. Influenced by the *summae* of Robert Flamborough and Thomas of Chobham, canon 33 on the sacrament of penance is concerned with the priest eliciting a 'true confession' [*veram confessionem*] from the penitent.[72] Only a full and true confession was considered sufficient to the total remission of sins. In order to do this the priest must diligently note the character, the magnitude of the sin, the time, the place, the cause and the hindrance done, as well as the devotion of the penitent's mind and the sign of contrition. For use as a working handbook, these statutes gave basic instruction on the Christian faith but also the importance of discerning the nature and type of sin as well as the state of the penitent's mind.[73]

Richard Poore's statutes of 1217/19 were borrowed and adapted by subsequent bishops, as they compiled similar documents for their own dioceses. These were often supplemented by tracts on confession which could circulate separately. The earliest such tract was issued with the statues of Bishop Alexander of Stavensby (d. 1238) for the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield in 1224-37.[74] This tract is also concerned with the role of the priest in eliciting a true confession from the penitent and reflects the increasing complexity and difficulty of ensuring one. It begins with a simple statement of what constitutes penance as established in the twelfth century schools: contrition of the heart, confession by words and satisfaction through works. The priest must then ascertain that the penitent is truly contrite before the confession can continue and give an assurance that they do not wish to sin again. The encounter with the priest, therefore, reaches not only into the past to deal with sins committed, but also into the future and the way the penitent intends to lead their life. Having

[72] List of statues is in Cheney, *English Synodalia*, p. 36 and Poore's statues can be found in Powicke and Cheney (eds.), *Councils and Synods*, p. 71.
[73] Gillespie, *The Literary Form of the Middle English Pastoral Manual*, p. 12.
[74] The Latin text can be found in Powicke and Cheney (eds.), *Councils and Synods*, pp. 220-226, whilst John Shinners gives a translation of it in John Shinners (ed.), *Medieval Popular Religion, 1000-1500: a reader*, (Ontario: Broadview press, 2nd edition, 2007), pp. 19-25 [hereafter Shinners (ed.), *Medieval Popular Religion*].

ascertained that the intention is pure, the priest is told to turn to those things which prevent a true confession, namely the pleasure of sin, the fear of punishment and shame. In each case he is to remove these obstacles with words that are, not so much reassuring, as reminding the penitent of the repercussions if their confession is not true. For the pleasure of sin leads to the loss of the reward of eternal joy; penance not fulfilled in this life must be reckoned in the next and the penitent confesses not to a priest but to God himself, who examines both the heart and the mind.[75]

The rest of the tract is devoted to an examination of the conscience and the role of the priest in bringing to light those sins which the penitent has omitted in confession. To do this, the priest is bidden to ask circumstantial questions on various subjects, including the penitent's marital status, occupation, the seven sins, tithing and sexual acts. This is further complicated by making a scholastic differentiation between firstly, consenting to sin and committing sin and secondly, between habitual and occasional sin. By way of a summary, the tract includes the mnemonic *Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando* as the basis of an exploration into the circumstances of sin. Finally, the tract gives guidance on the arbitrary assignment of penances. The three elements of penance: fasting, prayer and almsgiving are to be given in order to fit the sin, 'not like those foolish doctors who hope to cure every illness with one ointment'. Lying behind this is the notion that, 'for all types of sin their opposite should be enjoined'.[76] The tract ends with canonical rulings on excommunication and those sins which must be deferred to the bishop. In this brief survey, Stavensby's additional tract attempts to summarize for the priest the core elements of the confessional encounter and his vital role within it. In so doing, it reveals the increasingly complex nature of this encounter.

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[75] Powicke and Cheney (eds.), *Councils and Synods*, pp. 220-226; Shinners (ed.), *Medieval Popular Religion*, pp. 19-25.
[76] *Ibid*.

Stavensby's tract was one of a number of Latin texts which were added to synodal constitutions in order to aid the priest in his increasingly complex task of preparing the penitent to make a full and true confession.[77] One of the most successful was Robert Grosseteste's *Templum Dei*. Believed to have been written to supplement his constitutions for the diocese of Lincoln between 1239 and 46, the text combines two important elements which gave clarity and purpose to this interior examination: firstly, a clear schematic approach which meant that complex sins and their species could be understood and remembered and secondly, setting the confessional work of the priest within a larger scheme of salvation.[78] These elements can be understood by considering *Templum Dei* within the context of Grosseteste's other confessional writings.[79]

The schematic approach is noticeable from even the most casual glance at his Latin text.[80] Divided up with clear headings, the *Templum Dei* is tightly structured and consists of tables and schemes intended to enable the reader to navigate their way round this compendium of information which gave the confessor everything he needed to know for hearing confessions.[81] Despite its easy and clear style, Boyle notes that the text covers as much ground as Robert Flamborough's *Liber Poenitentialis* and Richard Wethersett's '*Qui bene*

[77] Further examples include the long lost *tractatus penitentialis* by Walter de Cantilupe for Worcester diocese in 1240 and the *Summula* of Peter Quivil, *c*. 1287 for the diocese of Exeter. For the latter, see Powicke and Cheney (eds.), *Councils and Synods*, pp. 1060-1077; Cheney, *English Synodalia*, pp. 42-3; Gillespie, *The Literary Form of the Middle English Pastoral Manual*, pp. 17-22.
[78] Boyle argues for its inclusion within Grosseteste's constitutions of 1239 in Leonard E. Boyle, 'Robert Grosseteste and the Pastoral Care' in *Pastoral Care, Clerical Education and Canon Law, 1200-1400*, ed. by Leonard E. Boyle (London: Variorum Reprints, 1981), pp. 3-51 [hereafter Boyle, 'Robert Grosseteste and the Pastoral Care'], p. 10.
[79] For a summary of these writings see James McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, Medieval Thinkers (Oxford: University Press, 2000), pp. 142-43 and S. Harrison Thomson, *The Writings of Robert Grosseteste Bishop of Lincoln, 1235-1253* (Cambridge: University Press, 1940), p. 125.
[80] For the Latin text, see Robert Grosseteste, *Templum Dei*, ed. by Joseph Goering and F.A.C. Mantello (Toronto: Pontifical Institue of Mediaeval Studies, 1984) [hereafter Goering and Mantello (eds.), *Templum Dei*].
[81] Goering describes the format of *Templum Dei* in terms of *distinctione*, namely the presentation and organization of doctrine in a schema or diagram: Goering, *William de Montibus*, p. 71.

praesunt' thereby assuring its popularity.[82] This depth and complexity can be seen by examining just one element of the text: the consideration of circumstances. In comparison to Stavensby's laboured attempt to cover various different circumstances of sin, in chapter XI Grossteste applies the Aristotelian principle of a virtue as being the mean between two vices, excess and dearth, to focus on the causes of sin within any given circumstance.[83] In this way Grosseteste seeks to address not just the acts of sin themselves, but more importantly the principle which gives rise to it. For Grossteste, this is rooted in an excess or deficiency in love.[84]

In both *Templum Dei* and *Deus est* (the latter a penitential tract attributed to Grosseteste) the seven deadly sins are treated in relation to love.[85] In *Deus est* it is in the nature of man to love God with all his soul, all his heart, and all his mind, for man consists of a soul with three parts: vegetative, sensible and rational and a body, made up of four 'elemental properties' or cardinal virtues.[86] Through the powers of the soul, man is able to love God by practising the virtues of humility, exultation, patience, generosity, spiritual activity, abstinence and continence. However, this nature has been distorted, which leads to excess and failure in virtue, namely vice. For Grossteste, confession is seen as dealing with this failure to practise the virtues, thereby enabling the soul to, once again, love God as it was meant to.[87] *Templum Dei* concludes with a description of the threefold life of love, namely meditation on God,

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[82] Boyle, 'Robert Grosseteste and the Pastoral Care', p. 11.
[83] Goering and Mantello (eds.), *Templum Dei*, pp. 51-53.
[84] This same principle was later used as the defining feature within Dante's *Purgatory* where love is seen as the seed 'not only of every virtuous action,/ But also of each punishable deed': Canto XVII ll.104-5 in *The Comedy of Dante Alighieri The Florentine, Cantica II Purgatory*, ed. by Dorothy L. Sayers (London: Penguin Books, 1955), p. 199.
[85] Wenzel argues for the authorship of *Deus Est* to Grosseteste: S. Wenzel, 'Robert Grosseteste's treatise on Confession, '*Deus Est*', *Franciscan Studies*, 30 (1970), pp. 232-8 [hereafter Wenzel, 'Robert Grosseteste's treatise on Confession'].
[86] See the text and introduction to Wenzel, 'Robert Grosseteste's treatise on Confession', pp. 221-223.
[87] McEvoy shows how Grosseteste argued against the given consensus of his day that human nature has an innate capacity for vision of the divine essence and the effects of original sin in disintegrating the human powers ability to have this vision in James McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 249-50.

works of mercy and knowledge of one's own wretchedness and dignity.[88] As Gillespie points out, Grosseteste set a high ideal for his priests, for they were not simply to administer a sacrament but to aid the soul in its deification or union with God.[89] He also sets a high ideal for his penitents, for within his scheme of salvation confession was not just a mechanism for dealing with sin, but the reorientation of the whole of one's life towards holiness.

Lying behind Grossteste's schematic approach to confession is therefore a broader recognition of the place of penance within the total economy of salvation. The preamble to *Deus Est* sets this tone as it describes the creation in terms of an outpouring of God's goodness which then falls, not only in the angelic order, but also in man. Through the Incarnation, Christ freed humanity and instituted the sacraments that he might not fall into death again. As one of these sacraments, penance is described as 'the beginning of good in the sinner on his return to God'.[90] In this way, Grossteste not only introduces the subject of penance, but also sets it within the wider scheme of salvation as the initial stage in man's return to God. Similarly, *Templum Dei* is structured around the Biblical text 1 Corinthians 3:17b: 'For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are'. Initially applied to priests, the meaning of this text soon opens up to encompass human nature, as confession is seen as the means by which the physical and spiritual temple is made fit to house the dual natures of Christ. In both these texts the role of the priest is vital. *Templum Dei* describes the priest as the student of, and assistant to, the Supreme Physician, Christ, who treats the wounded soul via confession.[91] In this 'supreme act', the 'art of arts', the priest is not just counselling souls

[88] Goering and Mantello (eds.), *Templum Dei*, introduction p. 13 and the text pp. 65-7.
[89] Gillespie, *The Literary Form of the Middle English Pastoral Manual*, p. 15. This transformative understanding of the role of the priest within confession is also discussed by James R. Grinther, *Master of the Sacred Page: A Study of the Theology of Robert Grosseteste ca.1229/30-1235* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p.167.
[90] Wenzel, 'Robert Grosseteste's treatise on Confession', pp. 220-1.
[91] Goering and Mantello (eds.), *Templum Dei*, introduction p. 12 and the text, pp. 36-38.

or drawing from them a true and full confession, but is seen as being a vital part in the process of curing the soul of sin, so enabling them to live a holy life united to Christ.[92]

The Responsibility of the Penitent

Grosseteste writes from the perspective of the priest within confession. Two devotional texts of the time enable us to consider confession from the perspective of the penitent and reveal that the role of the penitent was similarly taken very seriously. *De doctrina cordis c*. 1230 is structured around the catechetical teaching on the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit which are progressively paired with actions of the heart that eventually leads the soul towards contemplative union with God.[93] The nuns, to whom it is probably addressed, begin by preparing their heart for the arrival of their Lord.[94] Using the broom of the gift of dread they are to clean out the filth of the house of their heart by the door and mouth of confession. However, for this to be a true and full confession there must be a prior reckoning by the penitent. In the later Middle English version of the text it states:

> Of o þing be war: thow mayst never yif trew rekenyng in confessioun but yif thow remembre the longe afore, as a lordis catour, the whiche shal yive a rekenyng to his lorde, first he rekenyth by himself. Right so shuldest thou do, erþan thou come to confessioun, rekene thin defautes bi thiself: how thou hast despendid thi lordis good the whiche he hathe lente to the, that is, the yiftes of nature, the yiftes of fortune, and þe

[92] Canon 27 of the Fourth Lateran Council uses these terms to describe the work of the direction of souls: Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, p. 248, whilst Grosseteste uses the same term 'art of arts' in his letter 27 to justify his inquiry into the suitability of clergy: Robert Grosseteste, *The Letter of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln*, ed. and trans. by F.A.C. Mantello & Joseph Goering (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), p. 406.

[93] See introduction to Middle English version in *The Doctrine of the Hert: A Critical Edition with Introduction and Commentary*, ed. by Christiania Whitehead, Denis Renevey and Anne Mouron (Exeter: University Press, 2010), pp. xiii-xv [hereafter Whitehead, Renevey and Mouron (eds.), *The Doctrine of the Hert*].

[94] Palmer argues that the text was directed to enclosed nuns and monks and particularly Cistercian nuns in Nigel F. Palmer, 'The Authorship of *De doctrina cordis*' in Denis Renevey and Christiania Whitehead (eds.), *A Companion to the Doctrine of the Hert: The Middle English Translation and its Latin and European Contexts* (Exeter: University Press, 2010), p. 50.

> yiftes of grace. Thou wost wel also, yif a catour shuld yive trew rekenyng, he writeth bothe the dayes and the causes in his boke, how that he hathe dispended his lordis good. So must thow do. Rekene wel the circumstances of thin synnes: where and how and by what causes thow hast synned, and þan go to confessioun and yif thi rekenyng to thi lordis auditoure, that is, to þi confessoure, sittyng ther in thi lordis name.[95]

Within this text we see confession from the perspective of the penitent. A complete and true confession is not so much the responsibility of the priest, but has become reliant upon a prior self examination by the penitent, who must fastidiously write down, in the book of her conscience, not only her sins, but also their time, cause and circumstance. In this passage the nun becomes the priest of her own heart, questioning internally the acts and causes of her sin, whilst the confessor is no longer simply the 'catour' but rather the 'auditor' of her accounts. This internal reckoning of the heart does not replace confession, but highlights the responsibility of the penitent within the sacrament. For there to be a true and full confession, the penitent must be contrite and this is assured by prior examination of the heart by the penitent themselves. The priest's examination at confession becomes an externalizing and legitimizing of the internal sacrament that has taken place. As we have seen, it was universally accepted that both were equally necessary for the forgiveness of sins.

Similarly in the *Ancrene Wisse c.* 1220 the role and responsibility of the penitent in confession comes to the fore.[96] Part V, which focuses on confession, is imaginatively structured on the systematic ordering of confessional material found in the Latin manuals.[97] Divided into two tree trunks and then sub-divided into six and sixteen branches, the text deals with the power and form of confession. Written as a handbook for anchoresses, this section,

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[95] Whitehead, Renevey and Mouron (eds.), *The Doctrine of the Hert*, pp. 7-8, l. 104-116.
[96] The dating of the text varies around the perceived influence of Lateran IV placing it to around 1220, see E.J. Dobson, *The Origins of Ancrene Wisse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976). For an earlier dating, see Geoffrey Shepherd (ed.), *Ancrene Wisse: Parts Six and Seven* (Exeter: University Press, 1985, revised edition).
[97] The relationship between part V and Latin manuals has been noted by Bella Millett, 'Ancrene Wisse and the conditions of confession', *English Studies*, 80 (1999), pp. 193-215; Cate Gunn, 'Beyond the Tomb: Ancrene Wisse and Lay Piety' in *Anchorites, Wombs and Tombs: Intersections of Gender and Enclosure in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy and Marie Hughes-Edwards (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), p. 162 [hereafter Gunn, 'Beyond the Tomb'].

along with the following which addresses penance, is written with the penitent in mind. One of the branches of the form of confession is devoted to accusation. Within the Latin manuals this act of examination is often seen as being conducted by the priest within the confession itself, however, for the author of the *Ancrene Wisse* this becomes a process of self-examination which takes place outside the encounter of confession. Using the judicial imagery of the Last Judgement, the author writes,

> Seint Austin leofliche us leareth: *Ascendat homo tribunal mentis sue, si illud congitat quod opertet eum exiberi ante tribunal Christi. Assit accusatrix cogitatio, testis consciencia; carnifex timor* - thet is, thenche mon o Domes-dei ant deme her him-seolven thus o thisse wise. Skile sitte as domes-mon up-o the dom-seotel. Cume th'refter forth his thohtes munegunge, wreie him ant bicleopie him of misliche sunnen: "Beal ami, thi thu dudest thear! ant tis thear! ant tis thear! ant o thisse wise." His in-wit beo i-cnawes th'rof ant beore witnesse: "Soth hit is, soth hit is. This, ant muchele mare." Cume forth th'refter fearlac thurh the deme heast the heterliche hate: "Tac, bind him hete-veste, for he deathes wurthe. Bind him swa euch lim thet he haveth with i-suneget thet he ne mahe with ham sunegi na mare." Fearlac haveth i-bunden him, hwen he ne dear for fearlac sturie toward sunne. Yet nis nawt the deme - thet is, skile – i-paiet, thah he beo i-bunden ant halde him with sunne, but yef he abugge the sunne thet he wrahte, ant cleopeth forth pine ant sorhe, ant hat thet sorhe thersche in-with the heorte with sar bireowsunge, swa, thet hire suhie, ant pini the flesch ute-with mid feasten ant with other fleschliche sares. Hwa-se o thisse wise, bivoren the muchele dom, demeth her him-seolven, eadi he is ant seli.[98]

> St. Augustine, therefore, teaches us lovingly: *Reflecting that he must appear before the tribunal of Christ, let a man mount the tribunal of his own mind. Let reflection be present as accuser, conscience as witness, and fear as executioner.* Let man think upon the Day of Judgement, and judge himself here in this manner. Let Reason sit upon the judgement seat as judge. Then let his Memory come forth and accuse him, and charge him with various sins: "Good friend, you have done this at one time, this at another, and this at another, and in this way." Let his conscience admit it and bear witness to it: "It is true. It is true. This, and much more." Then let Fear come forth at the command of the judge, who sternly gives this order: "Take him and bind him fast, for he has deserved death. Bind every limb with which he has sinned, in such a way that he may never sin with them again." And when he dare not, for fear, make any movement towards sin, then Fear has bound him. But the judge, that is, Reason, is not yet satisfied, even though he is bound and refrains from sin, unless he pays for the sin which he has committed; and he calls forth Pain and Sorrow, and orders Sorrow to scourge his heart inwardly with sore repentance until it gasps for breath, and to torment

[98]Hasenfratz (ed.), *Ancrene Wisse*, pp. 314-5, ll. 91-107.

> the flesh outwardly with fasts and with other bodily hurts. Whoever judges himself here, in this way, before the great Judgement, is blessed and happy.[99]

Within this passage the author sets up the image of an internal forum where the anchoress is examiner, judge and priest to her own soul.[100] The seriousness of this act is brought out by the fact that it is seen as a precursor of the Final Judgement. Memory is to bring forth the sins and accuse the soul, whilst conscience is to take responsibility for them. Fear, as the penalty for sin, is not sufficient however, and reason calls forth pain and sorrow as penance. As Georgianna rightly suggests, the penitent must carefully prepare for confession and this preparation 'is an elaborate psychomachia in which the anchoress accuses herself, judges herself and levies her own penance'.[101] In many ways the passage seems to internalize the whole process of penance as the roles between priest and penitent are reversed. However, whilst the role of the priest may be reduced to that of observer rather than guide and physician, the power of the priest is in no way diminished.[102] This can be seen if we turn from the form of confession back to its power.

In the first trunk the author describes the power of confession using the Biblical story of Judith. Whilst he blurs the various aspects of the exposition to ensure that each element of the sacrament is conceived as one sacramental act, it is still the priest who wields the power to destroy the enemy,

> His heaved is i-hacket of, ant he i-slein i the mon, sone se he eaver is riht sari for his sunnen ant haveth schrift on heorte. Ah he nis nawt the yet i-schend hwil his heaved is i-hulet, as dude on earst Judith, ear hit beo i-schawet – thet is, ear muth I schrift do ut

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[99] *Ancrene Riwle*, trans. by M.B. Salu (Exeter: University Press, 1990), pp. 136-7, [hereafter Salu (trans.), *Ancrene Riwle*].
[100] The language of 'internal forum' is taken from Goering who uses the image of the two courts in Dante to differentiate between the external forum of the ecclesiastical courts and the internal forum of conscience and penance in Goering, 'The Internal Forum', p. 175.
[101] Georgianna, *The Solitary Self*, p. 111.
[102] Georginna argues for the reduced role of the priest in *ibid.*, p. 115.

> the heaved sunne – nawt te sunne ane, ah al the biginnunge th'rof, ant te fore-ridles the brohten in the sunne.'[103]
>
> His head is cut off and he is slain in a man as soon as he is truly sorry for his sins and has the intention of confessing in his heart. But the devil is not yet confounded while his head is hidden, as it was by Judith, and before it is shown forth, that is, before the mouth puts out the mortal sin in Confession, and not only the sin itself, but its whole beginning and the occasions which brought it about.[104]

In this passage the internal forum of confession is depicted within the power of the sacrament. The anchoress is seen to have an equally vital role to that of the priest. However, within both these texts the responsibility for a full and good confession is not entirely reliant upon the encounter between priest and penitent. The ideal confession is presented within the *Ancrene Wisse* as one in which 'there ought to be no questioning except only in the case of necessity, for evil may come of questioning if it is not done with enough discretion', whilst 'the priest need not give you any penance outside the life which you lead according to this rule' for the suffering of the anchoritic life of virtue is seen as penance in itself.[105]

Whereas the Latin manuals and Irish penitential texts were written primarily for priests and, as such, address the nature and practice of penance from the role of the priest, these two texts give an insight into confession from the perspective of the penitent. How much they can be taken as a guide for the ordinary penitent is an interesting question. Both texts were written for a relatively specialized audience. However, there is evidence to suggest that these devotional texts were not restricted to the world of the anchoress and nun. Firstly, the structure of both texts is shaped by the form of the examination by the priest within confession, as set out in the Latin manuals. In many ways they can be read as a commentary and expansion of the simple catechetical teaching *quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur,*

[103] Hasenfratz (ed.), *Ancrene Wisse*, p. 309, l. 13-17.
[104] Salu (trans.), *Ancrene Riwle*, p. 133.
[105] *Ibid.*, pp. 150 & 153.

quomodo, quando which formed the basis of the examination of the penitent.[106] Secondly, not only do these devotional texts borrow from penitential teaching and practice, but they are also aware of a much wider audience than is at first perceived. Parts V, VI & VII of the *Ancrene Wisse* are not only addressed to anchoresses, but also 'has the same relevance for everybody'.[107] Similarly, from manuscript evidence *De doctrina cordis* seems to have been a very flexible text, used for preaching and also, in a simplified form, as a catechetical work.[108] Finally, *De doctrina*'s popularity was unabated during the thirteenth century and it was later translated into different languages, including Middle English possibly for a wider audience, whilst the *Ancrene Wisse* soon 'escaped into the outside world'.[109] This evidence suggests that the responsibility of the penitent within confession was not just taken seriously by the devout.

Focussing on the Latin texts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries can easily lead one to conceive of penance as a purely priestly task and responsibility. However, with the efficacy of the sacrament lying with the penitent, examination and contrition were vital to a full confession. As we have seen, it was this element that dominated the Latin manuals of the thirteenth century and sought to shape the encounter between priest and penitent. As Goering argues, the full and detailed account of sins which the form of examination within the Latin manuals aimed to elicit 'might have been expected of a monk or a seeker after perfection in an earlier period; by the thirteenth century it was being held up as a model for all

[106] See above p. 89.
[107] Quotation from Salu (trans.), *Ancrene Riwle*, p. 151, the question of a wider audience is also highlighted by Robert Hasenfratz, 'Efter hire euene': Lay Audiences and the Variable Asceticism of Ancrene Wisse' in *Anchorites, Wombs and Tombs: Intersections of Gender and Enclosure in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy and Marie Hughes-Edwards (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), p. 146.
[108] Christinia Whitehead, 'De doctrina cordis: Catechesis or Contemplation?' in *A Companion to The Doctrine of the Hert: The Middle English Translation and its Latin and European Contexts*, ed. by Denis Renevey and Christiania Whitehead (Exeter: University Press, 2010), pp. 63-65.
[109] Words by Dobson quoted from Gunn, 'Beyond the Tomb', p. 165.

Christians'.[110] However, if we consider the practice of penance, as opposed to its teaching in the manuals, it soon becomes clear that the confessional encounter alone was not able to deliver on this model.[111]

For most people, including those priests who had very little Latin, it was still the experience of confession that influenced both the confessor, and the penitent.[112] The legislation of Lateran IV and subsequent diocesan synods sought to standardize, if not increase, the opportunities for confession yet, for most people, this comprised of at least an annual encounter during Lent. Taking place in the public place of the church and with a queue of penitents, it was necessarily brief and unable to be the rigorous reckoning of the heart as suggested by the manuals. For the confession to be true and full it required the examination of sin to take place prior to that encounter. Not only did the manuals instruct priests on how to examine the penitent, but through confessional practice, the penitent was increasingly being given the tools and language in which to search their own heart.

Penance was not the only forum in which the penitent was being instructed on how to reckon his sins. The arrival of the mendicant friars, especially the Dominican Order of Confessors and Preachers in England in 1224, is seen as seminal for the development of penitential thought and practice. Through their schools and manuals they educated priests in the hearing of confessions, and instructed penitents themselves through practice and preaching.[113] Grosseteste appointed friars as confessors and describes the use he makes of them in a

[110] Goering, 'The Internal Forum', p. 194.
[111] Wagner highlights the difficulty of attempting to perceive confession from the point of view of practice because of the lack of social traces in Wagner, '*Cum aliquis venerit'*, p. 201.
[112] For confessional practice, see: Goering, 'The Internal Forum', pp. 191-95 and Hamilton, *The Practice of Penance*.
[113] For the significance of the Dominicans see: Goering, 'The Internal Forum', p. 206; Boyle, *A Study of the Works attributed to William of Pagula*, pp. 210-14; George C. Homans, *English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century* (New York/London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1941), p. 391; Peter Biller, 'Confession in the Middle Ages: Introduction' in *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Peter Biller and A.J. Minnis (York: York Medieval Press, 1998), p. 9; McNeill, *A History of the Cure of Souls*, p. 138.

visitation, where, as bishop, he preaches to the clergy, whilst a 'Friar Preacher or Minor preached to the people. Thereafter, four friars heard confessions and enjoined penances'.[114] They were very popular and not only stirred souls to confess but also gave expert advice on tricky moral issues. An example of this can be seen in Thomas of Chantimpre's *Bonum universale de apibus c*. 1260. In his article on confession as a historical source in the thirteenth century, Murray focuses on Chantimpre's work and experience as a Dominican confessor to explore the penitent's confessional experience.[115] One aspect of his work is the way in which the confessor is used as a moral guru, or expert, which presupposes prior interior reckoning, rather than the person who guides the soul through this process by a simple listing of the different sinful acts. For example, he recounts a series of *exempla* in which Thomas hears the agonies of unrequited or forbidden love. Through the practice of penance and preaching, the penitent is thereby given the tools by which he is to make an internal reckoning for himself outside the confessional encounter. Rather than being the primary inquisitor on all manner of sins, the priest is seen as the specialist, the auditor, who can advise on extreme cases of moral confusion.[116]

This focus on the responsibility of the penitent to have reckoned with sin in their own heart before confession was not lost on the compilers of the manuals themselves. From 1260, as Boyle observes, a new wave of penitential material increasingly addressed the role of the penitent within confession, along with that of the priest.[117] In his 1281 syllabus, Archbishop Pecham (*c*. 1230-92) gives, in brief, the elements which parish priests were expected to expound in the vernacular to their parishioners at least four times a year.[118] It is interesting to

[114] Quoted from Goering, 'The Internal Forum', p. 190.
[115] Murray, 'Confession as a historical source', pp. 300-1.
[116] A point also made by Wagner, '*Cum aliquis venerit*', p. 218.
[117] Boyle, 'The Fourth Lateran Council', p. 34.
[118] For Latin text see Powicke and Cheney (eds.), *Councils and Synods*, pp. 900-905 and translation by John Shinners in Shinners and Dohar (eds.), *Pastors and the Care of Souls*, pp. 127-132. Boyle describes Pecham's

note that lying behind this list are many of the elements which constitute the confessional examination, including the fourteen articles of faith, the seven sacraments, the Ten Commandments, the seven deadly sins, the seven works of mercy and the seven virtues.[119] Not only had priests and confessors been educated in the 'art of arts' but also, by the end of the thirteenth-century, through the practice and preaching of penance the penitent had been given the language and tools to shrive their own heart.

Part 2 – Sin ever follows us

Whilst the manuals of the previous century had shaped penitential language and practice, and given the penitent the means to know and handle sin, the question of whether the practice of penance in the late fourteenth century was able to alleviate the internal sense of sinfulness, which this reckoning of the heart had elicited, is the subject of this second part of the chapter. It begins by demonstrating the extent to which the confessor continued to be aided in his task of *cura animarum* in the fourteenth century with a consolidation of the previous century's legislation and writing, as well as new penitential manuals. The influential and popular Latin manual *Oculus Sacerdotis* (1320-28) of William of Pagula is given as an example of this. Alongside these Latin manuals for priests, however, there was a flowering of texts written in the vernacular which were addressed primarily to the penitent. The assumption that Archbishop Pecham's 1281 decrees initiated this prolific rise in the vernacular manual and moral treatises is questioned and three alternative explanations are outlined: the mandate to instruct which

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Ignorantia Sacerdotum as 'a Syllabus which lists or defines what responsible parish priests would preach to their parishoners': Leonard E. Boyle, 'The Oculus Sacerdotis and some other works of William of Pagula' in *idem, Pastoral Care, Clerical Education and Canon Law 1200-1400* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1981), pp. 81-110 [hereafter Boyle, 'The Oculus Sacerdotis and some other works of William of Pagula']. Here at pp. 81-2.

[119] All of these elements are found in the penitential manuals of Robert Flamborough, Thomas Chobham and Robert Grosseteste amongst others.

Pecham's decrees gave impetus to, the changing status of English in relation to religious writing and demand from the devout. From this analysis, I conclude that, through the rise of the vernacular manual, the penitent was increasingly given the means to reckon his heart outside the confessional encounter.

Evidence for this shift in focus from the role of the priest to the responsibility of the penitent within the vernacular manuals and moral treatises, is demonstrated by focussing on one aspect of the catechetical teaching on the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the gift of dread. This survey reveals that, in contrast to the Latin manuals which sought to instruct the penitent, the fourteenth-century vernacular manuals and moral texts, increasingly address the penitent's concerns. A study of tribulation texts such as William Flete's *Remedies against Temptations* and *The Chastising of God's Children* identifies this concern as an overwhelming sense of sinfulness, even after confession. I argue that, whilst the vernacular manuals foster a focus on self-accusation by the penitent, through their emphasis on contrition and the role of fear within penance, they do not primarily cause this sense of sinfulness. Rather, by taking into account reflections on the nature of penance by commentators such as John Wycliffe (*c*. 1330-84) and William Langland (*c*. 1330-86) along with the personal testimonies of Margery Kempe (*c*. 1373-1438) and John Thorpe, it is the confessional encounter which is identified as failing the penitent. I conclude with an analysis of *Passus* XIII – IV of William Langland's *Piers Plowman* B text which encapsulates the late fourteenth century sense that whilst the manuals had enabled the devout to name their sin, penitential practice was increasingly unable to alleviate a sense of sinfulness and internal dread amongst those who sought a closer union with God and to live a life of charity.

The Flowering of the Latin Manual

By the close of the thirteenth-century the outpouring of diocesan legislation which the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council initiated, had come to an end. The form and language of confession had been set in place and subsequent material built upon this firm basis. Bishops increasingly used the form of the circular letter or tract to inform their priests of developments in canon law and procedure.[120] Latin manuals and confessional *summas* for priests assimilated and updated earlier texts, and made new theological developments within the schools available to confessors.[121] An early example of this assimilation can be found in the anonymous *Speculum iuniorum* (*c*. 1250), which interweaves the latest teachings from the schools with the authorities of Robert Grossteste, Richard of Wetheringsett, Thomas of Chobham and William Peraldus, and concludes with a discussion reliant upon extracts from Raymund of Penafort's *Summa de penitentia* and other canonists.[122] Equally, Archbishop Pecham's 1281 decree *Ignorancia sacerdotum* can be seen as a culmination of the pastoral movement, as it draws together knowledge and experience of the previous century's manuals into a succinct catechetical list.[123] Rather than initiating a syllabus of instruction, his list of the basic elements of faith which a priest should know and preach to his congregation in the vernacular, is legislative recognition of the form and language of pastoral theology which was being used at local level.[124]

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[120] W.A. Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge: University Press, 1955), p. 194, [hereafter Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century*]; Boyle, *A Study of the Works attributed to William of Pagula*, p. 248.

[121] Gillespie gives a survey of these Latin manuals of the fourteenth and early fifteenth century and outlines their literary form and content, in Gillespie, *The Literary Form of the Middle English Pastoral Manual*, pp. 112-161.

[122] Goering, 'The Internal Forum', p. 219; Boyle, *A Study of the Works attributed to William of Pagula*, pp. 238-40.

[123] Boyle, *A Study of the Works attributed to William of Pagula*, p. 257; Gillespie, *The Literary Form of the Middle English Pastoral Manual*, p. 115.

[124] Gillespie, *The Literary Form of the Middle English Pastoral Manual*, p. 115; Boyle, 'The Oculus Sacerdotis and some other works of William of Pagula', p. 257; Barratt, 'Works of Religious Instruction', p. 415.

Latin manuals of the early thirteenth century were also being updated and expanded. A fellow Dominican, John of Freiburg in his *Summa confessorum* (*c.* 1297/8) not only reworked Raymund's *Summa* (*c.* 1230) but also augmented it with current thought.[125] This does not mean however, that the production of new Latin manuals and *summas* subsided into the fourteenth century.[126] Bloomfield *et al* gave an indication of the vast amount of anonymous works which were related to the penitential system that survive from this period.[127] Judging from the number of surviving manuscripts, one of the most popular Latin manuals was *Oculus sacerdotis*.[128] Written by William of Pagula between the years of 1320-8, it contains the catechetical elements set down in Pecham's 1281 syllabus, but as a compendium of theory and practice it goes far beyond this syllabus.

The first part, *Pars Oculi*, is devoted to penance and it is within this context that we find the basic syllabus of knowledge. Written primarily for the benefit of parochial clergy, the first twelve chapters are devoted to the examination of penitents based upon the articles of faith, the Ten Commandments, the seven deadly sins and the venal sins. Pagula then puts this theory into practice and gives the setting of a model confession in which the penitent is encouraged to accuse himself on the basis of the previous questions. The rest of the *Pars* relies upon Thomas of Chobham's *Summa de casibus* and, in response to the lack of knowledge in canon law amongst parish priest which he experienced as a penitentiary, Pagula gives a catalogue of censures to instruct the priest in the procedure of absolution. In many

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[125] Goering, 'The Internal Forum', p. 222 and Boyle, *A Study of the Works attributed to William of Pagula*, p. 265.

[126] Goering demonstrates the continued outpouring of penitential works by the Dominicans and Franciscans during the latter part of the thirteenth and early fourteenth century in Goering, 'The Internal Forum', pp. 221-225.

[127] M.W. Bloomfield *et al* (eds.), *Incipits of Latin Works on the Virtues and Vices, 1100-1500 A.D.,* Medieval Academy of America Publications, 88 (Cambridge, MA, 1979) and for an update see R. Newhauser, *A Supplement to Morton W. Bloomfield et al*., '*Incipits of Latin Works on the Virtues and Vices, 1100-1500 A.D.*' (Turnhout, 2008).

[128] In addition to listing the extant manuscripts in Appendix B, Boyle points to wills as evidence for the popularity of the *Oculus*, for example in the archdeaconry of Norwich, compiled in 1368, the *Oculus* occurs eleven times in Boyle, 'The *Oculus Sacerdotis* and some other works of William of Pagula', pp. 109 & 94.

ways Pagula's *Pars Oculus* is much like any other Latin penitential manual. However, as Boyle points out, its popularity within the fourteenth century was assured, for it not only embraced within its three parts the various aspects of the *cura animarum*, but also incorporated the local legislation of the previous century, thereby giving the priest all he needed to know to carry out his pastoral office.[129] This popularity is reflected in the reworking of the text by John de Burgo as the *Pupilla Oculi* in 1385 and John Mirk's *Instructions for Parish Priests* (*c*. 1400), to name but two.[130]

Whilst *Oculus*, along with other Latin manuals and *summae* of confession, are addressed to the simple and unlettered priests who heard confessions, it is debateable whether they ever made their way into the hands of the intended parish priest.[131] As Gillespie has pointed out, a text like the *Oculus*, may have had a wide circulation, but this was probably only amongst the graduate clergy.[132] For most of the parish priests the sophisticated knowledge of Latin that was required to navigate these texts, let alone the theological or canonical education that was needed to mine its contents, was beyond them.[133] However, whilst the complicated Latin texts may have been closed to the average parish priest, the fourteenth century saw a flowering of literature in the vernacular, which not only aided the priest in his pastoral duties, but also addressed the subject of the penitent. [134]

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[129] Boyle, 'The Oculus Sacerdotis and some other works of William of Pagula', pp. 93-94.
[130] Pantin also recognizes *Oculus* as the base text to Rolle's *Judica me* in Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century*, p. 197.
[131] Deanesley draws attention to the booklessness of the lower orders of clergy in M. Deanesley, 'Vernacular Books in England in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries', *The Modern Language Review*, 15 (1920), p. 350 [hereafter Deanesley, 'Vernacular Books'], whilst Goering points to the importance of 'social learning' for the average parish priest in Goering, 'The Internal Forum', p. 203 and Goering, *William de Montibus*, p. 61.
[132] Gillespie, *The Literary Form of the Middle English Pastoral Manual*, p. 95.
[133] Grossteste urges such priests to find a fellow priest who did know Latin to help them in his sermon *Scriptum est de Levitis*, referred to in Goering, *William of Montibus*, p. 62, n. 10.
[134] The importance of English for clerics is argued in: Russell, 'Vernacular Instruction of the Laity', p. 102; Watson, 'The Politics of Middle English Writing', p. 337.

The Rise of the Vernacular Manual

Scholars have sought to classify this vast body of, what has been described as, 'literature of religious instruction', which ranges from simple catechetical listings of the works of the vices and virtues or the *Pater Noster*, to versified translations of confessional works, with varying degrees of success.[135] Often lying behind this classification is the assumption that this flowering of vernacular literature was primarily initiated by Pecham's syllabus which it developed.[136] Whilst the content and structuring of these vernacular texts draw upon the fourteen articles of faith, the Ten Commandments, the *Pater Noster* etc., these core elements around which the priest was to examine the penitent were set out well before Pecham's legislation of 1281, as we have seen. It is therefore more realistic to see these texts as developing alongside the Latin manuals and legislation of the thirteenth century, rather than as resulting from Pecham's decree. That is not to say that Pecham's decree had no influence on the vernacular texts that came after. His standardization of the core catechetical elements, as well as the legislative authority their formulation brought, would naturally have given a structure and basic content on which vernacular manual writers could build. Similarly, his emphasis on instruction of the laity is one of a number of elements which can be seen as advancing the rise of the manuals in the vernacular rather that initiating it. Others include: the changing status of the vernacular itself, especially in relation to religious texts and a rising demand from penitents themselves. These shall be considered in turn.

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[135] The description of this vernacular literature as 'works of religious instruction' is taken from Barratt who gives a survey of its translation and reception: Barratt, 'Works of Religious Instruction', pp. 413-432. For a classification of the writings see Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century*, pp. 189-243 and for a critical review of his system see Martin, 'Middle English manuals of religious instruction', pp. 285-291; whereas Pfander tries to define the term 'manual' to give some clarity to terminology and categorizes the literature according to language: Pfander, 'Some Medieval Manuals of Religious Instruction', p. 245.

[136] The assumption that Pecham's decree shaped the vernacular religious writing to come is stated by: Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century*, p. 193; Martin, 'Middle English manuals of religious instruction', p. 284; Pfander, 'Some Medieval Manuals of Religious Instruction', pp. 245; and Russell, 'Vernacular Instruction of the Laity', p. 99. For a summary of the argument see Barratt, 'Works of Religious Instruction', pp. 414-5.

Barratt's classification of this body of writing as 'literature of religious instruction' implies that a unifying factor to the diverse nature of the literature is its intention to instruct, not only the parish priest, but also his congregation.[137] Pecham's decree seeks to prevent the dangerous situation of ignorant priests casting their flock into a ditch of error.[138] His decree is addressed to those of simple learning and summarizes what every priest should know, regardless of their knowledge of Latin, but also that

> four times during the year…each priest in charge of a parish should personally explain or have someone else explain to the people in their mother tongue, without any fancifully woven subtleties the fourteen articles of faith, the Ten Commandments of the Decalogue, the two precepts of the Gospel (namely the twin laws of charity), the seven works of mercy, the seven capital sins and their fruits, the seven principal virtues and the seven grace-giving sacraments.[139]

Pecham's decree thereby places an expectation on both the priest and the laity to know this basic catechetical programme. As we have seen, this programme was not new, but reflected the core elements of the priest's examination of the penitent during confession.[140] However, Pecham's expectation is that these elements are also taught and known outside the forum of the confession by both priest and penitent alike.[141]

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[137] Barratt, 'Works of Religious Instruction', pp. 413-432.
[138] Given the conventional nature of the Biblical text that Pecham cites, Boyle considers whether his charge of ignorance of the clergy is unfounded: Boyle, 'The *Oculus Sacerdotis* and some other works of William of Pagula', p. 91 and concludes that some truth must lie behind his charge.
[139] For the Latin text see Powicke and Cheney (eds.), *Councils and Synods*, 1:900-05 and translation in Shinners and Dohar (eds.) *Pastors and the Care of Souls*, pp. 127-32.
[140] The thirteenth-century tradition of episcopal legislation on penance continued alongside Pecham's decrees and can be seen in the 1287 statues of Peter Quivel, Bishop of Exeter, whose *summula* is 'primarily a manual for the examination and instruction of penitents in the confessional': Boyle, 'The *Oculus Sacredotis* and some other works of William of Pagula', p. 82 and Powicke and Cheney (eds.), *Councils and Synods*, 1:1060-77.
[141] Scholars who highlight the instructive aspect of penance include: Lee W. Patterson, 'The 'Parson's Tale' and the Quitting of the 'Canterbury Tales', *Traditio*, 34 (1978), pp. 336-7 [hereafter Patterson 'The 'Parson's Tale'']; Mark Miller, 'Displaced Souls, Idle Talk, Spectacular Scenes: *Handlyng Synne* and the Perspective of Agency', *Speculum*, 71 (1996), pp. 606-32 [hereafter Miller, 'Displaced Souls, Idle Talk, Spectacular Scenes']; Bloomfield (ed.), *Thomae de Chobham Summa Confessorum*, XV; Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century*, pp. 192; Shaw, 'The Influence of Canonical and Episcopal Reform on Popular Books of Instruction', pp. 51-53.

The significance of this focus on instruction for the development of the vernacular manuals can be seen in John Gaytryge's English version of Archbishop Thoresby's 1357 Latin Instructions, known as the *Lay Folk's Catechism*. Ordered by the archbishop for his diocese, this manual takes as its basis Pecham's decree and expands it to form a vernacular catechism in verse.[142] The text begins with a summary of the Fall and then sets out the motivation behind this text, the acquiring of knowledge. Whilst Adam and Eve knew God in the beginning,

> all the knawyng þat we have in þis world of him,
> Is of heryng, and leryng and techyng of othir,
> Of the lawe and þe lare þat langes till halikirke,
> The whilke al creatures that loues god almighten
> Awe to knawe and to kun, and lede þaire lyue aftir;
> And so com to that blisse that never more blynnes.
> And forthi that mikill folke now in this world
> Ne is noght wele ynogh lered to knawe god almighten,
> Ne loue him, ne serue him als thai shuld do,
> Als thaire dedis ofte sithe openly shewes[143]

Echoing the experience of the confessional, knowledge and the moral life are seen as intimately bound together. To know God in this fallen world is only through the teaching of the church and it is a lack of knowledge which prevents the soul from loving and serving him and so falling into sin. The catechism is given therefore in order to rectify this and to impart the knowledge whereby the soul may live a life of virtue. Like Pecham's decree, all curates are thereby required to teach and preach publicly in the vulgar tongue 'the lawe and the lore to knawe god all-mighten' which is set out in the Catechism. In this context the forty-day indulgence, which Thoresby promises to those who know their catechism, is not simply a sweetener for learning, but a recognition that 'if ye kunnandly knaw this ilk sex

[142] For the composition of the text see Anne Hudson, 'A New Look at the Lay Folks' Catechism', *Viator*, 16 (1985), pp. 243-58; Anne Hudson, 'The Lay Folks' Catechism: A Postscript', *Viator*, 19 (1988), pp. 307-9.
[143] *The Lay Folk's Catechism*, ed. by Thomas Simmons and Henry Nolloth, EETS, OS, 118 (1901), p. 4, ll. 27-36 [hereafter Simmons and Nolloth (eds.), *The Lay Folk's Catechism*].

thinges/Thurgh thaim sal ye kun god almighten'. In the original Latin *Instructions*, which Thoresby gives to his priests, it is this knowledge which is to be demonstrated at the examination of the penitent in confession and forms the basis of a full and true confession. [144] As we have seen in the Latin manuals, knowledge of the core elements of faith is essential for the penitent to understand their sin. It not only begins the practice of penance but also the process of reformation.

In order for the penitent to have the knowledge necessary for confession, Thoresby thereby decrees that his catechism be expounded from the pulpit 'openly on Inglis'. This had been a common decree amongst bishops throughout the thirteenth century.[145] Archbishop Pecham was not the first to stipulate that parish priests should 'explain to the people in their mother tongue', Richard Poore had stated as much fifty years earlier.[146] Where Thoresby departs from former legislative practice is by disseminating his *Instructions* to archdeacons in a written vernacular form along with the Latin.[147] In this departure Thoresby gives legislative authority to a trend which had increasingly used the *materna lingua* in religious texts and was another element in contributing to the prolific rise of manuals in the vernacular.[148]

The fourteenth century has been characterized as the age in which English triumphed as the dominant language over Latin, the language of the church, and Anglo-Norman, the language

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[144] '*…de peccatis suis vere confessis poenitentibus et contritis'* from Thoresby's Latin Instructions, which are not reproduced in Gaytryge's version in Simmons and Nolloth (eds.), *The Lay Folk's Catechism*, p. 98.
[145] Shaw makes this point in Shaw, 'The Influence of Canonical and Episcopal Reform on Popular Books of Instruction', p. 51.
[146] For Latin original of Pecham's decree with translation see: Shinners and Dohar (eds.), *Pastors and the Care of Souls*, p. 128 and for Richard Poore see Powicke and Cheney (eds.), *Councils and Synods*, 1:61.
[147] Watson, 'The Politics of Middle English Writing', p. 336; R.N. Swanson, 'The Origins of The Lay Folk's Catechism', *Medium Aevum*, 60 (1991), pp. 92-100; Sue Powell, 'The Transmission and Circulation of the Lay Folks' Catechism' in *Late-Medieval Religious Texts and Their Transmission: Essays in Honour of A.I. Doyle*, ed. by A.J.Minnis (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1994), pp. 67-84.
[148] Vincent Gillespie, 'Vernacular Books of Religion' in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Unversity Press, 1989), pp. 317-44 [hereafter Gillespie, 'Vernacular Books of Religion']. Here at p. 318.

of the lawyers and aristocracy.[149] As Watson rightly points out, this myth is both unhelpful and unworkable.[150] However, at the turn of the thirteenth century the relationship between the three languages began to shift, as English increasingly became the medium for religious works, alongside Latin. One of the reasons for this is given in *Speculum Vitae* (*c*. 1349). Written around the time of Gaytryge's *Lay Folk's Catechism*, it begins with a justification by the poet of why he has used English:

> In Inglische tunge I sal yhow telle,
> If yhe so lange with me wil dwelle.
> Na Latyne wil I speke ne wast
> Both Inglische þat men uses mast,
> For þat es yhour kynde langage
> þat yhe haf mast here usage.
> þat can ilk man understande
> þat es borne in Ingelande,
> For þat langage es mast shewed
> Als wele amonge lered als lewed.
> Latyne, als I trowe, can nane,
> Bot þa þat has it skole tane;
> Summe can Frankische and na Latyne
> þat used has court and dwelled þarin;
> And som can of Latyne a party
> þat can Frankys bot febilly;
> And som understandes Inglische
> þat nouthir can Latyn ne Frankische.
> Bot lered and lawed, alde and yhunge,
> Alle understandes Inglische tunge.[151]

This passage reveals the complexity of language during the mid fourteenth century: some had been taught Latin at the schools, whilst others had French but no Latin, and, overall, knowledge of these two languages ranges from a little to none at all. It is therefore in his desire to use a universal language which addresses both 'lered' and 'lewed' that the poet

[149] Watson, 'The Politics of Middle English Writing', p. 335; for a seminal text on the subject see Clanchy, *From Memory to the Written Record*.
[150] Watson, 'The Politics of Middle English Writing', p. 335.
[151] *Speculum Vitae: A Reading Edition*, vol. 1, ed. by Ralph Hanna, EETS, OS, 331 (2008), p. 6, ll.61-80, [hereafter Hanna (ed.), *Speculum Vitae*].

chooses English.[152] This concern to reach everyone finds its motivation in the catechetical content of his work. He describes his text as 'a lessoun' in 'How yhe sal follow Goddes wille / And knaw bathe gode and ille, / And what yhe sal chese and what forsake / And what way yhe sal to heuen take.' The text which follows is structured on the catechetical and penitential material of the *Pater Noster*, and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. In turn it unfolds the significance of the Decalogue, the Creed and sacraments and the virtues and vices, thereby presenting a complete in depth analysis of the moral life. However, whilst it assumes that it will be of value to the 'lered', it is primarily addressed to the 'Gode men and wymmen' of the laity.[153]

Speculum Vitae is one of a number of religious texts which were adapted and translated from the Anglo-Norman tradition into English, primarily for a non-Latinate audience.[154] Along with *The Book of Vices and Virtues* (*c*. 1375) and *Ayenbite of Inwit* (*c*. 1340), the *Speculum Vitae* is a selective translation of the thirteenth-century Anglo-French text *Somme le roi* (*c*. 1279), written by Friar Lorens, the Dominican confessor to Philip II of France.[155] Robert Manning's *Handlyng Synne* (1303) similarly translates and is structured upon the Anglo-Norman text *Manuel des Pechiez* (*c*. 1260) but considerably expands and adapts the original

[152] The same linguistic motivation can also be seen in the 1300 *Cursor Mundi* whose poet chooses to write in English rather than French or Latin for 'the love of Englis lede, / Englis lede of Englelande / The commune for til understande' ll.76-78 in *Cursor Mundi (The cursor of the world): a Northumbrian poem of the XIVth century in four versions*, ed. by Richard Morris, EETS, OS, 57 (1874-93); for extract of the text on language see Watson, 'The Politics of Middle English Writing', pp. 267-71.

[153] Clanchy redefines the modern understanding of the term laity to encompass the medieval sense of anyone who had no Latinate book learning which also included nuns, monks and priests in Clanchy, *From Memory to the Written Record*, pp. 226-30.

[154] Pantin lists these texts under moral treatises in the vernacular: Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century*, pp. 224-226 he places *Speculum Vitae* in a different category of 'sevens' whilst still recognising its similarity to the *Somme le roi* texts pp. 227-229. However, Pfander describes them as manuals: Pfander, 'Medieval Manuals of Religious Instruction', p. 247. For the Anglo-Norman tradition, see *"Cher alme": Texts of Anglo-Norman Piety*, ed. by Tony Hunt and trans. by Jane Bliss (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2010).

[155] For the handling of his source material in *Speculum Vitae* see Ralph Hanna's introduction to Hanna (ed.), *Speculum Vitae*, pp. lxx-lxxiv.

source material with the use of *exempla*.[156] Lying behind these translations and adaptations is also the desire to make religious texts more accessible. This can be seen in the prologue to Manning's *Handlyng Synne,* where he addresses his work to layfolk looking for stimulation, for 'many ben of swyche manere, / That talys and rymys wyl blethly here; / Yn gamys, & festys, & at the ale, / Loue men to lestene trouteuale:/…For swyche men haue y made this ryme' (ll. 45-51). Whilst his text is structured on the complex catechetical schemes which shape the form and content of Latin penitential works, through his use of the vernacular, Manning addresses Langland's 'field of folk' and their internal moral life outside the confessional.

The increased use of vernacular in catechetical and penitential texts thereby made them more accessible to the penitent. Access to these texts would not however have been primarily through the written word but by what Coleman describes as 'aurality' or the shared hearing of texts.[157] Even when literacy improved and book ownership increased towards the end of the fourteenth century the social act of hearing a text read out was still prevalent.[158] The writer of the *Speculum Vitae* envisages that those who cannot read will hear the text read out to them and be instructed in it by a priest

> And al for lewd men namely
> þat can no manere of clergy.
> To kenne þam war mast nede,
> For clerkes can bathe se and rede
> In sere bokes of Haly Writte
> How þai sal lif, if þai loke itt.[159]

[156]Sullens (ed.), *Handlyng Synne*. For Manning's manipulation of *exempla* see Miller, 'Displaced Souls, Idle Talk, Spectacular Scenes, pp. 606-32.
[157] Coleman, 'Aurality', pp. 68-85.
[158] Coleman points to the reading habits of Chaucer as reflected in his works to emphasize the interchangeable nature of reading in private and public in Coleman, 'Aurality', p. 71.
[159] Hanna (ed.), *Speculum Vitae*, p. 7, ll. 83-88.

Margery Kempe presented a good example of such a person, when she describes a priest reading to her many books, including the 'Bybyl wyth doctowrys thereupon, Seynt Brydys boke, Hyltons boke, Boneventur, *Stimulus Amoris*, *Incendium Amoris*, and swech other'.[160] Similarly, Julian states, within S, that she 'herd read' the story of St. Cecilia by a holy man. Given that she may have been at home when she received her revelation, it is possible that Julian was part of the sub-culture Riddy identifies amongst devout women which owned, shared and read vernacular devotional and didactic material.[161] It has been convincingly argued that, once in her anchorhold, Julian could have had extracts from compilations of devotional texts read to her.[162] This pious reading is not seen as replacing the encounter between priest and penitent, nor as reducing the instructive power of preaching, but rather supplementing these two confessional activities and fuelling the rise in vernacular manuals and didactic penitential works. In many ways, the vernacular manuals can therefore be seen as bringing 'religious instruction out of the church and into the household'.[163]

There is evidence to suggest that such a shift in the use of the vernacular was also fuelled by demand from the 'lewd' themselves.[164] By the end of the fourteenth century vernacular didactic treatises and manuals were being increasingly owned by devout laity.[165] In addition, texts that were written solely for clerics or enclosed orders, were being adapted and used to

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[160] Windeatt (ed.), *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ll. 4819-4821.
[161] Benedicta Ward sets out a convincing claim that Julian received her revelations whilst still at home: Ward, 'Julian the Solitary'; Riddy, 'Women talking about the things of God', p. 111.
[162] Reynolds' image of Julian listening to theological texts read out by the neighbouring friars: Reynolds (ed.), *Julian of Norwich: A Shewing of God's Love*, p. xx, has been questioned by Pelphrey, who points to the time restriction imposed upon visitors to an anchoress: Pelphrey, *Love was his Meaning*, p. 22; whilst Dutton suggests that extracts from compilations would have been possible: Dutton, *Julian of Norwich. The Influence of Late-Medieval Devotional Compilations*, p. 11.
[163] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 69.
[164] Riddy, 'Women talking about the things of God', p. 107.
[165] From the evidence in wills, devout laity often owned service books and didactic texts such as the *Pricke of Conscience* along with devotional works by Richard Rolle and Walter Hilton in the late fourteenth century. See Meale, 'alle the bokes that I haue of latyn, englisch and frensch', pp. 130-38. They also bequeathed didactic penitential works such as the *Pricke of Conscience*, *The Chasitising of God's Children* and *The Doctrine of the Heart*: Felicity Riddy, 'Women talking about the things of God', p. 108; also see Tanner, *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich*, pp. 110-2.

meet a growing lay audience which sought to live what Hilton describes as 'the mixed life' and were literally 'taking the clergy's words out of their mouths'.[166] As Hussey cogently argues, spiritual writers such as Walter Hilton (d. 1396) and Richard Rolle (*c*. 1300-49) increasingly had an eye to a much larger audience than the enclosed anchoress to which their texts were addressed.[167] Hilton's later work, *The Mixed Life* is addressed to those who sought to live the 'medeled lif that is bothe actif and contemplative.'[168] Julian's L reflects a similar shift to a wider audience of 'mine even cristen' as opposed to S. In contrast to the Latin manuals which were written primarily to aid the confessor in his task of hearing confession, the vernacular manuals and moral treatises of the fourteenth-century address this wider audience and, as a consequence, increasingly consider penance from the perspective of the penitent. This can be seen by focussing on the development of one aspect of the catechetical instruction, from its teaching in the Latin manuals, to its expression in the vernacular manuals and moral treatises, namely the gift the fear. But first it is necessary to consider its theological background.

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[166] Quotation from K.B. McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 204, and also used in Gillespie, 'Vernacular Books of Religion', p. 317; Rice, *Lay Piety and Religious Discipline*, p. x; Hilary M. Carey, 'Devout Literate Laypeople and the Pursuit of the Mixed Life in Later Medieval England', *The Journal of Religious History*, 14 (1987), p. 361 [hereafter Carey, 'Devout Literate Laypeople']; Jeremy Catto, 'Religion and the English Nobility in the Later Fourteenth Century' in *History and Imagination: Essays in Honour of H. R. Trevor-Roper*, ed. by Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Valerie Pearl and Blair Worden (London: Duckworth, 1981), pp. 43-55; Deanesly, 'Vernacular Books', pp. 349-58.

[167] S.S. Hussey, 'The Audience for the Middle English Mystics' in *De Cella in Seculum: Religious and Secular Life and Devotion in Late Medieval England*, ed. by Michael Sargent (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1989), p. 110 [hereafter Hussey, 'The Audience for the Middle English Mystics'].

[168] Walter Hilton, *Walter Hilton's Mixed Life edited from Lambeth Palace M472*, ed. by S. J. Ogilvie-Thomson, Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies, 92:15 (Salzburg: Institute fur Anglistik und Amerikanistik Universitat Salzburg, 1986), p. 16, l. 161.

Penance from the Perspective of the Penitent: the gift of Fear

The gift of dread is the first of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Based upon the Biblical text of Isaiah 11:3 these gifts within the Latin manuals are given by the Spirit to enable the soul to live the life of virtue.[169] Fear is seen to play an integral role in dealing with sin by transforming *timor* into *amor*, the proper awe and dread which is rooted in the virtue of meekness rather than the horror of sin and punishment. In the late thirteenth century Thomas Aquinas set out the different forms of the gift of dread within the second part of his *Summa* (*c*. 1273), which clarified previous thinking but also shaped the understanding of the nature of dread within the penitential process in the centuries to come. [170] This process begins by awakening souls to their situation through revealing the nature and extent of sin. The anchoritic text *Ancrene Wisse* likens this 'initial fear' to someone shouting "Fire" in the way that it wakens the soul to its perishing condition.[171] In *The Pursuit of Wisdom*, a version of Richard St Victor's *Benjamin Minor*, which circulated in the *Cloud corpus*, dread is 'the first virtue experienced in man's affection' the first step on the path to wisdom is fear itself.[172] Similarly, the mid fourteenth-century *Prick of Conscience* identifies fear as that which 'may lofe bygyn'.[173]

[169] The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit were a common element in Latin *summa* and can be found in the works of Chabham, Wetheringsett, Flamborough, Simon of Hinton's *Summa iuniorum*, *c*. 1250/60
[170] *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, 19.
[171] Watson makes a similar connection in Watson & Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 354, n.1-2 which refers to *Ancrene Wisse. A Corrected Edition of the Text in Corpus Christi College MS 402 with variants from other manuscripts*, ed. by Bella Millett, EETS, OS, 325 (2005), p. 92, l. 907. The same image is also used by the *Cloud* author in *The Cloud of Unknowing and Related Treatises*, ed. by Phyllis Hodgson (Exeter: Catholic Records Press, 1982), p. 43, l. 10-16 [hereafter Hodgson (ed.), *The Cloud of Unknowing and Related Treatises*].
[172] *A Tretyse of the Stodye of Wysdome that Men Clepen Beniamyn*, in Hodgson (ed.), *The Cloud of Unknowing and Related Treatises*, p. 131, l. 15-19.
[173] Ralph Hanna and Sarah Wood (eds.), *Richards Morris's Pricke of Conscience a corrected and amplified reading text*, EETS, OS, 342 (2013), p. 12, l. 345 [hereafter Hanna and Wood (eds.), *Pricke of Conscience*].

The second form of dread, 'servile fear', is not simply fear of punishment but a knowledge of one's sins and their consequences in order to live a life of virtue. *Sawles Warde* (*c*. 1220) encapsulates this notion of servile fear in the way it visualizes Fear appearing to Caution, the gatekeeper of the soul, as the messenger of death, telling of all the horrors of the afterlife in hell, so that the Virtues may defend and protect the castle of the soul.[174] In part V of the *Pricke of Conscience* Christ appears on the day of Judgement with fifteen accusers, the first of which is man's own conscience, who shall call sinful man to account for the sins of his youth and old age. This is dramatically represented in the Doomsday scene at the end of the N-town play.[175] After the blessed have entered the gates of heaven, the damned are led before God and cry out for mercy. In a rage *Deus* asks them why they should be shown mercy having not shown any themselves and, using the words of Matthew chapter 25 verses 41-46, he tells them that their deeds 'doth yow spylle' (destroy).[176] The seven deadly sins are then described as written on each of their faces and they are read out by the demons until the damned cry out 'we have synnyd. We be to blame'.[177] In this powerful scene, which echoes the confessional format of self examination, the Judge reveals the hidden and unrepented sins to the quaking soul and the damned are brought to a shocking realisation of their guilt. [178] Such a text thereby encourages the penitent to search their heart and make confessions which are full and true.

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[174] *Sawles Warde* in Savage and Watson, *Anchoritic Spirituality*, p. 213.
[175] *The N-town Play: Cotton MS Vespasian D.8*, ed. by Stephen Spector, vol. 1: Introduction and Text, EETS, SS, 11 (1991) [hereafter Spector (ed.), *The N-town Play*].
[176] *Ibid.*, p. 412, l. 87.
[177] Spector (ed.), *The N-town Play*, p. 413, l. 130.
[178] Hanna and Wood (eds.), *Pricke of Conscience*, pp. 150-1, ll. 5422-5467; Delumeau argues that the perpetual stress on sin inevitably lead to the overriding image of God as Judge: Delumeau, *Sin and Fear*, p. 291. Emile Mâle reveals the extent to which the image of the Matthean version of the Last Judgement during the thirteenth century portrayed Christ showing his wounds not only to recall his mercy but also to justify his wrath: Emile Mâle, *Religious Art in France: The Thirteenth Century. A Study of Medieval Iconography and Its Sources*, trans. by Marthiel Mathews, Bollingen series XL.2 (Princeton: University Press, 1984), pp. 351-367.

Both initial and servile dread originate in the Holy Spirit, however, it is filial or chaste fear which Aquinas identifies with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is characterized by reverence to God and submission to his will. Reflecting the teaching of penitential manuals, Aquinas debates which Beatitude filial fear should most appropriately be allied with and concludes that *Beati pauperes spiritu* reflects the humility of filial fear.[179] The process by which the soul is brought to this state of dread by the Holy Spirit is visualized in *The Book of Vices and Virtues*. The root of humility is depicted as having four branches which spring up through thinking upon 'the pouerte, the foulenesse, the brotelnesse of his berthe', 'how he is ful of synne', 'whidere he goth' and the righteouness of God. The gift of fear is described as a process of noughting:

> þan ȝeueþ God hym a felynge þat powere of man is nouȝt and þat he haþ nouȝt and þat he can nouȝt and þat he may nouȝt, þan bigynneþ he to be pore gostliche.[180]

This tree of meekness is set beside the well of dread which waters the soul in humility. The seven degrees which the author goes on to describe, ensures that confession is full and true. These include knowing one's sins, feeling them and acknowledging them. Such texts focus on the responsibility of the penitent to know and acknowledge their sin prior to the confessional encounter, thereby enabling them to come to the confessional encounter in a proper attitude of contrition.

Within this context, texts such as the popular fourteenth-century didactic text, the *Pricke of Conscience* are therefore not so much concerned with evoking fear for fear's sake, as in revealing the place and role of fear to move the penitent to contrition and so begin the process of healing which lay at the heart of the sacrament of penance as depicted in the Latin and

[179] *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, 19, 12.
[180] Francis (ed.), *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, p. 129, ll. 34-37.

vernacular manuals. Often allied to the seven petitions of the *Pater Noster*, the gift of dread is usually related to the petition '*sed libera nos a malo'* (deliver us from evil) within the Latin manuals. This can be clearly seen in chapter VI of Grosseteste's *Templum Dei* where he sets out the elements needed to build up and care for the holy temple of the soul through confession.[181] Along with the seven petitions of the *Pater Noster*, the seven gifts of the Spirit are presented as the medicines given by God to be used by the priest physician to heal the wounded soul of sin. This would have formed the core understanding for the priest of what he was doing in the confessional encounter and the medicinal tools he had to offer the sinful soul. However, from the perspective of the penitent it does not answer the difficult question of how we will be delivered from evil.

In the Anglo-Norman tradition of vernacular texts this question is increasingly addressed, as the priestly schematic association of the *Pater noster* with the gifts of the Holy Spirit is reflected and expanded upon for the benefit of the penitent. Where Grosseteste's text was written primarily for priests, the vernacular versions of the *Somme le roi* present the programme of instruction from the perspective of the penitent. The British Library MS Additional 33995 edition of *Speculum Vitae* (*c*. 1349) which is transcribed by Ralph Hanna in his reading version of the text makes this clear.[182] For alongside the body of the verse there are scribal marginalia which reveal the extent to which the body of the text explains the priestly Latin programme within the manuals. The petition '*sed libera nos a malo'* is to 'make us haue the Gift of Drede', and the margin heading states as much, *Donum timoris Domini*. It is the gift that puts out the sin of Pride, *peccatum superbie* and 'instede of it plantes and settes/ Mekenes that Pryde mast lettes', *Virtus Humilitatis* which leads the soul to ghostly poverty, *Paupertatis Spiritus*, and is the path to the kingdom of heaven, *Premium*

[181] Goering and Montello (eds.), *Templum Dei*, p. 37.
[182] See Ralph Hanna's introduction to Hanna (ed.), *Speculum Vitae*, p. xxxiii & lxxxv1-viii.

Regni Celorum. This section of basic priestly knowledge is concluded by a quotation from the relevant Beatitude with its Latin in the margin, *Beati pauperes in spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum celorum*.[183] Having set out, for his lay audience, the programme of Latin knowledge which was tabulated for priests by Grossteste so successfully in the *Templum Dei*, the writer goes on to explain and expound the different branches and roots of the sin of pride which the gift of dread casts out. In many ways this text can therefore be seen as expounding the penitential information that the priest needed to perform his task of *cura animarum* in order for the penitent to make a full and true confession.

In a later version of the *Somme le roi* textual tradition, this adaptation and explanation of the Latin penitential material for the benefit of the penitent becomes more apparent. Instead of simply instructing the penitent in the nature of sin, it addresses the manner in which the gift of dread deals with it. *The Book of Vices and Virtues* (*c*. 1375) similarly associates the *Pater noster* petition 'deliver us from evil' with the gift of dread and reflects the notion found in the Latin manuals that this gift is given by God for protection and building the soul up in order to live the life of virtue. Requesting this petition is to ask for the gift of dread whereby 'we mowe be delyuered of the schrewe (evil one) and of alle othere euel, that is of alle synnes and of periles, in this world and in that othere, amen'. It not only protects the soul from evil but also makes it secure in virtue, so 'we lese not bi pride the giftes that thou hast geue us'. In this context the gift of dread is seen not so much as an active force in rooting up sin and planting meekness, but more as an attitude or state of the mind which holds the soul in virtue. As if to differentiate this grace from the work of the Spirit in the gift of dread, the writer calls it 'holy drede'.

[183] Hanna (ed.), *Speculum Vitae*, p. 118, ll. 3473-3490.

In many ways the writer has expressed the teaching on the gift of dread found within the Latin manuals. However, he continues by addressing the question of how the Holy Spirit works in the 'gifte of drede'. Whereas *Speculum Vitae* describes the gift of dread as rooting out the sin of pride and its many species of the sin, *The Book of Vices and Virtues* considers how this is done. The author uses a number of images which have a scriptural basis to show the state of the soul in sin.

> Þe synful man or womman þat slepeþ in dedly synne fareþ as a dronke harlote þat haþ al y-dronke at þe tauerne and is so naked and so pore þat he haþ nouȝt, but he ne feleþ it nouȝt, ne he ne pleyneþ hym nouȝt, but weneþ he be a grete maister.[184]

Based upon the scriptural image of the harlot Israel within Isaiah, the text presents sin as a state which distorts the nature of the soul and reduce it to a naked poverty. However, the soul itself is not only unaware of its situation and sleeps in sin, but also has a false understanding and lacks humility. The seriousness of this situation is brought out by another image, that of the sinking ship

> Euere-more þe synful, as seiþ Salamon, fareþ as he þat is in a schip alone in þe see, and slepeþ and leteþ the schip drenche for defaute of gouernaile, and he ne wot no þing þer-of , ne he nys not a-ferd.[185]

In this image the helplessness of the soul in sin is brought out. He is alone and unable to do anything about his perilous situation and yet at the same time is blissfully unaware of the state he is in. Another image uses the account of Peter's imprisonment in Acts 12:1-11 in contrast to the situation of sin.

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[184] Francis (ed.), *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, p. 126, l. 8-12.
[185] *Ibid.*, p. 126, l. 25-28.

> And ȝit more it fareþ be þe sinful as be hym þat is in a prisoune in feteres and gyues and in an hard kepynge, as seynt Petre was in Herodes prisoune, & ȝet þilke wrecche ne purueieþ hym not ne biþenkeþ hym not how he schal so to-fore justices, ne how þe galewes abideþ hym, but slepeþ and meteþ þat he is at weddynges and grete festes.[186]

Like Peter, the soul imprisoned by sin is oblivious to his situation and sleeps.

In each of these images, sin is depicted as an internal state in which the sinful man is 'noughted', blinded and imprisoned by sin so much so that it does not conceive of its situation. The gift of dread, which the Holy Spirit gives, is presented as dealing with this internal situation by awakening the sinner to his sin so that he may not only 'feleth he his harm and knoweth his owne folye' but also 'seeþ the perel' he is in and 'bigynneþ to haue gret drede of himself'. The gift of dread is thereby described as opening the eyes of the sinner to his sin, by evoking a sense of dread within him. In this vernacular version of the *Somme le roi* tradition the focus of the text has thereby shifted from being instructive, to addressing the internal state of sin experienced by the penitent and the role of the Holy Spirit, through the gift of dread, to bring the soul to confession.

Tribulation texts such *The Chastising of God's Children* (*c*. 1390's) and William Flete's *The Remedies against Temptation* (*c*. 1359) are good examples of fourteenth-century texts which directly address the profound sense of sinfulness experienced by the righteous soul.[187] Written primarily for his own benefit after dropping out of the *magisterium* in Cambridge and

[186] Francis (ed.), *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, p. 126, l. 31- p. 127, l. 2.
[187] Bazire and Colledge in their edition of *The Chastising of God's Children* date the text to around 1382 from internal evidence which points to the Lollard recantations of that year. However, Sutherland gives a more realistic assessment and gives a later date and lengthy composition prior to 1408 in Annie Sutherland, '*The Chastising of God's Children*: A Neglected Text' in *Text and Controversy from Wyclif to Bale: Essays in honour of Anne Hudson*, ed. by Helen Barr and Ann M. Hutchinson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), pp. 353-374.

before leaving England for Italy in 1359, Flete explains his internal chaos in terms of wrestling with demons.[188]

> Leo þe pope seith þat it falleth somtime þat goode and r(i)ghteful soules ben sterd be þe feend, and somtyme be sterynge of complexion to angres, troubles, taryenges and diseses of dredes, þat it semeth to hem her lif a torment, and here deth an ease, in so moche þat somtyme for disese þei begynnen to dispeire bothe in here lyf of body and of here soule. And thei wenen þat þei ben forsaken of god, whiche asayeth and proueth his chosen frendes be temptacyons….as þe feir purgeth gold, and a knyght also is preuyd good and hardy by bataile, right so temptacions and trubles preueth and pureth þe rightful man.[189]

Flete addresses the concerns of individuals whose internal state has become distorted and blinded by a false sense of sin, which leads them to despair and a false image of God's presence. To restore sight to the blinded soul, Flete describes this 'compleccyon' as a temptation by the devil, but asserts that the authority and power for this chaos lies not with the devil but with God.

Similarly the author of *The Chastising of God's Children* gives clarity to the distorted perception of sinfulness within the righteous soul by depicting God as a mother playing with her child, sometimes being present and sometimes absent. In her absence the heart hardens and the body becomes sluggish so that the child is 'lik to falle in vices' but yet she 'louith us neuer the lasse'.[190] The author differentiates between the perceived experience of sinfulness and the reality of forgiveness by giving six reasons why the Lord withdraws from his children. The first and the third are connected with penance and protect the soul in the life of

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[188] Benedict Hackett, *William Flete, O.S.A., and Catherine of Siena*, The Augustinian Series, vol. 15 (Villanova: Augustinian Press, 1992), p. 82.
[189] *Remedies Against Temptations: The Third English Version of William Flete*, ed. by Edmund Colledge and Noel Chadwick, Archivio italiano per la storia della pieta, v. 5 (Roma: ABETE, 1968), p. 224, ll. 5-15 [hereafter Colledge and Chadwick (eds.), *Remedies Against Temptations*] and 'The remedy against the troubles of temptations' in *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolloe of Hampole, an English Father of the Church, and His Followers*, Vol. 2, ed. by Carl Horstmann (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1895), p. 109.
[190] *The Chastising of God's Children and the Treatise of Perfection of the Sons of God*, ed. by Joyce Bazine and Eric Colledge (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), p. 98, l. 18 & 20-21.

virtue: the first to prevent pride, and the third to stop presumption. The second is to have knowledge of our wretchedness and the fourth is to seek God as a child does its mother. The author thereby addresses the internal trials, or 'dreadful doutis', that beset the righteous soul by revealing their false basis and re-orientating the soul towards God through knowledge of his power and authority and the sinner's reliance upon him, the state of humility.

Flete takes this a stage further and gives theological reassurance to the righteous soul that he remains in virtue despite the experience of internal chaos, by differentiating between the internal good will and an external sinful act[191]

> for goode dedes schewen alwey a good wil and euele dedes yuel wil. W(h)erfore a man þat doth in dede the seruice of god, þat man hath a good wil to god, þouȝ his trauailouse herte deme the contrarye.[192]

In his explanation of the internal sense of chaos and sinfulness within the righteous soul, Flete assures the reader that God looks upon the will or intent of the soul rather than 'his wers(um) fantasyes'. In both of these texts, sin itself is seen to be dealt with quite simply, as the soul is bidden to flee to God to receive mercy and forgiveness through the sacraments of the church. What they are both addressing however is the shortfall between the act of confession and the psychological alleviation of the sense of internal sinfulness. It is this relative failure in the penitential structures of the church which became increasingly apparent to social commentators and devorional writers alike towards the latter half of the fourteenth century. It is to this issue I now turn.

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[191] The connection between Julian and Flete is demonstrated by Watson in his textual notes toWatson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich* and argued by Gillespie, ''[S]he do the police in different voices'', pp. 198-99.
[192] Colledge and Chadwick (eds.), *Remedies Against Temptations*, p. 222, l. 35-38.

The Fourteenth-Century Confessional Crisis

Towards the end of the fourteenth century there is evidence to suggest that, for some at least, it was not the penitential manual which was failing penitents but rather the confessional encounter itself. It has been argued that the vernacular manuals were primarily responsible for causing a heightened awareness of sin.[193] The rise in vernacular manuals and moral treatises had increasingly, during the fourteenth century, enabled penitents to search their own hearts outside the confessional encounter. Given the prolific nature of this flowering of vernacular literature and its instructional mandate, there is reason to think that the penitent was encouraged to take seriously his role of self-accusation within the sacrament.

The vernacular manuals encouraged penitents to foster an attitude of contrition. Although the substance of the sacrament lay within the contrition of the penitent, it also required a formal act of confession according to the teaching of Holy Church in order for it to be efficacious. This dual nature of the sacrament is upheld by Robert Manning in his *Handlyng Synne* which ends with an exemplum of a model confession.[194] Playing on the relationship between speaker and what is spoken, the Devil lists all seven deadly sins and the atrocities he has committed. However, he has no sorrow for them, so the holy man who hears the confession asks why has he come 'that thou repentest the noun euyl'. His answer is that he wants 'so moche bryghtnes' as is given to those who repent. That is, the restoration which comes through receiving forgiveness. The angel of light, Lucifer, who fell because of his pride, in many senses makes the model confession but he shows no remorse and hence he leaves without forgiveness.

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[193] Murray, 'Confession as a historical source', pp. 301-2; Patterson, 'The Subject of Confession', p. 380; Carey, 'Devout Literate Laypeople', pp. 361-81.
[194] Sullens (ed.), *Handlyng Synne*, pp. 310-14.

Margery Kempe stands in contrast to Lucifer and is presented as an *exemplum* of true contrition. Her tears have been ordained by Christ himself so that she may

> be a merowr amongys hem, for to han gret sorwe, that thei schulde takyn exampil by the for to have sum litil sorwe in her hertys for her synnys, that thei myth therthorw be savyd; but thei lovyn not to heryn of sorwe ne contricyon.[195]

Following the teaching concerning contrition in the vernacular manuals, Margery shows that the power of the sacrament lies in the extent to which one is sorry for one's sins. True contrition is presented as a gift from God in order to move others to sorrow for their sins.

Within these manuals and moral treatises the act of confession itself is often absent, with the focus being on the penitent and their preparation for confession instead. The encounter with the priest is assumed to follow. This can be seen within the festival sermons of John Mirk which, unlike other medieval sermon collections, fail to include a description of an actual confession.[196] As Ford rightly observes, the reason for this omission is that Mirk was concerned with the state of the penitent's heart and the choices and actions that led them to confession rather than the mechanism of confession itself. In his sermon for *Quinquagesima* he states that the three requirements for forgiveness of sins are: full contrition with confession, full charity and stable faith.[197] Mirk does not so much reject auricular confession as assume that it takes place 'off stage', focussing on the contrition, faith and charity of the penitent which were necessary for forgiveness.[198]

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[195] Windeatt (ed.), *The Book of Margery Kempe*, p. 338, l. 6242-6245.
[196] Judy Ann Ford, *John Mirk's Festial. Orthodoxy, Lollardy and the Common People in Fourteenth-century England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), pp. 44-5.
[197] *John Mirk's Festial*, ed. by Susan Powell, EETS, OS, 334 (2009), pp. 72-3, l. 61-97 [hereafter Powell (ed.), *John Mirk's Festial*].
[198] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

Similarly, the *Book of Vices and Virtues* focusses on preparation for confession, rather than the practice of penance itself. However, in its emphasis on this initial stage it also raises profound questions about the importance of the confessional encounter. This can be seen in the role of the Holy Spirit: not only does it bestow the gift of dread, but is also 'the goode phisicion that scheweth hym his siknesse and meueth the humores with-ynne hym & gyueth hym a purgacion so bitter that he delyuereth and saueth hym and maketh hym hol and turne to the lif'.[199] The examination of sin which took place within the confession by the priest is seen here to happen prior to the encounter and enacted by the 'goode phisicion' the Holy Spirit without the aid of the priest. William Langland also raises questions regarding the power of the priestly encounter in *Passus* XIV of *Piers Plowman.* In this episode, Patience teaches Hawkin, or Active Man that, even when he is unable to undertake shrift, the power of contrition along with faith will still be able to save him:

> though a man myghte noght speke, contricion mygte hym save,
> And brynge his soule to blisse, by so that feith bere witnesse
> That whiles he lyvede he bilevede in the loore of Holy Chirche.
> Ergo contricion, feith and conscience is kyndeliche Dowel,
> And surgiens for dedly synnes whan shrift of mouthe failleth.[200]

In this extract Langland suggests that there are occasions when shrift of mouth fails, and states that contrition and faith will ensure forgiveness. When Hawkin is unable to speak, contrition and conscience are considered as sufficient for dealing with the problem of the seven deadly sins.

In many ways these texts reveal the 'grey mix of orthodoxy and heresy' which was soon to be brought into sharp focus by the Lollard heresy. [201] Writers like Walter Hilton walk a careful

[199] Francis (ed.), *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, pp. 127, l. 15-18.
[200] Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, pp. 165-6, l. 84-9.

line to assert the centrality of contrition but also to uphold the efficacy of the whole sacrament. In chapter seven of the second book of *The Scale of Perfection* Hilton states the necessity of going to one's priest in order to receive the sacrament and yet the pardon he is given is only 'his token and his warrant of forgevenesse', the sin itself is 'forgeven thorugh veri contricioun'.[202] Chaucer similarly places, in the mouth of his parson, as the 'model' parish priest, the conventional teaching which placed the efficacy of the sacrament on all its aspects, when he states in his sermon to the pilgrims that 'right so as contricion availleth noght withouten sad purpose of shrifte, if man have oportunitee, right so litel worth is shrifte or satisfaccioun wihtouten contricioun'.[203]

Other forms of late fourteenth-century liturature which were not overtly religious, however, were asking more searching questions of the nature of the confessional encounter. Romance writers of poems such as *Sir Ysumbras* or *Sir Gowther* utilize the pattern of penance to explore a person's inner journey from sin and humiliation to reconciliation and restoration through exile and trial.[204] However, it is in the highly nuanced and sophisticated *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* that the poet uses ambiguity and irony to question and subvert notions

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[201] Lollardy states that 'schrift of mouth is not needful to helpe of soule, but only sorowe of hert doth awey euery synne': the efficacy of the sacrament lies in the state or intention of the heart and not the words of the priest. See A. Hudson, 'Sixteen Points on which the Bishops Accuse Lollards' in *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, ed. by Anne Hudson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Medieval Academy of America, 2nd edition, 1997), pp. 19-24. Here at p. 19. For the importance of a grey area between heterodoxy and orthodoxy see Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, p. 411 and Douglas Gray, *Later Medieval English Literature* (Oxford: University Press, 2008), pp. 246-52.

[202] Walter Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection*, ed. by Thomas H. Bestul, TEAMS Middle English Text Series (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000) [hereafter Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection*] , p. 145.

[203] Quotation from Robinson (ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer*, p. 296, l. 309. It had long been held that Chaucer's *Parson's Tale* is based upon Raymond of Pennafort and Peraldus' *Summae*. See K. O. Petersen, *The Sources of the Parson's Tale*, Radcliffe College Monographs 12 (Boston: Gin and Co., 1901); Wenzel argues that it is a *Postquam*, which forms the basis of his *remedia* text in Siegfreid Wenzel, 'The Source for the 'Remedia' of the Parson's Tale', *Traditio*, 27 (1971), pp. 433-53 and Siegfried Wenzel, '*Postquam* and Chaucer's *Remedia*' in *Summa Virtutum de Remediis Anime*, ed. by Siegfried Wenzel, The Chaucer Library (Athens, Georgia: University Press, 1984), pp. 12-30; Patterson, 'The 'Parson's Tale'', and Pfander, 'Some Medieval Manuals of Religious Instruction'.

[204] Andrea Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights. A Study of Middle English Penitential Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) [hereafter Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*], *passim*.

of confession to reflect prevalent discourses on penance at the end of the fourteenth century.[205] The extent to which the poet is successful in raising questions about the nature and role of confession which cannot easily be answered, is indicated by the numerous scholarly articles which have sought to explain Gawain's two, if not three, confession scenes.

The first of these takes places once Gawain has finally succumbed to the Lady's persuasions and accepted the magical girdle that will prevent any mortal from harming him. Seeing the usefulness of such a 'juel' (jewel) when he confronts the Green Knight, he takes it and promises not to reveal its presence to Bertilak. Gawain then

Syþen cheuely to þe chapel choses he þe waye,
Preuely aproched to a prest, and prayed hym þere
Þat he wolde lyste his lyf and lern hym better
How his sawle schulde be saued when he schuld seye heþen.
Þere he schrof hym schyrly and schewed his mysdedeȝ,
Of þe more and þe mynne, and merci besecheȝ,
And of absolucioun he on þe segge calles;
And he asoyled hym surely and sette hym so clene
As domeȝday schulde haf ben diȝt on þe morn.

Then first and foremost he took himself to the chapel, went quietly to a priest and begged him there and then to hear his confession and teach him how his soul might be saved when he should pass away. Then he confessed himself fully and laid bare his sins, both big and shall, imploring forgiveness, and begging the priest for absolution; and he absolved him fully and made him as pure as if Judgement Day were to fall upon the following day.[206]

The poet describes a conventional confession scene which holds all the marks of being full and true. Firstly it is to a priest and takes place in an eccelesiastical setting. Secondly, Gawain asks to receive instruction, which was an essential element of confession from the

[205] Burrow makes this association within his seminal article: John Burrow, 'The Two Confession Scenes in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*', *Modern Philology*, 57, No. 2 (Nov., 1959), pp. 73-79[hereafter Burrow, 'The Two Confession Scenes]. Here at p. 77.
[206] *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. by W. R. J., Barron (Manchester: University Press, 1974) [hereafter Barron (ed.), *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*]. Here at l. 1876-84.

days of the Fourth Lateran Council and Archbishop Pecham. He then follows orthodox teaching and tells the confessor all his sins, 'both great and small', the poet insists, and as such is 'fully absolved'. At the end of this scene Gawain's reputation of purity is upheld and enforced by the poet. We have been shown the perfect confession and yet, the reader also knows that hidden under Gawain's belt is a magic talisman that will ensure him success in battle. With this knowledge the reader is thrown into a world of questions and doubts about the confessional encounter that has been presented, rather than be assured that Gawain is 'clene'. Burrow leads one area of argument when he states that 'Gawain was not 'clene' and that the priest's absolution was invalid' because he neither revealed nor made restitiution for the concealed girdle.[207] The perfect confession scene, he argues, is therefore to be read ironically. Conversely, other scholars like P. J. C. Field, question the nature of Gawain's fault.[208] Has Gawain really knowingly committed mortal sin and undermined the efficacy of confession or is he just culpable of a venial sin which is easily to be excused or is there no sin at all and Gawain's only flaw is that he cheated a little in a 'layk' or game?

It is the latter of these which Bertilak accuses him in the second confession scene. This scene, unlike the first, is precipitated by Bertilak revealing his knowledge of the hidden girdle and accusing Gawain of a lack of fidelity. Although, to Bertilak, this is a little fault which is absolved by the penance of a small nick in the neck, for Gawain, who sought to be a perfect knight, the revelation of his fault is mortifying. As Hopkins argues, from Gawain's reaction,

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[207] Burrow, 'The Two Confession Scenes, p. 74. Other scholars who follow this line of argument include: Nicolas Jacobs, 'Gawain's False Confession', *English Studies*, 51 (1970), pp. 433-5; W. R. J. Barron, '*Trawþe' and Treason: The Sin of Gawain Reconsidered* (Manchester: University Press, 1980); J. Burrow, *A Reading of 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight'* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965); G. J. Englehart, 'The Predicament of Gawain', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 16 (1955), pp. 218-25.

[208] P. J. C. Field, 'A Re-reading of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', Studies in Philology*, 68 (1971), pp. 255-69; Michael Foley, 'Gawain's Two Confessions Reconsidered', *The Chaucer Review*, 19, No. 1 (Summer, 1974), pp. 73-9; David Farley Hills, 'Gawain's Fault in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', The Review of English Studies*, New Series, 14, no. 54 (May, 1963), pp. 124-31; A. Francis Soucy, 'Gawain's Fault: "Angardez Pryde"', *The Chaucer Review*, 13, No. 2 (Fall, 1978), pp. 166-76; W. O. Evans, 'The Case for Sir Gawain Re-Opened', *The Modern Language Review*, 68, No. 4 (Oct., 1973), pp. 721-33.

it is clear that he was oblivious of any wrong-doing when he went to formal confession.[209] His body therefore winces with shame at the self-deceit and folly which Bertilak's words reveal. Though we are outside the forum of instutional confession, the poet explores and questions the role not only of the confessor, but also of the necessity in confession to name and know every sin one has committed in order to be 'clene' and absolved.

Using standard catechetical language, but this time outside the ecclesiastical forum, Gawain goes on to confess his sins to Bertilak:

"Corsed worth cowarddyse and couetyse boþ!
In yow is vylany and vyse þat virtue disstryeȝ."
Þenne he kaȝt to þe knot and þe kest lawseȝ,
Brayde broþely þe belt to þe burne seluen:
"Lo! þer þe falssyng, foule mot hit falle!
For care of þy knokke cowardyse me taȝt
To acorde me with couetyse, my kynde to forsake,
Þat is larges and lewté þat longeȝ to knyȝteȝ.
Now am I fawty and falce, and ferde haf ben euer
Of trecherye and untrawþe – boþe bityde sorȝe and care!
I biknowe yow, knyȝt, here style,
Al fawty is my fare;
Leteȝ me ouertake you wylle,
And efte I schal be ware".

"A curse upon cowardice and avarice too! In you is ill-breeding and vice which destroy knightly virtue". Then he laid hold of the knot and, loosening the fastening, angrily flung the belt straight at the man: "See, there is the token of my broken faith, bad luck to it! Because I feared your blow, cowardice led me to have to do with covetousness, to forsake my true nature, that generosity and fidelity which is proper to knights. Now I am lacking in fidelity and guilty of breach of faith, I who have always abhorred treachery and dishonesty – may sorrow and care befall both of them! I here humbly confess to you, sir, that my behaviour is very sinful; let me understand your pleasure with respect to penance, and henceforth I will be on my guard".[210]

[209] Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*, p. 214.
[210] Barron (ed.), *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, l. 2374-88.

Gawain's somewhat over reaction to Bertilak's words is both laughable and amusing, for the poet has also infiltrated a New Year game with the seriousness and language of sin and confession that surrounded the formal penitential process. In this way he not only questions but also highlights the scrupulosity to sin and perfection that troubled those who, like Gawain, wished to be perfect, and the inability of the confessional encounter to give reassurance of forgiveness.

The poem ends with a still distraught Gawain standing before the court of Arthur and unveils the 'nirt in þe nek' which he has received from Sir Bertilak for his lack of fidelity.[211] Though he has 'penaunce apert of þe point of myn egge' and been considered absolved of his sins by the Green Knight, Gawain once more rehearses before the court his failure to live as the perfect and sinless knight in a scene of public confession.[212] With the red face of shame, he holds out the green girdle as 'þe bende of þis blame' as the badge of the injury and harm of his sins of cowardice and covetousness. Regardless of the reaction of the court, for Sir Gawain this emblem of the forgiveness of sins will always be a reminder that he fell short of the ideal and succumbed to sin.[213] In many ways this contrite figure encapsulates the image of devout souls, whose scrupulosity to sin and inability to experience a sense of forgiveness after confession, easily becomes like a blazoned girdle which is worn about the neck as a public display of false meekness.

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[211] Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron (eds.), *Poems of the Pearl Manuscript: Pearl, Cleanness, Patience, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Exeter: University Press, 1987), p. 299.

[212] Anthony Low highlights the public nature of this scene which reconciles Gawain to the knightly community of Arthur's court in: Anthony Low, 'Privacy, Community and Society: Confession as a Cultural Indicator in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*', *Religion and Literature*, 30, no. 2 (Summer, 1998), pp. 1-20.

[213] The penitential nature of the text is explored in Mary Flowers Braswell, *The Medieval Sinner: Characterization and Confession in the Literature of the English Middle Ages* (London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1983), pp. 95-100.

Other writers were also expressing more profoundly their misgivings with the role of confession in dealing with penitent's problem of sin. William Langland highlights his concerns regarding the ability of the confessional forum for dealing with sin in the second vision of the B text of *Piers Plowman*, which runs from *Passus* V through to VII.[214] He presents this problem not as an issue for the spiritual elite or even devout laity but rather one that besets the entire 'field of folk'. In his account of the confession of the individual sins, Langland demonstrates the extent to which the penitent had been given the language to name the inner stirrings of the heart through the Latin and vernacular manuals. As Gillespie has clearly shown, the portrayal of the sins is based on the form of self-examination as set out in the manuals of penitence.[215] Hence the two 'speces' or types of envy set out within the *Lay Folk's Catechism:* 'a sorowe and a site of the welefare,/ and ioy of the yuel fare of our euen-cristen' are dramatically portrayed in the two aspects of his nature:[216]

> I wolde be gladder, by God! That Gybbe hadde meschaunce
> Than though I hadde this wouke ywonne a weye of Essex chese.
> I have a neghebore neigh me, I have annoyed hym ofte,
> And lowen on hym to lordes to doon hym lese his silver,
> And maad his frendes to his foon thorugh my false tonge.
> His grace and his goode happes greven me ful soore. (V, ll.91-6)

Whilst the confessional encounter with Repentance can name the sin it is unable to deal with Envy himself, and instead is merely a forum in which he repeats his sin. The internal state out of which these words and actions come are not addressed or even named. The manuals may have given a language to penitents but Langland questions the extent to which the

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[214] Little, *Confession and Resistance*, pp. 28-29 and John Burrow, 'The Action of Langland's Second Vision', *Essays in Criticism*, 15 (1965), pp. 247-68 [hereafter Burrow, 'The Action of Langland's Second Vision'].
[215] Gillespie, *The Literary Form of the Middle English Pastoral Manual*, pp. 174-86; Burrow, 'The Action of Langland's Second Vision', pp. 247-68; Siegfried Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth: Acedia in Medieval Thought and Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North California Press, 1967) [hereafter Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth*], p. 147.
[216] Simmons and Nolloth (eds.), *The Lay Folk's Catechism*, p. 88, l. 471-2.

confessional encounter is able to deal with sin. The implications of this failure can be seen in the inadequacy of Envy's confession.

> And whan I come to the kirk and sholde knele to the Roode
> And preye for the peple as the preest techeth –
> For pilgrymes and for palmeres, for al the peple after –
> Thanne I crye on my knees that Crist yyve hem sorwe
> That baren awey my bolle and my broke shete.
> Awey fro the auter thanne turne I myne eighen
> And biholde how [H]eyne hath a newe cote; (V, ll.103-9)

Like a good penitent, Envy comes before Repentance to confess. He enters the confessional forum ready to speak his sins. However, his words, unable to express the internal nature of the sin of envy, lead to a prayer which simply encapsulates its catechetical nature. He not only prays that sorrow will come to those who have taken his tankard and his torn sheet, but as soon as his eyes have left the altar he notices how Heinie has a new coat. For Langland the penitential manuals have in many ways enabled the devout to name the internal stirrings of the heart but the forum of confession is perceived as inadequate for dealing with the problem of sin itself.

In his tract *Of Confession* (*c*. 1383) John Wycliffe's reasons to justify his rejection of auricular confession are located within the practical nature of the encounter between priest and penitent.[217] Not only does confession give an occasion for sin, but the words of absolution vary amongst different priests. Wycliffe was not alone in his awareness of the inherent problems surrounding confession. In his version of William Pagula's *Oculus sacerdotis*, entitled *Instructions for Parish Priests*, John Mirk describes in detail how a priest

[217] *The English Works of Wyclif*, ed. by F.D. Matthew, EETS, OS, 74 (1880), pp. 328-31. For an analysis of his confessional stance see Little, *Confession and Resistance*, chapter 2.

should act during confession, so that he does not distract or prevent the penitent from making their confession:

> But when a wommon cometh to þe,
> Loke hyre face þat þou ne se,
> But teche hyre to knele downe þe by,
> And sum-what þy face from hyre þou wry,
> Stylle as ston þer þow sytte,
> And kepe þe welle þat þou ne spytte.
> Koghe þow not þenne þy þonkes,
> Ny wrynge þou not wyth þy schonkes,
> Lest heo suppose þow make þat fare,
> For wlatunge þat þou herest þare,
> But syt þou stylle as any mayde
> Tyl þat heo haue alle I-sayde[218]

Lying behind this careful description of how the priest should act within confession is the experience of those, who by the behaviour of the confessor, were prevented from making a full and true confession.[219] The quality of confessors was naturally varied and penitents increasingly sought out their own confessors. Whilst it was still the parish priest who had responsibility for hearing the confessions of his flock, by the fourteenth century licences were regularly being granted by bishops to allow households to confess to their own priest within their own private chapels, rather than to the parish priest.[220] It is very likely that this would have been Julian's penitential experience prior to enclosure.[221] Once she became an anchoress, she would have followed a rule which allowed her to confess her sins at least once a week to a father confessor, or some other holy man.[222] The learning and experience of the friars was also sought out by penitents who fled the public forum of the church and the

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[218] *John Myrc Instructions for Parish Priests*, ed. by Edward Peacock, EETS, OS, 31 (1868), p. 24, ll. 773-84.
[219] Barr specifically considers the difficulty both priests and women penitents faced within confession in Beth Allison Barr, *The Pastoral Care of Women* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), p. 112 [hereafter Barr, *The Pastoral Care of Women*].
[220] Goering, 'The Internal Forum', p. 180.
[221] Benedicta Ward convincingly argues that Julian was part of a household when she received her revelations: Ward, 'Julian the Solitary', p. 27.
[222] Salu (trans.), *Ancrene Riwle*, pp. 152-3.

knowledge of the parish priest, for a relatively more private encounter. However, this did not necessarily ensure that confession was the healing and cathartic process it was meant to be.

Margery Kempe gives an account of a disastrous confession possibly made to Robert Spryngolde who was the 'parische preste of Seynt Margaretys Cherche' after the death of her Dominican anchorite. She describes her conscience being burdened by a hidden sin and calls for her ghostly father so that she may be fully shriven

> And whan sche cam to the poynt for to seyn that thing whech sche had so long conselyd, hir confessowr was a lytly to hastye and gan scharply to undyrnemyn hir, er than sche had fully seyd hir entent, and so sche wold no mor seyn for nowt he myght do. And anoon, for dreed sche had of dampnacyon on the to syde, and hys scharp reprevyng on that other syde, this creatur went owt of hir mende and was wondyrlye vexid and labowryd with spyritys half yer, viii wekys and odde days.[223]

This episode highlights the importance which was placed upon the penitent to name all their sins within the confessional forum. *Jacob's Well* reveals how critical it was for the penitent to make a full confession and the importance of the priest to enable it, comparing penance to a scoop which draws out all the water of sin from the soul: 'ȝif þi scope of penaunce be brokyn, þat is…ȝif þou be schryue [of] summe synnes & of summe synnes noȝt schreuyn, þanne þi scope is brokyn, &…þe watyr of curs fallyth aȝen in-to þe pit of þi conscyence thrugh þe brokyn scope of þi brokyn penauns'.[224] Yet, as Margery's experience shows, the human encounter of penitent and priest was not always able to facilitate this complete confession and could tip the soul into internal chaos. [225]

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[223] Windeatt (ed.), *The Book of Margery Kempe*, pp. 53-54, l. 193-201.
[224] *Jacob's Well: An English Treatise on the Cleansing of Man's Conscience*, ed. by Arthur Brandeis, EETS, OS, 115 (1899), p. 65, l. 8-19 [hereafter Brandeis (ed.), *Jacob's Well*].
[225] In her analysis of the Wycliffite confession by William Thorpe, Katherine Little reveals a sense that the structures of traditional auricular confession were unable to give voice to interior sin, in Little, *Confession and Resistance*, pp. 66-70.

In many ways Margery's experience can be read as an exception to other devout laity. Her excessive habit of being shriven twice or three times a day is ridiculed by people (ll.368-375) and, of the many times she goes to confession, there are relatively few in which she does not feel her sins are forgiven. However, she is not alone in describing an internal state which the confessional encounter is unable to alleviate amongst those who would live a life of virtue. Whilst following contemplative ideals, William Flete's *Remedies against Temptations* clearly encompasses anyone who is struggling with the burden of conscience in their devotional life. He writes:

> The thredde colour of gyle þat he tempteth with is þis. Whanne a man or a woman ȝeueth hem to honest solace, to strenghte hym self with aȝens the fendis tormentis in comfort of his owne soule, þanne the fende wele stere hym to haue cons(c)ience þerof, and putteth in here hertis þat alle suyche disportys is but synne and vanyte, And somtyme he wole brynge to here mynde herfore don synnes, for to tary hem; this he doth for to drawe here hertis to heuynesse, for thei schulde no comforte haue, but al care and trouble, and so to tempte hem to dispeir and to bitter þouȝtis.[226]

Flete is not addressing a particular religious group *per se* but rather is dealing with the internal problems which beset those who simply 'gyneth them to honest dysporte'. These problems are concerned with the conscience which brings to mind former sins and continues to hold the soul in a state of 'heuynes and dyscomforte' even after confession.

The popularity of tribulation texts such as *The Remedies against Temptation*, which was copied and owned widely by both lay and religious alike towards the end of the fourteenth century, points to a wider concern in the ability of the confessional encounter to alleviate a sense of sin amongst the devout.[227] In his Latin letter, *Epistola ad Quemdam Seculo*

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[226] Colledge and Chadwick (eds.), *Remedies Against Temptations*, p. 233, l. 1-8.

[227] Evidence for this popularity is seen in the three versions of the text that were altered and expanded to meet a need. See M.B. Hackett, 'William Flete and the *De Remediis contra Temptaciones*' in *Medieval Studies presented to Aubrey Gwynn S.J.*, ed. by J.A. Watt, J.B. Morrall and F.X. Martin (Dublin: The Three Candles, 1961), pp. 330-48; Benedict Hackett, Edmund Colledge, and N. Chadwick, 'William Flete's 'De Remediis

Renunciare Volentem, Hilton counsels such a person who is similarly wracked by an internal blindness which causes him to linger on his sins after confession. The recipient of the letter, who has been identified as John Thorpe, has experienced a religious conversion after a period of sickness and imprisonment. Hilton encourages him in his intention to forsake the world for a religious life but also addresses his scrupulosity regarding the forgivness of his sins and the sense of ineffectiveness of sacramental confession. It is this section of the letter, which is extracted and freely translated in *A Pystille Made to a Cristene Frende*, that gives evidence that John Thorpe was not alone in his confessional experience and Hilton's response was valuable. Hilton summarises Thorpe's concern:

> you confess your sins as they come to mind in time of confession and nevertheless you do not believe yourself to be truly shriven, for you feel biting remorse of conscience after confession as you did before and perhaps more sharply. You begin to ransack yourself and your darkness and blindness grows evermore thick.[228]

In this passage Hilton describes an inner chaos and sense of sin, experienced as a biting remorse and blindness, which gives rise to a profound misgiving in the confessional encounter. The penitential encounter, which for centuries had been the forum through which both priest and penitent alike were taught how to name sin and understand the inner stirrings of the heart, by the end of the fourteenth century, was increasingly unable to give a reassurance of the forgiveness of sins at least among the devout.

Hitlon's response to this problem is to point out that the issue lies not with the sacrament but rather in a sense of lacking forgivness after confession. To remedy this breakdown between the sacrament and one's experience of it, Hilton begins by explaining the sacrament of

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contra Temptaciones' in its Latin and English Recensions: The Growth of a Text,' *Medieval Studies*, 26 (1964), pp. 210-30.

[228] *Walter Hilton's Latin Writings*, ed. by John P.H. Clark and Cheryl Taylor, 2 vols., Analecta Cartusiana, 124 (Salzburg: Institute fur Anglistik und Amerikanistik Universitat Salzburg, 1987) ii, p. 265, l. 339-343, translated in Hughes, 'The Administration of Confession', p. 136.

confession so Thorpe may fully understand it, regardless of his experience. Based on Aquinas he describes confession as having two parts: the substance of the sacrament and its outward token. For confession the substance of the sacrament is the forgivenss of sin by God, whereas the token is the outward reconciliation with the Church that is named at the absolution. God looks on the contrite heart of the penitent and it is this which assures forgiveness. In *The Scale of Perfecction* he puts the issue succinctly in these terms:

> 'But thane are some so fleschli and so unkunnynge that thei wolden feele or seen or heren the forgifnesse of hire synnes, as openly as thei moun feelen or seen a bodily thing; and for as mykil as thei feely it not, so thei fallen often in siche dweris and doutes of hemsilf and neere 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 heelid hym thus: *Confide fili, remittuntur tibi peccata tua* (Matthew 9:2). That is: Sone, trowe stidfasteli thy synnes aren forgiven thee. He seide not to him, see and feele how thi synnes aren fogeve thee, forgifnesse of synne is doon goostli and unseabli thorugh 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 feelynge forgifnesse of his synnes; and yyf he first trowe it, he mai afterward thorugh grace feele it and undirstonde it, that it is so'.[229]

For Hilton the biting pang of conscience after confession is therefore not so much a failure of the sacrament of confession as suffering that pain which is the automatic debt that must be paid for sin. It is the fire which purges the soul, as rust is burnt off an iron. But it does not diminish the efficacy of the sacrament. Hilton thereby reassures those who experience no sense of forgiveness that the church's sacrament of penance is not lacking but that they are suffering the consequences of sin itself.

The late fourteenth-century concerns regarding confession can be seen to be summed up in *Passus* XIII of the B text of William Langland's, *Piers Plowman*, where Patience and

[229] Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection*, Book 2, p. 155, l. 553-564.

Conscience set out with the dreamer, Will, on his search, once more, to find Dowell.[230] The volumes of books which Clergy owns are of little help in this deeper search and so they dismiss him, along with the hypocrisy of the Master Friar.[231] It is outside this clerical forum that they meet Hawkin, who represents the Everyman figure *Activa Vita*; after he has introduced himself as a minstrel, and given a colourful catalogue of his life, they notice his coat which 'was soiled with many spots in sundry places'. It soon becomes clear that these spots are the marks of the seven deadly sins and that Hawkin personifies 'the whole body of sinning, penitent laity'.[232] In an account which follows the conventions of confession laid out by the catechetical and penitential manuals and echoes the opening Repentance scene in *Passus* V, Hawkin lists his sins which 'encompass the full social and professional range' of the *activa vita*.[233]

Conscience takes Hawkin to task for not having washed or brushed his coat.[234] But Hawkin states that, whilst he has been shriven and given the penance of patience, he is unable to keep his coat clean. In reply Conscience says:

> 'And I shal kenne thee,' quod Conscience, 'of Contricion to make
> that shal clawe thi cote of alle kynnes filthe –
> *cordis contricio &c;*
> Dowell shal wasshen it and wryngen it thorugh a wis confessour –
> *Oris confessio &c;*
> Dobet shal beten it and bouken it as bright as any scarlet,

[230] William Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman: A Complete Edition of the B-Text*, ed. A.V.C. Schmidt (London: J.M. Dent, 2nd edition, 1989) [hereafter Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*], p. 153.
[231] A point also made by Staley, 'the feast of the kingdom of God is finally, only a party where the lords of the church talk among themselves' in Lynn Staley, 'The Man in Foul Clothes and a Late Fourteenth-Century Conversation about Sin', *Studies in Chaucer*, 24 (2002), pp. 1-47 [hereafter Staley, 'The Man in Foul Clothes']. Here at pp. 35-6.
[232] R.W. Chambers, *Man's Unconquerable Mind* (London; Toronto: Jonathan Cape, 1939), p. 152 and quoted in Stella Maguire, 'The Significance of Haukyn, Activa vita, in *Piers Plowman*', *The Review of English Studies*, 25, no. 98 (April, 1949), pp. 97-109. Here at p. 98.
[233] Quotation from Nicholas Watson, '*Piers Plowman*, Pastoral Theology, and Spiritual Perfectionism: Hawkyn's Cloak and Patience's *Pater Noster*', *Yearbook of Langland Studies*, 21 (2007), pp. 83-118 [hereafter Watson, '*Piers Plowman*, Pastoral Theology, and Spiritual Perfectionism']. Here at p. 111.
[234] Staley, 'The Man in Foul Clothes', p. 28.

> And engreynen it with good wille and Goddes grace to amende the,
> And sithen sende thee to Satisfaccioun for to sonnen it after:
> *Satisfaccio*.
> And Dobest kepeth clene from unkynde werkes'.[235]

Conscience gives Hawkin the traditional mechanism for handling sin, namely the process of penance, which was set down and advocated within the penitential manuals of the thirteenth century.[236] Like a confessor, Conscience gives Hawkin the framework of confession in which to cleanse his coat.[237] However, in the following scene Langland explores the gulf between knowing the catechetical teaching of the manuals and Hawkin's application of their teaching to cleanse his sinful soul. Through the figure of Patience, Hawkin's penance, the responsibility of the penitent in this process of reformation, is set out. He offers to give Hawkin dough and flour that he may himself make the 'soor loof' of 'Do Penance' which he and Will had previously been offered at the banquet of learning. Hawkin's reaction is very different from that of Will and Patience in the previous scene and, at his revulsion, Patience gives him instead 'a pece of the Paternoster – *Fiat voluntas tua*' from his bag of 'vitailles of gret vertues'.[238]

Gillespie's in-depth analysis of the scene reveals the extent to which this 'pece of the Paternoster' follows the catechetical teaching of the manuals and encapsulates within it everything that Hawkin needs to know, in order to conform his will to that of God's and be cleansed from his primary sins of wrath and envy.[239] However, for this penitential learning to become 'kynde knowyng', Hawkin must understand what it means to live a life of charity.

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[235] Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, *Passus* XIV, p. 163, ll. 16-23.
[236] Sarah Wood, *Conscience and the Composition of Piers Plowman* (Oxford: University Press, 2012) [hereafter Wood, *Conscience and the Composition of Piers Plowman*]. Here at pp. 62-5.
[237] John A. Alford, 'Hawkyn's Coat: Some Observations on 'Piers Plowman B xiv. 22-7', *Medium Aevum*, 43 (1974), pp. 133-138.
[238] Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, *Passus* XIV, p. 164, l. 49.
[239] Vincent Gillespie, 'Thy Will be Done: *Piers Plowman and the Paternoster*', in *Late-medieval Religious Texts and Their Transmission: Essays in Honour of A.I. Doyle*, ed. by A.J. Minnis, York Manuscripts Conferences: Proceedings, series 3 (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1994), pp. 79-110 [hereafter Gillespie, 'Thy Will be Done'].

Patience's unfolding of the life lived at one with God's will, brings Hawkin to a shameful realisation of the full extent of sin: 'so harde it is..to lyve and to do synne. Synne suweth us evere'. The *Passus* ends with a contrite Hawkin, who has come to realise the full impact of sin and experiences the shame of contrition, the first step towards regaining his coat of Christendom.[240] At the moment in which he comes to this knowledge, the dreamer falls asleep and there is a sense in which Hawkin has been left in a state of shame and contrition without any means to alleviate it. As if echoing the interior confusion which this realisation has elicited, the following chapter opens with Will waking and, as one who is lost, wanders until 'my wit waxed and wanyed til I a fool were'.

As a number of scholars have highlighted, in this scene Langland explores the perceived limitations of the penitential structures of the church in handling the problem of sin for the everyday person which were prevalent at the end of the fourteenth century.[241] In his encounter with Hawkin, Will is confronted with the daily reality of the problem of sin; the coat of Baptism which cannot be kept clean. The scene which follows echoes the conventional language and encounter of the confessional forum, however from the start the voices of the churchmen who should administer the sacramental practice of penance are found to be deficient in their ability to give spiritual counsel. As Sarah Wood points out the following 'good counsel', like the rise in the thirteenth-century vernacular manuals, results from clerical ignorance.[242] The instruction which Conscience and Patience give to Will therefore is not the official teaching of the church. Langland has taken Will outside the

[240] Watson argues that Hawkin's tears are ones of desperation rather than contrition, as Patience sets so high an ideal of poverty: Watson, '*Piers Plowman*, Pastoral Theology, and Spiritual Perfectionism', p. 115.
[241] Langland's questioning of the penitential system is highlighted by: Watson, '*Piers Plowman*, Pastoral Theology, and Spiritual Perfectionism', pp. 115-6; Little, *Confession and Resistance*, pp. 28-9; Wood, *Conscience and the Composition of Piers Plowman*, p. 67; Staley, 'The Man in Foul Clothes', p. 28; Gillespie, 'Thy Will be Done', p. 104; Emily Rebekah Huber, 'Langland's Confessional Dissonance: Wanhope in *Piers Plowman* B', *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 27 (2013), pp. 79-101 [hereafter Huber, 'Langland's Confessional Dissonance]. Here at pp. 97-8.
[242] Wood, *Conscience and the Composition of Piers Plowman*, p. 67.

formal instutional forum of confession, the realm in which the church handled daily sin and instead Hawkin is counselled by two interior qualities which represent lay spiritual guidance.[243] However, even in this setting the language and structures of the penitential discourse are seen as inadequate in bringing Hawkin to confession.

This can be seen in the extent to which Langland may have discarded the clerical administrators of the sacrament but the conventional discourse of confession is still retained in the encounter between Hawkin and his confessors, Conscience and Patience. Both seek to bring Hawkin to a deeper and spiritual reformation than the account of his sins which he has already given: Conscience speaks in the conventional terms of contrition, confession and satisfaction, but it is Patience who reveals the spiritual reality of this sacrament and brings Hawkin to a full realisation of his sin which he had only listed in catechetical terms previously.[244] In Patience's teaching Langland therefore not only questions the inadequacy of the catechetical structure and language of penance through which the penitent was required to understand and make his confession, but also the merchantile basis that had come to govern and shape the language of penance.[245]

Patience's 'soor loof' brings Hawkin to 'kynde knowyng' of sin and penance and the episode ends with Hawkin's cry of contrition, the threshold of forgiveness. However, as Emily Huber in her study of the role of Wanhope in this scene reveals, Hawkin may have been brought to the beginning of his conversion but his reformation is left incomplete and Hawkin falls into

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[243] Staley, 'The Man in Foul Clothes', p. 28.
[244] Robertson and Huppé describe Hawkin's confession as 'a kind of general confession of sins of all types not necessarily consistent with a single personality, as though the poet had described all of the sins applicable to the active life which he found either in a confessional inquiry or in a manual for penitents' in D.W. Robertson and Bernard F. Huppé, *Piers Plowman and Scriptural Tradition* (Princeton: University Press, 1951), pp. 168-9. Point also made by Watson: Watson, '*Piers Plowman*, Pastoral Theology, and Spiritual Perfectionism', p. 115, and Stella Maguire, 'The Significance of Haukyn, Activa vita, in *Piers Plowman'*, *The Review of English Studies*, 25, no. 98 (April, 1949), pp. 97-109. Here at p. 104.
[245] Huber, 'Langland's Confessional Dissonance', p. 94.

despair.[246] The form and process of confession even administered by the most sincere and compassionate spiritual guides is unable to transform the penitent and it is in the face of this inadequacy of the traditional penitential discourse that Wanhope's pervasive presence emerges to derail confession and the model of pastoral instruction on which the church and penitent had come to rely on in the handling of sin.

Langland is not alone in expressing concerns with the confessional forum in handling sin. I now turn to consider the writings of Julian of Norwich within the context of the late fourteenth-century penitential climate in order to demonstrate the extent to which her texts not only voice similar concerns but also seek to address them. I begin however, by focussing on the evidence which reveals that Julian's penitential routine was, much like that of any devout lay woman of her period, embedded within the pastoral offices of the church.

[246] Huber, 'Langland's Confessional Dissonance', pp. 96-8.

CHAPTER 3

'OURE KINDLY PENANCE' – JULIAN'S PENITENTIAL THEOLOGY

Introduction

In chapter 51 of L, Julian of Norwich describes her vision of a defaced coat,

> And yet I mervellyd, beholdyng the lord and the servant afornseid. I saw the lord sitten solemnly, and the servant stondand reverently aforn his lord, in which servant is double understondyng: on withouten, another within. Outward, he was clad simply as a labourer which wer disposid to travel, and he stode ful nere the lord, not even fornempts hym, but in partie asyd, that on the lift. His clothyng was a white kirtle, sengil, old and al defacid, died with swete of his body, streyte fittyng to hym and short, as it were an handful benethe the knee, bar, semand as it shuld sone be weryd up, redy to be raggid and rent. And in this I mervelid gretly thynkand: 'This is now an onsemely clothyng for the servant that is so heyly lovid to stondyn afor so worship lord'. And inward, in him was shewid a ground of love, which love he had to the lord was even like to the love that the lord had to hym.

A comparison can be drawn between Julian's defaced robe of the servant and the depiction of Hawkin's garment, soiled with the spots of deadly sin found within *Piers Plowman*. Staley even suggests that Julian knew Langland's representation of the active life struggling with sin.[1] However, in many ways Julian's representation of the problem of sin stands in direct contrast to Langland's own. Whereas Langland's Hawkin presents an everyman figure unable to deal with his sin, Julian comes to realise that the servant who wears the soiled coat in her *exemplum* is not simply a representative of Adam, but is Christ and 'the por clothyng' he wears is the manhood of Adam, 'with al the mischef and febilnes that folowith'. Christ,

[1] Staley, 'The Man in Foul Clothes', pp. 32-37. Alford similarly likens Hawkin's coat to the robe of the servant and points to its transformation by Christ through redemption: 'it is only through penance that he (Hawkin) may share in the plan of redemption so that finally he may put on the coat of salvation , reserved for him from the beginning'. See John A. Alford, 'Hawkyn's Coat: Some Obervations on 'Piers Plowman B xiv. 22-7'', *Medium Aevum*, 43 (1974), p. 137. This is also commented on in Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, pp. 527-8. Other scholars have focussed on the Biblical image of the coat as the flesh of Adam: Baker, *From Vision to Book*, p. 102; Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, p. 44; Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ*, p. 142.

robed in the flesh of Adam, falls into 'the slade of this wreched worlde' and through his 'traveyle' on the cross, transforms the soiled coat, so that it is made 'fair now, white, and bryte, and of endles clenesse'.[2] In contrast to Langland's theology which emphasizes our inability to cope with sin, Julian presents us with a vision in which sin is dealt with. However, despite her theological confidence that sin has been addressed by Christ and can even be 'behovable', or fitting to God's saving plan, this is not the experience of sin which she describes in her texts. Julian's texts reflect a profound concern with the devotional experience of sin which lay at the heart of catechetical preaching and teaching on penance in the late fourteenth century.

This chapter argues that Julian's texts reflect the late fourteenth-century expression of the debilitating and 'noughting' effect of sin within the soul found in the vernacular manuals and moral treatises. For Julian, the acute sense of dread and shame with which she sees the devout suffer, even after confession, expresses a general misgiving as to the ability of the mechanism of the church to deal with sin. Penance has enabled sinful souls to name the internal stirrings of the heart, but the confessional encounter does little to alleviate the sense of sin and dread and give the assurance of forgiveness. As a consequence the pastoral process of confession, which gave the soul the means of handling sin, is unable to help the devout navigate their interior world. Thus Julian, within S, sees devout souls as trapped within a blinded state of sin and fear that distorts their vision of themselves and God and makes them afraid even to appear before their Lord.

This argument is set out within three sections in the chapter: the first section considers Julian's own penitential routine and the likelihood of her knowledge of confessional and

[2] In the Paris manuscript 'new' replaces 'now' in Glasscoe's edition of the Sloane 1 manuscript: Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 105, n. 60:4. This possible updating of the text brings out more forcefully the idea found in 1 Corinthians 15:53 where the mortal flesh 'puts on immortality'.

moral treatises. The second analyses the extent to which S and L reflect the catechetical and penitential climate of the late fourteenth century, whereas the final section demonstrates the way in which Julian addresses these penitential concerns in order to give the assurance of the forgiveness of sins to the doubting penitent.

Part 1 – 'wolde have been shriven'

Apart from her period of illness in May 1373, there is little within Julian's texts that tell us of her life before or within the anchorhold. Julian may not have had firsthand access to vernacular manuals or moral treatises on penance, but her devotional life would have been shaped and permeated as much by the theology of penance through the 'common teaching of holy church' as by its practise within the confessional. With the absence of external evidence for Julian's penitential routine, her texts reveal the centrality of penance within her devotional life. This can be seen even as she seeks to erase herself from her text.

In section 6 of S, Julian makes her strongest plea for anonymity: 'leve the behaldinge of the wrechid sinfulle creature that it was shewed unto'.[3] The language she uses to deflect the reader away from herself and to God and to justify her stance is that of confession.[4] Yet these words are more than just a humble penitential posturing, for they come back as if to haunt Julian in chapter 76 of the long text, where she describes the way in which internal voices use these words to goad the soul to despair: 'for they seien thus: "Thou wittest wele

[3] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 73.
[4] This penitential posture is not unusual and can be found in other devotional texts, including Richard Rolle's *Meditations of the Passion* where he describes himself as 'a sinful wreche' Richard Rolle, *English Writings of Richard Rolle Hermit of Hampole*, ed. by Hope Emily Allen (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1988) [hereafter Allen (ed.), *English Writings of Richard Rolle*], p. 27. Margery Kempe similarly opens her work in penitential terms describing herself as 'a sinful caytyf' in Windeatt (ed.), *The Book of Margery Kempe*, p. 41, l.13-14.

thou art a wretch, a synner, and also ontrew; for thou kepist not the command"'.[5] It is perhaps because of the dangerously distorting nature of this self-understanding of sinfulness by devout souls that Julian leaves it out of chapter 8 in her long version, simply calling herself a 'wrech'. Julian takes a traditional penitential stance in her texts, but there is a sense in which she has a mind to the devotional effect these words may have on devout souls.

Julian's writings have been described by Gillespie as 'a vast echo chamber of allusion and imitation, but there are relatively few occasions when it is possible to identify her source unequivocally once it has been through the crucible of her imagination'.[6] This statement rings true with Julian's use of penitential language. Whilst her text resonates with the language and theology of the penitential process of conversion, which lies at the heart of the sacrament, reference to a confessional encounter is sadly lacking. Instead, Julian's involvement in the penitential rituals of the church is rather assumed within her text, and takes place 'off stage'.[7] However, two such oblique references within her texts do enable us to conclude that, like any devout woman of her age, Julian was immersed in the sacramental rituals of penance.[8] These references are found in chapter 66 of L and her deathbed scenario, which I will consider in turn.

[5] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 92.
[6] Gillespie, ''[S]he do the police in different voices'', p. 195.
[7] This has also be been identified as a feature within John Mirk's *Festial* by Ford, *John Mirk's Festial: Orthodoxy, Lollardy and the Common People*, p. 40.
[8] Wagner describes the difficulty in attempting to analyse the experience of penance which leaves little direct trace: Wagner, '*Cum aliquis venerit*', p. 201.

The 'Rightings' of Holy Church

In chapter 66 of L Julian recounts a curious visit made to her sick bed by a 'religious person' who asks her how she fares:

> I seyd I had ravid today, and he leuhe loud and inderly. And I seyd: "The cross that stod afor my face, methowte it blode fast." And with this word the person that I spake to waxid al sad and mervelid. And anon I was sor ashamid and astonyed for my recleshede, and I thowte: "This man takith sadly the lest word that I myte seyen than saw I no mor therof." And whan I saw that he toke it sadly and with so gret reverens, I wepid, ful gretly ashamid, and wold have ben shrevyn; but at that tyme I cowde tell it no preist, for I thowte: "How should a preist levyn me? I leve not our lord God."[9]

Scholars have mused on the identity of this religious person and the extent to which he was Julian's confessor. In his commentary on the passage, Watson describes him as a member of a religious order, possibly a friar or a canon.[10] It is with similar connotations that Ward uses the term cleric.[11] Jantzen is less specific and leaves his identity open, simply describing the figure as a man of religion, whilst it is highly unlikely that he is Julian's purported brother, Adam Easton, as Bolton-Holloway suggests.[12] Julian does not mention whether this person was her confessor. However, the seriousness with which he responds to her account of her visions causes Julian to come to a moment of contrition and repent at her reckless denial of the legitimacy of her visions. As a result, Colledge and Walsh interpret Julian's subsequent inability to be shriven in confessional terms. [13] They argue that the problem that prevents Julian from confessing lies not so much in the absence of a priest, as one is already present,

[9] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 81.
[10] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 330, n. 12.
[11] Ward, 'Julian the Solitary', p. 23.
[12] Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich, Mystic and Theologian*, p. 24; *Julian of Norwich Showing of Love*, trans. by Julia Bolton Holloway (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2003), p. x.
[13] Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, pp. 633-634, n. 25.

but in the fact that she knows her penitential theology.[14] Julian's open denial of her visions puts her confession in jeopardy, for the priest is no longer able to be confident that her words are true and full – the attributes necessary for her to receive an absolution. Whilst it is attractive to read this incident in specifically confessional terms, given that it is followed by an account of a visitation by the devil, it is more likely that, for Julian, this scene is about tribulation rather than penitential theology. However, it does highlight Julian's sense of penitential self-understanding and the necessity of the sacrament of the church to alleviate it.

A clearer example of Julian's involvement in the confessional rituals of the church can be found in the description of the events surrounding her illness in 1373 when Julian was 'thrittye wintere alde and a halfe'.[15] Julian tells us that on the fourth day of her sickness she 'toke alle my rightinges of haly kyrke'.[16] These would have primarily been confessional in nature and involved penance, *viaticum* or Eucharist for the dying and extreme unction or anointing, as set out in the *Ordo ad visitandum infirmum*.[17] Additional vernacular texts associated with the Latin *Ordo*, which have come to be known as literature of *The Visitation of the Sick*, gave practical advice to the priest on how to carry out this sacrament, as well as exhortations on penance and sets of catechetical questions for final confession.[18] As

[14] Hughes' suggestion that this episode was a moment of spiritual crisis for Julian, as she was unable to find anyone to absolve her, is inaccurate: Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries*, p. 121.
[15] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 65, l. 1.
[16] *Ibid.*, l. 3.
[17] The *Ordo* text from the 1543 printed edition of the Sarum Manual can be found in William Maskell, *Monumenta Ritualia Ecclesias Anglicanae*, 3 vols. (London: William Pickering, 1946) I, pp. 66-82 and for a vernacular version: *The book of the craft of dying* in *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole and his followers*, ed. by C. Horstmann (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1999, new ed.), pp. 406-420 [hereafter Horstmann (ed.), *Yorkshire Writers*].
[18] For scholarship on this literature and the *ars moriendi* tradition that grew from it see: Sister Mary Catherine O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well The Development of the Ars moriendi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942); Nancy Lee Beaty, *The Craft of Dying A Study in the Literary Tradition of the Ars Moriendi in England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970); T.S.R. Boase, *Death in the Middle Ages: Mortality, Judgement and Remembrance* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972); Phillipe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. by Helen Weaver (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981)*;* Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (London: British Museum Press, 1996); Caroline Walker Bynum and Paul Freedman (eds.), *Last Things: Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); Appleford, 'The 'Comene Course of Prayers'', pp. 190-214; Duffy, The *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 313-27.

Appleford points out, these texts were primarily concerned with preparing the dying for confession and ensuring that she 'schriue the clene to God and make the redy'.[19] The threat of devils and the way they 'ben ful besy to begile hem, and namliche with disperyr of Goddis mercy' evoke servile fear in the soul and so prick her conscience and encourage her to make a confession.[20] Julian states that she receives these 'rightinges' and, at a subsequent visit made by her curate, she describes how he came to mark her ending:

> And thay that were with me sente for the person my curette to be atte mine endinge. He come, and a childe with him, and brought a crosse, and be thane I hadde sette mine eyen and might nought speke. The person sette the crosse before my face, and saide: "Doughter, I have brought the the image of thy savioure. Loke thereopon, and comforthe the therewith in reverence of him that diede for the and me".[21]

As Appleford reveals, this incident closely follows the instructions set out in the *Ordo* and *Visitation* literature, where the image of the cross is held before the dying man's eyes to remind him of the hard Passion of Christ on account of his sin.[22] The image gave reassurance of forgiveness but also sought to evoke the penitential attitude of contrition even after final Penance. In many ways the stance of humble dread which this ritual evoked was to prevent presumption.

Julian's account of this visit, presumably from her parish priest, is the clearest evidence we have that she was involved in the confessional rituals of the church. What her specific confessional routine may have been after or before this event, we can only surmise. Margery Kempe gives an indication of the extent to which a devout woman in the early years of the

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[19] Appleford, 'The 'Comene Course of Prayers'', p. 199.
[20] Texts from the *Visitation* in Cambridge University Library, MS Nn.4.12, ed. by Kinpointer, as Appendix 2 quoted in Appleford, 'The 'Comene Course of Prayers'', p. 199; for list of extant *Visitation* manuscripts see Robert R. Raymo, 'Works of Religious and Philosophical Instruction', vol. 7 of *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English*, 11 vols. (New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1986), chapter 20, p. 2567.
[21] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, pp. 65-67, l. 19-24.
[22] Horstmann (ed.), *Yorkshire Writers*, p. 417; Appleford, 'The 'Comene Course of Prayers'', p. 198.

fifteenth century would confess her sins and the problems encountered in finding an adequate confessor.[23] As someone who became an anchoress, it is probable that Julian would have followed the advice of the *Ancrene Wisse* to 'schrive hire i-lome' (confess herself often) but the precise nature of her confessional routine as a lay woman is unknown.[24] Similarly the extent to which Julian had first-hand knowledge of the confessional manuals and moral treatises cannot be proven. Watson's commentary to his edition of Julian's writings show how they resonate with the language and ideas founds in penitential texts such as *The Chastising of God's Children*, the *Pricke of Conscience* and Flete's *Remedies against Temptations*.[25] His comparisons are persuasive in their suggestion that Julian probably had some working knowledge of the content of these devotional texts. However, as I have shown in the last chapter, such knowledge of catechetical and penitential thinking was not necessarily dependent on first-hand familiarity with vernacular manuals and moral treatises. The confessional encounter was the seminal medium for imparting knowledge which shaped both the penitent's understanding and articulation of the sacrament.[26] This process of repentance, which lay at the heart of confession, in turn extended beyond the confessional moment and underpinned much of the devotional life of the late fourteenth century. Whilst there is very little reference to the confessional encounter, Julian's texts reflect the centrality of this penitential process of repentance within the devotional life. This can be seen in Julian's penitential understanding of her three gifts.

[23] Windeatt (ed.), *The Book of Margery Kempe*, p. 67, l. 427, whilst Barr outlines how Margery, along with women in general, were perceived as difficult penitents: Barr, *The Pastoral Care of Women*, pp. 108-116.
[24] Hasenfratz (ed.), *Ancrene Wisse*, p. 171, l. 207; Clay argues that the one regular visitor to the recluse was her confessor in Clay, *The Hermits and Anchorites of England*, p. 137.
[25] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 3.
[26] Jantzen assumes that Julian would have had a confessor, but whether he would have lent books to her from his library is purely speculative: Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich Mystic and Theologian*, p. 23.

Three Penitential Gifts

S opens with Julian's description of her pious request to God for three graces or gifts: to have 'minde of Cristes passion', 'bodelye syekenes' and 'thre woundes'.[27] These gifts are interwoven one with another, so that the first and the second are echoed in the wounds of contrition, compassion and longing for God. Each of these gifts is rooted in traditional affective piety, which was concerned with initiating the process of repentance.[28] Julian makes this clear in the second of her requests and the first of the wounds, where she desires to have bodily sickness for penitential reasons. As the *Visitation* texts make clear, terminal sickness was a time in which the soul was potentially made clean and ready through confession, a fact which is not lost on Julian who states, 'for I would be purged by the mercy of God, and after live more to the worshippe of God because of that sickness'. [29]

Similarly her request to have compassion through 'minde of Cristes passion' also has a penitential basis.[30] Sutherland's study of Julian and the liturgy reveals the extent to which Julian's texts are grounded in the liturgy of the Passion, but does not develop the penitential significance of this.[31] The use of Christ's Passion in evoking the penitential process can be seen to lie at the heart of prayers and meditations on the cross. For example the office of prayers found in the *Ancrene Wisse*, which possibly formed a prototype for the later *Book of Hours*, includes specific meditations on the Passion, focussing on its redemptive power to

[27] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 63-4, l. 4-43.
[28] J.A.W. Bennett, *Poetry of the Passion: Studies in Twelve Centuries of English Verse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 60 and Kamerick, *Popular Piety*, pp. 133-45.
[29] Appleford, 'The 'Comene Course of Prayers'', pp. 197-98.
[30] Hagen argues that there is no penitential or even devotional dimension to Julian's request stating that 'her yearning comes out of a visionary impulse': Susan K. Hagen, 'St. Cecilia and St. John of Beverly: Julian of Norwich's Early Model and Late Affirmation' in Sandra J. McEntire (ed.), *Julian of Norwich: A Book of Essays* (New York and London: Garland Publications, 1988), pp. 91-114 [hereafter Hagen, St. Cecilia and St. John of Beverly]. Here at pp. 97-8. Baker emphasizes the affective basis of compassion for Christ, which was to evoke contrition: Baker, *Julian of Norwich's Showings*, p. 23.
[31] Sutherland, ''Oure Feyth is Groundyd in Goddes Worde', pp. 1-20 and 'Julian of Norwich and the Liturgy', pp. 88-98.

cleanse the soul from sin, '*Medicina Christiana/ Salva sanas, egras sana'* (O medicine of Christians, save the healthy, heal the sick).[32] The later *Book of Hours* includes prayers that make the penitential nature of these meditations more overt, for example the popular 'Fifteen Oes of St Bridget' begin thus,

> For mynde of thys blessyd passion, I beseche the, benygne Jesus, graunte me afore my dethe very contrycyon, true confession, and satysfaccyon, and of all my synnes clene remyssyon. Amen.[33]

Comparable to Rolle's *Meditations on the Passion*, these affective prayers to the cross, though professedly originating from the devotions of a 'woman, solitary and recluse', were firmly located within the penitential system of the church.[34]

Sutherland argues that, whilst Julian's request for 'minde of Criste', bodily sickness and three wounds are entirely conventional in late-medieval affective spirituality, Julian positions the first two of them 'outside the devotional framework of the Church'.[35] Evidence for this statement is found in the conditions which Julian placed on these two requests: 'For

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[32] Quotation from part one of *Ancrene Wisse,* p. 71, l. 45-6. For the relationship between the *Ancrene Wisse* and later Book of Hours see: Bella Millett, '*Ancrene Wisse* and the Book of Hours' in *Writing Religious Women: Female Spirituality and Textaul Practices in Late Medieval England*, ed. by Denis Renevey and Christiania Whitehead (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), pp. 21-40; Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and their Prayers, 1240-1570* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006) [hereafter Duffy, *Marking the Hours*], p. 7; Sutherland, 'Julian of Norwich and the Liturgy', p. 93.

[33] Quoted from the 1536 printed edition of the Sarum Hours, Short Title Catalogue 15993 (Rouen: le Roux, 1536) folio. 84; Duffy draws a comparison between the Oes description of the Passion and Julian's *Revelations* in Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 251; as does Colledge and Walsh in their edition of the short text in Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, p. 52 & 201, n. 6. Glasscoe argues that the shape of Julian's showings follow that of the Primer: Glasscoe, *Games of Faith*, p. 222, whilst Smith emphasizes the penitential use of the Passion in the fourteenth-century Hours of De Lisle, De Bois and Neville of Hornby: Kathryn A. Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England* (London and Toronto: British Library and University of Toronto Press, 2003), p. 160.

[34] Rolle writes: 'graunt me grace to profite to the with good wille and sorrow of hert for my synnys, and criynge mercy and wil to amend me in shrift and penance for my synnys', in Richard Rolle, *Meditations on the Passion* in Allen (ed.), *English Writings of Richard Rolle*, p. 28. ll. 26-30; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 254. For additional texts within Books of Hours see Paul Saenger, 'Books of Hours and the Reading Habits of the Later Middle Ages' in *The Culture of Print. Power and the Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Roger Chartier and trans. by Lydia G. Cochrane (Oxford: Polity Press, 1989), pp. 141-73.

[35] Sutherland, 'Julian of Norwich and the Liturgy', p. 88.

methought that it passede the comene course of prayers'.[36] However, this argument presupposes that there is a differentiation between public prayers and private devotion, between the *Pater Noster* of the church and the mystical vision of the individual, and the former must be manoeuvred around to ensure the articulation of the latter. In his study of late-medieval devotion within Books of Hours, Duffy rightly concludes that this demarcation is inaccurate.[37] To recite the slimmed down Latin version of the Missal in the Little Hours of the Virgin was not to set up a rival personal and private devotion but to be integrated within the official prayer of the church.[38] For the author of the *Ancrene Wisse*, mystical prayer similarly had a place within this liturgy. At the consecration of the host, the anchoress is bidden to 'foryeoteth al the world, ther beoth al ut of bodi, ther I sperclinde luve bicluppeth ower leofmon, the into ower breostes bur is i-liht of heovene' (forget all the world, be wholly out of your body, embrace in shining love your lover who has alighted in the bower of your heart).[39] For the thirteenth-century anchoress, mystical prayer was to be part of, and embedded within, the sacraments of the church and its life of prayer, rather than a separate and private devotion.[40]

Within this context, Julian's description, in S, of the manner in which she gazes up in devotion, rather than setting her eyes upon the cross her parish priest holds before her, is less of a statement about her attitude to the authority of the church, as argued by Abbot, and more about the place of the 'meanes' of liturgy within devotion and even mystical vision.[41] For it is only when Julian turns to look at the physical cross, to become a participant in the penitential rite of the church, and turn away from the upward stance into heaven which she

[36] The phrase 'common coures' which is found in the short text and also in the Paris manuscript is not present in the Sloane manuscript of the long text, placing undue significance upon it is therefore questionable.
[37] Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, pp. 97-106.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 59.
[39] Part one of Hazenfrantz (ed.), *Ancrene Wisse*, p. 83, ll. 204-5.
[40] The communal aspect of Julian's vision is brought out by Magill, *Mystic or Visionary*, pp. 90-7.
[41] Abbot, 'His Body, the Church', pp. 2-4.

believed was best, that her series of visions unfold.[42] In the later addition to S, Julian brings out the importance of the role of 'meanes' in prayer. In this way, chapter 6 can be seen as a criticism of the recitation of empty prayers – the 'bidding of beads' which the devil mocks, as related in chapter 69.[43] To prevent such false devotion the wise soul must be 'clevand to his godenes', in comparison to which just participating in the feasts of the church are 'to litil and not full worshippe to God'.[44] However, this does not mean that Julian rejects the liturgy of the church and sets up individual, mystical prayer over and above it. Rather, having emphasized the importance of true devotion, she sees the 'meanes' of the church as being ordained by God in order to make His goodness accessible. Julian thereby considers the liturgy of the church to be crucial for proper devotion to God. In this context, Julian's preference to gaze up into heaven rather than look at the crucifix of the sacrament of the church can therefore be read as a self-criticism, referring to those presumptuous young mystics who stare at the stars, rather than understanding the integral part that 'meanes' take in the goodness of God.[45]

It is therefore very unlikely that, in her request for sickness and a mind of Christ's Passion, Julian was positioning herself outside the devotional framework of the church. Not only do both these requests have a penitential basis, but also their very function was to evoke contrition and compassion within the soul which spurred her into a penitential conversion. It is more likely that Julian is making a statement about the pious and somewhat excessive nature of her requests. She does not simply want to have a 'minde of Criste', for she already has 'grete felinge in the passion of Christ'; she desires a 'bodily sight'. Similarly, it is not just an illness that Julian wishes to suffer, but to have a deathbed experience. Both of these

[42] A point also made by Tugwell, *Ways of Imperfection*, p. 188 and Gillespie and Ross, 'The Apophatic Image', p. 60.
[43] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 84.
[44] *Ibid.*, pp. 6 & 7.
[45] This criticism is found in chapter 57 of *The Cloud of Unknowing.*

requests were not 'outside' the church, but they 'passede the comene course of prayers' in their presumptive request by a pious young woman. The conditions Julian thereby places upon them are her recognition of this presumption.

Julian's third request is similarly entirely traditional and 'almost predictable' in its heritage and devotional range.[46] Initiated by hearing the story of St Cecilia, Julian piously desires to receive the same three wounds: 'the wounde of contrition, the wounde of compassion and the wounde of wilfulle langinge for God'. Unlike the two previous requests, which Julian not only forgets but also later comes to repent of having asked for, the third of her requests 'dwelled continuelye.' As Ward has shown, this devotional sequence had a heritage which stretched back to Anselm and presented an affective spirituality which sought 'to pierce and break the hard heart so that God's work of prayer could begin'.[47] Lying at the heart of these three wounds is the process of conversion which underpins the sacrament of penance. The sinful soul is brought back to God, firstly, through the wound of contrition for sins; secondly, by identification with the sufferings of Christ, by which the contrite soul is led to compassion and confession; and finally, by enabling contemplation and a longing desire for God within the penitent's heart. It is this traditional understanding of the penitential process that lies at the heart of Julian's third desire.

In chapter 39 the penitential basis of these three wounds is made explicit. Julian describes the way in which they are a gift from God in order to deal with the problem of sin: 'be contrition we arn made clene, be compassion we arn made redy, and be trew longyng to God

[46] Gillespie, ''[S]he do the police in different voices'', p. 196.
[47] Benedicta Ward, ''Faith Seeking Understanding': Anselm of Canterbury and Julian of Norwich' in Srs, E Mary, M. Paul, Benedicta Ward and A.M. Allchin, *Julian of Norwich: Four Studies to Commemorate the Sixth Centenary of the Revelations of Divine Love* (Oxford: Fairacres Publications, 1973), pp. 28-9; for the affective history of these wounds in relation to Julian see Baker, *From Vision to Book*, pp 20-33 and Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich*, pp. 61-70.

we arn made worthy'.[48] From this passage it is possible to locate Julian's notion of devotional 'meanes' as the vehicle through which God deals with sin outside the auspices of the penitential process of the church. Jantzen argues as such when she states that Julian was concerned with the internal compunction of the heart rather than its external forms of penance.[49] To a certain extent this is true. However, as we have seen, for Julian the 'meanes' are as important as the internal journey of reconciliation. This can be demonstrated by considering the context in which Julian highlights this association between the three wounds and the process of reconciliation, to which I now turn.

Chapter 39 begins with a description of the ravaging effects of sin on the soul. Following conventional teaching, the contrite soul is led to confession where he is

> wilfully to shewyn his synnes, nakidly and truely, with grete sorow and grete shame that he hath so defoulyd the fair ymage of God. Than underfo[n]gyth he penance for every synne, enioynid by his domysman; that is groundid in holy church be the teaching of the Holy Ghost.[50]

In this passage Julian describes the mechanics of confession, the 'meanes' for dealing with sin, in language which reflects the catechetical teaching on the basic requirements necessary for the confession to be full and true.[51] In S it is the penance which the confessor gives as a result of the confession that is the medicine for the wounded soul. However, in L, Julian's understanding of this medicine of penance has expanded, as she incorporates into it not only the three wounds, but also other forms of affliction to the devout soul, including bodily

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[48] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 40.
[49] Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich*, p. 65.
[50] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 40.
[51] Julian echoes four of the attributes for a good confession found within pastoral and confession manuals as well as Book V of the *Ancrene Wisse*, where they are listed as 'accusing, bitter with sorrow, complete, naked, made often, in haste, humble, full of shame, fearful, hopeful, wise, true, about oneself, determined and long considered': Watson and Savage, *Anchoritic Spirituality*, p. 159 and Hasenfratz (ed.), *Ancrene Wisse*, p. 312, ll. 54-57. See p. 84 above for the mnemonic in Diocesan stautes of the thirteenth century.

sickness, shame and temptations. No longer is there simply one medicine, the penance enjoined by the confessor, but now there are 'medicins' as Julian makes the term plural.

The basis for this alteration lies in Julian's understanding of the attitude by which the soul accepts her penance. In L the priest's penance is described in catechetical terms as a 'mekeness', the virtue that arises from the gift of dread and springs up from the root of humility.[52] By taking the wounds and afflictions which God gives in the same attitude of meekness with which she accepts the penances that have been 'enjoined by his domesman', they are perceived to possess the same medicinal power for dealing with sin. In this passage Julian expands the reader's understanding of penance, as she incorporates into the penitential practices of the church, the three wounds and other afflictions that beset the devout soul. Julian thereby brings a deeper devotional understanding of penance to the penitent, which encompasses not only the process of confession but also the experience of affliction. In chapter 77 Julian states that she was not shown the specific penances that a man takes upon himself, but rather 'that we shulde meekly and patiently bere and suffer that penance that God himselfe geveth us'.[53] It is clear, in chapter 39, that this penance includes the three wounds of the confessional process itself.

In this section I have argued that, despite the limited number of references to the confessional encounter, Julian's texts are steeped in the language of penance which was central to the devotional life. In Julian's development of the three wounds we not only find evidence for this importance, but also a concern for the penitential issues of her day. It is the extent to which Julian engages with these concerns that is the subject of the next section.

[52] Francis (ed.), *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, p. 130.
[53] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 93.

Part 2 – ‘sin is the sharpest scourge’

In section 17 of S Julian presents a positive view of sin. Looking forward to the eschatological vision of how God ultimately deals with the problem of sin, Julian states that sin ‘is na shame, bot wirshippe to man’ and though on earth it is punished with sorrow and penance, ‘it shalle be rewarded in heven be the curtayse love of oure lorde God alle mightye, that wille that nane that comes thare lese his travaile’.[54] Those who were famous for being great sinners on earth are not prevented, by their past shameful deeds, from receiving glory in heaven, but rather the suffering of sin will lead to more glory before the throne of God. For Julian this beatific vision answers her theological wrangling with the problem of sin which began with her wondering why ‘be the grete forseande wisdom of God, sin was nought letted’ and goes hand in hand with the answer she receives that ‘sinne is behovelye’.[55]

Scholars have invariably sought to give a theological premise to Julian’s positive view of sin. Turner argues convincingly that it is based on the scholastic notion of *conveniens,* regardless of whether Julian was aware of the writings of Aquinas and other scholastic thinkers or not.[56] This tradition sought to explain the problem of sin by presenting it as fitting or contingent to the saving work of God.[57] It presupposes that, whilst God did not will sin, it is necessary to the narrative of redemption. Whereas for Baker it is Julian’s eschatological perspective of sin that corrects the damaging Augustinian view of original sin and enables her reassuringly to

[54] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p 99 and 101. Baker argues that Julian addresses the problem of sin by considering it from an eschatological point of view rather than a focussing on the causes of sin: Baker, *From Vision to Book*, pp. 63-68.
[55] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 91, l. 36 & 45.
[56] In the absence of evidence for Julian’s knowledge of theological works, Turner argues that Julian would have been familiar with the tradition of *conveniens* rather than the actual texts: Denys Turner, ‘‘Sin is Behovely’ in Julian of Norwich’s Revelations of Divine Love’, *Modern Theology*, 20 (2004), pp. 407-22 [hereafter Turner, ‘‘Sin is Behovely’’]. Here at pp. 408-9.
[57] Turner, ‘‘Sin is Behovely’’, pp. 407-22.

state that, in God's eyes, sin is ultimately dealt with.[58] This notion is explicit in L where Julian conflates the statement that sin is 'behovelye' with the words of Christ that all shall be well.[59] However, in S, these reassuring words are lacking, and the possibility that sin could be 'behovelye' is left unexplained. Instead, Julian simply submits herself to the teachings of 'holy church'. In heaven sin is addressed, but how this manifests itself on earth is left to the power of St Peter's keys.[60]

Given the theological and eschatological confidence with which Julian reveals how God deals with sin it is therefore disturbing to find, within the midst of this vision, a description of the harrowing effect that sin has on the chosen soul in this life:

> Sin is the scharpeste scourge that any chosen saule maye be bette with, whilke scourge it alle forbettes man and woman, and alle forbrekes tham, and noghts thamselfe in thare awne sight, sa fareforth that him thinke that he is noght worthy bot as it ware to sinke into helle.[61]

Whilst this passage may be read as a counter balance to her boldness, it is clear that, despite her theological assurance that sin is 'behovelye', Julian is deeply concerned with the devotional experience of sin which afflicts the soul in this life. The language she uses to describe the effects of sin not only reveals her pastoral concern but also reflects the devotional experience of sin found within the vernacular manuals.[62]

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[58] Baker, *From Vision to Book*, p. 88.
[59] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 29.
[60] The phrase 'St Peter's keys' refers to the authority given to Peter, the Rock on which the Church shall be built, to bind on earth and in heaven in Matthew 16:18-19.
[61] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 99.
[62] See pp. 121-3 above for references to Francis (ed.), *The Book of Vices and Virtues*. Mountney argues that Julian's description of the lash of sin emphasizes that she does not make light of sin: John Michael Mountney, *Sin Shall be a Glory as revealed by Julian of Norwich* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1992), p. 41.

It has often been noted that, in her statement that 'sin is noght' and has 'no manner of substance', Julian follows the Augustinian tradition which described sin as a privation of good.[63] This may well be the case. However for Julian, the significance of stating that sin is 'all that is noght good' and is 'no deed', lies in the fact that it shifts the focus away from the cause of sin to its effects. Sin is thereby only known by the pain it causes. In her emphasis on the experience of sin Julian therefore reveals a concern for the effect sin has on devout souls rather than in its nature. This can be seen in the previous quotation from section 17 of S where Julian uses the evocative image of the scourge to describe the devastating nature of the effects of sin on the soul. The scourge of sin breaks, beats and 'noghts' a chosen soul to the extent he sees himself as worthless and sinks into the depths of despair. This image closely mirrors the passage concerning the scourging of Christ in section 8 of S where, in contrast, the scourge is presented as the instrument by which the life blood of Christ is able to pour out like water 'to oure service and to oure bodily ese.'[64] Within the context of the saving work of Christ's Passion the scourge of sin has become 'fitting' or 'behovelye', whilst the scourge of sin is experienced by the devout soul as a destructive and damaging instrument of punishment. Not only does it break, beat and 'noght' a soul in their own eyes, but it also makes them feel unworthy in the eyes of God. For Julian, the effects of sin are to blind and distort souls so that they no longer have a proper understanding of themselves or their relation to God. Sin turns the eyes inward so that they lose sight and dwell upon their own sinfulness so distorting the sense of their own worth and relation to God.

It is this problem of the blinding and noughting effects of sin on the soul that concerns Julian within S. Prayer is of greatest importance during these times when the soul 'fele[s] nought God'. For

[63] Hide, *Gifted Origins to Grace Fulfilment*, p. 68; Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich Mystic and Theologian*, p. 182; Baker, *From Vision to Book*, p. 65.
[64] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 77, l. 25.

> in the time that man is in sinne, he is so unmightye, so unwise and so unluffande that he can nought love God as himself. The maste mischefe that he hase es blindnesse, for he sees nought alle this.[65]

This helpless state of the soul is later visualized in chapter 51 of L where the greatest hurt that the servant suffers in his fall is his inability to see the face of his loving lord and instead 'entended to his felyng, and induryd in wo, in which wo he suffrid vii grete peynes'.[66] For Julian, it is this blindness or 'unknawenge of luffe' that 'most lettis Goddes luffers' and is of real concern within the devotional life for her. It is therefore not surprising that Julian no longer considers her oration on the nothingness of sin as a sufficient ending to S.[67] With seeming confidence Julian addresses sin personally and theologically with the words 'thowe er nought', but this is not the experience she conveys for those who dwell in 'gastelye blindehede' and cry out "Where er we?" and "Whate es alle in erthe that twines us?"[68] Instead it is with these desperate questions that Julian initially closes S.

To a certain extent Julian has already given an answer to this question of "how do we deal with sin?" In section 19 she states that when the soul is so blinded that 'he can nought love God nor himselfe' then …

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[65] *Ibid.*, p. 105, l. 56-8.
[66] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 54. Both Watson and Hide deny any connection to the seven deadly sins, but given their widespread nature and use to describe the wounds of sin it would be surprising if there were no allusion to them lying behind Julian's great pains: Hide, *Gifted Origins to Grace Fulfilment*, p. 118 and Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 274, n. 19.
[67] Whilst Colledge and Walsh describe this section stylistically as 'one of her finest passages, with its adroit combination of conversion, exclamation and repetition' it is much more likely that Watson, McAvoy and Gillespie are correct in identifying it as a standard peroration on sin which was used to end such religious texts: Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, p. 271; Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 112 and Liz Herbert McAvoy, 'Introduction: 'God forbade … that I am a techere': Who, or what, was Julian?' in *A Companion to Julian of Norwich* , ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy (Cambridge, D.S. Brewer: 2008), p. 3, n. 7; Gillespie, ''[S]he do the police in different voices'', p. 197.
[68] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 115.

> …the hale luffe of God allemighty, that ever is ane, giffes him sight to himselfe. And than wenes he that God ware wrathe with him for his sinne. And than is he stirred to contrition and be confession and othere goode dedes to slake the wrathe of God, unto the time he finde a reste in saule and softnesse in conscience. And than him thinke that God has forgiffen his sinnes, and it es soth. And than is God, in the sight of saule, turnede into the behaldinge of the saule, as if it had bene in paine or in preson, sayande thus: "I am gladde that thow erte comen to reste, for I hafe ever loved the and nowe loves the, and thowe me."[69]

In this passage Julian sets out 'the techinge of haly kyrke' in answer to the question of how a soul is to deal with the problem of sin, namely penance. As Julian shows, this teaching was primarily concerned with stirring the soul to contrition through sight of sins and belief of God's wrath at them. In contrast to the blinding and distorting effect of sin itself, Julian echoes the language of the vernacular manuals which imagine God giving souls a vision of their sins in order to 'prikke þair conscience withyn'.[70] It is God who gives this sight, but for most penitents this process was facilitated by the confessional manuals and moral treatises which sought to evoke contrition within the sinful soul through the gift of dread.[71]

Julian's ambivalence towards the manner in which the soul was awakened to its true nature in the eyes of God, is revealed in her description of the different types of dread at the end of S. Apart from doubtful dread, the 'foure manner of dredes' Julian describes in section 25 resonate with the popular understanding of the place of fear within the devotional life.[72] Watson draws a direct parallel between Julian's categories and those found in *The Contemplations of the Love and Dread*. However, considering that the latter is an early fifteenth-century text, as Watson himself acknowledges, it is unlikely that this could be an

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[69] *Ibid.*, p. 105, l. 58-66.
[70] Hanna and Wood (eds.), *Pricke of Conscience*, p. 12, l. 344.
[71] The role of the manuals in creating a discursive space for confession is discussed in Root, '*Space to speke*', pp. 31-71. See also Patterson, 'The Subject of Confession', pp. 374-86.
[72] For descriptions of the role of fear within Julian see: Ritamary Bradley, 'Julian's doubtfull drede', *The Month*, 242 (February, 1981), pp. 53-57; Pelphrey, *Love was his meaning*, pp. 281-85 and Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, pp. 127-32 & 156-7.

influence on S.[73] It is more likely that Julian, aware of the traditional demarcation of fear into four categories by Aquinas, pieced them together from her own experience and other devotional writings.[74] Thus, Julian's categories of fear reflect the popular understanding of its role within the devotional life to spur a soul towards contrition.

In both the fear of attack and fear of pain Julian recognizes the beneficial role of fear that brings the soul to contrition. She states that the 'drede of afray' is good 'for it helpes to purge a man' whilst the 'drede of paine' is the gateway and helps him to 'hafe contrition be the blisfulle touchinge of the haly gaste'.[75] From her language it is clear that Julian associates both of these dreads with the compunction that leads to contrition, the first step on the penitential path of contrition, confession and satisfaction. However, within ten lines Julian contradictes herself and states that 'alle dreads othere than reverente dredes that er profered to us, though thay come undere the coloure of haliness, they ere not so trewe'.[76] Thus whilst Julian upholds the role of fear in exciting the soul to contrition in S, the reader is left with the sense that Julian is not at ease with the role it plays within the confessional process.

This unease is clarified when we turn to L where Julian makes two important changes or additions to her text, which reveal her concerns with the conventional teaching of the 'holy church' on how to deal with sin. The first of these changes is to delete the text altogether. In chapter 47 of L Julian removes the section on the penitential teaching of the Church and instead radically alters how she views man in his sin. This can be seen by comparing the two texts. Within section 19 of S the soul is depicted in a state whereby he is so 'unmightye,' unwise and unloving that he does not love God or himself. In this condition the problem lies

[73] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 116, n. 1.
[74] *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, 19.
[75] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 117, l. 2 & 9-10.
[76] *Ibid.*, p. 119, l. 19-20.

with the sinner and hence he requires the prick of shame and fear at the vision of his sins to awaken the contrition within him which will begin the pastoral process of reconciliation. However, in L the sinner is no longer the active cause of the separation between God and man but rather has become the passive recipient of a situation into which he has unknowingly fallen. It is this state which has caused him to be 'onmytye and onwise of *hymself*, and also his wil is overleyde' through 'blindhede, for he seith not God'.[77] Julian deduces that, if the soul could continually see God, then 'he shuld have no mischevous felyng, ne no manner steryng the yernyng that servyth to synne'.[78] Thereby between the two texts Julian shifts the focus away from the penitent and their need for contrition, and instead emphasizes the state in which they find themselves as a result of sin. This sinful condition inhibits the soul's ability to see God and causes it to

> fallen into ourself, and than fynde we no felyng of ryth - nowte but the contrarioust that is in ourselfe, and that of the elder rote of our first synne with all that followyn of our contrivans, and in this we arn traveylid and tempestid with felyng of synnys and of peynes in many dyvers manner, gostly and bodyly, as it [is] knowen to us in this lif.[79]

With language which resonates with the theological notion of original sin, Julian expresses the inability of the penitent to be able to do anything about their sinful condition. Julian's surprising answer to the question of how do we deal with sin is now 'We cannot'.

The second alteration Julian makes to section 19 within L is in the way she depicts the means by which the soul is shown her sins. Within S it was God who gave the soul sight of her sins in order to stir up contrition whereas in L the image of God has altered from Judge to the 'lord of mercy'. In chapter 78 it is Mercy who 'shewith us our synne and oure febilnes be the

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[77] Glasscoe (ed.) *A Revelation of Love*, p. 50. The italics are my own.
[78] *Ibid*.
[79] *Ibid*.

swet gracious lyte of himselfe'.[80] As a result the vision of the soul's sinfulness is now tempered so that it can be seen 'profitably without despeir'.[81] In these two alterations to S, Julian reveals the extent to which the sacrament of penance, by focusing on contrition, invariably caused the eyes of the penitent to turn inwards to contemplate themselves and their sin. As a result their vision becomes distorted as they are no longer able to 'see' the 'behovely' nature of sin or how God looks upon the sinner.

The Problem of Confession

For Julian, the focus of the sacrament upon the sinful state of the penitent has caused the soul to linger upon itself. In this way Julian reflects the popular concern that the pastoral process of penance, instead of handling sin, has instilled within devout souls a profound sense of sinfulness experienced as dread. Julian sets out this problem in section 24 of S:

> For when they begin to hate sinne, and to amende tham by the ordinance of holye kyrke, yit there dwelles a drede that stirres tham to behaldinge of thamselfe and of ther sinnes before done.[82]

In this passage Julian describes the confessional encounter. Instead of focussing on contrition and the means by which the soul is pricked into seeking confession, Julian already assumes that the hateful vision of sin has moved devout souls and they have sought out confession to deal with it. Thus, she focuses upon the penitent's experience following confession and states that, for some, the process of penance is unable to alleviate a sense of sinfulness and dread. The catechetical spur or prick of conscience, namely fear, has become a problem and

[80] *Ibid.*, p. 94.
[81] *Ibid.*, p. 95.
[82] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 117, l. 20-22.

lingers even after the mechanism of the church has dealt with it. Julian thereby identifies a disparity between the pastoral process of confession and the continuing sense of sin experienced by 'Goddes luffers'.

The extent to which Julian locates this problem within the process of confession itself is revealed in the alterations she makes to this same passage within L. The two texts are set side by side for ease of comparison.

> For when thay/**we** begin to hate sinne, and to amende tham/**us** by the ordinance of holye kyrke, yit there dwelles a drede that stirres/**lettith** them/**us** to/**for the** behaldinge of thamselfe/**ourselfe** and of ther/**oure syn**nes before done, **and sum of us for oure everdayly synnes; for we holde nor oure covenants ne kepe not oure cleness that our lord settith us in, but fallen oftentimes into so much wretcidness that shame it is to seen it. And beholding of this makyth us so sorry and so hevy that onethis we can finde ony comfort**. And this drede that they/**we** take **sumtime** for a mekenesse, bot this is a foulle blindehede and a waykenesse. (S section 24 l. 20-21 and **L chapter 73)**[83]

Julian makes a number of significant changes to S. First, the sense of sinfulness has increased within this passage. The soul no longer simply lingers on those sins which they have previously committed, instead Julian expands their scope to include the experience of everyday sins. Unlike the authors of vernacular manuals and sermons, Julian is not concerned about the nature of confession itself and ensuring that it is full and true, this is taken for granted.[84] Rather, she refers to the sins which have already been brought to confession and the inability of the pastoral process to enable the soul once more to 'behold' her God. Julian describes this pervasive nature of sin as specifically causing a breach with the church. The sacraments of the church which were meant to bring surety of salvation

[83] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 117; Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelastion of Love*, pp. 88-9.
[84] The twelve points of shrift found in *Handlyng* Synne are a good example of concern for the authenticity of confession within the vernacular manuals: Sullens (ed.), *Handlyng Synne*, pp. 281-296. This emphasis within Mirk's *Festial* is drawn out by Ford, *John Mirk's Festial: Orthodoxy, Lollardy and the Common People*, pp. 33-60. See pp. 83-85 of previous chapter.

through belonging and absolution are no longer able to give reassurance of forgiveness. Instead of alleviating a sense of sinfulness Julian sees them as part of the problem. The reason for this, lies within the responsibility that is placed on the soul to keep itself 'clene'. The sinner has been given the sacraments of baptism and penance in order to handle sin, however, as Julian states, 'we holde nor oure covenants ne kepe not oure cleness that our lord settith us in, but fallen oftentimes'. For Julian the very means of the church which sought to enable the sinner to handle their own sin is compounding the problem and instead are causing sinners to dwell upon their sinfulness and their inability to cope with it. Rather than bringing a sense of forgiveness, confession is simply reminding the penitent of the extent to which they are continually falling through sin.

The second significant change Julian makes to section 24 of S is to shift from the exclusive third to the more inclusive second person pronoun. Scholars have argued that this reflects a general broadening within L to address 'mine even christen' instead of those who 'desire to lyeve contemplatyfelye'.[85] The popularity of texts such as Flete's *The Remedy against Temptations*, which was written for those who have 'for saken the world' in order to please God, attest to the fact that contemplative texts met wider pastoral needs than just those who were enclosed. In chapter 73 Julian is seen to consciously widen her audience thereby revealing her general misgiving in the sacrament of confession to deal with the problem of an enduring sense of sin.[86] As a consequence Julian's 'voice' similarly alters as she no longer adopts the role of 'ghostly father' to denote the devotional concerns of those who would be 'goddes luffers' but instead acquires a universal voice to reflect the more general concern with the problem of confession itself.[87] It is for this reason that she no longer sets herself

[85] Tugwell, *Ways of Imperfection*, pp. 187-207.
[86] Colledge and Chadwick (eds.), *Remedies Against Temptations*, p. 203-4.
[87] Scholars have sought to explain this shift by focussing not on the question of Julian's intended audience but rather on the way she understands her role as a writer: Windeatt, 'Julian of Norwich and her Audience', p. 6.

aside, observing the concerns of others, but rather identifies with them and presents them as concerns which have a much wider remit.

Julian highlights two consequences of this failure in confessional practice and the inability of the pastoral process to alleviate a sense of sin. The first is an experience of dread which lingers after the soul has undergone confession and causes penitents to be 'adred to appere afore our curteyse lord', and secondly, is the loss of the soul's ability to discern the truth which results from the blinding nature of this sense of sin and fear. The effect of these two 'maketh us so sory and so hevy that unnethes we can see ony comfort'. These two effects will be considered in turn.

Of the four 'manner of dredes' that Julian describes in section 25 of S, it is 'doubtfulle drede' that Julian differentiates from the others in having no devotional benefit.[88] Whilst 'drede of afray' purges a man, 'drede of paine' stirs him from the sleep of sin and 'reverente drede' is sweet and soft for 'mekillehede of luffe', 'alle doubtefulle dredes God hates, and he will that we hafe tham departed fro us with trewe knawinge of luffe'.[89] It is this doubtful dread which Julian identifies as lingering after confession. In section 24 Julian gives a more detailed description of this 'doubtfulle drede' and reveals its sinful, demonic basis. Not only is it like sin in that it is known by its effect on the soul, but it is also 'a drede that stirres tham to behaldinge of thamselfe and of ther sinnes before done'.[90] Julian uses the same contemplative term of 'beholding' to express the way in which dread causes the soul to linger on its repented sins. Through this direct parallel between the beholding of the soul in

[88] Ritamary Bradley records the amount of admissions to dread within the long text in Ritamary Bradley, 'Julian's 'doubtfull drede'', *The Month*, 242 (February, 1981), pp. 53-57 [hereafter Bradley, 'Julian's doubtful drede']. Here at pp. 53-4. Pelphrey erroneously focusses on the ability of doubtful dread to be turned into good: Brant Pelphrey, *Christ our Mother: Julian of Norwich* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1989), p. 203 [hereafter Pelphrey, *Christ our Mother*].
[89] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 117.
[90] *Ibid.*, p. 117, l. 22.

contemplation and the beholding of the sinful self through fear, Julian emphasizes the sinful basis of doubtful dread which not only causes the soul to fall into sin, but also traps it within this state, distorting its ability to discern the love of the Lord and his forgiveness.

Julian's use of active and objective terms in S to describe the way in which doubtful dread comes from without to stir or incite the soul to dwell on itself, locates her within the tradition that associated such fear with an external force, the devil.[91] This tradition becomes more apparent in section 25 where the dread takes bodily form and becomes a 'wikked spiritte' who 'travailes and tempestes' the soul.[92] In chapter 66 of L he makes an appearance. McAvoy reads this initial encounter with the fiend in sexual terms, as the conquest of the feminine within humanity over the negativity and masculine power of the fiend.[93] However, if understood within the context of Julian's day, this scene presents the traditional tribulation at the time of death, which for Julian arises from her doubt in her own revelation.[94] It is only when Julian recollects what she has been shown along with 'al the feith of holy church, for I beheld it is bothen one' that the devil disappears.[95]

Within L, this fear is no longer simply an external demonic force but has become an internal voice which holds the soul within the blinded state of sin. In chapter 73 Julian alters her description of doubtful dread to reflect its internal nature. Fear is no longer presented as that

[91] Scholarship on Julian's demonology has often focussed on Julian's bodily visions of the devil rather than the internal constructs of evil: Judith Dale, ''Sin is Behovely': Art and Theodicy in the Julian Text', *Mystics Quarterly*, 25 (1999), pp. 127-146 [hereafter Dale, ''Sin is Behovely'']; Brad Peters, 'The Reality of Evil within the Mystic Vision of Julian of Norwich', *Mystics Quarterly*, 13 (1987), pp. 195-205. Here at p. 197.
[92] In *The Remedies against Temptation* William Flete also associates fear with the work of the devil where he states that 'the temptynge of the fende þat maketh þe soule to erre in feyth and to fantasye in dispeir, semeth gret synne to a manis soule and is not so'. Flete is concerned with the way in which the devil distorts and leads devout souls astray. For him the devil is an external force which can be overcome. Colledge and Chadwick (eds.), *Remedies Against Temptations*, p. 222, l. 24-5.
[93] Liz Herbert McAvoy, '….The fend set him in my throte': Sexuality and the Fiendish Encounter in Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love*', *Reading Medieval Studies*, 30 (2004), pp. 33-55.
[94] An equivalent tribulation scene can be found in Hanna and Wood (eds.), *Pricke of Conscience*, pp. 66-67, l. 2300-2333.
[95] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, pp. 81-2.

which ‘stirres’ or incites the soul to the ‘behaldinge of thamselfe and of ther sinnes,’ instead it has become a passive blindness preventing the soul from knowing God’s love and causing the soul to dwell upon its sinfulness.[96] Julian expresses this internal problem with fear in chapter 76 where the devil appears once again. This time he no longer has bodily form but, along with ‘our owne foly and blyndhede,’ has become an inner voice which articulates the sense of fear and wretchedness that the soul experiences at its own sin following confession:[97]

> but for the chongeablilitie that we arn in in ourselfe we fallen often into synne. Than we have this be the stering of our enemy, be our owne foly and blyndhede; for they seien thus: “Thou wittest wele thou art a wretch, a synner, and also ontrew; for thou kepist not the command; thou behotist oftentymes our lord that thou shalt don better, and anon after, thou fallist agen in the same, namely in slauth, in lesyng of tyme”; for that is the begynning of synne, as to my syghte, and namely to the creatures that have goven hem to serven our lord with inward beholding of his blissid goodness. And this makith us adred to apear afore our curtes lord.[98]

These words bring together the internal accusations of chapter 73 with the language of confession itself. Not only do they accuse the soul of failing to keep her covenants with God, reminding her of her breach with the Church and inability to keep ‘clene’ through its sacraments, but this is now defined in catechetical terms. Julian rarely makes any reference to specific sins within her text, instead she states that ‘generally he shewid synne wherin all is comprehendid’.[99] However, in this passage, the internal voice takes on the form of a confessor and not only accuses the soul of sin but also names them in catechetical terms as

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[96] As Bryan observes, Julian’s L is concerned with the internal self-constructs which prevent one from knowing God’s love: Jennifer Bryan, *Looking Inward: Devotional Reading and the Private Self in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2008), pp. 145-175.
[97] The threat of the devil to engender contrition within the soul so that it focus on its sinfulness and fall away from God is analysed in David F. Tinsley, ‘Julian’s Diabology’, in Sandra J. McEntire (ed.), *Julian of Norwich: A Book of Essays* (New York and London: Garland Publications, 1988), pp. 208-37.
[98] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, pp. 92-3.
[99] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

'slauth, in lesyng of time'. Within the penitential manuals these were the two sins which were intimately connected with the failure to repent.[100]

Underlying these two sins is the popular notion, taught within the confessional manuals and handbooks, that sloth or *acedia* is primarily concerned with the sin of neglecting religious duties, the most important of which was confession. Robert Manning describes the consequences of neglecting to confess through the sin of sloth in:

> ȝyf þou lygge long yn synne,
> And wylt not ryse, ne þer of blynne,
> Certeynly for eury oure
> Þou shalt ȝelde acounte ful soure;
> For eury oure þat þou þer yn lay
> Yn purgatorye þou gest þy pay.
> Hyt ys sloghnes, and kalled accyde,
> Fro goddys seruyse so long þe hyde.[101]

This was not the only meaning of *acedia* during the later medieval period. As Wenzel points out, 'the concept of *acedia* one meets in the longer treatments of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is a comprehensive one, embracing elements from all stages of *acedia*'s past life.'[102] This included the monastic sin of interior temptation to tepidity and self disgust.

It is this combination of the internal state of the soul with the neglect of religious duty that we find in the English version of Lorens D'Orleans' *Somme le Roi*, *The Book of Virtues and Vices*. The author is not only concerned with the external ramifications of the sin but also with the internal state that it causes, this can be seen in the fifth evil which is caused by the sin of sloth:

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[100] Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth*, p. 95.
[101] In this text Manning reflects the popular notion that the sin of 'acedie' is primarily concerned with negligence in 'God's service': Sullens (ed.), *Handlyng Synne*, p. 120, l. 4779-86.
[102] Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth*, p. 179.

> Þe fifþe schrewednesse is whan a man lyþ in synne and feleþ temptynges of þe deuel and of his flesch þat assayleþ hym, and for schrewednesse ne wole not ones lift up his tail to clepe to God ne repente hym, ne ones seye, "Alas, þat I nere schryue!" Þilke man is like to a prisouner wrecched þat haþ leuere rote and diȝe in a foul stynkynge prisoun þa[n] haue þe trauail to a-rise and clymbe upon a ledder & goo his wey.[103]

The first part of this passage concentrates on the sin of neglecting to repent. Good cause is given for this neglect as the soul is assailed by the temptations of the devil and the flesh. In addition to this external cause to the sin of sloth, the author then reveals the internal effect it has upon the soul which also prevents her from confessing. The author describes this in terms of a man caught in a foul and stinking prison from which he cannot escape. The catechetical teaching on the sin of sloth is expressed in all the horror of what it does to the devout soul and reveals why it denies the sinner the ability to repent.

In her naming of the sins of slauth and 'lesing' of time, Julian reveals a similar concern with the sins that prevent the soul from beholding God. Like the author of the *Book of Vices and Virtues,* she does not so much focus on the external form of the sin of sloth but rather addresses the internal state that it causes whereby the soul is 'adred to appere afore oure curteyse lorde'.[104] In chapter 73 Julian thereby highlights how the pastoral process, which had given penitents the language to externalize and define their sins, has been internalized by Julian into a voice which traps the soul in a blinded state of fear that, in itself, prevents confession. Julian describes sloth as one of the 'ii manner of sekenes' that beset the devout soul within chapter 73 of L, the other being 'dispeir or doubtfull drede.' These are the two sins that 'most travelin and tempesten us' and 'be our gostly blindhede and bodily hevynes, we arn most enclinand to'. Julian presents them as the root cause of preventing those who

[103] Frances (ed.), *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, p. 27, l. 16-24.
[104] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 93.

seek to 'behold' God from seeing him, and visualizes them within the image of the fallen servant in chapter 51. Echoing the teaching of the vernacular manuals on sloth, the servant 'fallith in a slade and takith ful grete sore. And than he gronith and monith and waylith and writhith, but he ne may rysen ne helpyn hymself be no manner weye'.[105] This blinded state not only prevents the soul from appearing before the Lord but also distorts the soul's ability to perceive her true spiritual situation. Julian reveals this problem in both of her texts when she writes:

> And this drede we taken sumtime for a mekness, but this is a foule blyndhed and a waykenes. And we cannot dispisen it as we don another[r] synne that we knowen, for it comyth of enmite.[106]

The passage expresses the full extent to which fear blinds a soul, so much so that doubtful dread is mistaken as the pastoral virtue of 'mekness' and as such is difficult to scorn. The soul is so blinded by fear that it is no longer able to discern the sinful state it is in.

Discernment was an important part of the spiritual life in fourteenth-century England. Not only was it necessary for penitents to discern their sins to make a full and true confession but in a world where demonic forces were perceived to be prevalent discernment, in the form of shrift especially, acted as a remedy to their tempting and distorting influence.[107] Julian herself was spiritual guide to Margery Kempe, who sought her advice on the possible source of her visions as a deception by an 'evyl spyrit'.[108] It is in this mode of 'ghostly fader' or confessor that Julian not only sets out the four manners of fear at the end of S but also

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[105] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 54.
[106] *Ibid.*, p. 89.
[107] *Handlyng Synne* recounts the story of the man who made himself invisible to the devil because of his shrift in Sullens (ed.), *Handlyng Synne*, pp. 303-5, ll. 12209-60.
[108] Windeatt (ed.), *The Book of Margery Kempe*, p. 119, l. 1335-1378. Riddy implies that Margery was not alone in seeking out Julian when she argues that Julian's text evolved from 'a sea of talk': Riddy, ''Publication' before Print', pp. 48-9.

concludes with the advice that 'alle dredes othere than reverente dredes that er proferde to us, though thay come undere the coloure of halines, thay ere not so trewe'. For Julian the remedy to the falsity of dread is, 'to knawe tham bath and refuse the fals'. Julian similarly uses the imagery of the penitential manuals to describe such discernment in terms of perceiving the wicked spirit who is clothed in the 'liknes of a goode angelle'. Richard Rolle recounts such a deception in his *Form of Living* where the devil 'transfigurs hym in the forme of an awngel of light, that comonli al men ar temped with, when he hydes ill under the liknes of gode' in order to 'entice(s) us til scharp and over mikel penance, for to destroye oure self'.[109] Rolle thereby warns the anchoress Margaret that what may appear as a holy zeal for penance could be a self-destructive obsession initiated by the devil. Julian similarly closes S with an expression of the need for discernment over dread.

Discernment, however, can be a flawed process, as Margery Kempe attests to.[110] Julian alters her text to highlight the limitations of discernment to help the devout soul navigate their interior world. In L Julian removes the passage on its need and instead simply states:

> that dred that makith us hastily to fleen from all that is not good and fallen into oure lordes brest as the childe into the moder barme, with all our entent and with all our mynd knowand our febilness and our grete ned, knowing his everlasting goodnes and his blisfull love, only sekeing to him for salvation, clevand to with sekir troste – that drede that bringith us into this werking, it is kinde, gracious, good and true. And all that is contraries to this, either it is wronge, or it is medlid with wronge.[111]

Julian rehearses the catechetical and penitential teaching on dread but concludes that the only dread which is true is that which causes the soul to recognise its need of God. Having highlighted the distorting and blinding effects of 'doubtful dread' which traps the soul within

[109] Allen (ed.), *English Writings of Richard Rolle*, p. 91, ll. 79-81 & p. 92, l. 90. Other examples include: Colledge and Chadwick (eds.), *Remedies Against Temptations*, p. 232.
[110] Windeatt (ed.), *The Book of Margery Kempe*, p. 54, l. 195.
[111] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 90.

a sense of sinfulness and prevents her from knowing the love of the Lord, in this passage Julian has brought the soul to a realisation of their inadequacy to deal with sin. In the final section we demonstrate how Julian moves the struggling soul from focussing on the question of 'How do I deal with sin' to the way in which her showings reiterate the penitential and catechetical teaching of the church that it is God who deals with sin.

Part 3 – 'he is oure medicine'

L has been described as a 'corrective text' which attempts to 'override the extreme demoralization, scrupulosity and despair that was the Black Death's legacy to her age'.[112] To these 'Christians torn and tossed by sins they cannot control', Van Engen writes, Julian's revelation of love shows a God who is not angry and keeps no record of wrongs, whose love 'responds to sin with mercy, raising the mournful back to God'.[113] For those in the fourteenth century who were crushed by the fearful effects of sin and its penitential repercussions, a vision of love may have been reassuring, nevertheless it was essentially insufficient for dealing with the day-to-day problem of how to handle sin.

In this final section I demonstrate the extent to which Julian addresses the late fourteenth-century penitential concerns raised within her text: namely, the inability of the confessional encounter to alleviate a sense of sinfulness and dread within the penitent. I argue that her remedy is not simply a revelatory disclosure of love which seeks to 'outweigh or outflank church doctrine', as Van Engen argues, but is rather a visionary reassurance to the struggling

[112] Quoted from Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, p. 135; Nuth makes the same point in 'Two Medieval Soteriologies: Anselm of Canterbury and Julian of Norwich', *Theological Studies,* 53 (1992), pp. 611-645 [hereafter Nuth, 'Two Medieval Soteriologies']. Here at p. 621. Van Engen uses the quotation in Van Engen, 'Shifting Perspectives', p. 13.
[113] Van Engen, 'Shifting Perspectives', p. 13.

penitent that it is through the daily devotional practices of the church that Christ's saving work of love is accessible.[114] This is evident in the way Julian articulates her 'shewing' in the penitential terms of the late fourteenth-century vernacular manuals and moral treatises. Hence, L can indeed be read as a 'corrective' text, but only in so far as it seeks to shift the perspective from how the penitent deals with their own sin through the mechanism of confession, to a reassurance of the way in which the process of penance is the 'means' by which God deals with the ravaging effects of sin.

In order to demonstrate this process I focus on Julian's use of three terms which unfolds the penitential significance of her revelation. These terms are: treasure, holy mother church and remedy, each of which has its basis in the catechetical and ecclesiological teaching of holy church. However, in the hands of Julian they come to have a depth of meaning which addresses the devotional issues that surrounded the church's mechanism for handling sin and bring a new visionary understanding for the penitent of the process of penance itself. The first to be considered is the imagery of treasure.

'a tresoure in the erth'

Julian uses the language of treasure, or treasured, seven times within L.[115] Separately, they relate to the context in which they are found; however, together they form a sequential development of the term through which Julian reveals that it is Christ's Passion which has dealt with sin, and its merits which are accessible to the penitent within the sacrament of

[114] *Ibid.*, p. 1.
[115] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love,* chapter 41, p. 43; chapter 51, p. 58; chapter 56, p. 67; chapter 57, p. 69; chapter 75, p. 91; chapter 86, p. 102.

penance. In the late fourteenth century the image of treasure had theological and ecclesiological connotations in relation to the saving work of Christ.[116] With its roots in Anselm's doctrine of atonement, it was used to refer to the meritorious qualities of Christ's precious Passion which bestowed pardon on the penitent soul and released them from the debt of pain.[117] Lying at the heart of Anselm's theory is the notion that Christ makes satisfaction for sin. Walter Hilton, a contemporary of Julian's, reflects the popular rendering of this theology in his *Scale of Perfection* when he writes:

> For oure Lord Jhesu Crist, Goddis sone, bicam man, and thorugh His precious deeth that He suffride made amendis to the Fadir of hevene for mannys gilt. And that mygt He wel doon, for He was God, and He oughte not for Hymsilf, but for as mykil as He was man born of the same kynde that Adam was that first trespacede. And so, though He ought not for His owen persone, for Himsilf myght not synne, nevertheless He ought it of His free wille for the trespas of mankynde, the which kynde He took for savacioun of man of His endeles merci.[118]

In his synopsis of atonement Hilton encapsulates the central tenet of the doctrine which emphasized that only Christ is able to deal with the repercussions of sin. Based on the feudal sense of justice, Christ as true God and true man is able to restore the honour due to the lord who has been affronted by the scandal of sin. He not only pays the price for sin but, in his death, makes an offering which surpasses the original offence, 'and syn that was the beste

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[116] Shaffern summarizes the scholastic background to the image of the treasury of merit to describe the meritorious nature of Christ's death which was held by the church and from which the penitent received remission from the debt of sin: Robert W. Shaffern, 'The Medieval Theology of Indulgences', *Promissory Notes on the Treasury of Merits: Indulgences in Late Medieval Europe* (Boston & Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 11-36 [hereafter Shaffern, 'The Medieval Theology of Indulgences']. Here at pp. 23-25.

[117] For the Latin text of *Cur Deus Homo* see Anselm of Canterbury, *Opera Omnia,* ed. by F.S. Schmitt, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1938-61) and for an English translation: Anselm of Canterbury: *The Major Works*, ed. by Brian Davies (Oxford: University Press, 1998). For a synopsis of Anselm's 'satisfaction theory' see Gustav Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, trans. by A.G. Herbert (New York: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 84-92 and R.W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: University Press, 1991), pp. 205-227.

[118] Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. 2, chapter 2, p. 136, ll. 59-65.

manere deede and most worthi that evere was doon, therefore was it resonable that the synne of mankynde shulde be forgyven'.[119]

The similarities and differences between Julian's theology and Anselm's doctrine of atonement have been commented upon by Baker and Nuth.[120] One of the essential differences is the way in which Julian portrays Christ directing his satisfaction towards herself rather than God. In chapter 22 the lord asks Julian

> "Art thou wele payd that I suffrid for thee?" I sayd: "Ya good lorde, gramercy. Ya good lord, blissid mot thou be!" Than seyd Iesu, our kinde lord: "If thou art payde, I am payde. It is a ioy, a blis, an endles lekyng to me that ever suffrid I passion for the; and if I myht suffre more, I wold suffre more."[121]

As Julian reflects on these words in chapter 23, she comes to see the meritorious act of Christ on the cross as a gift which is given by the giver to 'please and solace' him whom he loves. It is primarily an act of satisfaction which is to aid the penitent rather than to appease an angry God. Hence she portrays Christ's motivation as an act of compassion at the effects of sin. Traditionally, it was through the church that the treasure of Christ's atoning blood was made available to the penitent.[122] The *Pricke of Conscience*, for instance, describes the church as the storehouse of the meritorious treasure of Christ which 'es gadirde for nede of pardon, Of vertu of Crestes passion'.[123] Along with the prayers and deeds of the faithful, which are the fruit of the work of the church, Christ's saving Passion is held within the

[119] *Ibid.*, p. 137, ll. 75-77.
[120] Nuth, 'Two Medieval Soteriologies', pp. 611-645; Baker, *From Vision to Book*, pp. 92-106.
[121] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 24.
[122] The canonist Hostiensis describes Christ's blood as 'the stored treasury in the casket of the Church, of which the Church possess the keys', in Hostiensis, *Summa aurea*, quoted from Shaffern, 'The Medieval Theology of Indulgences', p. 25.
[123] Hanna and Wood (eds.), *Pricke of Conscience*, p .107, ll. 3820-1.

church and 'swa large es Haly Kirkes tresor, /þat it es ynogh to pay þarfor /And for alle þe paynes þat dett may be /Of alle þe men of Cristante'.[124]

It is this theology which lies behind Julian's development of the image of treasure within chapter 51 of L. In this extended chapter Julian recounts a vision she was given in answer to her desire to know how God views sin. The *exemplum* she received perplexed Julian for nearly twenty years and has since fascinated scholars.[125] She was given an interpretive tool by which to 'read' the vision when bidden 'to taken hede to all the propertes and the condition' that were shown, both the outward form and the inward sense. Following the model of biblical exegesis, Bauerschmidt describes these two interpretive aspects of the *exemplum* as the *sensus litteralis* and the *sensus mysticus*.[126] However, whilst an allegorical reading of the example enables the reader to see that 'the event of the incarnation reconfigures the fall of humanity, and the sufferings of the cross transform the sufferings of sin', such a schematic approach to Julian's text is unable to take into account the dual perspective of temporal and eternal without running the risk of collapsing one into the other.[127]

Both Aers and Turner wrestle with this hermeneutic problem. Turner argues that the example conflates into one narrative the Fall of Adam, and the Incarnation and Redemption by Christ,

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[124] *Ibid.*, pp. 109-10, ll. 3922-25.
[125] Many scholars have focussed on the example in an attempt to understand Julian's soteriology, including: Baker, *From Vision to Book*, chapter 4; Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich: Mystic and Theologian*, pp. 192-200; Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ*, ch. 4; Aers, *Salvation and Sin*, pp. 165-70; Turner, *Julian of Norwich, Theologian*, ch. 4; Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, pp. 27-33; Hide, *Gifted Origins to Graced Fulfilment*, chapter 6; Kerrie Hide, 'The Parable of the Lord and the Servant: A Soteriology for our Times', *Pacifica*, 10 (1997), pp. 53-69; Marilyn McCord Adams, 'Sin as Uncleanness', *Philosophical Perspectives, vol. 5: Philosophy of Religion* (1995), pp. 1-27; Glasscoe, *Games of Faith*, pp. 246-55; M. L. del Mastro, 'Juliana of Norwich: Parable of the Lord and Servant – Radical Orthodoxy', *Mystic's Quarterly*, 14 (1988), pp. 84-93; Nuth, 'Two Medieval Soteriologies', pp. 631-2; Abbott, *Julian of Norwich Autobiography and Theology*, pp. 80-90.
[126] Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ*, p. 142.
[127] Quotation from *Ibid.*, p. 142.

thereby releasing the event of salvation from a historically contingent causality into a single divine eternally willed action.[128] For Aers, this eschatological understanding of salvation history is unable to take into account the freedom of human unfaithfulness and repentance.[129] To overcome this problem Bauerschmidt helpfully applies von Balthasar's notion of 'theo-drama' to Julian's text.[130] This drama takes seriously the interplay between the eternal and the particular, between the servant as Adam and the servant as Christ, between outward and inward meanings, and between the common teaching of holy church and revelation. It is through the playing out of the possibilities which are created by the interplay of these 'dynamically related poles' that Bauerschmidt sees Julian come to understand how the example answers her concerns about sin.[131] When applied to the development of the image of treasure within the long text this 'dramatic' hermeneutic reveals a dynamic interplay between the divine and the particular, between Christ's saving work and the experience of forgiveness encountered through penance.

The image of the treasure emerges out of Julian's meditative attention to 'all the pointes and the propertes' of the actions of the servant. Scholars have often remarked on the manner in which Julian's account of the Fall is motivated by love and not disobedience.[132] However, in her meditation on this event, Julian focuses not so much on the impulse of love, but rather on the action that resulted from this love, doing 'that thing which was his wille and his wurshippe'. Whilst she does not make it explicit, the outward clothing of 'a continuent labourer and an hard traveller of long time' is connected with this work which the servant undertakes. The nature of the servant's labours becomes clearer in the following section where Julian writes:

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[128] Turner, *Julian of Norwich, Theologian*, pp. 117-9.
[129] Aers, *Salvation and Sin*, pp. 169-70.
[130] Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ*, pp. 162-173.
[131] *Ibid.*, p. 172.
[132] Nuth, 'Two Medieval Soteriologies', p. 629; Baker, *From Vision to Book*, pp. 89-90.

> Ther was a tresor in the erth which the lord lovid. I mervelid and thowt what it myte ben. And I was answered in my understondyng: "It is a mete which is lovesome and plesing to the lord." For I saw the lord sitten as a man, and I saw neither mete nor drynke wherwith to servyn hym.[133]

Scholars have similarly wondered what the treasure might be. Turning to scripture, both Colledge and Walsh and Watson and Jenkins have discerned an allusion to the parable of the kingdom and the treasure hidden in the field, whilst other scholars have looked within Julian's texts to find references to fallen humanity and eternal life.[134] Julian's question is answered in her vision of understanding. It is a 'mete' or food, which the lord does not necessarily need but desires. The work of the servant is to be that of the gardener and 'delvyn and dykyn' in the ground until the 'mete' is prepared as the lord desires it.[135] He is then to present it before the lord and serve it to him. In this medley of images, played out before a static divine presence, Julian focuses not so much on what the treasure is, but on how it is sought, propagated and prepared. The images shift and intertwine in the 'dramatic' interplay between the servant as Adam and Christ so that they simultaneously allude to the punishment of Adam for his sin, the cultivation of the virtues and Eucharistic references to Christ's body and blood.[136] As the lord sits and waits, the treasure which the servant unearths and offers through his toil and sweat upon the hard cross, for Julian, is the loving gift that pays the debt of punishment and is available through the sacraments. Interestingly, unlike the

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[133] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 58.
[134] Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, Part 2, p. 529, n. 184 and Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 280, n. 157. The parable of the hidden treasure can be found in Matthew 13:44. In her analysis of Julian's soteriology, Nuth describes the treasure of chapter 51 as 'all humanity which is not fit to be in the company of the lord'. The servant's task is to return this treasure restored and renewed. She describes it as a work of recreation in Nuth, 'Two Medieval Soteriologies', p. 632; this view is also held by Hide in *Gifted Origins to Graced Fulfilment*, p. 124 and Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ*, p. 144; Bradley argues that it is eternal life in Ritamary Bradley, *Julian's Way: A Practical Commentary on Julian of Norwich* (London: Harper Collins, 1992), p. 125.
[135] For the medieval iconography of the gardener as everyman, Christ cultivating the virtue of the church and God planting Christ, the tree of love within the soul see: Glasscoe, *Games of Faith*, p. 250 and Francis (ed.), *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, p. 96; Baker draws a comparison between Julian's gardener and the tree of charity in *Piers Plowman* in Baker, *From Vision to Book*, p. 103.
[136] Glasscoe, *Games of Faith*, p. 250.

Pricke of Conscience, Julian does not locate this meritorious treasure within any ecclesiastical forum or authority. Instead, through the interplay of images of the treasure of Christ's death and the 'mete' of penance, Julian visually interlinks the saving work of Christ on the cross with the devotional act of confession itself. This can be seen by focussing on the pastoral repurcussions of the image of the meat which is offered to the lord.

The term 'mete' had a variety of meanings within Middle English and was used to describe flesh along with a range of foods, including bread, and fruit. Within the *Doctrine of the Hert*, the later translation of the popular thirteenth-century text *De doctrina cordis*, 'mete' refers specifically to the sacrament of penance.[137] In the first chapter the nun is instructed to prepare her heart to receive her Lord. Of the four tasks that are necessary, once she had cleaned her house with the broom of dread, one is to set out a 'mete-table' of penance on which she is to present herself as a feast to the Lord. This is to be done with 'gladnes and meknes' so that it may please the Lord but also in 'bisines and quyknes, that thou be not dul ne slow ne unlusty in doing of thi penance.'[138] Thus the penitent will be restored to 'the heritage of heven that was in maner lost fro the by thi synne.'[139] *The Doctrine of the Hert* uses the sustained image of the meat table to show how the soul is to approach her penance as a gift and offering to God, rather than a punishment for sin.

As a penitent who must handle the consequences of sin on a daily basis, Julian's servant in chapter 51 sweats and toils as a penitential gardener to bring forth the 'mete' of penance, which is then offered to the Lord in penitential devotion. Julian's interpretation of the servant

[137] For a study of the imagery of food within *The Doctrine of the Hert* see Vincent Gillespie, 'Meat, Metaphor and Mysticism: Cooking the Books in *The Doctrine of the Hert*' in *A Companion to The Doctrine of the Hert: The Middle English Translation and its Latin and European Contexts*, ed. by Denis Renevey and Christiania Whitehead (Exeter: University Press, 2010), pp. 131-158.
[138] Whitehead, Renevey and Mouron (eds.), *The Doctrine of the Hert*, p. 12, l. 269 & 276-77. For Latin text see *De doctrina cordis*, 1st edition (Paris, 1506).
[139] *Ibid.*, p. 13, ll. 301-2.

as the penitent who struggles with sin shifts as she comes to realise that she looks, not upon a sinful soul, but upon Christ who prepares the precious treasure of his own flesh upon the cross in satisfaction for sinful humanity. The preparation of this treasure within chapter 51 resonates with the language of chapter 12, in which Julian expands her vision in S to describe the effects of Christ's blood as it flows from his wounds upon the cross to wash away sin:

> Beholde and se. The pretious plenty of his dereworthy blode descendid downe into helle and braste her bands and deliveryd al that were there which longyd to the curte of hevyn. The pretious plenty of his dereworthy blode overflowith al erth, and is redye to wash al creaturs of synne which be of gode will, have ben, and shal ben. The pretious plenty of his dereworthy blode ascendid up into hevyn to the blissid body of our lord Iesus Christe, and there is in him bleding and praying for us to the Father - and is and shall be as long as it nedith.[140]

Through her repetition of the word 'precious' Julian not only reflects the popular devotion to the wounds of Christ but also the idea of the treasure that Christ's blood imparts to the sinful.[141] Just as the blood of Christ flows down to wash all creatures clean as well as up to heaven within his body, so Christ the servant makes 'swete flodes to runne' and prepares the meat of his flesh to present to the Lord at the banquet of the Eucharist.[142] As Walker Bynum rightly points out, Julian's image of the overflowing of blood is a startling departure from the limited metaphor of the droplets of blood paying for sin.[143] In contrast Julian's image is of a flood of blood that gives life. Through her use of the ecclesiological and penitential language of treasure Julian moves from considering the penitent's experience of handling sin to focus on the extent to which God lavishly deals with its repercussions in the meritorious blood of Christ on the cross.

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[140] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 15.
[141] Julian refers to the feast of devotion to the wounds of Christ in chapter six of the long text: 'we pray to God for his holy flesh and for his presious blood, his holy passion, his dereworthy death and worshipful woundes'. For the late-medieval importance of the devotion to the wounds see: Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 238-48; R.W. Pfaff, *New Liturgical Feasts in Later Medieval England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 84-133.
[142] The connection between the wounds of Christ and the sacraments is brought out by Nichols, *Seeable Signs*, pp. 9-18.
[143] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 207.

In her subsequent development of the image of 'treasure' and 'treasured', Julian unfolds the way in which the 'vertues and gyfts are tresured to us in Ihesu Christ' and made accessible to the struggling penitent through the life of virtue and the sacraments of the church. In chapter 57 Julian describes how mercy and grace work through faith within the soul to restore it when it falls through sin. Julian thereby turns from the theology of Christ's saving work and nature to the experience of the penitent soul who constantly is unable to handle their sin. She identifies faith as the means by which 'comen the seven sacraments ech folowing other in order as God hath ordeyned hem to us, and al manner of vertues' and through which mercy and grace work within the penitential and catechetical life to address the problem of daily sin. Instead of rejecting the teachings and mechanisms of the church Julian asserts their importance to the stuggling penitent. She concludes the chapter by stating that we 'ben his helpers, gevyng to him al our entendyng, lerand his loris, kep[yng] his lawes, desirand that al be done that he doith, truely trosting in hym'.[144] It is through the sacraments of the church and the catechetical life of virtue that the treasury of Christ's gifts and virtues are made present to the penitent soul.

Through her development of the penitential and ecclesiological language of treasure Julian thereby shines the light of faith onto the doubt of those who were struggling in the darkness of their sense of guilt even after confession that through their penitential participation in the sacrament they freely received the treasure of Christ's saving forgiveness. For Julian, the extent to which this penitential and ecclesiastical forum was an encounter with Christ himself will be explored in the second image.

[144] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 70.

‘oure moder holy church, that is Crist Jhesu’

In his poem *Piers Plowman* William Langland presents the reader with two allegorical representations of holy church which, as Barbara Newman points out, frame Will’s quest for Dowel.[145] The first is ‘a lovely lady of leere in lynnen yclothed’ who descends from the castle of Truth to instruct the pilgrim in the difference between Truth and Falsehood. In his figure of Lady Holy Church, Langland sets up an authoritative voice and moral discourse that forms a framework on which the rest of the poem is subsequently built.[146] Yet, whilst Lady Holy Church seeks to instruct a negligent and dull-witted Will on the nature of Truth, she is unable to accompany him on his search for ‘kynde knowynge’ and instead leaves him as she finds him, metaphorically still sleeping. It is not until the end of the poem that holy church reappears. No longer is she a beautiful lady who mediates truth through instruction, instead she has become a place where her teaching is lived out. Within the allegorical image of Piers Plowman’s barn, the church is primarily a penitential place, where the faithful take refuge from the assaults of Pride and his denizens, seeking the healing of penance under the guidance of Conscience. However, Unity Holy Church has been infiltrated. Unable to cope with the harsh and inadequate penitential plasters and medicines that the parson has applied to Contrition’s wounds, Conscience has invited Friar *Penetrans-domos* to wrap his wounds in ‘a pyrvee paiement’ till

> Contricion hadde clene foryeten to crye and to wepe,
> And wake for hise wikked werkes as he was wont to doone.
> For confort of his confessour contricion he lafte,
> That is the soverayneste salve for alle[s] kynnes synnes.[147]

[145] Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, p. 19.
[146] James Simpson, *Piers Plowman: An Introduction to the B-Text* (Longman: London and New York, 1990), p. 26.
[147] Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, p. 263, ll. 370-3.

As Unity Holy Church crumbles with this bewitching ointment, Conscience abandons the barn to become a pilgrim and search for Piers Plowman who alone can destroy Pride.

It has been argued that Julian holds a similar critical attitude to holy church and her orthodox statements are merely a posturing that enables her to escape accusations of heresy.[148] However, I argue, in this section, that unlike Conscience, Julian does not abandon temporal holy church neither does she set up a mystical ideal into which the devout may retreat.[149] Instead, through her development of the image of holy mother church, Julian addresses the crumbling confidence in the confessional encounter by revealing the extent to which Christ is present within the devotional life of holy mother church. In this way, Julian gives a contemplative depth to the sacramental teaching that the act of confession is ultimately an encounter with the person of Christ himself.

It is interesting that Julian's first use of the image of 'mother' is not in relation to Christ, but rather to His church.[150] In the face of seemingly irreconcilable differences between her revelation and the teaching of holy church regarding the blame of sin, chapter 46 of L concludes with an humble submission to 'yeele me to my moder holy church as a simple child owyth'. The term 'holy mother church' or *Ecclesia mater* was commonly used to

[148] Nuth explains Julian's protestations to orthodoxy as a response to the threat of continental heresy, in Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, pp. 19-22; whilst Staley argues that, in calling herself a 'child of the church, Julian defuses' any response that might link her to Lollardy, in Staley, 'Julian of Norwich and the Late Fourteenth-Century Crisis of Authority', p. 146; Watson similarly describes Julian's statements about the church as 'gestures of obedience': Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change', p. 851. Scholars who argue against this view include: Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich: Mystic and Theologian*, p. 101; Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ*, p. 118 and Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist: Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), pp. 132-33.

[149] Bauerschmidt similarly argues that Julian 'will not let go of the church as a visible, historical entity in which she can dwell in unity with her fellow Christians', in Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ*, p. 109.

[150] Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich: Mystic and Theologian*, p. 119.

describe the sacramental nature of the church.[151] With its roots in the writings of Cyprian, the idea of church as Mother was set alongside God as Father, to emphasize the notion that salvation was only possible through the church.[152] Cyprian's writings focus on the work of the maternal church as the means by which the divine light of God and his saving works were mediated to his children. Thus, in later iconography, *Ecclesia* is not only created from the streaming blood and water that flowed from Christ's pierced side but she also catches their saving drops in order to dispense them in the form of the sacraments of the Eucharist and Baptism.[153] Thus *Ecclesia mater* comforted and nurtured her children, suckling them with the food of faith and the sacraments.[154] This imagery is found within the heart of the fourteenth century catechism. John Gaytryge's English version of Archbishop Thoresby's 1357 Latin Instructions, known as the *Lay Folk's Catechism*, picks up Pecham's interpretation of the third commandment to honour thy father and mother as referring, not only to our earthly parents, but also to

> our gastly fadirs that has hede of us,
> And techis us how to lif til hele of our saules.
> And til our gastly modir, that is halikirke
> To be buxom thar-to, and saue the right of it,
> For it is modir til all that cristenly lyfes,
> And alswa til ilk man that worshipfull is,
> for to do worship aftir that it is.[155]

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[151] Marina Warner, *Alone of all her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (Oxford: University Press, 1976, new ed. 2013), p. 197.

[152] *De catholicae ecclesiae unitate*, 5-7, in *Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina*, vol. 3, ed. by M. Bevenot (Turnholt: Brepols, 1972), pp. 252: 117- 254: 176.

[153] Emile Mâle, *The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century*, trans. by Dora Hussey (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), pp. 187-90 and referred to in Abbott, 'His Body, the Church', p. 12.

[154] See sculpture by Giovanni Pisano on the pulpit of Pisa Duomo (1302-11) and illustrated in Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, p. 16. See also Hilton's description of the simple souls who 'aren brought forth in the bosom of Holi Chirche and norischid with the sacrament as children aren fed with mylk' in Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection*, Book II, chapter 10, p. 151, ll. 443-4.

[155] *The Lay Folks Catechism*, p. 44, ll. 200-206. Pecham's Latin version is less penitential in nature: '*ut pater sit prælatus Ecclesiæ mediates vel immediatus; mater autem Ecclesia, cujus filii sunt filii Catholici universi*' in *The Lay Folks Catechism*, p. 43, l. 85 and translated as 'our father is also any prelate of the church, mediate or immediate, and our mother is the church itself whose children are every Catholic person' by John Shinners in Shinners and Dohar (eds.), *Pastors and the Care of Souls*, p. 129. *Speculum Vitae* in the *Somme le Roi* tradition similarly describes holy church as 'Goddis spouse þat we suld our moder halde' who nourishes her children with

Langland's image of Lady Holy Church resonates with this portrayal of holy mother church, the authoritative figure who teaches where to seek for Truth.[156]

In many ways, Julian's tone of submission to 'my moder holy church' suggests a similar 'act of obedience to ecclesiastical authority' much like that of the dutiful 'doughter' who lowers her eyes from a contemplative gaze and fixes them upon the crucifix when bidden to by her priest.[157] However, as scholars have noted, this tone of submission to ecclesiastical authority is uncharacteristic of Julian's more confident and self-assured later text, where statements of capitulation have invariably become assertions of orthodoxy.[158] Even the title of 'Daughter' by which she is officially addressed has been removed in chapter 3, implying that Julian's statement of submission is not simply a resignation to ecclesiastical authority in the light of her conflicting revelation, but rather, a humble acknowledgment that the soul's relationship with 'moder holy church' is that of a 'simple child' to 'oure very moder Jhesu'.[159]

Julian's identification of holy mother church with the person of Christ begins in chapter 52. Reflecting on the vision of 'Goddes son, in peace with his lowid wife', which concludes the previous chapter, Julian describes the Trinitarian way in which God relates to the soul:

> And thus I saw that God enioyeth that he is our fader, God enioyeth that he is our moder, and God enioyeth that he is our very spouse, and our soule his lovid wife'.[160]

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milk from her paps as our earthly mothers do within his interpretation of *Qui es* in the *Pater noster*, in Hanna (ed.), *Speculum Vitae*, p. 34, ll. 915-930.

[156] Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, p. 10, ll. 12-26.

[157] Abbott, 'His Body, the Church', pp. 2-3.

[158] On the increased confidence of the long text see: Windeatt, 'Julian of Norwich and her Audience', pp. 1-17; Tugwell, *Ways of Imperfection*, pp. 187-207; Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*, pp. 165-183; and specifically in relation to the church: Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, p. 17.

[159] The term 'yeld' has a variety of meanings including repay, give back, surrender as well as yield or submit.

[160] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 61.

In this passage Julian reveals the intimate relationship between the soul and the Trinitarian Godhead. In many ways we have left the institutional language of holy mother church far behind and instead been caught up in a mystical vision of the delight of God in his relationship with the soul. As God delights in being our Father, so he delights in being our mother and our spouse.[161] The biblical and patristic heritage of Julian's association of the image of motherhood with the second person of the Trinity has been well documented.[162] In the chapters that follow, this language comes to the fore as Julian explores Christ's work of restoring and keeping as the property of the motherhood of Christ. However, whilst Julian's description of the imagery of motherhood is devoid of any direct reference to the church, her initial use of the title mother in relation to Christ is grounded within the Biblical imagery of the mystical nature of the church as the bride of Christ. God delights that he is 'our very spouse' and the reciprocal relationship of the soul to God is that of a 'lovid wife'. There is a sense, therefore, that Julian's description of Christ as 'our moder' is not so much a vision divorced from the church, but rather one that arises from it and is set within the context of 'holy moder church' in order to reveal the extent to which the church is holy mother Christ in both its work and in nature.

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[161] The significance of associating the motherhood to the second person of the Trinity has been explored by: Hide, *Gifted Origins to Grace Fulfillment*, pp. 131-82; Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich: Mystic and Theologian*, p. 116.

[162] Ritamary Bradley, 'The Motherhood Theme in Julian of Norwich', *Fourteenth Century English Mystics Newsletter*, 2 (1976): pp. 25-30; Ritamary Bradley, 'Julian of Norwich: Writer and Mystic' in Paul E. Szarmach (ed.), *An Introduction to the Medieval Mystics of Europe* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), pp. 209-210; Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, pp. 112-129; Jennifer P. Heimmel, *'God is our Mother:' Julian of Norwich and the Medieval Image of Christian Feminine Divinity*, Salzburg Studies in English Literature, Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies, 92:5 (Salzburg: Insitut Für Anglisttik und Amerikanistik Universität Salzburg, 1982), pp. 4-49 [hereafter Heimmel, *'God is our Mother'*]; Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich: Mystic and Theologian*, pp. 116-118; Patricia Mary Vinje, *An Understanding of Love According to the Anchoress Julian of Norwich* (Salzburg: Insitut Für Anglisttik und Amerikanistik Universität Salzburg, 1983), p. 153.

It has been argued that Julian's understanding of the motherhood of the church is an extension of the motherhood of Christ.[163] However, in chapter 60 Julian does not simply locate Christ's 'moderhed in werking' within the work of the church, but reveals the extent to which Christ is present within holy mother church. In an extensive passage, on the work of motherhood, Julian shows how Christ is our true mother. For he

> susteynith us within himselfe in love, and traveled into the full tyme that he wold suffre the sharpist throwes and the grevousest peynes that ever were or ever shall be, and dyed at the last.[164]

The saving work of Christ's incarnation and death upon the cross is described as a process of gestation and birthing which restores humanity.[165] However, His work as a mother does not end there. Because of the debt of love, Christ shows a continuing responsibility to feed His children. Within the imagery of holy mother church it was the church that suckled her child with the sacraments, acting as a mediator for Christ's saving love. Drawing upon a long heritage of literature that described Christ as nurturing his children with the food of his own blood and water, Julian states that it is 'oure precious moder Jhesu' who 'fede us with himselfe'.[166] In the words of Christ which follow, Julian merges these two images together as she locates the saving work of mother Christ within the preaching, teaching and sacramental life of holy mother church:

> "I it am that holy church prechith the and techith the"; that is to sey: "All the helth and the lif of sacraments, al the vertue and grace of my word, all the godness that is ordeynid in holy church to the, I it am."[167]

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[163] Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ*, p. 110; Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, p. 63; Hide, *Gifted Origins to Grace Fulfillment*, p. 147.
[164] Glasscoe (ed), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 73.
[165] Tarjei Park, *Selfhood and 'Gostly Menying' in some Middle English Mystics: Semiotic Approaches to Contemplative Theology*, Toronto Studies in Theology (New York: Edwin Mellen, 2003), pp. 171-2.
[166] For this heritage see Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, pp. 132-34 and Heimmel, *'God is our Mother',* pp. 10-11, 16-24.
[167] Glasscoe (ed), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 73.

For Julian there is no sense that the church simply mediates this saving work, like the lesser goddesses of Newman's writing, but rather that within holy mother church, Mother Christ himself is present and the mechanisms of the church are the means by which his saving work of motherhood is realised.[168]

The sacramental implications of this vision come to the fore in Julian's contemplation of Christ's wounds. As Duffy has shown, devotion to the wounds of Christ was popular and profound in late-medieval England.[169] The wounds were closely connected with the sacraments, to which they allegedly gave power.[170] Mirk expresses this theological understanding when he writes: 'to hys blys us lede/ þat for us on rode gan blede / *Septem sacramenta ecclesia*'.[171] Likewise, in art this link between the seven sacraments and the wounds of Christ was expressed by images of ribbons of blood emanating from the five wounds in Christ's hands, feet and side, which were related to standard representations of the seven sacraments. For instance, in the late-medieval *vulneral* windows, a shaft of red glass, representing Christ's blood, falls upon the *sacramentum et res* of the sacrament.[172] Thus, in the windows of Doddiscombesleigh church in Devon (see figure 2 below) a red beam of light rests upon the head of the priest whose hand is raised in the declaration of absolution over the contrite penitent who kneels before him. As this iconography depicts, it is in and through the sacraments that *Ecclesia mater* dispenses the precious drops of Christ's saving blood.

[168] Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, p. 19.
[169] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 243-46.
[170] See Aquinas *Summa Theologiae*, 111. Q. 62, a.b. The connection between the sacraments and Christ's wounds is highlighted by Nichols, *Seeable Signs*, pp. 9-18.
[171] In one MS of Mirk's *Instructions*, quoted by Nichols, *Seeable Signs*, p. 15.
[172] Nichols, *Seeable Signs*, p.18.

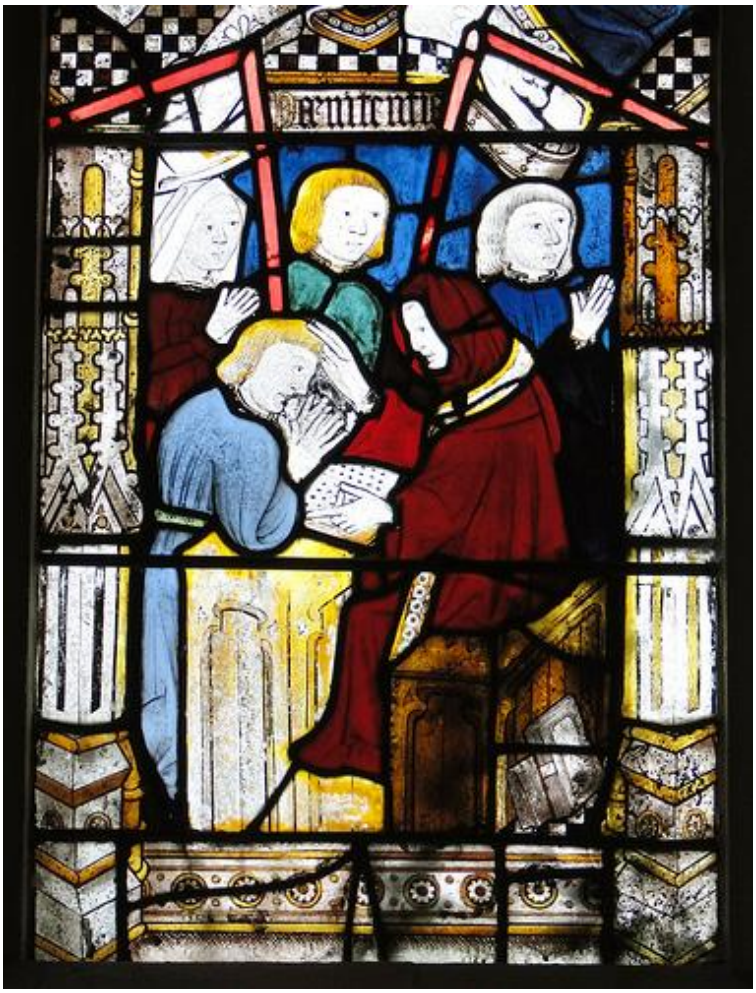

Figure 2: The penance panel from the seven sacrament window in St Michael's church, Doddiscombsleigh

Central to the devotion to Christ's wounds was their medicinal power to heal the wound of sin. In the *Ancrene Wisse* the anchoress is not only bidden to kneel in front of her crucifix and, in memory of the five wounds, to give thanks for the medicine of salvation, but also when temptation comes, to

> Flih to his wunden. Muchel he luvede us the lette makien swucche thurles in him for-te huden us in. Creop in ham with thi thoht – ne beoth ha al opene? Ant with his deorewurthe blod biblodge thin heorte. **Ingredere in petram, abscondere fossa humo.** "Ga into the stan," seith the prophete, "ant hud te I the dolven eorthe" – thet is, i the wunden of ure Laverdes flesch, the wes as i-dolven with the dulle neiles, as he i the Sawter longe vore seide…..He him-seolf cleopeth the toward teose wunden:

> **Columba mea, in foraminibus petre, in cavernis macerie**. "Mi culvre", he seith, "cum, hud te i mine limen thurles, i the hole of mi side." Muche luve he cudde to his leove culvre, thet he swuch hudles makede.[173]

> Flee to his wounds. Greatly did He love us who allowed such holes to be pierced in Himself that we might hide within them. Creep into them, in thought. Are they not wide open? And with His Precious blood cover your heart. *Enter thou into the rock and hide thee in the pit*. "Go into the rock," says the prophet, "and hide yourself in the pit which has been dug in the earth," that is, in the wounds of Our Lord's flesh which was as it were dug with the blunt nails as He had said long before in the Psalter….He himself calls you to these wounds. *My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall*. "My dove," He says, "come and hide thyself in the holes in my limbs, in the hole in my side." Great love He showed to His dear dove in making such apertures.[174]

For the anchoress, it is devotion and contemplation of the wounds of Christ that enables her to overcome the assaults of the devil. As Duffy points out, within the later Book of Hours invocations to each of the wounds could not only inflame the soul to love but could also act as an antidote to certain sins.[175] This moral dimension to the ecstatic entry into Christ's wounds is found in the fourteenth-century free translation of *Stimulus amoris*, entitled *The Prickyng of Love*.[176] Adapting the original text, the writer describes how he

> entrid in him with myn eȝen opened me thouȝte þat myn yȝen were filled ful of his blod & so i ȝeode in gropande til I come to þe innerest of his herte and þer I wonne and soche mete as he vseth I vse & drynke of þe self drynke. Charite is bothe mete and drynke.[177]

The writer goes on to exhort the reader to enter into Christ's wounds where he would find the medicines of the virtues that could 'hele the and restore þe'.[178]

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[173] Hasenfratz (ed.), *Ancrene Wisse*, pp. 302-3, l. 1386-1392 & 1395-1399.
[174] Salu (trans.), *The Ancrene Riwle*, pp. 129-30.
[175] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 244.
[176] The way in which the author of *The Prickyng of Love* adapts the original thirteenth-century text in order to make it more moral is explored by Michelle Karnes in *Imagination, Meditation and Cognition in the Middle Ages* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. 225-236.
[177] Harold Kane (ed.), *The Prickyng of Love*, Salzburg Studies in English Literature under the direction of Prof. Erwin A. Slürzl, Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies, ed. by Dr. James Hogg, 92:10 (Univesität Salzburg: Institut für anglistik und amerikanistik, 1983), p. 9, ll. 16-20.
[178] *Ibid.*, p. 11, l. 10.

For Julian, Christ's open wound, in his side, similarly leads to an ecstatic beholding of the saving love of the Godhead which gives 'gostely sekernesse of endlesse blisse' but it is also the place in which the whole church is hidden and enclosed, not just the solitary contemplative. In contrast to the blood which flows from Christ's wounds, Julian's contemplation of the sacramental nature of holy mother church recalls her tenth revelation in which she is led by the 'good lorde' to look within his wounded side. There she sees a 'faire delectabil place, and large enow for al mankynd that shal be save'.[179] The wound, out of which Holy Lady *Ecclesia* was born and from which the sacraments flowed, has become a place in which the community of the faithful are located. Julian's revelation brings holy mother church within the wound of Holy Mother Christ. Abbott argues that Julian is thus brought to 'a new and dynamic relation with the church as an essentially spiritual reality, Christ's mystical body'.[180] In many ways this is true, except that the significance of this revelation for Julian is not so much a new understanding of the spiritual nature of the church, as a revelation of the surety of salvation which it brings. Enclosed within the saving wound of mother Christ, holy mother church becomes for Julian the place in which the Godhead is not only beheld but also where 'the ioyes of hevyn, with gostly sekirnesse of endless bliss' are assured.[181]

The significance of this vision for the struggling penitent is realised in the following chapter 61 of L, as Julian addresses the crumbling confidence in the confessional act by envisaging it as an encounter with Holy Mother Christ. Julian begins by asserting the role of Mother Christ within the process of confession. Contrition comes about through a 'shewing' of 'oure fallyg and our wrechidnes' by Christ. Aware that this sight can cause the soul to be 'so sore

[179] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 26.
[180] Abbott, 'His Body, the Church', p. 13.
[181] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 74.

adred and so gretly ashamid of ourselfe that onethys we wettyn where that we may holden us' Mother Christ tempers the sight of sin so the penitent only sees as much as will initiate a response. It is then that Julian bids the soul to 'usen the condition of a child' and to run to the 'moder'. Thus Julian shifts the perspective to that of the penitent who speaks words of confession. Rather than voicing particular sins, the words the soul speaks to her mother are a confession of sinfulness and need of help:

> "My kind moder, my gracious moder, my dereworthy moder, have mercy on me. I have made myselfe foule and onlike to the, and I ne may ne can amenden it but with prive helpe and grace."[182]

In these revelatory words of confession Julian does not focus on the particularity of sin, or the sinfulness of the penitent, but rather on the recognition of their need of Christ. Within the context of her development of the image of holy mother church, Julian's visionary portrayal of the confessional encounter is more than simply an internal dialogue as suggested by Staley.[183] For by it Julian visualizes the basic catechetical teaching on confession as set out by Grossteste, whereby the priest and the mechanism of the church is merely the assistant and means by which Christ, the Supreme Physician of the soul, treats the wounds of sin.[184] Julian affirms this when she writes 'he will that we taken us mytyly to the feith of holy church, and fyndyn there oure dereworthy moder in solace of trew understondyng'. In this way Julian locates her vision of confession as an encounter with Holy Mother Christ within the penitential mechanisms of holy mother church.

Surety of forgiveness for Julian therefore lies in being 'fastened and oned to oure moder holy church, that is Crist Jhesu'. In this statement Julian brings to a conclusion her development

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[182] *Ibid*., p. 75.
[183] Staley, 'Julian of Norwich and the Late Fourteenth-Century Crisis of Authority', p. 145.
[184] Goering and Mantello (eds.), *Templum Dei*, p. 12, pp. 36-38.

of the language of holy mother church as ‘oure moder holy church’ is identified as Christ. *Ecclesia mater* is no longer the lady who holds the cup to Christ’s wounds, mediating his saving work, but has become a vision of Christ himself. From his wounds the ‘deerworthy blood and precious water’ directly flood out in streams of mercy to ‘make us fair and clene’, his side is open for healing and his hands are ‘redy and diligent about us’. In this way Julian reveals to the struggling penitent that it is through the daily devotional life of holy mother church that the saving love of God is realised and forgiveness is available to sinners. In the final section we turn to explore the extent to which Julian develops the penitential and catechetical language of remedy in order to reveal how the lord is ‘with us, kepand and ledand into the fulhede of ioye’.

‘Than is this the remedy’

In chapter 77 of L Julian gives a ‘remedy’ to the internal voice of false dread from the previous chapter, which sought to goad troubled souls into despair and make them afraid to appear before the lord.

> Than is this the remedy: that we be aknowen [of] oure writchidnes and flen to oure lorde; for ever the more redier that we ben, the more spedfull it is to us to neyghen him. And sey we thus in our mening: “I knowe wele I have a shrewid peyne, but our lord is almyty and may punish me mytyly; and he is al wisdam, and can punish me skilfully; and he is all goodnes, and lovith me full tendirly”. And in this beholdyng it is necessarye for us to abeyden; for it is a lovely mekeness of a synful soule, wroute be mercy and grace of the Holy Gost, whan we will willfully and gladly taken the scorge and the chastening of our lord himselfe will geve us. And it shall be full tendir and full esy if that we will onely holden us paid with him and with all his werkes.[185]

[185] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 93.

In one sense Julian's response to the debilitating and blinding words can be read as a revelatory alternative to the traditional remedy for sin, namely penance. However, her use of the term 'remedy', with its strong heritage, immediately locates the reader within the penitential and catechetical teaching of the church. In a comparable passage from *Remedies against Temptations*, William Flete tells the struggling soul, beset by the voice of temptation, to

> fle to hym þat al mercy is jnne, and aske mercy, and ȝe shuln haue mercy and forȝeuenesse of alle ȝoure synnes; and meke you louly to þe sacramentis of holy cherche, and þanne ȝe owen to beleuen trustily þat thei be forȝouen, and ȝe receyued into grace of god. [186]

In contrast Julian's remedy makes no overt reference to the sacrament of penance or the confessional encounter. Instead, Julian lingers on the internal state of the heart. It is this internal state which Julian sees as becoming blinded and distorted by a false sense of sin and dread thereby actively preventing the soul from appearing before the Lord. By considering her writings within the context of the catechetical and penitential teachings of the late fourteenth-century vernacular manuals, this final section demonstrates the extent to which Julian's 'remedy' is a 'beholding' of the way in which 'oure lorde is with us, keeping us and leding us into fulhed of joy' through the life of virtue and penance.

As we have seen in chapter two, the language of remedy runs through the history of penance from its first formulation by Cassian, to the earliest Irish manuals, and into the canons of the church at the Fourth Lateran Council.[187] Within these canons the understanding of what constituted the remedy to sin had already begun to broaden. Where the Irish manuals specify that it is the particular acts of penance given to the penitent by the priest that counter the

[186] Colledge and Chadwick (eds.), *Remedies Against Temptations*, p. 223, ll. 12-15.
[187] See above, chapter 2, pp. 71-2.

damaging wounds of sin, canon 21 states that the priest must enquire carefully into the circumstances of the sin and sinner in order to apply the appropriate ointment of healing, 'making use of different means to heal the sick one'.[188] For the author of the thirteenth-century *Ancrene Wisse* the most effective and powerful of these ointments against the temptations of the seven deadly sins is confession but other salves include…

> Halie meditatiuns in-warde ant meadlese, ant angoisuse bonen, hardi bileave, redunge, veasten, wecchen, ant licomliche swinkes, othres frovre for-te speoke toward i the ilke stunde thet hire stont stronge. Eadmodnesse, freolec of heorte, ant alle gode theawes beoth armes I this feht, ant anrednesse of luve over alle the othre.[189]

> …constant interior meditations – the prayers of anguish, robust faith, reading, fasting, keeping vigil, bodily exertions, comfort from other people to whom one may speak, by which one may be supported in the moment of temptation, humility, generosity of heart, and all good habits are weapons for this battle, and the constancy of love above all the rest.[190]

Increasingly the remedy for sin was not simply located within the sacrament of penance but also ventured into the everyday life of the penitent, as the cultivation of the virtues sought to strike at the root cause of the sins. In his popular penitential manual *Templum Dei*, Grossteste lists the virtues as the *medicina*, which will heal the illness or *infirmitas* of sin.[191] Acts of penance remedied those sins which were confessed by the sinner but through the process of confession the priest also sought to instil and educate the penitent in the life of virtue in order to 'remedy' the causes of sin.

By the fourteenth century the language of remedy had extended far beyond the confessional encounter and come to encompass the life of virtue and the suffering of tribulation. This change within the use of the word 'remedy' encapsulates the shift from the focus on the

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[188] Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, p. 245.
[189] Hasenfratz (ed.), *Ancrene Wisse*, p. 257, ll. 742-46.
[190] Salu (trans.), *Ancrene Riwle*, p. 106
[191] Goering and Mantello (eds.), *Templum Dei*, p. 38.

priest, in dealing with sins through confession, to the responsibility of the penitent to remedy the seven deadly sins by living a life of virtue. Writing in the latter half of the fourteenth century, Chaucer systematically set out the virtues as '*remedium contra peccatum'* to the acts and thoughts of the seven deadly sins in his Parson's Tale.[192] Confession may have been perceived as the most potent means by which to defeat sin, but it was the virtuous life that had the potential to remedy and prevent it.

Central to cultivating the life of virtue was the catechetical teaching of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Manuals in the *Somme Le Roi* tradition such as *Speculum Vitae* and *The Book of Vices and Virtues* recognized that the seven gifts of dread, knowledge, strength, counsel, understanding, wisdom and pity, were given by the Holy Spirit in response to the petitions of the *Pater Noster* in order to…

> …puttes out of þe hert euen
> þe principall Deadly Synnes Seuen,
> With alle þair branches þat may be sene
> And mas þe hert of alle synne clene;
> And in þair stede withinne settes right
> Seuen manere of vertus of myght[193]

Not only did the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit remedy sin but they also enabled the soul to live a virtuous life. In chapter two I highlighted the catechetical role of dread, which had the power to strike at the root of pride. This first gift of the Holy Spirit was able to 'deliver the soul from evil' and the temptations of the devil by awakening it to its sinful state and stirring it to confession.[194] The gift not only initiated contrition but also watered the tree of humility

[192] Robinson (ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 299-322.
[193] Hanna (ed.), *Speculum Vitae*, p. 114, ll. 3363-8.
[194] See above, chapter 2, pp. 117-125.

from which grew the seven branches of meekness.[195] Therefore dread was depicted as part of the on-going inner experience of the soul and an important gift in handling sin.

Yet, as we have seen, in her writings Julian reflects the extent to which this catechetical teaching on the gift of dread had become a problem during the latter years of the fourteenth century.[196] Instead of initiating the process of confession, dread was increasingly portrayed as the cause of devout souls dwelling upon internal accusations of sin which trapped them within a state of blindness and folly, leading them to linger on their sinful state and thus become afraid to appear before the lord. This 'false dread', as Julian describes it, replaced the 'beholding' of God with the 'beholding' of sin, and had become a tribulation and temptation by the devil preventing confession rather than initiating it.[197] Julian's remedy to this problem in chapter 77 of L is to shift the focus away from the language of dread to another of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, namely knowledge.

In the vernacular manuals the gift of knowledge similarly sought to bring the sinner to a state of contrition, but the means by which this was achieved was not through fear of sin or punishment but rather by knowledge of the sinful condition. As *Speculum Vitae* states, the gift of knowledge:

> …shewes a man what he es
> And whare he es – if he wil se-
> And in what peril here es he
> And whethen he come and whider he sal
> And his misdeeds – he shewes hym al –
> And what he has tane of frest vnqwitte,
> And how mykell he awe it mas him wit.
> And when he sees þat he es so sette

[195] The image is found in Francis (ed.), *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, p. 130, ll. 1-4.
[196] See above, chapter 3, pp. 161-6.
[197] Pelphrey argues that the problem of 'doubtful dread' is in the way it 'masquerades for religion': Pelphrey, *Christ our Mother*, p. 204.

Þat he has noght to quyte his dette,
Þan sal þe haly Gast of Knawyng
Bringe him til a grete forthinkynge
And make him grete and sare sigh ay
And cry God mercy and þus say,
"Lorde, forgif me here my dettes.[198]

Through the Holy Ghost's gift of knowledge the soul is brought to a sense of his own sinfulness and the realization that he is essentially unable to pay the debt of punishment for it. In language that echoes the depictions of Judgement Day, when all sins will be revealed, the gift of knowledge shows the sinner his sinful state, before the events of the terrible day of Judgement, so that he may cry out for mercy and forgiveness. Hence the petition from the *Pater Noster* that initiated the gift of knowledge was: '*Et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris*'.[199] The gift of knowledge thereby sought to stir the sinner's soul into a state of contrition, through sight of the full horror of his sin, thereby causing the soul humbly to seek forgiveness from God.

In this way the gift of knowledge is comparable to that of the gift of dread. Both seek to arouse a response in the sinner that initiates the process of reconciliation, namely contrition. Where they differ is in the deadly sin which they seek to remedy. Whilst the gift of dread pricks the conscience in order to strike at the root of pride, the gift of knowledge gives clarity of sight in order to 'casteþ out þe synne of wraþþe and felnesse, þat trobleþ a man or womman and makeþ hym wod so þat þey ne mowe not see for to lede hym ne non oþer'.[200] In Grossteste's *Templum Dei, Ira,* or wrath, was principally one of the seven deadly sins directed against one's neighbour; a teaching which Langland dramatizes in Wrathe's confession to Repentance in *Piers Plowman* as he boasts of the way in which his malicious gossip can stir up enmity between the Friars and secular priests as well as within other

[198] Hanna (ed.), *Speculum Vitae*, vol. 1, p. 104, ll. 3060-73.
[199] *Ibid*., p. 11, 211 & p. 156, l. 4624.
[200] Francis (ed.), *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, p. 149, ll. 1-4.

religious institutions.[201] However, the sin of wrath was not restricted to one's attitude to other people but found its source deep within the interior world. In *The Book of Vices and Virtues* this is expressed in terms of a 'fier þat wasteþ al þe good of þe hous'. [202] Wrath gives the soul no rest as it causes a chaos of war within herself, against God and with her neighbour. As Dante passes through the levels of hell he hears those souls who were damned for their wrath lament that, as their 'hearts smouldered with a sulky smoke' in this life, so now they lie deep within the black mud of the Styx. [203] Even those who have repented of their wrath must grope around in a thick smoke, lost and unable to see themselves or God.[204]

The diabolical cause of this interior chaos is captured by Chaucer in his *Parson's Tale* when he describes 'Ire' as chasing the Holy Ghost out of the soul, thereby replacing the likeness of God with the likeness of the devil 'and bynymeth the man fro God, that is his rightful lord'.[205] In each case the sin of wrath destroys, distorts and blinds the soul to its relationship with God. To cast out wrath, the gift of knowledge brings clarity through the virtue of 'Evenhede', which restores the balance between reason and will that 'makeþ þe herte so bryȝt on alle sides so þat he wole deceyue ne bigile no man'.[206] In the clear sight of the nature of this deadly sin and the extent to which it offends God, it is therefore not surprising that the

[201] Goering and Mantello (eds.), *Templum Dei*, p. 36, chapter v. 6; Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, p. 46, ll. 133-185.
[202] Francis (ed.), *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, p. 25, ll. 21-22.
[203] *The Comedy of Dante Alighieri the Florentine: Cantica 1 Hell*, trans. Dorothy L. Sayers (London: Penguin Books, 1949), canto vii, p. 113, l. 123.
[204] *Ibid.*, *Cantica 2: Purgatory*, trans. Dorothy L. Sayers (London: Penguin Books, 1955), canto xvi.
[205] Robinson (ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer*, p. 305, l. 544: Chaucer reflects the teaching of Grossteste who in his table of the seven deadly sins equates the illness which *Ira* induces as that of 'demoniacus'; Goering and Mantello (eds.), *Templum Dei*, p. 36. It has been convincingly demonstrated that the source of Chaucer's Parson's tale is located with the Peraldus tradition of penitential texts, see: K. O. Peterson, *The Sources of the Parson's Tale*, Radcliffe College Monographs, 12 (Boston: Gin and Co., 1901); Siegfried Wenzel, 'The Source for the 'Remedia' of the Parson's Tale', *Traditio*, 27 (1971), pp. 433-53 and Siegfried Wenzel, '*Postquam* and Chaucer's *Remedia*' in *Summa Virtutum de Remediis Anime*, ed. by Siegfried Wenzel, The Chaucer Library (Athens, Georgia: University Press, 1984), pp. 12-30.
[206] Francis (ed.), *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, p. 149, ll. 5-6.

soul is brought to the penitential state expressed by the Beatitude in the septenary schema: 'Blessed ben þei þat wepen, for þei schulle be conforted'.[207]

In chapter 48 of L Julian describes the state of the soul when beholding its own sinfulness in similar terms to the catechetical language of wrath contained within the manuals when she writes: 'for we be synne and wrechidnes have in us a wretchid and continuant contrariuste to peace and to love'.[208] S contains a paean to this wretched state into which the soul is brought by sin and 'the gasteley blindhede that we falle into in the firste sinne, and alle that folowes of that wrechednesse, passions and paines, gastelye or bodely'.[209] Thus, it is the catechetical language concerning the gift of knowledge rather than dread which lies at the heart of Julian's 'remedy' in chapter 77: 'than is this the remedy: that we ben *aknowen* [of] our writchidnes and flen to our lord'.[210] This perspective on sin is a departure from that described in her previous chapter, for unlike the blinded and distorted view of sin given by the devil to lead the soul into doubtful dread, knowledge reveals the soul's state of wretchedness caused by sin. No longer does the soul dwell upon its sense of sinfulness, but through knowledge she comes to a realization that she is trapped within a state of chaos which distorts perception of herself and her relationship with God. As for the author of *Speculum Vitae*, so for Julian: the gift of knowledge opens the eyes of the blinded soul so that 'we ben aknowen [of] our writidnes'.[211] For Julian it is this knowledge of the 'writidnes' of the sinful soul that causes it to turn outwards and 'flen to our lord' rather than inwards to dwell upon its sinfulness. Thus, Julian is identifying that which lies at the heart of the catechetical teaching of the gift of knowledge: the initiating of a response of contrition in the soul which will begin the process of reconciliation with God.

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[207] *Ibid.*, p. 159, ll. 32-33.
[208] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 51.
[209] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 115, ll. 33-35.
[210] My italics.
[211] Hanna (ed.), *Speculum Vitae*, vol. 1, p. 156, ll. 4625-32.

Building on this catechetical teaching of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in chapter 40 Julian emphasizes the extent to which the initiating of the process of reconciliation is inspired and governed by the work of the Holy Spirit:

> and furthermore he touchyth us ful privily and shewyth us our synne be the swete lyte of mercy and grace. But whan we seen ourselfe so foule, than wene we that God were wroth with us for oure synne, and than aren we steryd of the Holy Gost be contrition into prayers and desire to amendyng of our life with al our mytes, to slakyn the wreth of God, onto the tyme we fynd a rest in soule and softnes in consciens; and than hope we that God hath forgoven us oure synnes; and it is soth.[212]

The Holy Spirit not only 'touchyth us' and tempers the sight of sin, but he is also the initiator of contrition and the 'desire to amendyng of our life'. The whole process of reconciliation, even the perception that 'God were wroth with us' is interpreted by Julian to be that which is held within the inspiring gift of the Holy Spirit. In her emphasis on the role of the Spirit in initiating the penitential process, Julian not only reflects the essence of the church's catechetical teaching regarding the gifts of the Holy Spirit but also reverses it so that the focus is no longer on how the penitent is to handle sin but on the work of God within the penitential life of virtue. Julian's thought on this issue comes into sharp relief when compared to contemporaneous teaching on confession.

Manuals in the *Somme le Roi* tradition including *Speculum Vitae* and *The Book of Vices and Virtues* recognised that the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit were given to remedy sin but invariably they were presented as being contingent upon the state of the penitent's heart. Within the image of the tree of life these gifts spring from the well of grace which God the

[212] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 41.

gardener sets within the soul to 'wateren al the garden' at 'oure holy cristenyng'.[213] However, the measure of each gift was seen as dependent upon the extent to which every 'man or woman profiteþ in goodnesses and makeþ his herte redy and his ȝetfe to God'.[214] For the author of the *Book of Vices and Virtues* this conditional aspect of the gifts of the Holy Spirit was less significant than the nature of the gift, in the much later *Jacob's Well* it redefined the relationship between God and the sinful soul.

Based upon the vernacular manuals of the *Somme le Roi* tradition, *Jacob's Well* or *An English Treatise on the Cleansing of Man's Conscience* condensed their penitential teaching into the extended allegory of the deep well.[215] Unlike *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, the well is not one of grace, but is the pit of the human body which is filled with the water of cursing. Only with the 'scope of penanunce' can the 'dedly watyr' of sin be cast out.[216] This is the first action in what the author describes as a great labour, which reveals underneath the 'deep wose' of the seven deadly sins. Using the 'skeet of contricyoun, and after wyth a skauell of confessioun, and þanne schouelyn out clene þe crummys, wyth þe schouele of satisfaccyoun' the penitent clears out the well but, in order to find the springs of the water of grace, he must

> delve doun, wyth þe spade of clennesse, depe in þe ground of vertewys, contrarye to þe vii dedly synnes, tyl þou fynde vii sprynges of watyr of grace, þat is, vii ȝiftes of þe holy gost. And þanne þi welle is depe ynow in perfeccyoun for to springe watyr of grace.[217]

In contrast to many of the texts of the *Somme Le Roi* tradition, *Jacob's Well* inverts the order of their catechetical and penitential teaching. Instead of beginning with the ten

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[213] Francis (ed.), *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, p. 117, l. 27.
[214] *Ibid.*, p. 117, ll. 32-34.
[215] Carruthers convincingly argues that the Salisbury Cathedral MS copy of *Jacob's Well* is built upon versions of *Speculum Vitae* in Leo Carruthers, 'Where did Jacob's Well come from?' *English Studies*, 71 (1990), pp. 335-340.
[216] Brandeis (ed.), *Jacob's Well*, p. 65, l.8.
[217] *Ibid.*, p. 2, ll. 30-34.

commandments, seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Creed, the *Pater Noster* etc.: the author of *Jacob's Well* places them last, identifying them as the teachings that flow from the graces of the Holy Spirit and which have been released as a result of penance and the life of virtue. Through the hard labour of the penitent to cleanse himself from sin, the graces of God are now available and he is able to lead a holy life in accordance with the teaching of the church.

Jacob's Well can be seen as a culmination of the manual tradition. It encapsulates the late-medieval emphasis on the role of the penitent to remedy sin in both the confessional and in godly, virtuous living. However, as we have seen, this emphasis had led to an internal and debilitating view of sin, as well as a sense that the sacrament of penance was no longer adequate in enabling the penitent to deal with their sin and live a virtuous life. Julian addresses these concerns by shifting the focus of the catechetical teaching of the gifts of the Holy Spirit from how the penitent must handle his sin through confession and a virtuous life to how God deals with the internal state of sinfulness that besets the fallen soul by bringing it to a state of knowing through the sacrament of penance. She expresses the nature of this work through her development of the terms 'mercy and grace', to which I now turn.

As we have seen, the catechetical gift of knowing sought to spur the soul to confession through sight of sin. For Julian such knowledge not only enables the soul to see 'sinne, profitably without dispair' but also to 'behold' the extent to which it is a process of reconciliation inspired by the Trinity. Through the terms of 'mercy and grace' Julian extends the catechetical teaching of the Holy Spirit to emphasize the presence of the whole of the Trinity in the act of reconciliation. This can be seen in chapter 77 where Julian describes her 'remedy' as being 'wroute be mercy and grace of the Holy Gost'. However, the significance of this statement is not fully realised until it is placed within the context of chapter 48 where

she sets out the properties of mercy and grace as divine attributes of the Son and the Father which spring from love:

> For I beheld the properte of mercy and I beheld the properte of grace, which have ii manner werkyng in one love; mercy is a pitifull propirte which longyth to the moderid in tendyr love, and grace is a worshipful propirte which longith to the ryal lordshipp in the same love; mercy werkyth: kepyng, suffring, quecknyng and helyng, and al is of tendernes of love; and grace werkyth: reysing, rewarding and endlessly overpassyng that our lovyng and our travel deservyth, spreding abrode and shewyng the hey, plentivous largess of Godds ryal lordship in his mervelous curtesye; and this is of the abundance of love; for grace werkyth our dredfull faylyng into plentivous endles solace, and grace werkyth our shamefull fallyng into hey worship reysyng, and grace werkyth our sorowfull deying into holy blisfull lif.[218]

In this passage Julian describes grace and mercy as divine aspects of the motherhood and lordship of God, which work within the soul to bring restoration and reconciliation. It is not simply the Holy Spirit that operates within the soul but the whole Trinity. Therefore, whilst the manuals associate the seven gifts with the works of goodness wrought by the Holy Spirit alone, Julian expands this interaction with the soul to encompass all the persons of the Trinity. Thus Julian grounds her vision of the presence of the Trinity in the image of Christ on the cross from her first revelation within the church's catechetical teaching regarding the role of the Spirit within the penitential life. It is the Father and the Son who also work within the gifts of the Holy Spirit, to sustain the life of virtue as well as to reconcile the fallen soul to God.

Whereas the manuals sought to elicit a cry of mercy for forgiveness from the penitent, for Julian it is Mercy himself who tempers the sight of sin so that the penitent only sees as much of his sin as is profitable. In chapter 78 Julian writes:

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[218] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 51.

> our lord of his mercy shewith us our synne and our febilnes be the swet gracious lyte of hymself; for our synne is so vile and so horrible that he of his curtesie will not shew it to us but be the lyte of his grace and mercy.[219]

Within this 'gracious lyte' Julian goes on to set out the four things which it is the Lord's 'will that we have knowing'. The first is the knowledge that he is the ground of our being, which reveals the relationship of the soul to God. The second and third focus on how God treats the sinner and the nature of his work of reconciliation: 'he kepeth us mytyly and mercifully in the tyme that we arn in our synne', and 'howe curtesly he kepith us and makith us to knowen that we gon amyss', whilst the fourth refers to the 'lord' of the example and 'how stedfastly he abidith us and chongith no chere, for he will that we be turnyd and onyd to him in love as he is to us'.[220] In each of these aspects of knowledge Julian reveals the extent to which the Trinity is not only present within the soul, 'kepth' it while it is in sin, but also intimately involved in the process of reconciling the soul. Hence her remedy to sin in chapter 77 is not only to 'aknowen [of] our writidnes' but also to know 'that our lord is with us, kepand and ledand into fulhede of ioye' through the catechetical gifts of the Holy Spirit.[221]

Julian thereby brings depth to the catechetical teaching concerning the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which also gives pastoral reality to her vision of the God who 'wrappeth' us within himself. The Trinity, through his attributes of mercy and grace, works within the soul to initiate the penitential process, through opening the eyes of the penitent to the nature of sin. This gracious knowing, as Julian calls it, reveals that 'we arn ryte nowte but synne and wrechiddnes' but also that the sense of shame it elicits initiates the penitential process itself, which is the means by which the Trinity breaks the soul 'fro all things that is not our lord'

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[219] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 94.
[220] *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95.
[221] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 94.

and 'perfectly helyn us and one us to him'.[222] Julian's profound development of the penitential process can be seen by considering the alterations she makes to the text of her first revelation.

In chapter 5 Julian recounts her initial vision of the bleeding head of Christ. Emerging from a 'ghostly sight' of it, she perceives the entirety of creation, which is as small as 'the quantitye of an hesil nutt in the palme of my hand'.[223] As Julian marvels at it and the extent to which it only has being through the love of God, she comes to the realization that, until she can be 'nowtid of all things that is made' for to love and have God that is unmade; she may never have 'ghostly rest'.[224] For Gillespie, this vision brings Julian to 'the threshold of the apophatic' as it is only through the process of being 'noughted' or broken from this world that the soul will no longer 'sekyn here rest in these things that is so littil, wherin is no rest' and instead seek to be 'substantially oned to' God.[225] The contemplative basis of Julian's language of 'noughting' is clearly apparent within S, where Julian states that this 'nedes ilke man and woman to hafe knawinge that desires to lyeve contemplatifelye'.[226] However, in L Julian removes this fixed affiliation with contemplatives and widens the audience from 'they' to 'we'. Instead of solely associating the process of breaking from this world with the contemplative task of self-emptying or kenosis, Julian broadens it to express the penitential work of the Trinity within the soul.[227]

In a major addition to S, Julian describes the act of being 'noghted for love' in language which strips the soul of sophistication and complexity: 'it is full plesance to him that a sily

[222] *Ibid.*, p. 95.
[223] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[224] *Ibid.*
[225] Gillespie and Ross, 'The Apophatic Image', p. 66.
[226] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 71, ll. 37-8.
[227] Pelphrey draws parallels between Julian's noughting and the state of *apatheia* within Eastern spirituality in Pelphrey, *Love was his meaning*, p. 288.

soule come to him nakidly, pleynly, and homely'.[228] These words are also three of the sixteen marks which traditionally constituted a good confession.[229] Watson, in his commentary to this passage in L, similarly interprets the phrase 'nakedly and plainly' as referring to those attributes that contemporaneous pastoral theologians espoused as the qualities required to make a confession good and true but he excludes the third.[230] From her expansion of the concept of the 'homelyhede' of God it is clear however that the term 'homely' encapsulates for Julian the confessional quality of humility. This can be seen in chapter 7, where Julian describes an 'open example' to verbalize the servant's response to the homely nature of the Lord:

> "A! What might this nobil lord doe more worshipp and ioy to me than to shew me, that am so simple, this mervelous homlyhede? Sothly it is more ioy and likeing to me than he gave me grete gifts, and were himselfe strange in maner." This bodily example was shewid so hey that manys herete might be ravishid and almost forgettyng himselfe for ioy of this grete homlyhede.[231]

In this passage Julian describes the reaction of the soul to the 'homlyhede' of God. The knowledge of God's 'homlyhede' not only humbles the soul, making it realise its own insignificance but also, through Julian's use of the contemplative language of ravishing, is seen as the process whereby the servant is substantially 'oned' with the Lord. Given her understanding of the encounter between the soul and God within the vision of his 'homlyhede', Julian's use of the word 'homely,' within the context of her three attributes that make a good confession, does not so much replace humility as express a revelatory depth to the catechetical teaching which grounds her vision within the pastoral processes of the church. It is through the penitential process itself that the Trinity works to 'nought' the soul

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[228] Gillespie and Ross, 'The Apophatic Image', p. 66.
[229] See p. 149, n. 51.
[230] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich,* p. 140, n. 29.
[231] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 8.

and brings her to a state which will strike at the heart of the problem of humanity's propensity to sin.

In her use of the language of 'noughting' and breaking to describe the penitential process, Julian thereby gives a remedy to the paralysing view of sin which trapped devout souls in a fearful dwelling upon their internal state of 'wrechedness'. In section 17 of S she describes the effect sin has on the soul in terms of the punishment of a scourge which 'alle forbrekes tham, and noghtes thamselfe in thare awne sight, sa fareforth that him think that he is noght worthy bot as it ware to sinke into helle'.[232] In L Julian radically alters this passage as her image of the scourge shifts from gratuitous punishment to the penitential tool that humbles the soul.[233] No longer is the soul 'nowtid' by sin, but sin becomes the scourge of penance, which is able to bring the soul into the state of meekness where its response of being 'noyeth', or disgusted, reflects the Christ-like virtue of humility.

It is this state of the heart which Julian articulates in chapter 77 and gives as the remedy to the internal attitude of doubtful dread:

> "I know wele I have a shrewid peyne, but our lord is almyty and may punish me mytyly; and he is al wisdam, and can punish me skilfully; and he is all goodnes and lovith me full tendirly".[234]

In these words Julian reflects the virtue of Evenhede which the catechetical gift of knowledge brings. No longer does the sight of sin consume the soul with dread but it is able reasonably to recognize the offence of sin and is deserving of punishment. Through the work of the

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[232] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 99, l. 23-25.
[233] On the fifteenth-century seven sacrament font at Gresham church in Norfolk an angel stands behind the penitent with the traditional instrument of penitential chastisement, the birch, raised above his head. Ann Elijenholm Nichols describes the scene as depicting the act of absolution: Nichols, *Seeable Signs*, p. 176.
[234] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 93.

Trinity, who is might, wisdom and love, the soul has been brought into the 'beholding' of its proper relationship with God where it can accept the scourging and chastising that God gives. The inner voice which had articulated a state of fear and doubt, and the internal contrariness of sin and wrath, has been brought to a state of 'gracious knowing' through 'the Holy Gost, which is endles lif wonnyng in our soule, ful sekirly kepyth us, and werkyth therin a peas', in order 'to slake and waste oure wrath'.[235] In chapter 77 Julian articulates this state as a 'lovely mekeness of a synful soule'.[236]

Julian's notion of 'trew mekeness' is grounded within the manual's catechetical teaching on the virtue of humility. In the *Book of Vices and Virtues*, the highest of the seven degrees of Meekness is…

> …to wilne al an-ernest and desire in herte wiþ-out feyntise to holde for nouȝt and foule and as a knaue and foul y-spoken of, þat is riȝtful pouert of spirit & meknesse.[237]

Echoing the Beatitude regarding the 'poor in spirit', which was aligned within the septenary scheme of the pastoral manuals, the significance of the state of meekness is the extent to which it reflects the attitude of Christ. It was out of meekness that Christ 'dide upon hym þe cloþes of sinful men'.[238] Thus, Julian's servant in chapter 51 stands before the lord 'dreadfully, unornely clothed, in perty naked' as one who is despised and of nought. For Julian the soul is brought to 'this meke knowing' by the work of the Trinity. She writes:

> throw contrition and grace, we shall be broken fro all things that is not our lorde; and than shalle oure blessid saviour perfetely helyn us and one us to him.[239]

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[235] *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.
[236] *Ibid.*, p. 93.
[237] Francis (ed.), *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, p. 131, ll. 20-23.
[238] *Ibid.*, ll. 32-33.
[239] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, ch. 78, p. 95.

The penitential process is thereby portrayed as central to the work of God to bring the soul to the virtuous state whereby sin is remedied. It is through this state of meekness that the soul is able to behold that 'he is oure medicine'.

Integral to Julian's development of the catechetical language of meekness is her re-evalution of the role played by dread. Despite her concerns regarding the nature of dread, in chapters 78 and 79 of L, Julian reiterates the penitential teaching which envisaged dread as a vital aspect of 'trew mekenes' even for those who 'be hyely lifted up into contemplation be the special geft of our lord'.[240] In a comment which has undertones of criticism, Julian emphasizes the necessity of having 'knoweing and syte of our synne and our febilnes' to have 'trew mekenes'. For just as the catechetical gift of dread struck at the heart of the sin of pride, so this gracious beholding of sin will make the soul 'ashamd of oureselfe and broken downe as anempts our pride and presumtion' and dread 'savith me from presumption'.[241] In this way Julian rehearses the teaching of the church regarding the catechetical gift of dread. However, through her development of the terminology of 'reverent dread' Julian extends this catechetical teaching to address the false dread which masquerades as meekness. Julian thereby reveals the extent to which there is, at the heart of the soul's relationship with God, 'a holy, curtes drede of our lord, to which mekeness is knitt' which is fundamental to the soul's contemplative beholding of God.[242]

Julian's notion of reverent dread is rooted in the theological teaching of filial or holy dread as expressed in the vernacular manuals.[243] At the end of S Julian describes 'reverente dread' as

[240] In contrast Rolle states in his *Form of Living* that dread is a characteristic of the active life only. For contemplatives, this dread has been overwhelmed by the yearning for God. See Allen (ed.), *English Writings of Richard Rolle*, pp. 117-9.
[241] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, pp. 96 & 95.
[242] *Ibid.*, chapter 65, p. 80
[243] See above chapter 2, p. 119.

the last of the four manners of dread in her initial catechetical response to the problem of false meekness. This fourth manner is marked out from the other three as the only dread that can truly please God. Unlike false dread, which 'travailes and tempests and trubles' the soul, reverent dread increasingly brings 'softes and comfortes and pleases and restes' because of the greatness of love

> And yit is this reverente drede amd luffe nought bathe ane, bot thay er twa in properte and in wyrkinge, and nowthere of tham may be hadde withouten othere. Therfore I am sekere, he that luffes, he dredes, though he fele bot litille.[244]

Echoing the teaching of the time, Julian highlights the essential difference between other forms of dread and reverent dread. Whereas 'drede of afray', 'drede of paine' and 'doubtfulle dread' arise from a sense of *timor,* 'reverente dread' contains an aspect of love. This differentiation can be found in the early fifteenth-century *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God* which was written for a general audience. Building on the catechetical association between the scriptural verse 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' and the successive stages to love of God, the author describes three kinds of dread which will lead the soul through a penitential process that will destroy the vices and allow the soul to come to the full possession of God's love. [245] Each of these dreads is evoked by an external stimulus of *timor*: fear of punishment, fear of hell and fear to displease God. In contrast, the four degrees of love arise from the possession of wisdom. However, these degrees do not dispense with the role of fear but instead consider it as an integral property of love. Hence clean love will bring the soul to contrition and confession, not through fear of punishment or hell but because of the soul's knowledge of the damaging nature of sin. Similarly steadfast love is a worshipful response to the awesome nature of the Lord. For the author of

[244] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich,* p. 119, ll. 15-18.
[245] Margaret Connolly (ed.), *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God*, EETS, OS, 303 (1993), pp. 8-10.

Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God the path of wisdom is one in which fear is essential for love.

In order to bring the soul from a sense of *timor* and despair at the state of their sin and inability to discern it, to the *amor* of reverend dread Julian builds on the essence of the catechetical teaching of dread as a gift from God to assert the essential role it plays within the devotional life. This can be seen in the way Julian develops her notion of reverend dread between her two texts. In chapter 74 of L Julian makes substantial additions to her initial description of reverend dread, which highlights and expands her initial observation in S that it is 'fulle swete and softe for mekillehede of luffe'. Developing this aspect Julian presents reverent dread and love as two 'brethren', which are essential attributes of the soul having been 'rotid in us be the goodnes of our maker and thei shall never be taken fro us without end'.[246] For Julian these attributes of love and dread are given by God to enable the soul to properly respond to his nature:

> We have of kinde to loven and we have of grace to loven; and we have of kinde to dreden and we have of grace to dreden. It longith to the lordshippe and to the faderhede to be dred, as it longith to the goodness to be lovid; and it longith to us that arn his servants and his children to dreden him for lordship and faderhede, as it longith to us to loven him for his goodhede.[247]

For Julian, love and dread are qualities of the lordship and fatherhood of the Trinity which have been instilled into the soul in order that it may know and relate to Him.

The key to understanding Julian's development of reverend dread from its catechetical roots can be found in **S1**, the only manuscript of L to differentiate between 'reverent' and

[246] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 89.
[247] *Ibid*., pp. 89-90

'reverend' in the chapters immediately following Julian's sight and interpretation of her first revelation. In these chapters Julian explores the intimate manner in which the one who rightly deserves to be revered and held in dreadful awe, lovingly and humbly engages with his sinful creation and marvels, within S, that 'he wolde be so homlye with a sinfulle creature lyevande in this wreched fleshe'.[248] As we have seen, Julian's use of the term 'homely' is more than simply a domestic term to reflect the intimate relationship between God and the soul, but also resonates with the catechetical and penitential language of humility.[249] In this context the cause for Julian's marvelling is the penitential humility of Christ upon the cross by which He makes satisfaction for sin.[250] In L Julian alters this statement to incorporate two further concepts into this description of God's relationship to the soul which highlights this aspect of his nature: reverend and dreadful. Hence, in chapter 4 of L she writes: 'he that is so reverend and so dredfull will be so homely with a synfull creature liveing in wretched flesh'. It is only in the manuscript tradition of **S1** which we find these two terms in this form. The **P** equivalent differs with 'reverente and dreadful'. It is more likely that **S1** holds a more accurate rendition of the text for the term 'reverend' draws out the contrast between the humble and loving actions of God and his awesome nature. It is this contrast which makes her marvel.

At the end of chapter 6 in L **S1** once again records the term 'reverend drede' instead of 'reverent' dread to describe the attitude of awe and trembling which God inspires within the soul:

[248] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 137, l. 15.
[249] Colledge and Walsh suggest that the term 'homblye' in S is a confusion of 'humbly', in Colledge and Walsh, *A Book of Showings*, vol. 1, p. 221, n. 19.
[250] The Biblical basis for this is Phillippians 2:5-8.

> for the beholding and the lovyng of the maker makith the soule to seeme lest in his owne sight, and most fillith it with reverend drede and trew mekenes, with plenty of charitie to his even cristen.[251]

In the following chapter of **S1** Mary, the model of humility, is described as receiving 'reverend drede' when beholding of the greatness and nobility of God which[252]

> fulfilled her of reverend drede, and with this she saw hirselfe so litil and so low, so simple and so pore, in reward of hir lord God, that this reverend drede fulfillid hir of mekenes.[253]

For Julian it is not the fearful and overwhelming vision of a 'reverend' and fearful God that causes the soul to realise its nature in relationship to him, but rather 'that he that is heyest and migtyest, noblest and worthyest, is lowest and mekest, homlyest and curteysest'.[254] To highlight this fact Julian returns to her phrase 'reverend and dredeful' which she used to describe the nature of God in chapter 4, but now **S1** records a subtle change as the term switches from 'reverend' to 'reverent'. The one who is to be revered is the one who shows his creation the greatest reverence.

It is the term 'reverent dread' which we find throughout the rest of **S1** and in **A** and **P**. It is in this state of 'reverent dread' that Julian beholds her own visions and is 'the fair curtesy that is in heven before Goddes face,' for it is the proper response of the soul to 'he that is so reverent and dredfull'. Hence reverent dread is an important aspect of that 'hey, onperceyvable prayer' by which the soul beholds God. Unlike 'reverend dread'which is the attribute of God that inspires the proper form of fear within the soul, 'reverent dread' describes the response which God inspires within the penitent, when he apprehends God's 'reverent and dredeful'

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[251] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 7.
[252] For Mary as the icon of humility see: Marina Warner, *Alone of all her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (Oxford: University Press, 1976, new ed. 2013), p. 181-84.
[253] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 8.
[254] *Ibid.*

relationship with the soul. It is this quality which marks reverent dread from all other forms of dread for it causes the soul to 'hastely fle fro alle that is not goode and falle into oure lords brest, as the childe into the moders barme', so remedying the 'old rote of oure first sin'.[255] Whilst the *timor* of fear initiates a response of contrition and confession, it is reverent dead that bases such a response in *amor*. Hence it is the more true response to the nature of God than are the others which arise from fear. Unlike those which can come under the colour of holiness, for Julian it is 'reverend dread' that brings the soul into the state whereby it knows its sinfulness and great need to God; the state whereby it can begin the penitential process of reconciliation. But it is also 'reverent dread' which enables the soul to meekly marvel at the reverential humility of Christ. For Julian it is this 'kinde properte of drede' which lies at the heart of the catechetical teaching on the gifts of the Holy Ghost. In this way Julian grounds the penitential teaching of the manuals on the gift of dread within the natural and proper response of the soul to the nature of God, which is 'to drede him reverently and to love him mekly'.[256] It is this response that will enable the soul to discern true dread and remedy the distorted view of meekness and dread that afflicts the soul.

Julian uses the language of remedy to delve deep into the catechetical teaching of humility and reveal the extent to which it is this virtue that will 'remedy' the debilitating view of sin and the lingering sense of doubtful dread. Through her development of the catechetical gifts of knowledge and dread Julian identifies the penitential process as the means by which the Trinity works within the soul to naught it and bring it to the proper state of humility. Integral to this 'trew mekeness' is the gift of dread, which not only initiates the process but also enables the soul to live the life of virtue that strikes at the old root of sin and pride.

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[255] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[256] *Ibid.*

Conclusion

In chapter 38 of L Julian's sight is lifted up into the court of heaven and there she sees a number of significant figures from the Old and New Testaments, and medieval saints, including St. John of Beverley among many others. In direct contrast to the earthly court of Arthur in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Julian sees that 'sinne shalle be no shame, but wurshipe to man'. As each sin brings with it a grievous pain so, in heaven, there comes a reward. However, as both Alan Deighton and Susan Wilson point out, Julian's later *excursus* on St John of Beverley within L is not simply because of the local connection, but rather to draw out the fact that he, like the others, was renowned as a great sinner who repented.[257] He was a dear worthy servant of God because he was 'full mekille God loving and dreding' and it is in this attitude 'by contrition and mekenesse that he had in his living' that God gave him the joys of heaven.[258]

In this chapter we have seen the extent to which Julian engages with the penitential concerns of the late fourteenth century. Whilst she is confidently assured that, theologically, sin is dealt with and is '*conveniens*' to God's saving work, the fallen and blinded state in which sinners dwell forces her to question this truth. This questioning leads Julian to engage with popular contemporary discussions on the role played by the catechetical teaching of the church in naming this internal state and, more importantly, the sense that the pastoral process was inadequate in dealing with it. Lying at the heart of this problem for Julian is the focus on the role of the penitent within the process, not only to 'see' their sins, but also to keep them 'clene'. Any sincere desire to do so only leaves the 'active man' with a clearer vision of his

[257] Susan E. Wilson, *The Life and After-Life of St John of Beverley* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2006), p.37 and Alan Deighton, 'Julian of Norwich's Knowledge of the Life of St John of Beverley', *Notes and Queries*, 40 (1993), p. 442.
[258] Brant Pelphrey also highlights that the significance of John of Beverley was his act of repentance in Pelphrey, *Christ our Mother*, p. 199.

depravity rather than a sense of forgiveness. For Julian, devout souls, who long to behold God, are trapped within the prison of sin and fear, like the fallen servant, and in the heaviness of this flesh are blinded, for they know not themselves or the loving gaze of the Lord. The sacrament of penance, which was supposed to be the very means of dealing with this fallen state, is presented by Julian as part of the problem.

Rather than presenting Julian's revelation of divine love as an alternative to the pastoral processes of the church, in this chapter I have demonstrated the extent to which Julian addresses the late fourteenth-century pastoral concerns regarding sin and the confessional encounter. By using the penitential language of the vernacular manuals and the church's catechetical teaching, Julian reveals a depth to the pastoral processes of the church in order to reassure those struggling with a sense of their sinfulness that it is through the daily pastoral processes of the church that the Trinity not only deals with sin but also works to bring the soul into the state of 'holy, curtious drede of our lorde, to which mekenes is knitt' whereby it can truly behold the Lord as the saints do in the court of heaven.

With these findings in mind, the final chapter revisits the crucial question of the nature and function of Julian's texts and argues that L can be understood as a penitential text in the extent to which, through her writing, Julian seeks to bring assurance of the forgiveness of sins to those struggling with a sense of doubt and dread.

CHAPTER 4

'A LOVELY LESSON': THE PENITENTIAL NATURE AND FUNCTION OF THE LONG TEXT OF A *REVELATION OF DIVINE LOVE*

Introduction

In chapter 9 of L Julian directly addresses her audience in words that give evidence of a pastoral motivation lying behind the dissemination of her vision:

> For the shewing I am not goode but if I love God the better; and in as much as ye love God the better it is more to you than to me. I sey not this to hem that be wise, for thei wote it wele; but I sey it to yow that be simple for ese and comfort, for we arn al one in comfort.[1]

Commentators have often highlighted the modesty *topos* which lies behind this address, but the implications of her desire to bring 'ese and comfort' to her audience resonates with the intention of the vernacular catechetical and pastoral manuals.[2]

According to the fourteenth-century notion of the ladder of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, which raise the soul through the catechetical virtues to the perfect life, the highest gift is that of wisdom which not only cleanses the soul from sin but also bestows in the heart

> contemplacion, wher-bi a man or woman is so enspired and filled of þe loue of God þat þei desireþ ne secheþ no þing but to see hym.[3]

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[1] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 10.
[2] Colledge and Walsh speculate that Julian's use of a modesty topos at this point is because she is 'acutely aware that her writing may provoke hostile criticism', in Colledge and Walsh (eds.) *A Book of Showings*, p. 321, n. 3, whilst Watson and Jenkins focus on Julian's identification with her audience of the simple rather than the wise: Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 152, n. 3.
[3] Francis (ed.), *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, p. 272, ll. 8-10.

Within this contemplative state, the penitential text *The Book of Vices and Virtues* describes the way in which the gift of wisdom will so 'knytt' the soul to God that he will be ravished by a sweet delight and forget everything that is not ordained by him and so he will find rest, comfort and delight. Using maternal imagery for the person of Christ, the penitent will 'felen of his swete teetes of comfort, wherwiþ God ȝeueþ melke of contemplacion'.[4] The delights of contemplation are transient, but the gift of wisdom also instils in the heart the virtue of soberness or measure. There is a sense in which this virtue is not simply casting out its opposite, the vice of gluttony, but is the culmination of the catechetical life. Measure lies at the heart of all the other virtues, like a trunk to their branches and brings penitent souls to the fulfilment of the Beatitudes where they will be 'riȝtfulliche y-cleped Goddes sones'.[5]

Penitential texts, such as *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, sought to bring the penitent to the heights of the catechetical life through their instructive and didactic nature. In the concluding lines of *Speculum Vitae* the compiler makes it clear that he sees his work as one that instructs the soul. Within his text he has named the Seven Deadly Sins …

> … with þair braunches and þar rotes
> þat in þe hert of man oft shotes
> And seuen special vertus
> Þat alle þa seuen synnes forduse
> And þair branches and þair degrees
> Þat lettes alle vyces and vanytees,
> And of þe seuen blissedhedes
> I haf touched and of þair medes.
> Alle es wryten here on þis boke.
> Whaso wil rede it ouer and loke,
> It es na vertu vnnethes ne synne
> Þat he ne sal fynde it wryten þarinne.
> Þan may he knawe and se þarby
> Of what synne he es mast gilty
> And what remedy es þareagayne

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 274
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 289, l. 10

> Or vertu þat es mast certayne.
> Swa may a man knawe and se
> What he es and what he suld be.[6]

He describes the text in terms of a mirror that reflects back to the penitent 'whethir he be foul or clene' so that he may himself 'wele shryue'.[7] It acts like a script whereby the penitent prepares himself for the performance of confession, which takes place elsewhere outside the remit of the text.[8] Hence the author states that this is not a book to be read once, then put away or passed on, but that 'lewed men has grete need þis boke oft to here or rede'.[9]

In an additional passage to the *Speculum Vitae* the utilitarian nature of the text is made explicit as the author highlights the way in which the structure of his work is grounded within the daily repetitive prayer of the church, the *Paternoster*.[10] As the reader comes to the end of the manual, having learnt of the petitions and gifts that will strike at the root of sin, he is returned to the beginning in an ever cyclical path of conversion. The text thereby enables the soul to scrutinize his own heart even as he says the words of the *Paternoster* in his daily prayers.[11] As we have seen in chapter 2, by the fourteenth-century vernacular manuals, such as *The Book of Vices and Virtues* and *Speculum Vitae,* were so successful in enabling the penitent to be confessor to their own hearts they had instilled within some a knowledge and scrupulosity in sin that denied any of the delights and comfort of the contemplative gift of wisdom.

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[6] Hanna (ed.), *Speculum Vitae*, vol.2, p. 531, ll. 16035-52.
[7] *Ibid.,* p. 532, ll. 16065-68.
[8] This feature is also identified in Mirk's sermons by Ford, *John Mirk's Festial. Orthodoxy, Lollardy and the Common People*, p. 40.
[9] *Ibid.,* p. 532, l. 16072.
[10] See note 15969-16016 on p. 630 of Hanna (ed.), *Speculum Vitae*, vol. II.
[11] For the relationship between penance and prayer see Robert N. Swanson, 'Praying for Pardon: Devotional Indulgences in Late Medieval England' in *Promissory Notes on the Treasury of Merits: Indulgences in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. by R.N. Swanson (Boston & Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 215-240 and specifically for the power of the *Paternoster* see: Gillespie, 'Thy Will be Done', pp.79-110; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 53-87 & 296; Roger S. Wieck, *Painted Prayers. The Book of Hours in Medieval and Renaissance Art* (New York: George Braziller, 1997), p. 13.

This chapter argues that, in her concern for those whose knowledge and sight of God's love and forgiveness was inhibited by an excessive sense of sinfulness and dread, the didactic nature of Julian's L similarly seeks to bring the struggling penitent to the sense of comfort and peace which the manuals instructed. The chapter begins by examining the scholarly arguments which suggest that L was not written for a specific intended audience, be it contemplative or lay, but rather that Julian came to realise the universal and pastoral implications of her revelation for 'mine even christen,' who like herself 'nedeth comfort' in regard to handling their sin.

'myn evyn cristen'

It has often been noted that the tone of Julian's writing shifts between her two texts, from a more personal and defensive style of S to the inclusive and authoritative confidence of L.[12] This has been attributed to Julian's conscious change in her intended audience from those who wish to 'lyeve contemplatifelye' to the more universal focus of mine even christen.[13] However, as Riddy points out, the term 'mine even cristen' is not restricted to L alone and is found throughout S.[14] Such a clear demarcation in audience between the two texts therefore, is not as simple as first perceived. This has led a number of scholars to argue that Julian does not so much change her focus as to widen her appeal.[15] Chapter headings and summaries applied to **S1** give evidence of a text which has been schematized in order to allow a reader to

[12] Tugwell, *Ways of Imperfection*, p. 189; Staley, 'Julian of Norwich and the Crisis of Authority', pp.116-17; Windeatt, 'Julian of Norwich and her Audience', pp. 6-7; Watson, 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*', pp. 668-69; Hagen, 'St. Cecilia and St. John of Beverly', p. 91.
[13]Scholars who argue this include: Tugwell, *Ways of Imperfection,* pp. 188-9; McCormack, 'Reading God', p. 109; Windeatt, 'Julian of Norwich and her Audience', pp. 6-7.
[14] Riddy, ''Publication' before Print', p. 46, n. 74.
[15] Robertson, 'Julian of Norwich's 'Modernist Style'', p. 140; McCormack, 'Reading God', p. 102; Magill, *Mystic or Visionary*, p. 56.

more easily navigate a textual work. Such adaptations suggest that Julian had an intended wider audience for L.[16] As Vincent Gillespie argues religious books were being circulated amongst a wider readership and such textual structuring enabled them to become more accessible. However, he also adds a cautionary note that the transmission of such texts is unclear and their organisation idiosyncratic.[17] To over emphasize the existence of a definable group of 'lay devout' at the close of the fourteenth century, to which Julian addressed L, is similarly unwise.[18]

In the absence of a specific audience to whom Julian addressed her text, Lynn Staley considers the alteration in Julian's tone between her two works as less governed by audience specification and more by the change in Julian's understanding of herself as 'a voice aligned with the community of the church'.[19] A sense of divine imperative to write for the common good can be found in both of her texts but it is in the latter of these that Julian expresses more clearly the implications of her revelation of love for the everyday pastoral life of her 'even cristen'. This can be seen in the opening of chapter 37 of L.[20] In the comparable chapter in S Julian is simply reminded that she, like everyone else, will sin, but in L she expands this passage and sets it within the context of the whole revelation. Her imperative to write to

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[16] A general comment is made by Vincent Gillespie in Gillespie, 'Vernacular Books of Religion', p. 328; for a specific comment to the structural layout of the long text see: Johnson, 'The Trope of the Scribe', p. 831 and Dutton, *Julian of Norwich: The Influence of Late-Medieval Devotional Compilations*, pp. 29-36.

[17] Gillespie, 'Vernacular Books of Religion', p. 335. Scholars who highlight a general increase in devotion amongst the laity include: Hussey, 'The Audience for the Middle English Mystics', p. 121; Rice, *Lay Piety and Religious Discipline*; Carey, 'Devout Literate Laypeople and the Pursuit of the Mixed Life', pp. 361-81; Vincent Gillespie, 'Idols and Images: Pastoral Adaptations of The Scale of Perfection' in *Langland, The Mystics and the Medieval English Religious Tradition: Essays in Honour of S. S. Hussey*, ed. by Helen Philips (Cambridge: D.S.Brewer), pp. 97-123.

[18] Watkin identifies a specific 'circle of disciples' in Norwich to whom Julian addresses her text in E.I. Watkin, *On Julian of Norwich and in Defence of Margery Kempe* (Exeter: University Press, 1979), p. 1. Bauerschmidt is similarly cautious in, Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ*, p. 192. Whilst Wogan-Brown is also careful to note that Julian writes for an 'indistinctly defined audience of devout people' in Jocelyn Wogan-Browne *et al.* (eds.), *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280-1520*, Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies (Exeter: University Press, 1999), p. 79.

[19] Johnson, 'The Trope of the Scribe', p. 832.

[20] Riddy quotes just part of chapter 37 as evidence of Julian's realisation that the visions were not just given to herself but for the common good; Riddy, ''Publication' before Print', p. 44.

'myn evyn cristen' in chapter 37 is motivated by the comfort her revelation will give to all regarding sin.

> God browte to my mynd that I shuld synne; and for lykyng that I had in beholdyng of hym I entended not redily to that shewyng. And our lord full mercifully abode and gave me grace to entendyn. And thys shewyng I toke singularly to myselfe, but be al the gracious comforte tha[t] folowyth, as ye shal seen, I was leryd to take it to al my even cristen, al in general and nothing in special; thowe our lord shewid me I should synne, by me alone is understode al.[21]

Julian alters S in order to show, within L, what it is that will comfort 'my even cristen' in their sin. Taking a section from a later part of S, Julian states, in catechetical terms, that with a soft dread she hears a voice who answers her concerns regarding the universal problem of sin: "I kepe the ful sekirly". In L Julian aligns these revelatory words by Christ with the problem of sin: 'for as it was shewid that I should synne, ryht so was the comforte shewid: sekirnes and kepyng for al myn evyn cristen'. Julian's commission to write for the common good is therefore intimately concerned with the problem of sin and the way in which her revelation can give ease and comfort to all by revealing how, even in sin, God will 'kepe the ful sekirly'.

In her book, Margery Kempe gives evidence of the extent to which Julian was known for her pastoral as well as her revelatory guidance. Margery describes how she was bidden by the Lord to visit an 'ankres' in the city of Norwich 'whyche hyte Dame Jelyan'. Purportedly, over a period of three days Margery …

> … schewyd hir the grace that God put in hir sowl of compunccyon, contricyon, swetnesse and devocyon, compassyon wyth holy meditacyon and hy contemplacyon, and ful many holy spechys and dalyawns that owyr Lord spak to hir sowle, and many wondirful revelacyons wheche she schewyd to the ankres to wetyn yf ther wer any

[21] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 38

> deceyte in hem, for the ankres was expert in swech thyngys and good cownsel cowd yevyn.[22]

This was not an unusual occurrence for Margery who described numerous occasions on which she sought out the guidance of clerics and spiritual advisers alike on her 'revelacyons' and devotions.[23] However, Margery gives us a rare insight into 'the sea of talk' of which Julian is seen to be a part.[24] Whilst it must be taken into account that Margery's portrayal of her conversation with Julian is gilded by a desire for spiritual justification, Julian's words still present invaluable evidence of the type of advice and guidance she was perceived to give at her anchorhold window. [25]

In a patchwork of words which piece together terms and images identifiable with Julian's own writing but also with other devotional texts of the late fourteenth century, Margery recalls that Julian did not just validate and affirm Margery's life but went on to teach her about the work of the Holy Ghost in establishing the soul in charity. [26] Couched in catechetical language, Margery records Julian speaking about the 'yyftys of God' and that 'whan God visyteth a creatur wyth terys of contrisyon, devosyon, er compassyon, he may and

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[22] Windeatt (ed.), *The Book of Margery Kempe*, p. 120, ll. 1337-43.
[23] *Ibid., passim.*
[24] The phrase 'sea of talk' was coined by Felicity Riddy in Riddy, ''Publication' before Print', p. 48.
[25] Hirsch argues that the section in which Margery recounts her visit to Julian was constructed by a scribe in John C. Hirsch, 'Author and Scirbe in *The Book of Margery Kempe', Medium Aevum,* 44 (1975), pp. 145-50. Here at p. 145. Johnson argues that Margery had more control over her text in Johnson, 'The Trope of the Scribe', p. 835.
[26] Watson suggests that Julian was still in the process of writing her long text at the time of Margery's visit and Margery remembers 'paraphrase of fragments of the *Revelation*': Watson, 'The Composition of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*', p. 82. Whereas Ward and McAvoy both believe Julian had completed her life's work by the time of Margery's visit in 1413: Sister Benedicta Ward, 'Lady Julian of Norwich and her Audience: 'Mine Even-Christian'' in *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism*, ed. by Geoffrey Rowell (Wantage: IKON, 1992), pp. 47-63 [hereafter Ward, 'Lady Julian of Norwich and her Audience: 'Mine Even-Christian']. Here at p. 52. See also Liz Herbert McAvoy, ''And Thou, to whom this Booke Shall Come': Julian of Norwich and Her Audience, Past, Present and Future' in *Approaching Medieval English Anchoritic and Mystical Texts*, ed. by Dee Dyas, Valerie Edden and Roger Ellis (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), pp. 101-13 [hereafter McAvoy, 'And Thou, to whom this Booke Shall Come']. Here at p. 102. Baker also recognizes echoes of the text in Margery's account: Baker, *From Vision to Book* (Princeton: University Press, 1994), p. 3. Colledge and Walsh argue that the resonances of *The Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God* and *Qui Habitat* within Julian's response are evidence of Julian's learning: Colledge and Walsh (eds.), *A Book of Showings*, p. 38.

owyth to levyn that the Holy Gost is in hys sowle'.[27] Her final advice to Margery is to accept the 'schame and repref that y have in the world' with the virtue of patience. Where Riddy presents Julian as concerned with the 'ongoing urban discussion of love' amongst late fourteenth-century Norwich citizens, Margery's conversation reveals that the 'sea of talk' out of which Julian's texts emerge, and were then cast back, is not only concerned with revelations of love but also with the life of virtue and penance.[28]

For scholars, such as Staley, the confident tone which L exhibits in penitential and pastoral matters led Julian into a problematic relationship with 'holy church', around which she had to navigate and carefully express her revelatory insights.[29] However, within her text Julian consistently denies that it is her wish to set up her revelations as an authority within or against the church.[30] Instead, in L, she emphasizes the unity of her revelation with the teachings of the church. This can be seen in chapter 9 of L:

> But in althing I leve as holy church levith, prechith and techith; for the feith of holy church the which I had aforn hand understonden and, as I hope, by the grace of God wilfully kept in use and custome, stode continualy in my sight, willing and meneing never to receive onything that might be contrary therunto. And with this entent I beheld the shewing with al my diligens; for in al this blissid shewing I beheld it as one in Gods meneyng.[31]

This passage suggests that, far from 'carefully distinguishing between the faith of the church … and her experience of revelation', as Staley suggests, Julian in fact brings both church orthodoxy and her experience together.[32] The passage begins with a dogmatic statement of

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[27] Windeatt (ed.), *The Book of Margery Kempe*, p. 121, ll. 1361-3.
[28] Riddy, ''Publication' before Print', pp. 47-8.
[29] Staley, 'Julian of Norwich and the Crisis of Authority', pp. 142-44. Simon Tugwell similarly argues that in L Julian exhibits an authoritative voice which is able to address the church as a whole in Tugwell, *Ways of Imperfection*, p. 189.
[30] Jantzen is shocked by the way Julian apparently complied and colluded with a 'bad church', rather than question and challenge it: Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*, pp. 180-83.
[31] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, pp. 10-11.
[32] Staley, 'Julian of Norwich and the Crisis of Authority', p. 144.

belief but this soon shifts from dogma to faith. As we have seen in chapter 57, for Julian, faith is that which flows from God and 'therof comen al othir goods be which we arn led and savid'.[33] The sacraments are seen as channels of faith, bestowing grace upon the soul and through which the Holy Ghost acts within the life of virtue to keep the soul 'ful sekirly'.

In her expression of faith Julian could be seen to come close to the common association of the heresy of Free Spiritism, which disconnects faith from the church and depicts mystical experience as that which connects the soul to God, bypassing the life and teachings of the church.[34] Such a reading necessitates an interpretation of Julian's statement (above) as an unsatisfactory justification of unorthodox visions. However, a more plausible interpretation of the above passage is that Julian is not setting up faith as a gatekeeper that filters out any unorthodox visions.[35] Rather, Julian presents faith as that which is manifested in the teachings of the church through her own 'use and custome'. Her revelations are therefore not separate from faith but another manifestation of God's goodness, alongside and within that of the church and catechetical life. Hence she ends the passage by affirming that the faith of the church and her revelation were one, in God's meaning. As if to emphasize this Julian erased from S any literary device, however modest which would detract from her message that the revelation was part of the gift of faith and intimately connected with the everyday pastoral life of the church.

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[33] See page 176 above.

[34] This herectical thinking of the late-medieval period was prevalent in the Low Countries and characterized by the thought of Marguerite Porete. For scholarship on the Free Spirit movement see: Robert E. Lerner, *The Heresy of the Later Middle Ages* (London: University of California Press, 1972); M. D. Lambert, *Medieval Heresy. Popular Movements from Bogomil to Hus* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977); Gordon Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages: The Relation of Heterodoxy to Disent c. 1250- c. 1450*, vol. 1 (Manchester: University Press, 1967). Scholars who argue that Julian's speculative mysticism could have made her more vulnerable to charges of Free Spiritism than Lollardy include: Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, pp. 297-323 and Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, p. 20.

[35] In his commentary of this passage Watson sees faith as an allegorical figure which filters out thought and perception in Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 156, n. 20-21.

When S and L are held in parallel in this way it becomes clear that Julian's understanding of her revelations, in relation to the teaching of the church, changed over time. This development in thought can be seen most clearly by examining the significance of a passage in S that is omitted from L. In section 13 of S Julian makes a statement, which is typical of her seemingly compliant and submissive attitude to holy church (in S), in contrast to her confident sense of authority within L:

> Neverthelesse Jhesu in this vision enfourmede me of alle that me neded. I saye nought that me nedes na mare techinge. For oure lorde, with the shewinge of this, hase left me to haly kyrke; and I am hungery and thirstye and nedy and sinfulle and freele, and wilfully submittes me to the techinge of haly kyrke, with alle mine evencristen, into the ende of my life.[36]

This passage is in direct contrast to the extract from chapter 9 of L (above), where Julian articulated the unity between the teachings of the church and her revelation through faith.[37] In S, the church and Julian's revelation are portrayed as distinctly separate to one another: Julian has received her vision from Christ but now she is 'left' in the keeping of holy church. In S, Christ is depicted as absent from his church. The context of this passage in S is poignant, as it forms part of the section where Julian wrestles with the problem of sin. Christ has spoken to her and revealed that 'I it am that haly kyrke preches the and teches the'. But Julian realizes that what prevents her from seeing and knowing this, is sin: 'And so I beheld generallye in us and alle'. Julian has all the teaching she needs about the nature of Christ's church, and his presence within it, but her experience of it, at this point, is as a sinful and frail child who has been abandoned.

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[36] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 91, ll. 39-44.
[37] See above pp. 221-2.

Julian's restatement of Christ's words in chapter 34 of L, make a stark contrast to her attitude in S above. The chapter opens with a description of the 'privityes' that God not only wills to be hidden but also 'privytes to us for our blyndnes and our onknowyng'. It is sin that has blinded us to the knowledge and sight of God within his church. In revelatory language Julian goes on to describe how God will reveal all that is 'spedefule to us to wetyn and to knowen'. Julian no longer depicts this revelation as separate from the church but rather 'al the prechyng and techyng of holy church' is part of that revelation by God. It is in this context that God desires men and women to …

> … mytyly and mekely and wilfully (wisely) taken the prechyng and techyng of holy church; for it is his holy church; he is the ground, he is the substance, he is the techyng, he is the techer, he is the leryd, he is the mede wherefor every kynd soule travellith; and this is knowen and shall be knowen to every soule to which the Holy Gost declarith it. And hope sothly that al those that seke this he shal spedyn, for they seky God. [38]

The initial words of Christ have been expanded so that the teaching of the church and the person of Christ have become incorporated into each other. Julian makes a strong affirmation that it is in and through holy church that the 'privityes' of God are seen and known. As if to reaffirm this, the language Julian uses is that of the catechetical gift of wisdom, the highest of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Through the catechetical life of virtue and the penitential thwarting of sin by the Holy Ghost, the soul comes to that state where it may, in meekness and wisdom, have sight of the presence of Christ within his church and teachings, and that even in sin he is kept 'ful sekirly'. Julian humbly recognizes that there are many 'that never had shewing ne sight but of the comen teching of holy church', but who, nevertheless, love

[38] Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 227, ll. 12-17. The triad of 'mytyly, mekely and wisely' is found in the **P** manuscript and corresponds to chapter 8 where the context is comparable. The Sloane manuscript has 'mytyly and mekely and wilfully'but in other forms of this triad 'mekely' is replaced with 'wisely' ie. chapters 19 and 43. 'Wysely' is therefore the most consistent reading of this triad. See Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 400, n. 12-13.

God better than she. Yet, for those who, like herself, 'nedeth comfort' regarding the problem of sin she writes 'generally in comfort of us alle'.[39]

'drawing of our herts'

In chapter 86 of L Julian gives a summary of what she perceives to be the reason for her revelation:

> for trewly I saw and understode in our lords mening that he shewid it for he will have it knowen more than it is, in which knowing he will give us grace to loven him and clevyn to him; for he beholdith his hevenly tresure with so grete love on erth that he will give us more light and solace in hevenly ioye in drawing of our herts, for sorow and merkness which we arn in.[40]

In his article 'The Colours of Contemplation', Vincent Gillespie tracks Julian's journey towards the light: from seeing and being shown, from knowing to understanding and finally to simply beholding. [41] In the wink of an eye Julian's focus jumps from herself to God and back again until eventually her gaze comes to rest not so much on, but within, the beholding of God. In this section I consider the extent to which this journey is a penitential one from the comfort of the 'common light', into the 'merkness' of absence through sin, to the catechetical light and solace of beatific 'hevenly ioye'. I ask, 'to what extent can L be read as a text that seeks to draw the heart from the 'sorrow and merkness which we are in' by altering the reader's attitude towards sin and confession?'

[39] Both Ward and McAvoy conclude that Julian's intended audience is universal: Ward, 'Lady Julian of Norwich and her Audience: 'Mine Even-Christian', p. 56 and McAvoy, 'And Thou, to whom this Booke Shall Come', p. 113.
[40] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 102.
[41] Gillespie, 'The Colours of Contemplation', pp. 7-28.

The performance aspect of Julian's writing has long been associated with the opening words of chapter 86 where she stated that 'this booke is begunne be Gods gift and his grace, but it is not yet performid, as to my syte'. As scholars have argued, these words point to the didactic quality of Julian's writing which not only displays a person who is exploring the meaning of her own revelation but also seeks to draw the reader into her text.[42] Analysis of Julian's motivation for this has varied amongst scholars: Oliver Davies suggests that Julian's didactic text was the best medium by which to invite her reader into a similar process of seeing, knowing and beholding, which aimed to bring both her and her reader to the 'stillness of understanding'.[43] Maggie Ross, however, argues that Julian's work creates a textual space into which she invites her reader to enter, as 'a virtual anchorhold for the heart' rather than seeking to recreate the gift of beholding itself.[44] Both scholars approach Julian's text as a means through which she sought to articulate, if not impart, her revelation. The reader is invited into the textual world to engage with her sights, thoughts and questions; to follow in her footsteps so they may come to the same knowing as her. The performance of Julian's texts can therefore be seen as an act through which the reader is able to prepare themselves to enter into an understanding and beholding which reaches beyond the confines of the text.

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[42] Scholars who argue that these words refer to the didactic nature of her text include: Watson and Jenkins (eds.), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 378, ns. 1&2; Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ*, pp. 191-2; Gillespie, ''[S]he do the police in different voices'', p. 207; Dutton, *Julian of Norwich: The Influence of Late-Medieval Devotional Compilations*, p. 171. However, Colledge and Walsh associate the phrase with the Christians' 'performance' of their faith through contemplation: Colledge and Walsh, *A Book of Showings*, p. 731, n. 2. Crassons uses the phrase to open an article on medieval drama, interpreting it as a directive by Julian to put her teachings into practise: Kate Crasson, 'Performance anxiety and Watson's Vernacular Theology' in *English Language Notes*, 44 (2006), pp. 95-102. Here at p. 95. There is an interpretation of Julian's words implied in Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ*, p. 201. See also Staley, 'The Penitential Psalms', p. 243. Windeatt interprets it as a statement of the provisional nature of Julian's text: Windeatt, 'Julian of Norwich and her Audience', p. 17. The same is assumed by his quotation of the phrase to open an article on textual transmission: Windeatt, 'Julian's Second Thoughts', p. 116, whereas for Baker it refers to the incomplete nature of Julian's experience: Baker, *From Vision to Book*, p. 137. See also: Robertson, 'Julian of Norwich's 'Modernist Style', p. 139; McCormack, 'Reading God', p. 109; Watson, 'The Trinitarian Hermeneutic', p. 98; Windeatt, 'The Art of Mystical Loving', p. 69; Davies, 'Transformational Processes', p. 50; Ross, 'Behold not the Cloud of Experience', pp. 48-49

[43] Davies, 'Transformational Processes', p. 50.

[44] Ross, 'Behold not the Cloud of Experience', pp. 48-9. This 'performative' approach to mystical texts is identified by Louise Nelstrop, *Christian Mysticism*, pp. 14-16.

As we have seen, within the vernacular manuals, it was this same performance of the text that sought to enable the penitent to prepare their own heart for confession.[45] As judge and questioner, the penitent used the text only as a prompt and guide so that, when she sat before her confessor, a full, true and therefore valid, confession could be given. Thus, the manual text was used as a medium of preparation but, by the self-understanding that it engendered, the power of the text was transported into, and validated at, the act of confession. This approach to text was not unique to catechetical manuals. In her study of *Book to a Mother*, *Fervor Amoris* and *Abbey of the Holy Ghost*, Nicole Rice identifies spiritual works that enabled the lay reader to move beyond the catechetical life of virtue in order to explore the contemplative experience.[46] However, as Rice notes, these were works 'written for readers in the world and they seek to draw them back to the world on newly rigorous terms' rather than encourage them into a contemplative lifestyle.[47] They are therefore texts which sought to bring a new depth and understanding as well as spiritual rigour to their present penitential life.

This notion of spiritual preparation through texts that were written in order to alter how penitent souls understood their daily devotional practices illuminates our understanding of the nature of L as a work that seeks to refocus the struggling soul. This can be seen particularly clearly in chapter 45, where Julian enters on the discussion of the judgement of sin. Having described the properties of the soul in the previous chapter and the way in which these properties enable the soul to 'doith that it was made for: it seith God, it beholdyth God and it lovyth God', Julian differentiates between God's judgement, which looks upon 'oure kynde substance', and man's judgement, which is governed by the changeable sensuality of his fallen nature. This second form of judgement is unlike the 'ferme and deepe iugement of

[45] See page 96 above.
[46] Rice, *Lay Piety and Religious Discipline*, p. x.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. ix.

God' as it shifts and changes in degree, making it chaotic and unreliable. At this point Julian identifies no conflict between these two judgements or 'domes', for through the work of Christ entering the sensuality of this world, the 'herd and grevous' aspect of the second dome is reformed by mercy and grace. Therefore 'these ii be thus accordid and onyd, yet it shal be knowen, both, in hevyn without end'. Thus the judgement revealed in her revelation is that according to the divine justice of God, which can only fully be known in heaven.

The text then shifts away from this beholding of divine judgement to that of human judgement. It is as if Julian removes God from his seat as Judge and in his place sets herself. Her vision of God's judgement has been given as a divine revelation, but now Julian considers judgement from her own human perspective. In a way Julian is echoing what lay at the heart of the problem with confession, namely the overwhelming reliance placed upon the penitent to judge their own souls before they came before their Lord. Her text echoes the nature and consequences of this human judgement, for as soon as she takes the role of judge within the text, her sensual and changeable nature splits the unity of the vision of God's judgement into warring factions:

> The first dome, which is of God rythfulhed, and that is of his hey, endless life; and this is that faire swete dome that was shewid in al the fair revelation in which I saw him assigne to us no manner of blame. And thow this was swete and delectabil, yet only in the beholdyng of this I cowd nowte be full esyd, and that was for the dome of holy church which I aforn vunderstond and was continuly in my syte. And therefore be this dome methowte me behovyd neds to know me a synner, and be the same dome I understode that synners arn worthy sumtime blame and wreth; these ii cowth I not se in God.[48]

Julian has shown the nature of judgement for both God and man and how they accord with each other, but this is not the experienced reality for her reader. Instead, she shatters her

[48] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 48.

vision into two opposing and irreconcilable 'domes' that reflects the dichotomy experienced by the sensual and changeable nature of the reader towards sin.[49] Whilst the dome of God 'assigne[s] to us no manner of blame', yet from the dome of holy church 'methowte me behovyd neds to know me a sinner'.[50]

The image of the servant tripping over himself into the pit of 'mirknes' in his desire to do the lord's bidding, within the following chapter, expresses this loss of ease and comfort. On the one hand Julian is describing her own changeable way of judging and yet, on the other hand, she has deftly brought the reader to a seemingly reasoned yet chaotic fallen judgement of herself and the church that lay at the heart of the catethetical problem of confession. As if recounting a past event, Julian writes:

> Then was this my desire: that I myte sen in God in what manner that the dome of holy church herin techyth is trew in his syte, and how it longyth to me sothly to knoyn it, wherby thei myte both be savid, so as it wer worshipfull to God and ryte way to me.[51]

Out of the 'merkness' Julian calls for sight so that she may know and then behold once again how to judge sin correctly. It is by means of this human judgement of the 'sorow and merkness which we are in' that Julian will draw her reader in the following chapters.

The answer Julian receives from her cry for help is the example of a lord and a servant. The example has been described as many things, not least a re-writing of the Augustinian

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[49] Scholars who consider the two 'domes' include: Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ*, pp. 149-53; Turner, *Julian of Norwich, Theologian*, pp. 68-82; Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*, p. 182; Mastro, 'Juliana of Norwich: Parable of the Lord and Servant – Radical Orthodoxy', pp. 84-93; Baker, *From Vision to Book*, pp. 84-85; Staley, 'Julian of Norwich and the Crisis of Authority', p. 145; Deryck Hanshell, 'A Crux in the Interpretation of Dame Julian', *Downside Review*, vol. 92 (October, 1974), pp. 77-91.
[50] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 48.
[51] *Ibid*.

theology of the Fall.[52] But lying at the heart of the example is the problem of sin and how to perceive it. In her article on 'The Penitential Psalms' Staley reveals the extent to which the example can be read as a conversion text that aims to bring the reader to a 'new awareness of love'.[53] To a certain extent this is true. However, rather than simply 'ignoring the terms of punishment' for sin as Staley states, the example enables the reader to come to the point of seeing and knowing whereby they can behold that 'it longyth to man mekely to accusen hymselfe, and it longith to the propir goodnes of our lord God curtesly to excusen man'.[54] It prepares the reader to live with the distortion of double vision.

Chapter 51 begins with a statement about the nature of seeing this unusual vision. Julian remarks that it was 'shewid double in the lord, and the syte was shewid dowble in the servant'. Right at the start we are presented with a dichotomy of perspectives: bodily and ghostly, which has troubled her peace and ease over the judgement of sin. Julian begins by focusing our sight on the figure of the servant and the 'merkness' of the slade into which he has fallen. She dwells on the seven pains the servant endures, which closely resemble the seven contraries that are suffered by souls in hell, as is found in the *Pricke of Conscience*.[55] Though Julian is recalling the language and imagery of hell, her servant is not in hell but suffering the shame of sin. Julian has placed herself in the judicial role of the penitent who read, or had heard, penitential texts that enabled them to scrutinize sin and the ways it mars the soul. She presents herself, and her reading of the example, with the bodily eyes of human judgement in their preparation for confession. Later, Christ directly tells Julian not to dwell

[52] See Baker, *From Vision to Book*, pp. 83-106.
[53] Staley, 'The Penitential Psalms', p. 241. Scholars who focus on the love aspect of the example include: Baker, *From Vision to Book*, pp. 83-106; Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich: Mystic and Theologian*, pp. 190-201; Nuth, *Wisdom's Daughter*, pp. 115-6; Hide, *Gifted Origins to Graced Fulfillment*, pp. 115-30; Magill, *Mystic or* Visionary, pp. 117-9.
[54] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 62; Staley, 'The Penitential Psalms', p. 244.
[55] Hanna and Wood (eds.), *Pricke of Conscience*, pp. 216-221, ll. 7872-8075 describes seven shames which are contrary to the seven bodily blisses in heaven, they are: darkness of the body, heaviness from sin, feebleness, servitude, sickness, devils and hell and Julian describes bruising, heaviness, febilnesse, blindness, unable to rise, feeling alone and grievous place.

overmuch on such things, but here, in the example, she acts out the penitential teaching that has led to a sense of dread even after confession.[56]

The process of refocussing our eyes begins as Julian turns to the figure of the lord. At this point he is hazy and unfocussed in outline, not the bold and colourful figure that he will be presented as later in the text.[57] Thus, Julian directs our gaze away from his opaque form and, instead, towards his gaze of 'double cher':

> On outward, ful mekely and myldely with grete ruth and pety, and this was of the first; another inward, more gostly, and this was shewid with a ledyng of my understandyng into the lord, which I saw hym heyly enioyen, for the worshipful resting and nobleth that he will and shall bryng his servant to be his plentevous grace.[58]

By this point the example has given us sight of two views or 'domes' of the servant in his sin. First, whilst the servant languishes in a blinded state, Julian looks upon him as one who peers into hell to consider, not the form and condition of sin but its punishment. In a sense Julian has gone outside her penitential remit and not only considers sin so that it can be confessed and forgiven but contemplates the fallen servant who suffers from the pain and punishment of sin.

> And anon he fallith in a slade and takith ful grete sore. And than he gronith and monith and waylith and writhith, but he ne may rysen ne helpyn hymself be no manner wey. And of all this the most myscheif that I saw him in was faylyng of comforte; for he cowde not turne his face to loke upon his loving lord, which was to hym ful nere, in whom is ful comfort; but as a man febil and onwise for the tyme, he entended to his felyng, and induryd in wo, in which wo he suffrid vii grete peynes.[59]

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[56] 'he wille not that we besy us gretly aboute oure accusing, ne he wille not that we be wrechedfulle on oureselfe', Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Divine Love*, chapter 79.
[57] The colour is commented upon by Staley, 'The Penitential Psalms', p. 240; the significance of colour in the *Revelations* as a whole is explored in Gillespie, 'The Colours of Contemplation', pp. 23-26.
[58] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 55.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 54.

This is her perception of the *dome* of the church in confession. Secondly, and in contrast, is the beholding of the lord, which itself has two aspects: one outward of 'grete ruth and pety' and the other inward of 'worshipful resting'. Both of them are concerned, not with judgement and punishment, but with forgiveness and restoration. This is the *dome* of the deep judgement of God. Whilst sin is seen to be its own punishment there is however, still a clear differentiation for Julian between the dome of sin and punishment experienced by the servant and the 'glad cher' of the lord which is 'lovand and longand to brynen us to bliss'.

As Julian states, this was only the beginning of the teaching whereby she might 'come to knowing in what manner he beholdeth us in oure sinne'. The example then moves into radiant technicolour as the gaze of the lord becomes an active force and the two aspects of his beholding merge into a 'semely medlur' that transmute into the person of Christ.

> The merciful beholdyng of his lofly cher fulfilled al erth and descendid downe with Adam into helle, with which continuant pite Adam was kepte from endles deth. And this mercy and pite dwellyth with mankind into the tyme we com up into hevyn.[60]

The example presents the 'double cher' of the lord piercing the 'merkness of our sorow' and the blindness caused by sin. Through this dynamic act by God in the person of Christ, Julian's mode of sight shifts from simply seeing to beholding. This opens up Julian's understanding of the series of events she has seen enacted before her, as they no longer simply represent the fall and punishment of Adam but now reveal the manner in which God has judged and dealt with sin through the Incarnation and Passion of Christ. It is interesting that at no point does Julian present God's judgement as simply overthrowing or discrediting the dome of holy church.[61] Instead, the dome of holy church is still seen as integral to the

[60] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 57.
[61] Baker sees Julian resolving 'the dialectic contradiction between the Augustinian ideology of guilt and her own vision' in Baker, *From Vision to Book*, p. 105.

dome of God within the person of Christ. This can be seen if we look more closely at her beholding of the servant.

Through the dynamic 'double cher' of the lord in Christ, Julian herself comes to behold the servant in a new way, with a 'double understondyng: on withouten, another within'. This is epistomized in Julian's description of the servant as he stands before the lord:

> Outward, he was clad simply as a labourer which wer disposid to travel, and he stode ful nere the lord, not even fornempts hym, but in partie asyd, that on the lift. His clothyng was a white kirtle, sengil, old and al defacid, died with swete of his body, streyte fittyng to hym and short, as it were an handful benethe the knee, bar, semand as it shuld sone be weryd up, redy to be raggid and rent. And in this I mervelid gretly, thynkand: "This is now an onsemely clothyng for the servant that is so heyly lovid to stondyn afor so worship lord!" And inward, in him was shewid a ground of love, which love he had to the lord was even like to the love that the lord had to hym.[62]

Julian's judgement of the servant has gained a new dimension from the one that peered at him in the mire of sin. Whilst an outer perception sees sin as that which defaces his robe and rightly condemns it, now Julian's scrutiny of his robes leads her into the inner perception of beholding God's love. In the figure of Christ the servant, the perceived dichotomy of human judgement and God's judgement are brought together, not so much to cancel each other out but that they may be understood in the light of each other. Through contemplating Christ, Julian attains that double vision that enables her to behold sin within the divine justice and love of God.

The example can therefore be understood as a text that seeks to alter the reader's perspective on sin: to move the reader from the self-judging scrutiny of sin, which undermined the sacramental nature of confession, to beholding Christ, who reveals sin from the perspective

[62] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 57.

of the deep judgement of God's love. From this double perspective, sin is not simply eradicated or subsumed by God's love, as Staley argues.[63] Rather, in her final vision, Adam's old kirtle is made 'white and bryte and of endless cleness' but it is also a 'semely medlur which is so mervelous that I can it not discrien'. Sin has become incorporated by Christ into the Trinity, so that now the servant is no longer blinded and trapped within the mire, or standing before the lord in judgement but seated beside him 'in endless rest and peace'.[64]

As the scribal addition to **S1** rightly warns: 'beware thou take not on thing after thy affection and liking and leve another' for, in the example, Julian prepares the reader for how they are to view their sin in order that they may more fully understand how Christ handles it within and through the church. In chapter 52 Julian begins to relate the matter of her example to the daily devotional life of 'mine even cristen'. Whilst God's beholding was a marvellous 'medlur' of compassion and restoration, for 'oure evencristen' every day is a 'medlur' of sweetness at God's mercy but also of the sorrow of Adam's falling 'in which we arn made derke and so blinde that onethys we can take ony comforte'. Julian's answer to this chaos of sin is not to retreat into a vision of love but rather to return to holy church and the catechetical life of virtue:

> And if we be our blyndhede and our wretchednesse ony time fallen, that we redily risen, knowand the swete touching of grace, and wilfully amenden us upon techyng of holy chuirch after that the synne is grevous, and gon forwith to God in love; and neither on the on syd fallen over low, enclynand to despeyr, ne on that other syd ben over rekles as if we gove no fors, but nakidly knowing our feblehede, witeand that we may not stond a twincklyng of an eye but be keping of grace, and reverently cleven to God, on him only trostyng.[65]

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[63] Staley, 'The Penitential Psalms', p. 244.
[64] The Trinitarian trope in the Ormesby Psalter with which Alexandra Barratt likens this image is associated with judgement as it depicts the sharing and handing over the power of judgement of the Father and the Son in Alexandra Barratt, ''No such sitting': Julian Tropes the Trinity' in *A Companion to Julian of Norwich*, ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008), pp. 42-52. Here at p. 47.
[65] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 62.

In this passage Julian brings together the language of her example with that of confession. Her text has prepared the reader to behold the daily process of penance with new eyes. From the realm of revelation she sends the reader back into the penitential life of the church with a renewed understanding and vision that it is through this means that their sin is dealt with and the love of God revealed.

In her article called 'Julian the Solitary', Benedicta Ward authoritatively states that:

> *The Revelations* are not, like every other devotional piece of the time, a description of the Crucified written to invoke pity and repentance; they are not in the tradition of the *Stabat Mater*; they are serious theology of the love that is God.[66]

From the evidence of this thesis I argue that this statement is only partly true: Julian's texts do not seek to evoke tears of contrition from her vision of the cross, but neither can they be read purely as a theological treatise on the nature of God, who is love.[67] Instead, they are a complex interweaving of narrative, reflection and didactic thought that not only seeks to articulate and understand her 'shewing of love', but also attempts to draw the reader into that realm of measured sight where the 'ii domes' or judgements on sin by God and the church are seen as integral to each other.[68]

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[66] Sister Ward, 'Julian the Solitary', p. 29.

[67] Cate Gunn challenges the absoluteness of Benedicta's conclusion to the nature of Julian's long text, in Gunn, 'Images of Medieval Norwich', p. 37.

[68] Scholars who have revealed the complex richness and strata of narrative within Julian's long text include: Gillespie,''[S]he do the police in different voices'', pp. 192-207; McCormack, 'Reading God', p. 99 and 109; Windeatt, 'Julian of Norwich and her Audience', p. 12; Dutton, *Julian of Norwich. The Influence of Late-Medieval Devotional Compilations*, pp. 123-60; Watson, 'The Trinitarian Hermeneutic', p. 92 and 95; Riddy, 'Julian of Norwich and Self-Textualization', p. 104. The participatory nature of her text is argued by Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ*, pp. 191-201; Staley, 'The Penitential Psalms', pp. 221-69; Davies, 'Transformational Processes', pp. 39-52; Windeatt, 'The Art of Mystical Loving', pp. 55-71; and Robertson, 'Julian of Norwich's 'Modernist Style'', pp. 139-53.

CONCLUSION

In chapter 79 of L Julian writes:

> And whan that we be fallen be frelte or blyndhede, than our curtes lord touchith us, stireth us and clepith us; and than will he that we seen our wretchidness and mekely ben it aknowen. But he will not we abiden thus, ne he will not that we besyn us gretly about our accusing, nor he will not that we ben wretchfull of ourselfe; but he will that we hastily entenden to him.[69]

This thesis concludes that Julian's words are in response to the pastoral and penitential concerns of the late fourteeth and early fifteenth centuries. As we have seen in chapter 2, these concerns were focussed around the responsibility of the penitent, which had steadily grown in significance from the privatization of penance by the Irish manuals through the reforms following the Fourth Lateran Council's decrees to the emphaisis placed on the internal reckoning of the heart by the vernacular manuals of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. By the late fourteenth and early fifteenth-century social commentators, such as Langland, as well as pastoral writers including Walter Hilton and William Flete, reflect a climate in which the pastoral processes of the church were increasingly unable to give those burdened by a sense of sin reassurance of forgiveness. It is within this penitential climate of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century that Julian's S and L are dated in the first chapter.

Utilizing a contextual approach to Julian's writings, in chapter 3 I demonstrated the extent to which her work reflects the repercussions of focusing on the role of the penitent within confession in her portrayal of the distorting and blinding depiction of sin that traps devout souls in dread and self accusations, preventing them from seeking out their lord. By considering Julian's text in the light of vernacular and catechetical manuals, of which Julian

[69] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 96.

would have had a working knowledge through her own penitential routine, I establish that her writing utilizes their language and imagery to reassert the role of the pastoral offices of the church in dealing with the problem of how to handle sin. This is demonstrated by her use of three images. The first is the imagery of treasure through which Julian reveals the penitential nature of the atoning work of Christ, and the participation of the penitent within this saving act during penance. In this way Julian shifts the focus from the penitent's responsibility to deal with their sin to the work of Christ. She thereby reassures those burdened by doubt and fear that not only is their sin dealt with during penance, but also that the meritorious nature of Christ's saving work is showered upon them through the sacraments of 'holy church'.

The theology that the price of sin has been paid and is accessible to the penitent through confession is further developed in Julian's use of the second image of motherhood, through which she addresses the lack of confidence within the confessional encounter during the late fourteenth century. I deduce that, by locating the motherhood of Christ within the sacraments of holy mother church, Julian reveals the extent to which the confessional forum is a revelatory encounter with Christ. In this way Julian, once again, refocuses the penitent on the nature of God's work within confession rather than their own efforts. Finally, Julian uses the third penitential image of remedy, which was based in the catechetical teaching of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and develops these gifts in order to emphasise the extent to which God not only inspires the penitential process but also through this process enables the penitent to 'behold' themselves in relation to their sin and to God. Through her development of the catechetical notion of 'trew mekeness' Julian addresses the devotional problem of a continuing sense of fear which lingers even after confession, and discloses the way in which penance is the means by which the Trinity continues to work within the soul to remedy the pastoral problem of sin.

I therefore determine that L not only reflects and addresses the penitential and catechetical climate of the late fourteenth century but also functions in terms of a penitential text, in the way it seeks to draw the reader from a state of self-judging dread to the light of faith that is able to look upon the teachings of the church with the measured eyes of the gift of wisdom. I conclude, in chapter 4, that, just as the penitential process sought to release the soul from the burden of sin, so L brings a sense of ease and comfort at the assurance that sins are forgiven and God's love made manifest through the everyday practices and prayers of holy church.

This exploration of Julian's penitential and catechetical context reveals a number of new insights into Julian's texts: firstly, that Julian is concerned with the pastoral issues of her day; secondly, that her texts address them; thirdly, that the nature and function of L can be described in penitential terms; and finally, that Julian's approach to the church is orthodox in the sense that she grounds her revelation on love and forgiveness within the pastoral processes that handled sin. The study has focussed on a contextual reading of Julian's works, in order to demonstrate the extent to which she reflects and addresses the penitential climate of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century. It therefore does not set out a systematic account of Julian's theology of sin and penance but instead considers these issues largely from a pastoral perspective. As a result, certain aspects of Julian's theology of penance are not explored, these include: the importance of the will or intent in confession and the notion of amends making or satisfaction, both of which have scope for further research. Similarly, the thesis focuses on the confessional process; it does not consider the question of indulgences or Julian's attitude towards hell. These omissions reveal the fruit that further study into Julian's penitential theology will bear.

For Julian there are three things that sustain humanity in this life:

> ‘the ist is use of manys reson naturall; the ii is commen teching of holy church; the thred is inward gracious werking of the Holy Gost; and these iii ben all of one God’.[70]

This thesis gives a new contribution to the meaning of these words, even though they are but an ABC of knowing.

[70] Glasscoe (ed.), *A Revelation of Love*, p. 97.

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