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Performing the Seven Deadly Sins: How One Late-Medieval English Preacher did it

Alan J. Fletcher

Some things change very little. As late as the nineteenth century, an Indian summer in English preaching and a time when published collections of sermons were thick enough on the ground to allow us to infer that an avid readership awaited them, we find men like the Rev. Walter Baxendale perpetuating what was, in effect, an ancient tradition. While his awareness of that tradition's antiquity is hard to gauge, his compiling of a *Dictionary of Anecdote, Incident, Illustrative Fact, selected and arranged for the Pulpit and the Platform*,¹ an anthology of edifying matter arranged alphabetically by subject, would have been a pursuit as much in keeping with the spirit of the second half of the thirteenth century as it evidently was with that of the second half of the nineteenth. Even if one read no further than Baxendale's title – his book was for the pulpit *and the platform* – one might nevertheless form the impression that one thing he *was* fully aware of, as also indeed were many of his medieval predecessors, is how much of a performance art preaching might be. Of course, it is self-evident that preaching is likely to be a performance art at any stage in its history, and when, as in Rev. Baxendale's case, many of the narratives of his Victorian *exemplum* collection come stuffed with sprightly dialogue – an investment which invites, however modestly, dramatic realization in the delivery – preaching is cranked even more assuredly into a performative gear. Baxendale's more famous contemporary, Thomas Hardy the poet, captures the ethos of histrionic preaching that Baxendale's compilation would have gone some way towards encouraging. In the poem 'In Church', a parishioner catches sight of the preacher in the vestry after the sermon. She sees 'her idol stand with a satisfied smile / And re-enact at the vestry-glass / Each pulpit gesture in deft dumb-show / That had moved the congregation so'.²

Medieval predecessors of this tradition had grasped the nettle of the preacher as performer without hesitation and had gone further than Baxendale by openly recommending dramatic delivery. The preacher would do well to adopt a suitable

'voice': 'acutam in proferendo, austeram in corrigendo, benivolam in exhortando' ('sharp when expounding, stern when correcting and kindly when exhorting'), recommended 'Henry of Hesse' in his thirteenth-century *De arte predicandi*,³ and by the fifteenth century, the anonymous author of the Aquinas-tract had warmed so thoroughly to the idea of dramatic decorum in the pulpit, to the synchronizing of the sense of the words of Scripture uttered by the preacher with the tone in which he uttered them, that he advised not only on the choice of their inflection (vocally simulating, as appropriate, 'wonder', 'irony and derision', or 'impatience and indignation'), but also on the body language and mimetic gesture that suited them best. For example, God's chilling doom pronounced upon the damned, 'Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem eternum' (Matthew 25. 41), a favourite preaching topic, was to be delivered not only 'with hate', but also with 'turning away of the face'.⁴ Here, the preacher would have appeared even more conspicuously 'in role' before his congregation, no matter how local and temporary in the general context of the sermon such a dramatic effect may have been. In short, the preacher was being urged to adopt a persona, and being offered some suggestions about how to body it forth.⁵ Once in the pulpit, he was, in practice, on stage.⁶

Some preachers, it is true, shunned certain of the rhetorical embellishments characteristically recommended in the *artes predicandi*. As a result, they would have foreclosed some of the histrionic postures that those embellishments might otherwise have put into their heads. But my concern here is not with preachers of the sterner sort who set their faces against the more animated reaches of artifice and elocution.⁷ If, for the rest, the direct (and indirect) speech of Scripture might be dramatically energized and delivered before congregations 'in role', as we have seen, what of the dialogue that sermon *exempla* routinely contained? While the *artes predicandi* express no categorical precept about this of which I am aware, it makes little sense to imagine a preacher, only too ready to deliver Scriptural texts dramatically, abstemiously withholding such delivery from *exemplum* dialogue. Moreover, that he is hardly likely to have switched off dramatic delivery seems demonstrable from the way in which some *exemplum* dialogue is written up. Consider, for example, this snatch from a sermon *exemplum* in which a child and his mother converse in church:

And upon a certen tyme þei were in there chyrche, and faste this
childe behelde ever the rode, and seyde to his moder þus,
'Madame, is that a man or a childe that is so nayled up on zonder
tree? What menythe it þat he is so arayed?' Sche answerd and
seyd, 'Sonne, this is the similitude of Cristis Passion that he

sufferde for us to bryng us to the ioyes of heven.' 'And moder, whi stondithe that woman so by hym?' 'A sonne, that is the moder of Ihesu, his owne modur.' 'And saw sche tho peynes that he sufferd for us?' 'Jee certen, sonne', seyde sche. Then seyde þe childe to his moder, 'It wolde greve 3ow ri3t sore at 3owre hert, and case were þat 3e saw me so farde witheall.' Then seyde sche, 'Jee sonne, the moste hevynes it were to me that my3te be devised be eny possibil reson.' 'In certen moder, then it semythe to my reson that sche was full of hevynes when sche saw hyr sonne Ihesu suffer so grete tribulacion.'¹⁸

There are only five cases of 's/he said' deixis of who is speaking in this extract. For the most part, the dialogue tumbles out unannounced. Therefore, unless the preacher delivered himself with a modicum of dramatic differentiation at the very least, the alternation of narrative voice would not have registered smoothly with his congregation. So this short passage – and Middle English preaching has many like it – illustrates how particular sorts of sermon form and content might nudge preachers into dramatically enhancing their delivery. The inherent demands of oratory predisposed the sermon to be a site of performance. Further than this, the dialogic bustle familiar in sermons stocked with *exempla* or with direct speech *in persona* inherited from biblical sources bids us consider the possibility of their status as proto-dramatic scripts. This is something of obvious comparative interest to anyone who, like the honourand of this *festschrift*, is concerned with understanding early drama proper. Furthermore, students of this drama have every *a priori* justification for taking medieval preaching on board when most medieval plays that survive are evidently the products of that same clerical culture by which preaching was also sustained.⁹ A neat epitome of this liaison is seen in the case of the Dominican friar Thomas Bynham of Beverley: in 1423 Bynham, a member of that medieval order of preachers *par excellence*, wrote the banns of Beverley's Corpus Christi play.¹⁰ But the considerations broached here serve primarily to introduce the sermon published below, and are offered only as the merest preface towards some future assessment of the performative modes of late-medieval English preaching. Properly, this dimension will require full exploration in its own right before it can be compared with what is known of the performative modes of late-medieval English drama. Not until this has been attempted will the two related domains, preaching and drama, begin adequately to illuminate each other.¹¹

And finally, by way of introduction, we might note that the sermon below

would have fitted snugly into the repertoire of a very large corps of medieval preachers, those who were charged with discoursing on the time-honoured topics of Christian catechesis. Such preaching staple, so ancient and familiar, and indeed from 1409 mandatory for many English preachers, might well have benefited from a dramatic dusting down to make it eye- and ear-catching.¹² Since much of the Church's message had remained essentially unchanged over hundreds of years, much of it was eligible for enlivening, dramatic reinvention. One old chestnut of the catechetical programme, the Seven Deadly Sins (as in the sermon below), makes a good case in point. By the late-medieval period, cultural precedents and expectations that the sins should be dramatically vivified, in whatever medium they were presented, were extremely powerful. Not only had they long been paraded in the quasi-dramatic venue that the pulpit afforded, but in drama proper as well: witness the Paternoster plays which, while focusing on another catechetical topos, the Paternoster, appear also to have annexed the Seven Deadly Sins for dramatization in some way.¹³ And even in texts of a more readerly sort, the sins might urge towards dramatic life, one of the most telling examples of this being the dramatized confession of the Seven Deadly Sins in *Piers Plowman*.¹⁴ So the sermon below participates in this tradition of catechetical refurbishment, here figuratively animating the sins as daughters of the devil, and occasionally dramatizing in direct speech utterances typifying particular classes of sinner. Would the preacher have offered himself momentarily as a dramatic icon of those sins about which he preached? Precisely how the sermon may originally have been delivered will, of course, never be known. But if it ever was preached, a dramatic preaching would have both internal and external licence. It is published here for the first time.¹⁵

NOTES

¹ (London: Dickinson, 1888).

² *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by S. Hynes, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982-95), II, 141, lines 10-13. Compare the recommendations of the fourteenth-century preacher Thomas Waleys in note 6 below.

³ H. Caplan, *Of Eloquence: Studies in Ancient and Medieval Rhetoric*, ed. by A. King and H. North (Ithaca and London: Ithaca University Press, 1970), p. 57.

⁴ Caplan, *Of Eloquence*, p. 57 (the Aquinas-tract). The Doom dialogues of Matthew 25 were, of course, a favourite passage with dramatists too. 'Henry of Hesse' in his *De arte predicandi* was apprehensive about a preacher's 'digitorum demonstratio nimia; capitis iactatio; oculorum clausura' ('excessive pointing with the fingers; tossing the head; shutting the eyes'; Caplan, *Of Eloquence*, p. 157, and compare again the Aquinas-tract, *Of Eloquence*, p. 58).

⁵ The fourteenth-century evidence of the *Forma predicandi* of Robert of Basevorn is also worth recalling. Basevorn recommended matching vocal inflection to the matter in hand, and invoking Hugh of St Victor, sounded a cautionary note about gesture. The preacher should not stretch his arms out too much as disputants do, or wag his head too much like a madman, or roll his eyes like a hypocrite (*Artes praedicandi: Contribution à l'histoire de la rhétorique au moyen âge*, ed. by Th.-M. Charland [Paris and Ottawa: De Vrin, 1936], p. 320).

⁶ In his fourteenth-century *De modo componendi sermones*, Thomas Waleys recommended private sermon rehearsal before trees and stones (Charland, *Artes praedicandi*, p. 339). This implies a memorized or partly memorized script and performance style, and comes close to satisfying some formal definitions of acting. (Various of the Church's ministrations have courted theatricality; compare the medieval histrionics at Mass surveyed by T. P. Dolan, 'The Mass as Performance Text', *From Page to Performance: Essays in Early English Drama*, ed. by J. A. Alford [East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1995], pp. 13-24.)

⁷ Such dissenting preachers existed both within orthodoxy (compare, for example, those friars who eschewed use of *exempla* and preached sermons of an austere Scriptural sort) and without (perhaps most famously in this category in late-medieval England were John Wyclif and his followers).

⁸ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS e Museo 180, fol. 85r-v.

⁹ A judicious start has been made by M. G. Briscoe, 'Preaching and Medieval English Drama', in *Contexts for Early English Drama*, ed. by M. G. Briscoe and J. C. Coldewey (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), pp. 150-72.

¹⁰ *Report on the Manuscripts of the Corporation of Beverley*, ed. by A. F. Leach, Historical Manuscripts Commission, 54 (London: Mackie and Co., 1900), p. 160.

¹¹ The source materials for understanding the performative aspects of the medieval sermon will probably resolve into three principal categories: i) the precepts on the same contained in the *artes predicandi*; ii) any indications concerning delivery in sermons themselves or in reports of sermons; and iii) whatever may be deduced from contemporary

texts (including illustrations) in which preaching in progress is represented.

¹² In England, the obligation to preach catechesis had been formally enjoined upon *curati* since the thirteenth century. The Constitutions of Archbishop Thomas Arundel enforced the obligation formidably. For a valuable survey of this topic, see H. L. Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 201-07.

¹³ D. Wyatt, 'The English Pater Noster Play: Evidence and Extrapolations', *Comparative Drama*, 30 (1996-7), 452-70.

¹⁴ *William Langland: Piers Plowman A Parallel-Text Edition of the A, B, C and Z Versions*, ed. by A. V. C. Schmidt, 2 vols (London and New York: Dent, 1995-), I, 184-244, lines 60-506 (B text).

¹⁵ The sermon, edited from Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS e Museo 180, fols 69v-75, is collated against a version of it found in Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 50, fols 193-99v (L in the apparatus) and in Gloucester Cathedral Library, MS 22, pp. 478-93 (G in the apparatus; for further details on all these manuscripts, see A. J. Fletcher, *Preaching, Politics and Poetry in Late-Medieval England* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), pp. 154-59). All expansions have been italicized, and modern punctuation, word division and capitalization introduced. The letters 'u' and 'v' are distinguished according to modern usage. Editorial interventions in the base text are signalled between square brackets. Following the theory of copy text, additions to the base text are regularized to conform with its orthography. Superior angled ticks enclose text which the scribe required to be inserted. Angle brackets enclose conjectural readings where the manuscript is damaged or where simple scribal copying errors have been made. Half brackets enclose material originally copied and then cancelled. In the apparatus, 'om.' denotes 'omitted'.

A Sermon for the Fifth Sunday After Trinity

f. 69v 'Dominum autem Cristum sanctificate in cordibus vestris.' Prima Petri, tercio capitulo. Halow 3e the Lord Criste in 3owre hertis.

As for a proces of þis brefe and schort collacion, 3e schall understonde þat almy3ti God is halowed and worschepyd in every tru cristen sowle. For in like wise as
 5 there is in þe blissed Trinite iij persons and oo God, so þer is in every truw cristen sowle thre þingis, scilicet, Memoria, Intelligencia et Voluntas. The firste is thi mynde, the secund is thyne understandyng, the therd is þi willyng. For like as the Sonne Ihesu commethe of the Fader and the Holy Goste of hem boþe, so in the same maner wise understandyng commethe of mynde and þi willyng of hem bothe. And as
 10 þese docturs sey, echon of hem is withe other. So þen every good cristen man and woman be so disposed þat wolde that Criste scholde be halowed | 70r in his sowle, he muste kepe clene the iij partis of his sowle. Firste, he must kepe clene his mynde frome all unclene thow3tis and abhomynabill temptacions, after þe doctrine of the apostill Peter in the Pistill of þis day where he seythe thus, 'Omnes unanimes in oracione estote, [compacientes], fraternitatis amatores, misericordes, modesti,
 15 humiles.' Be 3e, as who seythe, in feythe of [oo] wyll, and in [prayer.] Be 3e everychon sufferyng of other and lovers of brotherhode, mercifull, mylde and meke. And þis maner of doctryne of the apostill scholde cawse the for to have a clene mynde. The secunde is that [3e] be perfytly disposed in luffe and charite. 'Non reddentes malum

2 hertis] herttis and LG. 4 almy3ti God] owre lorde Ihesu crist L. 5 truw cristen] cristen creature LG. 6 firste] first þing LG. 7 understandyng] understandyng And LG. 8-9 the same maner] lyke G. 9 wise] wyse þine G. 9 mynde] þi mynde G. 9-10 And . . . other] om. LG. 10 þen] om. L. 11 be so disposed] om. L. 12 Firste] þe first parte G. 12 kepe] om. L. 13 and] and from all G. 13 abhomynabill] wickid L. 13 the] þe holy LG. 15 compacientes] compacienter OLG. 16 as who seythe] everychone L. 16 oo] good O. 16 and] om. L. 16 prayer] prayers O. 16-17 Be 3e everychon] and in L. 17 and¹] om. LG. 17 mylde and meke] meke and mylde L. 18 of the] of þis holy LG. 18 the for] om. L. 18 mynde] mynde And O. 19 secunde] secunde þing G. 19 is] is þis L. 19 3e] he O.

- 20 *pro malo, vel maledictum pro maledicto, sed contrario benedicentes.*' [Not] zeldyng
[ivell] for ivell nother cursyng for cursyng, but on þe contrary wise blissyng.' Now I
cowncell 3ow to peyse well þese wordis and set hem fast to 3owre sowlis, and so
schall 3e lyfe a *perfyte* lyfe to the plesure of almyti God. The therde is 3e schall kepe
clene 3our willyng frome anger and wrathe, and þis fals | 70v desyre of takyng of
25 vengeaunce. And þen may 3e halow owre Lord Ihesu Criste in 3owre sowlis. 'Quia [in
hoc vocati] estis, ut benediccionem [hereditate] possideatis.' For in þis þing [3e] ben
calde, þat [3e] schall have the blissyng of almy3ti God be ry3tfull heritage.

- But alac, a man may see be dyvers exsampyls that the pepill sett more ioie to
þe plesure of the body then for to do þat that scholde be to þe salvacion of there
30 sowlis. For it is so nowadayes, and we have riche prosperite and welþe of body, what
synne that ever we use we drede not. For it farithe be moche pepyll of the worlde as it
faryd be a man þat had vij dow3ters. And they were feyre, semly and goodly of schape,
and goodly to beholde, but they had ivell names and fowle, and becawse of there fowle
names þat þei had, there wolde none honeste man com for to mari withe them ne wed.
35 He see þis þe fadur of hem and kept hem long tyme for þeire fowle names. And when
the fader understode þat, anone he chawngid ther namys and gafe hem þe gayest names
that he my3te fynde or eny man kowde perseyve or | 71r devise. And when that was
knownen, then come the pepyll of the worlde and married withe all vij dow3ters.
[Moraliter.] Be this man þat had vij dow3ters is understonde þe devill, and his vij

20 Not] No O. 21 ivell] I wyll O. 21 nother] ne LG. 21 þe] *om.* L. 21
Now] Now þen LG. 22 to peyse] for to remember LG. 22 fast] sadly L. 23
almyti] *om.* LG. 23 therde] therde þing G. 23 is] is þat LG. 24 and] *and*
from LG. 24 takyng] askyng L; taken G. 25 vengeaunce] vengeaunce of 3our
evencristen G. 25-26 in hoc vocati] invocati OLG. 26 hereditate] habitate OG;
habiate L. 26 þing] *om.* L. 26 3e ben] we ben O. 26 ben] are G. 27 3e
schall] we schall O. 27 almy3ti] *om.* LG. 27 heritage] possescion L. 28
alac] *om.* LG. 28 may] may well L. 28 the pepill] moche pepyl LG. 29
þat] tho þingis L; þat þing G. 29 there] þeire owne LG. 30 so] *om.* L. 30
nowadayes] now a dayes þat L. 30 we] we may LG. 30 riche] riches L. 31
worlde] worlde and synne LG. 33 ivell . . . fowle] fowle namys and evyll G. 34
wolde] wolde com LG. 34 com] *om.* LG. 34 ne wed] *om.* L; ne wedde hem G.
35 He see þis] So þen L; So G. 35 and] *om.* LG. 35 for] and þe cause was of
LG. 36 the] theyre LG. 36 ther] theyre fowle G. 36 gayest names] feyrest
namys and þe gayst L; feyreste namys G. 37 eny] þat eny LG. 37 perseyve or]
om. L; ymagyn or G. 38 and] *and* so LG. 38 all] all þe L. 39 Moraliter]
(*incorporated from O margin*); Moraliter So gostly to owre purpose LG. 39 had]
had þe G. 39 and] *and* by G.

- 40 dow3ters is understonde the vij dedly synnes, the whiche everi cristen creature scholde voyde, and exchewe the felischipe of hem. Consideryng þe fende of þe fowlenes of his fowle dow3ters namys, he hathe chaungid þe names of his dow3ters that were so odius, and now he haþe set hem on the goodlieste namys þat he cowde fynde. The first and the eldeste of þese same vij dow3ters of þe fowle fende of hell Sathanas, sche was
45 cald Pride, þe whiche was a fowle name to heavenly pepill. And for encheson þat þe fende wold mary hyr [to þe] pepill [of þe worlde,] he hathe sett on hyr a gay name, and sche is called Honesty, so þat a prowde man or a prowde woman is called an honest man or an honest woman. For nowadayes thow3e a man be never so prowde, of hert, of speche, of cowntenance, þinkyng in his hert that there is none so feyre ne so
50 71v fressche, so lusti, so iocunde, so goodly, so manly, so bewtifull as he is. Women in þere degre withe their gay heddys sett up on hey3te and ornyd, as it were an unresonabyll beeste, and þer gay bedis withe litill devocion and thereon ryngis full gay; hyr kyrtell sleveles to make hem to seme prayti to synne, and many oþer tokens. What, is þat pride? Nay syr, it is clenlynnes and honeste. But what schalt þu have for
55 that honeste? Seint Iohn seythe in the Apocalips, ['Quantum] glorificavit se et in [deliciis] fuit, *tantum* date ei luctum et tormentum.' 'As' moche as he or sche ioyethe hemselfe in delectacion of pride, so moche schall be to hem þe peynes and sorowis in hell worlde witheowten ende. And then þe apostill Petur rehersiþe in þe

40 whiche] whiche synnys L; whyche fowle synnys G. 41 hem] them þen G.
41 of þe] þe LG. 42 þe . . . dow3ters] þeyre namys L; them G. 42 so] fowle
and LG. 43 hem on] on þem L; up on hem G. 43 fynde] devyse LG. 43
first] firste dow3tter G. 44 same] *om.* G. 44 fowle fende] devills L. 44 of
hell Sathanas sche] of hell L; *om.* G. 45 name to] name some tyme to all LG.
45 encheson] be cawse LG. 46 fende] devyll L. 46 hyr'] hyr 'well' G. 46 to
þe] *om.* O. 46 of þe worlde] *om.* O. 46 on] up on L. 46 and] *and* now LG.
47-48 þat . . . woman] þat 'an honest man or an honest woman' a prowde man is
callyd an honest man G. 48 hert] hert or G. 50 lusti] lustye ne G. 50 so
iocunde] *om.* L. 50 is] is *and* so L; is And G. 51 degre] degre on þe same wyse
LG. 51 hey3te] hy3e LG. 51 as it were] like L; as G. 52 and'] Wythe LG.
52 gay] *om.* LG. 52 withe] and LG. 52 thereon] up on theyre L; up on G.
53 gay] gay *and* LG. 53 to make] for to make L. 53 prayti] praty un to L;
praty for to G. 53 tokens] tokens lyke to þe same L; sympil tokens moo G. 54
syr] forsothe he seythe L; forthe he seythe G. 54 clenlynnes and] *om.* L. 54 have]
have to þi mede LG. 55 Quantum] *quam tantum* OLG. 56 deliciis] dilectus O.
56 'As'] 'how' 'as' O; he seiþe as LG. 57 in] in þe LG. 57 of] of þe fowle of
G. 57 and] *and* þe L. 58 then] also LG. 58 þe'] þe holy LG.

Pistill of þis day and seythe þus, 'Oculi Domini super iustos et [aures] eius in preces
 60 eorum.' The ieene of the Lorde is upon [iuste] men and his eeris upon the prayers of
 hem. As who seythe, all prowde pepill alwey disposed in pride, God is ever redy to
 remyte them to everlasting correccion. And therfore if 3e wil halow | 72r this Lorde
 Criste Ihesu that is owre maker and owre Saviowre, let hym be halowed in [3owre]
 sowlis, and 3e muste be well ware that 3e mary not withe the dow3ter of the devyll,
 65 and that is Pride.

The secunde dow3ter was callyd Envy, but now she is called Iusticia, þat is
 [Ry3twysnes] for an envius man or an envius woman. For they will stody and seche
 in there myndis be dyvers menys falsly to make his ney3bor or his even cristen to lese
 there wordly gooddis. And ever he seythe it is ry3twysly done, thow3e it be as fals as
 70 God is truw.

The therde dow3ter [was] calde Ira, [Wrathe, but now sche is callyd Virilitas,
 þat is to sey, Manhode, for] he that is a fracer or a bracer, a grete bragger, a grete
 swerer or a gret fy3tter, soche men ben calde manly men. Pis is a fals wyle and a
 sotell of the devyll, þat be these menys, þat is to sey, be þe chawnychyng of there
 75 names, he wyll wed all his dow3ters to the pepyll of þe world, and so he hathe
 almoste. And owte of þis wicked synne of envy commethe bacbityng and fals
 slaunderyng. 'Invidia que fecit Caym occidere fratrem suum Abel.' Envy was cawse
 that Caym slow3e his broþer Abel. Envy was cawse that Iacob sonnys | 72v solde
 there owne brother Ioseph inte Egipt and so forsoke hym. And envy was the cawse

59 aures] aure O. 60 the Lorde] owre lorde L. 60 iuste] uniuste OL. 61
 alwey] þat ben L. 61 in] in þis fowle synne of L; in þe fowle synne of G. 62
 if] if þat LG. 62 this] þis good L; owre G. 63 Criste Ihesu] Ihesu crist LG.
 63 that . . . halowed] om. LG. 63 3owre] owre O. 64 sowlis] hertis G. 64
 and] þen LG. 64 3e muste] muste 3e L. 65 and] om. LG. 65 is] is to sey
 G. 66 þat is] om. G. 67 Ry3twysnes] om. O. 67 man] om. G. 67 or
 . . . they] om. L. 68 there] hys L. 71 was] is O. 71 Ira] om. LG. 71-
 72 Wrathe . . . for] vrilitas manhode þat is to sey O. 71 but] and L. 72 to sey]
 om. L. 72 or] om. LG. 72 a grete bragger] om. L. 73 Pis] that G. 74-
 75 þat is . . . names] om. L. 75 wed] wed 'hem' O. 75-76 and . . . almoste] om.
 LG. 76 And] And so LG. 76 owte . . . commethe] þer commythe owte of þis
 fowle synne of envy moche G. 76 þis wicked synne] þese fowle synnys L. 76
 of envy] of wrathe and envy L. 76 bacbityng] moche bacbytyng LG. 77
 slaunderyng] slawnderyng of þeire even cristen G. 77 cawse] þe cawse LG. 78
 cawse] þe cawse LG. 79 owne] om. LG. 79 inte] in to þe londe LG.

80 that the Iewys betrayed Crist. And so I sey that soche pepyll fallythe presisely into
 bacbityng and slawndering. To þe which maner of pepyll the apostyll seythe in the
 Pistill in thys same maner, 'Qui enim vult vitam diligere et videre dies bonos,
 coherceat linguam suam a malo et labia sua ne loquantur dolum.' He that wyll [lyfe
 and see good dayes, let hym constreyne] hys witt and his tong frome ivell, *and* his
 85 lippis to speke non ivell ne gyle ne no maner of falskede. 'Declinet autem a malo *et*
 faciat bonum; inquirat pacem et sequatur eam.' Bow every man frome ivell and do
 good, all 3e slears of men withe 3owre tongis, and amende 3owre lyvis. Seke pes and
 perfyte lyffe and so schalt þu halow Criste in thi sowle. Wherefore I may sey as I seyde
 at the begynnyng, 'Dominum autem Cristum sanctificate in cordibus vestris.' Halow
 90 3e þe Lord Criste in 3owre herttis.

The iiijth dow3ter was called Slowþe, and þat is turned [now] into another name
 and is calde Impotencia, [þat is to sey, Unmy3ty,] and that I preve as thus. If case be
 þat | 73r a man wolde sey to a grete slogard and to a grete slepar, 'Whi whilt not þu
 aryse up on the Sondayes and on other festyval dayes and come to the chyrche and ze fe
 95 a duw attendaunce to the devyne *servyce* of God and to all his seyntis?' Anon he wyll
 make his excuse and sey, 'I am olde', or 'sekely', or 'the weder is colde *and* I am
 febyll', or he wyll excuse hym and sey, 'I have a grete howsolde', or [ells he haþe]
 sum odur ocupacion to do. But for all these excusacions, and a man wolde come and
 hyre hym or hyr *and* wolde gyfe good wagis, then wolde they ley all excusacions
 100 aparte and come to þer devyne *servyce* acording to there duty, where God

80 the Iewys] Iudas G. 80 betrayed] betrayed owre lorde Ihesu L. 80 I] I mey
 well L. 80 soche] soche maner L; soche maner of G. 80 presisely] comenly
 LG. 81 bacbityng] bacbyng G. 81 apostyll] holy apostill LG. 81-82 the
 Pistill] his pistyll G. 82 in thys same maner] of þis maner sayng L; on thys
 maner wyse G. 82 dies bonos] bonos dies L; bonus dies G. 83 dolum] dolum
 fforsothe G. 83-84 lyfe . . . constreyne] streyne O. 84 witt and his] *om.* LG.
 85 to] for to L. 85 non . . . falskede] no gyle LG. 86 sequatur] sequitur L;
 sequetur G. 87 good] good dedis L. 87 all . . . tongis] *om.* L. 88 schalt þu]
 schall 3e LG. 88 thi sowle] 3owre sowlys LG. 91 now] *om.* O. 92 þat
 . . . Unmy3ty] *om.* O. 92 to sey] *om.* G. 92 I] I may LG. 93 to'] un to
 L. 93 and to] or to L; or G. 94 the'] tho G. 94 on'] *om.* G. 94-95 ze fe
 a] do þi LG. 95 to'] of LG. 96 sey] sey þat G. 97 or'] or ells LG. 97
 and sey] þus G. 97 sey] sey thus L. 97 ells he haþe] *om.* O. 99 or hyr]
om. L. 99 *and* wolde] and sey I wil LG. 99 then] þen anone G. 99 wolde]
 wyll LG. 99 all] all maner of L. 100 aparte] a bak LG. 100 to'] un to L.
 100 where] Where as almy3tti G.

commawndythe every creature *and* seythe þus, 'Memento quod diem [sabbati] sanctifices.' Have mynde that þu halow thi holy day.

The vth dow3ter was called Luxuria, Lecheri. And for þe devyl wold have hyr married well, he called hyr Luffe. And so if a lecherus man be chalengid of his vicius
 105 lyvyng and fowle synne, anon he wyll excuse hym be som sotel mene and sey it is not so, *and* swere horribly, I 73v or ells he wyll sey, 'I do it more for luffe then for enyþing ells.' For herdily, he þat muste 'be' <in the> 'worlde must' have lufe. This same synne of lechery distroyed Salamon, Sampson, David, and oþer moo. Wherefore Peter seythe in þe Pistill, 'Vultus autem Domini super facientes mala.' God
 110 wyll be redy withe his correccion ever upon soche wicked lyvers usyng soche ivell lyvyng.

The vjth dow3ter is Gloteny, for the whiche many ar dampned and ben in hell. But þis name is turned nowadayes into a feyre name and is cald Good Felischipe. For he þat is a riatowre and a revelowre and a grete hawnter of the taverne or the ale
 115 howse, *and* a grete waster of his gooddys, then is he callyd a good fellow. So at the last he wastipe bothe Godis parte and the worldis. Pis 3e understonde well inow3e that he þat usipe soche revell is callid a good fellow, 'Quorum deus venter est.' For his bely is his God. Wherefore þe apostill in þe Pistill seythe, 'Quis est qui vobis noceat si boni

101 every . . . þus] *and* seythe on this wyse L. 101 Memento] Memento homo G. 101 sabbati] *om.* O; saboti G. 102 mynde] mynde þu man G. 103 Luxuria] luxuria þat is to sey L; *om.* G. 103-104 have hyr married] marrye hyr G. 104 called hyr] hathe chaungyd hyr name *and* now he callipe hyr a gay name and þat is L; haþe chaungyd hyr name and callipe hyr G. 104 if] if þat L. 104-105 chalengid . . . synne] blamyd for his myslyving LG. 105 mene] menys L. 106 sey] sey that L. 107 For . . . lufe] *om.* LG. 108 This] also pis L. 108 same] same fowle L; fowle G. 108 and] and many LG. 109 Wherefore] *and* perfore þe holy apostyl L; Wherefore Seynt G. 109 Pistill] pistyl þus LG. 110 wyll] wyll ever L. 110 ever] *om.* L. 110-111 usyng . . . lyvyng] *om.* L. 112 is] was callid LG. 112 for . . . hell] *om.* G. 112 whiche] whiche fowle synne of gloteny L. 112 many] manyd one L. 114 and a revelowre] *om.* LG. 114 the taverne] tavernys LG. 114-15 the ale howse] of ale howsis LG. 115 at the last] þat LG. 116 part] parte and his owne *and* þe wordis bothe G. 116-17 Pis . . . fellow] *om.* L. 116 Pis] *om.* G. 116-17 he . . . revell] soche one G. 117 fellow] fellow so þat he wastipe boþe godis parte *and* þe worldis L. 117 is] was L. 118 apostill . . . seythe] holy apostil peter seythe in þe pistyll of þis day þus L; holy apostill seipe in þe pistill þus G.

emulatores fueritis?' Who is þat that schall dismay 3ow or disese 3ow if 3e be sewars
 120 or lovers of goodnes? As who seythe, what fende schal disceyve 3ow if 3e wyll leve
 þis fowle synne | 74r of glotený and lufe the feyre vertu of abstinence?

The vijth dow3ter and the laste, sche was callyd Covetise, but the fende hathe
 chawngyd her name, and he callythe hyr Elemosina, Almes Dede, and that I preve as
 þus. A covetose man and a covetose woman rekyþe not how they done, so they may
 125 have tresour of the worlde and for to labor to have good be extorcion and be comberus
 menys, some be fals whey3tis and fals mesurs or oder untru menys, as in biyng and
 sellýng and soche maner of fals weyes. And so if he be put to examinacion, he wyll
 sey, 'I wyll have a preste to syng for me when I am gone', or, 'I wyll gif a boke or a
 chalis to the chyrche, or a bell, or a vestiment, and so schall I be prayed fore every
 130 Sonday, or I wyll do some other good dede like to the same.' So all soche disposed
 pepil may be likened to Iudas Skariot, that traytour that betrayed Criste. For he made
 marchauntise be fals menys when that he solde Cristis persone, and so solde hymselfe
 to the devyll bothe body and sowle. [For] as Seynt Paule witnessithe, 'Stipendia enim
 peccati mors [est.]' The rewarde that soche covetise pepyll schall have for þer | 74v
 135 offence [schall be] everlastýng dampnacion worlde witheowten ende in the fyre of hell.
 And þefore, if we wyll have owre Lord Ihesu Criste owre Saviowre halowyd in owre

119 dismay] noye L; dysnoye G. 119 if] if þat LG. 119-20 sewars or lovers]
 þe folowers LG. 120 what fende schal] þere schall no wickyð fende ne spirit L.
 120 schal] schal 'fende' O. 120 3ow] 3ow ne tempe 3ow L. 120 if] if þat LG.
 120 3e] om. L. 122 sche] om. L. 122 but] but now LG. 123 he] om. LG.
 123 hyr] hyr a gaye name G. 123 Elemosina] Elemosina þat is to sey L. 123
 Dede] dedys L. 123 I] I may LG. 124 and . . . woman] om. LG. 124 how]
 how þat LG. 124 they] done he doþe L. 124 so] so þat LG. 124 they] he
 L. 125 have¹] þe L; have þe G. 125 and for to labor] ffor some men laboryþe
 L; ffor some men labor G. 125 to have] for to have LG. 125 and be] and by
 soche G. 126 and¹] and by L. 126 or] or by some L; or by eny G. 126
 oder] oþer soche G. 127 maner of] oþer L. 127 so] om. G. 125 if] if þat
 LG. 127 put] om. G. 128 sey] sey azene L. 128 to] for to G. 128
 gone] dede LG. 130 or] or ells LG. 130 So] So þen L; So þat G. 131 may]
 may wel LG. 131 to] un to L. 131 that¹] þe false LG. 131 betrayed]
 betrayed owre lorde Ihesu L. 132 that] om. L. 132 Cristis] cristis owne L.
 132 persone] persone to the Iewys G. 133 For] om. O; and þefore G. 133
 witnessithe] seythe LG. 134 est] om. O; est et cetera G. 135 offence] offencis
 LG. 135 schall be] om. O. 135 worlde] om. G. 135 witheowten] withe
 owte eny G. 136 And] om. G. 136 if] and G. 136 Lord . . . in owre] om.
 L. 136 owre Saviowre] om. G

sowlis, þen must we make a clene defors betwene us and þe vij dow3ters withe duw contriscion. And then wil owre Lorde Ihesu Criste sey unto us, 'Si quis diligit me, sermonem meum servabit, et Pater meus diliget eum, et ad eum veniemus, et mansionem apud eum faciemus.' 'Whosoever lovythe me', Criste seythe, 'do after my techyng, and my Fader schall lufe hym, and we schall come to hym, and make in him our dwellyng place'.

[The holy doctur] Seynt Austen tellythe, in libro *Confessionum*, that ther was a man had led his lyfe in extorcion and in lechery, and in many other myslyvyngis. And at the laste day when he scholde dye, his curat was withe hym and gafe hym good cowncell, ffor he thow3te the synner was contrite for his synne. And so the seke ever wept. So [when] þis preste saw þis man scholde dye, he requered þe sowle be the powere of almy3ti God owre maker and owre Saviowre, that he scholde apere to him agayne after the naturall lyfe was departed here from þe body, and so he dyd. And þe sowle | 75r come a3ene in the moste fowleste wyse þat eny man my3te see withe stynke and fyre and grete multitude of fendis, and so he aperyd in horribyll peynes. And þe preste asked hym what he was, and he seyde, 'The sowle of the body that þu desired to come a3ene to þe.' And the preste seyde, 'How doist thou?' And he seyde, 'I

137 dow3ters] dow3ters þat is to sey þe vij dedly synnys G. 138 owre . . . Criste] crist L; þe good lorde G. 138 unto] to LG. 140 Criste seythe] seythe crist and L; seythe crist G. 141 and my] my L. 141 to hym] om. G. 143 The holy doctur] om. O. 143 was] was some G. 144 man] man þat LG. 144 lyfe] lyffe all his dayes L; lyffe many 3eris G. 144 in] in grete LG. 144 lechery] þe fowle synne of lechery L; lecherus lyvyng G. 144 and in . . . myslyvyngis] om. G. 145 And] and so G. 145 the] his G. 145 was withe] came to LG. 145 and] and so G. 146 he] to dispose him selffe well to god for þe well of his owne sowle And so his curate L. 146 the synner] þat he L; by hym þat he G. 146 synne] synnys LG. 146-47 so . . . wept] wept sore for þem L. 146 seke] seke man G. 147 So] and þen L; And G. 147 when] om. O. 147 þis preste] he L. 147 saw] saw þat LG. 147 þis man] he G. 147 þe sowle] hym LG. 148 owre . . . Saviowre] om. LG. 148-49 to him agayne] a3ene to hym L. 149 the] þat his LG. 149 he] om. G. 149 dyd] grauntid hym L. 149-50 þe sowle come a3ene] þen come he a3ene L; then he cam to him G. 150 fowleste] horribyll L. 150 withe] withe moche fowle L; withe moche G. 151 and] and withe L. 151 in] in an LG. 151 horribyll] horribill lyckenes and 'in' grete LG. 151 peynes] peynes to his Curate L. 152 And] and þen LG. 152 þe preste] he L. 152 hym] hym in þe name of god G. 152 sowle] spiryte L. 153 And] and þen LG. 153 preste] Curate L.

am dampned to hell for evermore for all my contrisc*ion* that I had. For I thowȝt and
 155 if I myȝte have lyvid, in certen I wolde have ben as ivell as ever I was before. *And* as
 for my wepyng that I wept, was for incheson þat I scholde dye, and not for my synnes
 that I dyd here in erthe. And therfore byd all thi childern beware be me, *and* every man
 in his degre, for the well of þer owne sowlys.'

So in like wise þu muste forsake thi synnes withe contriscion [of hert,
 160 confescion of mowthe and satisfaccion in dede, for] the sekenes of þi sowle. 'Sed et si
 [quid] patimini propter iusticiam, beati.' But loke ȝe suffer this for ryȝte disposicion,
 and þen ȝe schall be blissed. And if ȝe be blissed then ȝe halow Criste in ȝowre
 sowlis, be þe whiche ȝe schall com to the ioie *and* blisse that never schall have ende.
 Amen. *Et cetera*.

154 to] to þe bytter peynes of G. 154 that I had] *om.* LG. 154-55 and if] if
 þat LG. 155 lyvid] lyvid still LG. 156 my^l] my sore G. 156 wept] wepte
 þat LG. 157 therfore] so L; *om.* G. 157 thi childern] men L; pepil G. 157-
 58 *and* . . . sowlys] but some wil not beleve it G. 157-159 every . . . muste] *om.*
 L. 159 þu] ȝe G. 159 thi] theyre L; ȝour G. 159-60 contriscion . . .
 mowthe] confescion of mowþe contriscion of herte G. 159-60 of hert . . . for] *om.*
 O. 160 for . . . sowle] *om.* L. 160 the] þe sore G. 160 þi] þe G. 161
 quid] quis OLG. 161 loke ȝe suffer] who some ever sufferyþe L; who so ever
 sufferyþe G. 161 ryȝte disposicion] ryȝtwysnes L; ryȝt poscession G. 162
 and þen ȝe] *om.* LG. 162 if . . . blissed] *om.* G. 162 then] þen do L. 162
 then ȝe] þen ȝe do G. 163 the] 'To' the O. 163-64 the . . . *cetera*] everlastyng
 ioie and blys To þe whiche *et cetera* Amen L; everlasting ioie To þe whiche *et cetera*
 Amen G.

COMMENTARY

1 Dominum autem: I Peter 3. 15, part of this Sunday's epistle (I Peter 3. 8-15), is chosen as the sermon's theme.

3 proces: The word is a stock piece of preaching terminology. The 'process' usually summarizes the matter to be treated in the following discourse.

4-9 The comparison of the three elements of a man's soul to the Trinity is ancient, and frequently exploited by late-medieval English preachers (compare, for example, its use in the sermon for the first Sunday in Lent in the collection edited by G. Cigman, *Lollard Sermons*, EETS, os 294 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 124, lines 115-17). It also often appears in vernacular accounts of the five Inward Wits (see P. S. Jolliffe, *A Check-List of Middle English Prose Writings of Spiritual Guidance* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediæval Studies, 1974), pp. 74-76, for a corpus of these). Ultimately, the comparison derives from St Augustine, *De Trinitate* (*Patrologia Latina* 42, col. 984), and it was widely taken up by later writers, such as Isidore (*Patrologia Latina* 82, col. 271), Alcuin (*Patrologia Latina* 100, col. 566) and Bernard (*Patrologia Latina* 183, cols 667-69). The fourteenth-century Dominican preacher John Bromyard included the motif in his *Summa predicantium* under Trinitas (British Library, MS Royal 7. E. iv, fol. 580, col. a), and from here it would have found its way to other late-medieval preachers. Before Bromyard, it had also attracted the attention of Thomas Aquinas; such influential attention would have ensured its further promotion (see I. Hislop, 'Man, the Image of the Trinity, according to St. Thomas', *Dominican Studies*, 3 (1950), 1-9).

14-16 Omnes unanimes: I Peter 3. 8. The words 'in oracione estote' are additions to the Vulgate.

19-20 Non reddentes: I Peter 3. 9.

25-26 Quia in hoc vocati estis: I Peter 3. 9. Readings which make no sense are emended from the Vulgate.

31-38 This *exemplum* of the seven daughters of the devil and their marriages was to become a clerical commonplace, though in its original form the story was somewhat different from that told here. Early versions speak of nine daughters, who were not

linked specifically with the Seven Deadly Sins. (P. Meyer, 'Notice du MS Rawlinson Poetry 241', *Romania*, 29 (1900), 54-58, discusses the appearance of the motif in the preaching of Jacques de Vitry, Odo of Cheriton and Adam de la Vacherie, but none resembles the treatment afforded in this sermon.) As might be expected of any commonplace, it is prone to variation, and the variation here is wholly conceivable. Gower tells how the Seven Deadly Sins were the daughters of Sin and Death in his *Mirour d'Omme* (*The Complete Works of John Gower*, ed. by G. C. Macaulay, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899-1902), I, 5-6, lines 205-76), though from where he derives this moral genealogy I have not discovered. Bromyard in his *Summa predicantium* under 'Falsitas' mentions sins in general as the daughters of the devil, which are married to many and made acceptable by the alteration of their names (British Library, MS Royal 7. E. iv, fols 174v, col. b - 175v, col. a). While the Bromyard passage generally resembles that of this sermon, its correspondences are not strict enough to suggest that it was an immediate source. However, what is at least clear is that by the fourteenth century, the motif as it appears in this sermon had essentially taken shape (compare also its appearance in the unpublished fifteenth-century Middle English sermon collection in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 95, fol. 100r-v).

48-50 For . . . as he is: The syntax is imperfect. There is no second verb to balance the initial concessional clause.

51-53 The syntax again is imperfect. The unit consists only of a list of attributes, without a main verb. Women's dress was a favourite topic for sermon censure. The 'horned' headdress was a favourite target, for not only was it one of those superfluous, and highly conspicuous, adornments which, according to the preachers, was worn in pride to incite lechery, but it also gave its wearer the appearance of an 'unresonabyll beeste' (line 52), and thus confounded the reason that was held to be humanity's hallmark. (For further examples of the clerical attack on this headdress, see G. R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England*, 2nd rev. edn (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961), pp. 390-404.) Though the garment was fashionable between the reigns of Henry IV and Henry VI (H. Norris and O. Curtis, *Costume and Fashion*, 4 vols (London and Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1924-38), II, 437-44), this is not in itself adequate evidence that this sermon is a fifteenth-century composition; Bromyard in the fourteenth century had already objected to 'cornua' (see his *Summa predicantium* under 'Bellum' and 'Luxuria'), and they were criticized earlier still, in a satirical English quatrain that appears in a thirteenth-century Latin sermon manuscript (A

Manual of the Writings in Middle English, ed. by A. E. Hartung, 9 vols (New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1919-1993), V (1975), 1460).

55-56 Quantum glorificavit: Revelation 18. 7. Corrupt readings are emended from the Vulgate.

59-61: Oculi Domini: I Peter 3. 12.

67 for . . . For: The co-ordination here is clearly awkward.

72 fracer . . . bracer: The word 'fracer' is not recorded in either the *Oxford English Dictionary* or the *Middle English Dictionary*. Both record a form 'facer', however, meaning 'bully', which has the appropriate sense. Possibly the -r- in 'fracer' has been erroneously intruded in anticipation of that in the word 'bracer'. This word is also noteworthy. No senses suiting its context here are recorded in the *OED* or the *MED*, and it would appear to be a word that both dictionaries have missed. It is probably related to the verb 'brace' (*OED*, 'Brace', v.2, 'to bluster, domineer; to assume a defiant attitude').

77 Invidia . . . Abel: The quotation may derive from some commentary on Genesis (Theodore cited in the *Glossa ordinaria* on Genesis 4 speaks of Cain's 'fraternorum bonorum operum invidia', for example; see *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa Ordinaria et Postilla Nicholai Lyrani*, 6 vols (Lyons, 1589), I, col. 117), but I have not determined an exact source.

82-83 Qui enim vult: I Peter 3. 10.

85-86 Declinet autem: I Peter 3. 11.

89 Dominum autem: I Peter 3. 15.

93-98 The interrogation of the sluggard and his responses may owe something to precedents in the *summae confessorum* (and compare below the interrogations of lechery, lines 104-07, and covetousness, lines 127-30, possibly prompted by the same tradition).

101-02 Memento: Exodus 20. 8. The Vulgate reads 'ut' for 'quod'.

107 For herdily . . . lufe: The manuscript is difficult to interpret, and the insertion of <in the> at line 107 is purely conjectural. The line of script comes to an end at 'muste', and the next one begins with 'have lufe'. The scribe, realizing that the line he wrote was unsatisfactory, added in the right-hand margin next to 'muste' the word 'be' plus a *caret* mark to note his omission. In the left-hand margin he continued the insertion, but because the manuscript has been trimmed, only the words 'worlde must' are now visible. If we may assume that the words of his insertion which originally appeared in the left-hand margin were written consecutively, then there were not many of them, since even after trimming, the pages of the manuscript do not seem to have been greatly reduced from their original width. The presence of 'muste' and 'must' suggests that homoioteleuton, not a faulty exemplar, caused the omission.

109 Vultus autem Domini: I Peter 3. 12.

117 Quorum deus: Philippians 3. 19.

118-19 Quis est: I Peter 3. 13.

128 to syng: That is, to sing Mass.

133-34 Stipendia enim: Romans 6. 23.

138-40 Si quis: John 14. 23.

143-58 The ascription of this *exemplum* to Augustine is incorrect. I have not traced its source.

159-60: Note here the three stages of a full act of penance, a commonplace of pulpit and confessional teaching.

160-61 Sed et si quid: I Peter 3. 14. The vernacular rendering of this citation in this manuscript, which is retained in the edited text, is closer to the proper Vulgate reading of 'si quid', from which the text of this manuscript and its congeners LG have had to be emended. Note that LG readings show some awareness of the meaning of the rejected Latin 'si quis', since they are respectively 'who some ever' and 'who so ever'. It is grammatically impossible to construe 'si quis' and 'patimini' together, but this has been done in LG. There may be an indication here that the scribe of the present

manuscript (who was also the copyist of LG) has a very elementary knowledge of Latin, and that he is making an imperfect correction on the strength of it in LG.