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Published Version

Taguchi, M. (1998) Cleanness and a hitherto unedited religious text in MS Pepys 2125. *Reading Medieval Studies*, XXIV. pp. 95-112. ISSN 0950-63129 Available at <https://centaur.reading.ac.uk/85039/>

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## *Cleanness* and a Hitherto Unedited Religious Text in MS Pepys 2125

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Item 3 in MS Pepys 2125, Magdalene College, Cambridge, is one of several hitherto unrecorded and unedited devotional writings preserved in the manuscript.<sup>1</sup> This sermon, or discourse, shows a particular resemblance to the medieval homily *Cleanness*. They employ the same images and metaphors in order to present the same biblical exempla. They also use similar rhetorical techniques. A comparison of these two texts will offer a key to a better understanding of this difficult work by the *Gawain*-poet.

This Pepysian manuscript is a collection of fourteenth century religious verse and prose, mostly in English, and includes such interesting texts as *The Chastising of God's Children*, *The Cleansing of Man's Soul*, *Speculum Ecclesie*, writings by Richard Rolle and Thomas Wimbleton's sermon at St Paul's Cross. The manuscript is also interesting because it includes a number of hitherto unedited texts. There is a strong possibility that these neglected texts also enjoyed a measure of popularity in the late fourteenth century and that examination of these texts will throw new light on studies of sources, manuscript-relationships and the religious life of people living in the late Middle Ages.

Item 3 develops around a penitential theme based on Job 10:20-22, where, according to the medieval interpretation, Job cries out for a respite so that he may repent of his sins before it is too late.<sup>2</sup> The discourse is styled in the form of a so-called 'ancient sermon' (sermon in traditional freer style, using narration and exempla) rather than that of a 'modern' or 'university sermon' (sermon associated with universities, elaborately designed with divisions and subdivisions according to *Artes Praedicandi*, manuals for structural composition of sermons).<sup>3</sup> The author repeatedly addresses the reader as 'brother', and refers to 'we' who 'forsooke þe wordle and þe delices of þe fflessh and al wordly wurshepe from the firste day þat we toke þe habit of religion' (f.49r). In view of the use of the vernacular in this manuscript, it is

also reasonable to suppose that Item 3 reflects religious themes currently popular and prevalent in the education of lay people. It has been pointed out, too, there are signs that 2125 was 'put together either by or for a male recluse, rather than a religious'.<sup>4</sup>

Item 3 and *Cleanness* agree in the following points:

- 1) Both use the parable of the Wedding Feast (Matt. 22).
- 2) Both use the metaphor of 'vessels'.
- 3) Both use the metaphor of 'clothing'.
- 4) Both use the metaphor of Christ as a lover/ bridegroom.
- 5) Both refer to the Incarnation and the First Advent.
- 6) Other parallels are found in the use of special terms, biblical passages and rhetorical techniques.

It is clear that the agreement between the two texts is extensive. The Parable of the Wedding Feast is a parable of the Last Judgement and therefore forms a suitable exemplum both for the penitential Item 3 and for *Cleanness*, in which the main theme of *visio dei* signifies entering the City of God. Item 3 also includes many other exempla, together with quotations from and references to the Bible, Church Fathers and saints' legends. In *Cleanness* too, the parable of the Wedding Feast looks as though it is merely a minor episode, employed for the sake of the clothing metaphor. It is significant, however, that almost all the elements in the Wedding Feast section in Item 3 are also found in the first and the middle sections of *Cleanness*.

Item 3 first refers briefly to Matt. 22:14 in f.41r: 'Ful meny þer beþ clepid, but fewe þer beþ saued'. Then in f.45r it goes into details of the parable, faithfully following the Bible from the point the master comes into the hall to greet his guests and notices a man in filthy clothes until the angry lord gives orders to throw the wretch into a dungeon. As in the case of *Cleanness*, which also cites the same Biblical verses, it is accompanied by a paraphrase of the clothing metaphor: 'charite', says the author of Item 3, 'is þe robe þat eche man nedith to be cloped with when he shal be clepit to entre to þe sposailles of þe kyng'.<sup>5</sup> *Cleanness* reminds its audience that the clothes represent what we have done in the past and that the lining of the clothes is made of what we think and shows if we really, truly follow God's Will:

Bot war þe wel, if þou wylt, þy wede3 ben clene,  
And honest for þe halyday, lest þou harme lache;

.....

Wich am þenne þy wede3 þou wrappe3 þe inne,  
 þat schal schewe hem so schene, schrowde of þe best  
 Hit am þy werke3 wyterly þat ou wro3t hae3,  
 And lyned with þe lykyng þat ly3e in þyn hert,....

(165-72)<sup>6</sup>

'Charity' in Item 3 corresponds to 'purity' in *Cleanness*. It clearly states that 'charity' purifies a man and, coupled with meekness of heart, grants a man to become a 'Vessel of Grace': 'if we be clene by verray charite and alle partes hol and sound by verey charite and deep and lowe by verey mekenesse, þen be we vessels to receyue þat precious licour, þat is þe grace of God' (f.45v). The *Cleanness* poet does not mention the Vessel of Grace or the Vessel of Wrath directly but it is clear that the three long stories of God's revenge are intended to provide concrete illustrations of the latter, while Noah, Abraham, Lot and Nebuchadnezzar represent types of the Vessel of Grace.

Item 3 explicitly asserts that the parable of the Wedding Feast is the parable of the wedding of Christ and Holy Church. The bride in the parable signifies the Church, whom Jesus Christ took in marriage when he entered the body of Mary. To attend this Marriage Feast means to undergo baptism through which the guest in turn becomes the bride in this pure and supreme marriage. Christ is standing at the door; so, in meekness, the bride should open the door, the heart, to him, as Christ urges in the Book of Love 'to a soule, as to his loue and to his spouse' (f.45v).

With this paradigm in view, the important role played by the middle passage in *Cleanness* emerges as closely related to the parable of the Wedding Feast. By the middle passage I mean the lines 1052-1148 which come between the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and Belshazzar's sacrilege. This passage at the centre of the poem first cites the *Roman de la Rose*, moves on to the scene of the Nativity, commends the pure life and the purifying power of Christ and ends with the exhortation to penance and purity. Its insertion into the stories of God's revenge seems somewhat abrupt at first sight. However, we can now see that it is a reiteration of the idea presented in the Wedding parable: spiritual marriage as the main prerequisite for the purity of heart and the sight of God. *Cleanness* borrows from the *Roman* to emphasise the element of love in the supreme relationship with God and advises the listener to imitate the lover-Christ (to please him) and to become pure. The joy of the Nativity scene represents the

bliss of an event that the whole world should celebrate; the Nativity is a manifestation of God's love and of the promise that the pure in heart will be blessed with the sight of God. Then Christ's own purity is immediately connected with his purifying, healing power. Christ healed those who came forward to him for help. In other words, Christ saves those who open the door to him. The purified soul is likened to the pearl and to the vessels of God, a comparison which serves as a bridge to the third main episode of the defilement of the God's vessels in Babylon.

Charlotte C. Morse has already pointed out that the *Cleanness* poet 'reiterates the goal of his listeners', that is to say attending the Wedding Feast as a bride of Christ, by introducing the Christ event in the middle of the poem. The relevance of the *Roman de la Rose* is therefore in giving 'advice appropriate to a lover'. Referring to Rabanus Maurus, Thomas Aquinas, etc., Morse also explains how the marriage of God and man 'begins with the Incarnation, when the uterus of the Virgin Mary becomes the marriage chamber' for that wedding.<sup>7</sup> Pepys 2125 Item 3 supports her view, showing that the parable of the Wedding Feast actually circulated in vernacular in combination with the ideas of spiritual marriage, the Incarnation and penance, and with a strong emphasis on the pseudo-romance relationship between God and man.

Looking at the structure of *Cleanness* in this perspective, we can describe its framework as supported by the parable of the Wedding Feast at the beginning and the Christ passage at the centre, both signifying spiritual marriage (Graph 1).

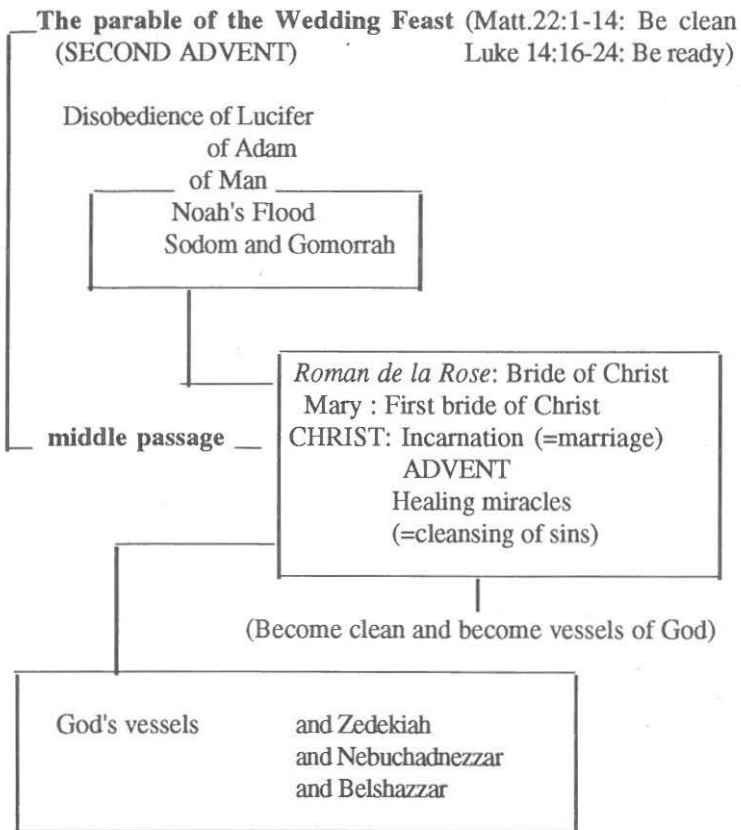
In the first half of the poem, the sin of the antediluvians and of Sodom and Gomorrah represents this-worldly impurity in general, which a true Christian has to abandon to become a bride of Christ. It is also important to remember that the unnatural carnal affairs in this section are contrasted to the pure and true love between God and man. There are mystical implications, therefore, in the passage where God tells Abraham about 'a kynde craft' (697) that he devised for true lovers:

Elle3 þay mo3t honestly ayþere oþer welde,  
 At a stulle stollen steuen vnstereð wyth sy3t,  
 Luf-lowe hem bytwene lasched so hote  
 Þat alle þe meschefe3 on mold mo3t hit not sleke.' (705-08)

The latter half of *Cleanness*, on the other hand, is balanced with the former by the vessel image introduced in the middle passage. It is not necessary to go into the details of the vessel image, which Charlotte C. Morse has elucidated in her illuminating critical works.<sup>8</sup> However, it is clear from Item 3 that the vessel image fits together with the clothing image and the parable of the Wedding Feast and that they are all used to develop a penitential theme.

Graph 1

THEME: 'Blessed are those whose hearts are pure; they shall see God'  
(Matt.5:8)



Now let us turn to other parallels in the two writings. The first thing to mention is the use of the same words and phrases. The 'filth of the flesh', for example, is one of the key images in *Cleanness* and it also appears frequently in Item 3. The idea that sins originate in the flesh, as opposed to the spirit, is discussed at length by Augustine,<sup>9</sup> and appears in many medieval writings. *The Parson's Tale*, for example, refers to the 'filth of the flesh' in a penitential context using Job 10:20-22.<sup>10</sup> In the case of Item 3 and *Cleanness* the 'filth of the flesh' is contrasted with outward beauty and associated with priesthood.

Opposed to the image of filth is the image of purity and this is described as wholeness and as having a flawless shape. Good vessels are of the kind described in Item 3, so 'if we be clene by verry charite and alle partes hol and sound by verry charite and deep and lowe by verry meknesse, þen be we vessels to receyue þat precious licour, þat is þe grace of God' (f.45v).<sup>11</sup> For the *Gawain*-poet the images of purity are the pearl and the Pentangle, seamless and endless, and therefore perfect. At the end of the middle passage the poet employs the image of the pearl in urging penance, the pearl of 'clene hwes' and 'of schap rounde,/ Wythouten faut other fylthe' (1119-22) shifting very smoothly to the image of God's vessels whose defilement in any form is never tolerated. Moreover, both authors emphasise the effect of contrition, saying that all the blemish, or the sins, can be 'washed' away by 'tears' (Item 3, f.46) or by 'wine' (*Cleanness*, 1125-28).

Also noteworthy is the way these texts employ familiar images in order to teach about divine truths. Item 3 seeks to show the relationship between God and human beings by using analogies of a great man and a king of England. In the same way the poet of *Cleanness* explains why one should not hurry to heaven without being purified through penance, by giving an example of a beggar in tattered clothes and with dirty hands who intruded into a noble man's hall and angered the lord. Then the poet moves on to the Matthean parable of the Wedding Feast, which itself uses the example of a rich man in order to teach about God.

Another interesting example of coincidence can be seen in the passages which the two texts quote from the Bible. As I pointed out earlier, both quote extensively from the parable of the Wedding Feast in Matthew, although the quotation in *Cleanness* is a little longer. And both make their Lucifer speak the same verses from Isa. 14:13-14.

There was a great need for penitential sermons and treatises in the Middle Ages and they all go back to the Bible, Church Fathers and other famous or popular writings. It is natural, therefore, that some of them share the same ideas, the same phraseology or the same logic. But parallels such as those which exist between Item 3 and *Cleanness* are hard to ignore, especially since the *Cleanness* poet is appreciated for his 'intelligent selection and combination of his Biblical material'.<sup>12</sup> I am not trying to prove that either Item 3 or *Cleanness* actually had the other as its immediate antecedent. It is however possible that both authors were familiar with the same group of penitential sermons or treatises. Alternatively the penitential theme of spiritual marriage using the parable of the Wedding Feast may have been far more popular than the readers of *Cleanness* generally assume or than the evidence of extant sermons suggests.<sup>13</sup>

Another evidence of the influence of religious writings on *Cleanness* is seen in its structural composition, which appears to be modelled on the pattern of a 'university sermon'. The parable of the Wedding Feast has a role comparable to the 'protheme' (expansion, or explanation by a second Biblical verse) in relation to the 'theme' (the Biblical text on which a sermon is based) of the sixth Beatitude.<sup>14</sup> Three examples (divisions) of the impurity follow: 1) Lucifer, 2) Adam, 3) Man. Two subdivisions for the third division are: A) Noah's Flood and B) Sodom and Gomorrah. The middle passage serves as the 'reiteration of the theme (and the protheme)' and urges contrition: to imitate Christ (the *Roman*) and to become clean. The rest of the story can be treated as the third sub-division of the third division: C) Vessels of God. This last subdivision is further divided into three sub-subdivisions: a) Zedekiah, b) Nebuchadnezzar, c) Belshazzar. Thus the 'thrynne wyses' (*Cl.* 1805) does not only refer to the three longer examples; the whole poem is in fact constructed according to a design of multiples of three, which could be outlined as follows:

[INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME]

- To have the right knowledge of purity is important.
- God detests filthy followers

False priests: 'inwith alle fylþe3'

[THEME]

Þe habel clene of his hert hapene3 ful fayre,  
For he schal loke on oure lorde with a bone chere.' (Matt. 5:8)



[INTRODUCTION TO THE PROTHEME]

- The parable of a filthy beggar at a nobleman's feast

[PROTHEME]

- The parable of the Wedding Feast (Marriage of Christ and Church; Matt. 22:1-14, Luke 14:16-24)

[DIVISIONS]

- God cannot tolerate the filth of the flesh

Example 1. the case of Lucifer

2. the case of Adam

3. the case of Man

[SUBDIVISIONS TO DIVISION 3]

A. Noah's Flood

B. Sodom and Gomorrah

[REITERATION OF THE THEME]

- Become clean

I. Imitate Christ and become His love (*Roman de la Rose*)

II. Christ's clean life

i. Incarnation

ii. Advent

iii. Cleansing power

III. Penitential guide

[SUBDIVISION TO DIVISION 3]

C. Vessels of God

[SUB-SUBDIVISIONS TO 3-C]

a. Zedekiah

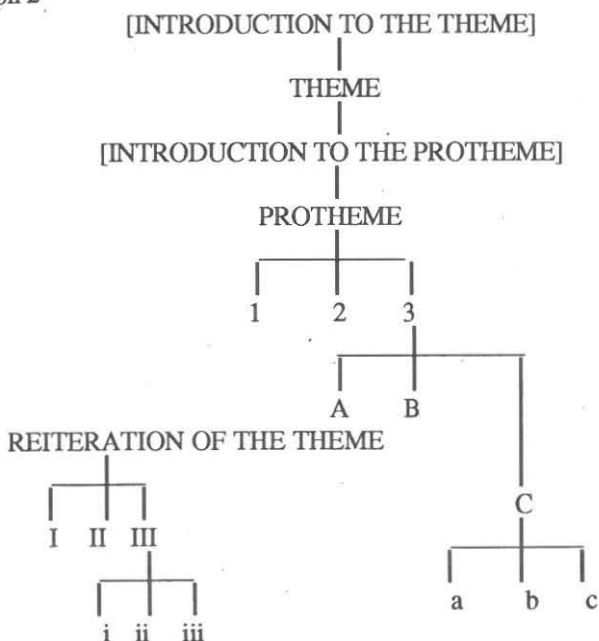
b. Nebuchadnezzar

c. Belshazzar

[CONCLUSION]

So an overview of the 'fayre forme<sup>3</sup>' of *Cleanness* (1.3) will look like this (Graph 2):

Graph 2



A comparison of the penitential sermon preserved in MS Pepys 2125 and *Cleanness* thus indicates some possible influences of late medieval religious teaching on *Cleanness*. Evidence shows the poet's familiarity with contemporary popular religious subjects, ranging from his scholarly knowledge of Latin sermons reflected in the poem's structure styled in imitation of an elaborate sermon, to the use of ideas and images which seem to have been well known among laity.<sup>15</sup> But this is only a glimpse of what seems to be the reality of the notoriously difficult (or flawed) poem. Most certainly more will be revealed about late medieval literary masterpieces through the study of such vernacular religious texts as Item 3. However unattractive or unsophisticated they may look to the eyes of the modern readers, they are important testimony of the religious life of the average people in the late Middle Ages. In appreciation of a literary writing from many hundred years ago; to know what its author's contemporary average

people knew should be equally important as to find out what the author was privileged to know. And it is hardly dismissible that such texts as Item 3 still remain unnoticed in large numbers.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See *Catalogue of the Pepys Library, v.i, Medieval Manuscripts*, compiled by Rosamond McKitterick and Richard Beadle, Cambridge, D.S. Brewer, 1992. Item 3 occupies ff. 39r to 50v with between 30 and 41 long lines to the page. A folio is missing between ff. 43 and 44. This text is not recorded anywhere else. H.L.Spencer's *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages*, Oxford, Oxford U.P., 1993, for example, treats Wimbledon Sermon (Item 9) and Easter Sermon (Item 50) only; V.M.O'Mara deals with the latter alone ('A Checklist of Unedited Late Middle English Sermons that Occur Singly or in Small Groups', *Leeds Studies in English*, N.S.19(1988) 141-66).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, Bk. IX.

<sup>3</sup> On the methodology of medieval sermon construction, see especially H.L.Spencer (1993), Ch.6, pp.228f.

<sup>4</sup> McKitterick & Beadle (1992), p.xxv.

<sup>5</sup> 'Charity' is also described as 'þe bride cloþ þat euery man muste haue þat schal come to þat feeste' in the eighth sermon, Septuagesima Sunday, *Lollard Sermons*, ed. Gloria Cigman, Oxford, Oxford U.P., EETS, 1989, OS 294, p.84.

<sup>6</sup> Quotations from *Cleanness* refer to J.J.Anderson's edition, Manchester, Manchester U.P., 1977.

<sup>7</sup> C.C.Morse, *The Pattern of Judgment in the 'Quest' and 'Cleanness'*, Columbia, University of Missouri Press, 1978, pp.172-74.

<sup>8</sup> Morse (1978) and 'The Image of the Vessel in *Cleanness*', *University of Toronto Quarterly* 40(1971) 202-16.

<sup>9</sup> Augustine repeatedly discusses the point in *Civitate Dei*, e.g. Bk. xiv, Chs. 2, 3, 5, 11, 16 and 18 and Bk. xv, Ch. 7.

<sup>10</sup> *The Parson's Tale* (ll.176f.) also introduces these Biblical verses to show that 'Job preyde respit a while to biwepe and waille his trespas, for soothly oo day of respit is bettre than al the tresor of this world' (l.178). This scriptural passage was usually referred to for the description of the darkness of hell. Cf. *The Sermon of Dead Men*, 1914, Cigman (1989), p.233. Item 3 and *The Parson's Tale* also coincide in the use of Rev. 3:20 (*PT*, ll.289-90) and they both relate sins and sinful nature of men to the filth of the flesh.

11. In the Old and New Testaments people is often described as a vessel; God, the potter, will destroy unshapely or broken vessels 'that cannot be made whole again' (AV, Jer. 19:11). Also see Jer.18:2-6, Ps. 2:9, Tim. 2:20-21, 43:38, etc.

12 Carleton F. Brown, 'The Author of *Pearl*, Considered in the Light of his Theological Opinions', *PMLA* 19(1904), p.121.

13 Item 50 of MS Pepys 2125, an Easter sermon which also remains unpublished, refers to the Eucharistic Sacrament as God's Feast, using clothing metaphor as well as that of vessels. Emphasising the good and bad effects of cleansing and reiteration of sins, this sermon, like *Cleanness*, exhorts people to imitate Christ, whose figure as the Saviour is enhanced by the scenes of his curing the sick and reviving the dead, and describes human soul as gained or lost by God or Satan through penance and sin. Another copy is in MS Harley 2398.

14 Monica Brzezinski also proposes that the stories in *Cleanness* are united by the rhetoric of the university sermon and treats the sixth Beatitude in this poem as its 'theme' and the parable of the Wedding Feast as 'protheme'. But we differ in opinion about how the poem is divided. ('Conscience and Covenant: the Sermon Structure of *Cleanness*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 89(1990), 166-80).

15 J.K. Lecklider's recent book, *Cleanness: Structure and Meaning*, Cambridge, D.S Brewer, 1997, offers a view that the structure of *Cleanness* depends on the configuration of the liturgical year and that the poet had an access to the cathedrals and religious houses of the west Midlands.

## Appendix Summary of MS Pepys 2125, Item 3.

The Middle English text is translated (in quotation marks) or summarized. 'Narracios' are marked in the margin. Other indications in bold and italics are mine.

[f.39r] **THEME:** DIMITTE ME DOMINE VT PLANGAM  
PAULULUM DOLOREM MEUM ANTEQUAM VADAM ET  
NON REUERTAR AD TERRAM TENEBROSAM ET  
OPERTAM MORTIS CALIGINE TERRAM MISERIE ET  
TENEBRARUM ETC. [Job 10:20-22]

'These are the words of the holy man Job, as a sinner bewailing his sinful life before he would pass away'.

**Gospel translation:** 'Lord God, suffer me a little while to bewail my sorrow before I go without turning again to the land of obscurity, full of darkness and covered with darkness of death'.

\* All that we ever have is debt to God, including sin.

[f.39v] **Example** to illustrate the above: If I am a bailiff to a great man and fail to use his money as he wishes but use it wrongly according to my own will, I will be a debtor to him. Such debt to God is sin.

\*But God forgives all those who truly repent and cry for His mercy; and punishes those who do not.

**Narracio 1** St Gregory, *Dialogue*, example of a rich man who fails to cry out for God's mercy at his death; his soul is snatched away by hideous devils to hell.

[f.40r] 'See now, if this man had cried for God's mercy he might have found mercy'.

**Example:** *If the king of England offers a thousand marks to a poor man who really needs the money and the man refuses the offer repeatedly, the king will withdraw the offer and will never give him anything.* / Likewise we are all in great need of God's grace. He offers it to us every day and we are not ready to receive it.

\* *The vessel that shall receive so precious a thing [Grace] must be good and fair; 'and that vessel I tell you is the heart of man, which should always be clean by chastity'.*

**Narracio 2** *A man of religion, honoured and loved, but defiled by lecherous imagination, is likened to a dish that should hold the fairest meat in the world [Ave] but this dish is so foul and stinking within that his Aves will not be accepted by St Mary.*

[f.40v] *'This vessel, which is your heart, should be not only clean of filth but be deep by true humility in order to receive this precious liquor that is the grace of God... Therefore, dear brother, if you desire the grace of God, clothe your heart with true humility, for the more meek you are, the more grace you will receive.'*

St James: 'To meek men God grants grace'.

St Paul: 'the virtue of Christ may dwell in me; that is humility'.

St Bernard: 'He will be pleased with this virtue only'.

St Matthew: '*Learn from me*, for I am mild and meek of heart'.

St Bernard: 'God's mother in heaven rejoices in humility'.

St Luke: 'Without meekness, no one can go to heaven'.

Christ: If you do not turn away from pride and become meek, you shall never enter heaven.

St Matthew: '*Many are called, but few are saved*'. [Matt. 22:14]

\* Exhortation of meekness [f.41r]

St Gregory: 'The clearest sign of salvation is true meekness'.

St John Chrysostom: 'God's children and the devil's children are known by meekness and by pride'.

St Augustine (*Homily*): 'The meek shall be summoned to everlasting joy with the Son of God'.

\* The proud will be thrown into hell.

*Lucifer: 'I shall set my throne above the stars of heaven and above the clouds; and I shall be like him who is the highest.'* [Isa.14:13-14]

Jeremiah: 'The way of life is meekness. The way of death is pride and vanity'.

Isaiah: 'As much as the heaven is separated from the earth, God's way is separated from the ways of (proud) men'.

[f.41v] **Example:** St Owen: Lucifer appears before the bishop as a young, beautiful and competent servant. He asks Owen to help him out of hell. God responds to Owen's prayer but Lucifer refuses to cry to him for mercy.

\* [f.42r] Only meekness guards men from griefs and deceits.

The Life of St Antony: God showed him the vision of this world, which was full of griefs and deceits. Only meekness releases man from these.

Book of Job: 'As soon as one turns to pride, the devil challenges him'.

3rd Book of Kings: Ahab, the wicked king of Israel. 'If he dies in town, hounds shall eat his body; if he dies in the field, birds will eat his body'. (AV I Kings 21:23)

[f.42v] St Gregory: God is pleased with those who repent of their sins and fear God. God punishes proud men and loves the meek.

**Example** Christ: he acted as a servant at table for his disciples and even washed the feet of Judas: We should make ourselves meek even to our enemies. (St John Chrysostom)

St Augustine: how can a man be proud?; *nourished in the corrupt blood in his mother's womb, born in sorrow, living in labour and dying in weeping*; if he is not protected by God's grace, the devils will take his soul and worms shall gnaw his body.

St Gregory: how can a man be proud when he thinks of what will happen to his body after death? [Detailed description of the dead body]

[a folio is missing]

[f.43r] fear of death

[f.43v] **Example** St Martin: the devil stood by at his death and pursued him with a multitude of fiends when he was dead, but his holy soul was met by angels in the air and was taken to heaven.

Job: 'Only with meekness, can a man stand against the devil's challenge'.

St Gregory: 'All the virtues of the world will be nothing without meekness'.

St Augustine: 'All the fairness of man comes from the root of meekness'.

St Edmund: All virtues exist only in charity.

[f.44r] St Gregory: Proud chastity is not a virtue; also meekness without charity is of no worth, for all meekness comes from charity.

**Narracio 3** Example of charity shown through a young friar, who saved monks and friars who fell sick with pestilence.

[f.45r] St John Chrysostom: *follow Christ* and love all.

St Augustine: Christ died for our love; so we should love each other sweetly and truly.

St John oGM : love is to men what moisture is to a tree.

**Example of Marriage Feast:** *'Charity is the robe that each man needs to be clothed in when he shall be called to attend the wedding of the king'*.

St Gregory: 'If he is well dressed, he shall be let in at once with great joy, that is, into heaven with Christ...but if this robe that is charity fails or is ripped or defiled or treated badly, that is to say, his charity is not perfect or true, he shall be rebuked harshly and handed over to the jailers without delay; that is to say, to the fiends of hell, whence there is no turning back'.

Gospel: 'When all were assembled at the wedding, there came in the king to see that fair assembly, and he saw a man who was not clothed in a robe that was appropriate for the wedding; and asked: "Friend, how did you come in, not clothed in the festive clothes? Take him at once, he said, and bind his feet and hands and cast him into the dark prison, which is hell". By this man is indicated every man that has neither love nor charity to neighbors'.

[f.45v] St Gregory: *'Those who attend this wedding are understood as Holy Church, which Jesus Christ married when he entered and was conceived in the Virgin Mary'*.

\* We should be ready when we are called; and then, if we are clean by true charity and all parts are whole and sound by true charity and deep and low by true meekness, then we will be vessels to receive that precious liquor that is the grace of God.'

\* Do not close the door to the bridegroom, that is Jesus Christ.



*Apocalypse: I stand at the door and ask an entry and I shall enter into him who opens the door to me; "this door is the heart of man that is closed against God, all the while a man is in sin, while he loves sin, and while he loves the world excessively, which is vanity, covetousness and the folly of the world, when he loves his flesh too much, which is the worldly pleasure, else the will of the flesh. But he opens the door when he begins to love Jesus Christ and his commandments and to hate sin and villainy. And our Lord prays us to open this door in the book of love, where he speaks to a soul as to his love and to his spouse".*

\*[f.46r] Let us open our heart to Him by true love and repentance:

**REITERATION OF THE THEME:** Dimitte me domine vt plangam paululum etc.

\* Christ wept to give us an example: *'Blessed are those who weep in this life, for they shall have great joy elsewhere'.*

St Augustine: Crying brings back all the goodness that has been lost through sin.

St Isidore: All sins are forgiven by tears of compunction.

\* *However horribly soiled and defiled by sin, there is no sin so horrible as cannot be washed away and made clean by tears, to go before God.*

St John Chrysostom: God covets fairness.

St Ambrose: Weeping is a silent prayer.

\* Weeping is like baptism, and recovers all goodness that has been lost through sin and makes the soul pure, fair and clean.

[f.46v] **Narracio 4** about the virtue of weeping: tears broke off chains by which the devil was leading a man.

**Narracio 5** St Benedict and his sister St Scolastica: Sister's weeping brought rain and thunder to keep St Benedict at her side.

St Gregory: baptise ourselves with tears.

[f.47v] **Example** of a man who cried himself into blindness.

Archbishop Stephen, St John Chrysostom: Nothing is more perilous to a soul than vainglory.

St Augustine: Meekness comes before our good deeds and follows them.

St Gregory: Fiends steal our good deeds away.

- \* How to weep: concentrate and see with your inner eyes how sinfully you have lived, and see your dying, your body after death and everlasting pain in hell.

**Tears of contrition, compassion, and devotion.**

[f.48r] **Narracio 6** About a woman who wrote a confessional letter to St Basil. Her tears erased the sins that were written in that letter.

**Narracio 7** Tears of contrition: about a sinner who wept so bitterly that he could not utter a word at confession.

**Example** Of a scholar at Oxford, to whom God showed the virtues of tears.

**Narracio 8** St Gregory [*Dialogue*]: A man died without absolution and came back to life through the weeping of a priest.

[f.48v] And his frightening story of afterlife.

St Augustine [*Libro de Cantate Dei*]: Tears of impatience, envy, wickedness, anguish of sorrow, for loss of cattle, physical pain, and false tears.

[f.49r] [**REITERATION OF THE THEME**]: Dimitte me domine vt plangam paululum dolorem meum etc.

- \* 'Brother, this applies especially to men of religion, who should weep not only for their sins and their other defaults, but grieve night and day during their imprisonment in this life, thinking of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and of his death'.

- \* 'Let us think then, I pray you good brother, why we came into religion and for whose love we forsook the world and the pleasures of the flesh and all worldly worship from the first day when we took the habit of religion'.

**About corrupt men of religion:**

[f.49v] Such wretched men of religion have forgotten why they entered the order and how they took up religion.

St Bernard: Such should have stayed in the world and perished there.

[REITERATION OF THE THEME]: Dimitte me domine etc.

\*All the sorrow and pain in this world is but a shadow compared with the pain in the other world.

**Three kinds of sorrow: in this life, in purgatory and in hell.**

St Gregory: There is nobody born from a woman that has never sinned; how then can one escape pain?

**Narracio 9** A story of a good man who preferred to die quickly rather than to stay and endure pain. He finds much greater pain in purgatory and later comes back to life to endure his illness a little longer and then to go to heaven.

[f.50v] **CONCLUSION:** 'Now I pray you, fair brother, ... I counsel you, do your penance whole-heartedly and as long as you are in this life, for the kingdom of heaven approaches very quickly so that you may escape the pains of Purgatory and come to that Kingdom through the help, grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is in heaven without end. Amen'.