

SIR ISRAEL GOLLANCZ MEMORIAL LECTURE

LANGLAND AND THE IDEOLOGY OF DISSENT

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PERHAPS one of the most curious conjectures as to the authorship of *Piers Plowman* is the note on the Harleian manuscript of the C-text by the catalogue's compiler: 'Now among the several persons to whom the poems of Piers Plowman have been ascribed,' the author writes, 'I remember not any William; so that if Geoffrey Chaucer was the man, he disguised his name for feare of the clergy, who are bitterly inveighed against in these poems.'¹ Scholarship has now established William Langland as the author of the poem, but its nature is still a matter of debate. The anti-clerical stance of William Langland gave the poet status as a reformer and Piers Plowman, taken to be the author,² blended with Chaucer's Ploughman to become the hero of many a fifteenth- and sixteenth-century poem of social complaint as well as a hero of the Protestant reformation.³ Bale regarded the poet as *ex primis Iohannis Vuicleui discipulis*;⁴ later editors and critics continued to debate the poet's

¹ *Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts* (London, 1808), ii. 673.

² Cf. Thomas Warton, *History of English Poetry*, ed. W. C. Hazlitt (London, 1871), ii. 244.

³ As well as the well-known fifteenth-century examples *The Ploughman's Tale* and *Pierce the Ploughman's Crede* we may note *The Praier and Complaynte of the Plowman unto Christe* (*Harleian Miscellany*, vi (1745), 84-106: STC 20036); *A proper Dyaloge betwene a Gentillman and a Husbandman* (ed. E. Arber, *English Reprints*, (1871), 129-69; cf. STC 6813); *How the Ploughman Learned his Paternoster* (*Reliquiae Antiquae*, ed. T. Wright and J. O. Halliwell (London, 1841), pp. 43-7: STC 20034); *A goodly Dyalogue betwene Pyers Plowman and a popysh Pryest* (STC 19903); *I playne Piers which can not flatter* (STC 19903a); a curious example in this kind is *Pyers Plowman: Man's Exhortation unto the Knights and Burgoysses of the Parlyament House* (STC 19905) which is less a complaint of clerical corruption than a pamphlet on enclosures. Cf. M. Aston, 'Lollardy and the Reformation', *History*, xlix (1964), 149-70; A. N. Wawn, 'Chaucer, *The Plowman's Tale* and Reformation Propaganda: The Testimonies of Thomas Godfray and *I playne Piers*', *BJRL* lvi (1973), 174-92.

⁴ *Scriptorum illustrium maioris Brytannie . . . Catalogus* (Basel, 1557-9), ii. 673.

indebtedness to Wyclif.¹ In the first part of the twentieth century, however, interest in the historical background receded and R. W. Chambers represented a generation and more of critics when he wrote in 1939: 'The light thrown upon contemporary history . . . was only incidental; the poem as a whole tells the story of the struggle of the human soul.'² Yet, some forty years on, a recent editor sees Langland again as 'in a way . . . in close relation to the Lollards,'³ and a recent study sees the poem as both an exposition of the Christian ethic and a critique of this, a poem whose poetry grows from the fissures within the clerical ideology of the age.⁴ It would thus seem worth looking again at the possible connections between Langland and Wyclif and to consider the implications of the historical material in the light of these investigations.

Any study of the relationship between Langland and Wyclif invites three questions: firstly, is what we know of the chronology and dissemination of Wyclif's work compatible with such a relationship? Secondly, does the text of *Piers Plowman* supply any evidence of such a relationship? Thirdly, how important is such a study to our understanding of the poem as a whole? In reply to the first question, it must be said straightaway that if we accept a date in the late sixties for the A-text, the influence of Wyclif can hardly be in question. For at this period Wyclif, according to modern dating, was writing his logical and philosophical works.⁵ The earliest reference to his views on dominion is probably one to be found in a sermon by William Rymyngton delivered in 1373.⁶ Whether the author of the A-text could have been acquainted with the preaching of John Ball, whose activities had attracted the unfavourable notice of the authorities as early as 1366, is another

¹ Cf. W. W. Skeat, *The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Plowman* (Oxford, 1886), II. xxxviii-liii.

² *Man's Unconquerable Mind* (London, 1939), p. 102.

³ D. Pearsall, *Piers Plowman: An Edition of the C-text* (London, 1978), p. 15.

⁴ David Aers, *Chaucer, Langland and the Creative Imagination* (London, 1980).

⁵ It is likely that Wyclif's works on logic, physics, metaphysics, and theology were written before 1373. See S. Harrison Thomson, 'The Order of Writing of Wyclif's Philosophical Works', *Českou Minulosti: Essays Presented to V. Novotny* (Prague, 1929), pp. 146-66; id. 'Unnoticed MSS. and Works of Wyclif', *JTS* xxxviii (1937), 24-36, 139-48; J. A. Robson, *Wyclif and the Oxford Schools* (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 115-16. For the suggestion that Wyclif was blacklisted in Oxford as early as 1366 see M. J. Wilks, 'The Early Oxford Wyclif: Papalist or Nominalist', *SCH* v (1969), 98. If such blacklisting existed it was presumably a purely academic affair.

⁶ R. O'Brien, 'Two Sermons at York Synod of William Rymyngton', *Cîteaux*, xix (1968), 59 and n. 79. I owe this reference as well as many helpful suggestions to Dr Anne Hudson.

question.¹ But what of the B-text? Here we enter a much more difficult area. For to the later seventies, when most critics would suppose the B-text to have been written, belong Wyclif's most important polemical works on doctrine and politics² which were to usher in 'a new age in which the tyrant priests would be deprived of their wealth and political power by the lay rulers, and redeemed as new men into a primitive purity.'³ The impact of this programme can be measured by the schedule of heresies and errors which Wyclif was called upon to answer in 1377.

Moreover, it may be demonstrated that, even if Wyclif's works were unknown to Langland, if the B-text was written in London as its familiarity with the events of 1376 would seem to suggest, he would not have lacked opportunity to imbibe radical ideas; nor do we need to rely for evidence of Wyclif's preaching in the vernacular on his somewhat puzzling reference to his *sermones . . . ad populum*.⁴ Indeed he boasts in the *De Veritate* that he has spread

¹ David Wilkins, *Concilia* (London, 1737), iii. 64-5, cf. 152-3.

² Gwynn's view that Passus xiii-xx were written not later than 1370-2 has not been generally accepted. See 'The Date of the B-text of *Piers Plowman*', *RES* xix (1943), 1-24. The dating of most of Wyclif's works is a matter of debate. The *Postilla* and the *Principium* are probably from c.1371-5 (cf. B. Smalley, 'John Wyclif's *Postilla super totam Bibliam*', *Bod. Lib. Rec.* iv (1953), 203; id. 'Wyclif's *Postilla* on the Old Testament and his *Principium*', *Oxford Studies Presented to Daniel Callus O.P.* (Oxford, 1964), p. 256; G. A. Benrath, *Wyclifs Bibelkommentar* (Berlin, 1966), p. 8); for other works the dating of the Wyclif Society editors is still in some cases useful, but some later opinions may be noted. The *De Benedicta Incarnatione* is probably 1371-2 or possibly as early as 1370 (cf. M. Hurley, 'Scriptura Sola: Wyclif and his Critics', *Traditio*, xvi (1960), 280); the *Sermones Quadraginta* are from c.1375-9 (cf. W. Mallard, 'Dating the *Sermones Quadraginta* of John Wyclif', *Medievalia et Humanistica*, xvii (1966); Benrath, pp. 378-86; probably written between 1373 and 1378 are *De Dominio Divino*, *De Mandatis*, *De Statu Innocentiae*, *De Civili Dominio*, *De Veritate Sanctae Scripturae*, *De Officio Regis*, *De Potestate Papae*, *De Ecclesia*, *Dialogus*, *De Eucharistia*, and some of the short treatises such as *De Paupertate* and the *Determination against Binham*. For discussion see H. B. Workman, *John Wyclif: A Study of the English Medieval Church* (Oxford, 1926); A. B. Emden, *A Bibliographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500* (Oxford, 1957); for further discussion of *De Civ. Dom.* cf. T. J. Hanrahan, 'John Wyclif's Political Activity', *Med. Stud.* xx (1958), 154-66; E. C. Tatnall, 'John Wyclif and *Ecclesia Anglicana*', *JEH* xx (1969), 19-24; George Holmes, *The Good Parliament* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 167-78; for the *Determination against Binham* cf. J. Dahmus, *The Prosecution of John Wyclif* (New Haven, 1952), pp. 22-3; for the relative order of *De Civ. Dom.* and the *Determination against Binham* see J. I. Catto, 'William Woodford, O.F.M. (c.1330-c.1397)', p. 175 (unpublished Oxford B.Litt. thesis, 1969).

³ Michael Wilks, 'Reformatio Regni: Wyclif and Hus as Leaders of Religious Protest Movements', *SCH* ix (1972), 118.

⁴ Iohannis Wyclif, *Sermones*, i, Praefatio, l. 11. References to Wyclif's works are to the editions of the Wyclif Society where these are available.

his doctrines *per magnam partem Angliae*.¹ The Chronicles also testify to Wyclif's preaching activities. Walsingham describes how in 1377 Wyclif preached in the city of London and how, elated by the support of the nobility, he ran from church to church proclaiming his errors to the citizens.² In the *Historia Anglicana* he also describes how Wyclif preached his heresies *nude et aperte* to the people of London, who received them gladly.³ We may perhaps surmise that these sermons were not unlike a famous sermon preached in 1382 by Nicholas Hereford in the churchyard of St. Frideswide's, Oxford, a summary of which is extant in MS Bodley 240. The theme was the abuse of mendicancy and the corruption of the clergy and he calls upon the king to confiscate their possessions.⁴ That a similar attack on clerical wealth was made in London in the seventies we know also from a sermon preached at Paul's Cross by Bishop Brinton in 1374 or 1375 in which he denounced those who attacked the temporalities of the church.⁵ And while Walsingham's testimony may be suspected of hindsight,⁶ that Wyclif was indeed spreading heretical ideas in the seventies seems demonstrated by the charge against him in 1377 that he advocated the confiscation of temporalities. The impact of Wyclif's teaching in London may also be inferred perhaps from Walsingham's story of the intervention on his behalf during the indictment of 1378.⁷ Moreover, some evidence from a later date and other areas may also indicate the impact and dissemination of Wyclif's teaching in the late seventies. For example, the statute of 1382 against illegal preaching no doubt reflects, not only increasing ecclesiastical anxiety about the spread of heresy, but also general anxiety about public disorder and sedition in the light of the Peasant's Revolt of 1381. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to suppose that those men who in the words of the statute 'under pretext of great sanctity' preached without licence 'not only in churches and cemeteries but also in markets, fairs and other public

¹ *De Veritate*, i. 349/21-2.

² *Chronicon Angliae*, ed. E. Maunde Thompson (RS 1874), pp. 116-17.

³ *Historia Anglicana (HA)*, ed. H. T. Riley (RS 1863), i. 363; *Chronicon Angliae*, p. 115. For the date cf. Dahmus, *Prosecution*, p. 21.

⁴ *unde si rex et regnum vellet eis auferre possessiones 7 thesauros eorum superfluos ut deberet tunc non oporteret regem spoliare pauperem communitatem regni per talagia sicut solet* (MS Bodley 240, p. 850).

⁵ *The Sermons of Thomas Brinton*, ed. M. A. Devlin (CS, Third Series, lxxxv, 1954), p. 48.

⁶ For Thomas Walsingham cf. V. H. Galbraith, 'Thomas Walsingham and the St. Albans Chronicle', *EHR* xlvii (1932), 12-30.

⁷ *HA* i. 356.

places . . . heresies and notorious errors' did not spring up overnight.¹ Indeed the events of 1381 would tend to support such a contention. The same inference may be made from the instruments against the preaching of Lollard doctrines by the followers of Wyclif in Wykeham's Register² and from the letter written by Courtenay to Peter Stokys on 28 May 1382 in which he speaks of 'certain sons of perdition' preaching in his diocese both 'in churches and squares and other public places'.³ It may also be that Walsingham's denunciation of Wyclif under the year 1382 may have wider chronological implications: *suas damnabiles opiniones, modo per se, he writes, modo per sequaces suos, modo scriptis, modo praedicationibus, per totum tempus illud dilatare contendit.*⁴ I think we may therefore suppose, in the light of the evidence I have presented, that Langland could well have imbibed the ideas of Wyclif in the late seventies when he was writing the B-text.⁵

It will not have escaped attention that I have made no mention of the vernacular sermons and tracts preserved in the collections of Arnold and Matthew.⁶ There is in fact no solid evidence for attributing them to Wyclif let alone to Aston, Repingdon,

¹ *RP* iii. 124-5, item 17. Cf. Dahmus, *Prosecution*, 98-101. For the association of Lollardy and sedition see M. Aston, 'Lollardy and Sedition, 1381-1431', *Past and Present*, xvii (1960), 1-44.

² *William of Wykeham's Register*, ii. 337-8, Hants Record Society, 1899.

³ *Fasciculi Zizaniorum (FZ)*, ed. W. W. Shirley (RS 1858), pp. 275-6.

⁴ *HA* ii. 51; cf. *Continuatio Eulogii*, ed. F. S. Haydon (RS 1863), iii. 354-5.

⁵ It must always be remembered that heretical ideas may have come from other than Wycliffite sources. There are numerous parallels between the ideas of the Lollards and the Brethren of the Free Spirit, the Waldensians and other continental groups. It has long been thought that there was no heresy in England before the Lollards (cf. M. D. Lambert, *Medieval Heresy* (London, 1977), p. 217. But Eric Colledge has drawn attention to some contrary evidence (see *The Chastising of God's Children*, ed. Joyce Bazire and Eric Colledge (Oxford, 1957), pp. 49-54). We may also note that, in speaking of the flagellants in England, he speaks of 'the indulgent neglect which until the days of the Lollards was the lot of religious enthusiasts in England' ('A Penitential Pilgrimage', *The Month*, xx (1), (1958), 8). It is difficult to believe that there were no beghards or Brethren of the Free Spirit among the Flemings of London, and it is perhaps worth noting that cloth workers were a prominent class in the Lollard movement (K. B. McFarlane, *John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Nonconformity* (London, 1952), p. 180). Certainly the ideas of the beghards were known in England. Wycliff speaks of *ratio beghardorum* (Benrath, p. 212 n. 516). This information he may indeed have picked up in Bruges but the heresy was also known to Bradwardine (see H. A. Oberman, *Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine: A Fourteenth-century Augustinian* (Utrecht, 1957), p. 151 and n. 2. Cf. also *De Civ. Dom.* i. 177/4-7 and n. 4.

⁶ Thomas Arnold, *Select English Works of John Wyclif* (Oxford, 1869-71); F. D. Matthew, *The English Works of Wyclif Hitherto Unprinted*, EETS os 74, 1880.

or Purvey,¹ although some may derive from works by Wyclif. This erroneous attribution dates back to the Catalogue of Shirley² and is based on the slightest evidence. It must be remembered that reforming zeal and hostility to the friars were once regarded as evidence of Lollardy. We now know that this is not the case. But there is an even more important reason for questioning the relevance of these texts to the B-text of *Piers Plowman*; there is little solid evidence for their dating. It is not, in my opinion, demonstrable that any of them dates from the seventies; some are datable to the middle or late eighties.³ Most of them cannot be safely dated at all. It would seem likely, however, that many of them were written after 1382, a period of rapid dissemination of the Lollard movement.⁴ I shall not totally ignore the evidence of these documents, but in our present state of knowledge it can only be regarded as suggestive and confirmatory. Students of Langland will realize that such a self-denying ordinance deprives the student of much traditional evidence.⁵ It may perhaps be added that it is not even clear that all the tracts are Wycliffite; some express merely anticlerical or antifraternal commonplaces.

We turn now to our second question; does the text of *Piers Plowman* afford any evidence of Wycliffite thought? I shall deal first with passages common to all texts, or common to B and C where A is not extant. Passages peculiar to C (quite few in number) I shall deal with later. The speech of Anima (or Liberum Arbitrium) in B. xv may first engage our attention. Much of the criticism of the clergy with which the speech is concerned is probably not significant. In an age when, as Owst showed, denunciations of clerical corruption poured from the pulpit;⁶ in an

¹ See Workman, i. 329-32.

² W. W. Shirley, *A Catalogue of the Original Works of John Wyclif* (Oxford, 1865), pp. 31-49, has a section entitled *Extant English Works*. This section was omitted in Loserth's revision of 1924.

³ For discussion of the dating of the vernacular texts cf. E. W. Talbert, 'The Date of the Composition of the English Wycliffite Collection of Sermons', *Speculum*, xii (1937), 464-74; M. W. Ransom, 'The Chronology of Wyclif's English Sermons', *Research Studies of the State College of Washington*, xvi (2), (1948), 67-114; for the tracts see the introductory material in Arnold and Matthew.

⁴ For the dating of the Lollard Movement from 1382 see K. B. McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights* (Oxford, 1972), p. 140.

⁵ Margaret Deanesly questions the attribution of the sermons to Wyclif in 1920 but her doubts seem to have remained unnoticed by literary critics. See *The Lollard Bible* (Cambridge, 1920), p. 317.

⁶ G. R. Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1926), especially pp. 1-47. It should be noted, however, that Owst does not always sufficiently

age when Parliament records complaints against the concubines of the clergy, against simony and absenteeism, and especially alien encumbents, an age when Parliament further claims that Holy Church is more harmed by such bad Christians than by all the Jews or Saracens of the world;¹ in an age when anticlerical invective even by the laity already had a long history and antifraternality literature was commonplace,² it is hardly necessary to invoke the name of Wyclif to explain denunciations of clerical corruption.³ Nevertheless, there are points of interest in Anima's speech. Some may be mentioned briefly as suggestive merely. Thus the tantalizing reference to tithes which clerics have *wipouten trauaille . . . þat trewe men biswynken*;⁴ or the attack on titular bishops;⁵ nor perhaps need we discuss Paull's view that the material on Mahomet shows the influence of Wyclif;⁶ his case seems unproven. The reference to the Donation of Constantine might appear more interesting, for Langland here shares with both Wyclif and the vernacular works a reference to the legend of the voice proclaiming the poisoning of the church:⁷

*Dos ecclesie þis day hap ydronke venym
And þo þat han Petres power arm apoisoned alle.*⁸

But, in fact, the legend goes back at least to the thirteenth century and became a commonplace of anticlerical satire.⁹ These distinguish between anticlerical material delivered to the clergy and the same material delivered to the laity.

¹ *RP* ii. 313-14, items 41 and 42; 338, items 97-9.

² Cf. P. R. Szittyá, 'The Antifraternality Tradition in Middle English Literature', *Speculum*, lii (1977), 287-313.

³ Cf. John A. Yunck, *The Lineage of Lady Meed* (Notre Dame, 1963). Gower's *Vox Clamantis* gives a notable example of lay criticism of the church by an anti-Lollard writer.

⁴ *B* xv, 488. On tithes see Anne Hudson, *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings* (Cambridge, 1978), note to Text 2, lines 81-7. For the collocation *trewe men* see Anne Hudson, 'A Lollard Sect Vocabulary.' *So Meny People Longages and Tonges: Philological Essays Presented to Angus McIntosh*, ed. M. Benskin and M. L. Samuels (Edinburgh, 1981), pp. 15-30.

⁵ *B* xv, 509-10; *C* xvii, 187-90, 259-61. The references are to the editions of Kane-Donaldson for the B-text and to Pearsall for the C-text.

⁶ M. R. Paull, 'Mahomet and the Conversion of the Heathen in *Piers Plowman*,' *ELN* x (i), (1972), 1-8.

⁷ See Matthew, 122/33-123/1, 374/22-4, 379/30-380/4, 399/31-3; Wyclif, *Polemical Works*, ii. 575/16-17; *Supplementum Trialogi* (*Joannis Wiclif Trialogus*, ed. G. Lechler (Oxford, 1869), 408/31-409/2); *De Pot. Pap.* 168/32-169/1.

⁸ *B* xv, 560-1; *C* xvii, 223-4.

⁹ Beryl Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1960), pp. 195-6. For the Donation more generally cf. D. Maffei, *La*

ambiguous passages, however, perhaps assume more importance when we turn to Anima's climactic apostrophe demanding that the clergy should live, in Langland's phrase, *per primicias et decimas*,¹ or in the words of the vernacular tracts *on dimes and offerings*:²

Takeþ hire landes, ye lordes, and leteþ hem lyue by dymes.
If possession be poison and inparfite hem make
(Charite) were to deschargen hem for holy chirches sake,
And purgen hem of poison er moore peril falle.³

A number of writers have suggested that we have here Wyclif's teaching on dominion.⁴ Wyclif's attack on the temporalities of the church can be traced back at least to 1373 but it is perhaps sufficient here merely to refer to the charge in the schedule of 1377 that Wyclif taught *thāt domini temporales possunt legitime ac meritorie auferre bona fortunae ab ecclesia delinquente*.⁵ Yet, while at first sight we seem to have caught Anima propagating Wycliffite ideas, the charge is not easy to sustain; for the idea was neither new or novel when Wyclif advanced it. It had been taught by Marsilius of Padua and John of Jandun, *damnatae memoriae*;⁶ even some of the Austin Friars, as Gwynn has pointed out, advanced a doctrine of dominion similar to that which led to Wyclif's heretical stance;⁷ its egalitarian tendencies came to light in the doctrines of John Ball;⁸ it was part of the prophetic programme of John of Rupescissa whose seventh intention was to devise 'a way of depriving the

Donazione di Costantino nei Guiristi Medievali (Milan, 1964). Criticism of the Donation is common in Wyclif's work but by no means confined to him. Cf. *De Civ. Dom.* ii. 195/30–196/28; iii. 215/12–218/9; *De Ecclesia*, Bk. xvi; *Dialogus*, 66/10–17; *Polemical Works*, ii. 670/1–9, 701/7–14, and so on. There may be a veiled reference to the Donation in B x, 317–20. The Abingdon Chronicle tells of a traditional association between Abingdon and Constantine (*Abingdon Chronicle*, ed. J. Stevenson (RS 1858), i, 7–8). A. Gwynn, however, sees a reference to the Austin friars (*The English Austin Friars in the Time of Wyclif* (Oxford, 1940), pp. 221–3).

¹ B xv, 556–556a; C xvii, 219–219a.

² Cf. Arnold, i. 199/26–8, 282/28–30; iii. 150/18–19; *De Off. Reg.* 52/9–11; *De Ecclesia*, 308/22–7.

³ B xv, 564–7; C xvii, 227–32.

⁴ Workman, i. 278; Gwynn (1940), p. 223; M. McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century, 1307–1399* (Oxford, 1959), p. 291; cf. Pearsall, p. 106 (n. to lines 168–71) for a different view.

⁵ HA i. 324; cf. FZ, pp. 248–9.

⁶ FZ, p. 243.

⁷ Gwynn (1940), pp. 59–73.

⁸ R. B. Dobson, *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381* (London, 1970), pp. 370–1, 374; R. Hilton, *Bondmen made Free: Medieval Peasant Movements and the English Rising of 1381* (London, 1973), p. 227.

universal church of all temporal things'.¹ Nor was the removal of temporalities from the clergy entirely a novelty. Wyclif claims that Edward III removed the *temporalia* of the Bishops of Norwich, Exeter, and Ely *pro contemptu* and held them for twelve years.² Certainly there is evidence of the seizure of Courtenay's temporalities and of those of William of Wykeham,³ although none of these cases implies the permanent confiscation of temporalities from the whole church. A curious example of the blending of practical politics and reforming zeal which seems to have informed the argument about temporalities is to be found in the articles which Bankyn and another Austin friar laid before Parliament in 1371, arguing the disendowment of the monastic orders in order to finance the war effort. This was in a sense a special plea designed to meet a special situation; but nevertheless the articles go to the heart of a controversy 'that was exciting angry passions' in the 1370s.⁴ And it should be noted that the articles conclude with a citation from Augustine on clerical poverty which Bankyn adduces in support of his concluding contention that 'a powerful man who, for their unnatural behaviour, would take from the monks their possessions and their liberty would be blessed of God'.⁵ In an era when public finance was strained by the war with France and by the exactions of the papacy,⁶ it was perhaps inevitable that men should look enviously at the church's wealth; equally, it was perhaps inevitable in an age of anticlericalism that such a programme should be supported by moral arguments about clerical poverty. Therefore, while it must be conceded that our text echoes both the article against Wyclif of 1377 and the requirement of clerical poverty commonly voiced in Wyclif, and while it may perhaps be surmised that the Dreamer has the same idea in mind when he speaks of Dowel and Dobet as *dominus and*

¹ *Vade Mecum in Tribulatione*, ed. E. Brown (*Fasciculus Rerum Expetendarum et Fugiendarum* (London, 1690), ii. 500.

² *De Ecclesia*, 332/4-10; cf. Tatnall, p. 33.

³ See J. Dahmus, *William Courtenay: Archbishop of Canterbury, 1381-1396* (Penna. State Univ. Press and London, 1966), pp. 12, 24; McKisack, p. 291.

⁴ See Gwynn (1940), p. 216.

⁵ *Adonques dit il qe un home puissant estoit beneit de deu qe lour voudreit tolir de lour avoir et libertes pour lour desnaturesse ensi apperceu*; V. H. Galbraith, 'Articles Laid before the Parliament of 1371', *EHR* xxxiv (1919), 579-82. For discussion of this Parliament see Dahmus, *Prosecution*, pp. 8-9.

⁶ That anti-papal claims were not confined to the laity is shown by the curious pamphlet of 1374 in the *Eulogium Historiarum* (cf. Gwynn (1940), pp. 219-21, and J. I. Catto, 'An Alleged Great Council of 1374', *EHR* lxxxii (1967), 764-71).

knyȝthode,¹ yet Anima perhaps stands out as much as an English patriot as a Wycliffite. Indeed, Anima would have been a credible participant in the famous scene depicted by Walsingham as taking place in 1385, when Parliament responded to Courtenay's refusal to accept lay taxation of the clergy *cum summa furia*, and demanded that the clergy should be deprived of their temporalities as a remedy for their overweening pride.²

I shall deal next with a number of passages dealing with the life of the clergy. Wyclif envisaged the dispossessed clergy living in evangelical poverty and innocency of life.³ Accordingly, passages in Langland advocating clerical poverty have been thought to be Wycliffite. Such a claim has been made by Pearsall for Loyalty's contention that:

If preestes weren (wise) þei wolde no siluer take . . .
Spera in Deo spekeþ of preestes þat haue no spendyng siluer,
 That if þei trauaille truweliche, and truste in god almyȝty
 Hem sholde lakke no lyfode.⁴

Such a claim, however, is difficult to sustain; still more Skeat's claim that it refers to the 'poor priests'.⁵ Wyclif was by no means the first to invoke a clerical age of innocence. Leff has pointed out that a primitive past was invoked in different ways by writers as diverse as Marsilius of Padua, Dante, Ockham, and Dietrich von Niem.⁶ While it is difficult to determine the paternity of many of these ideas, they must surely be seen in the wider context of that attempt to return to first principles and to primitive virtues which has always given impetus to Christian reform. The picture in Acts of a primitive church with all things in common has always haunted the minds of Christian writers. When Wyclif writes *omnia*

¹ B x, 336.

² *Milites Comitatum, cum quibusdam ex proceribus regni, cum summa furia deprecarentur auferre temporalia ab ecclesiasticis, dicentes clerum ad tantam excrevisse superbiam, quod opus esset pietatis et eleemosynae per ablationem temporalium quae ecclesiasticos extollebant eos compellere ad humiliter sapiendum*; cf. HA ii. 139-40.

³ *Clerum . . . deberet esse pauper, similis statui innocencie*: *Dialogus*, 3/17-20.

⁴ B xi, 283-9; C xiii, 99-102; Erzgräber thought that the passage in C on the good shepherd (C xvii, 292-3) showed the influence of Wyclif (W. Erzgräber, *William Langlands 'Piers Plowman': Eine Interpretation des C-Textes* (Heidelberg, 1957), p. 223. It could equally well show the influence of Grosseteste (cf. E. Brown, ed. *Fasciculus Rerum Expetendarum*, etc. ii. 260-3; but the image is commonplace. The same may be said of the passage in B xiv, 271-3 (C xvi, 111-13) in which Pearsall sees possible Wycliffite influence.

⁵ Skeat, ii. 175.

⁶ Gordon Leff, 'John Wyclif: The Path to Dissent', *PBA* lii (1966), 153; cf. Leff, 'The Apostolic Ideal in Later Medieval Ecclesiology', *JTS* xviii (1967).

*bona cleri sunt bona pauperum*¹ he is giving voice to the concept of a clergy living in humble poverty such as Langland voices in the passages under discussion. But it was a view expressed by many Christian writers, and the phrase itself was commonplace. For example, that writer much read in the Middle Ages, Julianus Pomerius, adjures the clergy that the property of the church is *patrimonia pauperum*,² and again that those who live *de evangelio* wish to have nothing of their own but possess all things in common.³ And within the context of the theme of poverty, all pervasive in the later Middle Ages, it is difficult to suppose that the words from Augustine cited by Bankyn to Parliament in 1371 would not find an echo in the hearts of many in England: *bona omnium pauperum non pauperibus dare sacrilegium est*.⁴ And it is to be noted that that reforming patriot Anima-uses virtually the same words for the same purpose as Bankyn:

Ac Religiouse þat riche ben sholde raper feeste beggeris
 Than burgeises þat riche ben as þe book techep,
*Quia sacrilegium est res pauperum non pauperibus dare.*⁵

The concept of a return to a primitive simplicity of life by an evangelical clergy is to be seen in two other matters which preoccupy both Wyclif and Langland; the matter of the participation of the clergy in the royal administration and in war. The participation of the clergy in the royal administration is criticized by Langland in the Prologue to *Piers Plowman*:

Bisshopes and Bachelers, bope maistres and doctours,
 That han cure vnder crist, and crownynge in tokene
 And signe þat þei sholden shryuen hire parisspens,
 Prechen and praye for hem, and þe pouere fede,
 Liggen at Londoun in Lenten and ellis.⁶

It is indeed the case that Wyclif and the Lollards denounced the Caesarean clergy. Thus in the *De Ecclesia* Wyclif claims that strife will never cease in the church until the usurpation of secular office by the clergy ceases,⁷ and this consistently held view appeared in

¹ *De Veritate*, iii. 41/21-2. Cf. *Sermones*, iv. 274/19-20.

² *De Vita Contemplativa*, ii. ix (PL lix. 454).

³ *Ibid.* ii. xiv (PL lix. 458).

⁴ Galbraith (1919), p. 582.

⁵ B xv, 342-3. For the source of the Latin see Skeat, ii. 226.

⁶ B Prol. 87-91; C Prol. 85-9; cf. A Prol. 90-5 (ed. Kane, London, 1960).

⁷ *De Ecclesia*, 292/3-7; cf. *De Civ. Dom.* iii. 173/14-176/7; *Opera Minora*, 21, 48/10-49/26; *De Off. Reg.* 27/3-29/10, 52/4-24.

the vernacular writings with equal vehemence.¹ Moreover, in 1376 Wyclif took part in the attack on William of Wykeham by preaching against him in London.² Yet while Wyclif's views derived from his theories of dominion and were, in a sense, academic, they corresponded to a political mood in the country which was hostile to the predominance of the clergy in secular affairs. Thus in 1371 a group of lay lords petitioned for the removal of the Bishop of Winchester from the Chancery and the Bishop of Exeter from the Exchequer.³ The motives indeed were secular but they well illustrate an aspect of the late fourteenth-century attack on the clergy which led Professor McKisack to characterize the period as one of notable anticlericalism.⁴ Langland in this matter, as in others, was as much in tune with his age as with Wycliffite views.

Denunciations of fighting clerics are common in the Lollard vernacular.⁵ It is not surprising therefore that critics have seen in the lewed vicory's condemnation of warring popes a reflection of Lollard thought.⁶ It is likely that the wars which broke out between Urban VI and Clement VII in 1379⁷ were the immediate inspiration of these passages, although a similar protest in the C-text against warring clerics who *with moneye maynteyneth men to werre vppon cristene*⁸ could have been inspired by the Despenser Crusade of 1383, another favourite target of Wycliffite and Lollard invective. The theoretical background is not so easy to determine. The question of clerical participation in warfare was the subject of Gratian's attention⁹ in the twelfth century and continued to be debated throughout the Middle Ages.¹⁰ As there were those who maintained the right of clerics to hold property so there were those

¹ Cf. Arnold, i. 270/6-7; Matthew, 168/16-26. Cf. also *The Twelve Conclusions* of 1395 (see Hudson, 26/62-71).

² G. Leff (1966), p. 144.

³ Cf. *RP* ii. 304, item 15.

⁴ McKisack, p. 289.

⁵ Cf. Arnold, i. 116/13-16, 123/3-8, 167/9-12; iii. 141/11-29; *The Twelve Conclusions*, ed. Hudson, 28/135-153.

⁶ B xix, 428-9, 442-6; C xxi, 428-9, 442-6. Cf. O. Mensendieck, *Charakterentwicklung u. ethisch-theologische Anschauungen des Verfassers von 'Piers Plowman'* (Leipzig, 1900), p. 83.

⁷ See J. A. W. Bennett, 'The Date of the B-text of *Piers Plowman*', *Med. Aev.* xii (1943), 63. But cf. B. F. Huppé, 'The Date of the B-Text of *Piers Plowman*', *SP* xxxviii (1941), 40-4; Gwynn (1943), 13-14.

⁸ C xvii, 234.

⁹ *Decretum*, C xxiii, q. viii (A. Friedberg, *Corpus Iuris Canonici* (Leipzig, 1879), i. 953-65; cf. S. Chodorow, *Christian Political Theory and Church Politics in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1972), esp. pp. 223-46.

¹⁰ See F. H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1975).

who maintained the right of clerics to take part in war, though not to fight. Wyclif's views on this matter were plain; appealing behind, as it were, the decretals to the earlier authority of Gratian,¹ he denounces the participation of the clergy in bloodshed. Clerical fighting is clearly associated with clerical worldliness. In the *Dialogus* he claims that the endowment of the clergy compels them to take up arms,² and in the *De Officio Regis* he devotes chapter xii to the discussion of the just war, and the inevitable connection between a Caesarean clergy and clerical bloodshed. Nor is his posture purely academic; for in the *De Paupertate* he must surely be speaking *ad hominem* when he says: *Peccatum mortale foret ecclesiam Anglicanum . . . ministrare domino papae bona ecclesiae ad expugnandum Cristicolos.*³ The lewed vicory's indictment of that worldly prudence which involves the popes in warfare is indeed in keeping with the thought of Wyclif but was not without parallels elsewhere in medieval thought.

We have so far considered a number of passages in which Langland might well be thought to express widely held popular views rather than purely the views of Wyclif himself. We may now consider some points of doctrine which might appear to be more fundamental than matters of political import. We may first deal briefly with the topic of penance. There is no question that repentance is an important theme in the poem; nor that Langland condemns the prostitution of the sacrament for financial gain. The confession of Mede and the form of the final Passus of the poem make this clear. What is in question is Langland's understanding of the nature of the sacrament of penance. His views have been seen as contradictory.⁴ Thus the Dreamer in Passus xi of the B-text (80-2) appears to argue, in a passage perhaps significantly omitted in the C-text, that *sola contritio delet peccatum*. Such a claim would seemingly match the heresy, known on the Continent,⁵ and attributed to Wyclif in the schedule of 1382: *Item quod si homo fuerit debite contritus omnis confessio exterior est sibi superflua, vel inutilis.*⁶ Imaginatyf seems to be making a similar claim when he says:

¹ Just as he cites Grosseteste in support of an attack on the Caesarean clergy. See Tatnall, p. 41.

² *Dialogus*, 8/7-8; cf. also *De Civ. Dom.* ii. 233/24-275/19, iv. 447/35-451/12; *De Pot. Pap.* 388/13-30.

³ *Opera Minora*, 25/17-19.

⁴ For discussion cf. Mensendieck, *op. cit.*, p. 82; Greta Hort, *Piers Plowman and Contemporary Religious Thought* (London, 1938), pp. 130-55; Erzgräber, pp. 227-9.

⁵ See R. E. Lerner, *The Heresy of the Free Spirit in the Later Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1972), p. 90.

⁶ FZ, p. 278.

For if þe clerk be konnyng he knoweþ what is synne,
 And how contricion wipoute confession conforteth þe soule,
 As þow seest in þe Sauter in Salmes oon or tweyne
 How contricion is comended for it cacheþ away synne;
*Beati quorum remisse sunt iniquitates, et quorum tecta sunt etc.*¹

On the other hand, we find passages seemingly commending auricular confession. At B xiii, 410–11,² Sloth is defined as failure to perform the penance imposed by the priest; at B xiv, 16–21, Conscience recommends contrition, confession, and satisfaction; in the same Passus³ Patience claims that *shrift of moub sleeth synne be it neuer so dedly*. In the final Passus of the poem we find emphasis on true penitence. Thus the horses of Piers' cart are Contrition and Confession⁴ and through Contrition and Confession the Dreamer comes to Unity.⁵ In B xx,⁶ we find confession to parish priests commended and the Battle with Antichrist ends with the theme of penance.

Two points may, I believe, be made about this seeming confusion. In the first place, Wyclif's attitude to the sacrament of penance is not as clear-cut as that of the vernacular writers whose works have influenced comment on this passage. In the *Postilla*⁷ and the *Sermones Quadraginta*⁸ Wyclif seems to support the orthodox view of the sacrament as including auricular confession. But even in a comparatively late work, such as the *De Blasphemia*, he seems to sanction auricular confession while claiming that when invalidated by the unworthiness of the priest it can still be efficacious if the sinner is contrite.⁹ In *De Potestate Papae* he envisages auricular confession as legitimate and meritorious but *preterneccarium quoad salvacionem*.¹⁰ This permissive attitude, while not strictly orthodox, except in its emphasis on the importance of contrition, is far from the angry denunciations of *rowning in the ear* found in the vernacular texts.¹¹ Secondly, Gratian opens *De Poenitentia* with the following question: *Utrum sola cordis contritione . . .*

¹ B xii, 174–7; C xiv, 114–17.

² C vii, 71–2.

³ B xiv, 91.

⁴ B xix, 331; C xxi, 332.

⁵ B xx, 212–13; C xxii, 212–13.

⁶ B xx, 281–4; C xxii, 280–3.

⁷ Benrath, p. 147.

⁸ *Sermones*, iv. 299/31–3.

⁹ 134/9–27.

¹⁰ 310/26–311/2.

¹¹ Cf. Arnold, i. 196/3–7, 351/4–6; ii. 87/25–8, etc., and Hudson, 20/69–21/80 and note.

*absque oris confessione quisque possit Deo satisfacere.*¹ That Langland is here indeed dependent on canon law or some derivative seems to be suggested by the line *And þou3 a man my3te no3t speke contricion my3te hym saue.*² For in Canon Law it is stated that *etiam ore tacente* may a man obtain pardon . . . *ut Dominus ostenderet, quod non sacerdotali iudicio sed largitate diuinæ gratiæ peccator emundatur.*³ It is, I think, therefore, difficult to sustain the view that Langland's views on the sacrament of penance are Wycliffite; rather I would assume that he is making a debating point to which his protagonists provide a perfectly orthodox answer, although it may not be entirely chance that these orthodox formulations are, in a number of cases, omitted in the C-text.

In discussing a number of short passages from the B-text we have had occasion to note discrepancies between the B- and C-texts. It might therefore be appropriate here to notice two passages in C which might be thought to indicate a sympathy with contemporary dissent before passing on to discuss more widely diffused topics in the poem. The first passage appears in the C Prologue

ydolatrie 3e soffren in sondrye places manye
And boxes ben yset forth y-bounde with yren
To vndertake þe tol of vntrewe sacrefise.
In menyng of miracles muche wex hangeth there.⁴

Pearsall comments that 'attacks on relic-mongering were a feature of Wycliffite writing'. To mock relic-mongering, attacked also in the B-text as well as by Chaucer, is not necessarily a sign of religious dissent. But the use of the word 'idolatry' as well as the accusation in line 119 that the clerics allow men to *worship maumettes*, seems to imply that Langland is not attacking merely the fraud implicit in the touting of false relics but also questioning relics and images as objects of veneration. It is certainly true that Wyclif attacks both relics and image-worship although these matters do not occupy the important place in his thought that

¹ *Decretum*, C xxxiii, q. iii, d. i (Friedberg, i. 1159). Cf. *Luce clarius constat cordis contritione, non oris confessione peccata dimitii*, *ibid.* c. xxx (Friedberg i. 1165). Langland's immediate source could have been some such writer as Raymond of Pennaforte. It is worth noting that this work may have been the inspiration of the banquet scene with the Doctor (cf. *Summa de Poenitentia et Matrimonio* (Rome, 1603), 442-5, §§ 8-9; cf. 447, § 13). If so, it would seem to indicate that the fundamental theme of the scene is not learning but penitence.

² B xiv, 85.

³ C xxxiii, q. iii, d. i. c. xxxiv (Friedberg, i. 1166).

⁴ 96-9.

they do in the vernacular works. For example, in the *Postilla*, in a commentary on Psalm 135, he compares *sculptilia moderna* to idols and comments tartly on images of Christ and the saints with golden locks and garments encrusted with gold, silver, and jewels.¹ In the *De Ecclesia* too he attacks the abuse of the relic cult and of pilgrimages, another target equally of Lollard polemic and Langland's satire.² For avarice, he claims, motivates the buying of relics so that they may become the lucrative objects of pilgrimage.³ It is also likely, as Jeremy Catto has suggested, that the debate on images antedates the discussion in Wyclif himself.⁴ It is worth noting that a story told by Henry Knighton under the year 1382 of a certain William Smith who used an image of St. Catherine as firewood,⁵ is told also of a beghard of Cologne who stole images from a church and used them to kindle a fire to keep warm.⁶ The passage in the C-text may thus represent an attack on images not necessarily Wycliffite. But it should be noted that even if we date the C-text before 1387 on the evidence of supposed borrowing in Usk, and even more if we accept a date in the nineties, the possibility of Lollard influence exists.⁷ Joy Russell-Smith has pointed out that there is no reference to the veneration of images in the schedule of 1382, and she claims that it was only in the nineties

¹ Benrath, pp. 337–8.

² See AB Prol. 46–9; C Prol. 47–50; C iv, 122–4. John Burrow is no doubt correct in claiming that the pilgrimage to Truth is polemical ('The Action of Langland's Second Vision', *EIC* xv (1965), 252–3). On the other hand, the reference to pilgrimages at B xiv, 196–8 (C xvi, 39–41) implies that they are potentially good. For a general survey of Lollard views on images and pilgrimages see Hudson, pp. 179–81.

³ *De Ecclesia*. 465/14–22; cf. *De Mandatis*, 155/26–160/13; *De Off. Reg.* 16/31–3.

⁴ Catto (1969), pp. 150–5; cf. also Wyclif's early *De Benedicta Incarnacione*, 42/16–28.

⁵ Knighton's *Chronicle*, ed. J. R. Lumby (*RS* 1895), ii. 182–4.

⁶ Lerner, p. 118. For the Waldensian disapproval of images see Lambert (1977), p. 154.

⁷ For a summary of opinions see E. Talbot Donaldson, *Piers Plowman: The C-Text and its Poet* (New Haven, 1949), pp. 18–19. But if the Ilchester manuscript (London University Library MS v. 88) is correctly dated as not much earlier than the 1390s, the earlier date is more probable (see A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes, 'The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the Early Fifteenth Century' in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries: Essays presented to N. R. Ker*, ed. M. B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson (London, 1978), 195 n.78. A date in the 80s may also be indicated by the C text of MS Bodley 851, a manuscript which belonged to John Wells who died in 1388. Cf. George Rigg, 'Medieval Latin Poetic Anthologies', *Med. Stud.* xl (1978), 387–407.

that the topic became violently polemical.¹ Thus we find Richard Wiche in 1395 saying that *In primis imponitur me praedicasse quod imagines non sunt adorandae, sed potius igni tradendae*.² In 1399 William Sautry, charged with heretical beliefs, asserts that he would rather adore an earthly king than the cross which, as far as he was concerned, was merely wood. Nor was he willing to venerate the bodies of saints.³ Furthermore, the public concern which such matters were attracting in the 1390s is indicated by the following item in *The Twelve Conclusions* of 1395: *þe pilgrimage, preyeris and offringis made to blynde rodys and to deue ymages of tre and of ston, ben ner of kin to ydolatrie and fer fro almesse dede*.⁴ But however we date the C-text, it is probably true to say that here again Langland may be reflecting contemporary controversy rather than academic debate.

But could we assume that Langland heard such matter discussed among the Lollers of Cornhill? I think this is unlikely. Discussion of the term *loller* is made more difficult by the conflicting manuscript evidence. In the relevant passages in Passus v, viii, and ix⁵ there is occasional variation between the terms *lorel* and *loller* (especially in Cotton Vespasian B xvi) and sometimes *lollard*, a reading often found in Douce 104, but in one instance only shared with other manuscripts.⁶ It should be noted, however, that at Passus ix, 215–18 all manuscripts agree in the readings *lolleth* and *lollen*:

He þat lolleth is lame . . .
Rihte so sothly such manere ermytes
Lollen aȝen þe byleue and þe lawe of holy churche.

This agreement of all the manuscript witnesses would seem to substantiate Langland's assignment of the meaning 'to lean, to limp' and thus 'to be idle', a sense recorded in English dialects.⁷ These *lollers* are often associated in Langland with *lewed hermits*,

¹ J. Russell-Smith, 'Walter Hilton and a Tract in Defence of the Veneration of Images', *Dominican Studies*, vii (1954), 180–214.

² *FZ*, p. 370.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 408–9.

⁴ Hudson, 27/93–6.

⁵ v, 2, 4, 31; viii, 74, 287; ix, 101, 103, 107, 137, 140, 158, 159, 192, 194 (some MSS), 213, 240. For the affiliation of the manuscripts cf. Donaldson. 227–31. At ix, 137 Pearsall's reading *lorelles* appears only in XMDYI. The reading should perhaps be *lollerles*.

⁶ Namely at v, 4 where the reading also appears in BL MSS Add. 34779, Harley 2376 and Cambridge CUL Ff. 5. 35. *Lorel* for *loller* appears at v, 2 and 4; viii, 75; ix, 103, 107 also in Royal 18 B xvii; at viii, 75 also in Douce 104.

⁷ See *EED* LOLL *v*¹ and *sb*¹; LOLLARD *sb*.

hermits who live under no fixed rule and have no fixed abode. But it would seem from Passus ix, 246–56 that the *lollers* are not heretics, for they are pictured as occupying a position of dignity and, unless the odd change of number indicates an omission in the text, to be under the protection of the bishop.

Ac aboute mydday at mele-tyme y mette with hem ofte,
Come in his cope as he a clerk were;
A bacheler or a bew-pere beste hym bysemede,
And for þe cloth þat keuereth hym ykald he is a frere,
Wascheth and wypeth and with the furste sitteth.

The cause of al this caytiftee cometh of many bischopes
That soffreth such sottes and opere synnes regne . . .

It appears from Passus ix, 139 that these *lollers* bear *bagges* and *botels* under their cloaks and they are again compared to 'lewd hermits'. They are idlers who earn their living by begging presumably with the sanction, or at least with the connivance, of the bishop. Moreover, while the word *Lollard* as a term of abuse in England dates from 1382,¹ it does not appear to become widespread until the nineties when it is so used by Gower.² The word *Lollard* originally used to describe various kind of continental heretic³ seems to have become blended in England both with the word *loller* 'idler', *gyrovagus*, and with *lolia* 'tares'; Lollards are thus those who *springen cokkel in our clene corn*.⁴ In Langland the reference may be to *gyrovagi*, wandering religious who had left their houses and joined the numerous wayfarers who infested fourteenth-century England. As for the *lunatick lollers*,⁵ it seems to me that they are most likely to be itinerant prophets as Donaldson suggested.⁶ Whether such prophets were heretical it is difficult to say, but it may be worth noting that, while various heretical sects in the Middle Ages such as the Fraticelli, the Apostolic Brethren, and the Joachists concerned themselves with

¹ Cf. James Crompton, 'The Leicestershire Lollards', *The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* (17 April 1969), p. 11; *MED* s.v.

² *Confessio Amantis*, *Prol.* 349; V, 1810–11; cf. Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, B 1173, 1177.

³ Cf. E. W. McDonnell, *The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture* (NY, 1969), pp. 246, 266–7; Lerner, pp. 31, 40–1.

⁴ *Canterbury Tales*, B, 1183.

⁵ Cix, 107, 137. The reading *lollers* at 137 is supported by all the manuscripts except Huntington 143, Cotton Vesp. B. xvi, Douce 104, Digby 102, and the Sterling Library V 88 (Ilchester MS).

⁶ Donaldson, *op. cit.*, pp. 144–7.

prophecy,¹ prophecy was not an especial concern of the Lollards. Cola da Rienzo observed that had St. Francis returned to the world of his day he might well have been considered *fantasticus et bestialissimus idiota*,² and it may well be that Langland, in speaking of his *lunatic lollers*, had in mind some prophetic simpleton who so appeared to his worldly contemporaries. It may be noted that the nomenclature is quite different from that customarily thought to have been applied to the 'poor priests', who have been seen in Wyclif's writings behind the common epithets *sacerdotes simplices*, *sacerdotes fideles*, *viri apostolici*, or *viri evangelici*.³ It seems to me therefore improbable that Langland's *lollers* are Lollards, and the fact that the word *lollers* is used already in the B-text (B xv, 213) would support this contention.

We have so far considered a number of points which are less part of the fabric of the poem than problematic moments, the product of textual interpolation maybe, or of a dialectical stance on the part of the poet or the dramatis personae. We should, therefore, now ask ourselves whether there are any more pervasive topics or dominant characters that might suggest sympathy with Wycliffite thought. There seem to be two main candidates for such a consideration; *Piers Plowman* and Langland's attitude to the church. Burdach suggested that the figure of Piers Plowman represented the same ideal as the poor priests of the Lollard movement.⁴ Could Piers represent the *praedicator evangelicus* whose duty, according to Wyclif, is to take the yoke upon his shoulders and to plough the soil of sinners' hearts?⁵ Does he demonstrate the natural affinity of manual labour with contemplation and with preaching which Wyclif speaks of in the *De Civili Dominio*?⁶ Or does he perhaps represent the priesthood which Wyclif regards as a surrogate of Christ's humanity?⁷ The priest is not merely a symbol

¹ Cf. M. Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1969), *passim*.

² See K. Burdach, *Der Dichter des Ackermann aus Böhmen u. seine Zeit* (Vom Mittelalter zur Reformation, III (2) (Berlin, 1926-33), p. 306 n.

³ See H. L. Cannon, 'The Poor Priests: A Study in the Rise of English Lollardy' *The Annual Report of the American Historical Association*, 1900 (1), 463.

⁴ Burdach, p. 210; for the poor priests cf. Cannon, 451-82; Dahmus, *Prosecution*, p. 85; McFarlane (1952), p. 101; M. J. Wilks, 'Royal Priesthood: The Origins of Lollardy', in *The Church in a Changing Society* (Uppsala, 1978), pp. 63-70.

⁵ *De Civ. Dom.* i. 329/1-7: The metaphor is, indeed, not new. Cf. S. A. Barney, 'The Ploughshare of the Tongue: The Progress of a Symbol from the Bible to *Piers Plowman*', *Med. Stud.* xxxv (1973), 261-93.

⁶ *De Civ. Dom.* iv. 382/36-383/3.

⁷ *Dialogus*, 2/14-16; cf. *De Off. Reg.* 13/10-12, 137/21-2. Cf. M. J. Wilks, *The Problem of Sovereignty in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 376-7.

of Christ's humanity but by virtue of a shared quality, patient poverty, is truly his representative.¹ The semiotics of the figure of Piers can, I believe, be illuminated by reference to an observation of Wyclif in the *Triologus*. *Non sequitur*, he writes, *Petrus secundum suum esse intelligibile est Deus, igitur Petrus est Deus*,² which we might paraphrase as 'a shared essence is not necessarily a shared individuality'. Thus when Wyclif claims that the priest is a surrogate of Christ's humanity he is not claiming identity with Christ nor that he is merely a symbol of Christ; rather he has the quality of humble service which characterized Christ's humanity and, by virtue of this, is his surrogate on earth. In an analogous fashion, each pope becomes a new Peter, the physical embodiment of the perpetual personality of the church. In demanding the separation of the papacy from the Bishopric of Rome, Wyclif was concerned to recreate the pope as *Petrus evangelicus*, 'qualified by his poverty and humility to superintend the rebirth of the church'.³ Such a *Petrus Evangelicus* perhaps lies behind the Piers of the last passus of the poem. I would therefore suppose that Piers Plowman is in this sense both a ploughman and Christ,⁴ the Son of Man;⁵ hence the Dreamer's question:

'Is þis Iesus þe Iustere', quod I, 'þat Iewes dide to deþe?
Or is it Piers þe Plowman? Who peynted hym so rede?'⁶

But in essence he is patient poverty, a realization of the *vita apostolica*, a life which involved the imitation of the primitive church conceived of as poor, simple, and humble,⁷ a fitting opponent of Hobbe the Robber, the symbol of avarice. This life was common to Christ and the true ploughman whose simple

¹ The virtue of humility in the view of Augustine lead to truth. He writes (*via ad obtinendam veritatem*) *est autem prima, humilitas, secunda, humilitas, tertia, humilitas*. Epistola 118, III. 22 (PL xxxiii. 442).

² *Triologus*, p. 47.

³ M. J. Wilks, 'The *Apostolicus* and the Bishop of Rome', *JTS* xiii (1962), 292. B xv, 212 (. . . Piers þe Plowman, *Petrus id est Christus*) may contain an ironical reference to the concept of the pope as Christ. The pope *should* be identified with Piers Plowman, the embodiment of charity.

⁴ Cf David Mills, 'The Rôle of the Dreamer in *Piers Plowman*', in *Piers Plowman: Critical Approaches*, ed. S. S. Hussey (London, 1969), p. 211: 'To be Piers-like is to be Christ-like'.

⁵ Burdach (pp. 322-3) calls attention to the reflection in *Piers Plowman* of the dual nature of the Son of Man; as an earthly ploughman and as a divine representative of God, the first and second Adam.

⁶ B xix, 10-11; C xxi, 10-11.

⁷ The purpose of this life was *zelus et salus animarum* and involved poverty and manual labour. Cf McDonnell, p. 141.

prayer, said in charity, as Lollard writers claim, is better than a thousand masses said by a covetous priest; or that of any order that loves God less than he, *blabere bei neuere so meche wip lippis*.¹ That an essential component of the figure of Piers Plowman is his patient poverty seems to be suggested by a sermon *ad status* by Jacques de Vitry in which he draws a picture of three farmers who equally labour in the harvest; one may accept labour as a penance proper for sinful man, another labours to gain money, another to steal the corn. They all labour outwardly but the first gains eternal life, the second temporary gain, and the third the pains of hell. In the second place, Jacques de Vitry maintains that, at a spiritual level, we have *Christus agricola* who took the ploughshare of the cross upon his shoulders and who ploughs the human heart.² It is only a short step from this metaphor to the figure of *Christus agricola* of late medieval paintings in which Christ is accompanied by the rural instruments of his trade instead of the instruments of the passion,³ his sufferings here identified with the *poenitentia* of labour illustrated by the good farmer of Jacques de Vitry's sermon. Here truly the husbandman and Christ are identified by the bond of patient poverty. Therefore I do not believe that we can identify Piers with the poor priests or indeed with the priesthood, although in emphasizing the qualities common to both Burdach, I believe, provided an essential clue to the figure of Piers.

We turn now to Langland's attitude to the church. Here it seems to me we find a sharp contrast between the Wycliffite and the Langlandian point of view. For nowhere in Langland, I believe, do we find that dualism, deriving from Wyclif's predestinarianism and ultimately from his realism, which lead him to distinguish between the *ecclesia malignantium* and 'the true reality of an Ecclesia of the just . . . the *respublica* of the righteous',⁴ and to posit within the institutional church a true church consisting of the elect alone.⁵ This was a recurring theme in Wyclif's works⁶ and in

¹ Matthew, 274/7-10, 321/10-12.

² Ed. J. B. Pitra, *Analecta novissima Spicilegii Solesmensis* (ii, 1888), pp. 435, 437.

³ M. Mollat and P. Wolff, *The Popular Revolutions of the late Middle Ages* (London, 1973), p. 291.

⁴ M. J. Wilks (1972), 119. Already in the *De Mandatis* Wyclif contrasts the *ecclesia malignantium* with the *ecclesia praedestinatorum* 372/34-373/2.

⁵ Cf. Gordon Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester, 1967), ii, 516-19; in Wyclif's words *Manifestum videtur quod nullus praescitus sit membrum illius ecclesie* (*De Ecclesia*, 83/21-2).

⁶ For example, *De Ecclesia*, 71/29-74/31; cf. *De Veritate*, iii, 126/8-22; *Dialogus*, 5/5-11; *Sermones*, iv, 42/15-45/21; *Opera Minora*, 100/8-101/3, 179/26-30, *Opus Evangelicum*, i, 119/16-27; 120/20-38; *Supplementum Trialogi*,

the works of the vernacular writers.¹ Nowhere it seems to me does Langland indicate such a view of the church. On the contrary, in Passus I we find Holy Church in a pedagogic role which seems to suggest authority and which is consonant with the Dreamer's own views on wealth and the importance of love. Piers's will also implies a loyalty to the church which can hardly be regarded as cynical.² Nor can *Liberum Arbitrium's* definition of the church be regarded as in any way Wycliffite:

'What is holy churche, chere frende?' quod y
 'Charite', he saide;
 Lief and loue and leutee in o byleue and lawe,
 A loue-knotte of leutee and of lele byleue,
 Alle kyne cristene cleuyng on o will,
 Withoute gyle and gabbyng gyue and sulle and lene . . .³

Holy Church is here represented as Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace. Again at B xi, 96–100 Loyalty warns the Dreamer not to speak against prelates and priests, and at B x, 412 the church is described as the ark, it is *goddes hous to saue*. Above all, in the last passus, the Church is Unity. Nor I think is there any indication that Langland identified Antichrist with an Anti-church although he does seem to identify the pope with Antichrist.⁴ Nor does the apparent association of the friars with Antichrist imply a belief in the two churches⁵ although it is true that the anti-church in Wycliffite writings is often called the church of Antichrist. Nor does the form of the Battle with Antichrist at the end of *Piers Plowman* suggest a church of Antichrist, incapable from all eternity

415/1–416/2. The heresy of the two churches was also characteristic of Waldensians, the Fraticelli, the Apostolic Brethren, and the Brethren of the Free Spirit (cf. Reeves, pp. 203–7, 213, 407–8, 411; Lerner, pp. 179, 205; W. L. Wakefield and A. P. Evans, *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* (New York and London, 1969), p. 405). It may be noted that the *Lanterne of lizt* which distinguishes between the church of God and the church of the fiend attributes a similar dualism to Lyra. See Hudson, no. 22.

¹ Cf. Arnold, i. 50/27–31, 287/20–288/7; iii. 134/13–23, 339/19–25, 395/6–29; Matthew, 198/33–199/4.

² A vii, 83–7; B vi, 91–5; C viii, 100–4.

³ C xvii, 125–9.

⁴ C xxii, 126–8. For the association of Antichrist with the corruption of the church cf. Wyclif, *De Ecclesia*, 377/26–30; in the *De Off. Reg.* he associates Antichrist with the Schism (*De Off. Reg.* 225/34–226/10). For the vernacular works see, for example, Arnold, i. 97/21–4, 205/21–4; ii. 394/9–395/17; iii. 245/26–246/3. For the widespread belief in Antichrist see Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (London, 1957).

⁵ Cf. Pearsall, p. 364, note to line 58.

of redemption; rather it is on the Psychomachia model of the French allegories.

It is true that the Dreamer raises the question of that favourite contemporary topic, predestination, and his question might be taken as implying the simple predestinarianism which lies behind the theory of the two churches:

For Clergie saith þat he seyh in þe seynt euayngelie
 That y man ymaed was and my nam y-entred
 In þe legende of lyf longe ar y were.
 Predestinaet thei prechen, prechours þat this sheweth,
 Or prescient inparfit, ypult out of grace,
 Vnwritten for som wikkednesse, as holy writ sheweth,
*Nemo ascendit ad celum nisi qui de celo descendit.*¹

The Dreamer's words seem to suggest that the *prescient*, the reprobate are denied God's grace, *ypult out of grace*, and thus incapable of good works and committed to damnation. But I suspect that this passage is not only making a debating point but that it may have a dramatic function too, for in *The Chastizing of God's Children*, in a passage reminiscent of the *The Stimulus Amoris*,² fear of reprobation is presented as a temptation to be overcome. The account of the temptation in the *Chastizing* might well stand as a description of Will's state of mind or, in the case of the C-text, that of Recklessness: *þus it farith bi hem also þat wolen imagyne of predestinaciouns, and of the prescience or of þe foreknowynge of god; and suche men sum tyme bien dredeful for synnes don bifore . . . Wherefor sum bien in poynt to falle in dispeir.*³ Such is the plight of the Dreamer when he hears the parable of the wedding feast:

Al for tene of here tyxst tremblede myn herte
 And in a wer gan y wex and with mysulue to despute
 Where y were chose or not chose⁴

I think we may, therefore, presume that Langland does not envisage the divided church of Wycliffite thought.

But could it be claimed that Langland does argue for a de-institutionalization of the church such as Wyclif's views on predestination and dominion led him to adopt? For since his church consisted of the *corpus predestinatorum*, the function of the priesthood and the sacraments was diminished. Thus, for example,

¹ C xi, 205-10; B x, 379-82.

² Cap. III (Bibl. franc. med. aev., iv, 1949); *The Goad of Love*, tr. Clare Kirchberger (London, 1952), cap. 33. Cf. Bazire and Colledge, *Chastizing*, pp. 45-6.

³ Bazire and Colledge, *Chastizing*, pp. 119-20.

⁴ C xii, 48-50; B xi, 115-17.

Wyclif claims that the excommunication of the church cannot separate the elect from the body of Christ.¹ Even as early as 1377 the danger to the institutional church of Wyclif's views on dominion was realized; thus Gregory XI speaks of these views as 'Propositions which attempt to subvert and weaken the whole polity of the church and even the secular state'.² In some cases Langland seems to reject the Wycliffian point of view. For example, he declares that though the ignorant priest in celebrating mass

ouerhuppe . . . oure bileue suffiseþ.³

But perhaps something might be learnt about Langland's attitude to the institutional church from the Dreamer's encounters with churchmen. There are three figures that might repay consideration; the priest in the Pardon Scene, the two friars at the beginning of Dowel, and Need. Are we to assume, for example, that the Dreamer's musings on the topic of indulgences indicate a rejection of these documents?⁴ Wyclif would seem to be on the side of the pardon from Truth. In the *Sermones Quadraginta* he emphasizes the instability of those who trust in indulgences *a pena et a culpa: Oportet enim omnem hominem proportionaliter ad proprium meritum vel demeritum premiari*.⁵ This view, which rejects the concept of the treasury of merit, the priest correctly challenges. Yet the ploughman, whose knowledge of the Bible is mocked by the priest,⁶ as though he were indeed a Lollard, continues the debate; nor is the Dreamer convinced by the priest. A similar case may be seen in the scene with the two friars. The Dreamer proposes the text *Septies cadit iustus*. He is, in effect, asking a question related to the topic of penitence. Thus Canon Law reads in the *De Poenitentia: Septies cadit iustus et resurgit. Si cadit quomodo iustus? Si iustus, quomodo cadit?* And the gloss adds: *Dicitur hic quod iustus septies . . . cadit per venalia peccata*

The idea that a priest in mortal sin is unable to exercise his priestly function can be found in the heretical sects of the Continent. In c.1252 Wm. Cornelius of Antwerp was accused of an heretical opinion that a priest in mortal sin is unable to consecrate, absolve, or impose penance (cf. McDonnell, p. 489) and a similar opinion is recorded for 1292 (McDonnell, p. 513).

¹ *De Ecclesia*, 111/21-6; cf. *De Off. Reg.* 166/8-10 and Leff (1966), pp. 165-7.

² *HA*, i. 346; *FZ*, p. 243. The charge is echoed by Courtenay in his letter of 1382 to Peter Stokys (*FZ*, pp. 275-6).

³ B xv, 387; C xvii, 117-19.

⁴ B vii, 173-86; C ix, 319-33. The passage is, no doubt, ironical (cf. *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, ed. A. V. C. Schmidt (London, 1978), note to lines 174-9 (p. 326), and to that extent is questioning the value of papal indulgences. For indulgences cf. *De Ecclesia*, cap. xxiii, and Hudson, note to text 2, ll. 105-18. For rejection by the Waldensians cf. Wakefield and Evans, pp. 389-90.

⁵ *Sermones*, iv. 474/9-12.

⁶ B vii, 136-7; cf. note 173.

*et tamen non cadit a charitate*¹ which is the gist of the friar's reply. Again we find the representative of the church giving an orthodox reply which fails to convince the Dreamer.² The meeting with Need may be another such case. Need appears to represent a friar, the harbinger of Antichrist.³ His speech is largely concerned with those controversial concepts 'necessity' and 'temperance' enshrined in the Bull *exiit qui seminat*;⁴ he is concerned, that is to say, with Franciscan poverty. Like the Bull, he refers to the proverb 'Necessity knows no law',⁵ and his praise of Temperance echoes the phrase *cum moderamine* of the Bull and controversial works concerning themselves with *usus pauper*. It is fitting that the speech should end with the praise of evangelical poverty. In fact the moderate use of what is necessary as recommended by the Bull had led to much extravagance and there is therefore an irony in the conjunction with Christ's poverty. Nevertheless, I think we may claim that this representative of the church, if such he is, is expressing orthodox views (although in this case highly contentious ones)⁶ which the tenor of the poem tends to undermine.

There are, however, two ways of looking at this. Should we suppose that Langland is implicitly criticizing the church in these passages or should we assume that the apparent criticism is in fact a reflection of the Dreamer's own wilfulness, that lack of *recta*

¹ *Decretum*, C xxxiii, q. iii, d. iii, c. xxiii (*Corpus Iuris Canonici* (Lyons, 1624), i, 1761); cit. Raymund of Pennaforte, pp. 441-2.

² The same might be said of the Friar's definition of Dowel in the banquet scene, B xiii, 104-5; C xv, 112-14.

³ Cf. Robert Adams, 'The Nature of Need in *Piers Plowman* xx', *Traditio*, xxxiv (1978), 299. It may be noted that the *meridian demon* with whom Adams identifies Need was identified by Wyclif with the friars and more generally with avarice and the corruption of the clergy as well as with Antichrist. Cf. *De Veritate*, iii, 91/4-6 and n. 5, 96/8-11; *Polemical Works*, ii, 411-25.

⁴ *Sexti Decret. Lib V; Tit. XII De Verborum Significatione*, c. iii; Friedberg, ii, 1109-21.

⁵ For the use of the maxim by the canonists and by political theorists such as Ockham see C. C. Bayley, 'Pivotal Concepts in the Political Philosophy of William of Ockham', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, x (1949), 199-218. But the context of the Bull is peculiarly appropriate to Need's thesis.

⁶ The debate on the poverty of Christ was not ended by the Bull *Inter nonnullos* of 1323. Cf., for example *De Civ Dom.*, Bk. iii; Richard Maidstone, *Protectorium Pauperis* (ed A. Williams, *Carmelus*, v (1958), 132-80; K. Walsh, 'The *De Vita Evangelica* of Geoffrey Hardeby (†c.1385)', *Analecta Augustiniana*, xxxiii (1970), 151-261; xxxiv (1971), 5-83. It is not necessary therefore to assume that Need's posture is rigorist let alone heretical. For general discussion see Decima L. Douie, *The Nature and the Effect of the Heresy of the Fraticelli*, Manchester, 1932, and M. D. Lambert, *Franciscan Poverty*, London, 1961; 'The Franciscan Crisis under John xxii', *Franciscan Studies*, xxxii (1972), 123-43.

voluntas which constitutes his sinfulness? Is the Dreamer himself in his *robe of russet* a critic of the church?¹ Unfortunately, the robe of russet is too ambiguous to give us an answer. It was indeed a mark of Lollardy; it was also a symbol of labour. Wyclif points out in regard to the russet of the Franciscans that *russetum vero significat laborem*.² And Langland himself seems to support this implication.³ This is a question which has relevance to our third and final question—the function of the polemical and satirical material in the poem as a whole. The Dreamer is a sinful man and it might be supposed that by depicting him as a wandering cleric, a *gyrovagus*, one of those hermits, *unholy of works* who appear fitfully in bishops' registers,⁴ Langland is symbolizing the fluctuating will. But the Dreamer is also a symbol of a corrupt church. And in his wanderings it is at a corrupt society that he looks, an image of himself. Thus Study attacks him for the corruption of learning,⁵ one of those traditional topics which the Lollards made their own; Clergy lectures him on the duties of the clergy;⁶ Anima (or *Liberum Arbitrium*) lectures him on the corruption of the age.⁷ He does indeed receive much moral instruction but much of it relates to the theme of the ploughman and the *vita apostolica* and is concerned, as Dunning pointed out, with the 'reform of Christian society'⁸ and the necessity of repentance. As Gower in the *Confessio* pictures both the corruption of the individual and of society, a society in which *Bope lettred and lewed beþ alayed now wiþ synne*,⁹ so too Langland interweaves the themes of the salvation of the individual and of society. Hence the importance of the theme of repentance in the poem. It is not so much, as Knight claimed, that satire is at the centre of the poem¹⁰ as that, as one critic put it, 'the "prophetic" character of Langland's mind is everywhere manifest in his poem'.¹¹ The poem is a vision in which the Dreamer, the sinful

¹ For the russet robes of the Lollards see Cannon, p. 473.

² *Polemical Works*, i. 27n. Cf. *Pierce the Ploughmans Crede* (ed. W. W. Skeat, *EETS* os 30 (1867)), l. 719; Pearsall, note to x, 2, and D. W. Robertson and B. F. Huppé, *Piers Plowman and Scriptural Tradition* (Princeton, 1951), p. 217.

³ B xv, 220.

⁴ See, for example, Register of Randolph Baldock on Thomas Byreford, hermit of Cripplegate (*CYS* 7 (1) (1911), pp. 141–2.

⁵ A xi, 17–92; B x, 17–139; C xi, 14–83.

⁶ B x, 272–335.

⁷ Most of B xv and C xvi and xvii.

⁸ T. P. Dunning, 'Action and Contemplation in *Piers Plowman*', *Critical Approaches*, p. 214.

⁹ B xv, 354.

¹⁰ S. T. Knight, 'Satire in *Piers Plowman*', *Critical Approaches*, p. 308.

¹¹ Edward Vasta, *The Spiritual Basis of 'Piers Plowman'* (The Hague, 1965), p. 13.

human will, as well as an erring cleric, learns by precept and example that *charitas* is *recta voluntas ab omnibus terrenis ac praesentibus prorsus aversa, juncta Deo inseparabiliter*.¹ The poem draws many ideas from the controversies of the period when it was written. Parallels, some of which I have indicated, can be found to the ideas of Wycliffe and other heterodox thinkers of the period. Some of these ideas I have looked at in detail; others, such as the fleeting references to vernacular scripture,² or criticisms of wordly learning implicit in the scene with the doctor and elsewhere in the poem, I have only briefly touched upon. But in the last resort, *Piers Plowman* is less concerned with the inculcation of theories, orthodox, heterodox, or heretical, than with a prophetic vision of a corrupt society and its eschatological doom. It may, perhaps, be surmised that when Conscience sets off at the end of the poem to seek Piers Plowman, it is the *renovatio mundi* that she seeks. Perhaps Langland saw this *renovatio* as Gerhoch of Reichersberg saw it, as an age in which the church would be cleansed of all filth and simony and adorned as with crowns of gold.³ Conscience is seeking *redde quod debes*, the spirit of justice and righteousness⁴ but also the spirit of charity. The ideal is summed up by Julianus Pomerius: 'Therefore if in this life we strive to fulfil justice, whose work it is to render each man his due, let us give ourselves back to God by whom we are made . . . Let reason master the vices, let the body be subject to the soul and the soul to God and the whole perfection of man is accomplished.'⁵ If we must conclude that Langland the Lollard still eludes us I think we should also conclude that Langland the reformer is due to reappear. Let Wyclif have the last word: *Spectat ad officium doctoris evangelici prophetare*⁶ In this at least Langland would seem to be at one with the evangelical doctor.

¹ *De Vita Contemplativa*, III, cap. xiii (PL lix. 493).

² Cf. the definition of Dobet: *he . . . hap rendred þe bible, and preacheþ þe peple . . . Libenter suffertis* etc. (B viii, 91-2; C x, 88-9) and Dame Study's observation that he who has Holy Writ in his mouth is little loved (B x, 32-8; C xi, 31-4). The emphasis on vernacular scripture is common among continental heretics especially the Waldensians. Cf. Lambert (1977), pp. 68, 91, 175.

³ R. E. Lerner, 'The Refreshment of Saints: The Time after Antichrist as a Station for Earthly Progress in Medieval Thought', *Traditio*, xxxii (1976), 114.

⁴ Cf. Pamela Gradon, 'John Gower and the Concept of Righteousness', *Poetica*, viii (1977), 61-71.

⁵ *De Vita Contemplativa*, III, cap. xxvi (PL lix. 508). This sense of *redde quod debes* seems to me more likely than that proposed by R. W. Frank ('*Piers Plowman*' and the Scheme of Salvation (New Haven, 1957), p. 106 n. 2.

⁶ *De Vaticinatione seu Prophetia* (Opera Minora, 165/3-4).