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PORTRAIT OF RICHARD ROLLE
 (From Cotton MS. Faustina B. VI, pt. ii, folio 8^b.)

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE *PRICK OF CONSCIENCE*

BY HOPE EMILY ALLEN

The authorship of the Middle English didactic poem, the *Prick of Conscience*,¹ is generally regarded as established. All modern historians of English literature ascribe it without question to the hermit, Richard Rolle of Hampole; and most, paying but little attention to Rolle's mystical works, have selected the *Prick of Conscience* for particular illustration of his style.² My object in this

¹ This investigation has been made under the direction of Professor Schofield, to whom I am indebted for much generous assistance. I owe my first interest in Rolle to Professor Carleton F. Brown, of Bryn Mawr College, who suggested my study of the other writings ascribed to Rolle.

² Ten Brink (*Hist. Eng. Lit.*, Vol. I, trans. H. M. Kennedy, New York, 1889, p. 295) declares that "Richard's position in English literary history and as an English poet rests chiefly on the *Prick of Conscience*." "There is also," he writes, "a Latin version of this work. But however it may be related to the English composition, there is no doubt that Richard was the author of the latter." H. Morley (*Eng. Writers*, IV, 264-269) gives long extracts and a full description of the *Prick of Conscience*. Jusserand (*Literary History of the Eng. People*, 1895, I, 216, n. 2) writes of Rolle: "His principal composition is his poem *The Prick of Conscience*." Garnett (*Illustrated Hist. Eng. Lit.*, 1903, I, 92) remarks of Rolle: "The most important of his English works, the *Prick of Conscience*, is in rhyme and extends to seven books. It is entirely ascetic in character, a perfect representation of the mediæval view of life as beheld from the cloister." (The italics are mine.) The histories that have appeared since the publication of Horstman's *Yorkshire Writers* do not judge Rolle so exclusively by the *Prick of Conscience*; for his mystical works, printed and described by Horstman, have made their impression. Professor Schofield, in his *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer* (London, 1906, pp. 105-108), gives a just estimate of Rolle as a mystic. Rev. J. P. Whitney, in the *Cambridge History of English Literature* (II, 49), also recognizes Rolle's strong mysticism. Jusserand, in *L'Épopée Mystique de William Langland* (Paris, 1893, p. 213), gives some space to Rolle as a mystic. Only in the very earliest works on Rolle may one catch some glimpses of uncertainty as regards the authorship of the *Prick of Conscience*. Warton (Warton-Hazlitt, *Hist. Eng. Poetry*, London, 1871, II, 242) was led, by the existence of the Latin alongside of the English versions, to wonder which was Rolle's work. He thought it possible that the hermit might be the author of the Latin treatise, but not the English translator. Warton's conjecture was taken up by Ritson in his *Bibliographia Poetica* (London, 1802, p. 36), and by J. B. Yates (p. 334) in his description of his own manuscript of the *Prick of Conscience*, published in *Archæologia*, XIX. Yates first mentions the poem (p. 315) as "generally

paper is to show, on the contrary, that there is no basis for this ascription, and that the character of the *Prick of Conscience* is such that it cannot reasonably be attributed to an author whose authenticated works are so wholly different from it in tone and teaching. I shall further venture to suggest who the real author of the poem may be.

I

It will perhaps be useful first to describe the man to whom the *Prick of Conscience* is generally attributed. The date of his death is fixed by many manuscripts at 1349.¹ Manuscript notes also inform us that Rolle was buried at Hampole, near Doncaster, and they bear evidence to his secluded life in the title, "Richard Hermit," by which they frequently designate him.² He calls himself by that name, moreover, in passages of his Latin mystical works.³ In general, however, his writings give us no autobiographical information beyond vague references to persecutions and accounts of mystical experiences.⁴

Our knowledge as to his life has been altogether derived from the *Office*⁵ prepared by the nuns of Hampole in the hope of his

ascribed to Richard Rolle," but he afterwards speaks of Rolle's authorship unquestioningly. Both Ritson and Yates reject Warton's theory as to Rolle's possible authorship of the Latin and not the English version of the poem; and Ritson believes (p. 37), from a note on a Pembroke Hall manuscript, that the Latin may be a translation from the English. Horstman (*Yorkshire Writers*, II, xli, n. 1) quotes the same manuscript note from MS. Dd. iv, 50, fol. 56-98, as follows: "Iste tractatus vocatur Stimulus conscientiae, qui ab anglico in latinam a minus sciolo est translatus: si quis igitur sapiens in illo aliquos reperiat defectus, deprecatur ut eos corrigat mente pia et transactori imponat." He then gives the beginning of the treatise, and concludes: "It is of course not by R. Rolle himself. Latin translations of English works are not infrequent." The slight uncertainty raised by this discussion perhaps accounts for Dr. Morris's first reference to Rolle in his preface to his (the only) edition of the poem, in 1863. His first mention of Rolle (p. 1) is as "the reputed author of the work." But that single uncertain statement is afterwards lost sight of in the confident mention of "Hampole's dialect," "Hampole's metre," etc., which appears throughout the rest of the work.

¹ Also in some manuscripts at 1348; see *Anglia*, VIII, 171. MS. Ll. i, 8, gives the date of Rolle's death in one place as 1384; in another as 1348.

² Cf. *Psalter*, pp. xxi-xxii; *The Thornton Romances*, ed. J. O. Halliwell, Camden Soc., 1844, pp. xxx f.

³ Cf. Horstman, II, xxix.

⁴ For references see below, p. 141.

⁵ First edited from the imperfect Lincoln MS. by Canon Perry, E. E. T. S., No. 20, pp. xix-xlv; ed. for the Surtees Soc., No. 75, 1882, II, Appendix 5.

canonization.¹ This *Office* was certainly written after 1383, since it includes a miracle of that date. It is not likely to be much later.² Three manuscripts now exist, and have been collated for the edition of the Surtees Society. The fact that as many as three manuscripts of this *Office* have been preserved, seems to show that there was considerable veneration of Rolle in private prayers, even though (since the plan for his canonization failed) he was denied the right to such honor in public.³ Such extended use of the *Office* within a half-century after Rolle's death would strengthen its authority. In any case, since it was apparently compiled by the nuns of Hampole, among whom the hermit lived many years, and finally died, its contents are entitled to respect.

The *Office* gives us a picturesque narrative. Richard, son of William Rolle of Thornton in Yorkshire, was sent to Oxford⁴ by the patronage of Archdeacon Neville. He returned home, however, at the age of nineteen, because he was all at once seized with an overpowering fear of sin and sense of the uncertainty of life. One day he suddenly asked his sister for two kirtles and his father's ulster, out of which he made for himself a hermit's dress. In

¹ In the metrical Prologue to the *Psalter* of MS. Laud Miscell. 286, the Lollard interpolations in Rolle's *Psalter* are described, and Rolle's piety is emphasized. Cf. *Psalter*, pp. 1-2.

² It is, in fact, dated by Mr. Whitney (*Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, II, 51) at 1381-1382. Horstman (II, xxxiv, n. 2), without stating his reasons, remarks that the *Miracula* is a later work, by another author than the *Vita*. If this can be substantiated, the *Vita* may be earlier than 1383.

³ Such use of the *Office* seems to have been intended at the time of its writing, for we read as follows: "Officium de Sancto Ricardo heremita, postquam fuerit ab ecclesia canonizatus, quia interim non licet publice in ecclesia cantare de eo horas canonicas, vel solemnizare festum de ipso. Potest tamen homo evidenciam habens sue eximie sanctitatis et vite eum venerari, et in orationibus privatis ejus suffragia petere, et se suis precibus commendare" (Surtees Soc., No. 75, II, col. 785). Cardinal Newman in the prospectus (written in 1843) of his *Lives of the English Saints* (printed in *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, London, 1905, note D, pp. 323 ff.) states that he has "included in the series a few holy or eminent persons, who, though not in the sacred catalogue, are recommended to our religious memory by their fame, learning, or the benefits they have conferred on posterity." Among such persons one finds "B. Richard, H. of Hampole," whose feast day is given as September 29 (*Apologia*, p. 337). Rolle's life was, of course, never written.

⁴ Abbé Feret (*La Faculté de Théologie de Paris et ses Docteurs les plus célèbres, Moyen-Age*, Paris, 1896, III, 247-250) takes up Rolle among "les Sorbonnistes anglais" because of the note, — "Vixit in Sorbona 1326," — found on MS. 1022 de l' Arsenal (par. iii, p. 122), containing "Domus et societatis Sorbonicae historia." My attention was called to Feret's notice of Rolle by Miss M. E. Temple.

this costume he ran away to the woods, leaving his sister in the belief that he was mad. He appeared on Sunday in a parish church attended by one Sir John Dalton, a friend of his father, where he mounted unsolicited into the pulpit and preached a remarkable sermon. The sons of Sir John, who had known Rolle at Oxford, could tell their father of his character, and the knight became so much interested in Rolle that he gave him a cell on his estate, and support. In this way the career of the hermit of Hampole began. Afterwards he moved about from place to place, but, though he was subject to persecutions, he never left his profession. His reputation for holiness was very great, and his influence commensurate. He is said to have attained to such preternatural concentration that he could write or meditate through any disturbance, and he even worked miracles. His grave in the nunnery of Hampole was the scene of more miracles, some of which are described at length in the *Office*. The tendency to ecstasy in his character is as evident in his Life as in his mystical writings. The responses as well as the narrative of the *Office* and his own mystical works agree in giving Rolle the same character of singular personal holiness.

II

We may now turn from the traditional character of Richard Rolle to the tradition that has ascribed to him the *Prick of Conscience*.¹ In this examination of the external evidence for the authorship of the poem we shall consider the *Office*, the actual manuscript attributions (so far as possible), the old bibliographies, and other old writings.

In the *Office* there is nothing that can be construed as a reference to the *Prick of Conscience*. Though the *Office* contains no formal list of Rolle's works, yet it should seem strange that in a work written solely to glorify the reputed author of the poem, so long

¹ The editions of Rolle's works used in this paper are as follows: *The Pricke of Conscience*, ed. Richard Morris, Philological Society, London, 1863; *Yorkshire Writers*, ed. C. Horstman, 2 vols., London, 1895-1896 (the prose extracts of the Thornton MS., published by Canon Perry, E. E. T. S., No. 20, 1866, are here included); *The Fire of Love* and *The Mending of Life*, trans. by Richard Misyn, Bachelor of Theology, Prior of Lincoln, Carmelite, in 1434-1435, ed. Rev. R. Harvey, E. E. T. S., No. 106, 1896; *The Psalter*, trans. by Richard Rolle of Hampole, ed. H. R. Bramley, Oxford, 1884.

and popular a production, the largest original work ever ascribed to him, should be entirely neglected. Moreover, Rolle's writings are not left completely out of account. Two quotations appear from the *De Incendio Amoris*, and one from "a book found after his death."¹ There seem to be references to his work on the Scriptures, and to such pious treatises as the *Form of Living*. We read, "Verbum aeternum explicat" (col. 806);² "Docens morum regulam" (col. 807). The utter exclusion of any reference to the *Prick of Conscience* seems fair evidence that the compilers and users of the *Office* of Richard Rolle did not attribute that poem to their saint.

It is impossible for me at present to state definitely the proportion of manuscripts that attribute the work to Rolle. It is certain, however, that the most important ones do not.³ The Northern manuscript Cotton Galba E. IX was chosen from ten in the British Museum as the basis of the text of Dr. Morris's edition,⁴

¹ Col. 794 (passage describing the first coming on of the mystical ecstasy, — the name of the book is here cited); col. 803 (passage describing the three grades of love, — the name of the book is here also cited); col. 797 (passage describing a temptation). In col. 796 we read also: "In sanctis exhortacionibus quibus quam plurimos convertit ad Deum, in scriptis eciam mellifluis et tractatibus ac libellis ad edificationem proximorum compositis, que omnia in cordibus devotorum dulcissimam resonant armoniam."

² I quote this reading from Canon Perry's text of the Lincoln MS. (E. E. T. S., No. 20, p. xl) where the stanza is, in full, as follows:

Verbum aeternum explicat
Ricardus dignum laudibus,
Dum ipsum sic magnificat,
! Famâ, signis, virtutibus.

The edition of the Surtees Society, for which all the existing manuscripts were collated, gives (col. 806) the unintelligible reading "Ricardum." The text agrees otherwise with that of Canon Perry. I believe that the "Ricardum" must be a scribal error, such as would be easy because of the "um" following of "dignum." This is the first of a series of stanzas describing Rolle's piety by a series of sentences of which "Richard" is the subject. The next stanza, for example, begins:

In vita totus innocens,
Carnem affligat, macerat.

Any other subject than Richard for "explicat," even if the sense allowed it, would break the parallelism of the stanzas. A reference to Rolle's *Psalter* must certainly be intended.

³ It should, perhaps, be noted that the Thornton MS. (f. 276b) contains vv. 438-551 of the *Prick of Conscience*, without any mention of Rolle. Earlier in the manuscript (f. 192-197) occur the short prose pieces printed by Perry. These are attributed to "Richard Hermit" and "Richard the hermit of Hampole." See Horstman, I, 184-185, for a list of the contents of the Thornton MS.

⁴ MS. Cotton Galba E. IX contained *lacunae*, which were filled out from MS. Harl. 4196.

and later writers acquainted with thirty-one manuscripts of the poem have agreed that it is the best. Yet it does not mention Rolle's name. Neither does Yates's Southern manuscript. Warton notes three copies in the Bodleian, in which the poem is ascribed to Robert Grosseteste,¹ and Yates notes one in the library of the Carmelites in London which attributes it "an Robt. Grosthed an Ric. Hampole."² Since it has been more than once stated that all English religious works of the fourteenth century that have gone astray are ascribed to Richard Rolle,³ occasional attributions to him of the *Prick of Conscience* prove little. In the actual scarcity of such attributions, the manuscript evidence for Rolle's authorship is certainly inconclusive.

Moreover, few manuscripts attributing the poem to Rolle seem to have been discovered by the early bibliographers. Leland⁴ has no mention of this work among Rolle's writings. His bibliography, to be sure, mentions only books in the Marian library at York and in that of the London Carmelites, where, however, plenty of mystical writings by the hermit were to be found. Bale's notebook⁵ records one manuscript of *De Stimulo Conscientiae* in Westminster, which, to judge from the first line quoted, is in Latin prose; and

¹ Warton-Hazlitt, II, 240.

² *Archaeol.*, XIX, 335. Yates remarks in this connection: "Grosseteste wrote, in the Romance or French language of his time, a poem (never printed) which professes to treat of the Creation, the Redemption, the Day of Judgment, the Joys of Heaven, and the Torments of Hell. From the similarity of the subjects this mistake may have originated." The poem here referred to apparently exists in MS. Bodl. N. E. D. 69 (v. Tanner, *Bibl. Brit.-Hibern.*, p. 350). It is worthy of note that William of Waddington's *Manuel des Pechies*, from which Robert Brunne translated his *Handlyng Synne*, is attributed to Grosseteste in two manuscripts of the latter (*Handlyng Synne*, ed. F. J. Furnivall, E. E. T. S., No. 119, p. 1).

³ Cf. *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, II, 50; *Religious Pieces*, ed. Perry, E. E. T. S., No. 26, p. 11.

⁴ John Leland, *Commentarii de Scriptoribus Britannicis*, Oxford, 1709, p. 348. Leland confesses that he does not mention all of Rolle's works, — "for he wrote many," — but only such as came to his hand. However, he records two books not in the two libraries mentioned. If the *Prick of Conscience* were in his day as conspicuous a work of Rolle's as it is to-day, it would certainly have been the first to be spoken of.

⁵ *Anecdota Oxoniensia*, ed. R. L. Poole and Mary Bateson, Oxford, 1902, *Index Britanniae Scriptorum*, I, 348-351. Bale here calls Rolle "Ricardus Hampole, heremita," and "Ricardus Remyngton de Hampole," and "Richard heremita." It does not appear from what source Bale derived the name "Remyngton." At the second mention, "Rolle" is written above "Remyngton," but the latter is not deleted (p. 350, n. 1).

the *Fire of Love* and other mystical treatises by Rolle are several times noted. This information, without specific number and place of volumes found, is repeated by Bale in his bibliography.¹ Pits² found one book of the *Stimulus Conscientiae* in the library of Merton College, Oxford, and one in Caius College, Cambridge; also one book, *De Stimulo Conscientiae, latine*, for which the same first line is quoted as that given by Bale for his Latin *De Stimulo Conscientiae*. He gives a long account of the mystical life, and notes the *Fire of Love* in three books. Wharton³ mentions a copy of the *Stimulus Conscientiae*, written in English verse, in the Lambeth library, and gives the titles of several mystical works. Oudin⁴ also found the *Stimulus Conscientiae* in Merton College, Oxford, and Caius College, Cambridge; and Tanner⁵ registers manuscripts of the same title, both in English and Latin. It will be seen that these early bibliographers do not present the solid front in regard to manuscript attribution of the *Prick of Conscience* that one would expect when the work in question, if Rolle's, is by far the largest original work of its author.

One may fairly assert that the external evidence for Rolle's authorship of the *Prick of Conscience*, as above considered, yields only doubt. But, as a matter of fact, it has been neglected in the general security given by a passage in Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*. That passage, which is really the chief prop of the traditional theory concerning the authorship of the poem, runs thus in Harl. MS. 1766, f. 262 (a contemporary manuscript):

In moral mateer ful notable was Goweer
 And so was Stroode in his philosophye
 In parfight lyvvyng which passith poysye
 Richard hermyte contemplatyff of sentence
 Drowh in ynglyssh the prykke of conscience.⁶

¹ John Bale, *Scriptorium Illustrium Majoris Brytanniae Catalogus*, Basel, 1557, pp. 431-432.

² John Pits, *De Illustribus Angliae Scriptoribus*, Paris, 1619, p. 466.

³ Appendix to Cave's *Scriptorium Ecclesiae Historia*, Geneva, 1694, Secl. Wick., 24 A.

⁴ *Commentarii de Scriptoribus et Scriptis Ecclesiasticis*, 1722, III, Secl. XIV, col. 928.

⁵ Tanner, *Bibliotheca Britannica-Hibernica*, London, 1748, p. 374.

⁶ As Professor Schofield has pointed out to me, it is worthy of note that Rolle's "contemplation" is emphasized in this reference, though knowledge of it could not be derived from the *Prick of Conscience*, the only work under discussion.

Professor Koepfel, in his dissertation on the *Fall of Princes*,¹ quotes the first words of the last line as, "brought in Englishe." It is "drew" in all of the five manuscripts of the British Museum which give this passage.² The remaining four omit almost all Lydgate's verses addressed to the Duke of Gloucester, in which these lines occur.³

The variation of the texts between "drew" and "brought" means little. "Drew" is found in other examples of Middle English, meaning "translated" or "compiled."⁴ "Brought" is synonymous with "translated." Therefore the Lydgate passage can mean at most no more than that "Richard Hermit" "translated" or "compiled" the *Prick of Conscience*. Moreover "drew" is the word used consistently by the author. It is found once in the Prologue, four times in the Epilogue.⁵ No other word is used by the author regarding his own work. Therefore the poet himself and the only real authority for Rolle's authorship agree in declaring the poem to be a translation or compilation.

That its authorship is a complicated question may be shown by the enumeration of a few facts regarding the condition of the manuscripts. Thirty-one copies of the poem have been examined

¹ *Laurents de Premierfait und John Lydgates Bearbeitungen von Boccaccios de Casibus Virorum Illustrium*, Munich, 1885, p. 99.

² The quotation from Harl. MS. 1766, and the references to the other early manuscripts and the printed books of the *Fall of Princes* in the British Museum, were made for me by Miss E. Margaret Thompson.

³ A similar omission is made in Pynson's edition of 1527 and in Wayland's edition of 1528. Tottel's edition of 1551 gives the passage and the text, "Drough in Englishe."

⁴ The Oxford Dictionary gives the meaning: "To render into another language or style of writing; to translate." Mätzner gives the meaning, "zusammentragen, kompilieren."

⁵ P. 10, l. 336: "... on Ynglese drawn"; p. 257, l. 9545: "In þis seven er sere materes drawn Of sere bukes . . ."; p. 257, l. 9549: "... Drawe I wald In Ingleshe tung . . ."; p. 257, l. 9575:

Of alle þeis I haf sere materes soght,
And in seven partes I haf þam broght,
Als es contende in þis tretice here,
That I haf drawn out of bukes sere.

P. 258, l. 9597: "þis tretice specially drawn es, For to . . ."; p. 258, l. 9616: "Pray for hym specially that it dru."

Price notes (Warton-Hazlitt, II, 242) the variant reading of "the King's MS.," which is more specific in regard to the translation. He notes also that Lydgate says no more than that Rolle translated the work.

and compared, eighteen by Dr. Percy Andreae,¹ thirteen by Professor Bülbring.² The result, as to establishing the text, is thus described by Professor Bülbring: "As yet no manuscript has been found which is the source of any other existing one. The whole number of sources whose existence is proved is twenty-three (the original being included); this number has been found by special inquiries into the materials of twenty-two existing manuscripts. It is remarkable that not one of all the twenty-three sources of the twenty-two remaining manuscripts is known, and that only these twenty-two apparently last copies are preserved. This fact would be surprising if we did not suppose that a considerably larger number of manuscripts, both sources and actually last copies, have been lost, or have not yet been found."³ No one of the seven manuscripts later found by Professor Bülbring was the source of any other. All were divided into four general groups, and many seemed to belong to one group by reason of one part of the poem, to another by reason of another. Practically no one was the identical length of any other. The variations of manuscripts of the *Prick of Conscience* are elsewhere described as sometimes enormous; for one is noted as adding an eighth book of the world after Doomsday, and another (Ashmole 60, of the fourteenth century) borrows fifty-eight verses from *Cursor Mundi*.⁴ The three noted by Warton as bearing the name of Robert Grosseteste are "very different."⁵ Again, the Latin and English works of this title noted by Pits⁶ are

¹ *Die Handschriften des Prick of Conscience*, Berlin, 1888.

² See *Trans. Phil. Soc.*, 1888-1890, p. 261 (six manuscripts are here added to Andreae's eighteen); Herrig's *Archiv*, LXXXVI, 386 (one manuscript is here added); *Eng. Stud.*, XXIII, 1-30 (six manuscripts are here added).

³ *Trans. Phil. Soc.*, 1888-1890, p. 279.

⁴ *Eng. Stud.*, XXIII, 24. — Ashmole MS. 60 is thus described in the catalogue (ed. W. H. Black, Oxford, 1845, col. 105): "This is a very valuable copy of the *Prikke of Conscience*. . . It is well known that few manuscripts of it agree; and this copy differs materially from those above mentioned (i.e. Nos. 41 and 52), being larger, and containing longer Latin quotations in rubric (which are common in this author's work) and insertions of Latin text. . . There is a large addition of thirty-two and one-half pages of sermonizing Latin prose, chiefly consisting of quotations from the Scriptures and the Fathers, and interspersed with English metre." The "English metre" is apparently the verses from the *Cursor Mundi*. Addit. MS. 36,983 (about 1442) contains part of the *Prick of Conscience*, viz. "nearly all of Bk. V (ll. 4085-6407), following, without indication of a break, on l. 22,004 of *Cursor Mundi*."

⁵ Warton-Hazlitt, II, 240.

⁶ Pits, p. 466.

given as each of one book, whereas we have the work in seven. A Southern manuscript of the *Prick of Conscience*¹ is owned by the Harvard Library. It is of the fourteenth century, beautiful in handwriting, and, except for the loss of the first three sheets, in excellent condition. This also is very much shortened. Such variations are perhaps strange in a poem of which we possess copies from the latter years of the reputed author's life.² Strange also is the fact noted by Dr. Morris, that of the ten manuscripts found by him in the British Museum, the oldest were among the six Southern transcriptions.³

It would be hard, moreover, to find the relation of the Latin and English versions of the poem. Conjectures on this matter have

¹ This manuscript, given in 1863 by Henry Tuke Parker, formerly belonged to Francis Blomefield, the Norfolk historian, and, after him, to Thomas Martin of Palgrave. It belonged also at one time to J. O. Halliwell, who described it in his *Brief Account of Theological Manuscripts* (Brixton Hill, 1854, pp. 4-5). It is an octavo volume on vellum, and retains the original board covers. The Latin quotations are written in red ink and there are many illuminated capitals.

² Introd. to *Prick of Conscience*, p. iv, note: "There are manuscripts (Southern) of the *Pricke of Conscience* as old as the middle of the fourteenth century, but their language is comparatively modern as compared with the Northumbrian ones of a later date.

"The fact of not finding manuscripts older than the middle of the fourteenth century would seem to show that Hampole compiled the *Pricke of Conscience* but a few years before his death (A.D. 1349)."

The best manuscripts of the *Psalter* are Northern (see A. C. Paues, *A Fourteenth Century English Biblical Version*, Cambridge, 1902, p. xli). Miss Paues (*op. cit.*) describes variations in the thirty-three manuscripts of the *Psalter* which are nearly as great as those among manuscripts of the *Prick of Conscience*. Particularly interesting are her quotations from manuscripts of Rolle's *Psalter*, showing Lollard interpolations. She gives (p. xxxv) several early references to Rolle's authorship of the *Psalter*. Another, not hitherto noted, is to be found in *English Reprints* (ed. Arber, No. 28, p. 177), in *A Compendious Olde Treatyse*, said to have been written about 1400 and printed in 1530 in the interests of the Reformation. Rolle's *Psalter* is there quoted from by name. — Professor Killis Campbell (*Mod. Lang. Notes*, 1905, p. 210) notes the existence of Bodl. MS. Rawlin. Poet. 175, dated about 1350. It is much like MS. Cotton Galba E. IX, but is complete. *The Dict. of Nat. Biog.* (v. Rolle) notes five manuscripts of the *Prick of Conscience* in the Cambridge University Library, and "at least twelve" in the Bodleian.

³ A manuscript of the *Prick of Conscience* is described in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 97, II, 216-220. It is of the fourteenth century and contains the ending, "Here endeth the sermon that a clerk made, that was clepyd Alquim, to Guy of Warwyk." The owner of this manuscript evidently considers "Alquim" to be the author of the poem, and the clerk of Guy of Warwick, "second Earl in the Beauchamp line," who died on the twelfth of August, 1315. There appears to be no possible connection between the *Prick of Conscience* and the well-known

already been quoted,¹ but no investigation of the subject has apparently been made. Some notion of the Latin version — one Latin version at least — can be gained from Dr. Andreae's statement² that one of the manuscripts listed by Morris (Harl. MS. 106) was really "only a short Latin prose tract." This is the copy said by Yates³ to be ascribed "either to Grosseteste or Rolle." It is not impossible that a prose tract by Grosseteste may be the nucleus of the whole poem. At present, however, the relation of the Latin and English versions seems hopelessly confused.

"Sermon to Guy of Warwick" (printed Horstman, *Yorkshire Writers*, II, 24, and E. E. T. S., E. S. No. 75, ed. Georgiana L. Morrill). — A manuscript of University College, Oxford (No. 142, fourteenth century), contains the ending :

Explicit stimulus consciencie
Nomen scriptoris Thomas Plenus amoris
Ricardus Rauf. P.L.

Ashmole MS. 61 (of the time of Henry VII) contains *Stimulus Conscientiae Minor*. Lambeth MS. 260 contains "*Stimulus consciencie interioris per sanctum Ricardum heremitam de Hampole*."

¹ These conjectures are, in full, as follows: Warton (*Warton-Hazlitt*, II, 242) makes the statement, "I am not in the meantime quite convinced that any manuscript of the *Pricke of Conscience* in English belongs to Hampole." Yates (*Archaeol.*, XIX, 334), in answer to Warton's statement that Rolle would not translate his own work, makes the assertion that the English poem is "not a translation, but an adaptation," "an enlargement in English upon a Latin treatise." "Continual reference is made to 'the boke' and to 'the glose of the boke,' by which terms the author appears modestly to designate his own Latin treatise." Price (*Warton-Hazlitt*, II, 242, n. 8), after a quotation from the "King's MS." as to the translation of the *Prick of Conscience*, remarks as follows: "Indeed it would be difficult to account for the existence of two English versions, essentially differing in metre and language; though generally agreeing in matter, unless we assume a common Latin original." However, the investigations of Andreae, Bülbring, etc., seem to show large portions of the text of various manuscripts to be as much in agreement as other portions are in disagreement. This state of affairs would preclude the possibility of entirely separate translations, and point rather to extremely free use of a common text. This conclusion was early reached by Hood, a writer (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 97, II, 216-220) before quoted. After a description of his own manuscript of the poem he goes on to say (p. 216): "Some of the known copies vary so importantly in language and measure as to support a belief of there being different translations, were it not that the hard features of some passages found in common in several copies militate against such an opinion. On this point the merit or demerit of the poem need not be questioned, neither can unsettled orthography or the discrepancies of uninterested scribes be pressed forward as accounting for the multitude of variations in text, measure, and almost matter; whereby the poem bears the character almost of being rewritten by the author."

² Andreae, p. 5

³ *Archaeol.*, XIX, 335.

There is, furthermore, considerable confusion in the title of the work. We have *Stimulus Conscientiae* and *Prick of Conscience*, one or both, very commonly. (The manuscript printed by Morris contained both.¹) But a Sion College copy is a *Treatise of Knowing Man's Self*, otherwise called the *Pricke of Conscience*.² A copy of Trinity College, Dublin, which is much shortened, is *Speculum Huius Vitae*.³ MS. Digb. Bodl. 87 is called *The Key of Knowing*.⁴ Addit. MS. 24,203, the manuscript of John de Bageby, monk of Fountains Abbey, is called *Clavis Scientiae*. This copy was apparently that described in 1816 by W. J. Walter as an *Account of a MS. of Ancient English Poetry entitled Clavis Scientiae or Bretagne's Skyll-Key of Knowing by John de Wageby, Monk of Fountains Abbey*.⁵ Since MS. Cotton Galba E. IX

¹ There is no certainty that the Harvard manuscript, which has lost its first pages, was known by the usual title; for the description of the title, "prick of conscience," is not to be found in this copy either in the Prologue or the Epilogue. The explanations as to the "drawing" of the work are also lacking in this copy, as well as the invitation to clerks to correct the author's errors. The whole retrospective reference to hell in the last book is omitted (ll. 9353-9485), and the text of MS. Cotton Galba E. IX is not followed beyond l. 9530. After that occurs the following conclusion not in Morris:

To þe whuche ioye he us brynge
 þat of nouȝt hay made alle þinge
 Amen amen so mote hyt be
 Seye we alle þo charyte. Amen.

² Noted by Bülbring, *Eng. Stud.*, XXIII, 2.

³ Noted by Bülbring, *Trans. Phil. Soc.*, 1888-1890, p. 262.

⁴ Warton-Hazlitt, II, 239, n. 4.

⁵ The identification of this British Museum manuscript with that in the possession of Walter is made in Warton-Hazlitt (II, 239). This Addit. MS. 24,203 has been seen by Professor Kittredge, who, with the greatest kindness, made notes of its text for my use. He verified the spelling of the monk's name as *de Bageby*, which is the form given in the catalogue of British Museum manuscripts. It is, however, given as *de Wageby* by Andreae and by Walter. Sir F. Madden, in his description of Walter's book in Warton-Hazlitt (II, 239), appears to quote Walter as writing *de Dageby*, but this reading is evidently only a typographical error, since the edition of Warton of 1840 (II, 36, n.) gives the form *de Wageby*. In any case, a photograph of the very rare pamphlet, lately presented to the Harvard Library by Professor H. N. MacCracken, shows Walter's reading to have been *de Wageby*. Professor Kittredge has noted other differences between Walter's text, as described in his *Account*, and the present Addit. MS. 24,203. There are slight differences, such as might have arisen from an imperfect understanding by Walter of the Middle English before him; but, further, Walter speaks (p. 2) of the manuscript as containing "296 pages of poetry and above 20 pages of prose." Addit. MS. 24,203 contains 300 pages of poetry and no prose. The transmutations exhibited by texts of the *Prick of Conscience* may be illustrated by quotations of a

expressly described its title in the text, a change of title means a change of text. Caius College MS. 216 (early fifteenth century) contains *Ricardi de Hampole Stimulus Amoris*, and Caius College

few lines from Morris's edition of the poem, Walter's *Account*, and Addit. MS. 24,203 (for the readings of which I am indebted to Mr. J. A. Herbert).

Morris (l. 9533 f.)

Now haf I here als I first undirtoke,
Fulfilled þe seven partes of þis boke . . .
(Here follow eleven lines describing the
different books.)

Namly til lewed men of England,
þat can noght bot Inglyse undirstand;
þarfor þis tretice drawe I wald
In Inglyse tung þat may be cald
Prik of Conscience als men may fele,
For if a man it rede and understande wele,
And þe materes þar-in til hert wil take,
It may his conscience tendre make,
And til right way of rewel bryng it bilyfe,
And his hert til drede and mekeness dryfe.

(Here follow twenty-four lines not in the
other texts.)

Walter (p. 3)

Now have I, als I undertuke,
Fulfilled the seven partys of this buke,
For leyd-men, namely of Yngelande
That noght but Yngelys understande:
Tharfor thys treytie draw I walde
In Yngelys, whylk may be calde
"Bretayne's Skyll-Kay of Knawing"
That may serve to ryght opponyng;
For men may oppen, and se through this kay
Wat has been anceande, and sall be aye.
Of this I have sere materes wrought
And in seven partys I have them brought,
That sulde be oppened and noght spared
To make men of syne aferde.

Addit. MS. 24,203 (fol. 149)

Till lewdmene namly of yngelande
þat cane noght bot yngelys vnderstande
þarefor þis treytie drawe I walde
On yngelys whylk may be calde
Be certayne skyll kay of knawynge
þat may serue to ryght opponnyng
ffor mene may oppon t̄ se thurghe þis kay
þat has ben andeseande þat sall be ay
Off þis I haue sere materes wroghte
And in vij partys I haue þam broghte
Als es contende in þis tretice here
þat I haue drwaene oute of bukes sere
Specialy of þis thynges vij
þat yhe herde me byfor neuene
þat suld be opporne and noght sperde
To make mene of syne a ferde.

The colophon of the MS. reads:

A M E N Quod Bagby
In isto libro continentur Quaterni. ix^{uem} et ð
Per fratrem Johannem de Bageby commonachum
monasterii beate Marie de fontibus
Scriptoris miseri Dignare deus misereri,
Nunc totam[or cotam = quotam] finio sit laus et gloria $\overline{\chi\rho\theta}$
Explicit liber Qui dicitur clausis scientie

In the catalogue of British Museum manuscripts, Addit. MS. 24,203 (end of the fourteenth century) is called "Richard Rolle of Hampole's *Prick of Conscience* with alterations by John de Bageby, a monk of Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire."

Halliwell (*Thornton Romances*, p. xxii, n. 1), in commenting on William of Nassington's translation from John de Waldeby, writes as follows: "Can John de Wageby

MS. 353 contains *Stimulus Amoris Domini*, not ascribed to Rolle. Bale's notebook¹ registers *Stimulus Compassionis* of John Wylton. It might turn out to be of some importance for this question that Bodl. MS. 938² and MS. Arch. B. 65 are noted³ as containing Rolle's English *Form of Living* under the title *The Prick of Love, treting of Love in Three Degres*.⁴ *The Spore of Love*, called *þe Prikke of Love* in the heading, is among the minor poems of the Vernon MS.⁵ *Stimulus Amoris* was, of course, the title of

in Walter's *Account of the Clavis Scientiae*, 8 vo., London, 1816, be an error for John de Waldeby? If so, it may be discovered that the *Prick of Conscience* is a translation of that author." No evidence can be found connecting John de Waldeby with the *Prick of Conscience*.

¹ *Anecd. Oxon.*, 1902, p. 275.

² Horstman, I, 3.

³ Warton-Hazlitt, II, 243, n. 1.

⁴ It may be noted that there seem to have been three conclusions to the *Prick of Conscience*, in only the last of which the title is described; that is, we have (p. 255, ll. 9471 f.):

Fra whilk payne and sorow God us shilde . . .
And the right way of lyf us wisse,
Whar-thurgh we may com til heven blysse. Amen.

The next line runs :

Now es þe last part of þis buke sped.

Again we read (p. 256, ll. 9351 f.):

Til whilk joyes þat has nan ende,
God us bring when we hethen wende. Amen.

The next lines run :

Now haf I here als I first undirtoke,
Fulfilled þe seven partes of this boke.

In the last epilogue of almost a hundred lines that follows, the title, "Prick of Conscience," is fully described. Moreover, we read in the Prologue (p. 10, ll. 343 f.):

When þai þis tretisce here or rede
þat sal prikke þair conscience withyn.

This reference, however, is not so definite as to preclude the possibility that the last Epilogue of the book may be an addition, together with the title. One has only to remember the familiar line in the Prologue of the *Canterbury Tales*, "So priketh hem nature in hir corages," to realize how natural similar expressions might be. In any case, titles such as this were not confined to our poem. One remembers the *Ayenbite of Inwyrt*, as well as the other works whose titles are quoted above.

⁵ This poem is strikingly like the *Prick of Conscience*, which it follows directly in the Vernon MS. The same poem follows the *Prick of Conscience* in Addit. MS. 22,283 also. It is listed in the catalogue under that manuscript as the *Prick of Love by Richard Hampole, or a Tretis of Contemplacioun and Meditacioun*. There exists also an Italian *Stimolo d'Amore*, which is in the manuscript attributed to St. Bernard, though it was probably written by Bernard of Chartres. See *Curiosita Letterarie*, No. 68, Bologna, 1866.

Bonaventura's mystical work,¹ which was translated into English prose in Addit. MS. 22,283, entitled at the end *The tretis that is cald Prikke of Loue ymaad by a frere menour Bonaventure that was a cardinal in the court at Rome*. Some confusion as to the *Prick of Conscience* may have arisen because of the existence of works of similar title.²

These facts will serve to show how complicated is everything connected with the *Prick of Conscience*. They indicate that it was one of those mediæval works that became almost common property — a kind of compilation, fair prey to any scribe. Evidently Rolle's authorship of the text in print cannot be established by any external evidence at present available. Its only support lies in the general careless reliance on the Lydgate quotation. Whether a translation

¹ A use of the phrase, "prick of conscience," occurs in Bonaventura's *Incedium Amoris* (ed. Lyons, 1668, VI, 184). This passage is, in part, as follows: "Ad stimulum conscientiae debet homo exercere se ipsum hoc modo meditando in via purgativa (the first stage of Christian life, according to Bonaventura). . . . Tria autem debet homo circa se circumspicere, scilicet diem mortis iminentem, sanguinem Christi recentem, & faciem iudicis praesentem. In his tribus acuitur stimulus conscientiae contra omne malum." The phrase, "prick of conscience," is, of course, a natural one with us to this day, and has been continuously used. It is used, for example, in the *Castle of Perseverance* (ed. E. E. T. S., E. S., No. 91, p. 78) and by Holinshed in his narration about Macbeth. In general, however, in the Middle Ages, the commoner phrase was "the worm of conscience." The gnawing of "the worm of conscience" was the tenth pain of hell in the *Prick of Conscience* itself (p. 190, ll. 7049 ff.). This metaphor was alive in the time of Shakespeare and occurs in his work. Benedick, for example, tells Beatrice what is "expedient for the wise (if Don Worm, his conscience, find no impediment to the contrary)"; and gnawing of the worm of conscience is part of Queen Margaret's curse (*Richard III*, I, 2, 222). A passage in St. Augustine's *City of God* (bk. xxi, chap. ix) gives the probable source of this image, in the passage in Isaiah lxvi, 24, as to going into hell . . . "where their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched": "Now, as for this worm and this fire, they that make them only mental pains do say that the fire implies the burning of the soul. . . . And this language may be meant also by the worm. . . . Now such as hold them both mental and real, say that the fire is a bodily plague to the body, and the worm a plague of conscience to the soul. This seems more likely." (I quote from Healey's translation of the *City of God*, London, 1892.)

² Professor Schofield has called my attention to the confusion among manuscripts of the *Imitatio Christi*, similar to that found among manuscripts of the *Prick of Conscience*. The *Imitatio* appears in some texts as the *Musica Ecclesiastica* and the *Book of Internal Consolation*. In the greater number of copies it is given to Thomas à Kempis, but many give it to Walter Hylton or to Gerson, while some appear with the names of St. Bernard, Bonaventura, Kalkar, Francis de Sales, Thomas Aquinas. See Leonard A. Wheatley, *The Story of the Imitatio Christi*, London, 1891, pp. 112 f.

by Rolle, as indicated by that quotation,¹ can be considered plausible, will appear from the examination of the internal evidence regarding our question. This examination, to which we now proceed, will show that the poem is one that could hardly have been even translated by Richard Rolle, the hermit of Hampole and the author of mystical writings.

III

The unit chosen from the work of Richard Rolle, into comparison with which the *Prick of Conscience* will here be brought, must first be described. Something, also, must be said to establish the right to include the several works contained in that one unit. For, although all are among those the connection of which with Rolle has never been questioned, yet since this paper has been written to deny the attribution of one work commonly regarded as his, acceptance of authority in other cases ought to be explained. It is hoped that it will be made sufficiently clear why, at least, it seems necessary to believe that the works chosen are certainly the work of one person. They, rather than the *Prick of Conscience*, are ascribed to Richard Rolle, because, plainly all by a single author, they are works exactly suited to a hermit² such as Rolle is reputed to have been; and they are certainly referred to in the *Office*.³

The works that are to be included on the one side of the comparison with the *Prick of Conscience* are the Latin tracts *De Incendio Amoris* and *Emendatio Vitae*, used by me only in the literal, but awkward, translation of 1434 by Richard Misyn⁴; the

¹ It may easily be seen that the attribution to Rolle of some manuscripts may have its origin in nothing more than Lydgate's statement.

² As has been mentioned, Horstman quotes passages from the Latin tracts containing Rolle's name. He quotes a passage thoroughly consistent with the mystical work (II, xxix): "Ego Ricardus utique solitarius heremita vocatus, hoc quod novi assero: quoniam ille *ardentius* Deum diligit qui *igne Spiritus sancti succensus* a strepitu mundi et ab omni corporali sono quantum potest discedet." Cf. p. xxx.

³ See above for references, pp. 119 f.

⁴ See Harvey's illustrations of the closeness of the translation, E. E. T. S., No. 106, p. xiii. The Latin text of the *De Incendio Amoris* has not been accessible to me, but the Latin text of the *Emendatio Vitae* is accessible in the *Magna Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum*, Lyons, 1677, XXVI, 609 f., along with short Latin prose pieces of Rolle. It is given there the title, *Emendatio Peccatoris*. The other Latin pieces

three English prose epistles, written to nuns, published at the beginning of Horstman's volume;¹ the English translation and commentary on the *Psalter*, which Middendorff has shown, in a valuable dissertation,² to be in general a translation from Peter Lombard. The two prose meditations on the Passion³ are not included, nor the several prose treatises of MSS. Thornton, Rawl. C. 285, Arundel 507, and Harl. 1022, thought by Horstman to be Rolle's work.⁴ This is for various reasons in various cases. In the case of the meditations, which are ascribed to Rolle in unique manuscripts, — as I believe, justly, — it is not for our present purposes possible, in the general uncertainty of attributions, to trust to manuscript authority for sole security here, where the type of literature is distinctive, and cannot, by comparison of contents with other Rolle works, afford also internal evidence of authorship. In the case of the treatises, some are possessed of manuscript authority for Rolle's authorship, some are not. Those of the Thornton MS., though there seems no reason to doubt their attribution to "Richard Hermit," are all too short to afford valid internal evidence either way. The larger ones do not possess manuscript authority, and the internal evidence they afford is by no means substantial enough to outweigh that lack. All such possible work of Rolle, however, eliminated by me from this discussion, is more or less mystical, and could not assist in establishing his authorship of the *Prick of Conscience*. There will be included for use as a criterion of the Rolle canon only the *Fire of Love* and the *Mending of Life* (to call them by their English titles), and the English prose epistles, the *Form of Living* and (so called by their first lines) *The Commandment of Love to God*, and *Ego Dormio et Cor Meum Vigilat*. These, therefore, with the *Psalter*, form the unit into comparison with which we may bring the *Prick of Conscience*.

those included are too short to be used in this discussion. They are expositions of the Lord's Prayer and of the Apostles' and the Athanasian creeds; the *Nominis Jesu Encomium*; an extract from the *Fire of Love*; and a characteristic, perhaps even autobiographical, short exposition of the text *Adolescentulæ dilexerunt te nimis*. The first expositions are colorless and not especially mystical; they are, however, all short, and none of them impossible for a mystic to write.

¹ I, 3-71.

² *Studien über Richard Rolle von Hampole*, Magdeburg, 1888.

³ Horstman, I, 83-103.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 104-172, 184-198.

Any reader will admit that these works show a striking mutual resemblance, amounting often to identity; but the general lines of likeness should, nevertheless, be pointed out. The similarity of dialect of the English mystical works, distinguishing them from the *Prick of Conscience*, will appear later. The discussion of the *Psalter* will likewise, in general, be postponed.

These writings are all of the same type of literature. They are all works of spiritual counsel, written especially in the interests of the mystical or contemplative life. The Latin treatises address themselves to all those who are eager to be "God's lovers," especially to those whose whole lives are given up to that condition. The three English epistles are addressed to special friends of Richard Rolle, all vowed to the contemplative life. The *Psalter* has always been the favorite food of the mystic, and Rolle's *Psalter*, moreover, as we shall afterwards see, abounds in mystical passages.¹ All these documents, therefore, are exactly what one would expect from a hermit vowed to the contemplative life; and they treat their common subject in a manner common to all. The same subjective manner, the same favorite aspects of the subject, the same habit of repetition,² appear constantly. All the treatises, now and then, break into lyric ejaculations and "songs of love" to Christ, "the lemman."³ There is, in all of them, exhortation against overmuch abstinence no less than overmuch indulgence;⁴ there is longing for death, praise of love, distrust of the "habit of holiness" *per se*.⁵ The mystical ecstasy is everywhere spoken of as the rare privilege given by God, not a foregone conclusion to any achievement of virtue.⁶ Rolle seems a thorough type of the mystic,

¹ Many passages might be cited from Rolle's mystical writing to show the value he set on the Psalms as aids to spirituality. Cf. *Ego Dormio* (Horstman, I, 55): "And when þou ert by þe al-ane, gyf þe mykel to say þe psalmes of þe psauter, and Pater noster, & Aue maria."

² Kühn (*Über die Verfasserschaft der in Horstman's Library . . . enthaltenen Gedichte*, Greifswald, 1900, p. 52) notes Rolle's habit of repetition and gives examples of parallel phrases drawn from the various works.

³ Cf. Horstman, I, 34, 57, 60: *Fire of Love*, p. 26, ll. 24 f.; p. 76, ll. 33 f.; p. 77; p. 88; *Mending of Life*, p. 122, ll. 30 f.; *Psalter*, p. 215.

⁴ Horstman, I, 6 f., 14, 26 f., 64: *Fire of Love*, p. 25, ll. 36 f.; *Mending of Life*, pp. 113-114.

⁵ Horstman, I, 8, 16, 68: *Fire of Love*, p. 26, ll. 5 f.; *Mending of Life*, p. 110, ll. 24 f.

⁶ Horstman, I, 42, 58: *Fire of Love*, p. 70, ll. 11 f.; p. 27, ll. 3 f.

but, for all his ecstasy, a man of largeness of temper, of independence, and considerable lucidity of mind. One gets, more than from most mediæval works, a distinct and consistent impression of the style and personality of the author. For the common characteristics of these works are not confined to the common characteristics of all works treating of mystical experience, which are well marked, and (as Mr. Inge notes in his *Christian Mysticism*¹) practically timeless. Richard Rolle describes his mystical experience with certain eccentricities.

A matter of detail that may be called an eccentricity of the author is his confession, in the Latin *Fire of Love*² and the English *Form of Living*,³ that when he "loved God" he "lufed for to sytt," rather than "gangand, or standand, or kneleand. For sittand am I in maste rest, & my hert maste vpwarde."

Again, the metaphor of the "fire of love"⁴ becomes almost a hall-mark of Rolle's style. It is used in the prologue of the *Fire of Love*, which begins (p. 2, l. 5):

Mor haue I meruayled þen I schewe, fforsothe, when I felt fyrst my hert wax warme, and treuly, not ymagynnyngly, bot als it wer with sensibyll fyer, byrned . . . Oft-tymes haue I gropyd my breste, sekandly whedyr þis birnyng wer of any bodely cause vtwardly.

The metaphor is used also when Rolle describes at length the first coming on of the ecstasy in the passage quoted by the *Office*.⁵ "Heat" is one of the essential elements of that crucial experience of his life, and henceforth *calor*, *canor*, and *dulcor* are the constant three characteristics of the mystical ecstasy. They appear in the

¹ W. R. Inge, *Hist. of Christian Mysticism*, London, 1899, p. 6, n. 1; pp. 104-105.

² P. 33, ll. 9 f.

³ Horstman, I, 45. This is the passage quoted.

⁴ This metaphor was not, of course, original with Rolle. The fact has not, I believe, hitherto been pointed out that Rolle borrows the title of the *Incendium Amoris* directly from Bonaventura's work of the same name, along with all of Bonaventura's prologue, which appears as Rolle's prologue prefaced by an apparently genuine autobiographical account of the first coming on of the "fire." Walter Hylton shows the prevalence of the metaphor in his time (doubtless due to Rolle) by feeling it necessary to explain that the fire of love is no "bodily thing"; though "some are so simple as to imagine that, because it is called a fire, that therefore it should be hot as bodily fire is" (*Scale of Perfection*, ed. J. B. Dalgairns, London, 1870, p. 31). Rolle, however, apparently believed that he felt an actual physical sensation of heat.

⁵ *Fire of Love*, p. 35, ll. 37 f. The metaphor of the "fire of love" has been italicized wherever occurring in the quotations from Rolle.

Office.¹ This metaphor runs riot through all Rolle's works; we have constantly not only the "fire of love," the "burning of love," "burning as if one put his finger in the fire," but also the "slaking of love," a "molten heart," a "heart enkindled," and so on through all possible implications of the figure. It is very frequent in the *Fire of Love*. In the three short prose epistles it is present or implied thirty-six times, and in the *Psalter* fifty-four times. In the *Ayenbite of Inwyrt*,² on the contrary, the contemplative life is described by many metaphors, but not once by the favorite one of Rolle. The favorite substitute there is that of the "light of love." Usually, in fact, Rolle's metaphor, though natural, and hence not uncommon among mystics, changes place equally with others, such as that of light, or hunger, or thirst.³ Such an extravagant fondness as Rolle's for one figure must be said to have become an eccentricity. We have fair evidence that it was so considered in his own time, from the fact that it is constantly found in the *Office*.⁴

A comparison of Rolle's descriptions of the mystical process in the five works reveals identity of thought and eccentricity in comparison with such treatments elsewhere. The mystical doctrine of love in the *Mending of Life*,⁵ the *Commandment*,⁶ and the *Form of Living*⁷ is described in three stages, named "insuperable," "inseparable," and "singular." In the *Fire of Love*⁸ the formal divisions do not appear, though the same progressive character is given as in the other treatises. In *Ego Dormio*⁹ the division into three grades is made, and the grades are there described in exactly

¹ Col. 792: "Ardet pectus ex flamma spiritus, calor fortis sentitur afforis: Ex quo patet fervoris exitus, et quod amor sit magni roboris. Melior canorius ardorem sequitur et dulcor ingens: Deo laus rettitur."

² Pp. 199, 245.

³ The pseudo-Dionysius carefully analyzes the superior advantages of the metaphor of fire for divine things to any other, though he finds it possible to use images from many parts of the body (*Celestial Hierarchy*, XV).

⁴ It has appeared in quotations above. Cf. also col. 796: "Amor monstret mentis incendium"; col. 806: "Caritatis incendio inflammat Dei populum." Compare also the Metrical Prologue of the *Psalter* (p. 1, l. 12): "Hit makes hertys all brennyng in luf of god lastand aye."

⁵ P. 123, l. 23 f.

⁶ Horstman, I, 62 f.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 31 f.

⁸ Cf. p. 62, l. 3: "And so fro gre to gre þai pass"; p. 66, l. 27: "And þus als wer be degre be giftys of þe holy goste to þe heght of godis behaldyngte it ascendis." Compare also p. 81, ll. 5 f. The emphasis on the progressive character of "love of God" appears also, of course, in such titles as the *Scala Perfectionis* of Walter Hilton.

⁹ Horstman, I, 52.

the terms of the other works, without the names. Rolle himself says of the contemplative man in the *Fire of Love* (p. 72, l. 16): "To slike a lufer sothely happyns in docturs wrytynge þat I hafē not fun expressyd."¹ Thus we have an expression from Rolle himself of the eccentricity of his mystical theory.²

By such examples³ the close interconnection of these writings will be seen, as well as the author's habit of unifying his work. Their identity of authorship will now be taken for granted, and they will be used as the standard with which to bring the *Prick of Conscience* into comparison.

¹ Mystics in general describe the mystical process in three stages; cf. Inge, *Hist. Christian Mysticism*, p. 9.

² It seems, moreover, that we have in the treatise *On the Contemplation of the Dread and Love of God*, printed by Horstman (II, 72), a fair piece of evidence for believing in the special association of Rolle, in his own time, with the doctrine of love in three grades. That treatise, though not given to Rolle in any manuscript, was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1506, under Rolle's name. His authorship is rejected by Horstman (II, xlii, n. 2) on account of the following passage reasonably thought by Horstman to be a reference to the hermit. In this passage we read (p. 74) that there were "other ful holy men of ryght late tyme whiche lyueden a ful holy lyfe. Some of these men as I haue herde and redde were vysyted by the grace of god with a passynge swetenes of the loue of cryste. . . . This loue whiche they haue wryten to other is departed in three degrees of loue." There follows (as Horstman has noted) a description of love in three grades according to Rolle's own terms in the *Form of Living*. The third degree "is so brennyngē . . . that who so hath that loue may as well fele the *fyre of brennyngē loue in his soule as an other man may fele his synger brenne in erthely fyre*." There follows (as Horstman notes also), apparently from *Ego Dormio*, a description of love in three grades without the names. That this passage refers to Rolle seems probable. It apparently justifies our taking the metaphor of the "fire of love" and the peculiar description of the doctrine of love as hall-marks by which to identify Rolle's mystical work when supported by all the similarities of style and substance apparent in the five prose treatises.

³ Rolle shows also a slight favoritism for certain quotations. *Amore Languet*, the favorite text of the mystic, occurs twice in the epistles, five times in the two Latin works. It is quoted with the connected passage from the Song of Solomon in the *Office* (col. 806). "Love is as strong as death and as hard as hell" occurs twice in the epistles, twice in the Latin works, and once in a passage later to be quoted from the *Psalter*. It occurs also once in the short *Encomium Nominis Jesu* found in the Thornton MS. (printed by Horstman, I, 186), which is there, and very often, ascribed to Rolle. It seems probable that Rolle wrote the Latin of this piece but not the English.

Since the number of quotations in the mystical works is extremely small, such a favoritism as that above described is notable. Neither quotation occurs in the *Prick of Conscience*, though the number of quotations there is extremely large.

The chapter on the *Setting of Man's Life (Mending of Life)*, pp. 111 f.) is almost identical in its classifications with the English *Form of Living* (Horstman, I, 21 f.). This is noted by Hahn (*Quellenuntersuchungen*, p. 7).

IV

Even simple juxtaposition is effective in revealing the entire incongruity of these mystical works with the *Prick of Conscience*.¹ The difference was felt by ten Brink, though it led him to no conclusion :

Richard's many writings deal partly with that which formed the heart of his inner life, and they aim partly, in more popular manner, at theological teaching and religious edification. He would be a guide to congenial souls in the path of asceticism and contemplation; or he strives to remind the sinner of the hollowness and misery of life, of God's majesty, kindness, and justice, and of the eternal requital of good and evil deeds.²

It is true that the mystical work is entirely spiritual and subjective; the *Prick of Conscience*, one may say, is entirely material and objective. The differences interpenetrate the tissue of both. These differences may be subdivided into the more mechanical differences of the author's habit and the more essential differences of his thought. All together make up the internal evidence regarding Rolle's authorship of the *Prick of Conscience*, as the matters first treated made up the external evidence.³

First and most mechanical of these matters concerning the author's habit must be put his dialect. Morris, Bramley, and Horstman, the editors of Rolle's English works, knowing the Yorkshire origin of the hermit, have been careful to print the purest Northern texts they could obtain. Horstman goes farther, and prints of the *Form of Living* all three Northern texts existing; of the *Ego Dormio*, the one Northern text and one mostly

¹ The extracts, both from the Latin and English works of Rolle, collected by Horstman in his introduction (*Yorkshire Writers*, II), though often used as material on which to base extravagant conclusions, are nevertheless valuable in the just impression they give of Rolle's mysticism. The same is true of the extracts printed by Middendorff.

² *Hist. Eng. Lit.*, I, 294.

³ The difference in general style between the mystical works and the *Prick of Conscience* was felt also by Hahn (*Quellenuntersuchungen zu R. Rolles Schriften*, Halle, 1900, p. 46). After the remark that Horstman's praise of Rolle's originality cannot extend to the *Prick of Conscience*, for that poem "does not contain a new idea," he goes on to say: "Etwas besser dürfte es in Hinsicht auf Originalität mit den englischen Prosaschriften stehen." The literary quality of the *Prick of Conscience* has been something of a bone of contention. Warton (*Warton-Hazlitt*, II, 239) saw in the poem "no tincture of sentiment, imagination, or elegance." Yates and Walter (there quoted) warmly defend the poem.

Northern; of the *Commandment*, besides the single Northern text, the best Southern transcription. We should therefore be able to examine all the English works under discussion in the same dialect, the Northern, which is presumably that in which they were written. However, a thorough examination of the dialect of the *Prick of Conscience* and the other works ascribed to Rolle has not been made, though comparison in regard to certain details has revealed the existence¹ of distinct divergence in the dialect of the poem from that of the *Psalter* and epistles.

¹ The Northern "gar," for example, noted by Morris (p. viii) as "common enough in Barbour, the *Cursor Mundi*, and *Metrical Homilies*, yet never occurring either in the *Psalms* or *Hampole*," occurs in each manuscript of the short *Form of Living* eight times; in the Northern manuscripts of the other two very short epistles it occurs in each once. It is registered twenty-two times in the somewhat over five hundred pages of the *Psalter*, but a most cursory examination has revealed eleven new cases. It is registered in the *York Plays* (ed. L. T. Smith) twelve times; in *Piers the Plowman* (ed. Skeat, Oxford, 1886) nine times. This must seem of importance. Moreover, the Northern "never-the-latter," which Morris registers but once in the nearly ten thousand lines of the *Prick of Conscience*, where "never-the-less" is common, occurs six times in the three short mystical epistles, where "never-the-less" does not occur. "Never-the-latter" is the consistent usage of the *Psalter*. Morris notes (p. viii) the use of "swa" in the *Prick of Conscience* for the "sa" frequent in other Northern works. "Sa" is more frequent than "swa" in the three mystical epistles, but the various Northern manuscripts printed by Horstman do not always agree for this matter. The question of "swa" and "sa" was probably somewhat a matter of spelling, dependent upon the vagary of the scribe. "Gar" and "never-the-latter," however, were more probably questions (in the author's native region, at least) of vocabulary, and preserved by the scribe in the forms written by the author. In their presence in the English prose works we have fair evidence for the variant authorship of those works from the *Prick of Conscience*, in which, large as it is, they do not occur. W. Bernhardt, in a review of the *Psalter* (*Angl.*, VIII, 172), makes a short comparison of dialect between the *Psalter* and the *Prick of Conscience*. The dialect of the former (p. 172), "dem *Hampole's* ausserordentlich nahe steht." However, two divergencies may be noted: where A. S. -ag in the *Psalter* gives both -agh and -aw, the same short syllable in the *Prick of Conscience* gives only -aw. The same divergence appears for the A. S. -äg. The *Prick of Conscience* has here also only -aw, while the *Psalter* shows -agh as well. Mätzner (*Sprachproben*, I, 119) notes the divergencies in style and dialect of the Thornton treatises from the *Prick of Conscience*. Though, as has been stated above (pp. 131 f.), some of the Thornton treatises published by Perry as Rolle's have lately been shown to belong to other authors; several of the short ones apparently belong to Richard Rolle. Therefore Mätzner's observations are significant for our present inquiry. Dr. Murray (*The Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland*, *Trans. Phil. Soc.*, 1870-1872) remarks that in "the prose works attributed to *Hampole* in the Thornton MS." the orthography, like that in the *Prick of Conscience*, is somewhat modified by Midland English, but it is "on the whole more Northern" than in the poem.

In the consideration of vocabulary and phraseology there are elements present that render that part of the inquiry somewhat unfruitful. The subject matter is so unlike as to explain many differences of this sort. One particular may, however, be found significant against Rolle's authorship, — the fact that in the *Prick of Conscience* the metaphor of the "fire of love" is but once introduced. In the joys of heaven there are no burnings of love. But the "hill of heaven," we read,

Es nocht els bi understanding,
Bot haly thoght and *brynaud yhernyng*,
pat haly men had here to pat stede. (P. 244, ll. 9059 f.)

That objective statement, in what is almost the sole reference to the contemplative life in the whole poem, is such as might be natural to any writer. Further, as to this part of the comparison, the observation may perhaps be hazarded that the phraseology and vocabulary of the mystical work seem better than that of the *Prick of Conscience*. The long quotations later will present the characteristic styles of both.

There is also a difference to be easily observed in the system of construction used in the two groups. The mystical work is notably vague in its divisions, in spite of the separation into chapters that is usually present. The subjects run over from one part to another continually without remark. Repetition of all sorts, without remark, is also very frequent. But the *Prick of Conscience* of MS. Cotton Galba E. IX. is extremely systematic.¹ At the outset it is divided into books; there is a prologue and epilogue to the whole, in both of which a table of contents of the whole appears. Repetition is usually accompanied by references back to the exact location of the first mention. This difference in treatment between the mystical works and the poem is such as, in modern works at least, we should certainly put down to difference in the temperament of the authors.

Suitable, one cannot help feeling, to the methodical manner of the *Prick of Conscience*, is its verse form — four-stressed rhymed couplets. Though it is, of course, the usual verse form for sustained metrical attempts of the time, one cannot be sure of any of

¹ Ullmann, in his comparison of the *Speculum Vitae* with the *Prick of Conscience* (*Eng. Stud.*, VII, 435), remarks of the latter: "Bezeichend sind die Übergänge von einem passus zum andern, in welchen der Inhalt des folgenden Abschnitts angekündigt wird."

Richard Rolle's verse with which it may be compared. The lyrics ascribed to him in MS. Cambr. Dd. V. 64 (which are printed by Horstman) belong to him on grounds too unsettled to permit their use as a criterion here; in any case, none of them employ rhymed couplets. There remain the four devotional songs introduced into the epistles,¹ which, however, are all of an original character. They are of an extreme irregularity and mixture of metres, so that in many cases they can scarcely be written as verse; rhymed couplets do not appear in them, but their favorite verse form, on the contrary, is a sequence of four lines or more of a single rhyme. They use alliteration largely, which was used in the early Latin *Melum Contemplativum*² of Rolle and appears, as well, in lines of rhythmic prose introduced into *Ego Dormio*³; examples of alliteration in all Rolle's English prose have been collected by Dr. John Philip Schneider in his dissertation on the *Prose Style of Richard Rolle*.⁴ The revival of alliteration even is claimed by Horstman for Rolle, and Professor Saintsbury, in his *History of English Prosody*,⁵ declares it to be a "not impossible guess" that the revival had "something to do with the great intellectual and religious stir effected about that time by the Yorkshire hermit, Richard Rolle of Hampole." There is, however, no alliteration in the *Prick of Conscience*, though we are told that it is in narrative rather than in lyric poetry that it is generally found. This is surely a fact of importance for the question of the authorship of that poem.⁶

Ten Brink, in the passage already quoted as distinguishing the two classes of Rolle's work, goes on to notice that in the mystical work, the first class, Rolle "draws from his own experience; in the latter (the *Prick of Conscience*) entirely from books."⁷ This

¹ Horstman, I, 30, 34, 57, 60. It may be noted that the eight lines surrounding Rolle's portrait contain but two rhymes. Rolle seems to have had the habit of dropping into rhyme in his prose. Horstman (see below, p. 150) notes an instance of rhyme in the *Psalter*, and the insertion of lines from one of the poems that he prints, in one of the *meditations* (I, 86). I believe that it has not hitherto been noted that this *meditation* contains two other instances of rhyme (p. 81, ll. 7 f.; p. 89, ll. 5 f.).

² Horstman, II, xxxvi.

³ *Ibid.*, I, 53.

⁴ Baltimore, 1906.

⁵ London, 1904, I, 101.

⁶ The instances of alliteration collected by Ullmann from the *Prick of Conscience* (*Eng. Stud.*, VII, 444) are not sufficient to be significant. In the whole poem less than twenty instances are noted, and these are of the most insignificant sort.

⁷ *Hist. Eng. Lit.*, I, 294.

observation may well introduce the consideration of the last comparison with respect to outward matters. In the use of authorities our two groups of work ascribed to Rolle are strikingly divergent. An early writer on the poem¹ remarked that his manuscript was "bloomingly erubricated with Latin quotations." As a matter of fact there are some three hundred and fifty-four citations of authority in the *Prick of Conscience*. On the other hand, in the three epistles together there are but twelve citations, and in the *Fire of Love* and the *Mending of Life* together but sixty-five. In the more than five hundred pages of the *Psalter* but eight quotations are noted by Bramley (p. xvi) outside of the Scriptures; the citations of Scripture are equally few. Yet the work is almost wholly a translation, a fact acknowledged in the phrase of the Prologue (p. 5), — "in expounding I follow holy doctors." Of the three hundred and fifty-four quotations of the *Prick of Conscience* only one hundred and twenty-six are recognizably from the Scriptures; two hundred and twenty-eight are from Church Fathers by name, or simply from "the boke" or "clerkes." Of the twelve in the epistles, seven are recognizably from the Scriptures, one from a "great doctor," one from "the wiseman," three from Fathers of the Church by name. Of the sixty-five in the Latin mystical works, one is "the sentence of the wise," one from "the play"; all the rest are either specific quotations from Scripture or recognizably such. In the use of authorities, therefore, the two groups are extremely divergent. The citations — especially those of clerical writers — become in the *Prick of Conscience* the eccentricity that the metaphor of the "fire of love" becomes in the mystical work.² The use of authorities in the mystical work is, for mediæval writing, sparse. It is conspicuous in its preference for Scriptural quotations. Here, then, is a deep-seated difference of habit between the writing of the two groups.

It is, moreover, worthy of remark that the twelve quotations of the epistles, all except the two *Amore languero* and *Ego Dormio et Cor Meum Vigilat*,³ which are used practically as mottoes,

¹ Hood, *op. cit.*

² Ullmann (*Eng. Stud.*, VII, 433) remarks of the *Prick of Conscience*: "Der autor liebt es, zur bekräftigung der wahrheit des von ihm ausgesagten, sich entweder ganz allgemein auf die vorlage und quelle zu berufen, oder den mann, die autorität zu citiren, welche diesen oder jenen ausspruch gethan hat."

³ Horstman, II, 29, 32, 33, 50.

appear translated directly into English. Each of these two quotations, however, appears once introduced into the text in English. Here is a notable contrast to the parade of Latin in the *Prick of Conscience* of MS. Cotton Galba E. IX.

Indeed, the whole pompous use of authorities in that work, especially of Church Fathers and clerks, is in disagreement with Rolle's declared conviction, as well as with his habit elsewhere. Consistently, as we shall see, he speaks with indignation of the vainglorious wisdom of many clerks of his day, such as is apparent in the *Prick of Conscience*. Although, as a matter of fact, his *Psalter* is almost wholly a translation, he did not, as we have seen, parade his authority at every step, but preserved at once his accustomed modesty, and the impression of orthodoxy he thought necessary, by saying at the outset, once for all, that he followed orthodox interpretations.¹ Towards the secular clergy in general he took a patronizing attitude,² for contemplative men, in his opinion, were superior to those in active life.³ It seems unlikely⁴ that the man who uncompromisingly throughout his mystical work set himself above the highest prelates and reviled the vainglorious learning of clerks⁵ would, in a lengthy work like the *Prick of Conscience*, seek

¹ *Psalter*, p. 5: "In expounyng e fologh haly doctours. for it may come in some enuyous man hand that knawes nocht what he sould say, that will say that i wist nocht what i sayd and swa doe harme til hym."

² Cf. *Fire of Love*, pp. 29-34, 48.

³ It is conjectured that Rolle was persecuted by the secular clergy; cf. Middelendorff (pp. 3 f.), Horstman (II, xvi, n. 1, xxiv), *Fire of Love* (pp. 26, 35, 60, 68 f., 74). After noting his "not improbable collision with the ecclesiastical authorities" (*Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, II, 52), Mr. Whitney felt compelled to remark of Rolle (II, 55): "If he had any quarrel with the Church, it was rather with some of its theologians who did not share his philosophy than with its system, or its existing development." Whereupon he quotes the interpretation, in the *Prick of Conscience*, of "the gates of the Daughter of Zion" as the Church.

⁴ The contrast is the greater, because of Rolle's real spiritual arrogance. He does not scruple to call himself a saint (Horstman, II, xxviii); cf. *Fire of Love*, p. 26, l. 29: "He þat þis joy has & in þis lyfe þus is gladdynd, of þe holy goste he is inspiryd, he may not erre; what-euer he do, leeful it is."

⁵ Professor Brown's statements as to the religious attitude of the author of *The Pearl* could very well be applied to Rolle: "On the whole," he says, "it is evident that our author's attitude towards religious matters was evangelical rather than ecclesiastical." "Still more significant is our author's disregard of patristic authority and tradition. We miss the familiar 'as seynt Austen saith,' or 'thus writes the holy Gregory.' . . . Finally, one feels . . . a deep ethical fervor. . . . His intuitive sense of justice leads him to make short work of doctrinal subtleties" (*Pub. Mod. Lang. Ass.*, XIX, 140).

to strengthen himself at every turn by clerical references, and end the whole piece with such an invitation as this :

And if any man þat es clerk
 Can fynde any errour in þis werk,
 I pray hym he do me þat favour,
 þat he wille amende þat errour. (P. 258, ll. 9587 f.)

All the matters of the author's habit — dialect, phraseology, system, verse-form, use of authorities — show essential divergencies, more and less, between the two groups of work ascribed to Richard Rolle, — the mystical work and the *Prick of Conscience*. We may now pass from these more external matters of the author's habit to a comparison of the more essential matters of his thought, or subject matter.

V

The fundamental difference in substance between the mystical work and the *Prick of Conscience* is, of course, immediately apparent. The subject matter of the two groups is utterly divergent. The one is of the type of a direct "guide to holiness," — this, moreover, of a mystical character; the other, though of course indirectly spiritual, is directly of the type of the theological narrative or history. The first is such work as one might call the professional task of a hermit; the second is such as might become the labor of any religious person. The first is written particularly for that specialized class of Christians, the contemplative; the rank and file of the Church would find it above their needs. The second is written for the general Christian public; presumably the contemplative would find it below their needs. The *Psalter* is such as would be suited to both. There is, of course, nothing impossible in the supposition that a hermit, a professed mystic, might at some time turn from his mysticism to address, for the moment exclusively, the less aspiring folk of the flock. It is, however, improbable that the hermit of Hampole should so descend, for ten Brink speaks justly of his "inexorable consistency of thought and deed."¹ In this matter of the mingling of the active and the contemplative life he was peculiarly uncompromising. Other mystics of the same age did not follow him in exhorting the contemplative never to leave their contemplation. We have the epistle

¹ *Hist. Eng. Lit.*, I, 291.

urging the "mixed life," printed under Rolle's name in Mätzner's *Sprachproben*, which Horstman, who also prints it (I, 264), shows to have been written by Walter Hylton, reputed to have been a follower of Rolle. But Rolle seems to have suffered a mystical metamorphosis of his whole organism, which allows a contemplation interrupted, he often tells us, only by sleep. That he even reached sometimes a state of morbid ecstasy appears not only by his consciousness of the sensible fire of love, but also by the tale of friends changing his garments while he remained rapt and wholly unconscious.¹ This is related in the *Legenda*, where also the passage is introduced of the hallucination of a young woman. To one in ecstatic condition sufficient to receive such hallucinations the works of the active life must have seemed unessential. He himself says, in the *Mending of Life* (p. 125, l. 3):

All my hert truly festynd in desire of Ihesu, is turnyd into *heet of lufe* & it is swaloyed Into anoþer Ioy and anodir form.²

As a result he earnestly and repeatedly absolves the contemplative man from the obligations of the secular clergy. The obligations of his own life are higher, sufficient, and exclusive:

Best contemplative ar hear þen þe best actife. . . . Sum for soth, gaynsettand, says: Actife lyfe is more fruytfull, for warkis of mercy it doys, it prechis & slike oþer dedis wyrkis; Qwharfore more meritory it is. I say nay, for slyke warkis langis to accidentale rewarde, þat is, joy of þinge wrought. . . . Als oft tyems it happyns þat sum of les meed is guyd & preches; A noþer prechis not, þat mikyll more lufys: is he not þis bettir for he prechis? no; bot he þis þat more lufys, hyar & bettir is; þof he be les in prechinge, sum meed he sal haue þat þe more was not worþi for he prechid not.³ Scheuyd þerfore

¹ *Office*, col. 797. It must be put to Rolle's credit that he never tries deliberately to reach a state of morbid ecstasy, as did so many saints of the Middle Ages. The regimen that accomplishes his mystical metamorphosis is a simple one: "þis name IHESU fest it swa fast in þi hert, þat it com neuer owt of þi thoght" (Horstman, I, 35; cf. pp. 55, 70). He earnestly seeks to dissuade his readers from excessive abstinence that may "forbreak their brains," and he bids them be suspicious of visions and dreams (Horstman, I, 12 f., 15 f.).

² Compare, for identical phrase, *Fire of Love*, p. 26, l. 20.

³ This slighting reference to ordinary preaching need not be in the least inconsistent with some preaching on Rolle's own part, — in the rôle of a mystic, however, not of a priest. The sermon before Lady Dalton, that opened his career, and the "*sanctae exhortationes*" mentioned by the *Office*, were doubtless mystical discourses and as unlike ordinary preaching as the mystical treatises were unlike the *Prick of Conscience*. It would be natural that a man who wrote so much should sometimes teach *viva voce*, — to the highest, however, not the lowest in the ranks of piety.

it is, þat mane is not holyar or hear for vtward warkis þat he doys. . . . For, þe more *byrnyngly* þat a man lufys, in so mikyl to hyar reward he ascendis (p. 48, ll. 4 f.).

The writing of such a work as the *Prick of Conscience* must be regarded as analogous to the preaching of the priest in active life here mentioned; it is care of the lowest of the flock. Again Rolle, in the *Fire of Love*, is more specific about the exclusive nature of his contemplative life.

To me treuly it is I-noghe my god to lufe & to hym to cum, sen I may do non oþir nor to þe wark of oþer þinge my-self I fele disposyd bot to lufe criste. And ȝit I cum not to so grete lufe of god as myn eldar fadyrs, þe whilk also many odyr profetabill þingis has done — wharof full gretely I am a-schamyd & in my-self confusyd. O lorde, þerfore my hart make brode þat it may be more abyll þi lufe to persauē (p. 21, ll. 10 f.). Bot with-oute doute [he writes again] emang al a-statis þat ar in þe kyrk, with a speciall gift þa joy þat ar becum contemplatife, in godis lufe now wer þa worþi singandy to Ioy. if any man truly both lifys myght gett, þat is to say contemplatife & actife, & þame keep and fulfyll, he wer full greet, þat he bodily seruys myght fulfyll & neuer-þe-les in hym-self fele heuenly sounde. And in to Ioy of heuynly lufe syngandy he wer *multyn*. I wot not if euer any deedly man had þis; to me impossibil it semys þat both to gidyr be. Criste truly in þis party emonge men is nott to be nowmbyrd, nor his blyst modyr emong wymmen. Criste truly had no scrithyng þoghtis, & contemplatife he was not in comon maner als sayntis in þis lyf ar contemplatife; hym nedyd not treuly labyr als vn nedis, for fro þe begynnynge of his consauēg he sawe gude: . . . He, þerfore, actife life þat sarifis wele, to contemplatif lyfe he is besy to go vp. Qwho truly with gift of heuenly contemplacion in maner forsayd is raysyd, to Actif cums not down, bot if parauntyr he be compellyd, gouernans to take of cristin, — þat seldom or neuer I trow has happynd (p. 49, ll. 18 f.).

It seems incredible that the man who wrote this would devote the time and energy of writing nearly ten thousand lines of verse on most elementary questions of the "active life," Christianity of the "first degree," such as might be the concern of the commonest parish priest.

On the contrary, we should expect him to write such mystical works as actually appear in the five prose treatises, and his conviction about what it would be important to write in general would be well expressed by actual words of Rolle about what it would be important to read. We find in his chapter on reading in the *Mending of Life* (p. 121, ll. 5 f.):

If þou desyre to cum to lufe of god, & in desire be *kyndyld* of heuenly Ioy, & be broght to despisyng of eerþly þingis, be noght necgligent in ȝinkyng

& redynghe holy scripture, moste in þo placis qwher it techis maners & desaytis of þe feynd to eschew, qwher it spekys of godis lufe & of lyfe contemplatyfe.

This rule for profitable reading is exactly followed in what Rolle himself provided for readers. In his *Form of Living* these three subjects make up the whole discourse, — the “sotell craftes and whyaynt of the devil,” “God’s love,” and the contemplative life. Elsewhere in the mystical works the last two are practically the whole subject matter. This is a typical example of Rolle’s “inexorable consistency of word and deed.” The sort of subject he treated in his own mystical writings is that which he specifically and exclusively recommended. That he composed the *Prick of Conscience*, which treats subjects far removed from those specially commended by him, is most improbable.

It seems, moreover, impossible to reconcile the poem with Rolle’s mystical works by any separation of the period of writing of the two products. For, if we believe the *Office* (our only evidence for his life), he was a youth of nineteen at the time he fled from Oxford and embraced the contemplative life. In the *Melum Contemplativum* (even in the title, as may be seen, thoroughly mystical) he calls himself¹ *puer, pusillus, juvenculus*. Our only evidence, therefore, by dating Rolle’s entrance into mysticism very early, denies the *Prick of Conscience* to his early years. Morris hazarded the conjecture that the poem was written late, since we have no manuscript earlier than the middle of the fourteenth century, the time of Rolle’s death.² But it seems unlikely that this mysticism, once begun, ever should abate so that he might write the poem in the latter part of his life. Certainly it was his declared conviction that no one who has once attained the highest degree of love — which is, one must remember, only by special gift of God — ever can slip from that height.³ Further and better evidence against Rolle’s withdrawal from the mystical life is his late connection with the Hampole nuns. According to the *Office* and all tradition, he died as the hermit of Hampole, spiritual counselor to the nunnery, and still mystic, as appears not only from the extracts

¹ According to Horstman (II, xix).

² *Prick of Conscience*, p. iv, note.

³ Cf. *Fire of Love*, p. 49, for the passage already quoted concerning the coming down from contemplative to active life: “that seldom or never I trow has happend.” For Rolle’s mysticism, cf. *Office*, cols. 785, 791, 792, 794, 796, 807, 808.

from the *Fire of Love* inserted in the *Office*, but also from the continual phrases of the responses. We read further (col. 803) :

Verum autem ne lateat homines, maxime eos qui devotis et attentis studiis circa vite perfeccionem adipiscendam insistunt, qualiter et quibus mediis beatus iste Dei zelotipus heremita Ricardus gradum perfecti amoris et caritatis prout promittit status mortalium adeptus est, ita ut omnis alius amor ei vilesceret et horrorem abhominabilem generaret.

This could hardly have been written if, toward the end of his life, he departed from the character in which the nuns, nevertheless, still present him in the *Office*. It is necessary to suppose, since it was those among whom he died who probably composed it, that he died in the full odor of sanctity there described. It does not seem possible to assign the *Prick of Conscience* to an unmystical period of the life of the author of the mystical works before us. Therefore, there seems nothing that can render in any way probable the writing by Richard Rolle of such a work of elementary religion.

VI

If, however, we grant the improbable, and agree that such an uninspired task as the *Prick of Conscience* might have been chosen by the hermit of Hampole, even then it is hard to admit that this particular poem could ever have been the work of such an author. One must believe that the life and personality of the writer, when so distinctive and absorbing as in the case of Richard Rolle, would influence those passages of the work where that particular life and personality might naturally be described. In a large poem of Christian theology, like the *Prick of Conscience*, it might be supposed that any strongly marked type of Christian might find occasion in which to interpolate some of his characteristic doctrines. In Rolle's *Psalter*, which, though appropriate in material, as a translation could never be entirely characteristic, this is what actually did happen. The mystical passages there are abundant and thoroughly consistent in all points with the original mystical work of Rolle. They come in part, to be sure, from the source of his *Psalter*, the commentary of Peter Lombard. But since that work was a compilation from many Church Fathers, so that several interpretations usually appeared for each text, Rolle's choice even in what he

decided to translate, must be seen to be significant for his character and method. For wherever he carried over a mystical passage from his source, he left unnoticed other unmystical material. He never made use of all the material gathered by Peter Lombard. As a matter of fact, more often than not, the mystical passages that appear in the *Psalter* are not really derived from his commentary. Sometimes they are expansions of a word or a phrase really found there, but in very many cases they are interpolations. This treatment is so characteristic of the unoriginal work of Rolle, and so instructive in its unlikeness to the *Prick of Conscience*, another unoriginal work ascribed to him, that we shall now study it in some of its details. This study will not by any means exhaust the consideration of the relation of the *Psalter* toward the mystical life, for the mystical material there is so abundant as to preclude any possibility of full examination here. However, a few notable examples will suffice to show a significant contrast to the short but exhaustive account of the mystical passages in the *Prick of Conscience*, to which we shall proceed — a contrast more illuminating perhaps than anything else with respect to the whole question of the authorship of the poem.

The following passages from the *Psalter* are instructive in exhibiting Rolle's use of his sources for that work.¹

¹ Middendorff says (p. 53): "Die Uebersetzung ist im Allgemeinen eine wörtliche zu nennen. An manchen Stellen ist dieselbe sehr steif, weil sie sich gar zu eng an das Latein anschliesst. Wo z. B. im Latein ein abl. abs. war, tritt auch in der Uebersetzung eine absolute Participialkonstruktion ein. Petrus Lombardus reicht fast überall aus, und das Wenige, was von ihm abweicht, ist entweder Eigenes von Richard, oder hier und da den Schriften anderer Kirchenlehrer entnommen. Hin und wieder hat Richard auch den Augustinus, Cassiodorius, Remigius, Rufinus, Beda und einige spätere Commentare nachgeschlagen" (p. 27). Middendorff (pp. 28-45) has printed entire the passages from Peter Lombard and other authorities used by Rolle for the Prologue and Psalms X, XVIII, XXXIX, LI, XC, XCIX, CXXIX, CL. He also prints the sources for some single passages. Reference has been made, for the uses of this paper, directly to Peter Lombard in the case of certain passages not treated by Middendorff, the likeness of which to Rolle's mystical work has seemed especially striking. In such cases there may be sources for Rolle's *Psalter* outside Peter Lombard. But that seems improbable in all instances, since Rolle rarely, according to Middendorff, went so far for his material. Since, moreover, the passages are strikingly consistent with Rolle's mystical work, they would seem to disprove such statements concerning the *Psalter* as that in the *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* (II, 53): "It is really a translation of Peter Lombard's Commentary and is therefore devoid of originality and personal touches."

Prologue : The first extract is at first pretty carefully translated, though some transpositions occur. A characteristic expansion is found at the end of the passage.

Ignem spiritalem in corde succendit,
omnium vitiorum sollicitudinem tollit.¹

[The *Psalms*] *Kyndils* thaire willes
with the *fyre of luf*; makand thaim
hate and brennand withinen & faire
and lufy in crystis eghen. And thaim
that lastes in thaire deuocioun: thai
rays thaim in til contemplatyf lyf & oft
sith in til soun & myrth of heuen (p. 3).

Hic enim describuntur praemia bono-
rum . . . perfectio pervenientium, vita
activorum, speculatio contemplativo-
rum.²

Thare in is discryved the medes of
goed men . . . the perfeccioun of haly
men, the whilk passis til heven. the
lyf of actyf men, the meditacioun of
contemplatifs & the ioy of contem-
placioun, the heghest that may be in
man lifand in body & feland (p. 4).

Psalm XVIII, 12: Nequit dici . . . in
custodiendis illis in futuro reddetur
praemium.³

Ffor na man may tell the mykilnes
of his ioy that enterly gifes him til
godis luf and for the keypyng of thaim
is mede withouten end (p. 71).

Psalm XXXIX, 3-4: *Statuit, inquam,*
pedes meorum, et direxit gressus eo-
rum; et hoc modo immisit in os
meum, id est, meorum, scilicet, et in
os cordis et in os corporis canticum
novum, . . . quod est carmen, id est,
laus Deo; . . . Ut novum canticum
nemo nisi innovatus cantare praesu-
*mat.*⁴

When he had taken me fra syn & fra
all bisynes of erth, and stabild me in
luf and vertus thain he sent in til the
mouth of my hert and of my body
alswa a new sange, that is the melody
of the tone of heuen, that nane may
syng bot his derlyngs, for it is ympyn,
that is, verray louyng, til oure god:
for god anly wate it, and nane may be
heghid thar of for louyng of men, for
men may not know how it is (p. 146).

¹ Middendorff, p. 28. The passage here quoted by Middendorff from the *Commentary on the Psalter* of St. Augustine does not occur in Migne's edition of that work. Similar passages, sometimes using identical phrases, are found there, in a Prologue said by Migne not to occur in all copies of the Commentary.

² Middendorff, p. 29; Migne, CXCI, col. 40.

³ Middendorff, p. 32. This passage is found in Migne, CXCI, col. 212, as follows: "Et ideo non ait, pro custodiendis, sed in custodiendis illis, quia non tantum pro eis in futuro reddetur praemium, sed et hic meorum custodia magnum est gaudium."

⁴ Middendorff, p. 33; Migne, XCIII, col. 693. I quote here directly from Migne.

Psalm XXXVI, 11: *Immolavi in tabernaculo ejus*, id est ecclesia toto orbe diffusa *hostiam vociferationis* vel jubilationis, id est laudis ineffabilis, ut deficiente sermone sola jubilatio restet, et de reliquo *cantabo* Domino, scilicet fecunditate contemplationis, et *psalmum dicam*, id est opus manifestabo. Et est sensus: corde laetabor Domino, et opere et verbis gloriam Dei praedicabo, et factis. . . . Jubilus enim gaudium vel laus est, quod verbis explicari non valet.²

Psalm LXXII, 22: *Quia per eos invidiae inflammatum est cor meum*. id est invidi felicitibus (col. 676).

Psalm XXXV, 9, shows a characteristic interpolation.

Psalm LXXIX, 19, shows an interpolation that may profitably be compared with a passage of Rolle's original English work to show the close relations that his mystical works bear to one another.

In þis ["singular" or 3d] degre es lufe stalworth as dede, & hard as hell. For als dede slas al lyuand thyng in þis worlde, sa perfite lufe slas in a mans sawle all fleschly desyres and erthly couaytise. And als hell spares nocht til dede men, bot tormentes al þat commes þartil, als wa a man þat es in þis degre of lufe, nocht any he forsakes þe wretched solace of þis lyf, bot als wa he couaytes to sofer pynes for goddes lufe.⁸

I offrid in his tabernakile, that is in haly kyrke, the hoste of heghyng of voice: that is, of gastly cryng & lovyng in wondrous ioy, that ioy is & cryng when a haly saule is filid with cristis luf, that makis the thocht to rise in til soun of heuen, or the soun of heuen lightis thar in, and than that man may loue god in heghyng of voice. All the clerkis¹ in erth may nocht ymagyn it, ne wit what it is, bot he that has it and in that i sall syng in dilatible of contemplacyon, thus is sayd in the glose. and i sall say psalme til lorde: that is i sall shew goed dede til his honor (p. 96).

Aswhasay, i am not biglyd with thaire dremys & slepe, for my hert is *enstaummed with fire of cristis luf*, that i fele it *brenand and turnyd in til flawme* (p. 261).

And in this world godis lufers ere drunkynd in the wondrous swetnes of contemplacioun, and gretly dwetyd in the *ardaunt* accesse of cristis luf (p. 129; cf. col. 365).

Thou sall make vs quyk and ay *brenand* in thi seruys, slaand in vs all thyng that lettis vs of thi luf. The luf of god is oure life, if we luf any creature we ere ded. forþi says the wyse man that luf is stalworth as ded. for as ded slas all lifand thyng swa verray luf of god distroyis in oure saules all willis and thochtis and þernyngis of ilke a creature swa that nocht lifis in us bot ihū crist sothely nane other affeccyon than of him has pouere in a saule that dwellis in his luf (p. 297).

¹ Compare the reverential attitude towards clerks in the *Prick of Conscience*.

² Migne, CXC1, col. 272. Other references to "col.," with number following, unless otherwise stated, are to this volume.

⁸ Horstman, I, 63. The line here quoted from the Canticles is, as has already been noted, a favorite with Rolle. It occurs in the same connection once in the

A curious example, noted by Horstman (II, xxxii, n. 2), of the consistency of Rolle's mannerisms occurs in Psalm LXI, — sufficient proof in itself, Horstman believes, for Rolle's authorship of the *Psalter*. Rolle there, at the end of the comment, lapses into a few lines of his typical jerky verse, such as is used in the four songs of the English *Epistles*.

For i wate na bettere wele. than in my thought to fele, the life of his lufynge, of all it is the best. ihū in hert to fest, and ʒerne nane other thynge (p. 215).¹

The interpretations of Sion, Manasses, Israel, etc., as they appear in the *Commentaries* of Rolle and of Peter Lombard, have been followed with some completeness. The result is interesting in showing how completely Rolle carried over into his translated *Commentary* his strong mystical partisanship. The mystic in the *Psalter*, as in the original mystical work, plays the chief part. Sometimes such an interpretation existed in the Latin, sometimes it did not.

Psalm II, 6: *Super Sion montem sanctum ejus. id est super Ecclesiam de Judaeis* (col. 72).

Syon, that is, contemplatif men, the whilke has the eghe of thaire hert ay till heuen, his haly hill (p. 10).

Psalm IX, 11: *Qui habitat in Sion, id est in praesenti Ecclesia, quae nunc per speculum contemplatur Deum. . . . Quia Sion interpretatur speculatio* (col. 134).

In Syon, that is, in halykirke, and in a contemplatif saule, that has ay the eghe vpwarde til him (p. 33).

Psalm XIX, 2: *Sion interpretatur specula vel speculatio* (col. 216).

Of syon, that is, of heghe contemplacioun (p. 72).

Psalm XXXV, 6: *Montes Dei, id est justi tui . . . quia luce veri solis ante alios illustrantur* (col. 363).

Thi rightwisemen ere gastly hilles of god: fore thai ere heghe in contemplacioun & sonere resayues the light of crist (p. 128).

Psalm XLVII, 2: Sion is interpreted in two quotations as "the Jews" (col. 459).

The hill of syon, that is, men heghe in contemplacioun of god (p. 171).

Form of Living (Horstman, I, 39), once in the *Commandment* (here quoted), twice in the *Fire of Love* (p. 22, l. 36; p. 100, l. 33); also in *Encomium Nominis Jesu* (Rolle?) (Horstman, I, 186 f.).

¹ These last three lines, slightly different in reading, occur in the Thornton MS. (see *Thornton Rom.*, p. xxx).

- Psalm XLVII, 10: Sion is interpreted as "Judæa" (col. 462). The hill of syon, that is, saules heghe in contemplatife life (p. 173).
- Psalm LVI, 11: Per *psalterium* . . . una caro Christi intelligitur (col. 531). Psautery, that is, gladnes of thought in life of contemplacioun (p. 203).
- Psalm LIX, 7: Manasses omnis ille est qui oblitus prioris vitæ, in anteriora cum Apostolo se extendit (col. 555). Manasses, that is, contemplatife men, that forgets this warlde, and gifes them haly to christes lufe (p. 212; cf. p. 294).
- Psalm LXVIII, 39: *Laudent illum caeli*, id est apostoli, *et terra*, id est Ecclesia Judæorum, *et mare*, id est gentes (col. 640). Heuen he calles contemplatife men, that ere bright in life, and heghe in godis luf. the erth is actife men, that ere laghe for warldis nedis, the se is tha that ebbis and flowis in fleyssly likyngis (p. 245).
- Psalm LXVIII, 40: *Salvam faciet Sion*, id est Ecclesiam, *salvam* in aeternum (col. 641). Syon is ilke perfite saule, that thynkis on the ioy of heuen, noght of erth, the whilke god sall make safe in endles rest eftire this trauaile ¹(p. 245).
- Psalm LXXI, 10: Et est sensus: *Reges Tharsis*, id est fideles in contemplatione fixi, qui dicuntur reges, quia sunt dominatores vitiorum (col. 662). Kings of tharsis, that is, contemplatife men, that ay lokes til heuen & ar laurds of all ill stirring (p. 254).
- Psalm LXXV, 2: *Sion*, id est in contemplatione futura, quando videbimus eum facie ad faciem (col. 706). In syon, that is, in tha that has ay thaire hert til heuen (p. 270).
- Psalm LXXVI, 19: Nothing is to be found in Peter Lombard about contemplation. In many watirs, that is, in pore men wilfully the whilke ere swete in contemplacioun of god (p. 276).
- Psalm LXXIX, 11: *Cedros Dei*, id est doctores (col. 762). The trese, that is, vertus, couyrd cedirs of god, that is, heghest men in contemplacioun ere hild fra vicys, dwell-and in vertus (p. 295).
- Psalm CXVII, 26. The horn of the altar is here interpreted as the sacrament (col. 1040). Waxand in luf til 3e cum til the horne of the autere, that is, til 3e be raysid in til the heghnes of contemplacioun, whare 3e sall loue god in voice of ioiynge and wondirful devocioun in *brennand* softnes (p. 410).

¹ Rolle's sense of the security of the mystic after death appears well in this passage.

Interpretations of Scripture are very rare in the mystical works of Rolle. In the only ones noticed the contemplative man is honored as in the *Psalter*:

Qwharfore in þe meetbuyrd of trew Salamon þe pilars ar siluer, & his resting-place gold. Pilars of þe chayr ar stronge vpberars And gude gouyrnours of holy kyrk . . . þe resting-place gold ar men contemplatife, in þe whilk in he rest beand, criste specially restis his heed. & þa forsoth in hym syngulerly restis. þis ar goldly, for purare & darrar þa er in honeste of lyfyng, And reddar in *byrnyng of lufyng* and contemplacioun.¹

We read also in the *Form of Living*:

A grete doctor says þat þai er goddes trone þat dwelles still in a stede, and er noht abowte rennand: bot in swetnes of Cristes lufe er stabyld.²

The numerous quotations here presented will be sufficient to show Rolle's method of translation and compilation as operative in the *Psalter*. We have seen exactly what we should expect in the accomplishment of such a task by such a man, — the development and interpolation at every turn of whatever belongs to his own all-absorbing life of mysticism.

VII

Brought into contrast with such an investigation as that we have just left behind us, the investigation of the *Prick of Conscience*, to which we now proceed, will show a very striking dissimilarity. Our conjectures as to the hermit's method of handling material, such as is not his usual choice, will here be disappointed as completely as they were satisfied in the case of the *Psalter*. This detailed study will finish the consideration of the internal evidence regarding our question.

It has been said that the *Prick of Conscience*, as an unoriginal work, imposed much the same sort of a task on its author as did the *Psalter*. The fact of its unoriginal character has been sufficiently determined for our present purposes, whether or not later research may discover that the "drawing" of the work meant a complete translation; for, as I have pointed out, it contains three

¹ *Fire of Love*, p. 48, ll. 40 f.

² Horstman, I, 45. It may be noted that there occurs in the *Fire of Love* (p. 34, ll. 20 f.) an elaborate comparison, in the manner of the lapidaries, of the contemplative man to the topaz.

hundred and fifty-four direct quotations, as well as the many unacknowledged quotations traced by Dr. Köhler in his article on its sources.¹ Since the *Psalter* appears less original than the *Prick of Conscience*, the author's peculiarities ought to appear more largely in the latter.

But in the nearly ten thousand lines of the *Prick of Conscience* there is absolutely no treatment of the mystical life. The words "contemplative" and "contemplation," omnipresent in the *Psalter* and the mystical works, cannot be found once. The hermit is but once mentioned. It is said that there will be seen in heaven

Innocentes many ane
Of whilk som was, in Goddes name slane,
And other martyrs and confessours,
And haly heremytes and doctours. (P. 235, ll. 8721 f.)

"Holy men" and "perfect men" are several times referred to casually, without, it seems, any particular intention of classifying. Such references, including the vaguest, do not reach a dozen. In one of them, a passage already quoted from the description of heaven, the mystical life is perhaps referred to:

þat hille es noght els bi understanding,
Bot haly thocht and *brynard* yhernyng,
þat haly men had here to þat stede. (P. 244, ll. 9059 f.)

We read also:

Bot parfit men, þat þair lif right ledes,
Welthe of þe worlde ay fiese and dredes. (P. 36, ll. 1289 f.)

Again we read of

Haly men and parfit,
þat with hym in dome þan sal sitt. (P. 153, ll. 5635 f.)
þa þat sal deme and noght demed be,
Sal be parfit men with God privé, . . .
First þas þat with Crist sal deme þat day
And noght be demed, er namly þai
þat here forsuke þe werldes solace,
And folowed rightly Cristes trace,
Als his apostels and other ma,
þat for his luf tholed angre and wa. (P. 163, ll. 6024 f.)

¹ R. Köhler, *Quellennachweise zu Richard Rolle von Hampole's Gedichte The Pricke of Conscience* (*Jahrb. für Rom. und Eng. Lit.*, VI, 196-212). Mr. Whitney (*Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, II, 55) speaks of the *Prick of Conscience* as a "popular summary of current mediæval theology, borrowed from Grosseteste and others."

This passage on the Judgment Day well serves to disclose the real vagueness of meaning in "perfect men" as used in the *Prick of Conscience*. For these "perfect men" here turn out to be the virtuous of any sort, in the active life as well as in the contemplative. If meant as references to mysticism, they are utterances astonishingly vague and objective for a mystic so accomplished as Richard Rolle shows himself to be throughout his other writings. Indeed, it seems almost more improbable that he could so control his feelings and neglect his opportunities as to refer in this way to his vocation, than that he could have kept silent on the subject altogether. At all events, hardly a half dozen of such passages as these are the only ones in the *Prick of Conscience* that can be construed as having reference to mysticism.

VIII

We have noted the lack in the *Prick of Conscience* of the favorite references of Richard Rolle to the mystical life. We can now go even farther and find the presence there of statements distinctly opposed to the mystical doctrines or to Richard Rolle's individual opinions. The poem differs from the mystical work that we are considering in its treatment of learning, of the sovereign virtue, of salvation, and of death.

The attitude of Rolle's mystical writings toward clerical learning has already been somewhat brought out. It may now be further illustrated. We read in the *Fire of Love*:

Alas, for schame! an olde wyfe of goddis lufe¹ is more expert, & les of worldly likynge, þen þe grete deyin, whos stody is wayne (p. 13, ll. 25 f.). — þis boke I offyr to be sene, noȝt to philisophys nor wyes men of þis warld, ne to grete devyens lappyd in questions infenyte, bot vnto boystus & vntaght, more besy to con lufe god þen many þinges to knawe² (p. 3, ll. 22 f.). — Let them fle all erthely dignyte, þat þai hate all pryde of connyng & vayn-glory (ll. 32 f.). —

¹ This exclamation is, of course, not original with Rolle. One may compare St. Augustine's Confessions: "A Christian old woman is wiser than these philosophers." It is also related of the Franciscan Giles that once he praised Bonaventura's learning, and Bonaventura answered that a poor little old woman could love God more than a master in theology. Giles, thereupon, ran to a window and shouted out to an old woman who was passing, her possibilities of greatness (*Golden Sayings of the Blessed Giles*, ed. Robinson, Philadelphia, 1907, p. xxix).

² The Prologue, in which this sentence occurs, is, as has already been noted, an exact translation from Bonaventura.

Lat no coueytys of worschip, fauyr or mens praysynge sett vs to conynge of scripture, . . . not to be haldyn connyng a-nens þe pepull, bot rap̄er vs aw to hyde our conynge þen schew it to praysynge.¹ — Many now sauours in so mykill in *brynnynge* of connyng & noȝt of lufe, þat playnly what luf is, or of what sauour, þai know noȝt, þof all þer labour of all þer stody þame aght to sprede vnto þis ende þat þai myȝt *byrne in goddis lufe*.² — But (of love) he has takyn wysdome & sotelte, . . . þofe he a foyll & vnwyse before wer haldyn. . . . Bot taght by connyng gettyn, not inscheed, & bolnyd with foldyn Argumentis, in þis disdene sayand: "qwher lernyd he, qwho reed him?" for þai trow not þat lufers of endles lufe of þer inward maister myȝt be taght to speek better þen þai of men taght, þat at all tymes for vayn worschip has stodyd.³ — Reading belongs to the lower part of the contemplative life. þe þare noȝt couayte gretely many bokes: halde lufe in hert, & in werke, and þou hase all þat we may say or wryte: for fulnes of þe law es charite; in þat hynges all.⁴

To these statements the *Prick of Conscience* affords great contrasts. The whole purpose of that book, dwelt on at length in the Prologue, is in entire disagreement with the convictions of Rolle expressed above. If man wishes to be higher than "an unskilful beast, þat nother has skil, witt, ne mynde," his only hope lies in knowledge of all the facts of human life. Indeed, several manuscripts name the poem from this central idea. The variant titles of "Clauis Scientie," and "A Treatise of Knowing Man's Self," have already been noted. But the version of MS. Cotton Galba E. IX is itself specific enough in emphasizing its principal purpose, as regeneration through education of the mind.

For þe right way þat lyggus til blys,
 And þat ledys a man theder, es þys;
 þe way of mekenes principaly,
 And of drede, and luf of God almyghty,
 þat may be cald þe way of wysdom;
 In-tyl whilk way na man may com
 Wyth-outen knawying of God here,
 And of his myght, and his werkes sere,
 Bot here he may til þat knawying wynne.
 Hym behoves know him-self with-inne,
 Elles may he haf na knawing to come
 In-til þe forsayde way of wysedome. (P. 5, ll. 139 f.)

Bot na wonder es, yf þai ga wrang
 For in myrknes of unkawying þai gang,
 Wyth-outen lyght of understanding

¹ *Mending of Life*, p. 121, ll. 17 f.

² *Fire of Love*, p. 13, ll. 22 f.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 74, ll. 21 f.

⁴ Horstman, I, 35.

Of þat, þat falles til ryght knawynge.
 þar-for ilk cristen man and weman
 þat has witte and mynd, and skille can,
 þat knaws nocht þe ryght way to chese,
 Ne þe perils þat ilk wise man flese,
 Suld be bughsom ay, and bysy
 To here and lere of þam, namely,
 þat understands and knawes by skille,
 Wilk es gude way and wilk es ille. (P. 6, ll. 193 f.)

With this introduction the book proceeds on its way of information. It was influenced, doubtless, by the conventional theory that wisdom was the seventh and highest of the virtues and the first of the joys of heaven.¹ Facts of clerical learning are, at any rate, its prime weapons of attack against the sinner. Such, indeed, constituted its originality, when viewed over against such a work as the *Ayenbite of Inwyrt*, with its simple analysis of sin and virtue. The contrast here between the *Prick of Conscience* and the mystical writings is a vital one.

The quotations from the mystical treatises in the preceding paragraphs have shown to some extent Rolle's choice of the sovereign virtue. The essential to spirituality is love. That is the typical virtue of the mystic, in which Rolle is not lacking. It is the most conspicuous theme of the *Office*, where it is well said: "Amor thema fit doctrine et celestis discipline" (col. 807). Its constant repetition there shows its prominent connection with Rolle shortly after his own day. It is described on nearly every page of his mystical writings:

For mekenes makes vs swete to god, Purete ioynes vs tyll god, Lufe mase vs ane with god: luf es fairhede of al vertus. . . . Lufe es perfection of letters, vertu of prophecy, frute of trowth, help of sacramentes, stablyng of witt and conyng; Ryches of pure men, lyfe of dyand men. Se how gude lufe es.²

A quotation of the whole of this passage would show not only the preëminent position of love in Rolle's religion, but also the virtues of his English prose.

¹ Professor Schofield has kindly called my attention to lines by Gower (*Conf. Am.*, vii, 15), of a similar tenor to the *Prick of Conscience*:

For wisdom is at every throwe
 Above all other thing to knowe
 In loves cause and elleswhere.

² Horstman, I, 36.

The *Prick of Conscience*, if less specifically exclusive than the mystical works in designating its sovereign virtue, is yet sufficiently definite in not making it love. One passage has already been quoted, declaring that the

Right way þat lyggus til blys,
And þat ledys a man theder, es þys;
þe way of mekenes principaly,
And of drede, and luf of God almyghty,
þat may be cald þe way of wysdom. (P. 5, ll. 139 f.)

Meekness, dread, and love are the three general first requisites of a Christian, but among them meekness, as the first of the cardinal virtues, bears the leading part usually apportioned to it in the Middle Ages. In the *Prick of Conscience* this conventional position is consistently kept, while in the mystical writings it is but vaguely referred to by the way; as when, for example, we are reminded of it by the declaration that

In þe self degree, þar prowde deuels fel downe fra, er meke men and wymen,
Criste dowves sett.¹

Thus, in a general way, the conventional position is once or twice recognized, at the same time that it is discarded for the mystical. The *Prick of Conscience*, as has been said, knows nothing beyond the conventional doctrine:

Swa may he tyttest come to mekenes,
þat es grund of al vertus to last,
On whilk al vertus may be sette faste. (P. 6, ll. 208 f.)

Ffor tulle þe kyngdom of heven may no man com
Bot he ga bi þe way of wisdom;
þe way of wysdom es mekenes
And other virtuse, mare and les. (P. 203, ll. 7541 f.)

Tulle þat ioyfulle lyf may alle men com
þat meke of hert er here, and bowsom. (P. 219, ll. 8147 f.)

The gates of the New Jerusalem signify meekness,

And fredom of ryght fayth and bowsomnes,
þat gyfes way and entré tulle men boghsom,
Intulle þe ceté of heven for to com. (P. 245, ll. 9097 f.)

We are once told that this book is written to stir to "love and dread" (p. 255, l. 9486). We are again told that it is written to

¹ Horstman, I, 51.

Pryk and stirre a mans conscience,
 And til mekenes and luf and drede it dryfe,
 For to bring hym til ryght way of lyfe. (P. 257, ll. 9572 f.)

It may his conscience tendre make,
 And til right way of rewel bryng it bilyfe,
 And his hert til drede and mekenes dryfe,
 And til luf and yhernyng of heven blis. (P. 257, ll. 9554 f.)

The only trace of Rolle's doctrine of the preëminent necessity of love appears when we are told, as Rolle tells us, that position in heaven depends on the degree of love on earth (p. 248, l. 9232). Since the writer of the *Prick of Conscience* gathered all sorts of material into his work, we have here included, along with the conventional doctrine of the preëminence of the cardinal virtue meekness, a trace of the mystical doctrine of the preëminence of the virtue love. But it is the conventional doctrine that receives all the emphasis.

Naturally associated with Rolle's mystical doctrine of love as the cardinal virtue, goes his doctrine of salvation by love and not by works. The declaration that "in charity hangs all" has already been quoted.

The diversity of love is the diversity of meed.¹ Love is in the heart and will of a man, not in his hand, nor in his mouth, that is to say, not in his work, but in his soul.² — Not to doars, bot to godis lufars is plente of heuenly crowne.³ — Good works are but a sign of love, not love.⁴

This was the common mystical version of the doctrine of "salvation by faith," which, of course, was the orthodox Augustinian doctrine of the Church; but many writings of the time show the influence⁵ of the Pelagian heresy then popular, teaching salvation by works. This influence appears in the *Prick of Conscience*. Though the author arranges heaven according to the diversity of love, though he declares that the way to bliss lies through meekness, yet he is continually betrayed into expressions favoring the doctrine of "salvation by works." We read of the way to heaven in a passage already quoted (p. 203, ll. 7539 f.) :

¹ Horstman, I, 29.

² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

³ *Fire of Love*, p. 39, l. 38.

⁴ Horstman, I, 38-39.

⁵ Professor Schofield has called my attention to the contrast between *The Pearl* and *Piers Plowman* in regard to the theory of salvation. For the position of *The Pearl*, see the valuable article of Professor Brown, "The Author of *The Pearl*," *Pub. Mod. Lang. Ass.*, XIX, 128 ff.

Bot whasa wille tak þe way þider-ward,
Behoves in gud werkes travaille hard;
Ffor tulle þe kyngdom of heven may no man com
Bot he ga bi þe way of wisdom.

The effect particularly hoped for from the book (p. 10, l. 335) is that the reader may "wirk gude werkes and fle foli." We read (p. 153, l. 5635) of those "haly men and perfit þat with hym in dome þan sal sitt," which has been quoted as a possible reference to the contemplative man who is to occupy that position with Rolle. But that no particular distinction of the kind was understood we see when we read:

Som sal nocht deme, bot demed be
Til blis, als men of grete charité
þat blethely wirk wald þe werkes of mercy,
And keped þam here fra syn dedly. (P. 164, ll. 6049 f.)

God has ordained heaven

for þair wonyng,
þat gyfes þam here tulle rightwise lyfyng. (P. 209, ll. 7769.)

The importance of good deeds appears also from the description of the judgment of every deed, every minute of life, to which all mortals are to be subjected at Doomsday by all devils and multitudes of all other creatures.

Richard Rolle is certainly not without his counsels to righteous living. "Stify put thee from all deadly sins"¹: that counsel belongs to the first degree of love requisite to all that would be saved. But he is never so unguarded as to recommend good works without subordinating their importance to that of love. The resultant impression of the author's opinion in the *Prick of Conscience*, confused as it is, is certainly that he had strong leanings toward the doctrine of "salvation by works."

In the account of the Last Judgment and the description of death appears a further striking contrast between the *Prick of Conscience* and Rolle's mystical writing. We are told in the *Fire of Love* that all true contemplative men (and, by implication, the writer himself) may, at their death, enjoy absolute security as to the Day of Judgment.

On þys wyse sothely is mane made parfyt & with fyer to be purgyd hym
sall not neyd aftyr þis lyfe qwhome *byrmandly* in flesche beand *fyre byrnys of*

¹ Horstman, I, 53.

þe holy goost (p. 50, ll. 31 f.). — Parfytte forsoth when þai dy, before god onone þai ar broght & sett in setys of blistful rest (p. 61, ll. 25 f.). — After dede sothely to aungels songe he is takyn, for now in musyk of the spirit purgyd & profet- and he dwellis. And forsoth in melody ful meruellus he sall dy (p. 38, l. 24).

Such is the secure and happy end of the mystic. His life is not "dread," as the *Prick of Conscience* would enjoin, but "joy that cannot be told."

Owȝ doctors say: parfyte aw to greit & þe more parfite more plenteuus of tenys þai suld be, for wrechidnes of þis lyfe & for þe delay of heuenly lyfe: to me certain a wondyrfull longynge in godis lufe was nere (p. 97, ll. 33 f.).

Only his longing for death makes his regret.

This longing for death is expressed hardly less constantly and extravagantly than the theme of love. Death, indeed, to the mystic is the consummation of love.

Now grauntt, my best belouyd, þat I may cese; for dede, þat many drede, to me suld be als heuenly musyk (p. 39, ll. 5 f.). — þan þe wil thynk þe deed swet- tar þan hony, for þan þou ert ful syker, to se hym þat þou lufes.¹

We read in the *Office* (col. 797):

Solvi cupit a carnis carcere, clamat, mors veni, festina propere. . . . Dulcis mors, en diu langui, fac me meo dilecto perfrui: Curre.

Apostrophes and welcoming ejaculations to death, as has been noted, are frequent in the mystical writings. We have the long song in *Ego Dormio*, the largest of the four lyrics that are to be attributed to Rolle as the only sure examples of his poetry. The whole song, called a "song of love," is really a pleading for death.

My sange es in syhtyng,
My lyfe es in langynge,
Til I þe se my keyng,
So fayre in þi schyning.
So fayre in þi fayrehede:
In til þi lyght me lede,
And in þi lufe me fede:
In lufe make me to spede,
þat þou be euer my mede.²

It goes on for a column and a half with the same mixture of metres and constant alliteration.

The two passages in the *Prick of Conscience* as to longing for

¹ Horstman, I, 32.

² *Ibid.*, I, 60. Horstman prints the poem without separating the lines.

death have already been mentioned. The longer one (p. 60, ll. 2176 f.) tells us that

Haly men yherned to dyghe
For to be with God in heven hyghe.

There follows a short consideration of their expressions concerning death, but the conclusion of the whole is (p. 61, ll. 2206 f.):

Bot alle-yf haly men may digh wele,
Yhit þe payn of dede byhoves þam fele,
þat es mare þan man can ymagyn. . . .
For sen Crist, als I sayd befor, had dred
Of the ded, thurgh kynd of his manhed,
þan aght ilkman, bathe mare and les,
Drede þe dede here þat swa bitter es.

Hints of comfortable doctrine are but chance gatherings into the great commonplace book of the *Prick of Conscience*. They are beside the main purpose and, in the general impression, altogether lost sight of. We have the two passages and the scanty references already noted, concerning those holy men that shall judge and not be judged at the Last Day. But a whole book of the poem is given up to the consideration of the terrors of death, which are there stated without any quarter to any soul alive.

Ded es þe mast dred thing þat es
In all þis world, als þe boke witnes;
Ffor here es na qwyk creature lyfand
þat it ne es for þe ded dredand
And flese þe ded ay whils it may. (P. 46, ll. 1666 f.)

For swa wyse and witty man es nane,
þat wate, when þe dede him has tane,
For certayn, whederward he sal ga,
Whether he sal wend til wele or wa. (P. 70, ll. 2574 f.)

There appears here no dying to music, such as Rolle describes; instead devils come to make horrible all deathbeds, —

Sen haly men þat here liffed right
Mught noght dygh with-uten þat sight,
Ne godys moder þat he loffed mare. (P. 63, ll. 2284 f.)

So the poem goes on in its sensational method of scaring the sinner into repentance. Clearly neither the author of the book nor the public for which it was written had any understanding of the mystical attitude towards death.

IX

We must conclude, in general, that the author of the *Prick of Conscience* had no conception of the mystical theory. In this paper an effort has been made to show his divergencies from it in the essential matters of the value of learning, of the sovereign virtue, of the means of salvation, of security at the Judgment Day, and of attitude towards death. In all he seems to show himself totally at odds with the mystical conceptions. When, in stray sentences, he refers to the mystic, or to mystical doctrines, his objective manner completes the impression that these were but chance findings in the academic labor of compiling his commonplace book. His true purpose is to create a corpus of clerical facts that may drive the reader into virtue through "dread" and "prick of conscience." The theme of his book, his way to bliss and to the prime virtues of meekness, love, and dread, is wisdom. The theme of Rolle's book, his way to bliss, and at once his prime virtue, is love. His work is not a commonplace book, negligently collected here and there, but an impassioned apology for his own vocation; the earnestness of his purpose fuses his material in his own "fire," and touches it with his own experience, whether, in the first place, it was original or borrowed. Herein lies the total discrepancy between the two groups, — a discrepancy the more notable since Rolle's mystical writings not only further exclusively their own doctrine of love, but expressly deny the doctrine of wisdom urged by the *Prick of Conscience*. The many minor differences follow in the wake of this vital one. The general purposes of the two works are therein involved. The sum of all the differences seems to be so great that it is impossible to harmonize them for one writer; nor can it seem likely that the author of the mystical tracts — above all, of the *Psalter* — could ever have translated from the Latin the *Prick of Conscience* as we have that work.

It is not hard to understand all the confusing consequences of the general, confident assumption of Rolle's authorship of the poem. Dissertations have been written attempting, by tests of language, etc., drawn from the most notable piece of literature ascribed to him, to determine the validity of the attribution of various works to Rolle.¹ But such circular argument is the lesser evil consequence.

¹ Cf. Ullmann already quoted; Franz Kühn, *Ueber die Verfasserschafts Lyrischen Gedichten aus Horstman's Sammlung*, Griefswald, 1900; Adler and Kaluza, "Studien zu Richard Rolle de Hampole," *Eng. Stud.*, X, 215 f.

The greater is, that Rolle's true character as a mystic is largely obscured by his false reputation as the author of the *Prick of Conscience*. That work furnishes, as has been shown, the material for most of his portion in the histories of literature. The resultant impression is distorted enough, and, as a corollary, he is entirely omitted from the histories of mysticism,¹ where he justly should occupy an important place. The exact documents descriptive of the mystical process to be found in his writings are entirely neglected by psychologists. Mr. Inge, in his *History of Christian Mysticism*, does not mention Rolle, though he treats Walter Hylton, reputed to have been his follower, at some length. Both Walter Hylton and Juliana of Norwich are discussed in separate essays in Mr. Inge's later *Studies in Mysticism*. The work of Walter Hylton, in a modernized form, has been edited twice in recent years by Roman Catholic priests. Richard Rolle, meantime, rests under the shadow of the *Prick of Conscience*. How uncertain and improbable it is that he ever wrote that work must surely now be evident. The ascription to him rests principally on the passage in Lydgate, written long after Rolle's death; and that passage says nothing more certain than that "Richard Hermit" translated the poem.

X

In 1884 J. Ullmann printed an article² concerning the contents of Cambridge University MS. Ll. I. 8. This manuscript contains two pieces, both there ascribed to Richard Rolle: a poem on the Pater Noster, commonly called the *Speculum Vitae*, or *Mirror of Life*, and said to have been translated by one William of Nassington from the Latin of John de Waldeby; and a prose Meditation on the Passion, elsewhere ascribed to Rolle.³ The first three hundred and seventy lines of the *Speculum Vitae* (the whole of which does not exist in print) is quoted by Ullmann at the end of his article. He prints the Meditation entire. The main part of his paper is taken up with an attempt to prove the truth of the attribution of the poem also, as given in the manuscript before him, to the

¹ An exception is the *Thomas à Kempis* of J. E. G. De Montmorency (London, 1906, pp. 69-73, 75, 76, 90), where Rolle takes his place among other fourteenth- and fifteenth-century mystics. Part of the picture of Rolle in MS. Faustina B. VI is there reproduced.

² *Eng. Stud.*, VII, 415 f.

³ Published also by Horstman, I, 83, and referred to above.

hermit of Hampole. The Meditation, which is mystical in character, thoroughly consistent, be it said, with Rolle's other mystical work, Ullmann notes as very unlike the *Speculum Vitae*:

Diese [the latter] einen ganz anderen ton athmen als die vorliegende Meditatio, so dass sich aus dem sth allein nicht wohl ein schluss auf den autor machen liesse (p. 419).

Ullmann, therefore, makes no attempt to establish Rolle's authorship of the Meditation, but he finds that the *Speculum Vitae* may be profitably compared with the *Prick of Conscience*, then, except for the treatises of the Thornton MS., the only work of Rolle in print.¹ By his exhaustive comparison of the *Speculum Vitae* with the *Prick of Conscience* he believes that he has proved the identity of authorship of the two works; that is, since the latter poem is commonly given to Richard Rolle, he believes that he has proved the correctness of the attribution to Rolle in the manuscript before him of the former also.

The *Speculum Vitae*, as here described by Ullmann and illustrated in his quotations, does seem extremely like the *Prick of Conscience*. An exhaustive comparison of the two works has not been made,² but sufficient examples have been cited to support Ullmann's statement that in both "zahlreiche verse, ja ganze stellen grosse anklänge und fast wörtliche übereinstimmungen zeigen" (p. 429). He appears justified in believing as he does, in the "übereinstimmungen beider gedichte in bezug auf dialekt, stil und geist." Kölbing, under whose direction Ullmann studied, accepts

¹ Two of these treatises — the only published mystical work then ascribed to Rolle — have since been shown to be probably by Walter Hylton. The treatise on the *Mixed Life*, before mentioned as presenting a less extreme attitude towards the mystical life than Rolle's, is one that formerly, on the authority of Canon Perry, went under Rolle's name. Three of the Thornton treatises printed by Canon Perry as Rolle's, of which this was one, were not ascribed to the hermit in the manuscript.

² Ullmann does not seem always to exhaust the evidence for the similarity of the two poems, contained in the quotations that he gives. He says nothing, for example, of the similarity of metre, which is amply illustrated in his extracts. Ten Brink noted that the author of the *Prick of Conscience*, "unlike most Northern poets, does not trouble himself at all about the number of syllables. The verses of his short couplets have always four accents, but often more than four unemphatic syllables" (*Hist. Eng. Lit.*, 1, 297). The same peculiarity may be noted in the author of the *Speculum Vitae*. Moreover, the *Speculum Vitae*, like the *Prick of Conscience*, apparently contains in its Epilogue several layers of conclusion (see

his conclusions.¹ Mr. Whitney, in the *Cambridge History of English Literature* (II, 52), referring probably to the *Prick of Conscience* and the *Speculum Vitae*, remarks of Rolle that "followers such as William Nassynton imitated him in poems hard to distinguish from Rolle's own." Apparently, then, Ullmann proves that Rolle is the author of the *Speculum Vitae* if he also wrote the *Prick of Conscience*.

The poem which Ullmann here attempts to give to Richard Rolle is, of course, a well-known work. As has already been stated, it is usually ascribed to William of Nassington. This is from the authority of the following note sometimes affixed to it, in which the author begs

That ȝe wald pray specialy
For Freere Johan saule of Waldby,
That fast studyd day and nyght,
And made this tale in Latyne right, &c.
Prayes also w^t deucion
For William saule of Nassyngtone,
That gaf hym als fulle besyly
Night and day to grete study
And made this tale in Inglys tonge,
Prayes for hyme old and ȝonge.²

Ullmann, in his attempt to prove Rolle the author of the *Speculum Vitae*, tries to disprove (p. 421) Nassington's authorship

Ullmann, p. 419). Again, the closing couplet is practically the same in both poems. The *Prick of Conscience* concludes:

Til whilk place he us alle bryng,
pat for us vouched safe on rode to hyng. (Ll. 9623-9624.)

The *Speculum Vitae* concludes:

To qwilk blis he us alle brynge,
pat an þe crosse for us wold hyng.
(MS. Ll. I. 36—quoted from the catalogue of manuscripts.)

Other peculiarities, unnoticed by Ullmann, though common to both works, have been noted above.

¹ *Eng. Stud.*, XXIV, 276.

² This ending from Reg. MS. 17 C. VIII is quoted from Warton-Hazlitt (III, 116, n. 2). Ullmann quotes the corresponding passage from his manuscript as follows:

At þis tyme wyle I no more say,
But ȝe þat han herd þis, I ȝow pray,
pat ȝe pray for hem, boþe olde and junge,
pat turnyd þis boke into Englysch tunge,
Where sere þei be and in what stede,
Wheþer þei lyue or þei be dede,
And ȝe þat prayen for oure travayle,
Of mede for hem schulen ȝe nouȝt fayle. (200^a, 33^r, p. 420.)

by quoting the note of Sir Frederic Madden, found on the Reg. MS. 17 C. VIII, stating that the attribution to Nassington is made in only two manuscripts. Eighteen manuscripts¹ of the poem can easily be traced. Eight or nine others are mentioned, but cannot be traced from the fact of their belonging to private collections or having changed libraries or numbers.²

Who the William of Nassington may be, to whom the *Speculum Vitae* has been commonly ascribed, has never been determined. Horstman summarily assigns to him various works, and concludes (II, 274):

So we have in him another Yorkshire poet of Richard Rolle's time, and his follower; but he is rather an easy versifier and translator, than an original thinker and poet.

Warton, without giving his reasons, stated that there were two Williams of Nassington:

To this period belong two persons, who had the same name in common, and who have been consequently confounded — two writers known as William of Nassington. One wrote a treatise *De Trinitate et Unitate*; the other, who was a proctor in the ecclesiastical court at York, translated into English John de Waldeby's *Myroure of Life*.³

¹ These are as follows: Stowe MS. 951; Addit. MSS. 22,283, 22,558, 33,995; Sloane MS. 1785; Harl. MS. 435; Trinity Coll. Camb. MSS. 593, 603; Univ. Lib. Camb. MSS. Ff. IV. 9, Gg. I. 7, Gg. I. 14, Ii. 36, Ll. I. 8; Tiber. MS. E. VII; Rawl. MSS. A. 356, C. 884, C. 890; Vernon MS. A note in Warton-Hazlitt (III, 118) remarks that "Lord Ashburnham is said to possess the best manuscript." Horstman (II, 340) states that Tiber. MS. E. VII "of about 1350 is the oldest and probably the original manuscript." MS. Ii. 36 of the Univ. Lib. Camb. (dated 1423) contains a note describing the successful examination of the poem to clear it from heresy, at Cambridge in 1384. The same note is quoted by Halliwell (*Thornton Romances*, p. xx) from "MS. Bodl. 446." Dr. Furnivall (*Notes and Queries*, 4th series, III, 169) gives a quotation from the *Speculum Vitae* as found in "Mr. Corser's manuscript," where it is called *Liber de Pater Noster per Johannem Kylyngwyke*.

² Ritson (*Bibl. Poet.*, p. 63) refers, under Hylton's name, to "certain pious contemplations in English rime and a Northern dialect which are extant in the Cotton Library" (Faust. B. VI. 22). Ritson notes: "It is presumed the catalogue-maker had some authority for ascribing his poem to Hylton, whose name, however, does not occur in it." In the copy of Ritson once belonging to Sir Frederic Madden, now in the Harvard Library, occurs the following manuscript note on the same passage: "There appears to be no authority. The poem is chiefly taken from Nassington's (*alias* Hampole's improperly?) *Myroure* adapted to the allegory of a Forest, etc." This is the manuscript from which the portrait of Rolle is reproduced. It contains other portraits of nuns and hermits.

³ Warton-Hazlitt, III, 116 f. Warton gives a quotation from the *Speculum Vitae*, pp. 117-118.

The poem *De Trinitate et Unitate*,¹ here mentioned, occurs in the Thornton MS., where a note is found with it giving the information regarding William of Nassington's position as a proctor at York. This, our only piece of information regarding that person, is therefore connected with the first of Warton's two Williams of Nassington. The note runs as follows :

*Incipit tractatus Willelmi Nassyngtone quondam advocati curiae Eboraci, de Trinitate et Unitate, cum declaracione operum Dei et de Passione Domini nostri Jhesu Christi, etc.*²

A careful study of the records reveals considerable evidence as to the existence of one or more Williams of Nassington in the fourteenth century. One, who was the chaplain of John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter, can be traced with considerable completeness from the accession of the bishop in 1326 to his own death in 1359.³ He was described in a letter to the abbot of Warden Abbey (perhaps fifty miles from Nassington in Northampton) as "originaliter vobis non extraneus sed vicinus"; he was also said to be "utroque jure instructus." He held many benefices and, in the first years of his establishment at Exeter, he already held a benefice at Osmunderle in the diocese of York. It is the only one mentioned as belonging to him, in the letter to the abbot of Warden Abbey in 1328.⁴

Other records of this period contain the same name. In 1344-1345 one Master William de Nassington, the king's clerk, is given

¹ Printed in Horstman (II, 334) and in Perry's *Religious Pieces* (E. E. T. S., No. 26, p. 60). It is a poem of perhaps slightly higher intellectual tone than the *Prick of Conscience* and the *Speculum Vitae*. Halliwell (*Thornton Rom.*, p. xxx) notes of it: "Warton has confused this poem, which has no merit, with Nassington's translation of Waldeby. The mistake was corrected by Sir F. Madden in Warton's History (II, 368), where the commencing lines do not seem to be accurately given." Mr. A. F. Pollard, in the *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, entirely confuses this poem with the *Speculum Vitae*. He declares that "Nassington's one claim to remembrance is his translation into English verse of the *Treatise on the Trinity and Unity* . . . written in Latin by one John de Waldeby. . . . The *Myroure of Life*, sometimes attributed to Richard Rolle, is identical with Nassington's translation." The compiler of the bibliography for the *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* also (II, 498) implies that the shorter poem of Nassington is likewise from John de Waldeby. He states that "Nassington translated some Latin works, such as one of Waldeby's *On the Trinity and Unity*, and also his *Mirror of Life*."

² Quoted from the table of contents of the Thornton MS., as printed in *Thornton Rom.*, p. xxx.

³ *Register of John de Grandisson*, ed. F. C. Hingeston-Randolph, London, 1894.

⁴ *Register*, pp. 167-168.

a benefice in the diocese of Chichester;¹ in 1345 Master W. de Nassington, vicar of the archbishop of York, is to be paid for a visitation of the Benedictine House of Weremouth in Durham;² a William of Nassington in 1337 is executor of the will of Master Philip of Nassington (a name found both at York and Exeter);³ a Master William of Nassington is pardoned for acquiring land at York irregularly in 1333;⁴ William of Nassington, on his resignation in 1352, is succeeded in the benefice in Chichester given him by the king by Philip of Nassington.⁵

These are the only records to be found in the Rolls as to any one bearing the name William of Nassington.⁶ Any attempt to settle the question of the authorship of the *Speculum Vitae* is at present blocked by our ignorance of everything connected with the traditional author of the poem. But the character of advocate at an ecclesiastical court, given him by our only information, is such as would be far more suitable to the author of the *Prick of Conscience* — and apparently of the *Speculum Vitae* — than would be that of an original and devoted mystic, like the hermit of Hampole.

Several more facts may be recorded as of possible bearing on the connection of the *Prick of Conscience* with the *Speculum Vitae*. No attempt can be made to determine their significance, but they seem possibly to indicate a connection between the two poems. It is worthy of note that Addit. MS. 22,283 (1380-1400), "closely agreeing with portions of the somewhat earlier Vernon MS.," contains a text of the *Speculum Vitae* described in the catalogue by the following puzzling note :

The Mirrour of Life : a poem generally attributed to William of Nassington, and founded on *La Somme de Vices et de Vertus*, of which there were two English prose translations in the fourteenth century, the one described under

¹ Pat. Nov. 6, 18 Ed. III, p. 374; June 7, 19 Ed. III, p. 477.

² Surtees Society, No. 29, 1854, p. 147.

³ Close Rolls, Jan. 16, 10 Ed. III, p. 736.

⁴ Pat. Jan. 22, 6 Ed. III, p. 783.

⁵ Pat. Dec. 12, 26 Ed. III, p. 396.

⁶ The name William of Nassington is found belonging once (at St. Ives in 1315) to a servant (Selden Soc., XXIII, 96). Other De Nassingtons are to be traced at Exeter at the same period as the Bishop's chaplain, William. They were lawyers or prominent ecclesiastics, some with connections at York. The same names are, in more than one case, found both at York and at Exeter. In the case of "John of Nassington" the existence of two persons bearing the name is indicated in the Rolls by the suffixes "Senior" and "Junior."

Art. 21 of this volume, the other known under the title *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, represented in a couplet at the end of the present poem :

Prikke of Conscience hette this book,
Whoso wol may rede and look.¹

Some information as to the real author of the *Prick of Conscience*, may be hidden in the tradition concerning a manuscript once in the possession of Dr. Munro, described by Ritson (p. 37) as "left after the death of Hampole and his brother to the Society of Friars Minor at York." A manuscript note in Sir Frederic Madden's copy of Ritson² states that this manuscript was then in the possession of Hudson Gurney. Since there is no record of a brother of Rolle, or, even in tradition, of any connection on his part with the Friars Minor, it is possible that this copy may have connected with it some facts regarding the actual writer of the *Prick of Conscience*. Again, Addit. MS. 33,995 (late fourteenth century) contains only four poems, namely, the *Speculum Vitae*; a poem on "Hell, Purgatory, Heaven, the Misery of human life, etc." (which is apparently the poem of similar heading printed by Horstman, with the remark that "it treats partly the same topics as the *Prick of Conscience*,

¹ Morris (*Ayenbite of Inwyt*, E. E. T. S., No. 23, p. 2, n. 1) notes that Tiber. MS. E. VII (said by Horstman to contain the oldest manuscript of the *Speculum Vitae*) contains a Northern metrical translation of *La Somme* attributed to Hampole, and that the same work exists as a fragment among the Sion College manuscripts. The quotations from the *Speculum Vitae* given by Ullmann show the debt of that work to Friar Lorenus. The tract of Waldeby, if the source of the English poem, must be itself largely derived from the French tract; for, allowing for the necessary differences between poetry and prose, the first three hundred lines of the *Speculum Vitae* and pp. 98-105 of the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* may be said to be close enough to each other to make them appear translations from the same work; that is, practically everything in the *Speculum Vitae* can be found in the *Ayenbite*, though the reverse is not true. It is worth noting that *La Somme* appeared sometimes under the title *Le Miroir du Monde*, which title is preserved in the English prose translation of Bodl. MS. 283 (*Ayenbite*, ed. Morris, Preface).

It should perhaps be noted, concerning John de Waldeby, that there seems some difficulty in connecting him with the *Speculum Vitae* on account of his late date. He is said (v. *Dict. Nat. Biog.*) to have been the Provincial of the Augustinian Friars in England, and the brother of Robert Waldeby, archbishop of York, who died in 1398 (v. *Lives of the Archbishops of York*, ed. James Raine, Rolls Series, London, 1886, II, 428). He himself is said, in a manuscript note on the "Trinity MS." (Tanner, *Biblio. Brit.-Hib.*, p. 746, n. c), to have died in 1393. It may be remembered that Horstman put the Tiberian manuscript of the *Speculum Vitae* at 1350. Some autobiographical details are said to be found in Waldeby's prologue addressed to the Abbot, St. Albans, which introduces his sermons in Caius Coll. Camb. MS. 334.

² In the Library of Harvard College.

often in identical terms");¹ the *Prick of Conscience*; Nassington's poem of the Thornton MS. under the title the *Bande of Louyng*.

These facts, joined with the evidence already presented, make the question of the connection of the *Prick of Conscience* with the *Speculum Vitae* seem worth further investigation. Whether William of Nassington or some one else proves to be the author of the *Speculum Vitae*, it is possible that that author may be found to be also the author of the *Prick of Conscience*.

¹ Horstman (II, 36), in printing the piece from Reg. MS. 17 B. XVII, remarks that a later manuscript is Addit. MS. 10,053. He adds (n. 2) that this copy at the end adds two stanzas asking the reader to pray for him "that this tretis on englisshe drowe." The description in the catalogue of Addit. MS. 33,995 states that this poem (No. 2) exists also in Addit. MS. 10,053. f. 69. A note is added denying this, and stating, on the contrary, that the poem of Addit. MS. 10,053 is the *Speculum of St. Edmund*. As a matter of fact, Addit. MS. 10,053 contains both the poem on "Hell, Purgatory, Heaven, etc.," and the *Speculum*. The latter work is said by Horstman (I, 219) to be "the great storehouse from which R. Rolle derived some of his favorite subjects and ideas." M. Konrath, in a review of *Yorkshire Writers* (Herrig's *Archiv.*, XCVI, 390), objects to this statement. It seems probable that Rolle's borrowings from the *Speculum of St. Edmund*, which are referred to by Horstman, are to be found in the *Prick of Conscience*. The following sentences may be noted as similar to portions of the *Prick of Conscience*: "Sed ad cognitionem Dei qui est veritas, non potes venire nisi per cognitionem tui ipsius. Ad cognitionem tui ipsius potes venire isto modo; cogita diligenter & frequenter qualis tu es, qualis fuisti & qualis eris." There follows a passage very similar to pp. 15 f. of the *Prick of Conscience*. Later we read: "Reddes etiam rationem de quolibet verbo ocioso, de omni cogitatione ociosa" (M. de la Bigne, *Magna Bibl. Vet. Patr.*, Paris, 1654, V, col. 767).

NOTE. The portrait of Richard Rolle reproduced at the beginning of this article is one of the illustrations to an English poem on the ascetic life, entitled *The Desert of Religion*, which has been attributed to Walter Hylton. Mr. J. A. Herbert (who most kindly arranged for making the photograph which has been used in this reproduction) is of opinion that it cannot safely be assigned to an earlier date than the beginning of the fifteenth century, though Horstman thought it to be of Rolle's own time. Mr. Herbert points out also that other copies of the poem are in Stowe 39 and Addit. 37,049, both manuscripts of the first half of the fifteenth century. They both have portraits of Hampole, viz. Stowe 39 on p. 16 b, and Addit. 37,049 on p. 52 b; but these are altogether inferior to the Cottonian manuscript. The three manuscripts give three different faces. Therefore one cannot assert that any one of them is an authentic likeness.