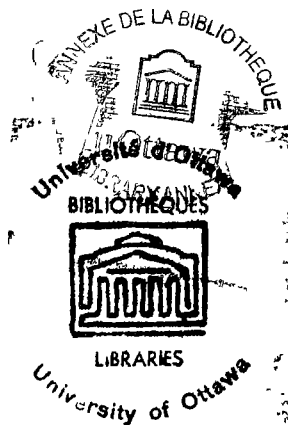


PETRS PLOWIAN AND THE LITURGY:

A LITURGICAL READING OF PASSUS XVII TO XX

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INTRODUCTION

THE LITURGY AND TRADITIONAL CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

In recent years, one of the most productive approaches to the study of medieval literature has been that of the "allegorists", those critics who attempt to arrive at the full meaning of a work by viewing it in the light of the exegetical writings of the Church Fathers. Of these critics, perhaps the most famous in their applications of this method are D.W. Robertson and Bernard Huppe.¹ However, the clearest definition of the aims and methods of this group has been stated by Robert E. Kaske in these terms:

The whole of this sprawling exegetical tradition, it seems to me, can make broadly two kinds of contribution to our understanding of medieval literature. The first, which has been recognized to some extent in modern scholarship, is that of explaining the medieval interpretations underlying obvious biblical quotations or allusions. A second contribution—potentially greater, though it has been relatively little exploited in the study of medieval English literature—derives from the role of the entire exegetical tradition as a sort of massive index to the traditional meanings and

¹ See, for example, their Piers Plowman and Scriptural Tradition (Princeton University Press, 1951) and Fruyt and Chaf: Studies in Chaucer's Allegories (Princeton University Press, 1963); see also D.W. Robertson, A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives (Princeton University Press, 1962) and Bernard Huppe, Doctrine and Poetry; Augustine's Influence on Old English Poetry (State University of New York, 1959).

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associations of most medieval Christian imagery. I refer, of course, not to the venerable pastime of source-hunting, but to the close analysis of the traditional associations which such imagery usually brings with it into literary works, and the interpretation of whatever artistic use has been made of them..... The normal discipline of scholarly argument, of course, demands that exegetical interpretation of an individual figure or allusion be supported by well-documented parallels from the exegetical literature itself, somehow embracing enough peculiar features that to consider them accidental would outrage probability. More extended exegetical allusion in a given work must be supported by an accumulation of parallels large enough, or by a pattern complex enough, that to consider² it accidental would outrage probability....²

The critic using this method is not interested primarily in discovering the exact patristic source of a particular literary image or passage; instead he establishes that the same image or passage appeared almost identically in so many patristic works— or at least in the works of a few of the most authoritative Fathers such as Augustine or Gregory— that it had become a commonplace accessible to any medieval writer. His next task is to analyse the traditional associations which the image or passage carries with it in patristic texts, and then to determine how and to what extent

² "Patristic Exegesis; The Defense" in Critical Approaches to Medieval Literature: Selected Papers from the English Institute, 1958-1959, ed. Dorothy Bethurum (New York; Columbia University Press, 1960), pp. 27-28, 30-31.

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they are carried over into the literary work, and how they affect its meaning.

A number of years before the exegetical method became widely known, G.R. Owst had already pointed out that medieval sermons were largely responsible for transmitting patristic commonplaces to all Christians, so that even an unlearned person, who had never read any of the Fathers would still be aware of their views through the sermons he constantly heard. Owst sums up his view in these words:

At the same time, however, it will be necessary continually to have recourse to earlier works of the kind, whenever the age of a particular manuscript may throw doubt on the priority of the pulpit tradition. For here we shall discover again and again that the latter almost invariably represents a tradition older by centuries than the actual writing before us. Our homilists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries speak and write the language of earlier generations of preachers. They borrow wholesale their phrases, their maxims, their arguments, even their illustrations. As was indicated in the present author's original volume, and as will be reindicated here, reference to the homilies of St Bernard and his fellow-orators on the continent, to treatises like the De Contemptu Mundi of Bernard of Morlaix or the Elucidarium of Honorius of Autun, and yet earlier still to the homilies of such Fathers and Doctors as Augustine, Chrysostom and Gregory the Great, will swiftly destroy the appearance of originality in many a later disciple. It is nevertheless through the latter that these living voices of the past continue to speak to men's hearts and minds.³

³ Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961), pp. 2-3.

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Collections of English homilies edited before and after Owst's work appeared, constantly bear out this conclusion. That of manuscript Royal 18 B xxiii, for example, contains quotations from and references to the works of Chrisostom, Jerome, Honorius Augustodunensis, Isidore, Augustine, Gregory, Rabanus Maurus, Bonaventura, Caesar of Heisterbach, Peter Lombard, Peter Comestor, Albertus Magnus, and the Glossa Ordinaria.⁴ Ross, however, is careful to point out that even these quotations and references were, for the most part, obtained "second-hand":

But it is not to be thought that these quotations prove the acquaintance of the preachers with any of the authors quoted. These writers are appealed to as authorities; that is, generally, specific statements of theirs are used to bolster specific statements made by the preachers. Consequently there is in the MS. hardly a quotation which may not have come from some collection of "proverbs" or from some volume of helps for preachers.⁵

Owst had already discussed such volumes of "helps". He shows the tremendous amount of patristic thought contained in

⁴ W.O. Ross, ed., Middle English Sermons from MS. Roy. 18 B. xxiii (London: E.E.T.S., 1938). See the editor's notes on sources pp. 343-380.

⁵ Ibid., p. lxiii.

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only one chapter of such a work, the Summa Predicantium,⁶ when he writes: "The antiquity of much of this traditional pulpit language will be gauged from a study of the sources quoted. These include Eusebius of Caesarea, Ambrose, Chrisostom, Augustine, Jerome, and above all, Gregory the Great, and Bernard of Clairvaux, as well as Canon Law and Scripture itself."⁷

Undoubtedly then, patristic writings, because of their great authority, played a great role in moulding the minds of all medieval men and their literature, especially since these writings were so widely and constantly disseminated through sermons. However, a richer and far more potent transmitter of patristic thought—the liturgy—has been almost totally neglected by scholars. "Allegorists" seldom use it as a primary source but most often relegate it to the rank of supporting evidence. On the other hand, students of medieval sermons tend to forget that these were only a part

⁶ Of this work in general, Owst writes: "We have every reason to believe that the massive Summa Predicantium of the English Dominican, John Bromyard, presents us with the gathered fruits of mendicant preaching in England throughout the fourteenth century and indeed even earlier." Literature and Pulpit, p. 224.

⁷ Literature and Pulpit, p. 205.

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of a larger liturgical whole and for the most part were delivered in the middle of a liturgical ceremony to which they were organically related. One has but to study some of the components of the liturgy to see its importance for the exegetical method.

First, it was the liturgy that supplied most men with whatever knowledge of Scriptures they had. Regular attendance at Matins and Mass assured one of hearing at least portions of almost all the books of the Bible. In the Sarum rite, for example, the Breviary contained readings from twenty-seven of the forty-six books of the Vulgate Old Testament and from twenty-three of the twenty-seven books of the Vulgate New Testament.⁸ The Sarum Missal filled in readings from thirteen of the twenty Old Testament books neglected by the Breviary,⁹ thereby extending the yearly coverage to roughly eighty-five per cent of the Bible. But more important than percentages is the liturgy's

⁸ F. Proctor and C. Wordsworth, edd., Breviarum ad usum insignis ecclesiae sarum (Cambridge University Press, 1882), vol. III, Index Biblicus pp. lii-lxi. Hereafter Sarum Breviary.

⁹ F.E. Warren, ed., The Sarum Missal in English (London; Alcuin Club, 1911), vol. II, Scriptural Index, pp. 591-613.

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alterations of certain biblical passages in its Responses and Antiphons to indicate their patristic interpretations. Such is the case of Genesis 18:1-2, the appearance of three men to Abraham on the plains of Mamre: "Apparuit autem ei Dominus in convalle Mambre sedenti in ostio tabernaculi sui in ipso fervore diei. Cumque elevasset oculos, apparuerunt ei tres viri stantes prope eum; quos cum vidisset, cucurrit in occursum eorum de ostio tabernaculi, et adoravit in terram."¹⁰ The Fathers had long interpreted this as a vision of the Trinity, as is seen by this quotation from a sermon often attributed to Augustine but in reality the work of Caesarius of Arles (470-543): "Tribus ergo occurrit Abraham et unum adoravit, In eo autem quod tres vidit, sicut jam dictum est, Trinitatis mysterium intellexit; quod autem quasi unum adoravit, in tribus personis unum Deum esse cognovit."¹¹ The liturgy kept this interpretation alive by transforming the Vulgate text in the following manner:

¹⁰ Vulgate quotations are taken from A.C. Fillion, Biblia Sacra (Paris: Librairie Letouzy et Ane, 1921) 8th ed.

¹¹ J.P. Migne, ed., Patrologiae Latinae, Cursus Completus (Paris: J.P. Migne, 1844-1864) vol. 39, col. 1748. Hereafter PL. For other examples of this interpretation see Ambrose, De Abraham, I, V, 33 (PL, 14, 435), Bede, Hexameron, iv (PL, 91, col. 166), Glossa Ordinaria, PL, 113, 126, etc.

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"Dum staret Abraham ad radicem Mambre: vidit tres pueros descendentes per viam. Tres vidit et unum adoravit. Cuique vidisset eos, cucurrit in occursum illorum adorans Dominum."¹² The importance of this liturgical practice is discussed by no less an authority than Bernard of Clairvaux himself (1090-1153) who states that if the Church modifies the meaning or the position of the words of Scripture, the new composition has greater power than the original text.¹³ The liturgy then permits Christians to familiarize themselves with almost the entire Bible. At times it even rewrites the texts to set forth patristic interpretations.

Hymns are a second component especially important from a patristic point of view, for it is often through them that traditional views of the early Church have been kept alive. Of the twenty-five hymns Joseph Connelly is able to date with certainty in the opening section of his

¹² In the Sarum Breviary this is the fifth response of Matins for Quinquagesima Sunday. See vol. I, col. dxlvi.

¹³ Sermo Tertius in Vigilia Nativitatis Domini, PL, 183, 94-95. The Latin reads: "Cum ergo ipsa in Scripturis divinis verba vel alterat, vel alternat; fortior est illa compositio, quam positio prima verborum: et fortassis tanto fortior, quantum distat inter figuram et veritatem, inter lucem et umbram, inter dominam et ancillam."

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Hymns of the Roman Liturgy,¹⁴ nineteen were written prior to the seventh century, twelve of which belong to such authorities as Ambrose (d. 397) and Gregory the Great (540?-604) or to their schools. An excellent example of how hymns transmitted exegetical matter is furnished by Ambrose's Aeterne rerum conditor sung at Lauds from the first Sunday after Epiphany to Quinquagesima Sunday in both the Roman and Sarum rites. Connelly translates lines 5 to 16 in this way:

And now the bird that has been like a light to travellers during the night and marked off for them the night-watches, is heralding the day and calling on the sun to shine. When the cock crows, the sun wakes up and frees the skies from darkness; when he crows, all night prowlers leave the path of sin. At cock-crow the sailor again finds courage, the angry seas become calm. It was at cock-crow that the very Rock of the Church washed away his sin.¹⁵

One quickly notes the parallels between the hymn and the following passage from the same author's Hexameron, an exegetical study the six days of Creation as found in Genesis:

¹⁴ New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957. See Part I; "Hymns of the Days and Hours."

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 16-18. The Latin reads:
 "Praeco diei jam sonet / Noctis profundae pervigil:
 Nocturna lux viantibus, / A nocte noctem segregans.
 Hoc excitatus lucifer / Solvit polum caligine:
 Hoc omnes errorum chorus / Viam nocendi deserit.
 Hoc rursus vires colligit, / Pontique mitescunt freta:
 Hoc ipsa petra Ecclesiae / Canente culpat diluit."

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The cock's crow is pleasant at nightfall. It is not only pleasant, but useful, too. As a good domesticated fowl he arouses the sleeper, gives him warning when he is perturbed, and consoles the voyager by asserting in musical tones that night is approaching. When the cock crows, the thief forðakes his schemes and the star of dawn rises to illumine the sky. When the cock crows, the sailor's gloom and trepidation disappear. Tempests and storms stirred up by gusts of wind at eveningtide subside. At his crowing the devout of heart bestir themselves for prayer and resume their reading. Finally, on this occasion, "the rock of the Church" washed away his sin which he had committed before the cock crowed. At cock-crow hope returns to all, the sick find comfort, the wounded find relief, the feverish are calmed, the lapsed return to the faith. Jesus has regard for those who stumble and corrects the errant. Hence He paid heed to Peter and forthwith the sin departed. Peter revoked his denial and his confession was completed.

Hymns, then, are clearly an important vehicle of patristic thought.

A third constituent, and perhaps the most important, is the "lectiones" or readings drawn from the Fathers and found at Matins in conjunction with the scriptural passages assigned for each day. In the Temporale of the Sarum rite,

16 Translated by John J. Savage, Saint Ambrose: Hexameron, Paradise and Cain and Abel (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1961), pp. 223-224. The Latin is found in PL, 14, 240-241: "Est etiam galli cantus suavis in noctibus; nec solum suavis sed etiam utilis, qui quasi bonus cohabitator et dormientem excitat, et sollicitum admonet et viantem solatur, processum noctis canora significatione protestans; hoc canente latro suas relinquit insidias; hoc ipse lucifer excitatus oritur, caelumque illuminat. Hoc canente maestitiam trepidus nauta deponit, omnisque crebro vespertinis flatibus excitata

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besides numerous readings from anonymous authors, one finds passages from the works of Ambrose, Augustine, Bede, Chrysostom, Fulgentius, Gregory, Haymo of Halberstadt, Jerome, Hilary, Isidore, Leo the Great, Origen, and Severianus.¹⁷ A slightly different list is found in the early fourteenth century Ordinale from Exeter, where readings for the period from the first Sunday in Advent to Christmas Eve were drawn from Ambrose, Bernard, Gregory, Augustine, Maximus of Turin, Bede, and Origen.¹⁸ The liturgy, then, in its daily readings kept alive the writings of the most influential Church Fathers.

Something has already been said of another important element of the liturgy—homilies. From the earliest times,

tempestas et procella mitescit; hoc canente devotus affectus exsilit ad precandum, legendi quoque munus instaurat; hoc postremo canente ipsa Ecclesiae petra culpam suam diluit, quam priusquam gallus cantaret, negando contraxerat. Istius cantu spes omnibus redit, aegris levatur incommodum, minuitur dolor vulnerum, febrium flagrantia mitigatur, revertitur fides lapsis, Jesus titubantes respicit, errantes corrigit. Denique respexit Petrum, et statim error abscessit: pulsa est negatio, secuta confessio."

¹⁷ Sarum Breviary, vol. III, Index Auctorum, pp. xciv-xcv.

¹⁸ J.N. Dalton, ed., Ordinale Exon. (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1909-1940), vol. III, pp. 61-65. Hereafter Exeter Ordinal.

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Church Fathers wrote series of homilies, one or more for each important liturgical feast. Generally, matter for Breviary lectiones was chosen from collections of these homilies, like that of Paul the Deacon (d. 797), one of the oldest of its type used in the liturgy and one which greatly influenced the Sarum and Roman Breviaries.¹⁹ Later preachers quite naturally made use of these in composing their own homilies, thereby binding such homiletic matter to specific liturgical feasts and making it truly liturgical. This is true of vernacular collections, such as the English northern homily cycles which J.E. Wells describes in these terms: "The homilies are made up usually of a paraphrase of the Gospel for the day, followed by a largely allegorical exposition of the Gospel based on the Fathers (especially Gregory and Bede), usually succeeded by a narratio or tale (legendary or "popular") as exemplum for some teaching drawn

¹⁹ His Homiliarus is printed in PL, 95, 1159-1566. One has but to compare Paul's list with the homilies used in both the Roman and Sarum rites to note the similarities. See also L. Eisenhofer and J. Lechner, The Liturgy of the Roman Rite (New York: Herder and Herder, 1961) pp. 27-29. Two other such collections which are extremely useful are the Collectiones of Smaragdus (PL, 102, 15-552) and the Deflorationes SS. Patrum of Werner of St. Blaise (PL, 157, 721-1256).

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from the Gospel."²⁰Ms. Royal 18 B.xxiii affords a striking example of this; of the patristic quotations it contains, thirty-one belong to patristic homilies.²¹

Though not a component of the liturgy, liturgical commentaries constitute another element which became fused with it during the Middle Ages. Since early Christians understood the liturgical language and the meaning of the limited number of simple sacred ceremonies then in use, the commentaries of the first Fathers on the forms of worship were generally limited to homilies preached during Easter week for the instruction of neophytes about to receive the sacraments for the first time.²² Later, however, as the

²⁰ A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1400 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916), p. 288. The entire section on homilies is filled with descriptions of individual manuscripts such as the following of Ms. Bodley 343, f. 4 v: "Usually the sermons present the Gospel story at much length, then announce that, the story having been told in plain English, there shall follow the "exposition" or "exposition from commentary". The latter expression points to what several pieces acknowledge, dependence in the Fathers—i.e., Augustine, Jerome, Isidore." (p. 278).

²¹ ed. Ross. See note 4.

²² An excellent collection of such early material can be found in Jean Danielou, Bible et liturgie (Paris: Cerf, 1958). For a good summary of the history of liturgical commentaries in general, see Lechner and Eisenhofer, The Liturgy of the Roman Rite, pp. 43-48.

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masses lost touch with liturgical Latin and ceremonies grew more elaborate, a pressing need arose for extensive written commentaries on the meaning and symbolism of feasts, prayers and rites, which the clergy, through their sermons, could then transmit to the rest of the Church. Works of this nature flourished, therefore, from the seventh century throughout the Middle Ages, setting forth the symbolism of everything connected with worship, from church architecture and sacred vestments to the prayers and ceremonies connected with each feast of the Temporale and Sanctorale. This material was disseminated in England during the Old English period in vernacular homilies like those of Archbishop Wulfstan (d. 1023). Discussing the sources of his homilies on the baptismal rite, Dorothy Bethurum writes: "The material for these homilies came from several Carolingian sources; most important, Alcuin's outline of the baptismal rite contained in letters to the monastery at Lyon and to a priest Odwin, which Jesse of Amiens included in his *Epistola de baptismo*; Theodulf of Orleans' *De ordine baptismi*; and Amalarius of Metz's *De ecclesiasticis officiis*."²³ In later

²³ The Homilies of Wulfstan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 302.

medieval England also, vernacular works on the liturgy, destined for preachers, show the influence of similar commentaries. Of the seventy chapters in the fifteenth century Speculum Sacerdotale, twenty-eight contain at least traces of the Rationale Divinorum Officiorum of the Parisian theologian Jean Beleth (d. after 1165) and very often are simply literal translations of corresponding chapters in Beleth's work.²⁴ A contemporary collection of liturgical homilies by John Mirk also makes use of this source.²⁵ Perhaps the most famous of these commentaries is that of Guillaume Durand (d. 1296), whose influence in liturgical matters was so great that the Pontifical designed by him for his personal use while bishop of Mende rivalled the Roman Pontificals and finally replaced them in 1485.²⁶ His

²⁴ Ed. E.H. Weatherley (London: E.E.T.S., 1936). See Introduction, pp. xxvii-xxxv. Beleth's work is printed in PL, 202, 13-166.

²⁵ Th. Erbe, ed., Mirk's Festial (London, E.E.T.S., 1905). See, for example, those homilies where Beleth is mentioned by name, or those where, without acknowledgement of source, Mirk simply translates Beleth's words, e.g. the homilies on Palm Sunday (p. 115) and on Holy Thursday (p. 125).

²⁶ See Lechner and Eisenhofer, The Liturgy of the Roman Rite, p. 37.

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Rationale Divinorum Officiorum²⁷ is so eclectic and the sources so numerous that it is often the only work extant for explaining liturgical practices and rubrics little known outside of England.²⁸

Of a similar nature are all those practices considered for a long time as part of the liturgy but deleted from the service-books by the reforms of the Council of Trent. This was the case of the Latin liturgical drama.²⁹ In England, its vernacular offspring, the Mystery Cycles, considered by writers, participants, and audiences alike as liturgical actions,³⁰ existed well into the sixteenth century and must also be taken into account as vehicles of

²⁷ Neapoli: J. Dura, 1859. Lechner and Eisenhofer write of Durand that he "put together a mosaic of these symbolical interpretations...indispensible for a knowledge of medieval liturgiology." (Liturgy of the Roman Rite, p. 46)

²⁸ T.F. Simmons in editing The Lay Folk Mass Book (London: E.E.T.S., 1879) found it invaluable in solving certain problems for which solutions could be found nowhere else. See, for example, his discussions of the rubric "Alexander papa instituit" concerning the "Qui pridie" prayer from the Canon of the Mass (p. 356-357) or of the last Gospel "In principio" p. 383.

²⁹ The most important collection of these is Karl Young's The Drama of the Medieval Church (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933).

³⁰ See A.P. Campbell, "The Medieval Mystery Cycle Liturgical in Impulse", Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa, xxxiii (1963), 23-37; Glynn Wickham, Early English Stages

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traditional thought and doctrine.³¹

To strengthen the case for the liturgy as the most important transmitter of patristic thought, we must add to the above elements the fact that all of them were repeated in their entirety every year, and were available to all Christians since one of the first duties of a Christian was to receive the sacraments and to worship God according to the prescribed practices of the Church.³² For the masses who could not understand Latin, precious vernacular aids existed, like the Prymer, the Lay Folks Mass Book, and above all, the explanations of liturgical feasts and

1300-1600 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959) vol. I, p. 145; Marjorie D. Coogan, The Influence of the Liturgy on the English Cycle Plays (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Yale, 1942); E.M. Clarck, "Liturgical Influences in the Townley Plays", Orate Fratres xvi (1941), 69-79. For an example of a typical medieval view, see William of Waddington's Manuel des Pechiez and its English translation in Robert of Brunne's Handlyng Synne, ed. F.J. Furnival (London: E.E.T.S., 1901) p. 155.

³¹ According to H.C. Gardiner, Mysteries' End (Yale University Press, 1946) this traditional content is precisely one of the main reasons for the systematic destruction of such cycles by Protestant reformers.

³² See C. Wordsworth and H. Littlehales, The Old Service-Books of the English Church (London: Methuen & Co., 1904), who write: "For the ordinary lay-folk, to be present at Matins and Mass, and at second Evensong (and possibly at the "first Evensong" on the previous day), on Sundays and holy days, to be shrived in Lent and Houselled (or

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ceremonies as set forth in vernacular homilies for each particular occasion. Finally, it is extremely important to note, in connection with R.E. Kaske's comments on "traditional associations" linked to patristic exegetical comments and thought,³³ that the liturgy had a way of adding to and transforming the matter it adopted by associating it with certain emotions and moods aroused by the various liturgical seasons and feasts: expectation and preparation during Advent, joy and charity during Christmastide, etc. The liturgy, then, also contributes something of its own to the host of associations collected over the years by patristic images and interpretations, and this traditional thought, when borrowed from the liturgy by a writer, will necessarily carry with it these associations, thereby adding to the richness and complexity of the literary work.

Despite all of this, the liturgy's influence on medieval English literature has been studied extensively only in the case of the Mystery Cycles.³⁴ The present work,

communicated) at Easter, and to join in a litany or procession now and then, was good and sufficient church-going." (p. 16). See Langland himself on the subject of Mass and Matins, Piers Plowman B,V, 458-460.

³³ See above, p.2.

³⁴ See above, note 30.

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therefore, undertakes to study some of the aspects of this influence on one medieval masterpiece of epic proportions, William Langland's Piers Plowman, which has attracted much scholarly attention during recent years. Besides a new critical edition of the A text and preparations for editions of texts B and C, critics have given us many interpretations of the work ranging from those of the poem as a social and political satire or as an allegory on all-embracing patristic themes like the caritas-cupiditas antithesis, to those of the poem as a representation of the monastic ideal or as an analysis of the threefold division of the contemplative life.³⁵ The case for all of these is strong and Langland's ability to draw all of this material together is certainly a major reason for including his work in the English epic tradition.³⁶ However, critics forget that such

³⁵ The A text has been edited by G. Kane, Piers Plowman: The A Version (London: Athlone Press, 1960). At present E. Talbot Donaldson is at work on the other texts but the number of extant manuscripts makes this a long term project. The other allusions are to G.R. Owst (Literature and Pulpit), who discusses the poem primarily in chapters entitled "The Preaching of Satire and Complaint", Robertson and Huppe (Piers Plowman and Scriptural Tradition), Morton Bloomfield's Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth Century Apocalypse (New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press, 1961), and T.P. Dunning's "The Structure of the B Text of Piers Plowman", RES vii (1956), 225-237.

³⁶ See E.M.W. Tillyard, The English Epic and Its Background (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954), pp. 151-171.

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interpretations, if held to be exclusive of all others, tend to limit the poem's audience to the learned, or to the political, social and religious leaders. A level of liturgical symbolism could well extend the work's appeal to the masses familiar enough with the liturgy to use liturgical quotations, allusions and larger liturgical patterns as bridges over the more difficult passages of theological and mystical subtleties or as paths leading gently into the very middle of otherwise unapproachable material.³⁷

The present work is oriented towards the discovery and analysis of such larger patterns, like those provided by Langland in his Good Samaritan episode and in his image of Christ the Warrior-Knight, which will be dealt with in the opening chapters. Succeeding chapters will examine Langland's use of materials from the liturgy of

³⁷ J.F. Goodridge has pointed to a number of such liturgical patterns in the introduction and notes to his recent Piers the Ploughman: A New Translation (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1959). However, he attempts to discuss and quote from as many of the poem's interpretations as possible, so that, proportionally, his liturgical considerations do not do justice to the wealth of liturgical material contained in the poem. Of lesser importance but also interesting is Greta Hort's discussion of the liturgical origin of Langland's scriptural quotations in Piers Plowman and Contemporary Religious Thought (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge); pp. 46-56 and Appendix, pp. 161-170.

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Passiontide, Easter, Pentecost, and Advent to enrich both the form and the meaning of his work. Although this study is limited to Passus XVII to XX of Piers Plowman, it is hoped that its conclusions will help to shed new light on some of the great themes dominating the entire poem. It is hoped, also, that this study will help to establish the liturgy's true position in the hierarchy of sources of religious influence on medieval literature.

CHAPTER I

THE LITURGICAL ASSOCIATIONS OF LANGLAND'S SAMARITAN

The extent of the liturgy's influence in Piers Plowman cannot be judged properly by simply discussing in turn each of the numerous liturgical quotations and allusions found in the poem. To truly understand how the liturgy affects the work, it is necessary to analyze its contribution to one of the poem's longer and more important episodes, such as that of the Good Samaritan found in Passus XVII of the B text,¹

The episode occurs in the following context. Immediately preceding his meeting with the Samaritan, Will encounters two other figures; lines 172-177 of Passus XVI describe his meeting with the first, Abraham or Faith:

And thanne mette I with a man. a Mydlenten Sondaye,
As hore as an hawethorne. and Abraham he hi3te.
I frayned hym first. fram whennes he come,
And of whennes he were. and whider that he thou3te.
"I am Feith," quod that freke. "it falleth nou3te
to lye,

¹ All quotations from the poem are taken from The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Plowman, ed. W.W. Skeat (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886). Where passages from the A and C texts are used, they are clearly labelled A and C. Otherwise all references are to the B text.

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in line 10, where Langland describes the Christ-Knight as "One semblable to the Samaritan. and some-del to Piers the Plowman", it is formally introduced in lines 22-26. which state that the Christ-Knight will joust in armor borrowed from Piers,³ that is, in a human form:

This Iesus of his gentrice. wole Iuste in Piers
 In his helme and in his haberioun. humana natura;
 That Cryst be nou3t biknowe here. for consummatus
 In Piers paltok the Plowman. this priker shal ryde;
 For no dynte shal hym dere. as in deitate patris."

Because of the number and diversity of these elements, ideal structural unity can be maintained only if the Samaritan episode is inherently related to the Abraham-Faith, Law-Hope figures and to the Passion and Incarnation themes.

As it appears in Luke 10: 30-35 of the Vulgate,
the story does not suggest such relationships:

And Jesus answering said: A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers, who also stripped him and having wounded him went away, leaving him half dead. And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way; and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan, being on his journey, came near him; and seeing him was moved with compassion: And going up to him, bound

3 For a fuller discussion of the Christ-Knight's borrowed armor, see Chapter II below.

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up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine; and, setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence and gave to the host and said: Take care of him; and whatsoever thou shalt spend, over and above, I, at my return, will repay thee.⁴

At the very most, since the Samaritan figure here represents charity, the Vulgate might suggest a connection with faith and hope, a traditional association. An examination of patristic exegesis of these verses, although of some use, fails to solve the problem satisfactorily. The liturgy, however, provides all the answers: it furnishes all the necessary connotations to make the story a perfect structural link, either by echoing the relevant exegetical texts or by adding new associations of its own.⁵

⁴ Vulgate translations are taken from The Holy Bible: Douay Version (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1956).

⁵ In the medieval English Church, the Samaritan Gospel was read on the thirteenth Sunday after the octave of Pentecost (Trinity Sunday); J.W. Legg, ed., The Sarum Missal (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), p. 185. (Hereafter Sarum Missal). W.G. Henderson, ed., Missale ad usum insignis ecclesiae eboracensis (Surtees Society, 1874-1875), vol. I, p. 235 (Hereafter York Missal); J.W. Legg, ed., Missale ad usum ecclesiae westmonasteriensis (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1891-1896), vol. I, col. 425-427 (Hereafter, Winchester Missal); W.H. Frere, ed., The Hereford Breviary (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1904-1913), vol. I, p. 469; J.B.L. Tolhurst, ed., The Monastic Breviary of Hyde Abbey, Winchester (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1930-1942), vol. II, fol. 160v; Exeter Ordinal, I, 334.

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Langland first incorporates this important relationship, between the Samaritan and the Abraham-Faith, Law-Hope figures, by making these two identical with the Priest and Levite of the parable. The authority of the Fathers seems to play a part here. since Augustine, for example, explains the Priest and Levite as representatives of all the Old Testament priests and ministers: "Sacerdos autem et Levita qui eo viso praeterierunt, sacerdotium et ministerium Veteris Testamenti significant, quae non poterant prodesse ad salutem."⁶ Another interpretation in the Glossa Ordinaria sees them as the Law and the prophets respectively: "Sacerdos Dei legem annunciat: descendit quidem lex per Moysen in mundum, et nullam sanitatem contulit huiusmodi. Descendit Levita, qui typum ostendit prophetarum, sed et hic nullam sanat, quia lex peccata arguit, sed pertransit, quia indulgentiam non largitur."⁷ A liturgical homily by Godefridus (d.1165) comes much closer to Langland's thought in his interpretation of the Priest as the patriarchs and

⁶ Quaestionum Evangeliorum, Lib. II, Quest. XIX, PL, 35, 1340. See also Bede, In Lucae Evangelium Expositio, Lib. III, cap. X; PL, 92, 469.

⁷ PL, 114, 286-287.

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just men living before the law and the Levite as all the
just men living under the law:

Et bene per sacerdotem ordo patriarcharum aliorumque
justorum, qui ante legem erant, designatur, qui
vere sacerdotes Domini erant, eo, quod legem
aliam non habebant, nisi quod semetipsos hostiam
vivam, sanctam Deo placentem in ara cordis quoti-
die mactare satagebant, et in sacrificiis, quae
offerebant, Deum quodammodo mitem et placatum
sibi reddebant....In levita, quantum video, ordo
justorum illorum, qui sub lege erant, non incongrue
figuratur. Qui levitae secus locum fuisse memoran-
tur, quia secus legem erant, legemque habebant et
legebant, in qua totum absconditum erat, quidquid
per incarnationem, passionem, resurrectionem et
ascensionem Domini in fine temporum fieri con-
gruebat .⁸

The liturgy, however, constitutes the only completely
satisfactory source for Langland's associations of Abraham-
Faith-Priest and Law-Hope-Levite. In conjunction with the
Samaritan Gospel, the Mass for the thirteenth Sunday after
Pentecost makes use of Galatians 3, 16-22 as its Epistle:

To Abraham were the promises made and to his seed.
He saith not: And to his seeds, as of many; but
as of one: And to thy seed, which is Christ.
Now this I say: that the testament which was
confirmed by God, the law which was made after
four hundred and thirty years doth not disannul,
to make the promise of no effect. For, if the
inheritance be of the law, it is no more of
promise. But God gave it to Abraham by promise.
Why then was the law? It was set because of

⁸ Homiliae Dominicales, PL, 174, 571-572.

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transgressions, until the seed should come to whom he made the promise, being ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not of one; but God is one. Was the law then against the promises of God? God forbid! For, if there had been a law given which could give life, verily justice should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise, by the faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe.⁹

Liturgical commentators like Rupert of Deutz (d. 1135) note and stress the relationship between Epistle and Gospel by linking Abraham and the Law of the first and the Priest and Levite of the second:

Primum epistola, Abrahæ dictæ sunt promissiones et semini ejus (Gal. III), per hoc quod tali evangelio præmittitur, multum ad intelligendum aperitur ipsa, simulque tota pene disputatio Pauli ad Galatas, unde hæc lectio sumpta est. Nam per hoc quod tam sacerdos quam levita viso homine illo præterivit, innuitur quid lex contulerit, quæ post quadringentos et triginta annos data est, a testamento Dei, cum fidei Abraham per repromissionem confirmato, videlicet quia non quidem ipsa adversus promissa Dei, sed nullus justificari potuit coram Deo ex operibus ejusdem legis.¹⁰

In this way both Abraham and the Law become intimately connected with the Samaritan. Furthermore, the complete text of the Gospel for this Sunday strengthens the ties

⁹ See note 5 above for service book sources.

¹⁰ De Divinis Officiis, Lib. XII, cap. XIII; PL, 170, 322.

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between the Samaritan and the Law-Hope figure as the introduction to the parable, Luke 10, 23-29, shows:

And turning to his disciples Jesus said: Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear and have not heard them. And behold, a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying: Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? But he said to him: What is written in the law? How readest thou? He answering said: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said to him: Thou hast answered right. This do; and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said to Jesus: And who is my neighbour? And Jesus, answering, said: etc...

The next relationship, that between the Samaritan and the Incarnation-Passion themes, requires the identification of the Samaritan as Christ, which Langland does in numerous passages.¹¹ Here again, the poet seems to echo patristic interpretations, such as that of Ambrose who likens the Samaritan and his journey down the road to Christ and his descent to earth: "Hic ergo Samaritanus des-

¹¹ See below for discussion of the Samaritan's veiled references to His Passion, defeat of Satan and Resurrection (Passus XVII, lines 109-123). See also Passus XVIII line 10, where Will says of the Christ-Knight that he is "One semblable to the Samaritan."

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cendens quis est? Scilicet: Qui descendit de caelo, et qui ascendit in caelum, Filius hominis qui est in caelo (Joan. III, 13)?¹² But the liturgy shares exactly the same views; most homilies and commentaries for this Sunday use words like "scilicet Christus" or "id est Christus" when referring to the Samaritan.¹³

Langland sows the seeds of the themes themselves in lines 106-108 of Passus XVII, when he alludes to Christ's body in connection with the Samaritan's horse and to Satan's ultimate defeat by Christ:

For he seigh me, that am Samaritan. suwen Feith
and his felaw
On my caple that hatte Caro. (of mankynde I toke it),
He was vnhardy, that harlot. and hudde hym in
inferno.

Again the Fathers appear as the likeliest source for such an image. Bede, for example, speaks of the Samaritan's steed as Christ's body, on which He bore the weight of man's sins on the cross: "Jumentum ejus est caro, in qua ad

12 Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam, Lib. VII,
74; PL, 15, 1718; see also Bede, In Lucae, Lib. III, cap. X;
PL, 92, 469.

13 See, for example, Durand, Rationale, Lib. 6, cap. 127, p. 639; Rupert, De Divinis Officiis, Lib. XII, cap. XIII; PL, 170, 321, etc. All the commentators and homilists quoted in this chapter have this in one form or another.

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nos venire dignatus est.... In quo saucium imposuit, quia peccata nostra ipse portavit in corpore suo super lignum."¹⁴

We find, however, that such interpretations have become an inextricable part of the liturgy; passages in the homiletic manual of Smaragdus, the Collectiones, and in Rupert's commentary closely parallel the words of Bede:

Jumentum ejus est caro, in qua ad nos venire dignatus est, in quo saucium imposuit, qui peccata nostra portavit in corpore suo super lignum...

 ...et imponens super jumentum suum, id est in corpore suo, peccata nostra perferens super lignum, ad stabulum Ecclesiae perduxit.¹⁵

But the liturgy contributes more than these simple parallels. First, the Incarnation theme is linked solidly to the Samaritan Gospel because of the structure of the Mass for the thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Along with the Samaritan Gospel, this Mass makes use of the following communion chant drawn from Wisdom, 16,20: "Panem de caelo

¹⁴ Expositio in Lucae Evangelium, Lib. III, cap. X; PL, 92, 469; see also Augustine, Quaestionum Evangeliorum, Lib. II, Quest. XIX; PL, 35, 1340; Ambrose, Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam, Lib. VII, 74; PL, 15, 1719.

¹⁵ PL, 102, 447-448 and 170, 322; see also Werner of St. Blaise, Deflorationes, PL, 157, 119; Sicard of Cremona, Mitrale, PL, 213, 396; Honorius Augustodunensis, Speculum Ecclesiale, PL, 172, 1060.

THE LITURGICAL ASSOCIATIONS OF LANGLAND'S SAMARITAN 32

dedisti nobis, Domine: habentem omne delectamentum et omnem saporem suavitatis."¹⁶ Bread was one of the commonest symbols of the Incarnation on the authority of John 6, 33 and 35: "For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world....I am the bread of Life."¹⁷ To a liturgical commentator like Guillaume Durand this chant naturally enough calls the Incarnation to mind since this mystery made the "bread of angels" into the "bread of man": "Quomodo autem sanavit illum coecum, patet quia per panem angelorum, qui factus est panis hominum, idest per Filium Dei incarnatum, et ideo sequitur in communione: Panem..."¹⁸ In the case of the Passion theme Langland makes full use of the image of a battle between Christ and Satan, an image widely employed in Holy Week and Easter liturgy. Will tells us. in line 51. that the Samaritan

¹⁶ See note 5 above for service book sources.

¹⁷ Since the bread referred to here is the manna of the desert as the biblical context of the passage shows, a more pertinent comment is made by Peter Lombard (d.1164), who explains manna in terms of the Living Bread which descended from heaven: "Quid est manna? Panis vivus qui de caelo descendit." (Collectanea in omnes D. Pauli Apostoli Epistolas. In Epistolam I ad Corinthios, cap. X; PL, 191, 1618.

¹⁸ Rationale, Lib. VI, cap. 127, p. 639.

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rides to a "joust" in Jerusalem. The Samaritan acknowledges this in line 74 and then in lines 109-112 goes on to describe the battle that will soon take place:

Ac ar this day thre dayes. I dar vndertaken,
That he worth fettred, that feloune. fast with
And neure eft greue grome. that goth this ilke cheynes,
O mors, ero mors tua, etc. gate;

The next chapter will deal at length with Langland's Passion-battle image but the following passage from the Easter Sequence Victimae Pascali, describing Christ's encounter with Satan as a duel between Life and Death, affords an excellent proof of its liturgical nature: "Mors et vita duello conflixere mirando:/dux vitae mortuus/regnat vivus."¹⁹ Furthermore Langland's "O mors, ero mors tua" from the passage just quoted is taken from Osee 13,14, used by the liturgy as the first Antiphon for Lauds on Holy Saturday.²⁰

In brief, then, because of its liturgical associations found in the texts of the Mass for the thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost and in liturgical homilies

¹⁹ See Sarum Missal, p. 141; York Missal, I, 129.

20 See Sarum Breviary, I, dcccii; S.W. Lawley, ed., Breviarum ad usum insignis ecclesiae eboracensis (Surtees Society, 1880-1882), vol. I, p. 402. (Hereafter, York Breviary).

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and commentaries for the same Sunday, the Samaritan episode is locked solidly into place between the Abraham-Faith, Law-Hope figures and the Incarnation-Passion motifs which precede and follow it in Langland's poem.

If the liturgy plays an important part in fixing the position of the Samaritan episode and related elements within the poem, it also furnishes Langland with a number of elements within the episode itself, not found in the Vulgate.

The first of these appears when the Samaritan begins to ride off, after treating the wounded man. Will tells us. in lines 78-85. that Faith, Hope and he, all ran after the Samaritan, and that he begged to become the merciful stranger's servant:

"For I may nou3t lette," quod that leode. and
 lyarde he bistrydeth,
 And raped hym to-Iherusalem-ward. the ri3te
 weye to ryde.
 Faith folweth after faste. and fonded to mete hym,
 And Spes spaklich hym spedde. spede if he my3te,
 To ouertake hym and talke to hym. ar thei to
 toun come.
 And whan I sey3 this, I soIourned nou3te. but
 shope me to renne,
 And suwed that Samaritan. that was so ful of pite,
 And graunted hym to ben his grome....

The Collect read on the thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost, after mentioning the "serving of God", prays that we may be permitted to "run after the object of His promises"

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thereby paralleling Will's request and the running of all three after the Samaritan: "Omnipotens et misericors Deus, de cujus munere venit, ut tibi a fidelibus tuis digne et laudabiter serviatur: tribue nobis, quaesumus, ut ad promissiones tuas sine offensione curramus. Per Dominum nostrum."²¹ Langland is not, of course, the only one to notice the importance of this Collect; Guillaume Durand interprets it as the words of Holy Church praying for the grace to run towards the true promises of God: "Unde sequitur Oratio: Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, de cujus munere venit, etc. Et rogat ut possit currere Ecclesia ad veras promissiones."²² Not only the Collect, however, but the Introit, Gradual and Offertory of this Mass have a bearing on the above passage. Sicard of Cremona (d. 1215) explains these chants as mankind's cries to the Samaritan for liberation and healing: "Hunc quippe sacerdos, vel levita sanare nequivit; quia lex neminem ad perfectum duxit, unde

²¹ See note 5 above for service book sources; note that this same Collect appears three times on the same day, as the Collect for Mass, Lauds and Vespers.

²² Rationale, Lib. VI, cap. 127, p. 638.

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in epistola: Abrahae. Ubi probatur quod ex lege non est justificatio; quia tunc erant omnia sub peccato. Itaque vox populi liberandi et infirmi generis humani sanitatem a Samaritano petentis: Respice, eadem in graduali, Respice et exsurge, similiter in offerenda: In te Domine.²³ This view comes very close to Langland's idea of having all his characters, Faith, Hope, and Will, run after the Samaritan to obtain greater knowledge and help. Langland may also have been influenced here by the lawyer of the Gospel. who, like all three of Langland's figures, seeks to learn more by questioning Jesus: "What may I do to possess eternal life?"

Another series of elements in the poem, but not in the Vulgate, concerns the identity of the wounded man and that of his assailants. Langland tells us in lines 98-99, that no man ever entered the forest where the attack took place without being waylaid by thieves: "For went neuere wy in this worlde. thorw that wildernesse, / That he ne was robbed or rifled. rode he there or 3ede."

Patristic interpretations of the wounded man as Adam or

²³ Mitræ, Lib. VIII, cap. XIII; PL, 213, 396.

He was vnhardy, that harlot. and hudde hym in
inferno.
Ac ar this day thre dayes. I dar vndertaken,
That he worth fettred, that feloune. fast with
cheynes,

24 See, for example, Augustine, Quaestionum Evangeliorum, Lib. II, Quest. XIX; PL, 35, 1340; Bede, Expositio in Lucae Evangelium, Lib. II, cap. X; PL, 92, 468.

25 Homiliae de Tempore, PL, 95, 1388. See also Godefrigus, Homiliae Dominicales, PL, 174, 566, etc.

26 Speculum Ecclesiale, PL, 172, 1059. See also Sicard, Mitræ, Lib. VIII, cap. XIII; PL, 213, 396.

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And neure eft greue grome. that goth this ilke
gate.

To the Fathers, the thieves were the devils, or in the words of Ambrose, the angels of night and darkness: "Qui sunt isti latrones, nisi angeli noctis atque tenebrarum, qui se nonnumquam transfigurant in angelos lucis, sed perseverare non possunt?"²⁷ In both homilies and liturgical commentaries the same view is taken; for Paul the Deacon, the thieves are the devil and his angels: "Latrones, diabolum et angelos ejus intellige."²⁸ Honorius interprets them as the host of devils, which surrounds man exiled from paradise: "Qui latrones incidit, quia exulem protinus turba daemonum circumdedit."²⁹

Next, Langland adds to the Vulgate narrative a long discussion of the proper remedies for the wounded man. In explaining why Faith and Hope passed by the wounded man without helping him, the Samaritan states, in lines 87-93, that they must be excused since their help would

²⁷ Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam, Lib. VII, 73; PL, 15, 1718. See also Augustine, PL, 35, 1340; Bede, PL, 92, 468.

²⁸ Homiliae de Tempore, PL, 95, 1381. See also, Smaragdus, Collectiones, PL, 102, 447.

²⁹ Speculum Ecclesiale, PL, 172, 1059.

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latrones; sacerdos inquam, et levita veteris Testamenti, sed solus Samaritanus, scilicet Christus, qui est custos noster, ipsum sanavit. Et quia lex non sanat, quoniam neminem ad perfectionem ducit, sed solus Deus in quo sperandum est, ideo sequitur Offertorium: In te Domine speravi.³⁰

In lines 94-97, the Samaritan, continuing his discussion of the remedies, says that they are three in number; the sacraments of Baptism, Penance and the Eucharist:

And be he bathed in that blode. baptised, as it
were,
And thanne plastred with penaunce. and passioun
of that babi,
He shulde stonde and steppe; ac stalworth worth
he neure,
Tyl he haue eten al the barn. and his blode
ydronke.

Once again the liturgy provides the source for all three remedies. A homily by Paul the Deacon explains that the wounded man being carried to the inn on the Samaritan's horse is like a man coming to faith through baptism: "Moraliter autem tunc quilibet super jumentum Domini imponitur et in stabulum ducitur, cum ad baptismum veniens, fidem sanctae Trinitatis percipit, et in societate sanctae Eccle-

³⁰ Rationale, Lib. VI, cap. 127, p. 639; similar statements are made by Sicard (Mitræ, Lib. VIII, cap. XIII; PL, 213, 396) and Rupert (De Divinis Officiis, Lib. XII, cap. XIII; PL, 170, 322).

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siae collocatur."³¹ The Collectiones of Smaragdus adds the Eucharist to Baptism; the Samaritan's placing of the wounded man on his horse and the ensuing journey to the inn are symbolic of the receiving of Baptism and the Eucharist, the two indispensable sacraments for entering the Church: "Stabulum autem est Ecclesia praesens, ubi reficiuntur viatores de peregrinatione hac in aeternam patriam redeuntes, et bene jumento impositum duxit in stabulum, quia nemo nisi baptizatus, nisi corpore Christi adunatus, Ecclesiam intrabit."³² Rupert of Deutz connects the Eucharist and the Samaritan by bringing in the communion chant read in conjunction with the Samaritan Gospel.³³ It is used on this particular day, he claims, because the Eucharist especially, cures us of our wounds: "Et qui corpus Christi, quod sumimus, illa specialiter curat vulnera, bene et illud de libro Sapientiae canimus in communione: Panem de caelo dedisti nobis."³⁴ Liturgical commentators

³¹ Homiliae de Tempore, PL, 95, 1392.

³² PL, 102, 448.

³³ See above, pp. 10-11 where this chant is quoted.

³⁴ De Divinis Officiis, Lib. XII, cap. XIII; PL, 170, 322.

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also associate the Samaritan and the sacrament of Penance. As already seen, Durand, Sicard, and Rupert describe Christ as the only cure for the wounds or the sickness of sin; this interpretation is linked closely to patristic teachings on the sacrament of Penance. Origen speaks of the confessor as a physician, who must be chosen with great care, to whom the sickness must be clearly exposed, and whose advice for regaining health must be diligently followed:

Tantummodo circumspecte diligentius, cui debeas confiteri peccatum tuum. Proba prius medicum, cui debeas causam languoris exponere, qui sciat infirmari cum infirmante, flere cum flente, qui condolendi et compatiendi noverit disciplinam: ut ita demum si quid ille dixerit, qui se prius et eruditum medicum ostenderit et misericordem, si quid consilii dederit, facias, et sequaris, si intellexerit et praeviderit talem esse languorem tuum qui in conventu totius Ecclesiae exponi debeat et curari, ex quo fortassis et caeteri aedificari poterunt, et tu ipse facile sanari, multa hoc deliberatione, et satis perito medici illius consilio procurandum est. ³⁵

Jerome likens sin to the bite of a serpent, which must be brought to the attention of a physician to be cured since medicine cannot cure what it does not know: "Si quem serpens diabolus occulte morderit, et nullo conscio, cum

³⁵ Homilia II in psalmum XXXVII, J.P. Migne, ed. Patrologiae Graecae (Petit-Montrouge; J.P. Migne, 1857-1866), vol. 12, col. 1386. (Hereafter PG).

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peccati veneno in infecerit; si tacuerit qui percussus est, et non egerit poenitentiam, nec vulnus suum fratri et magistro voluerit confiteri, magister et frater, qui linguam habent ad curandum, facile ei prodesse non poterunt. Si enim, erubescat aegrotus, vulnus medico confiteri, quod ignorat medicina non curat."³⁶ But such interpretations are also liturgical as shown by the opening words of the following episcopal absolution of penitents: "Domine sancte pater omnipotens eternae deus. qui uulnera nostra curare dignatus es..."³⁷

Finally, in lines 115-121, after his presentation of the necessary remedies, the Samaritan describes how the "feeble and faint" will be restored to health and goes on to promise that he will return to help all those in need of him:

³⁶ Commentarius in Ecclesiasten, cap. X, PL, 23, 1096. The same image occurs in the Syrian Church: see Aphraat, Demonstratio VII De Paenitentibus, nos. 2 and 3 in R. Graffin, ed., Patrologia Syriaca (Paris: Firmin-Didot et Cie, 1894-1936) vol. I, col. 315-316.

³⁷ G.H. Doble, ed., Pontificale Lanaletense (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1937), p. 140; H.A. Wilson, ed., The Benedictional of Archbishop Robert (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1903), p. 57.

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And Hope the hostelleres man shal be. there the
man lith an helynge;
And alle that fieble and faynt be. that Faith
may nou3t teche,
Hope shal lede hem forth with loue. as his
lettre telleth,
And hostel hem and hele. thorw holicherche bileue,
Tyl I haue salue for alle syke. and thanne shal
I retourne,
And come a3ein bi this contree. and confort alle
syke
That craueth it or coueiteth it. and cryeth
there-after.

Liturgical homilies undoubtedly also described how the weary travellers regain their strength with the help of hope as this excerpt from a homiletic manual shows: "Stabulum est Ecclesia praesens, ubi sperando reficiuntur viatores, in aeternam vitam redeunt." ³⁸ Speaking of the central theme of the Mass for the thirteenth Sunday, Guillaume Durand says that this is the Sunday of promises, especially of the promise of Christ's coming, prefigured in Langland by the Samaritan's return: "Dominica enim ista est de promissionibus, unde dicit in Introitu: Respice Domine, in Testamentum tuum, et in promissione tua, ut sicut promisit, veniat Filius tuus." ³⁹

38 Werner of St. Blaise, Deflorationes, PL, 157, 1120; see also Smaragdus, Collectiones, PL, 102, 447.

³⁹ Rationale, Lib. VI, cap. 127, p. 638.

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Concerning the Samaritan episode, we may conclude, therefore, that the liturgy constitutes an important principle of structure and source for elements absent from the Vulgate narrative, but added by Langland to the story as it appears in his poem. However, if the liturgy's function is one of structure only, its role may well be termed a minor one. But while performing this relatively minor task, the liturgy assumes a role of major importance by furthering the development of the total meaning of the work.

Up to the end of Passus XVII, Will is engaged in a search for salvation as his own words show in Passus I, lines 83-84; "Teche me to no tresore. but telle me this ilke, / How I may saue my soule. that seynt art yholden?" As the poem develops Will's quest broadens into one for spiritual perfection as lines 122-126 of Passus VIII point out:

Thanne Thou3t in that tyme. seide thise wordes,
 "Where Dowel, Dobet. and Dobest ben in londe,
 Here is Wille wolde ywyte. yif Witte couthe
 teche hym,
 And whether he be man or no man. this man fayne
 wolde aspye,
 And worchen as thei thre wolde. this is his
 entente."

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In Passus XVIII this quest seems to have attained its object for it suddenly recedes into the background to reappear only at the poem's end, Passus XX, lines 378-384:

"Bi Cryste," quod Conscience tho. "I will bi come
a pilgryme,
And walken as wyde. as al the worlde lasteth,
To seke Piers the Plowman. that Pryde may destruye,
And that freres hadde a fyndyng. that for nede
flateren,
And contrepleteth me, Conscience; now Kynde me
auenge,
And sende me happe and hele. til I haue Piers
the Plowman!"
And sitthe he gradde after grace. til I gan
awake.

Indeed, in a sense, Passus XVIII answers Will's problems; for, there, in a blinding vision, Langland brings us face to face with Christ our Savior so that we may know by whom, why, and how, our Redemption was wrought. Before this great climax to the poem, however, it is fitting that Langland sum up all that has been said so far in the poem concerning the quest, while pointing out where the true solution lies.

The liturgy of the thirteenth Sunday after the octave of Pentecost provides all these things. Will's agonizing search for the true promises of God, salvation, and perfection, parallel the motifs found in the Collect, the chants of the Introit, Gradual and Offertory, and to some extent, the Gospel of this Sunday's Mass. The Epistle covers,

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in general terms, practically all the proposed solutions to Will's problem when it states that the faith of Abraham, hope in the promises of God, and all good works under the law are incomplete in themselves.⁴⁰ Finally, the Samaritan Gospel with its liturgical associations provides the ultimate answer to the problem; here the whole question is put squarely to Christ himself, the Supreme Authority, in terms very close to Will's own plea quoted above:

"What may I do to possess eternal life?" Christ's answer, the Samaritan parable, was recognized by Christian tradition as being fulfilled in deed by His Incarnation, Passion, and Death, so that, as seen above, these mysteries were

⁴⁰ The answers Will receives are too often taken as contradictory, when in fact they are complementary; Langland simply balances off against each other as many facets of the solution as possible, thereby revealing the complex nature of both it and the problem it seeks to clear up. Also, each answer is that aspect of the solution, which one would naturally expect from the allegorized faculty, virtue, or abstraction presenting it. For example, the faculty for speculative thinking, represented by the character Thought, sees Dowel as the life of all honest toilers in the secular state, Dobet as the life of the cloister, and Dobest as the life of the bishop. Thought, according to his nature, speaks in abstractions and completely ignores individualizing circumstances. Therefore, he fails to see that these ideals, though good in themselves, do not necessarily lead to a perfect life simply because a man embraces one of them and that they may even be debased and corrupted by individuals. However, the nature of the speaker calls for just such a one-sided

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always associated with the parable.⁴¹ Langland merely points this out in Passus XVII reserving the next Passus for its full development. Thus, with the aid of the liturgy, Langland brilliantly sums up all the preceding matter while preparing the reader for the poem's great climax.

That Langland did not hit upon all this accidentally, that he was not the only person to see all these motifs in the liturgy of the thirteenth Sunday, and that all these meanings were indeed attached to this Mass by centuries of liturgical tradition, is made abundantly clear by the homilies and especially by the liturgical

solution. Divorced from all the other faculties which influence him, Thought necessarily produces an incomplete answer but one needed to solve the puzzle.

⁴¹ The belief that Christ practiced perfectly all that He taught so that man might have a model after which he could fashion his own life, is alluded to in Passus XI, lines 227-234:

Cleophas ne knewe hym nau3te, that he Cryste were,
For his pore paraille. and pylgrymes wedes,
Tyl he blessed and brak. the bred that thei eten.
So bi his werkes thei wisten. that he was Iesus;
Ac by clothyng thei knewe hym nou3te. ne bi
carpyng of tonge.

And al was in ensample. to vs synful here,
That we shulde be low. and loueliche of speche,
And apparaille vs nou3te ouer proudly. for
pylgrymes ar we alle.

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commentaries on these texts. Furthermore, some or all of these liturgical themes must have been pointed out to Langland's contemporaries every year when the thirteenth Sunday reappeared, so that even a "lewed" audience could pick up the thread of Langland's argument in Passus XVII if the preceding subtleties and digressions had caused some readers to lose their way.

CHAPTER II

LANGLAND'S CHRIST-KNIGHT AND THE LITURGY

Besides complex units like the thirteenth Sunday after the octave of Pentecost with its many and varied constituents, medieval liturgy contained an almost limitless number of simpler images, not only striking in themselves, but also extremely rich because of their associations with other liturgical and doctrinal materials. Such is the case of the Christ-Warrior-Knight image which Langland incorporates so effectively into his Piers Plowman.

By Langland's time, a fairly common way of representing Christ was a Lover-Knight, jousting with Satan to rescue or gain the favor of his Lady, the soul of each man. A perfect example is found in the following late fourteenth century vernacular sermon for the third Sunday in Lent:

Ensample here-of I fynde in þe Gestes of Rome.
 I fynde þat þer was a noble knyght þat dow3ty
 was in armes and stronge of bodye, þat put hym-
 selfe to fy3ght for þe loue of a mayden þat
 falseliche was disherett þorowe a tyraunte, þe
 wiche knythe þan besou3the þis mayuden of no3the
 els but only þat she wolde loue hym sofferandly,
 and iff it so be-fell þat he were slayn in bateyll
 for loue of hure, þat she wold take ys armes,

blody in mynde of hym, and hange hem vp in here chambur, and þat she shulde not forȝett is loue þat loued hure somuche.

Goostelichefor to speke, ryght þus fareþ oure Lorde Ihesu Criste be mans soule, þat for þe helthe of mans soule and saluacion, to brynge it to þe herytage of þe blisse of heven, of wiche herytage mans soule was falseliche forbarred þorowe envye of þe wicked tyraunte þe fende of-hell, þerfore he wolde dye on þe Rode Tre and suffre grette peynes and stronge, for þe wiche peynes he ne askeþ none oþur rewarde of vs, but only þat we loue hym, and often tymes to haue hym in mynde, and þe grette loue þat he shewed to vs in ys dyinge. Þerfore seþ Seyn Austyne, et est in libello De Spiritu et Anima, "Amat Deus ut ametur; et cum amat, nichill aliud vult quam amari—God," he seythe, "he loueþ for to be loued; and when þat he loueþ, he ne askesse noȝthe els but for to be loued aȝeyne." Ðan is þis þe firste poynte of loue of God almyghty, ofte tyme to þenke on God.¹

However, if Langland's Christ-Knight is carefully analysed, most of the elements essential to the Lover-Knight image are found wanting. Langland's image in its essential terms deals only with a battle between Christ and Satan and the rescue of all Satan's captives. For example, in lines 95-96 of Passus XVI, the Holy Spirit, speaking of

¹ Ross, Middle English Sermons, pp. 77-78. For a thorough discussion of this theme in medieval English literature see Rosemary Woolf's "The Theme of Christ the Lover-Knight in Medieval Literature", R.E.S. New Series, XIII (1962), 1-16.

the fruit of the tree of Charity and its lawful owner, tells Mary that both claimants, Christ and Satan, will settle the matter by judgment of arms, in a joust:

"And thanne shulde Iesus Iuste there-fore. bi Iuggement of armes, / Whether shulde fonge the fruit. the fende or hymselfue." Later, in lines 100-105, the poet describes how Jesus, grown skilful in battle long before the appointed day of combat, devoted the remaining time to studying the art of healing that he might tend his wounds received at the hands of the enemy:

And in the wombe of that wenche. was he fourty
wokes,
Tyl he wex a faunt thoww her flesshe. and of
fi3tyng couthe,
To haue y-fou3te with the fende. ar ful tyme
come.
And Pieres the Plowman. parceyued plenere tyme,
And lered hym lechecraft. his lyf for to saue,
That though he were wounded with his enemye.
to warisshe hym-self.

Will's vision of Christ's life ends in lines 162-166 with a mention of the joust on Good Friday and Christ's victory over the powers of death and night:

That on the Fryday folwyng. for mankynde sake
Iusted in Ierusalem. a Ioye to vs alle.
On crosse vpon Caluarye. Cryst toke the bataille,
A3eines deth and the deuel. destruyed her
botheres my3tes,
Deyde, and deth fordid. and daye of ny3te made.

Obviously, we do not have here the image of the Lover-Knight as it appears in the sermon quoted above. We are, in fact, dealing with the much older representation of the Redemption as Christ's conquest of the devil and the ensuing liberation of man, the devil's captive since the Fall.²

This image was available to Langland especially through the liturgy. Little need be said of one liturgical source of the general features of the image, the psalter, read in its entirety every week and containing martial descriptions of God, like the following:

Thou hast conducted me; for thou hast been my
hope: a tower of strength against the face of
the enemy. (Ps. 60: 3-4).

.....
Thou hast broken the heads of the dragon. Thou
hast given him to be meat for the people of the
Ethiopians. (Ps. 73: 14).

² Wilbur Gaffney. In "The Allegory of the Christ-Knight in Piers Plowman," PMLA XXXXVI (1931), 155-168, discusses possible sources of Langland's image but lists examples of the Christ-Lover type. He is corrected by Sister Marie de Lourdes Le May in The Allegory of the Christ-Knight in English Literature (Washington: Catholic University of America Dissertation, 1932), when she writes of Langland's knight: "...gates must be entered, castles besieged but, as we naturally expect from Langland, there is no romance connected with the delivery of the imprisoned lady." (p. 41).

Send forth lightning, and thou shalt scatter them: shoot out thy arrows, and thou shalt trouble them. (Ps. 143: 6).

Other biblical texts used liturgically, a number of Pauline Epistles, for example, make use of military terms in discussing man's resistance to evil, thereby transforming Christians into warriors and, by association, Christ into a military leader. Ephesians 6: 10-17, the Epistle for the twenty-first Sunday after the feast of the Trinity, describes in great detail the armor of God's soldier:

Finally, brethren, be strengthened in the Lord and in the might of his power. Put you on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against the flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places. Therefore, take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day and to stand in all things perfect. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth and having on the breastplate of justice; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; In all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit (which is the word of God).³

³ Sarum Missal, 192; Winchester Missal, I, 461-462. Armor is mentioned again in I Thessalonians, 5:8, the Epistle for Friday of the third week of Easter: "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, having on the breastplate

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The second letter to Timothy, 2: 3-4, the Epistle for Wednesday of the twentieth week after Trinity Sunday, speaks of the soldier of Christ and God: "Labour as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No man, being a soldier to God, entangleth himself with secular businesses."⁴

The ceremonies of Holy Week and Easter provide many more specific examples. Langland demonstrates his knowledge of these in passages such as line 65 of Passus XVIII, "Lyf and Deth in this derknesse. her one fordoth her ʒother," obviously a vernacular rendering of the verse "Mors et vita duello conflixere mirando," of the eleventh century Easter Sequence *Victimæ Paschali*.⁵ The opening verses of the sixth century *Pange lingua*, sung on Good Friday, speak of the glorious battle between Christ and the devil and describe the cross as the Victor's trophy:

Pange, lingua, gloriosi
Proelium certaminis

of faith and charity and, for a helmet, the hope of salvation. (*Sarum Missal*, p. 148, n. 3-3).

⁴ *Sarum Missal*, p. 192, n. 1.

⁵ *Sarum Missal*, p. 141; *York Missal*, I, 129; *Winchester Missal*, I, 316.

Et super crucis trophaeo
 Dic triumphum nobilem
 Qualiter Redemptor orbis
 Immolatus vicerit.⁶

The Sequence Fulgens praeclara of Easter morning Mass relates how Christ triumphed over the proud foe and laid low his entire army: "Fulgens praeclara rutilat per orbem hodie dies, in qua Christi lucida narrantur ovanter praelia. De hoste superbo quem Jesus triumphavit, pulchre castra illius perimens teterrima."⁷

Liturgical homilies also frequently portrayed Christ's Passion in warlike terms. Leo the Great (d.461) describes the Jews doing battle against Christ, their teeth and tongues like arrows and sharp swords, their cries and words like poisoned darts and arrows:

⁶ Sarum Missal, p. 113; York Missal, I, 106. In the version used today lauream has replaced proelium. Of this change Connelly writes: "Fortunatus used proelium not lauream, as he was thinking of the struggle, not of its result." Of the phrase super crucis trophaeo he writes: "The trophaeum was that on which were placed or carried the spoils of victory to recall the victory. The relic of the Cross, carried in procession, recalled Christ's victory." (Hymns of the Roman Liturgy, p. 83).

⁷ Sarum Missal, p. 136; York Missal, I, 126; Winchester Missal, I, 301-302. In the Roman rite, the third collect read over the palms on Palm Sunday speaks of Christ's battle with the prince of death and calls the palms symbols of Christ's glorious victory: "Intellecti

Sed cum inardesceret ira clamantium, ut Barrabam indulgentia relaxaret, et Jesum crucis poena susciperet; cum consono fremitu diceretur a turbis: Sanguis ejus super nos et super filios nostros (Matth. XXVII, 25); obtinuerunt iniqui in damnationem suam quod pertinaciter exigebant: quorum dentes, sicut propheta testatus est, arma erant et sagittae, et lingua eorum gladius acutus (Ps. LVI, 5). Frustra enim a crucifigendo majestatis Domino manus proprias continebant, in quem lethalia vocum spicula, et venenata verborum tela jaciebant.⁸

In another of his Passion homilies, Leo makes Satan a cruel tyrant, overthrown by the power of Christ's cross and despoiled of all his booty: "Quamvis enim forti et crudeli tyranno per potentiam crucis Christi vasa antiquae deprædationis erepta sint, et dominatio principis mundi a redemptorum sit ejecta corporibus, insidiari tamen etiam justificatis eadem malignitas perseverat, et multis modis eos in quibus non regnat impugnat."⁹ Almost ten centuries

enim jam tunc illa hominum beata multitudo praefigurati: quia Redemptor noster humanis condolens miseriis, pro totius mundi vita cum mortis principe esset pugnaturus, ac moriendo triumphaturus. Et ideo talia obsequens administravit, quae in illo, et triumphos victoriae, et misericordiae pinguedinem declararent." See Robert Lippe, ed., Missale Romanum 1474 (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1899-1907), I, 131. I have not been able to find this collect in the missals of Sarum, York, or Winchester.

⁸ Sermo de Passione Domini VIII, PL, 54, 339.

⁹ Sermo de Passione Domini XIX, PL, 54, 382.

later Christ, the Warrior-Knight is still very much a part of sermon imagery, as seen in the following vernacular sermon for the twenty-first Sunday after Trinity:

The firste, I seye euery man was gette in bateyll borowe þe myghtfull dethe þat Crist suffred on þe Rode Tree. And how þat he gatte þe I will shewe þe by ensample. I rede of an ermyte þat walked by a veye and met with a knyght commynge aȝeyns hym vn-armed. And þe ermyte asked hym fro whens þat he com and wheþur þat he wolde. And þe knyght answered and seid, "I com fro my fadur and am goynge to feyght with a geaunte þat hathe many of my faders men in pryson." Þan seid þe ermyte, "Seþen þat þou wolte goye feyȝthe withe þat geaunte, tell me what þat þou bereste in þin armes." "I bere a beere of blake with a lylie of whyte and v roses of redde."

By þis armet I vnderstonde gooslyche euery Cristen man in þis worlde þat walkeþ in þe veye, I hope, towarde heven. For whan þat þou shalte walke þat veye, þou shalte mete withe a knyght, þe wiche is Criste, Goddes Sone of heven; for ȝiffe þou meve þe oon fote toward heven, Criste cometh towarde þe an hundred myle. But þis Knyght com from is Fadere when þat he com from heven and toke flesshe and blode of þat gloryusse vergyn, Oure Lady Seynte Marye. But he com vnarmed when þat he lefte all is grete povere þer and com downe mekely for to feyght with a geaunte, þat was þe dewell of hell. But what bare he in is armys? A beere of blake, þe wiche was bittur penaunce þat he suffred on þe Rode Tre; a lilie of whyte, þat was is owne precieuse bodye in all is bittur penaunce; v roses of rede, þe wiche were þe v princypall woundes in ys bodye. All is bodye was full of woundes, but þer were v princypall: tweyn in is hondes, tweyn in is fete, and oon in is herte. With pese armys he ouercome þe dewell and brought vs to þe kyngdom of heven. And here-to bereþ wittenes Seynt Poule, ad Colocenses, primo, "Qui eripuit nos de potes-

tate tenebrarum et transtulit in regnum filij
 sui—þe wiche þat delyvered vs was Criste by is
 dethe fro þe powere of derkenes and brought vs
 vn-to þe kyngedom of is Sone." Þan by þis skill
 euerye man is a seruaunte to Criste, for he was
 gette in bateyll.¹⁰

Liturgical commentators also followed this tradition. Guillaume Durand, for example, interprets the Good Friday chant Eripe me as a representation of the David-Christ Goliath-devil combat: "Secundus vero Tractus, scilicet: Eripe me, prolixior est, et repraesentat magnum bellum David cum Golia, et Christus noster David hodie magnum Goliath, idest diabolum, debellavit."¹¹ Commentaries on the Mass in general, however, contribute the most to keeping the image alive. The Mass had long been thought of as a commemoration of Christ's Passion as seen, for example, in the pseudo-Alcuinian De Divinis Officiis, which states that Christ himself asked that the Mass be celebrated in memory of His Passion: "Celebratio missae, in commemorationem passionis Christi peragitur. Sic enim ipse praecepit apostolis, tradens eis corpus et sanguinem suum: Hoc facite in meam commemorationem (Luc. XXI, 19),

¹⁰ Ross, Middle English Sermons, pp. 37-38.

¹¹ Rationale, Lib. VI, cap. 77, p. 533.

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hoc est, in memoriam passionis meae. Tanquam diceret,
quod pro vestra salute passus sum, ad memoriam revocate,
et pro vestra vestrorumque salute eadem proferre curate."¹²

Also, parts of the Mass are associated with certain events of the Passion so that, to Honorius Augustodunensis, the altar becomes the cross and the corporal, Christ's body spread on the cross, as the corporal is on the altar. The chalice of wine and water foretells of the blood and water which flowed from Christ's side. The priest's inclination at the Hanc igitur represents Christ's acceptance of the Father's Will and the elevation of the chalice symbolizes Christ's elevation on the cross. The deacon stands behind the celebrant to represent the flight of the Apostles while the sub-deacon stands beside him imitating those who stood by Christ until the end. The priest's inclination at the Supplices te rogamus and the recitation of the Nobis quoque peccatoribus remind us of Christ's death and of the words of the Centurion: "Indeed, this was the son of God."¹³ Other commentators preferred to explain

¹² Cap. XL; PL, 101, 1246.

¹³ This is a summary rather than a translation of a passage in the Gemma Animae, Lib.I, cap. XLVI, (PL, 172, 557-558). The Latin reads: "In hoc officio agitur Christi

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the Mass as an epic combat. Sicard of Cremona lists a number of battles which it symbolizes but states that the chief one it commemorates is that between Christ and Satan: "Nulli dubium quod missa pugnae sit repraesentativa, repraesentans cujusdam pugnae conflictum et victoriae triumphum. Et quod repraesentat nobis triplicem pugnam: unam figurantem, duplicem figuratam; unam in capite, aliam in membris. Figurans fuit cum Moyses Amalec prostravit, Josue septem populos expugnavit, David Goliath, Saulem et Philisthaeos superavit. Figurata in capite

passio super crucem chrismatis, altare crux intelligitur in quo corporale in forma corporis Christi distenditur.... Calix cum vino et aqua in dextra locatur, quia sanguis cum aqua de latere Christi manasse praedicatur. Cum sacerdos Hanc igitur oblationem dicit, se usque ad altare inclinat, quia ibi passio inchoatur, qui se usque ad aram crucis obediens Patri pro nobis inclinaverat (Philipp. II). Deinde oblata, vel calix in manu sacerdotis exaltatur, quia Christus pro salute nostra in crucem levatur, et sanguis ejus in redemptionem nostri immolatur. Interim diaconi retro episcopum stantes figuram gerunt apostolorum, qui in passione Domini eo relicto omnes fugerunt. Subdiaconi vero retro altare stantes contra episcopum, aspiciunt mulieres et notos, Jesum praeferunt, qui a longe stantes ejus passionem viderunt. Ante altare se sacerdos inclinat, cum Supplices te rogamus dicit, quia ibi passio Christi finit, et Christus inclinato capite spiritum emisit.... Sacerdos vocem levat dum Nobis quoque peccatoribus dicit, designans quod Ecclesia de Christi latere jam formam in confessione Redemptoris erupit, dum per vocem centurionis sic clamavit: Vere Filius Dei erat iste (Matth. XXVII).

est, quia Christus cum diabolo pugnans, ipsum superavit infernum exspoliavit."¹⁴ Sicard then goes into a detailed discussion of each part of the Mass relating it to a specific event of the Passion. Almost the same text crops up in the work of Durand nearly a hundred years later, showing how long such an interpretation continued to appeal to medieval liturgists. These commentaries transform the Confiteor and opening prayers into a renunciation of Satan's dominion over man followed by the first encounters with the enemy. The deacon is said to brandish a sword against the devil when he folds the chasuble over his shoulder. The sub-deacon reading the Epistle stands for the emperor giving his battle orders. The chants that follow are the trumpets and the cries of the troop commanders. During the reading of the Gospel, the enemy is entirely defeated and the victorious army reassembles. The sermon, the offerings, and the Offertory chant are likened to the emperor's congratulations, his division of the spoils among the soldiers, and their praise of him in return. The peace given to the people at

¹⁴ Mitræ, Lib.III, cap. IX; PL, 213, 144.

the end of the Mass and the Ite, missa est are explained as the peace which follows the defeat of the enemy and the disbanding of the victorious army.¹⁵ Since the Mass took on the figurative meanings of both the Passion and a battle, quite naturally the Passion and battle image were associated apart from the Mass, making Christ into a victorious Warrior and furnishing sufficient examples to anyone desirous of developing this theme poetically. Evidently, the liturgy could have provided Langland

¹⁵ Rationale, Lib. III, cap. 1, p. 161. The Latin is: "Sic itaque munitus ad certamen contra spiritualia nequitiae in coelestibus, et pro sedanda in subditos Judicis ira ad altare procedit, et per confessionem diaboli renuntiat dominio, et seipsum accusat; populus vero quasi pro suo privilegio oraturus, in profestis diebus terrae prosternitur. Dum autem ille orationes et alia recitat, quasi totis viribus contra diabolum pugnat. Dum diaconus in jejuniis ante Evangelium casulam super humerum replicat, quasi gladium contra hostem vibrat. Dum Epistola legitur voce praeconis, Imperatoris edicta dantur. Cantus sunt tubicinae, praecentores chorum regentes, sunt ducentes exercitum ad pugnam, instruentes, quibus lassescentibus alii subveniunt. Cantus autem sequentiae est plausus, seu laus victoriae. Dum Evangelium legitur, hostis quasi gladio vulneratur, aut exercitus post victoriam dispersus adunatur. Episcopus praedicans est Imperator, victores laudans. Oblationes sunt spolia, quae victoribus dividuntur. Cantus offertorii est triumphus, qui debetur Imperatori. Pax autem in fine datur populo, ut qui ex hoste prostrato insinuetur. Et deinde populus, data ei licentia, per Ite missa est, cum gaudio de victoria et pace obtenta ad propria redit." See also Sicard, Mitræ, Lib. 3, cap. IX, PL, 213, 145-146.

with enough material to explain the Christ-Knight passages
quoted above.

Langland, however, did not limit himself to these simple passages but went on to much more complex ones in Passus XVIII and XIX. Such is the case of Passus XIX, lines 5-14, which describe Christ the Conqueror, clothed in bloody armor and bearing His cross:

I fel eftsones a-slepe. and sodeynly me mette,
That Pieres the Plowman. was paynted al bloody,
And come in with a crosse. bifer the comune peple,
And ri3te lyke in alle lymes. to owre lorde Iesu;
And thanne called I Conscience. to kenne me the
sothe.
"Is this Iesus the Iuster?" quod I. "that Iuwes
did to deth?
Or it is Pieres the Plowman!. who paynted hym
so rede?"
Quod Conscience, and kneled tho. "thise aren
Pieres armes,
His coloures and his cote-armure. ac he that
cometh so bloody
Is Cryst with his crosse. conqueroure of Crystene."

The dialogue form of the passage, along with the ideas of blood stained garments and victory in battle, parallel Isaias, 63: 1-7, a lesson at Mass for Wednesday of Holy Week:

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, this beautiful one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength? I, that speak justice and am a defender to save. Why then is thy apparel red, and thy garment like theirs that tread in the winepress? I have trodden

the winepress alone: and of the Gentiles there is not a man with me. I have trampled on them in my indignation and have trodden them down in my wrath. And their blood is sprinkled upon my garments: and I have stained all my apparel. For the day of vengeance is in my heart: the year of my redemption is come. I looked about, and there was none to help: I sought, and there was none to give aid. And my own arm hath saved for me: and my indignation itself hath helped me. And I have trodden down the people in my wrath and have made them drunk in my indignation: and have brought down their strength to the earth.¹⁶

The Old Testament text makes no use of the term knight but the text was nevertheless interpreted as referring to Christ the Warrior-Knight and to His bloody battle with Satan, as seen in this fourteenth century vernacular adaptation:

What ys he, pys lordling pat cometh vrom þe
 vyht
 Wyth blod-rede wede so grysliche ydyht,
 So vayre y-coyntised, so semlich in syht,
 So styflyche 3ongep, so douhti a knyht?

Ich hyt am, Ich hyt am, pat ne speke bote ryht,
 Chaunpyoun to helen monkunde in vyht.

Why poenne ys þy schroud red wyht blod al y-meind,
 Ase troddares in wrynge wyht most al by-spreynd?

¹⁶ Sarum Missal, p. 100; York Missal, I, 92;
Winchester Missal, I, 256.

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þe wrynge ich hadde y-trodded al mysulf on,
 And of al monkunde ne was non oþer won.
 Ich hoem hadde y-trodded in wreþe and in grome,
 And al my wede ys by-spreynd wyth hoere blod
 ysome,
 And al my robe y-uuled to hoere grete shome.
 þe day of þylke wreche leueth in my þouht,
 þe þer of medes þeldyng ne uorþet ich nouht.
 Ich loked al aboute som helpynge mon,
 Ich souhte al þe route bote help nas þer non.
 Hyt was myn oune strengþe þat þys bote wrouhte,
 Myn owe Douhtynesse þat help þer me brouhte.
 On Godes mylsfolnesse ich wole by-þenche me,
 And heryen hym in alle þyng þat he þeldeth me.

Ich hadde y-trodded þe uolk in wrethe and in
 grome,
 Adreynt al wyth shennesse, y-drawe down wyth
 shome.¹⁷

By far the most complex passage occurs at the beginning of Passus XVIII where Will questions Faith about the young knight riding to joust in Jerusalem. We note by Faith's words in lines 24-26 that Christ hides His divine nature under the armor of Piers since, otherwise, no adversary, even Satan, would dare engage in battle with an undefeatable opponent:

That Cryst be nouȝt biknowe here. for consumma-
tus deus,

¹⁷ Carleton Brown, ed., Religious Lyrics of the Fourteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), pp. 28-29.

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In Piers paltok the Plowman. this priker shal
ryde;
For no dynte shal hym dere. as in deitate patris.

This tricking of Satan is not a reference to a practice of medieval chivalry, as some feel;¹⁸ the liturgy makes use of this tricking of Satan at least as early as the fifth century. In a Passion homily, Leo the Great states that Christ hid his might from the devil, opposing him in the weakness of our humanity, because the devil would otherwise certainly have held the Jews in check, for fear of being defeated by his divine adversary and despoiled of all his captives:

Qui ut humanum genus vinculis mortiferae prae-
varicationis absolveret, et savienti diabolo po-
tentiam suae majestatis occuluit, et infirmitatem
nostrae humilitatis objecit. Si enim crudelis et
superbus inimicus cōsilium misericordiae Dei
nosse potuisset, Judaeorum animos mansuetudine
potius temperare, quam injustis odiis studuis-
set accendere; nec omnium captivorum admitteret
servitutem, dum nihil sibi debentis persequitur
libertatem. Fefellit ergo illum malignitas sua:

18 Of this passage Gaffney writes: "Christ is here represented as following the custom fairly well known in the Middle Ages—at least in the chivalric romances—according to which a renowned and formidable knight rides to a tourney in disguise so that his adversaries will not recognize him and consequently decline to encounter him in the lists." ("The Allegory of the Christ-Knight," p. 166)

intulit supplicum Filio Dei, quod cunctis filiis
hominum in remedium verteretur. Fudit sanguinem
justum, qui reconciliando mundo et pretium es-
set et poculum. Suscepit Dominus, quod secundum
propositum suae voluntatis elegit. Admisit in
se impias manus furentium, quae dum proprio in-
cumbunt sceleri, famulatae sunt Redemptori.¹⁹

In the next century Fortunatus gave this idea even greater
vigor by incorporating it into his Pange lingua, still
used in the liturgy of Good Friday:

Hoc opus nostrae salutis
Ordo depoposcerat
Multiformis proditoris
Ars ut artem falleret
Et medelam ferret inde
Hostis unde laeserat.²⁰

In lines 22-23 and 25 of the same passage Langland
enumerates the pieces of armor borne by Christ against
Satan:

This Iesus of his gentrice. wole Iuste in
Piers armes,
In his helme and in his haberioun. humana natura;
.....
In Piers paltok the Plowman. this priker shal
ryde.

The armor and weapons of Christ are not new to the
liturgy, especially to that connected with the Passion. In

¹⁹ Sermo de Passione Domini XI, PL, 54, 351.

²⁰ Sarum Missal, 113-114; York Missal, I, 106.

the Postcommunion for the feast In Inventionem Sanctae Crucis, the cross becomes the weapon by which Christ defeats Satan: "Repleti alimonia caelesti et spirituali poculo recreati, quaesumus, omnipotens Deus, ut ab hoste maligno defendas quos per lignum sanctae crucis Filii tui armis justitiae pro salute mundi triumphare jussisti."²¹ The Sequence Si vis vere gloriari, for the feast of the Crown of Thorns, transforms the crown into a battle helmet:

In hac galea pugnavit
Cum antiquam hostem stravit
Triumphans in stipite
Haec pugnantis galea
Triumphantis laurea.²²

Christ is said to follow the ancient battle custom of despoiling the defeated enemy of his weapons in the Easter Wednesday Sequence Concinat orbis: "Sic tolerando mala gerens nostra, descendit ad ima tartara. / Hostis antiqui

²¹ Sarum Missal, p. 266; York Missal, II, 34. The same ideas are found in the following Sequentia de Sancte Crucis: "In te mortem mors necavit, / dum se ipsum immolavit / vera Christi hostia: / per te Christus hoste strato, / inferno despoliato / ad se traxit omnia." See F.J. Mone, Lateinische Hymne des Mittelalters (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1853), I, 141. To my knowledge English rites did not make use of this sequence.

²² Warren, Sarum Missal in English, I, 71; York Missal, II, 221.

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quo defringens arma, revehit potens ampla ovando tropaea."²³

However, lines 22-25 quoted above contain more than the ideas of weapons and the tricking of Satan. The Latin tag humana natura of line 23 and the mention of borrowed armor clearly refer to the body, borrowed by Christ in His Incarnation, in which He fought the great battle of His Passion. Langland here draws together the themes of the Incarnation, the Passion and the trappings of a warrior, an association similar to the one to which liturgical vestments give rise in the works of most medieval commentators. That all such vestments were associated with the Incarnation is evident in this statement by Sicard of Cremona: "...quaedam vero sumuntur ab apostolis sanctis, tam hac quam illae, virtutes signi-

²³ Sarum Missal, 139; York Missal, I, 130-131. The Circumcision Sequence Eya recolamus connected only remotely with the Passion (the Circumcision is considered as the first shedding of Christ's blood) groups all the preceding images when it mentions Christ putting on his battle helmet, defeating Satan, depriving him of his arms and distributing the spoils: "Querere venerat pastor pius quod perierat. Induit galeam certat miles armatura. Prostratus in sua propria ruit hostis spicula auferuntur tela. In quibus fidebat divisa sunt illius spolia capta praeda sua. Christi pugna fortissima salua nostra est vera. Qui nos suam ad patriam duxit post victoriam. (Sarum Missal, p. 36); Winchester Missal, I, 61.

ficant, vel opera justitiae, vel mysterium Incarnationis Dominicae."²⁴ Most often, however, two particular vestments, the amice and the bishop's sandals, are connected with the Incarnation since they cover and conceal the flesh, as Christ's flesh concealed his divinity: "Sandalia ergo pontificis incarnationem, ut dictum est, significant Filii Dei. Et pulchre quod in amictu capitis idem in calcamento pedum signatur; nam et in carne divinitas latuit, et per carnem ejus notitia universum mundum percurrit."²⁵ The mystery of the Passion was also linked to liturgical vestments. To Amalarius of Metz the chasuble, by the openings at its sides, imitates the spear wound received by Christ: "Ipsa (casula) habet pertusas subtas alas, quoniam Christum vult imitari, qui lancea perfossus est in latere, et vult ut nos sequamur ejus vestigia, quod significat perfossus in latere."²⁶ Guillaume Durand

²⁴ Mitrale, Lib. II, cap. V; PL, 213, 72.

²⁵ Rupert of Deutz, De Divinis Officiis, Lib. I, cap. XXIV; PL, 170, 24.

²⁶ De Ecclesiasticis Officiis, PL, 105, 1097; see also Honorius, Gemma Animae, Lib. I, cap. ccxxxi; PL, 172, 613.

has particular vestments correspond to specific items connected with the Passion so that, for example, the alb and the cincture become the white robe which Jesus wore before Herod and the scourge with which He was beaten: "Haec etiam vestis representat albam vestem, in qua Herodes illudit Christo....Representat (cingulo) etiam flagellum, quo Pilatus cecidit Jesum."²⁷ Finally, commentators work out in great detail the relationship between vestments and armor. To Honorius Augustodunensis the armor is composed of the sandals, amice, alb, and chasuble which become respectively the greaves, helmet, corslet and shield. For weapons, one uses the stole, cinctures, maniple and the Book of Scriptures which symbolize the spear, bow and quiver, club, and sword respectively.²⁸

²⁷ Rationale, Lib. III, cap. 3, 5, pp. 106-107.

²⁸ Gemma Animae, Lib. I, cap. LXXXII; PL, 172, 569-570. The Latin reads: Sacerdos itaque pugil noster cum hoste populi congressurus, armis munitur spiritualibus, quia pugnaturus est contra spiritualia nequitiae in coelestibus (Ephes. VI, 12). Denique sandalis se pro ocreis induit, caput humerali pro galea tegit, totum corpus alba pro lorica vestit. Cum stollam collo circumdat, quasi hastam ad resistendum vibrat. Cingulo pro arcu se cingit, sub cingulum pro pharetra sibi appendit. Casula pro clypeo protegitur, manipulo pro pugili clavo utitur. Porro libro, in quo est verbum Dei pro gladio armatur..." See also Sicard, Mitrale, Lib. III, cap. IX, PL, 213, 144.

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More important than all these individual associations, however, is the merging of all three interpretations, at least as early as the thirteenth century. In the work of Durand, vestments are associated simultaneously with the Incarnation, the Passion and armor. In discussing the amice, for example, he links it to the Incarnation by means of several scriptural texts, then likens it to the veil, which covered Jesus' face while his tormentors struck Him and asked Him to prophecy as to their identity, and finally describes it as a battle helmet:

Porro amictus quo sacerdos caput obnubilat, secundum quod capiti, scilicet Christo, convenit, significat id quod in Apocalypsi describitur, videlicet Angelum Dei discendisse de coelo amictum nube. Et in Isaia: Ecce Dominus ascendit super nubem levem. Veniens etiam ad Salvatorem mundi, Dei filius, Angelus magni concilii, amictus est nube, dum divinitatem abscondit in carne, nam caput viri Christi, caput Christi Deus. Hoc ergo carnis latibulum significat sacerdotis amictus... Amictus etiam repraesentat operimentum, quo Judaei velabant faciem Christi, dicentes: Prophetiza nobis Christe, quis est qui te percussit.... Secundo, amictus pro galea caput contigit."²⁹

Such a drawing together of all three interpretations

²⁹ Rationale, Lib.III, cap. 2, pp. 104-105; cap. I, p. 100.

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Durand writes that the most powerful forces, here, the bishops, priests, and deacons, open and close the procession, like the advance and rear guard of an army, while the weaker soldiers, the subdeacons and acolytes, are placed in the center. The singing of the chanters and the ringing of the bells represent the trumpets which arouse the spirits of the troop and urge them to do battle with Satan, while the cross carried processionaly replaces the traditional flags and battle standards.³¹ Langland, then, seems to be following a liturgical tradition in having his warrior ride processionaly into battle. This

³¹ Rationale, Lib. IV, cap. 6, pp. 159, 161. The Latin reads: Disponitur autem ita processio, velut castrorum acies ordinata, nam majores et fortiores quasi custodes exercitus praeveniunt, et sequuntur; minores autem quasi debiliores in medio colleguntur; praecedunt enim Episcopi, et presbyteri subsequuntur, Pontifex, et diaconi in medio colliguntur; subdiaconi et acolyti; cantores vero quasi tubicines, exercitum praecedunt, ut eum ad praelia contra daemones exercitent et invitent, de quo praelio Apostolus dicit: Non est nobis colluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem, sed adversus spiritualia nequitiae, in coelestibus; unde: Buccinate in neomaenia tuba, in die insignis solemnitatis vestrae..... Sane, ut praemissum est, dum fit processio campanae pulsantur; nam sicut rex terrenus in exercitu suo legalia habet insignia, scilicet tubas, et vexilla, sic et rex aeternus Christus, in Ecclesia sua militanti campanas pro tubis, et Cruces pro vexillis habet... See also Innocent III, De Sacro Altaris Mysterio, Lib. II, cap. XII; PL, 217, 805, for a similar passage; also, Honorius, Gemma Animae, Lib. 1, cap. LXXII; PL, 172, 566.

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interpretation is strengthened by commentaries of another type. As seen above the Incarnation and Passion are closely linked to the Christ-Knight through His borrowed armor and His forthcoming joust with Satan. To commentators, all processions become symbols of both these mysteries; that is, Christ's coming into the world, and His journey from Jerusalem to Gogoltha: "Simus memores Jesu Christi, qui de sinu Patris venit in mundum; de praesepti ad templum; de Bethania in Hierusalem; de Hierusalem in montem:..."³² By having his Knight appear on the scene in this manner Langland provides his reader with an image which brings to mind the most important steps taken by Christ to accomplish the Redemption of man.

By giving his knight a liturgical dimension, Langland adds tremendous power to his allegory, while contributing greatly to the poem's total meaning. The Lover-Knight allegory, mentioned earlier, stresses the personal and emotional relationship between Christ and

³² Sicard of Cremona, Mitrale, Lib. III, cap. IX; PL, 213, 145. See also Durand, Rationale, Lib. IV, cap. 6, p. 160. Rupert, De Divinis Officiis, Lib. I, cap. XXVIII; PL, 170, 26.

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the individual soul and is, therefore, much more fitting for personal devotions.³³ The liturgical Warrior-Knight, however, has the merits of presenting Christ as the Redeemer of all mankind, a view much more in line with Langland's central theme of mankind's salvation.

Also, the representation of Christ as a warrior, jousting with Satan turns the mind from the sufferings endured by Christ to the glorious battle and victory over Satan, which liberated mankind. The liturgy and Langland seem to prefer this view to a graphic description of Christ's torture, which would arouse pity and sorrow but might very easily relegate into the background the glorious results which the torments achieved.³⁴ Two of the poem's major themes, Redemption and Salvation, would

³³ Of the lady rescued by the Lover-Knight, Rosemary Woolf writes: "...the bride ceased to be a corporate body, mankind or the Church, and became instead the individual soul." ("The Theme of Christ, the Lover-Knight," p. 4).

³⁴ Note that at the high point of Good Friday services, the adoration of the Cross, the liturgy moves from the sorrowful Improperia to the Pange, lingua, of which the opening lines speak only of Christ's great combat and victory.

undoubtedly have lost the attention of the reader had Langland allowed himself to dwell on Christ's sufferings.³⁵

Finally, the use of a liturgical image of Christ and Redemption provides the reader with a key to the interpretation of Passus XVIII and XIX, which can be fully understood only if seen as re-creations in poetic form of the liturgical ceremonies of the period from Palm Sunday to Pentecost.³⁶

³⁵ Langland's description of Christ's sufferings in Passus XVIII, lines 36-86, aside from the Longinus episode, are almost a literal translation of the Passion Gospels. For a further discussion, see chapter IV.

³⁶ J.F. Goodridge in the introduction to his translation of the poem writes of Passus XVI to XVIII: "For a knowledge of the Missal and Breviary is more helpful to an understanding of these Books, than all the writings of Scriptural Commentators, Mystics and theologians." (Piers the Plowman, p. 38).

CHAPTER III

LANGLAND'S HARROWING OF HELL AND THE
LITURGICAL EXPRESSION OF THE DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION

To many scholars, Will's vision of Christ's Passion, Death, and Harrowing of Hell in Passus XVIII forms the climax of Piers Plowman.¹ This is easily understood since salvation is one of Langland's main themes and since the merits of Christ's Passion and Death have always been, in the eyes of the Church, the cornerstone of the entire edifice of salvation. That Langland should link the Harrowing of Hell to both these mysteries and even devote a greater space to it² is also understandable, since the Harrowing portrays concretely the results of the application of Christ's merits: the liberation of

¹ See, for example, J.F. Goodridge, Piers the Ploughman, p. 45; Elizabeth Salter, Piers Plowman, An Introduction (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963), pp. 49, 63; E.M.W. Tillyard, The English Epic and its Background (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954), p. 166.

² In the B text the Harrowing of Hell takes up one hundred and forty-seven lines, the account of the Passion and Death, only fifty-five.

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man's soul from its bondage.³

Langland was only one of a large number of English poets to see the importance of the story. In his own time, it appeared in at least seven major vernacular literary works, of which perhaps the most important and most influential was the Evangelium Nicodemi translated into English verse in the early fourteenth century.⁴ Close to it in structure is the story as it occurs in some six hundred lines of the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century Cursor Mundi.⁵ A third poem, the early

³ E.M.W. Tillyard has written: "But I think he (Langland) chose it because it was the most concrete expression, in the whole Christian story, of human salvation. The cross expressed the struggle which made salvation possible, but it was a struggle in which ordinary humanity had no part. The Harrowing of Hell presented the first example of human salvation itself. It was thus peculiarly fitted to catch up and bring to fulfilment the theme of human salvation that had been fitfully presented through the dreamer." (The English Epic, p. 166).

⁴ See W.H. Hulme, ed., The Middle-English Harrowing of Hell and Gospel of Nicodemus (E.E.T.S., E.S. 100, 1907). Hulme prints four texts: the Galba, Harley, Sion and Additional manuscripts. All quotations here will be identified as to manuscript and line number.

⁵ See R. Morris, ed., The Cursor Mundi (E.E.T.S., 57, 59, 62, 66, 68, 99, 1874-1892). Morris prints four texts from the Cotton, Fairfax, Göttingen, and Trinity manuscripts. Here also quotations will be identified as to manuscript and line number.

or mid-fourteenth century Harrowing of Hell devotes its two hundred and fifty lines exclusively to this theme.⁶ Finally, there exist four pageants on the subject, one from each of the York, Towneley, Chester and Ludus Coventriae Mystery Cycles.⁷

Such an important doctrine could not escape notice in the liturgy, where references to it range from simple allusions, as in the Symbolum Athanasii and in the Canon of the Mass,⁸ to dramatic descriptions like the

⁶ See W.H. Hulme, ed., The Middle-English Harrowing of Hell. Hulme prints texts from the Digby, Harley, and Auchinlech manuscripts. As above, quotations will refer to manuscript and line number.

⁷ See Lucy Toulmin Smith, ed., York Mystery Plays (New York: Russel & Russel, 1963), pageant XXXVII; Alfred W. Pollard, ed., The Towneley Plays (E.E.T.S., 71, 1897), pageant XXV; Dr. Matthews, ed., The Chester Plays, Part II (E.E.T.S., E.S., 115, 1916), pageant XVll; K.S. Block, ed., Ludus Coventriae or the Plaie called Corpus Christi (E.E.T.S., E.S., 120, 1917). The Ludus has two pageants on the subject, 33 and 35. In its case quotations will refer to pageant and line number, in all other cases, to line number only.

⁸ The Symbolum recited at Prime contains the following passage: "Quis passus est pro salute nostra descendit ad inferos." (Sarum Breviary, II, 46-49). The prayer Unde et memores contains the words "necnon et ab inferis resurrectionis." (Sarum Missal, p. 223). For a brief but excellent historical view of the Harrowing in the liturgy see Dictionnaire d'archeologie chretienne et de liturgie, F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq, edd. (Paris: Librairie Letouzy, 1924), Part IV, col. 682-693.

following from a Response for the Office of the Dead which portrays Christ breaking the gates of hell and giving light to those dwelling in darkness: " R. Libera me Domine de viis inferni. Qui portas aereas confregisti, et visitasti infernum, et dedisti eis lumen ut viderent te qui erant in poenis tenebrarum. V. Clamantes et dicentes Advenisti Redemptor noster."⁹ That this office was a favorite devotion of laymen is demonstrated by its inclusion in the Prymer, where we find the following English translation of the Latin passage quoted above:

"R. Lord, delyuere þou me fro þe peynes of helle, — þou þat brak þe ȝatis of bras, & visitidist helle, and ȝaf liȝt to hem (þat) þei myȝten se, þat weren in peynes of derknessis, Cryinge & seyng, 'oure aȝenbier! þou art come to vs."¹⁰ It is in the hymns, rites, and homilies of Holy Week and Easter, however, that the theme is fully worked out. For example, the hymn for Matins of the Sunday in the Octave of Easter shows Christ

⁹ Sarum Breviary, 11, 280.

¹⁰ See Henry Littlehales, ed., The Prymer or Lay Folk's Prayer Book (E.E.T.S., 105, 1895), Part I, p. 70.

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defeating Death and trampling the infernal regions

underfoot:

Cum rex ille fortissimus,
Mortis confractis viribus,
Pede conculcans tartara¹¹
Solvit a poena miseros.

Even more explicit are these verses from the hymn for Vespers of the same Sunday, in which Christ breaks into the infernal regions and rescues the captive people:

O vere digna hostia,
Per quam fracta sunt tartara,
Redempta plebs captivata,
Reddita vitae praemia.¹²

The liturgy also provided vernacular explanations of the story through homilies, as seen in the following passage from one homiletic and liturgical manual:

And the iiii.the is þat he rose profitabely,
for he þen toke his praye, scilicet, delyuere-
de oute of helle alle þat were his and hadde
ben there fro tyme of the preuaricacion of
Adam vnto the resurreccion of Crist. And when
he come nye to the 3atis of helle, he criede
with a gret voys sayinge: "Tollite portas, prin-
cipes, vestras, et cetera." He seyde: "Vndo
youre 3atis, 3e prynces, and the kyng of ioye
schal entre in." Þen come deuels to hym and

429. ¹¹ Sarum Breviary, I, dccclix; York Breviary, I,

436. ¹² Sarum Breviary, I, dccclxv; York Breviary, I,

schetten here 3atis with barris of yren. And then a3eyn he made a voys hydous and gret as a pondur and seide: "Tollite portas vestras, et cetera." And when deuels herd hym, they seide to hemself: "He criep a3eyn." And they seide: "Quis est iste rex glorie? Who is this kyng of ioye?" þen he answerde, sayinge: "Dominus fortis et potens, Christus, dei filius, qui nunc resurrexit a mortuis. A lord, " he seide, "stronger and my3ti, Crist, the sone of God, þe whiche hath nowe rysen fro dep." And when this was herde, þei dredde and lurkyd. And what then? Forsoþe alle the 3ates and barris of iren breken a-sondre, and Ihesu, þe saueoure, entred in and spoyleid helle and brou3t oute his chosyn children and lefte þe wyckyd. And ri3t as þe egle descendþ in-to the see and takeþ oute here praye, so Crist comyng and descendyng downe in-to the lowe depnyys of helle toke oute with hym his praye.¹³

Finally, we must add the many dramatic ceremonies concerning the Harrowing, which were part of the Latin liturgy and which attempted to provide a vivid representation of the theme for medieval Christians.¹⁴

That all these literary and liturgical expressions of the Harrowing of Hell go back to a common tradition is shown by their many similarities. Their differences, however, reveal that each was conceived with a particular

¹³ See Edward H. Weatherly, ed., Speculum Sacerdotale (E.E.T.S., 200, 1936), p. 119.

¹⁴ See Karl Young, The Drama of the Medieval Church (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), vol. I, pp. 149-177.

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purpose in mind and that their authors, while using the same basic materials, emphasized, added, and even changed certain elements to suit this purpose. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Langland's own work, where the Harrowing takes a form unlike that of any other Middle English handling of the story. A careful study of Langland's work in the light of other vernacular versions and of the liturgy, especially, reveals that his episode's peculiarities of form and content have a definite purpose and make an important contribution to the meaning of the entire poem.

We note this from the very beginning in the treatment given the light which appears before the gates of hell. To Langland this is not just another marvel accompanying Christ; Christ is the Light. When the devil first spies it, he says that he sees a soul blazing with light and glory, and he immediately identifies it as Jesus, in lines 304-305: "And now & se where a soule. cometh hiderward seyillynge / With glorie and with grete li3te. god it is, & wote wel." Later, in lines 314-315, when Lucifer questions the Light as to its identity, it answers that it is the King of Glory: " 'What lorde artow?' quod Lucifer. 'quis est iste?' / 'Rex glorie'.

the li3te sone seide." The York and Towneley plays explain the light as a sign only, sent by Christ to announce His coming, while Adam in the Chester pageant says of Christ: "Of this light thou art Author."¹⁵ Other Middle English versions make an identification similar to Langland's, but, except for the Ludus, this occurs during a long discussion, in which patriarchs and prophets explain the Light's identity in terms of Old and New Testament prophecies.¹⁶ The liturgy, also, identifies Christ with the Light, and, like Langland, gives no formal explanation, allowing the image to speak for itself. In the Easter Vigil blessing of the new fire, God is called an unfailing light, who enlightens the consciences of our hearts with the fire of his love: "Domine deus noster pater omnipotens. lumen indeficiens. conditor omnium luminum. exaudi nos famulos tuos et benedic hunc ignem qui tua sanctifica-

¹⁵ In Towneley, Christ says in lines 21-22: "A light I will thay have / To know I will com sone," lines identical to those in York. The Chester reference is to line 3.

¹⁶ See, for example, the Gospel of Nicodemus, ll. 1177-1284 and especially ll. 1189-1200, 1213-1220, 1242-1248 for the prophecies; see also the Cursor Mundi, ll. 17874-17972.

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cione atque benedictione consecratur tu illuminans omnem hominum venientem in hunc mundum. illumina consciencias cordis nostri igne tue caritatis..."¹⁷ When the paschal candle is lit from the new fire, a hymn to Christ our Light is intoned, in which Christ is asked to give back His light to mankind and is called the true light for man's eyes, senses, and hopes:

Inventor rutili dux bone luminis,
 Qui certis vicibus tempora dividis,
 Merso sole Chaos ingruit horridum,
 Lumen redde tuis Christe fidelibus.

 Tu lux vera oculis, Tu quoque sensibus;
 Intus tu speculum, Tu speculum foris.¹⁸

The Exultet which follows this hymn states, in its second verse, that the earth is illuminated with the great brilliance and splendor of Christ, the Eternal King:
 "Gaudeat se tellus tantis irradiatam fulgoribus, et aeterni regis splendore lustram totius orbis se sentiat

¹⁷ Sarum Missal, p. 115.

¹⁸ Sarum Missal, p. 117; York Missal, I, 110.

amississe caliginem."¹⁹ All these ceremonies and hymns take place at the very beginning of the Easter Vigil and are neither preceded by, nor contain any explanation of the Christ-Light image, based on Old or New Testament prophecies. It cannot be ascertained that Langland consciously imitated the liturgy here, but his treatment of the Christ-Light does achieve some of the liturgy's emotional intensity destroyed in other texts by long speeches of explanation.

After his presentation of the Christ-Light, Langland goes into the Attollite portas dialogue between Christ and a spokesman for the devils in hell. The dialogue, phrased in extremely simple terms, begins in lines 259-262 with Christ's order to the princes of hell to unlock the gates so that the crowned King of Glory may enter:

"Attollite portas, etc"

A voice loude in that liȝte. to Lucifer cryeth,

¹⁹ Sarum Missal, p. 118; York Missal, I, 111-118. The Roman liturgy emphasizes the Christ-Light by having the following antiphon sung before the procession of the Paschal Candle: "Lumen Christi gloriose resurgentes dissipet tenebras cordis et mentis." During the procession the deacon carrying the Candle sings aloud three times the words "Lumen Christi" to which all reply "Deo Gratias". See Robert Lippe, ed., Missale Romanum 1474 (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1899-1907), vol. 33, p. 85.

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"Prynces of this place. vnpynneth an vnlouketh!
 For here cometh with croune. that kyng is of
 glorie."

In the debate's conclusion. in lines 313-318, Christ, a second time, bids the devils to unlock the gates; Lucifer questions him as to the King's identity, and Christ reveals that He is the King of Glory, the Lord of might, power, and every virtue. He then repeats His command a third time in the name of the Son of the King of Heaven:

Efte the liȝte bad vnlouke. and Lucifer answered,
 'What lorde artow?' quod Lucifer. 'quis est iste?'
 'Rex glorie.' the liȝte sone seide,
 'And lorde of myȝte and of mayne. and al manere
 vertues; dominus virtutum;
 Dukes of this dym place. anon vndo this ȝates,
 That Cryst may come in. the kynges sone of heuene.'

Though all Middle English versions examined here contain the AttoLite dialogue, they show striking differences when compared with Langland's episode. The Gospel of Nicodemus, like Langland's work, employs the simplest language for Christ's first and second commands to unbar the gates and for Hell's question. The answer to Hell's inquiry, however, comes not from Christ but from David, who reminds Hell of his prophecy of a lord mighty in battle, and states that Christ has come to hell because He beheld from heaven the sorrow of His servants.

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David then gives the third command to unbar the gates, for the King of Bliss has come to deliver the captive souls through God's power.²⁰ The Cursor Mundi also expresses Christ's first command in simple terms, but when it is repeated, it comes from the imprisoned souls, who twice make use of Christ's words, adding to their second cry that the devil is now cast down and will ever be without powers. Christ then speaks the traditional command a second time, and is questioned in the traditional manner by Hell. As in the Gospel, David answers, reminding Satan of his prophecies and mentioning Christ's pity aroused by the sighs of the prisoners, and His desire to free them. He concludes with an order to "stinking" hell to let in the blissful King.²¹

20 The text of David's speech is as follows:
 "pan said dauid: '3e ne wate / how pat I said þus right, /
 "he es lord of grete state, / in batayle mekill of
 might;" / þe king of blis, trewly I tell, / right at þi
 3ates standes, / he has bihalden fro heuyn to hell /
 þe sorow of his seruandes. / þarfore vndo, þou fende so
 fell, þi 3ates right with þi handes, / þe king of blis
 cumes in ful snell / to bring vs fro þi bandes / thurgh
 might of his godhede.' (Galba, ll. 1389-1401).

21 The section with the cries of the captive souls reads: " þis herd þe santes all, and said / Till
 hell wit wordes up-braid, / 'Bot open up þin yates wide, /

The York, Towneley, Chester, and Ludus pageants, like Langland but unlike the Gospel and Cursor, begin the dialogue in Latin. The York and Chester plays follow up with a literal translation, while the Ludus strays from the Latin, adding that Christ has remembered man's soul and has come to deliver him.²² The pageants then go their separate ways. The Ludus has Belial admit defeat and Christ declare that He will bring all souls out of purgatory. In the York and Towneley plays, Christ repeats his initial command; Satan questions the speaker after each utterance,

Lete in þe king, wit-vten bide! / In sal he com, þe kyng
o bliss.' /... þe santes all þai gaf a cri / Till hell,
'vn-do þin yates suith! / þou ert nu crachun fra þis
sith. / Hell,' þai said, 'overcummen er þou / And euer
wit-vten might fra nu?' " (Cotton, ll. 18093-18097;
18118-18122. David's answer to Hell reads: "...wel wat
i quat / þe words þat i here of cri, / Ful wel i knau
þam,' said dau; / 'For i wit propheci it hight / Thoru
þe haligast might, / And þat i tald had for-wit þan /
I sai þe nu, wele i it can. / þe lauere þat es sua
mikel o might, / þat es sa strang and stijf in fight, /
þe blisful kyng þis es þat ilk, / For þar mai nanoper
suilk. / He þat bi-heild fra heuen dun / To here þe
plaint of his prisun, / Of his sinful sighand sa sare, /
To lese þam o band and care. / And thou hell, sua fule
stinkand thing, / Vn-do, lete in þe blisful king!' " (Cotton, ll. 18132-18148).

²² See York, ll. 121-124; Chester, ll. 144-148. Towneley gives the Latin only, l. 115. The loose rendering by the Ludus reads: "Ondothæ 3oure 3atys of sorwatorie /

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and David answers twice with the familiar reference to his prophecy of the destruction of hell's gates by a powerful lord.²³ In conclusion, both pageants have Christ utter a final order that the gates be opened and God's people be set free. The Chester play has Christ repeat His original Latin command in the vernacular, and, when questioned by Satan, reveal Himself as the Almighty, who will bring man to bliss.²⁴ All vernacular versions, therefore,

On mannys sowle I haue memorie / here comyth now be
kyng of glorie / these gatys for to breke / 3e develys
pat arn here with-inne / helle gatys 3e xal. vn-pynne /
I xal delyvere mannys kynne / ffrom wo I wole hem wreke."
(Pageant 33, ll. 994-1001).

²³ See Ludus Coventriae, pageant 33, ll. 1002-1017. In York David's words are as follows: "I lered
leuand, with-uten lees, / He is a kyng of vertues clere./
Al lorde, mekill of myght, / And stronge in ilke a stoure,/
In batailes ferse to fight, /And worthy to wyne
honnoure. /...pat may pou in my sawter see / For pat
poynte of prophicie. / I saide pat he schuld breke /
Youre barres and bandis by name, / And on youre werkis
take wreke, / Nowe schalle 3e see pe same." (ll. 127-
132; 187-192). See also Towneley, ll. 116-117; 128-135;
185-192. The Towneley even adds a third command by Christ,
a third question by Rybald and another answer by Jesus
in lines 193-198.

²⁴ Christ's words ending the dialogue read:
"That lord the which Almighty is; / ther is no power lyke
to his, / of all ioy he is kinge. / And to him is none
lyk, iwis, / as is soothly seene by this, / for man, that
sometyme did amis, / to his blisse he Will bringe."
(ll. 182-188).

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wander away from the original Latin, adding new materials and speakers.

Langland's extremely simple dialogue, on the contrary, is quite obviously a literal translation of Psalm 23, 7-10:

Attollite portas principes vestras, et elevamini
portae aeternales: et introibit Rex gloriae.

Quis est iste Rex gloriae: Dominus fortis et
potens: Dominus potens in praelio.

Attollite portas principes vestras, et elevamini
portae aeternales: et introibit Rex gloriae.

Quis est iste Rex gloriae: Dominus virtutem ipse
est Rex gloriae.²⁵

This psalm, the first of the second Nocturne for Holy Saturday Matins, is accompanied by the Antiphon "Elevamini, portae aeternales: et introibit rex gloriae,"²⁶ and is one of the most important pieces in the simple, yet highly dramatic presentation of the Harrowing as it occurs in the Tenebrae of Holy Saturday. Preceding it, the second Response from the first Nocturne mentions the devil being taken prisoner, Christ breaking the gates

²⁵ Sarum Breviary, II, 40.

²⁶ Sarum Breviary, I, dccxcvii; York Breviary, I, 397.

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and locks of death, and Death fleeing before Him: "Recessit pastor noster fons aquae vivae, ad cujus transitum sol obscuratus est; nam et ille captus est qui captivum tenebat primum hominem. Hodie portas mortis et seras pariter Salvator noster dirupit. V. Ante cujus conspectum mors fugit, ad cujus vocem mortui resurgunt: videntes autem eum portae mortis confractae sunt."²⁷ Also, a ceremony at the end of Matins attempts to dramatise to some extent the destruction of hell's gates. A number of candles, lit at the beginning of Matins, are extinguished one by one as the hour proceeds, until only one is left. This candle is hidden behind the altar when the office is completed and then brought back to the darkened church to symbolize the Christ-Light:

Quae latet officio tendem candela peracto
 Redditur extinctis lumen sparsura lucernis
 Restituitque fidem surgens a morte Redemptor.²⁸

The signal for the candle's return is noise made by a member or members of the choir. Though this ceremony

²⁷ Sarum Breviary I, dccxcvi. In the York Breviary, it is the fourth response (I, 397).

²⁸ See Alexander of Villa Dei, Ecclesiaste, ll. 666-668 (ed. L.R. Lind, Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1958).

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often symbolized the Resurrection, the following passage from a Middle English homily on the Tenebrae clearly shows that the same ceremony was often associated with the Harrowing of Hell: "Þe strokes þat þe prest 3euyþ on þe boke bytokenyþe þe clappys of þondyr þat Crist brake hell-3atys wyth, when he come þedyr and spylud hom."²⁹ With all this as a setting, Psalm 23, 7-10 must surely have been understood by everyone attending Matins as a reference to the dialogue between Christ and Satan before hell's gates. Because Langland's dialogue remains as close as possible to this psalm and even employs three Latin tags from it, its source must certainly have been recognized by his readers.

That the dialogue is patterned after the liturgy in yet another way is seen if it is compared with two liturgical ceremonies dramatizing the Harrowing. The first, from the monastery of Barking near London and dating back to the second half of the fourteenth century, begins with all the members of the convent representing the souls imprisoned in Hell, awaiting their liberation

²⁹ See Theodore Erbe, ed., Mirk's Festial (E.E.T.S., E.S. 96, 1905), p. 118.

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behind closed doors. Outside, a priest, representing Christ, sings the Attollite three times and strikes the door after each verse. The doors are then opened and the members of the convent set free:

In primis eat Domina Abbatissa cum toto conuentu et quibusdam sacerdotibus et clericis capis indutis, quolibet sacerdote et clerico palmam et candelam extinctam manu deferente; intrent capellam Sancte marie Magdalene, figurantes animas sanctorum Patrum ante aduentum Christi ad inferos descendentes, et claudant sibi ostium dicte capelle. Deinde superueniens sacerdos abdomadarius ad dictam capellam appropians alba indutus et capa, cum duobus diaconis, vno Crucem deferente cum vexillo dominico desuper pendente, altero cum turribulo manu sua baiulante, et aliis sacerdotibus et clericis cum duobus pueris cereos deferentibus, ad ostium dicte capelle incipiens ter hanc antiphonam:

Tollite portas.

Qui quidem sacerdos representabit personam Christi ad inferos descensuram et portas inferni disrupturam, et predicta antiphona vnaquaque uice in altiori uoce incipiatur, quam clerici tociens eandem repetant, et ad quamquam inceptiorem pulset cum Cruce ad predictum ostium, figurans disruptionem portarum inferni; et tertia pulsatione ostium aperiatur. Deinde ingrediatur ille cum ministris suis. Interim incipiat quidam sacerdos in capella existens antiphonam:

A porta inferi,

quam subinferat cantrix cum toto conuentu:

Erue Domine,

et cetera. Deinde extrahet sacerdos abdomadarius omnes essentes in capella predicta, et interim incipiat sacerdos antiphonam:

Domine, abstraxisti,

et cantrix subsequatur:

Ab inferis.

Tunc omnes exeant de capella, id est, de limbo Patrum, et cantent sacerdotes et clerici antiphonam:

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Cum rex glorie,
 processionaliter per medium chori ad Sepulchrum
 portantes singuli palmam et candelam, designan-
 tes victoriam de hoste recuperatam, subsequenti-
 bus Domina Abbatisa, priorissa, et toto conuen-
 tu sicut sunt priores.³⁰

The second ceremony from the Church of St John the Evangelist in Dublin takes place before a sepulchre where a cross and Host have been deposited on Good Friday. The officiating priest sings, "Elevamini, etc.," to which the choir responds, "Quis est iste," the entire dialogue being repeated three times as in the Barking ceremony: "Item idem sacerdos tercio alcius incipiat antiphonam: Elevamini (portae aeternales, et introibit rex glorie!). Chorus prosequatur verum: Quis est iste rex glorie? Dominus uirtutum, ipse est rex glorie."³¹ Langland's dialogue and that of the York pageant alone, of all the texts examined, have the Attollite said three times only, with Christ the speaker each time. All the other vernacular versions have Christ speak once, twice, or four times, and even allow David and the imprisoned souls

³⁰ The text is printed by Young (Drama of the Medieval Church), I, 165-166.

³¹ Young, I, 170.

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the words do appear, as in the Gospel, the Cursor, and the Chester play, they are spoken by John alone, before Christ's entrance.³³ The words were sung in chorus, however, at Holy Saturday Matins in the third Response, which follows the previously quoted Response Recessit pastor noster describing the breaking of the gates — texts which Langland undoubtedly heard when attending or chanting the Tenebrae:

Agnus Dei
Christus immolatus est
pro salute mundi: nam,
de parentis prothoplasti
fraude facta condolens,
quando pomi noxialis
morte morsu corruit:
ipse lignum tunc notavit,
Damna ligni ut solveret.³⁴

After the words of the patriarchs, Langland introduces, in line 325-401, a seventy-six line monologue by Christ, who justifies His liberation of man and sets forth the essentials of the doctrine of Redemption. No

³³ See the Gospel, ll. 1235-1236; the Cursor, ll. 17909-17912; the Chester play, ll. 61-64.

³⁴ Sarum Breviary, I, dcccxcvii. In the York Breviary, it is the eighth Response (I, 400).

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other vernacular version contains anything similar.³⁵ It is to the liturgy, especially to that of Holy Week and Eastertide, that we must turn to find a grouping of ideas and images resembling those developed here by Langland.

At the outset, Christ describes the Redemption in terms of a ransom paid for man's soul: "...lo! here.my soule to amendes / For alle synneful soules. to saue tho that ben worthy." (ll. 325-326). Later, he pursues this further and shows how He, as a man, will make amends for man's wrongdoing, soul for soul, life for life, death for death:

Ergo, soule shal soule quyte. and synne wende to
And al that man hath mysdo. I, man, wyl amende.
Membre for membre. bi the olde lawe was amendes,
And lyf for lyf also. and by that lawe I clayme
Adam and al his issue. at my wille her-after.
And that deth in hem fordid. my deth shal releue,
And bothe quykke and quyte, that queynte was
thorw synne." (ll. 338-344)

The liturgy, also, speaks of the Redemption in terms of

35. The Harrowing of Hell and the Towneley and York pageants do contain long debates dealing in part with Christ's right to free the captive souls and Satan's right to keep them prisoner. None of these, however, nor any of the other texts contain more than one or two of the themes which appear in Langland's monologue as will be noted further below.

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a ransom in a number of hymns and Sequences. The Victi-mae paschali presents the image in its simplest form when it says that the Lamb redeemed the flock and reconciled God and sinner: "Agnus redemit oves, Christus innocens Patri reconciliavit peccatores."³⁶ The Exultet explains the image in detail saying that Christ paid for us the debt of Adam to the Eternal Father, thereby blotting out the bond of man's old sin: "Qui pro nobis eterno patri ade debitum soluit et ueteris piaculi cautionem p[ro] cruore deterisit."³⁷ Stressing what was exchanged for man's soul, the Fulgens praeclara praises the Lamb who purchased us with His blood: "Laus tibi, honorque, ac virtus, qui nostram antiquam levasti sarcinam. / Roseo cruore Agni benignissimèempta florida micat haec aula."³⁸ The Dic nobis states that God the Father ordered His Son to pay our

³⁶ In the Sarum Missal, this Sequence is found in the Mass for Easter Thursday and Saturday, pp. 141, 143. The York Missal makes use of it in the Easter Tuesday Mass, I, 129. The ransom theme appears in the Cursor also, when the captives speak of Christ as their "raunsomer" (Fairfax, l. 18322).

³⁷ Sarum Missal, p. 118; York Missal, I, 113.

³⁸ Sarum Missal, p. 136; York Missal, I, 126.

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ransom and save us from death by His own death on the cross: "Pater Filium tradidit saevis, ut interimerent pro salute nostra. / Sponte subiit Filius mortem, ut nos redimeret morte ab aeterna."³⁹ Finally, the idea that Christ has destroyed death for man through his own death is expressed in the Zima vetus:

Jesu victor, Jesu vita,
Jesu vitae via trita,
Cujus morte mors sopita,
Ad paschalem nos invita
Mensam cum fiducia.⁴⁰

Langland then has Christ assert His right to ransom man, because all men are His creatures, and therefore His claim on the captive souls is stronger than the devil's: "Myne thei be and of me. I may the bette hem clayme." (l. 327). The liturgy of the Easter Vigil reminds man that he is God's creature, by using as its first Lesson the first chapter of Genesis, which tells of the creation of the world and man. The Collect which follows praises

³⁹ This Sequence is found in the Mass for Easter Wednesday in the Sarum Missal, p. 140 and in that for Easter Saturday in the York Missal, I, 136.

⁴⁰ This is one of the Sequences for Easter Monday Mass in the Sarum Missal, p. 138 and for Easter Friday in the York Missal, I, 134. In the Gospel, the patriarchs praise Christ because "ded thurgh ded is destroid." (Galba, l. 1509).

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God for man's initial creation and his re-creation through the Redemption: "Deus qui mirabiliter creasti hominem et mirabilius redemisti..."⁴¹

Christ then discusses the original cause of man's enslavement and admits that man was justly condemned to death because of Adam's sin. However, the Fall, He says, was due in large part to Satan's deceitful tricks:

Al-though resoun recorde. and ri3t of my-self,
That if thei ete the apple. alle shuldedeye,
I bihy3te hem nou3t here. helle for euere.
For the dede that thei dede. thi deceyte it made;
With gyle thow hem gete. agayne al resoun.
For in my paleys, paradys. in persone of an addre,
Falseliche thow fettest there. thyng that I loued.
Thus ylyke a lusarde. with a lady visage,
Theuelich thow me robbedest;...(ll. 328-336)

This traditional 'heme is expressed most memorably in the Pange lingua, which explains that God had pity on our first parent because he was deceived into eating the apple and into causing his own downfall:

⁴¹ Sarum Missal, p. 119; York Missal, I, 118. In the Harrowing of Hell, Satan claims that all the souls in hell are his by right since Adam, in his hunger, sold himself and his descendants for an apple. Christ retorts that the apple and the apple tree were both His originally, and therefore all the imprisoned souls bought with His property rightfully belong to Him. (Auchinleck, ll. 85-104). Langland makes no use of such clever legalistic wrangling, but prefers to have Christ claim the souls on grounds more in line with traditional doctrine.

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De parentis prothoplasti
 Fraude facta condolens,
 Quando pomi noxialis
 Morte morsu corrui⁴²

The words "multiformis proditoris" in the same hymn describe Satan as a traitor of many faces and shapes. Because Satan caused man's fall through guile, simple justice demands, Christ concludes, that he should himself be beguiled: "the olde lawe graunteth, / That gylours be **bigiled** . and that is gode resoun;" (ll. 336-337). The Pange makes an identical statement, saying that justice demanded that a divine trick be used against the deceitful devil:

Hoc opus nostræ salutis
 Ordo depoposcerat
 Multiformis proditoris
 Ars ut artem falleret

Christ goes on to explain that this justice took the form

⁴² This hymn was sung on Good Friday during the Adoration of the Cross. It was also the hymn for Matins during Passion Week, and the verses quoted above appear as part of a Response for Holy Saturday Matins. See Sarum Missal, 113-114; York Missal, I, 106; Sarum Breviary, I, dccxvii, dccxcviii; York Breviary, I, 345, 400.

of a tree since man was lost by a tree: "And as Adam
and alle. thorw a tre deyden, / Adam and alle thorwe a
tree. shal torne a3eine to lyue;" (ll. 356-357). Again,
here, we have an echo of the Pange: "Ipse lignum tunc no-
tavit / Dampna ligni ut solveret."⁴³ Adding a final touch
to the theme, Christ claims that the doctor of death
must swallow his own medicine: "The bittermesse that thow
hast browe. brouke it thi-seluen, / That art doctour
of deth. drynke that thow madest!" (ll. 361-362).

Although it does not use a medical image, the Pange makes
a parallel statement when it says that Satan's own
weapons were used against him: "Et medelam ferret inde /
Hostis unde ~~deser~~erat."

Christ next reveals the divine reason behind
the entire plan of Redemption: love so great that it
resembles an unquenchable thirst. It will be satisfied,
however, by the "ripe new wine" of the Resurrection of
the Dead, when Christ shall call His own to Him:

⁴³ In the Gospel of Nicodemus, the fiends make
the same statement when they berate Satan for allowing
Christ to enter hell: "pat we wan thurgh þe tre / when
eue þe fruit had etyn, / ilk dele ogayn has he / now
with þe rode-tre. getyn.", (Galba, 1473-1476).

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For I, that am lorde of lyf. loue is my drynke,
And for that drynke to-day. I deyde vpon erthe.
I fau3te so, me threstes 3et. for mannes soule
sake;
May no drynke me moiste. ne my thruste slake,
Tyl the vendage falle. in the vale of Iosephath,
That I drynke ri3te ripe must. resurreccio mortu-
orum. (11. 363-368).

The "thirst" image has its basis in Christ's words on the cross, taken from John 19:28, part of the Passion Gospel for Good Friday, as the C text carefully points out in Passus XXI, line 411: "Ich fauht so, me fursteth But.for mannes soule sake; Sicio." This thirst is one of Christ's torments singled out by the Improperia, sung during the Adoration of the Cross on Good Friday; Christ tells His people that they have offered Him only vinegar and gall to calm his thirst. In return for all his blessings:

"Quid ultra debui facere tibi, et non feci?... aceto namque mixto cum felle sitim meam potasti..."⁴⁴ Although the

44 Sarum Missal, p. 113; York Missal, I, 105.
The Tract which precedes the Litany sung during the
Easter Vigil mentions another great thirst of love, that
of the soul for the Living God: "Sitiuit anima mea ad
deum. uiuum quando ueniam et apparebo ante faciem dei mei."
The Collect after the Tract prays that we may thirst
after the fount of life, Jesus-Christ: "Concede quesu-
mus omnipotens deus, ut qui festa paschalia agimus celes-
tibus desideriis accensi, fontem uite siciamus dominum
postrum ihesum christum filium tuum." (Sarum Missal, p. 120)

liturgy offers no exact parallel to Christ's "ripe new wine", it does employ the image of the vine from Isaias, 5: 1, 2, 7 as a Tract after the third Lesson for the Easter Vigil: "My beloved had a vineyard on a hill in a fruitful place....And he fenced it in, and picked the stones out of it, and planted it with the choicest vines, and built a tower in the midst thereof, and set up a winepress therein....For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel..."⁴⁵ The liturgy is careful to delete parts of verses two and seven as well as verses three to six, which show that the vine brought forth only wild grapes and was destroyed. Because of these omissions and the passage's context of paschal hope and joy, the vine and its vintage must be interpreted as an excellent thing, like Langland's "ripe wine".

Building on the theme of the Resurrection, Christ now completes His exposition of the Redemption with a discussion of His Second Coming and the Final Judgment: "And thanne shal I come as a kyng. crowned with anges, / And han out of helle. alle mennes soules." (ll. 369-370). Though these themes are generally associated with

⁴⁵ Sarum Missal, p. 120; York Missal, I, 118-119.

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Advent, they appear also in the Easter Vigil Mass, where Colossians 3:1-4 is read as the Epistle: "Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with him in glory."⁴⁶ In connection with the Final Judgment, Christ speaks of the justice and mercy He will mete out on that occasion and states that He will find it difficult to refuse mercy to men; because He and they are brothers of one blood although not all of one baptism: "And to be merciable to man. thanne my kynde it asketh; / For we beth bretheren of blode. but nou3te in baptesme alle." (ll. 373-374). God's desire to show mercy to all men, whether or not they believe in Him, and have been baptised into His faith, is referred to in the Good Friday Collect for the pagans of the world: "Omnipotens sempiterne deus qui non uis mortem peccatorum set uitam semper inquiris, suscipe propitius

⁴⁶ Sarum Missal, p. 132; York Missal, I, 124.

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orationem nostram..."⁴⁷ God's mercy is one of the central themes of the Exultet where it receives what is perhaps its most memorable expression: "O mira circa nos tue pietatis dignacio. O inestimabilis dilectio caritatis ut servuum rectumeres + filium tradidisti..."⁴⁸ The term 'brothers in one baptism' is implied in the Easter Vigil baptismal ceremony's depiction of Christians as God's children, adopted through baptism: "Omnipotens sempiterne deus adesto sacramentis, et ad creandos novos populos quos tibi fons baptismatis parturit spiritum adoptionis emitte..." The same image is repeated in the Good Friday Collect for Catechumens, and in the Easter Friday Postcommunion: "Omnipotens sempiterne deus qui ecclesiam tuam nova semper prole fecundas, auge fidem et intellectum cathecuminis nostris, ut renati fonte baptismatis adoptionis tue filii aggregentur... Deus qui adoptionis tue sobolem peccatorum remissione genuisti..."⁴⁹ In His concluding

⁴⁷ Sarum Missal, p. 112; York Missal, I, 105.

⁴⁸ Sarum Missal, p. 118; York Missal, I, 114-115.

⁴⁹ Sarum Missal, pp. 128, 111, 143; York Missal, I, 121, 104.

image, Christ presents Himself as a king who must help his subjects in their time of need or become an inhuman ruler: "For I were an vnkynde kynge. but I my kynde holpe, / And namelich at such a nede. ther nedes helpe bihoueth;" (ll. 396-397). The image of Christ the King appears in the Fulgens praeclara and the Prome casta; both Sequences also speak of His goodness, the first praising His vast, lovely clemency, the second, the perpetual joy which He brings to the world:

O magna, O celsa, O pulchra, clementia Christi
 luciflua, O alma.
 Ergo, pie Rex Christe, nobis dans precamina, ...

 Regi claustra Deo tartara rumpenti decanta nunc
 symphonia,
 Morte qui victa resurgens, gaudia mundo gestat
 colenda.⁵⁰

The monologue terminated, Langland has Christ seize Satan and bind him in chains. When the devils see their leader subdued, they hide in the darkest corners of hell, afraid to face Christ:

...and bonde hym with cheynes.
 Astaroth and al the route. hidden hem in hernes,

⁵⁰ Sarum Missal, p. 136, 139; York Missal, I, 126, 132. The sequence Prome casta is sung at Easter Monday Mass in the Sarum rite and at the Easter Thursday Mass in the York.

They dorste nouȝte loke on owre lorde. the bol-
 dest of hem alle,
 But leten hym lede forth what hym lyked. and lete
 what hym liste; (ll. 401-404).

The binding of Satan is a commonplace found in most vernacular Harrowings and in the liturgy also, as seen in the Fulgens praeclara, where a verse shows Christ, the glorious victor, binding Satan in fiery chains: "Dic, impie Zabule, quid valet nunc fraus tua, igneis nexus loris a Christi potentia?"⁵¹ The flight of the devils before Christ, not found in vernacular texts,⁵² has a long liturgical tradition behind it, especially in connection with prayers of exorcism. In one such prayer from the Easter Vigil, incense is blessed in the name of Jesus, so that wherever it burns, no devil shall dare raise opposition, but rather, shall depart in flight:

Exorcizo te immundissime spiritus et omne phantas-
 mata inimici in nomine dei patris omnipotentis,

⁵¹ Sarum Missal, p. 136; York Missal, I, 126. For the binding of Satan in vernacular Harrowings, see the Gospel, ll. 1441-1444, the Harrowing of Hell, ll. 151-156 (Auchinleck), York pageant, ll. 339-342 etc.

⁵² In the Harrowing of Hell, the devil guarding the gates runs away at the sound of Christ's voice, but he is the only devil to do this. Also, the incident occurs before Christ's entrance into hell. (Auchinleck, ll. 145-148).

et in nomine ihesu christi filii eius et spiritus sancti; ut exeas et recedas ab hac creatura thiamiatas siue incensi cum omni fallacia atque nequicia tua ut sit hec creatura sanctificata in nomine domini nostri ihesu christi; ut omnes gustantes, tangentes siue adorantes eam, uirtutem et auxilium percipiant spiritus sancti; ita ut ubicumque hoc incensum uel thiamiana fuerit ibi nullatenus appropinquare audeas nec aduersa inferre presumas, set quicumque spiritus immunde es cum omni uersucia tua procul inde fugias atque discedas adiuratus per nomen et uirtutem dei patris omnipotentis et filii eius ihesu christi domini nostri.⁵³

Even more dramatic is the description of the frightened devils in the Prone caste where the demon host is seen trembling with fear, wailing aloud, and marvelling at the destruction of hell's gates:

Terrore perculsa tremiscit daemonum plebs valida.
Dant suspira fletum alta: repagula
Quis sic audax fregerit, mirantur tunc, mortia.⁵⁴

Finally, in line 405, Langland concludes his harrowing by having a multitude of angels sing Latin verses which deal with the salvation of man by Christ's manhood: "Many hundreth of angeles. harpeden and songen, / Culpat

⁵³ Sarum Missal, p. 116. Two other prayers of a similar nature follow the one quoted above. See also the prayers of exorcism in another Easter Vigil ceremony, the Ordo ad cathecumen faciendum, pp. 123-126.

⁵⁴ For the source of this quotation, see note 50, above.

caro, purgat caro; regnat deus dei caro." Nothing similar occurs in any other Middle English version. On the contrary, all are characterized by their long, complex conclusions. Most notable are those of the Gospel, Cursor, and Chester play, where the liberated souls, on their way to heaven, meet Enoch and Elias, who tell of their future return to earth to battle Antichrist. In paradise, the souls meet the thief crucified with Christ, who explains that Christ granted him eternal life. In chorus, then, the saints thank God and vow to worship Him forever.⁵⁵ While there is no procession to heaven in the York, Towneley, and Ludus pageants, all these texts end with speeches of praise and thanksgiving by individual Old and New Testament figures, such as Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, Isaias, and John the Baptist.⁵⁶ We note here again, a completely different approach on Langland's part, for which the liturgy again is responsible. The singing of

⁵⁵ Gospel, ll. 1545-1608; Cursor, ll. 18379-18448. In the Chester plays, the Te Deum is sung by the entire company of saints, ll. 213-260.

⁵⁶ York, ll. 349-408; Towneley, ll. 367-404; Ludus, 35, ll. 1352-1383. The York and Towneley plays end with the singing of Laus tibi cum gloria and the Te Deum respectively.

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angels in connection with the Harrowing and with man's liberation is found in the opening lines of the Exultet and the Prome casta: "Exultet jam angelica turba caelorum; exultent divina mysteria, et pro tanti regis victoria turba intonet salutaris.... Prome casta concio cantica organa subnectens hypodorica."⁵⁷ The verses sung by Langland's angels may seem puzzling at first since they belong to the Aeterne rex altissime, an Ascension Day hymn.⁵⁸ Langland, however, simply follows another tradition contained in the liturgy, the association of the Harrowing and the Ascension. The Fulgens praeclara which refers a number of times to the Harrowing ends with a reference to the Lord's Ascension:

Paraclyti Sancti consolationem piam
Expectamus, secundum promissionem tuam,
Post acta Ascensionis sancta sollemnia,
Qua es regressus ad caelos nube tectus clara,
Pollens laude aeterna.

If we turn to the feast of the Ascension, we discover a number of references to the Harrowing. For example,

⁵⁷ For the sources of these quotations, see notes 48 and 50, above.

⁵⁸ Sarum Breviary, I, dcccclix; York Breviary, I, 481. In the Sarum rite, the hymn is sung at Matins; in the York, at Vespers.

the hymn Salve festa dies, for the procession preceding the Mass, describes Christ's liberation of hell's captives: "Solue cathenatos inferni et carceris umbras et reuoca sursum quicquid ad ima ruit. / Eripis in numerum populum de carcere mortis et sequitur liber quo suus auctor abit."⁵⁹ The Alleluia for the same Mass, Ephesians, 4:8, states that Christ "ascending on high, led captivity captive," a New Testament text advanced by theologians as proof of the Harrowing doctrine.⁶⁰ The following Middle English Ascension sermon explains why the Harrowing was linked to the Ascension— it was on the day of His Ascension that Christ brought the liberated souls to heaven: "þen in his ascencyon he had wyth hym a gret multytude of soules þe wheche þat he fat out of hell from þe fendis bondes."⁶¹ With the song of the angels, Langland leaves the Harrowing⁶² and returns to the frame

⁵⁹ Sarum Missal, p. 155.

⁶⁰ Sarum Missal, p. 156. For this and other Old and New Testament texts on the Harrowing, see Hulme, The Middle English Harrowing, p. lxii-lxiii.

⁶¹ See Erbe, Mirk's Festial, p. 152.

⁶² One element of Langland's Harrowing, the devils' debate in lines 263-312, has not been included in

in which the episode was originally set, the debate of the four daughters of God.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, Langland chose the episode of the Harrowing of Hell, and more precisely Christ's long monologue, as the vehicle for the traditional doctrine of man's Redemption. Because of the highly complex nature of the Redemption and because of its importance to the meaning of the entire poem, the doctrine had to be expressed in terms easily grasped by the reader. As seen above, the liturgy furnished Langland with just such terms, not necessarily simple in themselves, but so familiar to medieval Christians that their meaning

the above discussion because no parallel exists in the liturgy and because it bears few resemblances to any such debate found in vernacular versions. (Langland alone, for example, uses Lucifer as his central character in this debate. Further important differences are listed by Skeat in his volume of notes to his edition of Piers Plowman, (E.E.T.S. 67, 1877, p. 417). Langland may have been led to include it in his essentially liturgical presentation of the Harrowing on the authority of the Mystery Cycles, which are liturgical in nature and which do employ such a debate. Be that as it may, the debate is set into Langland's Harrowing in such a way that it makes important structural and thematic contributions despite its non-liturgical nature. It provides a reason for Christ's monologue, which, in part, is an answer to Lucifer's statement during the debate, of the theory of the devil's rights to man's soul. It also depicts man's captors and captivity in terms that can only increase man's gratitude for Christ's liberation.

could not possibly be missed.

The poet also needed a setting which would reinforce the speech's impact, not one which would attract attention away from it. Harrowings, such as those of the Mystery Cycles where characters, speeches, and actions are multiplied in the name of drama and spectacle, would most certainly have detracted from Christ's speech. The same is true of a Harrowing such as the Cursor's. Since this work's main aim is to illustrate the progressive historical development of God's plan of salvation for man, a great many patriarchs and prophets are made to repeat their biblical prophecies and to demonstrate the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. Christ's speech would surely have been drowned in such a sea of matter, or at least relegated to a less prominent position. A liturgical Harrowing, however, because it shares the same sources as the speech and, therefore, reveals in advance the speech's frame of reference, provides the ideal setting. It also carries with itself all the powerful religious emotions associated with Holy Week and Easter, of which it is an integral part. This emotional intensity, created by a relatively small number of elements, such as the Christ-Light image, the Attollite dialogue, and the

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patriachs' Ecce Agnus Dei, affords an excellent preparation for Christ's monologue which is the climax of the episode, of the Passus, and perhaps of the entire poem.

CHAPTER IV

THE LITURGICAL STRUCTURE OF PASSUS XVIII

Langland's Harrowing provides a clear, concise statement of the doctrine of Redemption, but, as stated previously, both the Harrowing and the Redemption are founded on Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection which made possible the liberation of man's soul from the captivity of sin. The Harrowing, therefore, is only a part of a complete vision of Christ's redeeming actions, which Langland's Passus XVIII presents.

The Passus opens with a description of an event which immediately preceded the Passion; Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The Latin tag "ramis palmarum", in line 7 indicates the source of this opening description and the spirit in which it should be read. since these words are part of the Latin title, Dominica in Ramis Palmarum, given to Palm Sunday by all the service books.¹ These same words are found in John 13:12,

¹ See, for example, Sarum Breviary, I, dccxiv; York Breviary, I, 361; Sarum Missal, p. 92; York Missal, I, 84.

part of the Gospel read over the palms at their blessing, and also in a number of chants for the procession of the palms, such as the following Antiphon and Response:

"Cum audisset populus quia ihesus uenit ierosolimam acceperunt ramos palmarum et exierunt ei obuiam.... Ingreddente domino in sanctam ciuitatem hebreorum pueri resurrectionem uite pronunciantes. Cum ramis palmarum osanna clamabant in excelsis."² Having revealed his source, Langland then borrows other Latin tags freely from chants for the same procession. The words "osanna," "a fili david," and "Benedictus qui uenit in nomine domini" of lines 9, 15 and 17 are found in the Gospel read over the palms and in a number of processional Antiphons and Responses, such as the following:

Pueri hebreorum uestimenta prosternebant in uia
et clamabant dicentes osanna filio dauid benedic-
tis qui uenit in nomine domini.

.....
Cum appropinquaret dominus ierosolimam... alii
prosternebant uestimenta sua in uia alii ramos
de arboribus externebant et qui sequebantur cla-

² Sarum Missal, pp. 94, 96; York Missal, I, 86, 88. (My italics).

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mabant osanna benedictus qui uenit in nomine
domini benedictum regnum patris nostri dauid
osanna in excelsis miserere nobis fili dauid.

.....:

Ave rex noster fili dauid redemptor mundi quem
prophete predixerunt salutorem domui israel esse
uenturum te enim ad salutarem uictimam pater
misit in mundum quem expectabant omnes sancti ab
origine mundi et nunc osanna filio dauid benedic-
tus qui uenit in nomine domini osanna in excelsis.³

A more complex use of such chants occurs in line 8: "Of
gerlis and of gloria laus.' gretly me dremed." The words
"Gloria laus" form the opening words of another processional
hymn: "Gloria laus et honor tibi sit rex christe redemp-
tor cui puerile decus prompsit osanna pium". By using the
word "gerlis" meaning "children", Langland may have been
trying to evoke the manner in which the chant was sung,
since the rubric accompanying the Gloria laus reads:
"Hiiis finitis assint pueri in eminenciori loco canentes."⁴

Langland's description of the Knight also is

³ Sarum Missal, pp. 94, 96; York Missal, I, 85, 88. (My italics).

⁴ Sarum Missal, p. 96; York Missal, I, 88. For an explanation of the word "gerlis", see Skeat, Notes, p. 396. Miss Maureen Hanna feels that the rubrics for another chant may have influenced Langland: "Faith may be in "a fenestre" because Langland was thinking of the boy dressed as a prophet, who sang the antiphons foretelling

indebted to the procession of the palms. In line 11, "Barfote on an asse bakke. botelees cam prykye," the Knight appears riding on an ass, a borrowing from John 12, 14-15, found in the Gospel read over the palms, at the end of the Antiphon Cum audisset, and again in the third Collect from the blessing of the palms: "... noli timere filia syon ecce rex tuus uenit sedens super pullum asine.... Deus cuius filius pro salute generis humani de celo descendit ad terras et appropinquante hora passionis sue ierosolimam in asino sedens uenire et a turbis rex appellari et laudari uoluit auge fidem in te sperancium et supplicum preces clementer exaudi..."⁵ Also, line 11 together with line 12, "Wyth-oute spores other spere. spakliche he loked," strongly resemble the following

the triumph of Christ, when the halt was made for the first station... (quoting the Processionale ad usum Sarum), for he was to stand in "aliquo eminenti loco" and the instruction "postea evanescat" points to his singing from one of the church windows. (The Treatment of the Passion in the B Text of Piers Plowman with Special Reference to Liturgical and Other Sources, Unpublished dissertation, St Anne's College, Oxford, 1958, p. 123).

⁵ Sarum Missal, pp. 93-94; York Missal, p. 85-86. (My italics).

processional Response: "Hic est qui de edom uenit tinctis
 bosra uestibus in stola sua iormosus gradiens uirtutibus
 non in equis bellicosus nec in altis curribus."⁶ The word
 "spakliche" meaning "sprightly" or "lively" could be
 meant as an echo of the Latin "gradiens virtutibus" and
 since Langland's Knight rides an ass and carries no
 weapons, it may also be said of him that he trusts neither
 war horses nor any type of defense.

Finally, Langland's description of the people
 participating in the procession seems to show the
 influence of Palm Sunday homilies. Those who marched in
 procession to Jerusalem before Christ are generally
 interpreted as the patriarchs and prophets of the Old
 Testament by homilists such as Aelred of Rievaulx (d.1166)
 and Martin of Leon:

Ecclesia praecedit, et Ecclesia sequitur adven-
 tum ejus. Non enim est Ecclesia solum ista fide-
 lium congregatio, quae credit in eum post ejus
 adventum, sed omnes sancti ab Abel justo usque
 ad ultimum justum, qui erit in hoc mundo, perti-
 nent ad sanctam Ecclesiam; et de omnibus illis
 constat illa una Ecclesia, cui dicitur: Una est
columba mea (cant. vi). Pars una praecedit adven-

⁶ Sarum Missal, p. 95. For the meaning of
 "spakliche", see Skeat, Notes, pp. 397-398.

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tum ejus: Abel, Noe, Abraham, David, et caeteri
 sancti.....
 Omnes igitur, qui in hac processione Christum
 praecedebant, fideles veteris Testamenti, scili-
 cet patriarchas et prophetas, et ceteros ad vi-
 tam aeternam praedestinos significabant.⁷

The same interpretation is found in the Middle English
Speculum Sacerdotale: "And the peple that yede a-fore
 and be-hynde betokenep the seyntis of the Olde and the
 Newe Testament. For a-fore tyme pat Crist was i-bore they
 louyd God as patriarches and trowyd he schuld come in
 flesche."⁸ Langland's choice of the word "olde" to describe
 the Jews in line 17, "Olde Iuwes of Ierusalem. for Ioye
 thei songen," indicate that he may have had this
 interpretation in mind.

Passus XVIII, which begins in the spirit of Palm
 Sunday ends on a note of Easter hope and joy by the
 evocation of certain Easter liturgical ceremonies and

⁷ Aelred, "Sermo X, In Ramis Palmarum", PL, 195,
 269; Martin, "Sermo XX, In Ramis Palmarum", PL, 208, 836.
 Similar interpretations occur in Garnerius of Langres,
 "Sermo XV, In Ramis Palmarum", PL, 205, 671; Hildebert of
 Mans, "Sermo XXIX, In Dominica Palmarum", PL, 171, 479.
 See also Aelfric's Palm Sunday homily in Homilies of the
 Anglo-Saxon Church: Sermones Catholici, Aelfric, ed. B.
 Thorpe (London: Aelfric Society, 1844), I, 215.

⁸ Weatherly, Speculum, p. 100.

customs. Line 422, "Treuth tromped tho, and songe. Te deum laudamus", refers to the prayer set aside with the arrival of Septuagesima but taken up again at Easter morning Matins as the following rubrics indicate: "Ab hac die (dominica in LXX) usque ad Pascha non dicitur Te Deum, sive de Temporalibus, sive de Festis Sanctorum fit servitium... In die Sancto Paschae... Executor Officii in stallo suo in capa serica alta voce, finito Responsorio cum suo Versu prodicto, incipiat Psalmum Te Deum."⁹ Line 425, "that men rongen to the resurexioun..." refers to the custom of not ringing church bells from Holy Thursday to Easter morning to symbolize the silence of the Apostles who fled in terror when Jesus was arrested:

Campanae conticescunt, per quas apostolos intelligimus, qui charitatis igne docente, in protectione Dei coeli quasi terrae fortitudinis commentes, intus suspensa ratione poenitentes, non tacebant praedicare nomen Dei: sed in passione non solum conticuerunt, sed etiam fugerunt, et veritatem negaverunt. Unde campanis silentium non indicimus, nisi a vespera qua traditus est Dominus, quando videlicet omnes fugerunt discipuli, praeter Joannem qui erat notus pontifici. Nostrae tamen consuetudinis est ad primam quintae

⁹ Sarum Breviary, I, cccxciii, dcccxiv; York Breviary, I, 236, 405. It may also be possible that Faith's playing on trumpet ("tromped") may refer obliquely to the high note ("alta voce") on which the Te Deum was intoned.

feriae, et non ulterius campanas sonare.¹⁰

The rubrics of the Sarum rite indicate that before Easter Matins were sung, the host was placed in a pyx on the altar, and immediately afterwards all the bells were rung in a clash: "In die sancto Paschae ante Matutinas... ita tamen quod proedicti duo excellentiores in fine processionis subsequantur, corpore Dominico super altare in pixide dimisso et sub Thesaurarii custodia, qui illud statim in prodicta pixide in tabernaculo deponat: et tunc pulsantur omnes campanae in classicum."¹¹ This would certainly be a joyful and memorable moment for all those attending services.

Lines 428-429, "And crepeth to the crosse on knees. and kisseth it for a luwel! / For goddes blissed body. it bar for owre bote,"¹² refer to another Easter morning ceremony, the Elevatio Crucis, of which the Exeter

¹⁰ Sicard, Mitrale, Lib. vi, cap. xi; PL, 213, 301. Alexander of Villa Dei writes: "A modo campane pulsatio non datur hocque / Signat discipulos visa Christi nece mutos." (Ecclesiale, ll. 677-678).

¹¹ Sarum Breviary, I, dcccviii.

¹² Skeat (Notes, p. 427) and Goodridge (Piers the Ploughman, p. 360) explain these lines as a reference to the Good Friday Adoratio Crucis, where the "Creeping to the Cross" was also performed. This fails to explain why Langland would have set a reference to Good Friday in the midst of a number of references to Easter morning.

Ordinal contains the following description:

In aurora diei ante pulsacionem campanarum et ante eciam Matutinas conueniant clerici omnes et laici ad ecclesiam, et ascendantur omnia luminaria per ecclesiam. Episcopus et Decanus uel alie due digniores persone presentes in supperelecijs cum ceroferarijs et thuribularijs albis indutis ad sepulchrum una cum toto choro circumstante accedant, et facta deuota genuflexione, incensatoque prius sepulchro, cum magna ueneratione corpus dominicum accipientes priuatim super altare deponant. Item, accipientes cum genuflexione crucem de sepulchro inchoent Episcopus et Decanus, . . . , alta uoce hanc antiphonam Christus Resurgens, cum qua antiphona est processio choro canente totam antiphonam cum versu. Et tunc pulsentur omnes campane in classicum. Et sic cum magna ueneratione deportetur crux solempniter inter eos super brachia, et thuribularijs et ceroferarijs procedentibus, per hostium australe presbiterij incedentes et circumeundo per medium chori regredientes, choro sequente habitu non mutato, scilicet in capis nigris, ad locum ubi prouisum fuerit, excellenciis personis precedentibus. Finita antiphona cum suo uersu a toto choro, dicat excellencior persona in ipsa stacione ante altare ad clerum conuersus hunc V. Surrexit dominus de sepulchro. R. Qui pro nobis pendit in ligno. Alleluia. Cum oracione Deus qui pro nobis. Nec precedat nec subsequatur Dominus uobiscum set finiatur per Christum dominum nostrum. Finita oracione omnes cum gaudio genua flectant ibidem et ipsam crucem adorent, in primis a dignioribus personis. Interim pulsetur ad Matutinas.¹³

¹³ Exeter Ordinal, 1, 138-139. The only text of the Elevatio according to Sarum, which I have found is the following: "Iterum accipientes crucem de sepulchro inchoet episcopus vel decanus Ant. Christus Resurgens. Tunc omnes cum gaudio genua flectant et ipsam crucem adorent, idipsum canentes cum V. Dicant nunc (W.H. Frere, The Use of Sarum, Cambridge University Press, 1901, II, 70). See also Sarum Breviary, I, dcccvii-dcccix.

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Daniel Rock, on the basis of some of the oldest texts of the Sarum rite, gives this description of the ceremony according to Sarum:

Just before the first streak of dawn upon Easter morning, the church was lighted up, and thither everybody hastened ere one toll had been given on the bells. Two of the upper priests, accompanied by the acolytes and the thurifer, and followed by the whole clergy, walked to the sepulchre, and having incensed it with incense on their bended knees, most reverently took out the pyx which held the body of our Lord, and carried it to the high altar, where they hung it up within the cup or dove beneath the canopy. All the bells then rang out a gladsome peal at once. Going back again with the same attendants, these two priests next took out of the sepulchre the crucifix which had been kissed, and buried there on Good Friday. Holding this cross between them in both their arms, they intoned the anthem Christus resurgens ex mortuis, and then began the procession to some small altar, at the foot of which they laid the crucifix down upon a cushion; and the clergy and the people came or "crept", as they did on Good Friday, and kissed it.¹⁴

The Versicle and Response "Surrexit Dominus de sepulchro / Qui pro nobis pependit in ligno", sung at the end of the Elevatio, are probably the source of Langland's line 429,

¹⁴ The Church of Our Fathers (London: C. Dolman, 1853). III, Part II, 251. The rubric "osculatur", indicating that the cross was kissed, is found in the Elevatio from the Breviarum Frisigense, and in those from St Gall, Meissen and Diessen printed by Karl Young in The Dramatic Associations of the Easter Sepulchre (University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature, 1920, No 10), p. 85-86, 91, 108, 124.

"For goddes blissed body. it (the cross) bar for owre bote," since the line occurs immediately after the reference to the "Creeping" and since it mentions, like the Latin, that Christ was crucified for our benefit.¹⁵

Finally, Langland's use of "jewel" in connection with the cross in line 428, "... and kisseth it for a Iuwel," has its basis in the liturgical custom of carrying different types of crosses during the various liturgical seasons. During Lent, for example, a red wooden cross was used, while a silver cross was borne on Palm Sunday:

De ij dominica Quadragesime, et de Cruce lignea....
 Dominica secunda et in omnibus dominicis per
 xl, Excepta prima dominica ["in processione" R.]
 differetur crux lignea rubei coloris depicta
 sine ymagine Crucifixi.....
 De dominica in Ramis palmarum.... Deinde lectio
 euangelio (Cum appropinquasset Iesus) feretrum
 cum reliquijs preparatum in quo corpus Christi
 in pixide dependat obuiam venientem cum cruce
 argentea cum ymagine Crucifix precedente cum
 duobus vexillis et cetera.

From Easter morning to the Ascension, churches employed a cross of crystal: "In ecclesia Sarum, et secundum Ordinale Sarum, nunquam ad processionem portatur crux cum vexillo, sicut habetur in multis ecclesijs. Sed in tempore

¹⁵ The same Versicle and Response occur at the end of Easter Lauds, Sext, and Vespers. See the Sarum Breviary, I, dcccxv; dcccxvii, dcccxx.

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pascali portatur crux cum berillo vsque ad Ascensionem Domini."¹⁶ Langland, then, is most probably referring to this crystal cross, which would certainly have the appearance of a jewel.

Since Passus 18 is enclosed in a liturgical envelope, composed of prayers, chants, and ceremonies from Palm Sunday and Easter, it is to be expected that much of the remaining material will show the influence of both these days and of Holy Week in general. As already seen, this is true of the Harrowing of Hell, which borrows much from the liturgies of Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter. This seems to be the case, also, of Langland's description of the Passion, which follows as closely as possible the four Gospels of the Passion, read, respectively, on Palm Sunday, on Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week, and on Good Friday.¹⁷ Langland

¹⁶ See Chr. Wordsworth, ed., The Tracts of Clement Maydeston (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1894), pp. 49, 50, 53. Commenting on this passage in Maydeston, Rock writes: "This 'cross of christall' is noticed in the Easter morning procession at Durham; and others of the kind are often found mentioned in old church-plate inventories... (Church of Our Fathers, III, Part II, 254).

¹⁷ See Sarum Missal, pp. 98, 99, 101, 110.

gives his readers a clear indication of his sources by using a number of Latin tags taken directly from the Gospels. The "sedens pro tribunali," "Tolle, tolle," the "consummatum est," and the "Vere filius dei erat iste" of lines 36, 47, 57 and 68 are taken respectively from Matthew 27:19, John 19:15, and Matthew 27:54 or Luke 23:47. The "Crucifige" of lines 39 and 46 occur in Mark 15:13-14, Luke 23:21, and John 19:15. The words "Ave rabby" of line 50 were, in reality, those used by Judas when he betrayed Christ, as reported in Matthew 26:49 and Mark 14:45. Langland here confuses them with the words "Ave Rex Judeorum" spoken by Christ's tormentors, according to Matthew 27:29 and John 19:3. The rest of the account up to the Longinus episode is almost a literal translation of passages from the four Gospels as seen when Langland's verses are compared to the Gospel texts.¹⁸ Since Langland sets his Passion account in the midst of a Passus with a liturgical opening and closing and since he follows the Gospels so closely, it seems quite probable that his description is meant to reproduce the Passion just as liturgy itself presents it four times during Holy Week.

¹⁸ See Appendix I.

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It may be argued that the story of Longinus, lines 78-91, constitutes a non-liturgical intrusion since the blind knight appears nowhere in Holy Week rites. However, the act of piercing Christ's side, which tradition attributes to Longinus, is stressed by the liturgy of Good Friday where it appears in the ninth Response for Matins, in the Improperia preceding the Adoratio Crucis, and in the Antiphon Dum fabricator from the same ceremony:

Tenebrae factae sunt dum crucifixissent Jesum
 Judei. Et circa horam nonam exclamavit Jesus voce
 magna, Deus meus, ut quid me dereliquisti? Et in-
 clinato capite emisit spiritum, tunc unus ex mi-
 litibus lancea latus ejus perforavit: et conti-
 nuo exivit sanguis et aqua.....
 Quid ultra debui facere tibi et non feci ego qui-
 dem plantaui te vinea mea fructu decora et tu
 facta es michi satis amara aceto namque mixto cum
 felle sitim meam potasti et lancea perforasti la-
 tus saluatori tuo.....
 ... Aperto ergo militis lancea latere crucifixi
 domini exiit sanguis et aqua in redemptionem sa-
 lutis nostre.¹⁹

Langland's insistence on this event may be attributable partly to the liturgy's own insistence. Also, the liturgy did not totally neglect Longinus, since his name appeared in the Martyrologies, from which a passage was read daily

¹⁹ Sarum Breviary, I, dccxcii; York Breviary, I, 394; Sarum Missal, pp. 113, 114; York Missal, I, 105-106.

at the public recitation of the Office in all religious houses and cathedrals.²⁰ The Exeter Martyrology, for example, contains the following item: "Idibus Marci.... In Cesarea Cappadocie, passio sancti Longini, qui latus domini lancea perforavit, ut in gestis eiusdem invenitur."²¹ In this way the liturgy helped keep the Longinus legend alive.

Although the material examined so far draws heavily upon the liturgy, large portions of the Passus, like the debate of the four daughters of God, do not have a liturgical basis. Langland, however, very subtly succeeds in echoing the liturgy of Holy Week even in such episodes by introducing Latin liturgical quotations into vernacular passages. For example, in line 35, after he

²⁰ See Eisenhofer and Lechner, The Liturgy of the Roman Rite, p. 39.

²¹ See the Exeter Ordinal, II, 388. A vernacular Martyrology, The South English Legendary, says of Longinus: "Seint Longius was a blind kniȝt. þo God was ido in rode / Pilatus him made oure Louerd stinge. & oper þat þer stode / To þe heorte he smot þe sper. and þo he velde of þe blode / Þer wiþ he wette is blinde eiȝene. hi bi come cler & gode." (ed. Charlotte D'Evelyn and Anna J. Mill, London: E.E.E.S., 1956), p. 84.

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has told Will that Christ will defeat Lucifer and vanquish death, Faith quotes Osee 13:14, "O mors, ero mors tua," the first Antiphon for Holy Saturday Lauds.²² As seen in chapter III, the Matins for the same day, which precede Lauds, refer a number of times to Christ's defeat of Satan and to his harrowing of Hell so that Faith is "liturgically" justified in using this quotation. Elsewhere, in line 179 when the maiden Peace tells the other daughters of God that she is on her way to welcome all the souls of hell soon to be freed by Christ, she quotes Psalm 29:6, "Ad vesperum demorabitur fletus, et ad matutinum leticia," recited during the second Nocturn of Holy Saturday Matins. Peace links the psalm to the liberation of souls, just as the liturgy does by giving it the following Antiphon: "Domine ~~abstraxisti~~ ab inferis animam meam."²³ During the demons' debate, the Devil, describing his loss of power in line 312, quotes John 12:31, "Nunc princeps huius mundi eicietur foras," from the Gospel for Monday of Holy Week.²⁴ In Langland's text

²² Sarum Breviary, I, dccxcvii; York Breviary, I, 401.

²³ Sarum Breviary, I, dccxcvii; York Breviary, I, 397.

²⁴ Sarum Missal, p. 99; York Missal, I, 91.

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these words occur after the appearance of the Christ-Light and after a reference to the raising of Lazarus by the Light. It is surely no simple coincidence that the Gospel, from which the quotation is taken refers three times to the raising of Lazarus and five times to Christ as the Light of the world. In all, twenty-six such Latin quotations from the liturgy of Holy Week alone appear in a passus that is only four hundred and thirty-one lines in length, an average of one quotation for every sixteen lines.²⁵

To these quotations must be added a number of vernacular passages which were undoubtedly influenced by Latin texts from Holy Week.²⁶ This is the case of Mercy's

²⁵ See Appendix II for a complete list of these quotations and their liturgical sources.

²⁶ Two very short passages of this type occur in line 65 and 101. In the first, one of the dead risen from the grave at the moment of Christ's death says, "Lyf and Deth in this derknesse. her one fordoth her other," which appears as "Mors et vita duello conflixere mirando," in the Victimae Paschali. In the second, Faith, speaking of God's vengeance for Christ's death, associates it with the end of darkness that enshrouds the earth: "For be this derknesse ydo. his deth worth avenged." This resembles Osee's description of God's judgment, "et iudicia mea quasi lux egredientur" (6:6), part of the opening Lesson of Good Friday services, where judgment is also associated with light (See Sarum Missal, p. 109; York Missal, I, 101).

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two answers to Truth's doubts as to the possibility of man's salvation. In line 160 Langland reveals the source of Mercy's words. by having her quote the verse "ars ut artem falleret" from the Pange lingua. In light of this, the reader should not be surprised when in lines 128-132 Mercy speaks of the Virgin Mary, of Christ's conception through the Holy Spirit, and of Christ's birth, in a passus devoted almost entirely to Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection; the maiden is simply echoing the Pange, a hymn in praise of Christ's Passion, which devotes twelve of its sixty-six verses to Christ's Incarnation and virgin Birth:

A mayden that hatte Marye. and moder with-out
felyng
Of any kynnes creature. conceyued thorw speche
And grace of the holygoste; . wex grete with childe;
With-outen wem. in-to this worlde she brou3t hym;

Quando venit ergo sacri
Plenitudo temporis,
Missus est ab arce Patris
Natus orbis Conditor:
Atque ventre virginali
Caro factus prodiit.

Vagit infens inter acta
Conditus praesepia:
Membra pannis involuta
Virgo Meter alligat:
Et Dei manus pedesque
Stricta cingit fascia.

Next, in lines 133-134 Mercy speaks of Christ's Death occurring in His thirtieth year, the same number of years mentioned in the Pange, instead of in His thirty-third year, as tradition generally has it:

Sith this barn was bore. ben thritti wynter passed;
Which deyde and deth tholed. this day aboute
mydday.

.....

Lustra sex qui jam peracta
Tempus implens corporis:
Se volente natus ad hoc
Passioni deditus.

In line 140 Mercy reminds the other daughters of God of the old prophecy that a tree would win back what was lost through a tree, "And that was tynt thorw tre. tree shal it wyne," a statement identical to the Pange's "Ipse lignum tunc notavit / Damna ligni ut solveret." Also, she claims in lines 141 and 157-158 that Christ's Death will be the cause of salvation for all those who were undone by death and the devil:

And that deth down brou3te. deth shal releue.

.....

So shal this deth for-do. I dar my lyf legge,
Al that Deth fordyd furste. thorw the deuilles
entysynge.

Though the Pange offers no exact parallel, it does

mention Christ's victory over Satan and His immolation as a victim for mankind, implying that His Death has saved man from the death of sin:

Pange lingua gloriosi
Proelium certaminis:
Et super crucis trophaeum
Dic triumphum nobilem,
Qualiter Redemptor orbis
Imolatus vicerit.

Agnus in cruce levatur
Immolandus stipite.

Similarly, no exact parallel exists in the Pange for Mercy's lines 152-156, which explain that often the only cure for a sickness is that which caused it in the first place, so that the scorpion's venom is often used as an antidote for the scorpion's sting:

For venym for-doth venym. and that I proue by
resoun.
For of alle venymes. foulest is the scorpioun,
May no medcyne helpe. the place there he styngeth,
Tyl he be ded and do ther-to. the yuel he
destroyeth,
The fyrst venymouste. thorw venym of hym-self.

The Pange, also, implies the same idea when it says that a tree saved what was originally lost by a tree and that God defeated Satan by using Satan's own weapons against him: "Et medelam ferret inde / Hostis unde laeseretur." Using the Pange itself as her authority, Mercy concludes in lines 159-160, that just as man was deceived

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in the beginning through the devil's guile so will Grace,
in turn, beguile the devil:

And ri3t as thorw gyle. man was bigyled,
So shal grace that bigan. make a good sleighte;
Ars ut artem falleret.

It is difficult to deny, therefore, that Mercy's two speeches reproduce both directly and indirectly many of the ideas and images of the Pange lingua and that in this way, the memory of the Good Friday Adoratio Crucis is evoked, thereby linking Christ's Death on the cross to Mercy's main theme, the freeing of man's soul from its captivity.

Another vernacular speech influenced by the liturgy is that made by the character "Book" in lines 230-248:

"By godes body," quod this Boke. "I wil bere
witnessse,
That tho this barne was ybore. there blased a
sterre,
That alle the wyse of this worlde. in o witte
acordeden,
That such a barne was borne. in Bethleem citee,
That mannes soule sholde saue. and synne destroye.
And alle the elementz," quod the Boke. "her-of
bereth witnessse.
That he was god that al wrou3te. the walkene
firste shewed;
Tho that weren in heuene. token stella comata,
And tendeden hir as a torche. to reuerence his
birthe;
The ly3te folwed the lorde. in-to the lowe erthe.
The water witnessed that he was god. for he went
on it:

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Although Gregory's homily is meant for Epiphany, the witnessing elements it discusses are also bound by tradition to the liturgy of Holy Week and Easter. Two of these witnessing phenomena, the solar eclipse and the earthquake of lines 243-246, are found in the Passion Gospel according to Matthew (27:45, 51-53).²⁸ Leo the Great in his tenth sermon on the Passion speaks of four elements, the sky, the earth, the sun, and the stars, which proclaim the guilt of the Jews for having killed Christ: "Sed his vocibus vestris stultis atque blasphemis reddunt omnia elementa responsum, et unam simul in vos sententiam ferunt caelum, terra, sol, sidera, quae indignos vos suo ministerio protestantur terribili motu, insolitoque defectu tenebras mundo vestrae caecitatis ostendant."²⁹ During the blessing of water on Holy Saturday, we are reminded that the water also bore witness to Christ's divinity for He walked upon it: "Qui pedibus

²⁸ The solar eclipse is mentioned also in Mark 15:33 and Luke 23:44.

²⁹ PL, 54, 343.

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super te (aquam) ambulauit."³⁰ Finally, the Easter Sequence Laudes Salvatori contrasts the terrifying aspect of nature at the Death of Christ, including the solar eclipse and earthquake, with nature's joyful appearance after His Resurrection:

Faudent igitur resurgenti christo cuncta gaudiis.
Flores segetes rediuiuo fructu uernant et uolucres celi gelu tristi terso dulce iubilant.
Lucent clarius sol et luna morte christi turbida.
Tellus herbida resurgenti plaudit christo que tremula eius morte se casuram minitat.³¹

Langland, therefore, is sufficiently justified in using the witnessing elements in connection with Holy Week and Easter even if the form he chooses was meant originally for Epiphany.³²

Langland's talent for realism, as manifested in the hustle and bustle of the world presented at the end of the Prologue or in the confession of the Seven Deadly

³⁰ Sarum Missal, p. 129; York Missal, I, 122.

³¹ Sarum Missal, p. 144; York Missal, I, 127. The sequence is sung on the Sunday after Easter in the Sarum rite and on Easter Monday in the York.

³² Note that several hundred years before Langland's time, Aelfric had also used the witnessing elements from Gregory's sermon in a sermon of his own for Easter Sunday (Thorpe, Homilies, I, 229).

Sins depicted in Passus V, could certainly have enabled him to present his readers with a totally different vision of the final days of Christ's life and of His Resurrection. He could, for example, have described with great pathos all the sufferings endured by Christ during His Passion or portrayed Christ's rising from the tomb with great dramatic excitement as do the Chester plays on these subjects. Instead, Langland gives his readers what amounts to a "ritual retelling" of Christ's Passion and Resurrection by closely following the ceremonies, readings, and chants of Holy Week and Easter. When he does create spectacle or employ dramatic techniques, as in the opening procession or in the Harrowing of Hell, he does so only to the extent to which the liturgy itself does when commemorating these events. In this way, Will's vision becomes not merely a historical narrative with didactic intent but a prayer of praise and thanks to God for His Redemption of man.

CHAPTER V

PASSUS XIX AND THE LITURGY OF
EASTERTIDE AND PENTECOST

To shed light on the problem of man's salvation, Langland devotes the major part of Passus XVIII to long descriptions of the Passion and Death of Christ and of His Harrowing of Hell. Because of this, the Resurrection, which is the central doctrine of the Christian faith, receives only a brief treatment at the very end. Passus XIX, therefore, makes up for this by presenting a joyful celebration of the glories of the Risen Christ and a portrayal of the events which took place immediately after the first Easter. As in the case of Passus XVIII, the liturgy either furnishes Langland with much of his material, or influences the form which the material takes.

The first image of Passus XIX, the bloodied Christ-Knight of lines 6-14, constitutes an important link between Passus XVIII and XIX because of its liturgical associations:

That Pieres the Plowman. was paynted al blody,
And come in with a crosse. bifor the comune peple,
And ri3te lyke in alle lymes. to owre lorde Iesu;
And thanne called I Conscience. to kenne me
the sothe.

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'Is this Iesus the Iuster?' quod I. 'that Iuwas
 did to deth?
 Or it is Pieres the Plowman!. who paynted hym
 so rede?'
 Quod Conscience, and kneled tho. 'thise aren
 Pieres armes,
 His coloures and his cote-armure. ac he that
 cometh so bloody
 Is Cryst with his crosse. conqueroure of Crystene.'

That this is primarily a Holy Week image because of its source, Isaias 63:1-6, a Lesson for Wednesday in Holy Week, has already been pointed out.¹ Langland's use of it, even after his allusions to Easter at the end of Passus XVIII, is in full accord with liturgical tradition, since the same image is often connected with the feast or the Ascension, celebrated after Easter. In his discussion of the feast of the Ascension, Guillaume Durand interprets Isaias 63:1-6 as referring to the words spoken by the angels when they beheld Christ rising to heaven:

Postea sequitur duplex Alleluja, quia Dominus ascendit in duplici stola, et ita eadem ratione cantatur duo Alleluja in Ascensione, quae durant usque ad Pentecosten, quia et in tempore paschali primum Alleluja est: Ascendit Deus in jubilatione, id est in gaudio ineffabili antiquorum Patrum, qui cum eo ascendebant, et Apostolorum et Angelorum dicentium: Quis est rex gloriae?

¹ See above, Chapter II, p. 64-66.

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Isaias: Quis est iste qui venit de Edom? Sequitur: Et Dominus in voce tubae, idest in voce horribili, quia de voce loquitur Angelorum...²

A similar interpretation is found in the following passage from an Ascension Day homily by John Wark:

Wherfor, in steyng of our Lord Ihesu Crist, þe lowe angelis—for gret wondyr þat þay hadden yn Crist ascencyon, when þay seen hym in flessch and blod bodyly steý vp wyth soo gret multitude of angeles makýng melody, and so gret multitude of sowles wyth hym, and also for gret wondyr þat þay hadden, when þay seghen þe fendys of þe ayre fle away for gret drede þat wer befor wont wyth gret prýde assaýle all þe sowles wythouten any spare— and also all good angeles, yn all þe nast þat þay myȝten, þay comyn, toorto do Crist seruyce and reucrens. Þus, for gret wondyr þat þes angelis hadden, þay askyd þe heȝur angeles and sayden þus: 'What ys þys þat comyth out of þe world, wyt þe bloody cloþes, as he wer kyng of joy?'³

A more satisfying text, because of its completeness, is the following from the Speculum Sacerdotale, which takes up the entire passage from Isaias and explains it line by line in terms of Christ's Ascension:

And then when the angels sawe Criste ascende in oure flesche and haue the tokenys of his passion, they mervaylede, saynge: 'Quis est iste qui venit de Edom?' 'Who is this', they

² Rationale, Lib. VI, cap. civ, pp. 608-609.

³ Erbe, Wark's Festial, pp. 153-154.

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seyde, 'that is comyn fro Edom?' Scilicet, the erpe, for Edom is as myche to say as erpe. 'Tinctis vestibus de bosra. With clothis wette with bosra;' scilicet, blode, for bosra is as myche to say as blode. 'Uiuus, formosus, et ambulans in fortitudine sua.' Scilicet, 'wele schapen and semely, comynge by his owyn my3tte and strengþe.' And then spake Crist: '3e knowe not me, for I am cloþe in flesshe and kynde of man. And these are the signes of my passion, the whiche I woll schewe vnto my fader that he haue the raper mercy of hem for whome I haue suffrid this. And I shall telle you what I am: he that made you and that haue saued mankynde.' And then seid the angels: 'Quare rubrum est vestimentum tuum et indumenta tua sicut calcancium in torculari?' They seide: 'Why is thy clothynge so rede, and why seme they like to fullers in þe prissee?' Þen answerd oure lord: 'Torcular calcanei solus, et de gente non est vir mecum.' He seyde: 'I haue by my-self alone fullyd a pressoure for alle folke; there was not o man with me.' Scilicet, 'I haue susteynyd reproues, scorgynggis, schedynge of blode, passion, and resyn fro dep, and nowe I ascende vnto heuene for to fulfille youre nombre, fro the whiche felle the deuel and his angels. And therefore ye moste nowe gladyn with me, for I haue foundyn a schepe that hath perischid fro me; scilicet, I haue recoueryd the first man whome the deuel deceyued. And therefore ioyeþ and be ye gladde, for youre nombre shall be fulfillid.'⁴

The bloodied Knight image, since it belongs to both Holy Week and the Ascension, has the advantage of binding Passus XIX to the preceding Holy Week Passus while indicating the direction which Passus XIX will take.

⁴ Weatherly, Speculum, pp. 156-157.

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The same image allows Langland to move smoothly from the martial image of the Knight triumphant in battle to another martial image of Christ as the Conquering King, of which the liturgy makes constant use during the days between Easter and the Ascension. When Will hears Conscience give the name "Christ" to the bloodied Knight, he protests in lines 15-23 that His rightful name should be Jesus, which is above all names:

'Why calle 3e hym Cryst?' quod I. 'sithenes
 Iuwes calle hym Iesus?
 Patriarkes and propheetes. prophecyed bifore,
 That alkyn creatures. shulden knelen and bowen,
 Anon as men nempned. the name of god Iesu.
Ergo is no name. to the name of Iesus,
 He none so nedeful to nempne. by ny3te ne by daye.
 For alle derke deuellles. aren adradde to heren
 it,
 And synful aren solaced. and saued bi that name.
 And 3e callen hym Cryst. for what cause, telleth
 me?

Will's ideas here are based on Philippians 2:8-11, which the liturgy of Holy Week uses a number of times; for example, as the Capitulum at None on Palm Sunday, as the Introit for the Mass of Wednesday in Holy Week, and as the Gradual for Holy Thursday:

He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death,
 even to the death of the cross. For which cause,
 God also hath exalted him and hath given him a
 name which is above all names: That in the name
 of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that
 are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth;

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And that every tongue should confess that the
 Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the
 Father.⁵

In a long answer Conscience shows that one person can be
 knight, king, and conqueror and that this is so of Jesus,
 who has therefore earned the name of Christ which
 signifies all these things:

"Thow knowest wel", quod Conscience. "and thow
 That kny3te, kyng, conqueroure. may be o persone.
 konne resoun,

.....
 Tho was he Iesus of Iewes called. gentel propnete,
 And kyng of her kyngdome. and crowne bar of thornes.
 And tho conquered he on crosse. as conquerour
 noble;

.....
 he may wel be called "conquerour". and that is
 Cryst to mene.

In giving these titles to Jesus, Conscience echoes the
 liturgy of Eastertide which constantly addresses Christ
 by these names. A typical example is found in the Fulgens
praeclara where the following verses praise Christ as
 our King and death's Victor: "Rex in aeternum suscipe
 benignus praeconia nostra tibi sedulo canentia Patris

⁵ Sarum Breviary, I, dcclxi; Sarum Missal, pp. 100,
 104; York Missal, I, 92, 97. Note that Langland quotes
 a Latin verse from this passage at line 76: "Omnia celes-
tia, terrestria, flectantur in hoc nomine Iesus."

sedens ad dexteram, / Victor ubique morte superata atque triumphata, polorum possidens gaudia."⁶ The word "rex" and forms of the word "victor" appear together in other Easter Sequences, such as the Prime cesta, Victimae paschali, and the Lane prima sabbati, as well as in the Aurora lucis rutilat, sung at Matins from the Sunday in the Octave of Easter to the feast of the Ascension. They occur also in the Ascension Day Sequence Rex omnipotens, while in the Antiphon for the Magnificat at Ascension Vespers the word "triumphator" replaces "victor".⁷ Not only does the liturgy afford parallels for Langland's epithets, but it also explains the reasons for using them in much the same way as Conscience does. For example, Conscience claims in lines 42-43 that a king must bring law to the people he rules: "It bi cometh to a kyng. to kepe and to defende, / And conquerour of conquest. his lawes and his large." The processional Easter hymn Salve

⁶ Sarum Missal, p. 136; York Missal, I, 126.

⁷ Sarum Missal, pp. 138, 141, 156; York Missal, I, 132, 129, 137, 147; Sarum Breviary, I, dcccclxv, dcccclviii; York Breviary, I, 429. In the Sarum rite the Easter Sequences are sung respectively, on Easter Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. In the York rite, they are sung on Easter Friday and Tuesday, and on the Sunday in the Octave of Easter.

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festas and the sequence Dic nobis speak of Christ as having put an end to the law of death, which He has replaced by the new law of grace:

Tristia cesserunt inferne uincula legis expa-
uitque chaos luminis ore premi
.....
Nox ergo pennis volucris vacuas dirigens laeta
per auras,
Rediit fanulis, et dixit vacuam legem vete-
rem et novam regnare gratiam.⁸

Conscience explains, also, in lines 46-47 that a king defends his people from all evils: "And fended fram foule yueles. feueres and fluxes, / And fro fendes that in hem were. and fals bileue." Although it does not mention specific physical ills, the Fulgens praeclara says of Christ that he raised the burden which weighed heavily upon us and cleansed our miseries and that He has the power to loose us from guilt: "Laus tibi, honorque, ac virtus, qui nostram antiquam levasti sarcinam./... Potenti virtute nostra qui lavit facinora, tribuens dona fulgida." Much closer to Langland's catalogue of ills is the Laudes Salvatori which shows Christ curing sicknesses, such as leprosy, fluxes, and fevers:

⁸ Sarum Missal, p. 135, 140; York Missal, I, 135-136. The Dic nobis is sung on Easter Wednesday in the Sarum rite and on Easter Saturday in the York.

PASSUS XIX AND THE LITURGY OF EASTERTIDE AND PENTECOST 152

Aquam nuptiis dat saporis vinei; caecos oculos claro vestivit lumine; lepram luridam tactu fugat placido.

Putres suscitavit mortuos membraque curat debilia; fluxum sanguinis constrinxit, et saturavit quinque de paribus quina millia.

Stagnum peragrat fluctans, seu siccum littus ventos sedat, linguam reserat constrictam, recludit aures privatas vocibus, febres depulit.⁹

Christ's greatest claim to kingship, however, says

Conscience in lines 40-41, is His coronation on Calvary:

"... for Iesus was yfulled, / And vppon Caluarye on crosse. ycrowned kynge of Iewes," an idea paralleled in the

Salve festa's statement that the crucified God reigns:

"Qui crucifixus erat deus ecce per omnia regnat..."

Christ may also be called conqueror, states Conscience in lines 30-33, because He has the power to turn young men of the lowest classes into freemen and lords; by the same power, He can change freemen into vassals if they refuse to follow His rule:

Ac to be conquerour called. that cometh of
special grace,
And of hardynesse of herte. and of hendenesse
bothe,
To make lordes of laddes. of lond that he wynneth,

⁹ Sarum Missal, p. 144; York Missal, I, 127-128. The Laudes Salvatori is sung on Sunday in the Octave of Easter in the Sarum rite and on Easter Monday in the York.

PASSUS XIX AND THE LITURGY OF EASTERTIDE AND PENTECOST 153

And fre men koule thralles. that folweth nouȝt
his lawes.

Like several other Easter Sequences, the Fulgens praeclara speaks of Christ paying man's ransom, thereby implying that man, once a captive or slave, has become a freeman through Christ: "Laus tibi honorque, ac virtus, qui nostram antiquam levasti sarcinam. / Roseo cruore Agni benignissimi empta florida micat haec aula."¹⁰ Conscience completes his thought by showing in lines 34-40 that this power is exercised through baptism; those who receive this sacrament become free, while those who refuse it, like the Jews, are relegated to the lowest classes of society:

The Iuwes, that were gentil-men. lesu thei
dispised,
Bothe his lore and his lawe. now ar thei lowe
cherlis.
As wyde as the worlde is. wonyeth there none
But vnder tribut and taillage. as tykes and
cherles.
And tho that bicomme Crysten. by conseilte of
the baptiste,
Aren frankeleynes, fre men. thorw fullyng that
thei toke,
And gentel-men with lesu.

Paralleling this idea, to some extent, are the following

¹⁰ For other examples of the ransom image see above Chapter III, pp. 100-102.

PASSUS XIX AND THE LITURGY OF EASTERTIDE AND PENTECOST 154

verses from the Fulgens praeclara and the Zyma vetus which contrast the free, joyous Christians and their flourishing Church with the unbelievers of Judea and their drooping Synagogue:

Judaea incredula, cur manes adhuc inverecunda?
Perspice Christicolae, qualiter laeti canunt
inclita Redemptori carmina.

.....
Botrus Cypri reflorescit,
Dilatatur, et excrescit;
Synagogae flos marcescit,
Et floret Ecclesia¹¹

Of course, Christ's claim to the title of conqueror, explains Conscience in lines 50-55, lies principally in His great victory over death and in His Harrowing of Hell:

And tho conquered he on crosse. as conquerour
noble;
ly3t no deth hym fordo. ne adown brynge,
That he ne aros and regned. and rauysshed helle.
And tho was he 'conquerour' called. of quikke
and of ded;
For he 3ef Adam and Eve. and other mo blisse,
That longe hadde leyne bifore. as Lucyferes
cherles.

The defeat of death by Christ is celebrated in several

¹¹ For the Zyma vetus, see Sarum Missal, p. 138; York Missal, I, 133-134. In the Sarum rite it is sung on Easter Monday while the York rite uses it on Easter Friday.

PASSUS XII AND THE LITURGY OF EASTER-TIDE AND PENTECOST 155

Easter Sequences, such as the Zyma vetus which states that the conflict between Life and Death is ended and that the Victorious Christ, our Life, has risen:

Mors et vita confluxere,
Resurrexit Christus vere;
Et cum Christo surrexere
Multi testes gloriae.¹²

Similarly, frequent references to the Harrowing of Hell occur in Easter Sequences, such as the Prope casta which mentions the destruction of hell's gates, the liberation of captive souls, and their ascension with Christ to the courts of heaven:

Terrore perculsa tremiscit daemonum plebs valida.
Dant suspira fletum alta: repagula
Quis sic audax frangerit, mirantur tunc, fortia.
Sic ad supera redit cum turma gloriosa...¹³

Finally, says Conscience in lines 56-58, Christ, like a true conqueror, rewards his liegemen:

And sith he 3af largely. alle his lele lyges
Places in paradys. at her partyngs hennys,
He may wel be called "conquerour"....

The Fulgens praeclara states the same idea when it speaks

¹² For other examples of this image, see above Chapter II, pp. 55-59.

¹³ For other examples of similar references to the Harrowing, see above Chapter III, pp. 81-84.

PASSUS XIX AND THE LITURGY OF EASTER-TIDE AND PENTECOST 156

of Christ rewarding his followers righteously and granting bright gifts: "Mundans olim arva, regna petis supera, justis reddens praemia, in saecula dignanter ovantia./... Potenti virtute nostra qui lavit facinora, tribuens dona fulgida."

In lines 65-148 Conscience follows up this exposition with the story of Christ's life, indicating the moments at which Christ received or earned the names Jesus, King, and Conqueror. He mentions such events as Christ's birth, the adoration of the angels and Magi, along with many of the miracles performed by Christ. This may appear as a digressive recapitulation of matter having little to do with Eastertide which focuses on the final events of Christ's life rather than on his early years. The Easter liturgy of medieval England, however, liked to recall the whole of Christ's life leading up to the Resurrection, as seen in the Sequence Laudes Salvatori. Among other events, it mentions Christ's birth, His circumcision, His baptism, and His temptation in the desert. Interestingly enough, it contains references to a number of miracles also referred to by Conscience in his speech, such as the miracle at Cana, the curing of the blind, the deaf, and the dumb, and the multiplication of the loaves and fishes:

PASSUS XLV AND THE LITURGY OF EASTERTIDE AND PENTECOST 157

In his Iuente this Iesus. atte Iuene feste
 'ater in-to wyn touned. as holy writ telleth
 (ll. 104-105).

.....
 He made lame to lepe. and 3aue li3te to blynde,
 And fedde with two fisses. and with fyue loues
 Sore afynred folke. mo than fyue thousande
 (ll. 121-123).

.....
 For defe thorw his doynge to here. and donbe
 speke he made (l. 126).

.....
 aquam nuptiis dat saporis vinei; caecos oculos
 claro vestivit lumine;...
 ... et saturavit quinque de panibus quina millia.
 ... linguam reserat constrictam, recludit aures
 privates vocibus...

Because of the lack of further parallels it cannot be claimed that the Laudes Salvatori was Langland's main source for Conscience's speech, but the Sequence does show that Langland's passage is in accordance with the liturgical traditions of Eastertide.

This long discussion of the names of Christ is followed by references to, and descriptions of a number of events which took place at the time of the Resurrection or shortly after. In lines 145-151, Langland presents the episode concerning the bribing, by the Jews, of the guards who witnessed the Resurrection but who remained silent for a price. The incident is based largely on Matthew 28:2-4, 11-15, read as part of the Gospel for

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the Easter Vigil and for the Friday after the Octave of Easter, respectively:

The kny3tes that kepten it. biknewe it hem-seluen,
 That angeles and archangeles. ar the day spronge,
 Come knelynge to the corps. and songen, 'Christus
resurgens'
 Verrey man bifor hem alle. and forth with hem he
 3ede.
 The lewes preyded hem pees. and bisou3te the
 kny3tes
 Telle the comune that there cam. a compaignye
 of his aposteles,
 And bywicched hem as thei woke. and away stolen
 it.

Who when they were departed, behold, some of the guards came into the city and told the chief priests all things that had been done. And they, being assembled together with the ancients, taking counsel, gave a great sum of money to the soldiers, saying: Say you, his disciples came by night and stole him away when we were asleep. And if the governor shall hear of this we will persuade him and secure you. So they, taking the money, did as they were taught; and this word was spread abroad among the Jews even unto this day.

Langland, in lines 146-147 adds two details that are not scriptural: the angels and archangels kneeling before Christ's body and the singing of Christus resurgens. These words from Romans 6:9 appear at the beginning of an Antiphon sung on Easter morning: "Christus resurgens ex mortuis jam non moritur: mors illi ultra non dominabitur:

PASSUS XIX AND THE LITURGY OF EASTER-TIDE AND PENTECOST 159

quod enim vivit, vivit Deo. Alleluya. Alleluya."¹⁴ The Antiphon's context, the Elevatio Crucis,¹⁵ is especially illuminating for Langland's passage because during this ceremony, participants first honored Christ's cross and then, like Langland's kneeling angels, worshipped Christ's body in the form of the host. That Langland had all this in mind in connection with the episode of the soldiers seems almost certain since the Versicle which accompanies the Christus resurgens is addressed to the guards of the sepulchre, ordering them and the Jews to produce Christ's body or accept the Resurrection as a fact: "Dicant nunc Judei quomodo milites custodientes sepulchrum perdiderunt regem ad lapidis positionem, quare non servabant petram justitiae: aut sepultum reddant: aut resurgentem adorent nobiscum dicentes, Alleluya Alleluya."

¹⁴ Sarum Breviary, I, dcccvii. The same words are used as the Capitulum for first Vespers of the Sunday in the Octave of Easter, as an Antiphon for the procession preceding the Mass for the fifth Sunday after Easter, and as an Alleluia for Mass on ferial days during the Easter season (Sarum Breviary, I, dccciv; York Breviary, I, 289; Sarum Missal, pp. 149, 146). Since this chant was used so often it is understandable that Langland allowed himself to quote it twice within the space of nine lines (See lines 147, 155).

¹⁵ For a complete description of this ceremony, see above Chapter IV, pp. 126-129.

PASSUS XIX AND THE LITURGY OF EASTERTIDE AND PENTECOST 160

Langland's next passage, lines 152-156, deals with Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalen and her spreading of the good news of the Resurrection. It is based ultimately on John 20:14 and 18, read as part of the Gospel for Easter Thursday:

Ac Marie Magdeleyne. mette hym bi the wey,
 Goynge toward Galile. in godhed and manhed,
 And lyues and lokynge. and she aloude cryde,
 In eche a compaignye there she cam. 'Christus
resurgens!'
 Thus cam it out that Cryst ouer-cam. rekeuered
 and lyued;
Sic oportet Christum pati, et intrare, etc.;

When she had thus said, she turned herself back
 and saw Jesus standing;...Mary Magdalen cometh
 and telleth the disciples: I have seen the Lord;
 and these things he said to me.¹⁶

The Sarum rite emphasizes the fact that Mary conveyed the good news to all by singing the Victimae paschali immediately before reading the Gospel just quoted. This Sequence contains a short dialogue between Mary and the Apostles in which she announces Christ's Resurrection to them, when questioned as to the things she has witnessed:

Dic nobis, Maria, quid vidisti in via?
 Sepulchrum Christi viventis, et gloriam vidi
 resurgentis,

¹⁶ Sarum Missal, p. 141; York Missal, I, 129.

PASSUS XIX AND THE LITURGY OF EASTERTIDE AND PENTECOST 161

Angelicos testes, sudarium et vestes.
 Surrexit Christus spes nostra, praecedet vos
 in Galilaeam.¹⁷

From the point of view of Langland's episode, the Victimae paschali is important not only because it speaks of Mary as the herald of the good news as does Langland in lines 153-154 but also because it alludes to the deceitfulness of the Jews, stating that Mary, rather than they, should be believed: "Credendum est magis soli Mariae veraci, quam Judaeorum turbae fallaci." In this way the bribing of the guards is linked to the Mary Magdalen episode by the liturgy just as Langland links the two episodes by having one follow immediately after the other. Also important is the Dic nobis in which Mary is depicted running from place to place and revealing the good news to all in a clear voice, first to an unidentified speaker, then to the Apostles:

Dic nobis quibus aetheris nova
 Cuncto mundo nuntiens gaudia,
 Nostram rursus visitas patriam?
 Respondens placido vultu clara voce dixit;
 Alleluya,
 Angelus mihi de Christo indicavit pia miracula,
 Resurrexisse Dominum siderum cecinit voce laudanda.

¹⁷ Sarum Missal, p. 141. In the York rite the Sequence is sung on Easter Wednesday where Luke 24:36-47 is read as the Gospel. (York Missal, I, 129).

PASSUS XIX AND THE LITURGY OF EASTERTIDE AND PENTECOST 162

Nox ergo pennas volucris vacuas dirigens laeta
 per auras,
 Reditit famulis, et dixit vacuatam legem veterem
 et novam regnare gratiam.
 Itaque plaudite, famuli, voce clara: Christus
 hodie redemit nos a morte dira.

This description closely parallels Langland's "...and she
 aloude cryde,/ In eche a compaignye there she cam. 'Christus
resurgens!'¹⁸

After this incident Langland presents in lines
 161-176 an account of Christ's second appearance to His
 disciples and of the story of Thomas's doubt. The passage
 is a literal translation of John 20:26-29, part of the
 Gospel for the Sunday in the Octave of Easter, from which
 Langland borrows his three Latin quotations:

And as alle thise wise wyces. weren togideres,
 In an hous al bishette. and her dore ybarred,
 Cryst cam in, and al closed. bothe dore and 3ates,
 To Peter and to his aposteles. and seyde 'pax
vobis!'
 And toke Thomas by the hande. and tau3te hym to
 grope,

¹⁸ Another Easter Sequence, the Hane prima
Sabbati, devoted almost entirely to praising Mary Magdalen,
 speaks of her as the harbinger of Christ's Resurrection:
 "Resurgentis itaque / Maria Magdalene / Facta est praenun-
 tia." (Sarum Missal, p. 469; York Missal, I, 137-138). It
 should be noted also that the Latin quotation "Sic oportet
 Christum pati, et intrare, etc.," concluding the Mary
 Magdalen episode in Langland, is taken from Luke 24:46,
 read as part of the Gospel for Easter Tuesday and used
 as an Alleluia on ferial days during the Easter season.
 (Sarum Missal, p. 146).

PASSUS XIX AND THE LITURGY OF EASTERTIDE AND PENTECOST 163

And fele with his lyngres. his flesschlich herte.
 Thomas touched it. and with his tonge cryde,

'Deus meus et dominus meus.

Thow art my lorde, I bil'ue. god, lorde Iesus!
 Thow deydest and deth toledest. and dene shalt
 vs alle,
 And now art lyuynge and lokynge. and laste shalt
 euere!'

Crist carped thaune. and curteislich seyde,
 'Thomas, for thow trowest this. and trewliche
 bileuest it,
 Blessed mote thow be. and be shalt for euere.
 And blessed mote thei alle be. in body and in
 soule,
 That neuere shal se me in siȝte. as thow doste
 nouthe,
 And lellich bileuen al this. I loue hem and

blesse hem;

Beati qui non viderunt, et crediderunt, etc.'

And after eight days again his disciples were
 within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the
 doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said:
 Peace be to you. Then he saith to Thomas: Put
 in thy finger hither and see my hands; and bring
 hither thy hand and put it into my side; and be
 not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered
 and said to him: My Lord and My God. Jesus saith
 to him: Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou
 hast believed; blessed are they that have not
 seen and have believed.¹⁹

The scene is completed in lines 177-184 by a discussion
 of the power to bind and to loose given to the Apostles
 by Christ before His Ascension, a power mentioned also
 in John 20:23, part of the Gospel just quoted:

¹⁹ Sarum Missal, p. 145; York Missal, I, 139.

PASSUS XIX AND THE LITURGY OF THE TRIDUUM AND PENTECOST 164

Thus hath Pierces powere. be his pardounpayed,
 To bynde and to vnbynde. botue here and
 And assoille men of alle synnes. saue of dette
 clles-where,
 one (ll. 183-185).

Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven
 them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are
 retained.

The liturgy emphasizes the power of binding and loosing by using at latins for the Sunday in the Octave of Easter, in conjunction with the Gospel quoted above, Gregory's twenty-sixth homily, which comments on this power. Gregory insists that a fault cannot be absolved by a pastor until the penitent has openly disclosed the fault and the penance or restitution which he has accomplished. Basing his thought on an exegetical interpretation of the removal of the winding bands from the body of Lazarus after his resurrection, Gregory explains that only those given the grace of repentance by God (represented in the Gospel by Jesus calling Lazarus out of the tomb) can be truly absolved:

Causae ergo pensandae sunt, et tunc ligandi atque solvendi potestas exercenda. Videndum est quae culpa praecessit, aut quae sit poenitentia secuta post culpam, ut quos omnipotens Deus per compunctionis gratiam visitat, illos pastoris sententia absolvat. Tunc enim vera est absolutio praecedentis, cum interni arbitrium sequitur iudicis. Quod bene quatrIduani mortu resuscitatio illa significat, quae videlicet demonstrat

quia prius mortuum Dominus vocavit et vivificavit, dicens: Lazare veni foras (Joan. XI, 43); et postmodum is qui vivens egressus fuerat a discipulis est solutus, sicut scriptum est: Cumque egressus esset qui fuerat ligatus institis, tunc dixit discipulis: Solvite eum et sinite abire (Joan. XI, 45). Ecce illum discipuli jam viventem solvunt, quem magister resuscitaverat mortuum. Si enim discipuli Lazarum mortuum solverent, fetorem magis ostenderent quam virtutem. Ex qua consideratione intuendum est quod illos nos debemus per pastorem auctoritatem solvere quos auctorem nostram cognoscimus per suscitantem gratiam vivificare. Quae nimirum vivificatio ante operationem rectitudinis in ipsa jam cognoscitur confessione peccati.²⁰

This homily is especially enlightening with respect to lines 180-185 where Langland explains that Piers can forgive the sins of those only who acknowledge his power of absolution and who show some tangible sign of repentance:

Hym my3te men to assoille. of alle manere synnes,
In couenant that thei come. and knowleche to paye,
To Pieres pardon the Plowman. redde quod debes.

Gregory makes essentially the same statement since the confession to the pastor and the act of repentance or restitution on which he insists are similar to the acknowledgment of the Church's power and to the payment

²⁰ PL, 76, 1200. See also the Sarum Breviary, I, dccclx-dccclxi; York Breviary, I, 429.

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of one's debts which are Langland's two conditions.

In lines 186-193, Langland takes up the event of the Lord's Ascension and associates it with His return at the end of time to judge all men:

Anone after an heigh. vp in-to heuene
 He went, and wonyeth there. and wil come atte
 And rewarde hym ri3te wel. that reddit quod ^{laste,}
debet—
 Payeth parfitly. as pure trewtne wolde.
 And what persone payeth it nou3t. punysshē he
 And demen hem at domes daye. bothe quikke and ^{thinketh,}
 The gode to the godhede. and to grete loye, ^{ded;}
 And wikke to wonye. in wo with-outer ende.'

The hymn Tu Christe for Ascension Day Lauds, after mentioning Christ's Ascension, speaks of His Second Coming and prays that He may forgive us our debts and give us the heavenly crown:

Ut cum rubente coeperis
 Clarere nube iudicis,
 Poenas repellas debitas,²¹
 Reddas coronas perditas.

The Tu Christe, therefore, groups the ideas of man's debt, of Christ's Ascension, and of His Second Coming, just as Langland does by discussing all these ideas, one after the

²¹ Sarum Breviary, I, dccccxlxiii. In the York rite this hymn is sung at Vespers as part of the longer Aeterne rex altissime (York Breviary, I, 476).

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other within a space of seventeen lines. All three ideas are again present in the Ascension Day Sequence Rex omnipotens which opens with a reference to the power of binding and loosing, speaks of Christ's Ascension, and concludes with a reference to the final judgment:

Victor ascendit caelos, unde ~~de~~scenderat.
 Nam quadraginta postquam surrexerat
 Diebus sacris confirmans pectora
 Apostolorum, pacis cara reliquens oscula,
 Quibus et dedit potestatem laxandi crimina,

 Judex cum veneris, judicare saeculum,
 Da nobis quaecumque, sempiterna gaudia in polorum
 patria,
 In qua tibi cantemus omnes alleluya.²²

Langland then focuses on the Descent of the Holy Spirit, in lines 195-198, using much the same language as Acts 2:2-4, the Epistle for Pentecost:

...and thanne come, me thou3te,
 One spiritus paraclitus. to Pieres and to his felawes;
 In lyknesse of a li3tynge. he ly3te on hem alle,
 And made hem konne and knowe. alkyn langage .

And suddely there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming; and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were of fire; and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost; and they began to speak with divers tongues, according

²² Sarum Missal, I, 156; York Missal, I, 147-148.

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as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.²³

Lines 204-205 show that Langland had the liturgy of Pentecost in mind since he has Conscience quote the opening words of a Pentecostal hymn:²⁴ "'Knele now,' quod Conscience. 'and if thow canst synge / Welcome hym and worship hym. with veni creator spiritus.'" This hymn, like Conscience in lines 202-203, speaks of the Spirit as coming from the great God and as being the Spirit of grace; and it, too, prays for the Spirit's help. as do Conscience and Will in lines 206-207:

Quod Conscience, and kneled. "this is Crystes
messenger,
 And cometh fro the grete god. and Grace is his
name.

 Thanne songe I that songe. and so did many
hundreth,
 And cryden with Conscience. "help vs, god of
grace!"

Veni Creator Spiritus,
mentes tuorum visita,
Imple superna gratia
Quae tu creasti pectora.

²³ Sarum Missal, p. 162; York Missal, I, 152.

24 The hymn is used at Terce for the feast of Pentecost and during its Octave (Sarum Breviary, I, mviii; York Breviary, I, 503). The York rite also made use of it as a Sequence for Tuesday after Pentecost (York Missal, I, 155).

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Qui Paraclytus diceris
 Donum Dei altissimi,
 Fons vivus, ignis, caritas,
 Et spiritualis unctio.

Infirma nostri corporis
 Virtute firmans perpetim.
 Hostem repellas longius,
 Pacemque dones protinus.

In lines 210-211 Grace announces that he will distribute his gifts to men: "For I wil dele to-daye. and dyuyde grace, / To alkyngnes creatures...". Though the theme of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is traditionally associated with moral theology, nevertheless it occurs constantly in pentecostal liturgy in such words and expressions as "dona", "charismata", "magnalia", "charismatum et munera", and "tu qui dator es et donum", found in hymns, such as the Beata nobis gaudia for Pentecost Vespers and in Sequences for the week after Pentecost, such as the Eya musa, Laudes Deo devotas, and Consolator alme.²⁵ Also, the Lessons at Matins for the feast of Pentecost are taken from Gregory's thirtieth homily, in which he quotes First Corinthians,

²⁵ For the Beata nobis gaudia, see the Sarum Breviary, I, xxi. The Sarum rite sings the Eya musa and the Laudes Deo devotas on the Tuesday and Friday after Pentecost (Sarum Missal, pp. 164, 166). The York rite uses the Laudes Deo devotas and the Consolator alme on Tuesday and Friday after Pentecost (York Missal, I, 155, 159).

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12:8-10, describing the various gifts of the Spirit:

De isto quippe Spiritu scriptum est: Spiritus ejus ornavit coelos (Job. XLVI, 13). Ornamenta enim coelorum sunt virtutes praedicantium. Quae videlicet ornamenta Paulus enumerat, dicens: Alii datur per Spiritum sermo sapientiae, alii sermo scientiae secundum eundem Spiritum, alteri fides in eodem Spiritu, alii gratia sanctorum in uno Spiritu, alii operatio virtutum, alii prophetia, alii discretio spirituum, alii genera linguarum, alii interpretatio sermonum.²⁶

Gregory then goes on to describe the gifts at work by showing how they transformed David from a harpist into a psalmist, Amos from a herdsman into a prophet, Daniel from a boy into a judge, Peter from a fisherman into a preacher, etc.:

Implet namque citharoedum puerum, et psalmistam facit (I Reg. XVI, 18). Implet pastorem armentarium sycomoros vellicantem, et prophetam facit (Amos. VII, 14). Implet abstinentem puerum, et judicem senum facit (Dan. XIII, 46, seq.). Implet piscatorem, et praedicatorem facit (Matth. IV, 19). Implet persecutorem, et doctorem gentium facit (Act. 13, 1, seq.). Implet publicanum, et evangelistam facit (Luc. V, 27, 28). O qualis est artifex iste Spiritus!

Interesting as these examples may be, they in no way provide parallels for lines 224-252 in which Grace describes the various skills practiced by man with the help of the gifts

²⁶ The Sarum Breviary gives only the beginning of the homily (I, miii-mvi). The entire homily is printed in PL, 76, 1224-1226.

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of the Spirit, and in which he states that members of all professions should love each other and never look down upon one another. However, John Mirk's vernacular sermon for the Vigil of Pentecost includes in its list of traditional gifts of the Holy Spirit the gift of the science of trades and crafts whereby each man may earn an honest living: "He 3euype also grace of dyuers sciens in lernyng of dyuers craftes, and som to lerne on and som anopyr, so þat ych man haþe by 3yft of þe Holy Gost grace forto lerne a science by þe wheche he may gete his lyflode with trewþe."²⁷ This passage shows that the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so often mentioned in the liturgy of Pentecost did not, for the Christian of the Middle Ages, refer solely to the traditional seven virtues enumerated in Isaiah 11:2-3.

On the basis of all this evidence, it is difficult to deny that the opening section of Passus XIX is heavily indebted to the liturgy. The opening image of the bloodied Christ-Knight, providing a link between Passus XVIII and XIX, is a liturgical one. Conscience's long speech dealing

²⁷ Erbe, Mirk's Festial, p. 157.

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with Christ's titles and great deeds is an intricate weaving together of a large number of themes from Easter hymns. Episodes such as the bribing of the soldiers guarding Christ's tomb, Mary Magdalen's heralding of the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Descent of the Holy Spirit, are handled with great artistic control. Langland, rarely, if ever, allows himself to stray from his scriptural source for the sake of adding realistic details or literary embellishments. He is always careful, however, to present each episode in such a way that its liturgical context is brought back to the mind of the reader. We may conclude, therefore, that, the opening section of Passus XIX, which together with Passus XVIII contains Will's vision of Christ, belongs truly to the spirit of liturgical worship. For some six hundred lines, the reader, moving from one liturgical image, quotation, or allusion to another, is led to relive all the memorable experiences provided by the liturgy from Palm Sunday to Pentecost. In this way, along with the poem and with the liturgy on which it is based, he participates in the praise and worship of God who, in the words of the Exultet, revealed through His Son "the marvelous condescension of his loving kindness for man."

CHAPTER VI

A LITURGICAL READING OF WILL'S VISIONS
OF THE BUILDING OF UNITY AND OF THE COMING OF ANTICHRIST

If the liturgy is used in Passus XVIII and at the beginning of Passus XIX principally to arouse the spirit of worship in the reader, it performs different but equally important functions in the closing section of the poem, which focuses largely on two main themes: the building of Holy Church and its defense against the attacks of Pride and Antichrist. It is through the liturgy that these last visions are unified and also through the liturgy that some of the most important questions concerning the quest for salvation and perfection are finally answered.

In the second half of Passus XIX, Langland in a long allegorical passage, deals with the building of Holy Church. Line 325 makes the meaning of the allegory clear by stating that Grace, after building a great house to hold the harvest, "called that hous Unite. . . holicherche on Englisshe." In his choice of the name Unity, as in his description of the Holy Spirit's descent examined previously, Langland shows the influence of the liturgy of

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Pentecost. Quite naturally, the liturgy while celebrating the founding of the Church at Pentecost,¹ likes to speak of unity, as seen, for example, in the following sermon by Augustine which interprets the Spirit's gift of tongues as a foreshadowing of the unity of the Church amid the tongues of all the nations:

Quid ergo, singuli in quos venit Spiritus sanctus, singulis linguis omnium gentium sunt locuti, illi alia lingua, et illi alia, et quasi dividerunt inter se linguas omnium gentium? Non sic: sed unusquisque homo, unus homo linguis omnium gentium loquebatur. Loquebatur unus homo linguis omnium gentium: unitas Ecclesiae in linguis omnium gentium. Ecce et hic unitas Ecclesiae catholicae commendatur toto orbe diffusae.²

The Collect from the Mass for the Vigil of Pentecost prays that all nations may be gathered together in one confession of God's name: "Omnipotens sempiterne deus qui paschale sacramentum quinquaginta dierum voluisti misterio contineri, presta quesumus ut gentium facta dispersio diuisione

¹ The Sequence Laus jocunda speaks of the glorious day of Pentecost as the day on which the Church was founded: "O quam felix, quam festiva, / Dies in qua primitiva / Fundatur Ecclesia!" The York rite uses this Sequence for Thursday after Pentecost (York Missal, I, 157). Legg does not print it in his edition of the Sarum Missal, but Warren (The Sarum Missal in English, p. 348) lists it as the Sequence for Wednesday after Pentecost.

² Sermo 268, In die Pentecostes, PL, 38, 1232.

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linguarum, ad unam confessionem tui nominis celesti munere congregetur."³ The Sequence Sancti Spiritus adsit claims that the Holy Spirit has restored to unity a divided world: "Tu divisum per linguas mundum et ritus adunasti, Domine."⁴ Most interesting with regards to Piers Plowman is the Sequence Laus jocunda, which states that Church unity rests solidly on Christ, the edifice's corner-stone, just as Langland's Unity rests on a good foundation made from Christ's baptism and blood, according to lines 320-322:

And of his baptesme and blode. that he bledde on
 He made a maner mortar. and hercy it hi3te.
 And there-with Grace bigan. to make a good
 foundement.

Panes legis primitivi
 Sub una sunt adoptivi
 Fide duo populi.
 Se duobus interjocit,
 Sicque duos unum fecit
 Lapis caput anguli.

Even if Langland's Unity is solidly built, it still invites attack as shown in lines 331-334, where Pride is seen gathering a great host to besiege the Church:

³ Sarum Missal, p. 159.

⁴ Sarum Missal, p. 162; York Missal, 1, 153. The Sequence is sung on the feast of Pentecost.

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Now is Pieres to the plow. and Pruyde it aspyde,
 And gadered hym a grete oest. to greuen he thinketh
 Conscience and al Crystene. and cardinale vertues,
 Blowe hem doune and breke hem. and bite atwo the
 mores.

Similarly, while thanking God for Church unity, the liturgy of Pentecost warns that Pride is always ready to attack and divide. In a sermon for Pentecost, Augustine states that unity is received into the mind through humility but is driven out through pride:

Congretur enim unitas corporis Christi ex omnibus linguis, per omnes scilicet gentes toto terrarum orbe diffusas. Et quod unus tunc omnibus linguis loquebatur, ipsam unitatem in linguis omnibus futuram testabatur. Dicit autem Apostolus, Sufferentes invicem in dilectione, quod est caritas: satis agentes servare unitatem spiritus in vinculo pacis. Quia ergo Spiritus sanctus ex multis in unum colligit nos: capitur autem per humilitatem, repellitur per superbiam. Aqua est enim cor humile tanquam locum concavum quaerens, ubi consistat: elatione autem superbiae, tanquam tumore collis, repulsa labitur: unde dictum est, Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam.⁵

In his thirtieth homily, from which excerpts are read at Pentecost Matins, Gregory states the same idea, explaining that the builders of Babel lost their common tongue through pride, but that all tongues are made one in those who humbly fear God:

⁵ Sermo 270, PL, 38, 1243.

Audistis etenim quia Spiritus sanctus super discipulos in iugis linguis apparuit, omniumque linguarum scientiam dedit. Quid scilicet hoc miraculo designans, nisi quod sancta Ecclesia, eodem Spiritu repleta, omnium gentium erat voce locutura? Qui vero contra Deum turrim aedificare conati sunt communionem unius linguae perdidierunt (Genes. XI, 8), in his autem qui Deum humiliter metuebant linguae omnes unitae sunt. Hic ergo humilitas virtutem meruit, illic superbia confusionem.⁶

In lines 351-363 and 373-376, Conscience, warned of the coming attack and counselled by Kynde Wytte, prepares Unity for a siege by having all Christians, through prayers, penance, and alms-giving, dig a deep moat, which is then filled with tears of repentance:

And thanne can Kynde Wytte. Conscience to teche,
 And cryde and comaunded. al Crystene peple,
 For te deluen a dyche. depe a-boute Vnite,
 That holy-cherche stode in Vnite. as it a pyle
 were.
 Conscience comaunded tho. al Crystene to delue,
 And make a muchte mote. that my3te ben a strengthe,
 To helpe holycherche. and hem that it kepeth.

 Somme thorw bedes-byddynge. and somme thorw
 pylgrymage,
 And other pryue penaunce. and some thorw
 penyes-delynge.
 And thanne welled water. for wikked werkes,
 Egerlich ernynge. out of mennes eyen.

The central point of the allegory here, of course, is that,

6 Sarum breviary, I, miii-mvi; York Breviary, I,
500-501. The passage quoted here is taken from PL, 76,
1222.

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despite the Passion and blood of Christ out of which it is constructed and despite Grace's many rich gifts to it, Holy Church, like its members, is never free from the attacks of evil, in the form of pride or other vices. These assaults can be repulsed only by penance and mortification. The liturgy shows its awareness of this fact in its institution of Ember Days. The meaning and importance of these days of fast are set forth by Leo the Great in one of his numerous sermons for these occasions. These fasts were instituted, the sermon claims, under the direction of the Holy Spirit and distributed throughout the year, in Lent, in the week after Pentecost, in September, and in the winter, so that the law of abstinence would be recalled in every season:

Hujus observantiae utilitas, dilectissimi, in ecclesiasticis praecipue est constituta jejuniis, quae ex doctrina sancti Spiritus ita per totius anni circulum distributa sunt, ut lex abstinentiae omnibus sit ascripta temporibus. Siquidem jejunium vernum in Quadragesima, aestivum in Pentecoste, autumnale in mense septimo, hiemale autem in hoc qui est decimus celebramus, intelligentes divinis nihil vacuum esse praecceptis, et verbo Dei ad eruditionem nostram omnia clementa servire; dum per ipsius mundi cardines, quasi quatuor Evangelia, incessabiliter discimus quod

et praedicemus et agamus.⁷

Speaking more particularly about Pentecostal Ember Days, Guillaume Durand states that the Apostles fasted immediately after the coming of the Holy Spirit to show that they had turned away from earthly pleasures and to respect Christ's words that the wedding guests should fast after the Groom's departure. Many Christians, he claims, in memory of these things, begin a "summer Lent" during the week after Pentecost:

Sequitur quarta feria, in qua fiunt jejunia Quatuor temporum. Apostoli namque nobis exemplum jejunandi hoc tempore reliquerunt, qui post susceptum Spiritum sanctum, sicut mentes averterant a caeteris mundi illecebris, sic at ab epularum appetitu. Licet enim quamdiu cum illis fuit Christus, non jejunarent, post ablationem tamen ejus spontaneis se subdidere jejuniis. Sponso enim ablato, eis jejunandum erat, sicut Dominus praedixerat: Cum auferetur ab eis sponsus, tunc, jejunabunt: unde repleti Spiritu sancto sponte jejunare coeperunt, quocirca in praecedenti secunda feria quaedam eastivalem inchoant quadragesimam.⁸

With interpretations such as these, there can be little doubt of the seriousness with which the Middle Ages accepted these regular periods of fasting.

More to the point concerning Piers Plowman, is a

⁷ Sermo XIX, De jejunio decimi mensis, PL, 54, 186.

⁸ Rationale, lib. VI, cap. CX, pp. 619-620.

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sermon for Pentecostal Ember Days by Leo the Great in which Ember fasts are described in military terms. These days were instituted by the Apostles, states the sermon, as weapons to fight off and decapitate vices; for the devil, seeing that we do not give in to carnal desires, will be powerless against us despite all his weapons:

Illi itaque doctores, qui exemplis et traditionibus suis omnes Ecclesiae filios imbuerunt tirocinium militiae christianae sanctis inchoare jejuniis: ut contra spirituales nequitias pugnaturi, abstinentiae arma caperent, quibus victiorum incentiva truncarent. Invisibiles enim adversarii et incorporales hostes non erunt contra nos validi, si nullis carnalibus desideriis fuerimus immersi. Cupiditas quidem nocendi in tentatore perpetua est, sed inermis atque inefficax erit, si nihil in nobis unde contra nos pugnet invenerit.⁹

The Collect of the Mass for Ember Friday after Pentecost also uses military imagery, when it prays that the Church, gathered together by the Holy Spirit, may not be disturbed by the assault of the enemy: "Da quesumus ecclesie tue misericors deus, ut spiritu sancto congregata, hostili nullatenus incursione turbetur."¹⁰ Ember fasts, therefore,

⁹ Sermo LXXVIII, PL, 54, 415.

¹⁰ Sarum Missal, p. 166; York Missal, I, 159. Note also the Introit from the Mass for the feast of Pentecost and for Ember Wednesday taken from Psalm 67:1: "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered: and let them that hate him flee from before his face." (Sarum

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are meant to act as a defense against the attacks of vices, just as Langland's moat of penance and mortification defends Unity against the vices enlisted in Pride's army. In Langland's allegory, however, there are many, according to lines 364-369, who refuse to help dig the moat, such as prostitutes, liars, flatterers, usurers, thieves, and those who perjure themselves for money:

Thanne alkyn Crystene. saue comune wommen,
 Repenteden and refused synne. saue they one;
 And fals men, flatereres. vsureres and theues,
 Lyes and questmongeres. that were forsworen
 ofte,
 Wytynge and willefully. with the false helden.
 And for syluer were forswore. sothely thei wist it.

This list shows several parallels with a similar list of unrepentant sinners in Wisdom 1:3-6, the Epistle for Ember Wednesday:

Missal, pp. 161, 164; York Missal, I, 152, 156). It is not surprising that Ember Days give rise to some military imagery, since their liturgical context makes great use of such images. Speaking of the Lessons at Matins for the first weeks after Pentecost, Guillaume Durand says that the four books of Kings, with their stories of wars and victories, are read so that we may fight courageously against our enemies: "Sed quia hostes habemus... scilicet carnem, mundum et diabolum, ideo legitur de libris Regum, in quibus agitur de bellis et de victoriis, ut invitetur ad pugnandum fortiter contra hostes, ut victoriam habeamus, sicut Judaei de Philistaeis, et tandem gloriemur in coelis, quia non est nobis tantum lucta adversus carnem, sed etiam adversus aereas potestates" (Rationale, Lib. VI, cap. CXV, p. 626).

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For perverse thoughts separate from God: and his power, when it is tried, reproveth the unwise. For wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins. For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful, and will withdraw himself from thoughts that are without understanding: and he shall not abide when iniquity cometh in. For the spirit of wisdom is benevolent, and will not acquit the evil speaker from his lips.¹¹

The liturgy of Ember Days is important for yet another reason with respect to Langland's poem. The poet chooses to represent the building of Holy Church in terms connected with farming. The building scene itself, lines 257-330, cannot be quoted here because of its length, but even a simple summary reveals Langland's great talent for handling allegory. First the fields, representing all reasonable men, are plowed by four oxen, that is the four Evangelists, and then harrowed by four bullocks, the four great Fathers, Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory and Jerome, drawing the two harrows of the Old and New Testament (ll. 257-268). Then the seeds of the four cardinal virtues are sown, and from time to time the fields are weeded of vices (ll. 269-311). Next, Unity, a storehouse to hold the harvest, is constructed of wood from Christ's cross, of

¹¹ Sarum Missal, p. 164; York Missal, I, 156.

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mortar made from his baptism and blood, or the wattles of Christ's pains and Passion, and of roofing made up of holy Scriptures (ll. 312-326). To carry the sheaves, Grace builds the cart of Christendom to be drawn by two horses, Contrition and Confession; and, finally, he appoints Priesthood as hayward (ll. 327-329). The liturgy of Ember Day was also associated with farming, as seen in vernacular discussions of these days in liturgical manuals and compiles. The Speculum Sacerdotale, for example, explains the four fasts in terms of the four seasons as related to farming:

Also we faste foure tymes, for there ben foure tymes in the yere. In wynter we sowe certeyne seedes, as whete; in veere estiuall seedes as barley and pber herbes and floures floresche in trees, vynes sprynges and burgynes; in somer fruytes growes; in heruest we ryphen oure fruytis.

Each season and its agricultural associations are then applied to some state of man's spiritual life:

The secounde reson whi pat we faste fowre tymes in the yere is for þe first fastyngis are made in marche, scilicet, in the firste weke of Quadregesime, þat vices fallen a-way and marcessen fro vs; in somer are made also for þat vertues schuld sprynge and burgyn, in the weke of Pentecoste, for þen cometh þe Holy Goste, and we oweþ for to be fervent with hym; in Septembre a-fore þe feste of Michaelmasse in the bridde weke, for then be fruytes gedred, and we oweþ of the same wyse then for to þelde to God fruytes of good werkes; in

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Decembre they are made, for then herbes dieþ, and
so owerþ we for to dye in the world and be borne
avenne in blisse.¹²

John Pirke, in his sermon De Ieiunio Quatuor Temporum,
explains Ember Days with similar references to agriculture:

We fasten bytwyxx heruest and syde-tyme, forto
haue grace to ledyr frute of goode werkes ynto
be beine of oure conciens, and so by good ensam-
pull of good lyuyng sowe hom among all þat we
conceyueþ wyth, pore and rych. We fasten yn þe
wyntyr þat deyþe and sleþe all stynkyn wedys,
for to sle yn vs all þe stynkyn wedys of vyces
þe whech han groen yn fowle erþe of oure flesche
þat makyþe our angelys and oper good men eschew
our company; for yche good man ys loþe for to be
yn company wth a vycyous man.¹³

Besides the fact that Lenten Embers and September Embers
occurred every year during times such as planting and
harvest, a careful examination of the biblical texts read
as Lessons on these days shows a further connection between
them and farming. For example, Leviticus 26:3-6, part of
a lesson for Ember Saturday in Pentecost week, speaks of
God rewarding his people with fair weather and the fruits
of the earth:

¹² Weatherly, Speculum, pp. 91-92.

¹³ Erbe, Mirk's Festial, p. 253.

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If you walk in my precepts, and keep my commandments, and do them, I will give you rain in due seasons. And the ground shall bring forth its increase: and the trees shall be filled with fruit. The threshing of your harvest shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land without fear.

Deuteronomy 26:2-3, 9-11, another Lesson for the same day, recalls the duty of offering first-fruits to God and of thanking Him for nature's bounties:

Thou shalt take the first of all thy fruits, and put them in a basket, and shalt go to the place which the Lord thy God shall choose, that his name may be invoked there. And thou shalt go to the priest that shall be in those days, and say to him: I profess this day before the Lord thy God, that I am come into the land, for which he swore to our fathers, that he would give it us. ... And brought us into this place, and gave us this land flowing with milk and honey. And therefore now I offer the first-fruits of the land which the Lord hath given me. And thou shalt leave them in the sight of the Lord thy God, adoring the Lord thy God. And thou shalt feast in all the good things which the Lord thy God hath given thee, and thy house; thou and the Levite, and the stranger that is with thee.¹⁴

The same type of imagery is found in Amos 9:3-14 and Osee 14:6-9, used as Lessons for Ember Wednesday and Ember Friday in September:

¹⁴ Sarum Missal, p. 168.

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when the ploughman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed: and the mountains shall drop sweetness, and every hill shall be tilled. And I will bring back the captivity of my people Israel: and they shall build the abandoned cities and inhabit them: and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine of them: and shall make gardens and eat the fruits of them. And I will plant them upon their own land: and I will no more pluck them out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.

I will be as the dew: Israel shall spring as the lily and his root shall shoot forth as that of Libanus. His branches shall spread and his glory shall be as the olive-tree: and his smell as that of Libanus. They shall be converted that sit under his shadow: they shall live upon wheat and they shall blossom as a vine: his memorial shall be as the wine of Libanus. Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I will hear him and I will make him flourish like a green fir-tree: from me is thy fruit found.¹⁵

Such farming imagery even carries over into the ordinations of priests, which took place only on Ember Saturdays. Honorius Augustodiniensis discussing ordinations says that they take place on Ember Days in Lent so that vices may be weakened, in Pentecost week so that virtues may bloom and flourish, in September so that the fruits of good works may be harvested, and in Advent so that all that is dead

¹⁵ Sarum Missal, pp. 197, 198; York Missal, I, 238, 239.

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may come to life again:

Ministri Ecclesiae ideo in Quatuor Temporibus ordinantur, quatenus sub quatuor Evangeliiis Christo et Ecclesiae servire admoneantur. In Quadragesima idcirco ordinantur, ut vitiis marceant; in vere ideo, ut virtutibus floreat; in septimana Spiritus sancti, et in aestate ideo ut sint spiritu ferventes, Domino servientes (Rom. XII, 11); in Autumno et in festo tabernaculorum, ideo ut fructus bonorum operum colligant, et ipsi tabernaculum Dei fiant; in hiema et ante Nativitatem, ideo ut mundo moriantur, et cum Christo in virtutibus renascantur.¹⁶

This is particularly interesting in view of Langland's line 329 which connects Priesthood with farming by making him hayward.

Since the ideas of Church unity and the danger of pride connect Langland's episode of the building of the Church to the liturgy of Pentecost and since Langland's farm imagery is followed by a long section on penance, the medieval reader would probably have been struck by the resemblances between this section of Langland's poem and the liturgy of Pentecostal Ember Days, which contains similar associations, images, and an insistence on penance and fasting. In this way the central meaning of Langland's entire episode would be strengthened, with the reader

¹⁶ Gemma Animae, Lib. III, cap. CLV; PE, 172, 686.

remembering that at least four times each year during Ember Days, in obedience to the counsels of the liturgy, he, like the inhabitants of Langland's Unity, should dig a moat of penance against the onslaught of vices.

If the first attack against Unity is repulsed by means of vigilance and penance, the second, led by Antichrist and described in Passus XX, is much more successful. Langland carefully prepares both the coming of Antichrist and his success in battle. Antichrist himself is mentioned by name in Passus XIX, long before his coming. In lines 214-221, Grace declares that the time of Antichrist is not far off, and for this reason he distributes weapons to help in the forthcoming battle:

For Antecryst and his. al the worlde shal greue,
And acombre the, Conscience. but if Cryst the
And fals prophetes fele. flatereres and glosers
Shullen come, and be curatoures. ouer kynges and
And Pryde shal be pope. prynce of holycherche,
Coueytise and Vnkyndenesse. cardinales hym to
For-thi,' quod Grace, 'er I go. I wil gyue 3ow
And wepne to fi3te with. whan Antecryst 3ow
assailleth.'

A closer examination of earlier sections of Passus XIX reveals that even before Grace's coming Langland begins

setting the stage for Will's final vision. He does this by means of the Latin tag Redde quod debes, taken from Matthew 18:28, which appears four times at crucial moments in Passus XIX before Will's vision of Antichrist has taken place. In lines 177-182, Christ, before his Ascension, grants Piers and the Church the powers of binding and loosing on the condition that sinners pay back what they owe:

And whan this dede was done. Dobest he tau3te,
 And 3af Pieres power. and pardoun he graunted
 To alle manere men. mercy and for3yfnes,
 Hym my3te men to assoille. of alle manere synnes,
 In couenant that thei come. and knowleche to paye,
 To Pieres pardon the Plowman. redde quod debes.

The same tag appears again in lines 187-189 where it is spoken of as the condition essential to salvation, for at the Final Judgment Christ will grant eternal reward only to those who have paid their debts:

He went, and wonyeth there, and wil come atte laste,
 And rewarde hym ri3te wel. that reddit quod debet—
 Payeth parfitly. as pure trewthe wolde.

In lines 253-254, Grace, after building Unity, makes Piers his steward and keeper of the records so that all the inhabitants of Unity may always pay back what they owe and be free of debt. This condition for belonging to Unity

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is such a demanding one that when it is repeated in lines 383-388 as a prerequisite for receiving Communion, we are told in line 407 that many are lost because of it:

Here is bred yblessed. and goddes body ther-vnder.
 Grace throw goddes worde. gaue Pieres power,
 And my3tes to maken it. and men to cte it after,
 In helpe of ner hele. onys in a moneth,
 Or as ofte as they hadden nede. tho that hadde
 To Pieres pardoun the Plowman. redde quod debes.^{ypayed}

 'Thanne is many man ylost'. quod a lowed vycory.

It is this very insistence on the paying of debts that finally allows the forces of Antichrist to enter within the walls of Unity. In Paslus AA Shrift, patching up those wounded during Antichrist's first onslaughts which have been only partially successful, uses medicines made up of Redde quod debes as seen in lines 301-306:

Conscience called a leche. that coude wel shryue,
 'Go salve tho that syke ben. and thorw synne
 ywounded.'
 Shrifte shope sharpe salve. and made men do
 penance
 For her mysdedes. that thei wrou3te hadden,
 And that Piers were payed. redde quod debes.

However, as we are told in lines 307-308, some do not like these drastic and painful cures and beg for more gentle medicines: "Somme lyked nou3te this leche. and lettres thei sent, / 3if any surgien were in the sege. that softer

couth plastre." The result is that Friar Flatterer enters Unity and soon puts most of Unity's defenders to sleep; and Conscience is left alone to fight a losing battle against the massed forces of Sloth and Pride, Antichrist's chief generals. Taken as it stands the Redde quod debes tag is a very good link between Will's vision of Holy Church and his vision of Antichrist.

However, the same Latin quotation, when viewed in its liturgical context, takes on extra richness and even more relevance to both the themes it is meant to unite. The Gospel from which the words are taken, Matthew 18:23-35, is read on the twenty-second Sunday after the feast of the Holy Trinity.¹⁷ Two liturgical commentators, Rupert of Deutz and Guillaume Durand, interpret the liturgy of this Sunday in terms of Church unity and the conditions essential to such unity. The Gospel and Epistle (Philippians 1:6-11), claims Durand, urge us to practice

¹⁷ Sarum Missal, p. 193; York Missal, 1, 249-250. The Gospel reads: "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened to a king who would take an account of his servants. And, when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents. And, as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children and all that

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perfect charity since unity can exist in the Church only if we forgive the wrongs done to us by others. To encourage us in such acts, the joys of perfect unity are described in the Gradual, Psalm 132:1. Also, the Alleluia, Psalm 146:3, states that God is always ready to cure through charity those who do penance for their moments of anger:

In Epistola: Confidens, etc., invitatur nos Apostolus ad perfectam charitatem, ut dimittamus fratri, ut Deus dimittat nobis, ut sicut habetur in fine Evangelii: Sic Pater meus coelestis faciet vobis, si non remiseritis unusquisque fratri suo de cordibus vestris. Dicit igitur Apostolus in Epistola: Fratres, confidens, idest confidentiam talem habemus. Et postea sequitur: Et hoc oro ut charitas vestra magis ac magis

he had, and payment to be made. But that servant falling down besought him, saying: Have patience with me and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with pity, let him go and forgave him the debt. But, when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him an hundred pence; and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying: Pay what thou owest. And his fellow-servant, falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me and I will pay thee all. And he would not; but went and cast him into prison till he paid the debt. Now his fellow-servants, seeing what was done, were very much grieved; and they came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him and said to him: Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me; Shouldest not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his lord, being angry, delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt. So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."

abundet, ut sitis sinceri, et sitis sine offensa,
et tunc est unitas in Ecclesia, quando non offen-
dius propter injurias, sed dimittimus: unde se-
quitur Responsorium: Ecce quam bonum et quam
jocundum, habitare fratres in unum. Sed quoniam
 illos qui irascuntur sanat Dominus per charitatem,
 et dum poenitent, ideo sequitur: Alleluja, qui
sanat contritos corde, etc.¹⁸

Like these commentators, Langland, as seen above, associates
 this Latin quotation with Church unity in three out of the five
 times he uses it.¹⁹ As for Langland's second theme, the
 coming of Antichrist, a vernacular sermon on the theme
Redde quod debes discusses the Gospel for the twenty-second
 Sunday in terms of the Final Judgment—an extremely
 important association since the reign of Antichrist was
 to occur immediately before the Final Judgment:

Þ us and þou wolte haue forþeuenes of þi dette
 þat þou oweste, þou muste forþeue hen þat ben
 lettoures to þe. And who-so will not, Criste at
 þe Daye of Dome shall seye to hym þise wordes
 þat I rehersed afore in þe Gospell, "Serue nequam,

¹⁸ Rationale, Lib. VI, cap. CXXXIX, p. 649;
 See also Rupert of Deutz, De Divinis Officiis, Lib. XII,
 cap. XLII; PL, 170, 329.

¹⁹ Note also the strong parallel between
 Snrft's use of redde quod debes as a strong medicine,
 in Passus XL, lines 304-306, and Psalm 146:3, the Alleluia
 for the twenty-second Sunday: "He healeth the broken of
 heart and bindeth up their bruises."

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omne debitum dimisi tibi quoniam rogasti me;
 nonne ergo oportuit et te miserere conserui
 tui sicut et ego tui miseratus sum?— wicked
 seruaute, all bi dette I for?aus be ior pou
 preydeste me; why wolde not pou haue mercy on
 bi seruaute as I hade mercy on be?"²⁰

Two other commentators, Sicard of Cremona and Honorius Augustodunensis, mention not only the Last Judgment but Antichrist's coming as well. Sicard interprets the Introit for the twenty-second Sunday, Psalm 129:1, 3-4, as a cry for mercy by God's people during the terrible days of Antichrist when the love for Christ will grow cool. The Gospel, he goes on to say, refers to the final paying of debts on the last day:

Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine, Domine quis sustinebit? Adhuc populus Dei affligitur, quod peccatis exigentibus promeretur. Et haec afflictio corporalis spirituales significat afflictionem, quae fuit ab exordio mundi, est et erit usque in finem saeculi. Increbescat autem in temporibus Antichristi, quando refrigescet charitas multorum, quando veniet rex rationem ponere cum servis suis, et servum tradet tortoribus, quoadusque universum debitum reddat, ut hodiernum praedicat evangelium.²¹

²⁰ Ross, Middle English Sermons, p. 37. For the prophecy of the reign of Antichrist, see Apocalypse 20: 7-15.

²¹ Littré, Lib. VIII, cap. XXII; PL, 213, 402.

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After giving the same interpretation of the Introit as Sicard, Honorius takes up each part of the Mass and explains it in terms of the last days. The Epistle, he says, refers to the coming of Enoch and Elias, the Gradual and Alleluia to the conversion of the Jews, and the Communion to the joyous cries of the just after Antichrist has been imprisoned and given over to the torturers, as the Gospel explains:

Unde et hoc officium ad tempora Antichristi refertur, sub quo Ecclesia graviter affligetur, sicut hic populus sub Nabuchodonosor afflicto legitur. Porro Ecclesia de sua afflictione sic ad Dominum clamabat, Si iniquitates observaveris (Psalm. CIII). Deinde orat, ut ei Deus refugium fiat. Per Epistolam praedicto Eliae, et Enoch denotatur, qua afflicta Ecclesia consolantur. In Graduale et Alleluia gaudium Ecclesiae insinuat, quo de conversis Judaeis gratulatur. Evangelium optime congruit, in quo rex rationem cum servis ponit (Matth. XVIII), quia Christus rex verus tunc ad iudicium veniet, qui a cunctis actus singulorum exigit. Antichristus etiam rationem cum populo ponet, quia cunctos sibi subdere disponet. Conservum in carcerem mittet, quia cunctum populum sibi rebellem crudeliter affliget. Offertorium orationem Ecclesia exprimit, qua Deum sui recordari poscit. Quam Deus exaudiens citius liberabit, dum Antichristum in tentorio suo exanimabit... Communionem vero gaudium innotescit, quo iusti super his gaudebunt, qui post interitum Antichristi conversi erunt.²²

²² Gemma Animae, Lib. IV, cap. XCIII; PL, 172, 726.

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It is mainly because of its liturgical associations, therefore, that the tag redde quod debes forms an ideal link between Will's two visions. By choosing a Latin text associated liturgically with Church unity and with the coming of Antichrist, and by repeating it a number of times at crucial points in Passus XIX and XX, Langland provides the perfect bridge from one theme to another and at the same time hints at the reasons for Antichrist's future success.

If the liturgy furnishes Langland with much of his material for Will's vision of Holy Church and with a link between it and Passus XX, it also offers an explanation of the final lines of the poem, which are most important for a full understanding of one of the poem's central themes—the quest for salvation and the perfect life. With Antichrist's forces already inside Unity and with most of the defenders lulled to sleep by Friar Flatterer, Conscience decides in lines 378-384 that he must become a pilgrim once more and seek Piers Plowman to the ends of the earth if need be. It is Conscience's cry for grace that awakens Will and ends the poem:

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'Bi Cryste,' quod Conscience tho. 'I wil bicom
a pilgryme,
And walken as wyde. as al the worlde lasteth,
To seke Piers the Plowman. that Pryce may destruye,
And that ireres hadde a lyndyng. that for nedc
flateren,
And contrepleteth me, Conscience; now Kynde me
auenge,
And sende me happe and hele. til I haue Piers
the Plowman!!
And sitthe he gladde after grace. til I gan awake.

Though Conscience has just terminated a long pilgrimage, which merited him a wondrous vision of the Redemption of fallen man through Christ and though he has participated in the building of Holy Church, he must again set out to seek what he seemed to have found in Passus XVIIII and XII. That this passage is not meant to sound a note of pessimism and futility is clear if it is examined in the light of the liturgy of Advent with which it is connected through the figure of Antichrist.

As seen in its hymns and readings, the Advent season deals at great length with the themes of Christ's Second Coming and of the Last Judgment. For example, the hymn Vox clara for Advent Lauds encourages all men to join together their prayers and tears to obtain pardon so that on the terrible day of His Second Coming Christ may protect them in His mercy instead of punishing them

for unrepented sins:

Canes pro indulgentia
Vocem genus cum lacrimis.
Secundo ut eum fulserit
mundus horror cernerit:
non pro rectis puniat
Sed pius nos tunc protegat.²³

Also, the Gospel for the second Sunday in Advent is taken from Luke 21:25-33 of which the opening verses read:

And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves; men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. For the powers of heaven shall be moved. And then they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with great power and majesty. But, when these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift your heads, because your redemption is at hand.²⁴

Gregory's first homily, read at Matins on the same Sunday, makes it very clear that these words were interpreted as references to the last days. In its opening words the homily states that Christ uttered this warning so that those who refuse to serve God during times of tranquility

²³ Sarum Breviary, I, xxxi; York Breviary, I, 16. See also the Hymns for Matins and Vespers which speak of the Last Judgment in similar terms (Sarum Breviary, I, vi, xviii; York Breviary, I, 38).

²⁴ Sarum Missal, p. 17; York Missal, I, 4.

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may be driven through fear, at least, to prepare for the coming Judgment: "Dominus ac Redemptor noster paratos nos invenire desiderans senescentem mundum quae mala sequantur denuntiat, ut nos ab ejus amore compescat. Appropinquante ejus terminum quantae percussiones praeveniant innotescit: ut si Deum metuere in tranquillitate nolumus, saltem vicinum ejus judicium vel percussionibus attriti timeamus."²⁵

The liturgy of Advent also stated explicitly that the reign of Antichrist would precede Christ's Second Coming as seen in the following homily read as a second Nocturn Lesson at Matins for the first Sunday in Advent:

Frequenter audivimus sacris literis praedicatum prius quam Dominus Jesus Christus adveniat anti-christum regnaturum. Qui ita tenebras humano generi suae praevitatis infundet, ut lucem veritatis nemo paene perspiciat, et caligine propria operiens mentes hominum caecitatem quandam spiritualibus oculis exhibebit. Nec mirum si diabolus emittat iniquitatis tenebras, cum ipse sit nox omnium peccatorum. Ad hujus igitur noctis tetram caliginem depellendam velut fulgor quoddam Christus adveniet. Et sicut lucente die nox subvertitur, ita coruscante Salvatore anti-christus effugabitur. Nec ulterius poterit dissimulare iniquitatis suae tenebras, cum lumen veritatis eifulserit.²⁶

²⁵ Sarum Breviary, I, lxxxvii; York Breviary, I, 31.

²⁶ The Sarum Breviary (I, xxiv) attributes this homily to Maximus of Turin (380-465).

The figure of Antichrist, then, would undoubtedly have called up memories of Advent in the minds of Langland's contemporaries. In this way, they would have been led to place the image of Conscience's pilgrimage in its proper liturgical context, the Advent season.

The pilgrimage theme occurs a number of times in Advent liturgy, notably in Isaiah 2:2-3, part of the first Lesson at Matins for Tuesday in the first week of Advent where it is connected with the idea of the last days:

And in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills: and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go, and say: Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths.²⁷

It is found also in Psalm 24:4, the Gradual of the Mass for the first Sunday in Advent: "Shew, O Lord, thy ways to me: and teach me thy paths."²⁸ The Epistle for the same Sunday, Romans 13:11-14, contrasts the idea of a pilgrimage with

²⁷ Sarum Breviary, I, lviii. In the York Breviary, it is used as the Capitulum of first Vespers for the first Sunday in Advent (I,3).

²⁸ Sarum Missal, p. 15; York Missal, I, 1.

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that of spiritual laziness. Both these ideas are also contrasted in Langland's lines 373-376 where we are told that Conscience decides to go on a pilgrimage because all the other defenders of Unity have been put to sleep:

Conscience cryde eft. and bad Clergye help hym,
 And also Contricioun. Iorto kepe the 3ate.
 'He lith and dremeth,' seyde Pees. 'and so do
 many other ;
 The irere with his phisik. this folke hath
 enchanted,
 And plastred hem so esyly. thei drede no synne.'
 'Ti Cryste,' quod Conscience tho. 'I wil bicom a
 pilgryme.

And that knowing the season; that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is passed and the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy.

In his discussion of the liturgy for this Sunday, Guillaume Durand links the texts of the Mass with the pilgrimage theme as it is expressed in the passage from Isaiah quoted above. Also, he claims that the chant of the Introit of this Mass starts on a low note and ends on a high one so that those who are spiritually asleep may be awakened:

Ad missam vero Introitus est: Ad te levavi, etc., quia per adventum Domini in carnem spes maxime elevatur: Sic enim Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret, et iterum: Proprio

Filio suo non pepercit, etc. Et nota, quod si quidam excitentur, alii tamen somno torpent, ideo cantor incipiens: Ad te levavi animam meam, exaltando vocem ab interiori ad superius procedit, quod proprium est excitantis, quod etiam notatur in Epistola, ubi dicitur: Hora est jam nos de somno surgere. Sequitur versiculus: Vias tuas Domine demonstra mihi, quia Christus veniens nobis vias suas indicavit: unde Isaias: Erit mons domus Domini, etc. Venite et ascendamus ad montem Domini, et ad domum Dei Jacob, et docebit nos vias suas. Quae autem sint viae ille, ostendit Epistola, quae est ad Romanos: Scientes, quia hora est jam nos de somno surgere. In eo enim quod ibi dicitur: Nox praecessit, dies autem appropinquavit, assignatur effectus, quia factus est dies, quando natus est sol, et ideo sequitur sic: Sicut in die honeste ambulemus, scilicet in omnibus operibus bonis, et induimus Dominum Jesum Christum, ut sic filii Dei simus, quia propter hoc Filius Dei factus est homo, ut homo fieret filius Dei.²⁹

Finally, two vernacular sermons for Advent contain a number of ideas also found in Langland's closing passage. In the first, for the first Sunday in Advent, the author, using as his theme Romans 13:12 from the day's Epistle, speaks of spiritual conversion as both a journey and a battle:

3e knowe well þis, þat 3ill a man shuld goye a wey þat he must nedys goy, or els feght with a slye enmye for is right and is heritage or els to

²⁹ Rationale, Lib. VI, cap. 3, p. 396.

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lese is liff, þan 3iff so were þat he were ouer-
 charched with armour, or with clothes, or with
 opur hevy charches þat shuld lett hym of is
 ierney, þan trewly it were necessarie to hym to
 throwe þis grett charge from hym. Þan muche more
 shuld we þat be charched with synne and with þe
 burdeyns of oure flesche and with many wicked
 dedes þat drawes man to derkenes of peyn in hell
 for euermore. Throwe we þan a-veye from vs suche
 werkes of derkenes, seth þat itt lettys vs to
 goye þe ryght wey to heven; for els we be loste
 foe euer, but 3iff we ouere-comm oure aduersary
 þe fende, þat hath so many slethes a3eyns vs.
 For and he ouercomm vs, þan we shall lose oure
 heritage fore euermore.

As previously seen, Conscience's pilgrimage, also, is linked to the battle theme since it takes place after a number of great battles against Antichrist's forces. When the same sermon goes on to say that many men do not really seek Christ because they are not truly repentant, we are reminded of lines 307-308 quoted previously, in which the inhabitants of Unity refuse to accept help from Shrift because his penitential medicines are too strong, thereby revealing their lack of true repentance:

And þer-fore I redd you do as þe holy prophete
 teches you, "Querite Dominum dum inveniri potest;
 invoke eum dum prope est— seche 3e oure Lord
 whils 3e may fynde hym; calle 3e hym whils þat he
 is ny3." Or els he will sey to you as he seid to
 þe Iewes, "Queritis me et non inuenietis— 3e
 shall seche me and not fynde me"; be-cause þat 3e
 seche not oure Lord with a sorowfull and a con-
 trite herte for youre synnes, but in youre riot,
 lawgters, and dronkenes, with a feyned ypocrisy

and noible swayngge as þe most parte of þe
pepull dose now-a-dais.³⁰

The second sermon, also for the same Sunday and also using the day's Epistle as its theme, states that since this is a time of grace, men must rise out of their vices and cry to God for mercy: "And þer-fore arise, for now is tyme for to amend, for now is þe day sterre vpe. As a vice clerik seip, "Surge, miser, a viciis, nam oritur stella Dei—arise, wrecne," he seis, "oute of þin synnes and cris God mercy, for þe day sterre is vpe." I vnderstond by þe day sterre no þinge els but þis tyme, þat is now tyme of grace.³¹ This presents a striking parallel to Langland's final line, "And sitthe he gradde aiter grace."

The pilgrimage which the liturgy of Advent mentions is not a simple thing. To liturgical commentators like Guillaume Durand and Sicard of Cremona, Advent is a "tempus renovationis", a time of spiritual renewal.³² The author of the Speculum Sacerdotale claims that, just as the first Sunday in Advent marks the beginning again of the

³⁰ Ross, Middle English Sermons, pp. 104, 105.

³¹ Ibid., p. 112.

³² See Durand, Rationalc, Lib. VI, cap. II, p. 388; Sicard, Mitrele, Lib. V, Prologus; PL, 213, 189-190.

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entire liturgical cycle, so too it marks a time in man's life when he must renew himself and recover his baptismal innocence:

And in þat Sondag afore rehersed alle hokes of
holw and dyuyne seruyse are begonne ayene all
neue. And so oue ye to begynne and renewe youre
lyff. Seynt John seyb in the Apocalips: 'Be-
thynke the,' he seyb, 'howe thow hast fallyn.
Do thy first werkys.' That is to say, take inno-
cense and clennes that thow resayeyd in thy
baptym and sythen hast i-lost hit by synne. We
schuld anewe youre lyf ayene, what prou3 oite
askynge and visetyng the chirche, what prou3 say-
ing many orysouns and prayers, what prou3 makynge³³
largely thyn almes and confession of thy synnes.

The seriousness of the Advent pilgrimage is brought out, also, throughout this season by the constant use of the theme of Christ's Second Coming and by frequent warnings to prepare a way for him.

Advent, therefore, like another liturgical season, Lent, is a time of intense and prolonged spiritual activity. Short periods of penance and fasting, such as those provided by the liturgy in its Ember Days for example, may help to ward off certain vices, but spiritual rebirth can be achieved only through much more painful and arduous labor. Also, by repeating its Advent and

³³ Weatherly, Speculum, p. 4.

Lenten seasons every year, the liturgy warns man that one good pilgrimage does not signify that the end of the road to perfection has been reached. Because of his very nature, man, even if he does approach the summit of perfection, soon finds himself at the bottom again with another long climb ahead. As the cyclical nature of the liturgy points out, the earthly pilgrimage to perfection is a never-ending one.

It is in this light that Conscience's pilgrimage to Piers Plowman must be understood. The poem's initial pilgrimage ends with the vision of Christ, which fortifies and refreshes the pilgrims by giving them assurance of man's Redemption and by allowing them to see the perfect life in practice, as exemplified by Christ's life. The pilgrims, therefore, bring their journey to a halt and settle down to tarming and building, convinced that salvation and perfection lie within easy reach. Their conviction is strengthened when an attack by Pride and his cohorts is deterred by a host of penance and good works. Their illusion is shattered, however, by the successful attacks of the truly powerful evils of Antichrist. The perfection, which seemed so near now appears to lie as far away, perhaps, as the ends of the earth. And so Conscience

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once again becomes a pilgrim on the long and difficult road to Piers Plowman. Langland's poem, like the liturgy, has come full circle, ending as it began with a pilgrimage; and we are left with the knowledge that this one will only lead to many more like it until, in death, the pilgrim finally reaches the home of the Father.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the preceding chapters, the claims made for the liturgy at the beginning of this work do not seem exaggerated. That at least one major medieval poet found the liturgy to be an excellent primary source of Christian beliefs, doctrines, and imagery is proved by the liturgy's pervasive influence on Passus XVII to XX of Piers Plowman. In Langland's poem, we have seen the liturgy perform a number of structural functions, each of which contributes to the development of the poem's meaning. It is their liturgical associations that make the Good Samaritan episode and the Christ Warrior-Knight image excellent structural building-blocks; the Samaritan story, because it summarizes many of the important themes discussed up to Passus XVII and points to the answers to Will's questions on salvation and perfection; the Warrior-Knight image, because it helps to unify the four Passus in which Langland uses it and proclaims that Christ redeemed all men by His complete victory over Satan and death. By borrowing heavily from the liturgy for his episode of the Harrowing of Hell, Langland is able to deal with the difficult and complex doctrine of the Redemption in terms familiar to all Christians and to create the proper

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emotional climate necessary to the full reception of such a doctrine. Besides contributing a great number of ideas, images, and quotations to Passus XVIII and XIX, the liturgy of the period from Palm Sunday to Pentecost furnishes Langland with a pattern after which he fashions these same Passus, thereby capturing some of the spirit of liturgical worship and arousing the desire to praise and glorify God for his great gifts to men. Finally, the poem's concluding Passus is given a new dimension when read in the light of the liturgy of Pentecost and Advent, and examined in relation to the cyclical nature of the liturgy: only then is Conscience's pilgrimage seen as an illustration of man's constant need for spiritual renewal. The liturgy, therefore, furnishes Langland with a concluding image which answers many of the poem's difficult questions about the perfect life by showing that he who sets out to find salvation and perfection embarks upon a lifelong pilgrimage.

APPENDIX I

LANGLAND'S ACCOUNT OF THE PASSION IN PASSUS XVIII
 COMPARED WITH THE PASSION GOSPELS.

11. 36-37 Thanne cam Pilatus with moche peple.
sedens pro tribunali,
 To se how doughtilich Deth sholde do. and deme
 her botheres ri3te.
- John 19:13 Now, when Pilate had heard these words, he
 brought Jesus forth and sat down in the
 judgment seat, in the place that is called
 Lithostrotos, and in Hebrew Gabbatha.
- 11.38-39 The Iuwes and the Iustice. a3eine Iesu thei
 were,
 And al her courte on hym cryde. crucifige
 sharpe.
- John 19:6 When the chief priests, therefore, and the
 servants had seen him, they cried out,
 saying: Crucify him, Crucify him. Pilate
 saith to them: Take him you, and crucify
 him; for I find no cause in him.
11. 40-45 Tho put hym forth a piloure. bifor Pilat,
 and seyde,
 "This Iesus of owre Iewes temple. Iaped and
 dispised,
 To fordone it on o day. and in thre dayes
 after
 Edefye it eft newe. (here he stant that
 seyde it)
 And 3it maken it as moche. in al manere
 poyntes,
 Bothe as longe and as large. bi loft and
 by grounde."

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- Matt. 26:61 And they said: This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and after three days to rebuild it.¹
11. 47b-50 and toke of kene thornes,
And bigan of kene thorne. a gerelande to make,
And sette it sore on his hed. and seyde in envye,
"Aue, rabby!" quod that ribaude. and threw redes at hym,
- Matt. 27:29-30 And, platting a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And, bowing the knee before him, they macked him, saying: Hail, King of the Jews. And, spitting upon him, they took the reed and struck his head.²
1. 51 Nailled hym with thre nailles. naked on the rode,
- Matt. 27:35 And, after they had crucified him, they divided his garments, casting lots; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: They divided my garments among them; and upon my vesture they cast lots.³

¹ In Matthew, this is said before the Jewish Council, not before Pilate.

² See also Mark 15:16-20; John 19:1-3.

³ See also Mark 15:24.

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11. 52-53 And poyoun on a pole. thei put vp to his
lippes,
And bede hym drynke his deth-yuel. his
dayes were ydone.
- Matt. 27:48 And immediately one of them running took
a sponge and filled it with vinegar and
put it on a reed and gave him to drink.⁴
11. 54-56 "And 3if that thow sotil be. help now
thi-seluen,
If thow be Cryst, and kynges sone. come
downe of the rode;
Thanne shul we leue that Lyf the loueth.
and wil nou3t lete the deye!"
- Mark 15:30-32 Save thyself, coming down from the cross.
In like manner also the chief priests,
mocking, said with the scribes one to
another: He saved others; himself he
cannot save.
Let Christ the king of Israel come down
now from the cross, that we may see and
believe. And they⁵ that were crucified with
him reviled him.
11. 59-63 The lorde of lyf and of li3te. tho leyed
his eyen togideres.
The daye for drede with-drowe. and derke
bican the sonne,
The wal wagged and clef. and al the worlde
quaued.
Ded men for that dyne. come out of depe
graues,

⁴ See also Luke 23:36; John 19:29.

⁵ See also Luke 23:37

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- Matt. 27:50 And Jesus, again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.
- Luke 23:44 And it was almost the sixth hour; and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.
- Matt. 27:51-53 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom; and the earth quaked and the rocks were rent.
And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose,
And, coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, came into the holy city and appeared to many.
11. 68 Some seyde that he was goddes sone. that so faire deyde,
Vere filius dei erat iste, etc.
- Matt. 27:54 Now the centurion and they that were with him, watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake and the things that were done, were sore afraid, saying: Indeed this was the Son of God.⁶
11. 69-70 And somme saide he was a wicche. "good is that we assaye,
Where he be ded or nou3te ded. doun er he be taken."
- John 19:31 Then the Jews (because it was the parasceve), that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day (for that was a great sabbath day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken; and that they

⁶ See also Mark 15:39; Luke 23:47.

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might be taken away.⁷

11. 71-72 Two theues also. tholed deth that tyme,
Vppon a crosse bisydes Cryst. so was the
comune lawe.
- Luke 23:33 And, when they were come to the place which
is called Calvary, they crucified him there;
and the robbers, one on the right hand,
and the other on the left.⁸
11. 73 A cacchepole cam forth. and craked bothe
her legges,
- John 19:32 The soldiers therefore came; and they broke
the legs of the first, and of the other
that was crucified with him.

⁷ See also Mark 15:44.

⁸ See also John 19:18; Matthew 27:38.

APPENDIX II

A LIST OF LATIN QUOTATIONS IN PASSUS XVIII
AND THEIR HOLY WEEK LITURGICAL SOURCES.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. 7, <u>ramis-palmarum</u> | Latin title for Palm Sunday. |
| 1. 8, <u>gloria laus</u> | Hymn <u>Gloria laus</u> , Palm Sunday Procession. |
| 1. 9, <u>osanna</u> | John 12:13; Gospel read over palms and Antiphons, Palm Sunday Procession. |
| 1. 15, <u>a! fili David!</u> | Antiphons, Palm Sunday Procession. |
| 1. 17, <u>Benedictus qui venit in nomine domini,</u> | John 12:13; Gospel read over palms and Antiphons, Palm Sunday Procession. |
| 1. 35, <u>O mors, ero mors tua!</u> | Osee, 13:14; first Antiphon for Lauds, Holy Saturday. |
| 1. 36, <u>Pilatus...sedens pro tribunali</u> | John 19:13; Gospel, Good Friday. |
| 11. 39,46, <u>Crucifige</u> | Mark 15:13; Luke 23:21; John 19:6; Gospels for Holy Week. |
| 1. 47, <u>Tolle, tolle!</u> | John 15:19; Gospel, Good Friday. |
| 1. 50, <u>Aue, rabby!</u> | Matthew 27:29; Gospel, Palm Sunday. |
| 1. 57, <u>Consummatum est</u> | John 19:30; Gospel, Good Friday. |

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|--|--|
| 1. 68, <u>Vere filius dei</u>
<u>erat iste</u> | Matthew 27:54; Luke 23:47;
Gospels for Holy Week. |
| 1. 160, <u>Ars vt artem falle-</u>
<u>ret</u> | Hymn <u>Pange lingua</u> , Palm
Sunday, Good Friday. |
| 1. 179, <u>Ad vesperum demo-</u>
<u>rabitur fletus, et</u>
<u>ad matutinum leticia</u> | Psalm 29; second Nocturn,
Holy Saturday Matins. |
| 11. 184-185, <u>in pace in</u>
<u>idipsum / dormiam et</u>
<u>requiescam</u> | Psalm 4; first Antiphon,
Holy Saturday Matins. |
| 1. 259, <u>Attolite portas</u> | Psalm 23; second Nocturn,
Holy Saturday Matins. |
| 11. 314-316, <u>quis est iste? /</u>
<u>Rex glorie / dominus</u>
<u>virtutum</u> | Ibid. |
| 1. 312, <u>Nunc princeps huius</u>
<u>mundi eicietur</u>
<u>foras</u> | John 12:31; Gospel, Monday
of Holy Week. |
| 1. 322, <u>ecce agnus dei</u> | Third Response, Holy
Saturday Matins. |
| 1. 376, <u>Tibi soli pecca-</u>
<u>ui</u> | Psalm 50, first psalm, Lauds
for Holy Thursday, Good
Friday and Holy Saturday. |
| 1. 397, <u>Non intres in iu-</u>
<u>dicium cum seruo tuo,</u>
<u>domine</u> | Psalm 142, second psalm
Good Friday Lauds. |
| 1. 422, <u>Te Deum laudamus</u> | Hymn, Easter Matins. |
| 1. 423, <u>Ecce quam bonum</u>
<u>et quam iocundum</u> | Psalm 132, Holy Thursday
<u>Mandatum ceremony.</u> ¹ |

¹ Only the Sarum Breviary and Missal have been consulted here. The York Breviary and Missal may use these readings, hymns and psalms at other times during Holy Week, although both rites generally follow one another closely.

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ABSTRACT

Critics who attempt to interpret works of medieval literature in the light of Christian thought generally neglect a major source of Christian beliefs, doctrines, and imagery: the liturgy. Liturgical service books and the works of liturgical commentators and homilists form a constant source of traditional Christian thought; these works were familiar to Christians of all classes since their contents were repeated annually and since the entire Christian community worshipped God according to the prescriptions and exhortations found therein.

That at least one major medieval poet found the liturgy to be an excellent manifestation of Christian beliefs *and* doctrines, and a storehouse of imagery is proved by the liturgy's pervasive influence on Passus XVII to XX of Piers Plowman. In Langland's poem, the liturgy performs a number of structural functions, each of which contributes to the development of the poem's meaning. It is the liturgical associations of the Good Samaritan episode and the Christ Warrior-Knight image that make both these elements excellent structural building-blocks; the Samaritan story, because it summarizes many of the important themes discussed up to Passus XVII and points to the answers to Will's questions on salvation and perfection;

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the Warrior-Knight image, because it helps to unify the four Passus in which Langland uses it and proclaims that Christ redeemed all men by His complete victory over Satan and death.

By borrowing heavily from the liturgy for his episode of the Harrowing of Hell, Langland is able to deal with the difficult and complex doctrine of the Redemption in terms familiar to all Christians and to create the proper emotional climate necessary to the full reception of such a doctrine. Besides contributing a great number of ideas, images, and quotations to Passus XVIII and XIX, the liturgy of the period from Palm Sunday to Pentecost furnishes Langland with a pattern after which he fashions these same Passus, thereby capturing some of the spirit of liturgical worship and arousing the desire to praise and glorify God for His great gifts to men.

Finally, the poem's concluding Passus takes on a new dimension when read in the light of the liturgy of Pentecost and Advent, and examined in relation to the cyclical nature of the liturgy: only then is Conscience's pilgrimage seen as an illustration of man's constant need for spiritual renewal. The liturgy, therefore, furnishes Langland with a concluding image which answers many of the

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poem's difficult questions about the perfect life, by showing that he who sets out to find salvation and perfection embarks upon a lifelong pilgrimage.