

“This lucid new translation of the writings of Richard Methley offers an intoxicating, not to say spiritually inebriated, account of his search for union with God. An assiduous reader and translator of earlier contemplative texts, he blends together the languor of Richard Rolle, the apophatic austerity of the *Cloud*-author, the theological intensity of Heinrich Suso and the *devotio moderna*, and the liquefying ardour of Marguerite Porete. The resulting synthesis produces a new, urgently prophetic voice of meltingly eloquent spiritual longing existing in transcendent tension with the structures of his daily life as a Carthusian.”

—Vincent Gillespie
J.R.R. Tolkien Professor of English
University of Oxford

“This book makes available in modern English one of the most significant contributions to the contemplative tradition of fifteenth-century England. By fusing in such a sophisticated way the apophatic and the cataphatic approaches to the contemplative life as part of his experience, Methley’s writings challenge our contemporary desire for categorization and division. The excellent translations by Barbara Newman bring to light the daily mystical experiences and the pastoral concerns of a Carthusian monk following a strict monastic life. Her notes and the outstanding general introduction by Laura Saetveit Miles provide a wealth of information about the rich religious tradition from which Methley’s corpus emerged.”

—Denis Renevey
Professor of Medieval English Language and Literature
University of Lausanne

“Newman and Miles have set the table for an affective mystical feast! Laden with elaborate metaphor and devout hyperbole, the works of Richard Methley translated here offer an extraordinarily intimate perspective on late-medieval Carthusian mysticism in England.”

—Steven Rozenski
University of Rochester, New York

“Barbara Newman’s translation of Richard Methley’s original Latin and Middle English works brings this important but little-known mystical writer to wider attention. Compared to Margery Kempe by the ‘red-ink annotator’ of her Book, Methley offers essential perspective on late-medieval Carthusian spirituality, affective devotion, and visionary experience—all helpfully contextualized here in an introduction by Laura Saetveit Miles. Scholars of late-medieval religion will be grateful for this excellent and essential volume.”

—Jessica Brantley
Professor of English
Yale University

CISTERCIAN STUDIES SERIES: NUMBER TWO HUNDRED EIGHTY-SIX

The Works of Richard Methley

translated by Barbara Newman

with an introduction by Laura Saetveit Miles



Cistercian Publications
www.cistercianpublications.org

LITURGICAL PRESS
Collegeville, Minnesota
www.litpress.org

A Cistercian Publications title published by Liturgical Press

Cistercian Publications

Editorial Offices
161 Grosvenor Street
Athens, Ohio 45701
www.cistercianpublications.org

Translated from *The Works of Richard Methley*, vol. 1 of *Mount Grace Charterhouse and Late Medieval English Spirituality*, ed. John P. H. Clark and James Hogg, *Analecta Cartusiana* 64, no. 3 (2016); (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 2017).

Biblical passages are translated from the Vulgate by Barbara Newman. All rights reserved.

© 2021 by Order of Saint Benedict, Collegeville, Minnesota. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever, except brief quotations in reviews, without written permission of Liturgical Press, Saint John's Abbey, PO Box 7500, Collegeville, MN 56321-7500. Printed in the United States of America.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Methley, Richard, 1451- author. | Newman, Barbara, 1953- translator.

Title: The works of Richard Methley / translated by Barbara Newman ; with an introduction by Laura Saetveit Miles.

Description: Athens, Ohio : Cistercian Publications ; Collegeville, Minnesota : Liturgical Press, 2021. | Series: Cistercian studies series ; number two hundred eighty-six | Previously published as: vol. 1 of *Mount Grace Charterhouse and Late Medieval English Spirituality*, ed. John P. H. Clark and James Hogg, *Analecta Cartusiana* 64, no. 3 (2016); (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 2017) | Includes bibliographical references and index. | Summary: "This book contains translations of Richard Methley's treatises dating from the 1480s including a guide to contemplative prayer, a spiritual diary, and an unknown work on the discernment of spirits"— Provided by publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2020032652 (print) | LCCN 2020032653 (ebook) | ISBN 9780879072865 (paperback) | ISBN 9780879076863 (epub) | ISBN 9780879076863 (mobi) | ISBN 9780879076863 (pdf)

Subjects: LCSH: Theology—History—To 1500.

Classification: LCC BR100 .M4413 2021 (print) | LCC BR100 (ebook) | DDC 248—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2020032652>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2020032653>

Contents

Introduction vii

by Laura Saetveit Miles

Selected Bibliography iv

Translator's Preface 1

by Barbara Newman

The School of Languishing Love 9

A Devout Prayer on the Name of Jesus and
on the Five Wounds 51

The Bedroom of the beloved Beloved 53

The Refectory of Salvation 91

The Experience of Truth 129

To Hugh Hermit: An Epistle on Solitary Life Nowadays 149
translated from the Middle English by Laura Saetveit Miles

Index 157

Introduction*

Richard Methley (ca. 1451–1527/28) was a Carthusian monk whose spiritual writings constitute a significant contribution to the Latin religious literature of late medieval England. Methley's three surviving mystical works intertwine the traditions of apophatic theology and affective spirituality with the genres of contemplative treatise and visionary account. He compared himself to the hermit and mystic Richard Rolle (d. 1349), and a contemporary later compared him to the laywoman and visionary Margery Kempe (d. after 1438). Few readers today, however, have heard of him, and even among specialists in medieval religion he is barely known. In this volume, his five surviving works are translated for the first time. Their obscurity—due in large part to their challenging Latin, the limited accessibility of modern editions, and the lack of translations until now—is undeserved. They offer a vivid view into the contemplative milieu of the Carthusian Order, and an engaging, idiosyncratic glimpse into the mystical experiences of a monk who felt driven to document those divine encounters for the benefit of his fellow Christians.

What little we know about Richard Methley can be gleaned mostly from the autobiographical aspects of his writings. He

* I would like to thank Barbara Newman, Michael Sargent, Katherine Zieman, Addison H. Hart, Antti Saarilahti, Kristin Saetveit, J. Duane Saetveit, and the Literature and Religion Research Group at the University of Bergen for their feedback on earlier drafts of this Introduction.

carefully dates his mystical experiences according to his age and the number of years since his profession as a monk, and his death is recorded in the obituaries from the Carthusian General Chapter for 1528 (and thus occurred sometime between spring 1527 and May 3, 1528).¹ He was born around 1451/52 to the Furth family in the village of Methley, just outside Leeds in Yorkshire. Whether or not he attended university or was ordained early on, he does not say, and no evidence survives. Nonetheless, he acquired ready fluency in Latin. A defining year in his life was 1476, when at the age of twenty-five he was professed as a monk at Mount Grace Charterhouse in North Yorkshire, where he would become vicar and live until his death around the age of seventy-seven. As he explains in *The Refectory of Salvation*, he was inspired to join the hermit-like Carthusian Order after visiting an “elderly recluse” or anchoress enclosed in a cell attached to a chapel, to whom he publicly gave a small donation while secretly giving much more. Against his wishes the recluse’s servant revealed his generosity, for which he received both praise and censure from others. Upon the recluse’s death a few days later, he too was led within three months “to a solitary cell to live there as a Carthusian” (chap. 20).

The Carthusians

At Mount Grace, Methley joined the Carthusians’ life of contemplation as it had been practiced nearly unchanged for almost four hundred years, ever since the foundation of the Grande Chartreuse by Bruno of Cologne in the Chartreuse Mountains of France (1084). The Carthusian Order, still vibrant today, is unique in that it functions as a community of solitaries or hermits. In the isolation of their individual cells, more like small apartments set around a

1. Michael Sargent, “Richard Methley,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/69525>. For Methley’s obituary, see *The Chartae of the Carthusian General Chapter: MS. Parkminster B.62 (1504–1513)*, vol. 1, ed. John Clark, *Analecta Cartusiana* (1992): 28, lines 16–17.

cloister, and nearly self-sufficient with back gardens, monks spend most of their week alone: they eat, sleep, read, and pray by themselves, performing almost all of the Divine Office in private. They gather communally for Vespers and Matins (the evening and night Offices), on Sundays and significant holy days for Mass and lunch in the refectory, and for chapter meetings.² This daily and annual rhythm of private prayer and public liturgy shaped Methley's life and oeuvre, and is especially evident in *The Refectory of Salvation*. Carthusian monks also wrote or copied manuscripts in the private scriptorium part of their cell, facilitating the "literary character of the spirituality of the Carthusian Order," in the words of Michael Sargent.³ Book production has always been a central part of their vocation; they were not allowed to preach publicly. Guigo I (d. 1136), fifth prior of the Grande Chartreuse, encapsulated this priority in his statutes for the Order, the *Consuetudines*: "We wish books to be made with the greatest attention and guarded most carefully, as eternal food for our souls, so that because we cannot preach the word of God by our mouths, we may do so with our hands."⁴ As scribes, Carthusians copied thousands of manuscripts of Christian theology, spirituality, and history, thus promoting the preservation and circulation of an enormous ancient and medieval tradition. They also composed and copied their own texts—as Methley did. In many ways the Carthusian focus on books brought individual solitaries out of their cells into networks of communities of varying scales. Voices like Methley's could address local,

2. Richard W. Pfaff, "Liturgy at the English Charterhouses," in *The Liturgy in Medieval England: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 265.

3. Michael Sargent, "The Transmission by the English Carthusians of Some Late Medieval Spiritual Writings," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 27 (1976): 225–40, at 240.

4. Guigo I, *Consuetudines* XXVIII.3, from *Coutumes de Chartreuse*, ed. Maurice Laporte (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1984), trans. in Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 334, n. 73. See 27–57 for a brief history of the Carthusian Order in general and in England, their book culture, and the context of this oft-discussed quotation.

national, and international readerships, and copying manuscripts for exchange could link together different reading circles, primarily monastic, but also secular and lay.

The Carthusian Order soon spread across the Channel and exerted an influence in England similar to what it had on the Continent. Witham Charterhouse was founded in 1178, followed by seven others, including London in 1370, Mount Grace in 1398, and Sheen in 1414. Carthusians made large contributions to the production and circulation of religious literature in medieval England. Through gifts, copying, and composition, they grew vast libraries of devotional and spiritual works, often of quite imaginative literary genres at the forefront of nascent trends, and they fostered very specialized vernacular mysticism in addition to Latin.⁵ In particular, the Carthusians had a high regard for medieval women visionaries, and they played a major role in the preservation of English copies of texts by Elisabeth of Schönau, Mechthild of Hackeborn, Marguerite Porete, Birgitta of Sweden, Catherine of Siena, and Englishwomen Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe. To what extent they disseminated such works beyond the charterhouse walls is more debatable, and is an issue taken up below in reference to Methley's connections to both Porete and Kempe. Regardless, as a literary and spiritual force, the order remained a significant part of English religious culture until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1538, just ten years after Methley's death.

Methley's Works

During his enclosure of over half a century, Methley was a prolific author of his own religious texts as well as a translator and glossator of texts originally composed in Middle English. His four

5. Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness*, 57. See also E. Margaret Thompson, *The Carthusian Order in England* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1930).

extant original compositions in Latin and one in the vernacular are translated here; they represent perhaps half his total output as an author, as he identifies four other Latin texts that do not seem to have survived. And there were evidently more: in *The Bedroom of the beloved Beloved*, one of his earlier surviving texts, he refers to “the many books I have already written” (chap. 1). An approximate timeline for his known corpus, and when his documented mystical experiences occurred, can be extrapolated from their internal evidence (works marked with an * are translated in this volume):

- 1484 *Scola amoris languidi** (*The School of Languishing Love*), a treatise on contemplative prayer including references to mystical experiences on August 6 of that year;
- 1484 *Cellarium* (*The Cellar*) does not survive but is mentioned in chapter 30 of *The Bedroom* as being written in the previous year;
- 1485 *Dormitorium dilecti Dilecti** (*The Bedroom of the beloved Beloved*) records mystical experiences in April of that year;
- 1486/87? *De Marie nomine et sacramento altaris* (*On the Name of Mary and the Sacrament of the Altar*) does not survive but is mentioned in chapters 32 and 35 of *The Refectory*;
- 1487/88 *Trivium excellencie* (*Three Ways of Excellence*) does not survive but is mentioned in chapter 34 of *The Refectory of Salvation* as having been begun on December 8, 1487;
- 1487 *Refectorium salutis** (*The Refectory of Salvation*) records mystical experiences between October 6 and December 13 of that year;

1491 *Speculum animarum simplicium*, a glossed translation into Latin of the Middle English version of *The Mirror of Simple Souls* by Marguerite Porete;

1491 *Divina caligo ignoranciae*, a glossed translation into Latin of the Middle English treatise *The Cloud of Unknowing*.

Other texts are of unknown date but probably from later in his life:

Defensorium solitarie sive contemplative vite (*A Defense of the Solitary or Contemplative Life*) does not survive but is mentioned in chapter 23 of *The Experience of Truth* as having already been written;

*Experimentum veritatis** (*The Experience of Truth*), a treatise on the discernment of spirits, survives only partially;

*To Hugh Hermit: An Epistle of Solitary Life Nowadays**, a letter of spiritual counsel in the vernacular to a nearby hermit.

It appears that Methley was forgotten after the Reformation until just a few decades ago. Almost all of the impetus behind bringing Methley's life and works to modern readers can be ascribed to the Carthusian scholar James Hogg (d. 2018). By means of the *Analecta Cartusiana* series begun in the late 1970s, Hogg published diplomatic transcriptions and editions of the surviving texts; *Experience* was edited by Michael Sargent. In 2017 Hogg and John Clark co-edited an updated volume of Methley's complete corpus, and the present translation is based on this edition, with consultation of the medieval manuscripts.⁶

6. *The Works of Richard Methley*, vol. 1 of *Mount Grace Charterhouse and Late Medieval English Spirituality*, ed. John P. H. Clark and James Hogg, *Analecta Cartusiana* 64, no. 3 (2016); (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 2017).

The Manuscripts

In contrast to better-known authors like Bernard of Clairvaux, whose writings were widely copied and circulated in the medieval period, the works of Richard Methley come down to us today only in single manuscript witnesses. These material artifacts reveal important information about their texts' meaning, reception, and contemporary significance. *School*, *Bedroom*, and *Refectory* are preserved in Cambridge, Trinity College MS O.2.56, a manuscript that shows that these texts were well regarded by multiple scribes and readers, who made special efforts to improve their quality and accessibility to a monastic audience. In contrast, we learn less about *The Experience of Truth* and *To Hugh Hermit* from their copies in London, Public Record Office Collection SP 1/239. We know neither why they were copied nor who might actually have read them.

Cambridge, Trinity College MS O.2.56 functions as a unique anthology of Methley's mystical texts. It contains five items in total:

1. fols. 1^r–21^r *The School of Languishing Love*
2. fols. 21^v–22^r Latin hymn and collect for the Name of Jesus and the Five Wounds (translated in the present volume at the end of *The School*)
 fol. 23^r–24^v stubs
3. fols. 25^r–48^r *The Bedroom of the beloved Beloved*
 fol. 48^v blank
4. fols. 49^r–70^v *The Refectory of Salvation*
 fol. 71^{rv} blank
5. fols. 72^r–75^v Table of contents

The Trinity manuscript can be dated to the late fifteenth century on paleographical grounds; it was probably copied and read at an English monastery or charterhouse with close connection to Methley, if not at Mount Grace itself.⁷ A first and second main section of the paper manuscript can be distinguished in several ways: different scribes, similar but differing watermarks and thus similar but not identical paper, a lower position of the text-block and a lack of ruling in the second section, and telltale stubs between the sections showing that empty folios were cut out when the sections were brought together. There are several hands in the manuscript, showing that it was made over some time and carefully read and corrected by at least three different scribes. The first main scribe, Hand A, wrote the first section (fols. 1–22), and the second main scribe, Hand B, wrote the second section (fols. 25–76).

Nicholas Bell suggests the following order of events in the manuscript's construction: first, Hand A writes fols. 1–22, including marginal notations. Second, a different hand adds marginal notes on fols. 4^v, 5^r, 5^v, and 19^v, and foliates fols. 1–24. Third, Hand B writes fols. 25–76 on new paper stock (also writing folio numbers and catch words), and adds annotations to fols. 5^r–11^r, 18^r, and 22^r. Finally, the blank folios 23–24 are removed when the two sections are bound together.⁸ At some point, yet another hand adds notes on fols. 6^r, 21^v, and 22^v. These details show that the manuscript was subject to annotation and correction throughout its production and afterward, with fairly frequent erasures and interlinear insertions.

7. For a full description, see printed catalogue entry 1160 in M. R. James, *The Western Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902), 176–78; also Clark and Hogg, *The Works*, viii–ix. The manuscript is available online as of this writing.

8. See Nicholas Bell's description of the manuscript in Clark and Hogg, *The Works*, ix.

As usual, these scribes did not sign their work, but it seems likely that they were monks, maybe also at Mount Grace. Could Methley himself have been one of the scribes of the Trinity manuscript, as M. R. James has suggested?⁹ This is almost certainly not the case for several reasons. As Hogg and Clark note, none of the hands matches Methley's autograph, captured in a brief letter in the vernacular that he wrote to Henry, Lord Clifford (d. 1523), who was a patron of Mount Grace and endowed new cells.¹⁰ In addition, the colophon of *Refectory* refers to the author in the third person in a way suggesting that Methley was not the scribe at least for the second section of the manuscript:¹¹ "Here ends *The Refectory of Salvation*, composed from the most opulent drunkenness by that man of God, Richard Methley, filled with delights." Finally, as noted in the Translator's Preface below, the texts themselves contain grammatical and other errors that would seem to preclude the author himself from having been the copyist. What quality of source material these scribes had, how distanced they were from Methley's autographs, and how closely he may or may not have been involved in correcting this manuscript is difficult to tell.

The fact that so many scribes interacted with this anthology, copying the different texts and annotating and correcting them, shows that Methley's works were valued and that extensive efforts were made to increase their reliability. Carthusians in general were very concerned with correcting texts to ensure the textual uniformity of books and the integrity of the individual copy, and to prevent that copy from perpetuating errors when it was copied again. We can assume that the monks who worked on the Trinity

9. James, *The Western Manuscripts*, 176.

10. The letter is preserved in London, British Library Add. MS 48965, fol. 10^r, and is reproduced on a small scale in Clark and Hogg, *The Works*, xii. An edited transcription of the letters to Lord Clifford in MS 48965 can be found in A. G. Dickens, ed., *The Clifford Letters of the Sixteenth Century*, Surtees Society 172 (Durham: University of Durham, 1957), 62–74.

11. Clark and Hogg, *The Works*, viii.

manuscript expected it to be an exemplar for further copies, though none of those survive today. While the Trinity manuscript presents versions of *School*, *Bedroom*, and *Refectory* with some linguistic errors and corrupted passages that pose a challenge, the material evidence of the manuscript suggests that its creators tried hard to present texts of as high a quality as possible because they thought they were worth reading and reproducing.

Other evidence in the Trinity manuscript also reveals interesting information about both how different monastic readers accessed the texts and how the texts were made accessible to them. For instance, seven parchment tabs, much like a medieval version of our modern Post-its, are still glued to the outer edges of seven folios.¹² Such tabbing was a typical practice in medieval book production and can be found in other Carthusian manuscripts. The tabs indicate that readers wanted to mark certain places in the text for frequent later reference. Hand B also went to the trouble to add at the end of the manuscript a comprehensive table of contents listing the title of every chapter in each of the three works. Another major effort toward accessibility is the inclusion of nearly ninety marginal glosses, short explanatory annotations (much like commentary notes in a modern textbook), to accompany *The School of Languishing Love*. Almost all were copied by the same scribe as the text itself, with a few others added by the other main scribe.¹³ (We have included translations of all glosses in the footnotes; they are also included in the Latin edition.) In many ways, these marginalia function as an official paratextual apparatus and should be considered integral to the main work itself.

Generally, the glosses are explanatory and didactic, clarifying the meaning of specific words or theological terms, supplementing

12. Tabs are still attached to the outer edges of fol. 12 (*School*, opening of chap. 13), fol. 21 (*School*, opening of chap. 24), fol. 27 (*Bedroom*, opening of chap. 4), fol. 32 (*Bedroom*, chaps. 14–15), fol. 44 (*Bedroom*, chaps. 31–32), fol. 50 (*Refectory*, opening of chap. 2), and fol. 65 (*Refectory*, chap. 31).

13. One other explanatory gloss in the manuscript can be found in chap. 6 of *Refectory*.

a line with a scriptural verse, or simply expanding on the main text with more clarity. They illuminate aspects the expected readership might have struggled with, and sometimes they add another interpretive layer helping the reader to understand the text in a deeper or more sophisticated way. Methley almost certainly composed these glosses himself for his fellow monks; in that respect they offer a reliable and coherent part of *School*. Two notes suggest Methley as self-glossator because they feature the first person, seeming to refer to the main work and not just the glosses. These are the notes in chapter 13 (“as I said before”) and the beginning of chapter 22 (“As I have explained above”). Methley also glossed his Latin translations of two difficult mystical works, *The Cloud of Unknowing* and Marguerite Porete’s *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, with similar explanatory and interpretive aims, though also with a keen awareness of the potential heterodoxy of those texts—especially *The Mirror*.

The other two texts are preserved in a different way, with less information about their scribes and readers. London, Public Record Office Collection SP 1/239 preserves the second half of Methley’s treatise on the discernment of spirits, *The Experience of Truth* (fols. 262^r–265^v), and his letter of guidance to a hermit, *To Hugh Hermit* (fols. 266^r–267^v). This manuscript is not so much a standard bound codex as a collection of individually mounted letters, including some others related to the Carthusians (fols. 156–162; 184).¹⁴ Methley’s pieces are both copied by the same scribe in the early sixteenth century. Unlike the Trinity manuscript, these copies show only corrections by the main scribe and no marks or marginalia left by other readers, so it is unclear how broad a circulation they received. Their origins and reading history are difficult to deduce, especially since they are small parts of a collection compiled later on. We could probably safely assume

14. These letters are detailed in Clark and Hogg, *The Works*, x, and James Hogg, “Carthusian Materials in London, Public Record Office Collection SP 1/239,” *Analecta Cartusiana* 37 (1977): 134–44.

they were copied and read by fellow Carthusians, as evidence suggests for the Trinity manuscript, but in fact even this much is unknown—as well as who or how many people actually read these texts. For instance, while Methley clearly wrote *To Hugh Hermit* expecting Hugh to receive a copy (and perhaps also hoping for wider dissemination), on the evidence of the single surviving witness, we might never know whether this letter reached any readers beyond the person who copied it.

The Spiritual Treatises: *School, Bedroom, and Refectory*

The three long treatises, *School, Bedroom, and Refectory*, all refer several times to readers as “my brothers.” These were written for the benefit of a Carthusian audience with a solid foundation in text- and image-based meditation, who were now ready for the next level of contemplation, which moves beyond words and images.¹⁵ The overall purpose of *School* is to give Methley’s fellow monks a basic understanding of union with the divine and teach them how to approach it through contemplative practice. While in *School* his own mystical experience only comes up briefly, in *Bedroom* Methley shifts the balance to focus on his many kinds of spiritual illumination as models for the reader’s advancement. Finally, *Refectory* moves toward full documentation of Methley’s mystical experiences, in the form of a day-by-day (sometimes minute-by-minute) spiritual diary. What unites all three works is their shared rhetorical and thematic trope of a recurring refrain, a short phrase chosen from the Song of Songs—that endlessly fruitful erotic and allegorical scriptural text fueling so much mystical literature in the medieval tradition.¹⁶

15. For a brief account of Methley’s mysticism, see Bernard McGinn, *The Varieties of Vernacular Mysticism, 1350–1550* (New York: Crossroad, 2012), 488–90.

16. On this tradition see Denys Turner, *Eros and Allegory: Medieval Exegesis of the Song of Songs*, CS 156 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1995).

The refrain for *The School of Languishing Love* is from Song of Songs 2:5, *amore languet*: “I languish for love.” For Methley this phrase captures the contradiction of the contemplative’s love for God and desire to be united with him, but being denied full dissolution in the Godhead while still living on earth. Simultaneously, it expresses God’s pleasure and pain in loving sinful humans. Over twenty-four chapters, Methley sets out twelve different ways to understand how both people and God languish in love, as the basis for an approach to contemplation. He speaks directly to the reader, expounding the meaning and implications of languishing for love. Sometimes he ventriloquizes God himself at length, having God speak to the reader, as in chapter 5, “A disputation and complaint of God against ungrateful humanity.” He cites his own experience of rapture in church at one point (chap. 7) to give a concrete example of the ineffability of the languor of love, while acknowledging the paradox of such an attempt. By chapter 16, he judges the reader informed enough to actually attempt meditation. He gives quite practical guidance: find a suitable place, sit in a soft seat, set a cross in front, and then direct the mind to God—for fifteen minutes, three times a day.¹⁷ (The fact that Methley takes for granted that his readers had the time and space to follow this regimen reminds us that he had exclusively fellow monks in mind.) He goes so far as to include sample prayers for beginning and ending each session. The clear, explanatory glosses in the margin of the main text (translated here as footnotes) underline the way *School* aims to educate the reader in crucial aspects of prayer as an approach to its more advanced, mystical levels.

For monks past these beginning stages, *The Bedroom of the beloved Beloved* is less about praxis and more about the nature of

17. This practice, grounded in *The Cloud of Unknowing*, was popularized for lay use in the 1970s under the name of Centering Prayer and is still widely used. See Thomas Merton, *Contemplative Prayer* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), and Thomas Keating, *Foundations for Centering Prayer and the Christian Contemplative Life* (New York: Continuum, 2002).

ecstatic union itself. The refrain here is Song of Songs 5:2, *Ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat*: “I sleep and my heart is awake.” Methley interprets this sentence in a variety of ways, centrally as being “awake in the love of God, asleep to the love of the world,” in that “sleeping means taking no pleasure; being awake means taking pleasure,” whether in God or in the world (chap. 8). In moving away from the didacticism of *School*, *Bedroom* directly addresses the connection between Methley’s mystical experiences and their channeling into a text. From the start, and continuing throughout, he slips easily between addressing the reader and addressing God, beginning when he describes the composition of *Bedroom*: “in this book you [God] want me to write with you in a new mode of speaking, a most truthful mode. Sometimes this will be through inspiration, though differently than before. At other times it will be in dialogue, as in the many books I have already written through you” (chap. 1). (*School* and the lost work *The Cellar* are among those “many books”; the rest remain unknown.) At the same time we get a hint of the divine impetus behind Methley’s drive to compose all the works. He quotes God as saying to him, “In this volume of yours, write all the words I speak to you” (chap. 1).

In order to elucidate this state of sleeping wakefulness, over the next thirty-six chapters Methley interweaves different analogies of divine love and union, interactive dialogue with Christ or God, and the description of a variety of his ecstatic experiences. He was ravished into “a marvelous light” while he was walking outdoors on Easter Day, 1485, as described in chapter 11; later on in chapter 23 he describes repeated, frequent ecstasies when God “ravished me above myself in the spirit” three or four times in an hour; and by chapter 31, he attests to having “peace not just for a moment, as scoffers say, but constantly.” He also writes of several illuminations involving “spiritual visions,” aligned with Augustine’s category wherein “the soul is raptured into things seen that are similar to bodies, but are beheld in the spirit in such

a way that the soul is totally removed from the bodily senses, more than in sleep but less than in death.”¹⁸ He sees Christ standing on top of a very high mountain (chap. 33), as well as two visions of the Virgin Mary acting as intercessor before Christ on his behalf (chaps. 22 and 36).

The last treatise, *The Refectory of Salvation*, completes the shift from contemplative instruction to spiritual autobiography and is devoted to relaying Methley’s visionary and mystical experiences over approximately three months of 1487, from October 6 to mid-December. Here the scriptural refrain expresses the inebriation of spiritual illumination, from Song of Songs 5:1: “I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk.” Over forty-one chapters he details the ways in which he is “refreshed by heavenly food”: frequent raptures at all times and places, marked by heavenly song, spiritual illuminations or visions, bodily incapacitation, and vocal exclamations. Methley structures the text as a diary documenting these mystical experiences as happening with some regularity every few days, or even multiple times over a few hours. He identifies the day on which they occurred, usually in reference to a saint’s feast or other holy day, and when they occur during the daytime, he mentions the relevant hour of the Divine Office or the Mass. The raptures sometimes overtake him during private prayer, but often happen unexpectedly in the middle of communal worship or even interrupt mundane activities such as making the bed. Methley shares these experiences with his “dearest brothers” by means of this book as an act of charity, interspersing his accounts of the mystical experiences with reflection on their import and theological context in a way he imagines will be helpful for his readers.

18. Augustine on the three forms of vision, *Literal Commentary on Genesis*, 12.26.53; trans. in *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*, ed. Bernard McGinn (New York: Modern Library, 2006), 322.

Translator's Preface

Richard Methley, who was both a mystic and a connoisseur of mystical texts, is best known today for his translations from Middle English into Latin: *The Cloud of Unknowing* (*Divina caligo ignorantiae*) and Marguerite Porete's *The Mirror of Simple Souls* (*Speculum animarum simplicium*). But his original Latin works have never before been translated into English or any other tongue. There is good reason for this. Methley died in 1527/28, only seven years before the Dissolution, and most of his writings perished in the ensuing chaos. In the three and a half extant Latin texts presented in this volume, he mentions four others that do not survive: *The Cellar*, *On the Name of Mary and the Sacrament of the Altar*, *Three Ways of Excellence*, and *A Defense of the Solitary or Contemplative Life*.¹ However high the author's reputation may have stood in his lifetime, it was swiftly eclipsed by the Reformation.

The School of Languishing Love (1484), *The Bedroom of the beloved Beloved* (1485), and *The Refectory of Salvation* (1487) all appear in a single late fifteenth-century manuscript from Mount Grace Charterhouse: Cambridge, Trinity College O.2.56, written in two principal hands. M. R. James describes the manuscript in his catalogue as "most probably in the autograph of the author,"² and its numerous glosses and corrections do suggest a provenance

1. Their Latin titles are *Cellarium*, *De Marie nomine et sacramento altaris*, *Trivium excellencie*, and *Defensorium solitarie sive contemplative vite*.

2. M. R. James, *The Western Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902), 176.

close to him. However, as Laura Saetveit Miles notes in her Introduction, the colophon of *Refectory* indicates a different scribe at least for that work: “Here ends *The Refectory of Salvation*, composed from the most opulent drunkenness by that man of God, Richard Methley, filled with delights.”

The hands are legible, though heavily abbreviated, but the Trinity manuscript does not present a particularly good text. A passage in *Refectory* helps to explain why. In chapter 37, Methley is praying (as he so often does) that he will soon die and join his Beloved in heaven. But the devil, he says, tempts him: “He told me I should not wish to be dissolved and be with Christ because I had books that I had corrected before, yet I came back to them later and found that something was still inaccurate—a word, a syllable, a letter, perhaps a title or something of that sort. So he said I should delay and correct them again.” Methley rejects this advice as a temptation, arguing that if he were to die with his work unfinished, God would arrange for the correction of his books by some other means. The same text ends with a plea from the author to his readers, envisioned as potential copyists (chap. 41): “See, dearest brothers, I have written this *Refectory of Salvation* for you. Correct it if necessary, give thanks to God, and pray for me. If you have written well, correct what you have written; otherwise, I ask you not to write.”

We learn from these anecdotes that the mystic did correct his own work and cared about producing an accurate text. Indeed, the Trinity manuscript reveals extensive corrections, including erasures as well as interlinear and marginal insertions. Yet many errors remain, often resulting in unclear or ungrammatical forms. Punctuation is sparse and at times misleading. Methley’s editors, John Clark and James Hogg, supply numerous small emendations and faithfully record all scribal corrections in their apparatus. Regrettably, however, they do not succeed in resolving all the textual problems. For the purpose of translation, therefore, I have often had to emend the text, as well as making my own decisions about where sentences should begin and end. All chapter numbers and titles follow the manuscript, but the paragraph breaks are my own.

If Methley or anyone else ever made a fair copy of these three texts, it does not survive. Many of the scribal problems can be attributed to his working methods, for he wrote about his mystical experiences in “real time,” snatching a few moments here and there after Mass, before Vespers, or whenever he could. He always scrupulously records the liturgical date as well as the time of day (within the cycle of the Office) for each of his experiences, and in each work he also mentions the year. Sometimes he explains exactly when he left off his writing and when he took it up again. All three works are addressed to his Carthusian brothers, an audience of seasoned contemplatives. He often refers to “the man of God” (*vir Dei* or *sanctus vir*), so I have preserved his masculine pronouns except in a few cases where he envisages humankind in general. Unlike Bernard of Clairvaux and others, Methley seldom speaks over the heads of his monks to address a wider audience. With rare exceptions, too, he does not bother to strive for eloquence. Instead, he writes an almost colloquial Latin, using a telescopic, elliptical style that counts on the intuitive grasp of those who knew him well and may have been familiar with his oral teaching. Some passages seem to have been written on the edge of ecstasy, such as the many chapters where he bursts into jubilant repetitions of the name of Jesus: *O Jesu Jesu Jesu! Jesu Jesu Jesu! Jesu Jesu Jesu!*

School, the first text in the manuscript, is the most systematic, offering instruction in contemplative prayer peppered with accounts of Methley's own revelations and experiences. It is also heavily glossed for teaching purposes, at least in part by the author himself, and presents the clearest text of the three. All the marginal glosses have been duly recorded by the editors and are included here as footnotes. *Refectory*, on the other hand, is a day-by-day spiritual diary, making only intermittent attempts to unify its meditations around a common theme. *Bedroom*, structured as a dialogue between Methley and Christ, falls somewhere in between. In the two latter texts, some passages are so obscure that the work of translation feels dangerously close to mind reading, requiring

not only emendations but conjectures about what the author must have been thinking. I have been guided by similar, clearer passages elsewhere, and at several points I have checked the text by comparing the published edition with the manuscript.

Certain terms require special comment. For example, Methley often speaks of *amor sensibilis*. I have translated *sensibilis* consistently as “perceptible,” its primary meaning, but the Latin is richer than the corresponding English term.³ The related noun *sensus* can refer to the five senses but also to feelings, sensations, thoughts, sentiments, and meanings, while the verb *sentire* can mean “feel, see, perceive, experience, undergo, observe, understand, think, judge.”⁴ In Methley’s usage, *sensibilis* always has a strong affective, experiential component. *Amor sensibilis* is love that is felt in the heart, perceived by the senses, experienced in the body. It is a gift for which aspiring contemplatives pray, while those who receive it express deep gratitude. Similarly, Methley speaks at times of a “spiritual sensation” (*sensacio*) that he receives during prayer. In *The Experience of Truth*, he names the presence of *amor sensibilis* as one of the chief criteria for determining whether a purported revelation is trustworthy.

Closely related to *amor sensibilis* is *amor languidus* or simply *languor*, inspired by the refrain of the Song of Songs: *quia amore langueo* (Song 2:5 and 5:8). Nearly every chapter of *School* ends with this refrain. I have rendered *amor languidus* as “languishing love” and *languor* by its English cognate, but readers should be aware that it also carries a sense of “sickness,” especially fatigue or faintness. In *Bedroom* Methley uses the oxymoron of a sickly health or health-giving sickness, which will be familiar to readers of secular love poetry. *Quia amore langueo* is also the refrain of one of the most celebrated Middle English religious lyrics, “In

3. I thank Bernard McGinn for his advice on this problem.

4. *Sentio, sentire*, in D. A. Kidd, *Collins Gem Latin Dictionary* (London: William Collins, 1957).

the vaile of restles mynd," in which Christ himself languishes for love. In one of many wooing stanzas, he tells the narrator,

I am treu love that fals was neuer,
 My sister, mannys soule, I loved hyr thus,
 Bycause I wold on no wyse disseuere
 I left my kyngdome gloriouse.
 I purueyd hyr a paleis precieuse.
 She flytt, I folowyd, I luffed hir soo
 That I suffred thes peynes piteuouse,
*Quia amore languo.*⁵

Methley was strongly influenced by Richard Rolle, a debt he acknowledges explicitly in *Refectory*, chapter 12: "my life consists of love, languor, sweetness, warmth, and song [*amore, languore, dulcore, feruore, canore*] The Beloved has promised me that I would experience love more often in languor, just as the kindly Richard of Hampole experienced it more often in warmth." All these rhyming Rollean terms occur often in Methley's work, but especially *languor* and *canor*. I have translated the latter as *song, music, or melody*, depending on context. Sometimes Methley calls it *canor angelicus*, the supreme gift of hearing angelic song and mentally joining in. No audible music is involved. But in certain passages, Methley imitates the intensely lyrical, alliterative style of Rolle's *Melos amoris*.⁶ In *School*, chapter 12, for example, he writes, "mens mea . . . musicam multiplicat et merorem funditus fugauit a philomena, que filium et fratrem fulcitum floribus dulcissimum dilectum amplexatur in brachiis benediccionis." In such passages, which end as abruptly as they begin, the aural effect must take priority over the literal meaning. So I have

5. "In the vaile of restles mynd," stanza 3, in *Medieval Lyric: Middle English Lyrics, Ballads, and Carols*, ed. John C. Hirsh (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 58.

6. For a virtuosic translation, see *Richard Rolle's Melody of Love: A Study and Translation with Manuscript and Musical Contexts*, trans. Andrew Albin (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2018).

reproduced the alliteration as best I could: “My mind banishes mourning and multiplies music as God’s nightingale embraces the bountiful Beloved, her brother and son, sustained by blossoms in the arms of his blessing.”

A few technical terms of mystical or scholastic theology occur from time to time, such as *excessus mentis* (ecstasy), *sensualitas* (the body as a feeling, sensing, perceiving organism), and *scintilla synderesis* (the apex or “spark” of the soul, which experiences divine union). In *School* Methley discusses what he calls *tedium*, a condition of world-weariness, boredom, and disgust that afflicts the monk when his devotion fails. The more familiar term for this in monastic literature is *acedia* (depression, sloth, sadness), but Methley never uses that word, perhaps because it designates one of the seven deadly sins and he does not want his monks to feel guilty when they suffer this affliction. I have rendered *tedium* as *ennui*, the French term being stronger than any English equivalent.

The title of *Bedroom* poses a special problem. Methley refers to Christ throughout his works as the Beloved, but in *Bedroom* he doubles that term. *Dilecti dilecti* occurs just once in the Vulgate (Ps 67:13), in what is certainly a mistranslation of the Hebrew: *Rex virtutum dilecti dilecti* (the King of virtues of the beloved Beloved). Methley picked up on the phrase to highlight the superlative quality of his love. In this amorous dialogue, he and Christ both address one another as “beloved Beloved,” a term I have faithfully reproduced despite its peculiar ring in English.

Methley’s fourth treatise, *The Experience of Truth*, stands apart from the others. This undated work, later than the rest, survives in a different manuscript: London, Public Record Office Collection SP 1/239. There the second half of this text (chap. 14 through the concluding chap. 27) precedes a short Middle English letter, *To hew heremyte—a pystyl of solytary lyfe nowadayes*. Although *Experience* still refers to the author’s personal encounters with God, angels, and demons, it is primarily a treatise on the discernment of spirits, addressing such hot-button issues as how to de-

termine the authenticity of a vision, how to respond to “the evangelists and prophets of modern times,” how to advise a bishop who wants to exchange his pastoral duties for a contemplative life, and, perhaps most interesting, “what a holy man should do if he is asked to settle a dispute among theologians” (chap. 21). This suggests that Methley and his religious brothers sometimes found themselves in that situation. Unlike the other works, *Experience* concludes with an address to “sisters” as well as “fathers and brothers,” and an anomalous passage on virginity.

I have noted all biblical allusions in the apparatus, with the exception that when Methley repeats a verse, as he frequently does, I mark only its first occurrence. Biblical passages are translated directly from the Vulgate. The apparatus also includes the dates of all saints' feasts mentioned in the text, citations and allusions to other medieval authors, occasional explanatory comments, and translations of all the marginal glosses in *School*.

Finally, I should note the surprising genesis of this translation, which is a fittingly contemplative one. In October 2018, the British Zen master Julian Daizan Skinner advertised on a Classics listserv, offering to pay for a translation of Methley's works to use in his meditation workshops. Intrigued by the notice, I sent for the recently published edition of Methley's *Works*, read them, and decided that this virtually unknown author deserved the attention of medievalists as well as Zen disciples. I would like to offer special thanks to Dr. Giuseppe Pezzini, lecturer in Latin at the University of St. Andrews, who answered Daizan Skinner's ad. We corresponded, and Dr. Pezzini, a specialist in Terence and ancient Roman comedy, very kindly sent me his draft translation of *Bedroom*. I found it helpful as I was beginning my work on this project, but the present translation is my own.

The School of Languishing Love

**Here begins a prayer to introduce the book called
*The School of Languishing Love.***

O Jesus Christ, teacher of righteousness and lover of all who hope in you, attend to the devout prayers of your servant, and grant that I may so languish in your love¹ that for your love I may live and die. As long as I live in this world, grant me special grace in praising you so that I may sing and burn in your love, really as well as morally,² until you deign to give me what I await, namely yourself, in eternal life, with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Here ends the prayer. Here begins the prologue to
the aforesaid book.**

The highest aim of all creatures is to love and be loved,³ but some strive well and others badly to attain this goal. No one loves well unless he loves the one God in Trinity and the Trinity in unity, and loves all created things with due respect for God's sake.⁴ For this reason, because I love God with actual devotion (I give him

1. Song 2:5; this key verse is the refrain of the entire work.

2. *canam amore tuo et ardeam realiter et moraliter*. Like Richard Rolle in the *Incendium amoris* (*The Fire of Love*), Methley speaks of a fire that is physical as well as metaphorical. His theme of *canor* or spiritual song is also indebted to Rolle.

3. Cf. Augustine, *Confessions* II.2: "Et quid erat quod me delectabat, nisi amare et amari?"

4. Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* (*On Christian Education*), 1.22.

thanks forever and ever), I try to arouse all people to love God. Because love is the cause of the whole universe, it can establish nothing better than love itself as a remedy, enabling everyone who wishes to love to attain at last to a perceptible love.⁵

It might seem difficult to see how this love, the best that exists, could be a remedy for the love of another. If you have ever loved an ungrateful person, you know what I mean.⁶ But if you have never loved either God or an ingrate with perceptible love, then you do not yet know how love can be a remedy for love.⁷ For love makes a person love someone else who does not return that love. If the beloved is willing and able to consider how painful unrequited love is, he will sooner fall in love because of the other's love than for any other reason, no matter what it may be.

I think the greatest of all pains is to love an ingrate.⁸ But do not apply everything I have written to the enemy who must be loved.⁹ No, you should understand that the person I am discussing torments the affectionate soul more than an enemy, even if he has inflicted no harm. Reason enjoins all good Christians to love their enemy for God's sake; yet that kind of love has little to do with affection. On the contrary, the kind of person I am discussing is loved freely and affectionately. In true lovers, the more such affection is rejected, the more it increases, or else it remains stable—

5. *amorem sensibilem*, a love that is both emotionally warm and perceptible to the senses. Methley uses the noun *amor* (rather than *dilectio* or *carietas*), but his preferred verb for loving is *diligere*.

6. *Marginal gloss*: "This means that everyone, however perfect, is still ungrateful to God in certain ways. So this whole analogy makes the point that we, who are ungrateful to God in many ways, may be roused to mutual love by the immensity of his gratuitous love."

7. *Marginal gloss*: "This is the meaning. When an ingrate is greatly loved by another, yet the beloved repays that love only with ingratitude, he may see that in spite of this, the other loves him no less. Thus he might be aroused to love him—even unwillingly, so to speak—by the constancy of the other's love."

8. The literature of courtly love, still flourishing in Methley's day, focused obsessively on unrequited love and the lover's suffering.

9. Matt 5:44; Luke 6:27.

provided that the lover is just as unchanging as God is.¹⁰ In fact, such love can truly be ascribed to God alone. God therefore must be loved above all things. Because he is unchanging, a sinner who turns to him with his whole heart after his sin can firmly hope for love from the One whose love never changes.

That is not how it is among worldly people! What they love is not the goodness of a person's nature but the happiness of his fortune. Woe to those wretches, for they shall perish! But if I may use a human analogy, God, who knows what is secret and hidden, suffers the greatest pain because he loves an ingrate—that is, a human being who does not love him in return. And this is strange indeed, for God always loves and is always quick to be reconciled. Beyond all mortals or even immortals, it is he who can say “I languish for love.” That is why this book, in keeping with its subject, is called *The School of Languishing Love*.

**Here ends the prologue. Here begins the book called
“The School of Languishing Love.”**

*1. On love and languor, on fear and song, and on
perceptible fire*

“I languish for love.” Experience teaches what it means to say “I languish for love,” although it may seem like a contradiction that love involves languor when there should be delight in it. In languor, on the contrary, there is exasperation. But the knowledge of love, no doubt, can be perfectly acquired only by experience. Love is the most delightful thing there is, for it makes everyone in heaven rejoice eternally. To lovers of this world, languor is the most odious thing there is, for it snatches their delight and sometimes even their life away. In this treatise, however, love and languor will be inseparable companions. Love is the cause of languor and languor the cause of love.

10. Persistence in unrequited love was understood as the supreme virtue of loyalty or constancy.

I would like to explain what love is and what this languor is—but I must ask for your attention. Where true love is concerned, no one can lose, so no one should hesitate to lend an ear. The kind of love we are discussing is both the cause and the reality of eternal bliss. Languor, though, is the remedy by which every rational creature can attain true love, without exception. This love is a condition of the soul that both wounds and heals.¹¹ It heals and wounds with perceptible delight, so that languor is the constant companion of love and love of languor. Indeed, languor is so full of love that even if the whole world were turned to joy, a person who languishes for love would not turn his eyes even once to see it. One who languishes like this cannot find gladness in anything except his beloved.¹²

No one who languishes for love of his Beloved can fear any creature. (You must understand that I refer to the relationship between God and man.) Blessed is he who languishes, for neither all the people in the world nor all the demons in hell can frighten him! The languor of love does not permit one who languishes to mourn. Instead, it compels a lover to sing. Love's languor produces fervent tears, and where there is fervor, there is sometimes a perceptible fire of love. The languor of love brings the man of God close to death—and this happens habitually. At such a time, absolutely nothing can make him afraid.¹³ Any thought that occurs to his mind is transformed by the violence of his languor into a song of love.

One who languishes for the Beloved's love has no fear of his Judge's judgment. That is why he asks nothing of the Beloved

11. Cf. Job 5:18: *Quia ipse vulnerat et medetur*.

12. *Marginal gloss*: "All this applies to the love of God, not of the world or any other creature." Cf. Richard of St. Victor, *On the Four Degrees of Violent Charity* II.10. In the third degree of violent love (called *languidus amor*), "nothing besides the beloved can satisfy the mind."

13. *Marginal gloss*: "For perfect love casts out fear." 1 John 4:18.

except death.¹⁴ Yet he often receives from him what he does not ask, that is, something that is better in its time. Because he loves and languishes, he suffers pain, yet at the same time he is sweetly filled with the fullest delights¹⁵—and he says, “I languish for love.”

2. On love and languor; how even God himself languishes, in a way, and how a human does

The languor of love can be understood in many ways, both good and bad.¹⁶ I intend that all should know it in a good way; may the love of the Beloved grant this! Our God, who is Love itself,¹⁷ languishes for love because he is good. He also languishes for love because he loves an ingrate who does not return his love. Again, he languishes for love because he is waiting for someone who does love him—waiting to crown him in due time. Undoubtedly, he languishes with the noblest love because he calls a person who turns away from him to return—yet he pays no attention to someone who formerly loved him.¹⁸ He languishes for love too, because he never ceases to offer his passion for those who repent.

A human being languishes for love because, when his devotion runs dry, he is gravely afflicted by ennui. He languishes for love because, for a long while, he never ceases to desire that his affection might become sweeter, and this does not happen. No doubt this is because he is not paying perfect attention, or else the time

14. A major theme of *The Bedroom of the beloved Beloved* and *The Refectory of Salvation*.

15. *Marginal gloss*: “The languor of love, though sweet, is painful because of the Beloved’s delay, for hope deferred afflicts the soul.” Prov 13:12.

16. This chapter supplies a table of contents for the rest of the treatise.

17. *ipse amor est*. Cf. 1 John 4:8, *Deus caritas est*.

18. *Marginal gloss*: “This sentence agrees with a certain saint’s remark in the person of Christ: ‘Greater than all my pain is my inner suffering because I find you ungrateful.’ But it should be noted that no suffering can befall God; that is impossible. Because of the weakness of human understanding, however, God is said by analogy with humans to languish, suffer pain, feel hatred, and similar things.”

of his affection has not yet come.¹⁹ He languishes for love because, even though he experiences love with the greatest delight, it torments him beyond everything that he does not yet see the Beloved. He languishes for love because he unites his will perfectly with the will of the Beloved. Because he does this voluntarily, he experiences the greatest languor. He languishes for love because it is tiresome for him to remain alive for even one moment. He languishes for love because he fears to be held back from the Beloved even after death—a delay he can scarcely endure.²⁰ If it seemed that even in Paradise, in the empyrean heaven, he could be satisfied by some lesser good than God, he would not believe it, for he languishes vehemently for love. Finally, a person languishes for love because of the mighty struggle between the spirit and the flesh.²¹ The spirit constantly yearns to depart at once, yet the flesh desires the opposite. And so I say, “I languish for love.”

3. On faithfulness between the lover and the Beloved; who is a thief and who is a robber; and that a person should entrust himself to the Beloved

The first lesson for anyone who wants to feel the languor of love is to have faith in the fidelity of the Beloved. He should have such perfect confidence in that fidelity²² that he is ready to live and die

19. *Marginal gloss*: “By a secret dispensation of God, it very often happens that perceptible affection is delayed. But the virtue of love nevertheless remains if someone perseveres in good will and intention.”

20. Methley here (and elsewhere) echoes Margery Kempe, whose *Book* is preserved only in a manuscript from Mount Grace. Kempe says that she “wept ful plenteuowsly . . . for desyr of the blys of hevyn and for sche was so long dyfferryd therfro,” but Christ tells her that “sche schuld abyden and languren in lofe.” *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Lynn Staley (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, 1996), 34, chap. 7.

21. Cf. Gal 5:17; Eph 6:12.

22. Cf. 1 John 4:17.

before he knowingly²³ takes pleasure in a creature²⁴—unless it increases his affection for the Beloved. But that rarely happens in the perfect, and indeed, they are still imperfect until they freely love the Beloved for his own sake. This fidelity teaches a person to keep his mind free at all times,²⁵ not just on some schedule.²⁶

Some people may find this strange, so I will explain more fully. Affection prompts every lover to love the Beloved freely for his own sake, because he sees such abundant signs of his love all around him. Anyone who loves with an ulterior motive proves that he loves not God himself, but his goods. So he is no true lover of God but (if I may say so) a thief and a robber.²⁷ If he could have whatever he loves without God's knowledge, he would care nothing for God's love—and this causes God the greatest pain because he loves an ingrate. (I am speaking in a human way here. When we attribute a human passion to God, it is the figure of anthropomorphism.)²⁸

If you love God freely, as I said, have faith that he cannot possibly abandon you for long. To the extent that you are faithful, by his grace you will experience his faithfulness just as much and incomparably more, for God has no measure. See who is at fault, then, if you are troubled! It is your own fault because you do not show fidelity, and that in turn is because you do not perfectly

23. *Marginal gloss*: “*Knowingly* means deliberately and with full intention. Otherwise, if this happens from weakness or in the assault of temptation, it does not altogether impede the perfection of love. For the righteous falls seven times in a day.” Prov 24:16.

24. *Marginal gloss*: “In reason, that is, even though the sensuality may grumble and resist.”

25. *Marginal gloss*: “To understand at all times with a good and unimpaired will, free of all earthly love, all carnal affection, and desire for any kind of pleasure or consolation, except in God or for God's sake.”

26. *semper non horatim*.

27. John 10:8.

28. *Antropaspathos*. *Marginal gloss*: “*Antropaspathos* is when a human passion is attributed to God, such as saying that God is angry or rejoices, etc. This figure is very common in the Scriptures.”

believe in him. You do not believe because you do not have perceptible love.²⁹ Further, you do not have perceptible love because you busy yourself pointlessly with transitory things.³⁰

Here is what you should do. If you can find it in your heart to be perfect and sell or abandon all transitory things,³¹ entrust yourself to the Beloved like the ancient fathers,³² as it is handed down in writing. When you have done this, entrust yourself once again to the Beloved in all contingencies. Note that I said *all* contingencies, however they arise—from humans, the devil, or the flesh.³³

You ask, “How should I entrust myself to the Beloved?”

I say, “Tell him this: ‘I languish for love because I have no love; I am weak in virtues because I feel no love. To you, my Beloved, I entrust all care for myself.³⁴ As for me, I am poor and needy.³⁵ But as for you, take care of me! Make me languish perceptibly for your love, I pray, so that just as you are my faithful lover, I may be your faithful lover—until at last I can say with supreme thanksgiving, for your honor and the salvation of all people, I languish for love.’”

29. *Marginal gloss*: “There is a certain kind of faith in the perfect called ‘formed faith,’ which is a perceptible contact with divinity. It is much more excellent and efficacious than ordinary faith, and cannot be attained except through perceptible love.”

30. *Marginal gloss*: “You busy yourself pointlessly (*supervacue*), that is, idly and in vain, because no good fruit comes of this. For a monk, any occupation with transitory things is pointless and idle unless it occurs through obedience, charity, or necessity.”

31. Matt 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 18:22.

32. *Marginal gloss*: “Like the ancient fathers: this means to entrust body and soul purely and simply to God, and to a human being (that is, a superior) for God’s sake.”

33. *Marginal gloss*: “They can arise from humans through external losses in property or reputation, through scandal or abuse, slander, or anything of that kind that can happen. They can arise from the devil through hidden suggestions and temptations, or from the flesh through its shameful and rebellious motions.”

34. 1 Pet 5:7.

35. Ps 39:18.

A Devout Prayer on the Name of Jesus and on the Five Wounds¹

O Jesus, good ruler of morals
And savior of the ages,
Song of those who deserve you:
May the holy wound of your right hand
End the lament of our hearts
After the way of lovers.

Eternal, exalted King
And most delicious bread,
Food of those who enjoy you:
May the wound of your left hand
Bless us, lest the infernal Vulcan
Burn the hearts of believers.

Hail Jesus, hail Jesus,
Music to the ear, honey in the mouth,
Health of those who love you:
May the broad wound of your right foot
Purge our guilt away,
Salvation of the weak and sick.

Burn our loins, breath of holy fire,
Our helper and advocate,

1. Devotion to the Name of Jesus and his Five Wounds was widespread in Methley's day. See R. W. Pfaff, *New Liturgical Feasts in Later Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 62–91. The author of this poem is unknown, though it could be Methley himself. Its rhyme scheme is AABCCB.

Life of those who behold you:
May the open wound of your left foot
Expose the hidden wound of our hearts
In the way of confessors.

Hail Jesus, good Jesus,
In the union of love,
Holiness of those who live in you:
May the wound of your pierced heart
Heal the wounds of the desperate
And the hearts of those who sing.

Verse: O Jesus, may your name and your five wounds

Response: Save us from every slaughter.

Let us pray.

O God, almighty Father, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ and through his cross and passion resolved to save the world; grant, we beseech, that through the invocation of his name and the veneration of his wounds, we may deserve pardon and grace in the present and happily attain to glory unknown in the future, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Bedroom of the beloved Beloved

Here is the angelic greeting to begin a book called *The Bedroom of the beloved Beloved*. “Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Amen.”¹ And blessed be your most holy mother Anne, of whom your immaculate, virginal flesh was born.² Amen.

**Here begins the prologue to the aforesaid book,
The Bedroom of the beloved Beloved.³**

In the past, gracious Creator, you gave me the ability to write about you while I was awake. But now, as best I can, I want to disclose the celestial glory I experience while I am miraculously awake in sleep,⁴ because I know that you want this too. For you languish for my love and I for yours⁵—but this languor causes

1. The *Ave Maria* derives from Luke 1:28 and 1:42.

2. An allusion to the Immaculate Conception, still a debated doctrine at this time.

3. The phrase *dilectus dilectus* (Ps 67:13), or “beloved beloved,” is a superlative form equivalent to *dilectissimus*. In the title it can also mean “one beloved by the Beloved,” i.e., Christ.

4. Song 5:2, “I sleep and my heart is awake,” a key refrain. *Ego dormio (I Sleep)* is a work by Richard Rolle.

5. Song 2:5. “Languishing for love” is the second refrain and key concept of the work.

me to sleep, and you as well. I have no doubt that as the proverb goes, in both of us this sleep is a sign of health, not sickness.

Because we are speaking to one another here, I believe that *The Bedroom of the beloved Beloved* is an apt title for this little book. O my Beloved, I beg you, in this bedroom let there be a single bed for us both—and then I have no doubt that our sleep will be sweet! Indeed, this is marvelous: I am healthy because I sleep, yet I also languish because I sleep. Further, this is yet more marvelous: I am awake and asleep at the same time, and at once healthy and languishing. In the following pages I will explain all this. But here I will not fail to add that I have such a great hope of love in the glorious Virgin Mary, your mother and mine, that I long for her honor in all things. That is why I began with the angelic greeting, for I know that she will make haste to help me. *Here ends the prologue.*

Here begins the book called *The Bedroom of the beloved Beloved*.

1. On the mode of speech in the aforesaid bedroom

“I sleep and my heart is awake.” At the very beginning, the literal sense proves to be impossible, so we must turn our pen to a spiritual understanding. Because it is the master who is supposed to teach, not the student, I beg you to teach me—and through me, teach others. Truly I know your will: in this book you want me to write with you in a new mode of speaking, a most truthful mode. Sometimes this will be through inspiration, though differently than before. At other times it will be in dialogue, as in the many books I have already written through you.⁶ But here you speak to me through your very self, without intermediary, in an ordinary style of speech. Yet at times you also want to teach me through inspiration without supplying a name.

6. A reference to earlier, lost works.

The Lord says to me, “In this volume of yours, write all the words I speak to you in *The Bedroom of the beloved Beloved*.⁷ For you are beloved to me, well beloved; and I am beloved to you, incomparably beloved.”

“I sleep, Lord, but you alone know how.”

“As for you, teach others so that they too can learn to sleep, once they have been provided with this bedroom and you have been laid in the grave.”

“Lord, this is the only thing I desire in this world, and therefore I languish for love. But I have not yet explained how it is that I sleep.”

2. How one must sleep

It seems wondrous that a mortal could sleep while he is awake and be awake while he is sleeping. I know what sleep is and what waking is, so it is with great wonder that I see them coexist at the same time in the same way.

The Lord says to me, “Teach them how one must ascend step by step to learn to sleep in the bedroom of the beloved Beloved.”

Step by step, my brothers, is how one must ascend to this bedroom. So whoever wants to sleep should ascend the first step by fully believing that those who love God purely, for his own sake, cannot lack any useful thing either here or in the future life. In this way he will have peace from external anxieties so he can sleep. Second, he should fully believe that as long as he retains the use of the five senses, he must absolutely never omit anything to which he is bound by obedience—though some things can be delayed for awhile, or changed for the better, and afterward be done again as they were before. Third, let him know that all things have their time.⁸ So in spiritual matters, two things should never be done at once because, without special grace, they cannot both

7. Cf. Jer 30:2 and 36:2.

8. Eccl 3:1.

be done well. In this way he will have peace from the hubbub of domestic concerns.

Fourth, he should firmly understand that he must not set any condition for himself, whether in affairs of the will,⁹ the spirit, or the body, where he is ignorant. Rather, let him offer his whole self to God and, when the time comes, experience will infallibly teach him whether he has attained a knowledge of truth and falsehood. Fifth, anyone who wishes to sleep and be awake at once should not set a definite time, but wait for you at all times, always ready. Then when you come, he will not miss you out of reliance on old habits.

See, now I have spoken.

3. How great is the joy of this wakefulness

The Lord says to me, “Tell them how great is the joy of this wakefulness in which you glory so much.”

Truly I begin to be foolish, for I cannot speak unless you, God, put a word in the mouth of my heart—the word I must write to them. This joy is so great that no mortal creature can tell of it, nor can anyone presume to comprehend it in itself. Yet I am allowed to proclaim something of it to others insofar as you bid me tell them. Think how great a difference there is between a dying man in his last agony and a flourishing youth who revels in his strength. Know then that there is a difference just as great—or incomparably greater—between the highest pleasure one can enjoy among creatures in sin and the infinite pleasure to be enjoyed in God for his own sake.

4. That the love of God deserves veneration

But let no one suppose from this analogy that he could imagine or describe even the least joy of truly divine love. For just as God

9. Reading *voluntariis* for MS *voluptariis*.

is ineffable, his love in a true lover cannot be expressed. Such a lover is one who loves God for his own sake and would not sin even if he were allowed to do so with impunity. Let no one flatter himself that he is a true lover unless he senses that condition in his own heart in a perceptible way—just as perceptibly as if he felt his finger burnt in the fire.¹⁰ Such perceptible feelings¹¹ are very common in supremely perfect men, as I have said. I will say it again: in supremely perfect men, for many may seem perfect both to themselves and to others, yet not to God. Search me, O God, and know my heart,¹² for I languish for love. If I say this in order to be praised and not for your own sake, let me be deprived of you and the heavenly crown.

5. On the intensity of divine love

Such a person must sleep in this novel way, for he is so perfect that every creature is burdensome to him—every creature in heaven or on earth. This is not because he despises any creature; rather, he is so afflicted by desire for the Creator that no creature can comfort him. Let me clarify this with an analogy. When a person has been searching for someone he loves very much and is so grief-stricken that he seems to have lost his mind, suppose he sees someone who resembles his beloved. But when he comes closer, he realizes that this is not the one he is seeking. Then he is stung, or rather pierced through the heart, by a fresh sting. It is the same in this case, for whenever it occurs to me that I could be consoled by any creature, my pain is renewed and I nearly faint. So I can well say, “I sleep and my heart is awake.”

10. Cf. Richard Rolle, *Incendium Amoris*, Prologue.

11. *Affectus sensibiles*. For Methley, love is a disposition of the will, yet in its perfect state it is experienced in both the emotions and the senses.

12. Ps 138:23.

Index

- Adam, 119, 123
Adam of Dryburgh, xlv–xlvi
Aelred of Rievaulx, xxiii, xlvi,
 24n
Affective piety, xxii–xxiv
Alan of Lille, xxix
Albert the Great, xxxi, xxxii
Albin, Andrew, xxvi
Alfonso of Jaén, xxxviii
Almsgiving, 110
Ambrose, St., 72
Amor sensibilis (perceptible
 love), xxx, 1, 4, 10n, 16, 57,
 67–68, 103; as criterion of
 authenticity, 134, 140–42;
 how to obtain, 35–36, 146–47
Anchoress, viii, 110
Ancrene Wisse, xlv
Angelic song, 5, 30, 63, 68–70,
 75, 93–95, 97, 111, 113
Angels: fallen, xxxvi–xxxviii,
 130, 133–35; guardian, 129–
 30; revelations from, xxxix,
 130–33
Anselm, St., xxviii
Anthropomorphism, 15
Apophatic theology, xxx–xxxiii,
 38–41
Aquinas. *See* Thomas Aquinas
Aristotle, 32n
Augustine, St., xx, xxxviii–
 xxxix, 9n, 72, 87n, 135n
Ave Maria, 53, 89, 92, 141, 146
Ave maris stella, 116
Beckett, Lucy, lii
Bell, Nicholas, xiv
Benedictine Rule, 66n
Bernard of Clairvaux, xiii, xxiii,
 xxviii, 3, 84n, 88n
Birgitta of Sweden, x, xxiv, xlii,
 86n
Bishops, resignation of, 143–44
Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Renate,
 136n
Bonaventure, xxiii, 23n
Brothers of the Common Life,
 xxiii
Bruno of Cologne, viii
Bude, Tekla, lii
Caciola, Nancy, 132n
Caesarius of Heisterbach, 129n
Canor. *See* Angelic song
Carthusian Order, 61; and
 pastoral care, xlii–xlvi, li; and

- theological debates, 140–41;
 books of, ix–x, xv–xvi, xxiv,
 xxx–xxxii; history of, viii–x;
 in England, x, xxxi; liturgy
 of, ix, xxi, 3, 112, 121; nuns
 in, xli, xlvi, li, 147n; on
 discernment, xxxv; praise of,
 107; statutes of, ix, 96n
 Cassian, John, xxxviii, 66n
 Catherine of Siena, x, xxiv,
 xxxviii, 86n
 Centering Prayer, xix
 Chastity, 150–51
 Clark, John, xii, xv, 2, 96n, 135n
 Clifford, Lord Henry, xv
Cloud author, xxxi, xxxix
Cloud of Unknowing, xii, xvii,
 xxxi–xxxv, 22n, 38n, 41n,
 43n, 114n
 Compassion: of Christ, 75–77; of
 Mary, 122
 Contemplation, xviii–xxi, 77–78,
 et passim; how to begin, xix,
 37–38
 Courtly love, 10n, 28n

 d’Ailly, Pierre, xl
 Dante, 47n
 Darker, William, xxxv, liii
 Death, longing for, 24, 43–44,
 64, 70–82, 92, 97–100, 105,
 108, 122, 125, et passim
 Deification, 62
 Demons. *See* Angels, fallen;
 Devil
 Devil, 41–42, 70, 83, 98, 103,
 109, 119–20, 124–26, 136–39
 Devotio Moderna, xxiii
 Dionysius the Areopagite, xxx,
 38n, 41n, 96
 Discernment of spirits, xxxvi–
 xlii, 129–40
 Dissolution of the Monasteries,
 x, liii, 1
 Divided will, 42–44
 Divination, 132

 Ecstasy, 3, 6, 101–2, 107, 111,
 124, 132, 135. *See also*
 Raptures
 Elisabeth of Schönau, x
 Elizabeth of Hungary, xxiv
 Ennui (*tedium*), 6, 13, 29–30, 45,
 67–69
 Eriugena, John Scotus, xxxi
 Eternal Wisdom, xxiv, 46n, 48,
 66, 85, 100
 Evangelists, modern, 135–38

 Faith, exceptional, 14–16, 32–33
 Fearlessness, 65
 Fidelity, 14–16
 Five Wounds, devotion to, xxvii,
 51–52
 Fletcher, Robert, lii, 135n
 Francis of Assisi, xxiii

 Gallus, Thomas, xxxi, xxxiii,
 116n
 Gerson, Jean, xxxviii–xlii, 134n
 Ghosts, 120
 Gift exchange, xxxiv, 87, 91, 117
 Godric of Finchale, 153
 Grande Chartreuse, viii–ix, xlv

- Gregory the Great, 23n, 26n, 58, 136n
- Grenehalgh, James, xxxv, liii
- Grosseteste, Robert, xxxi, 26n
- Guigo I, ix
- Guigo II, xlv
- Hampole, nunnery of, xxv
- Harris, Sara, xxxv
- Heart, mystical sensations in, 57, 65–66, 96–99, 101–2, 121
- Henry V, king of England, xliii
- Henry VIII, king of England, lii
- Hermits, xlii–xlvi, 47, 141; and pastors, 143–45; spiritual direction for, 149–55
- Hildegard of Bingen, 62n
- Hilton, Walter, xxxii, xxxviii–xxxix, xli–xlii
- Hogg, James, xii, xv, 2, 96n, 135n
- Holy Name, devotion to, xxvii–xxx, xxxii, 3, 33–34, 51–52, 115–16; invocation of, 69–74, 97, 114, 151
- Hugh of Balma, xxxi, xxxiii
- Hugh of Lincoln, 153
- Hugh of St. Victor, xxxi, xxxviii, 41n
- Imitation of Christ*, xxxiii
- Immaculate Conception, 53n, 122
- In the vaile of restles mynd*, 4–5
- Infused grace, 62
- Ingratitude, 18–21, 27, 74
- James, M. R., xv, 1
- Jerome, St., 72
- Jesu dulcis memoria*, 21n
- Jesus. *See* Holy Name
- John, St., 66–67, 131
- John of Howden, 30n
- Jubilus*, 66, 94. *See also* Angelic song
- Julian of Norwich, x, xxiv, 74n, 82n, 114n
- Kempe, Margery, vii, x, xxii, xxiv–xxv, xxix, xlii, xlvii–li, 14n, 32n
- Life of St. Anthony*, 30n
- Lochrie, Karma, xlix
- Lollards, 138n
- Love, Nicholas, xxiii, xliii
- Lutherans, 138n
- M.N., translator, xxxiv
- Manuscripts: Cambridge, Pembroke 221, xxxiv; Cambridge, Trinity O.2.56, xiii–xvii, xxvii, xxix, xlvii, 1–2; Lincoln Cathedral 57, li; London, BL Add. 37049, xxx; London, BL Add. 48965, xv; London, BL Add. 61823, xlvii–l; London, PRO Coll. SP 1/239, xiii, xvii–xviii, 6
- Mary Magdalene, 109, 148n
- Mechthild of Hackeborn, x, xxiv, 86n
- Meditations on the Life of Christ*, xxiii, xliii

- Melton, William, lii
- Methley, Richard: influence of, xlvii–liii; life of, vii–viii, 110; lost works by, xi, xx, 1, 81, 120, 122–23, 143; spirituality of, xviii–xxi; translations by, xii, xvii, xxxii, xxxiv–xxxv, xlvi, 1, 22n, 38n, 87n
- Mirror of Simple Souls*. See Porete, Marguerite
- Monastic office, 59, 121
- Moses, 131, 141
- Mount Grace Charterhouse, 61, 113; foundation of, x; manuscripts at, xiv–xv, xxiv, xlvii, 2, 14n, 66n; mystics at, li–liii, 135n
- Mystical drunkenness, 92, 112, 118
- Mystical sleep, 53–59, 65, 88
- Norton, John, xlvi–xlix, li–liii, 58n, 135n
- Nuns, xxv, xli
- Obedience, 58–59, 89, 150
- Office of the Dead, 106–7, 123
- Ovid, xxix, 28n
- Paradise, 45–48, 115
- Parsons, Kelly, xlvi
- Patience, 24–25
- Paul, St., 43n, 129, 130, 142, 151
- Peace of mind, 17, 55–56, 58, 83, 98, 100, 109
- Perseverance, 33
- Peter, St., 103–4, 129, 142
- Pezzini, Giuseppe, 7
- Porete, Marguerite, x, xii, xvii, xxxiii–xxxv, 83n, 87n
- Poverty, voluntary, 150–51
- Preaching, 84, 133, 144–45, 146n
- Prophetic signs, 139–40
- Prophets: biblical, 61, 127, 137, 141, 152, 154; modern, xli–xlii, 135–37, 139–40
- Pseudo-Dionysius. See Dionysius the Areopagite
- Purgatory, 45–48, 60, 134
- Quia amore langueo*, 4–5
- Raptures, 22–24, 44, 62–64, 73–74, 81, 93, 101–3, 114, 135; counterfeit, 133
- Red ink annotator, xlvi–li
- Revelation of Purgatory*, 47n
- Richard of St. Victor, xxxi, xxxii, 12n, 40n
- Rolle, Richard, vii, xxxii, xxxix, xliii, xlvi, xlvi, 1, 5, 60n, 63n, 68n, 94n; alliterative style of, xxvi, 5, 23n, 30n, 42n; cited explicitly by Methley, 104; *Commandment*, xxv, xxviii; *Contra amatores mundi*, 45n; detractors of, xxv; *Ego dormio*, xxv, xxvii, 53n; *Emendatio vitae*, xxv, xxviii; Form of Living, xxv; *Incendium amoris*, xxv–xxvi, xxviii, 9n, 57n; *Melos amoris*, xxv, xxviii, 5, 30n, 42n;

- mystical vocabulary of, xxv–xxvi; *Super Canticum*, xxviii
- Sacred Heart, devotion to, xxix
- Salve Regina*, 88–89, 118
- Samson and Delilah, 63, 89–90
- Sargent, Michael, ix, xii, xxxvi
- Sarracenus, John, xxxi
- Scala claustralium*, xlv
- Sensualitas*, 6, 125
- Sentio, sensibilis*, 4, 67n
- Sheen Charterhouse, x, xxxv, xliii
- Silence, 142–43, 152, 154
- Sins, venial, 68
- Skinner, Julian Daizan, 7
- Song of Songs tradition, xviii–xix, xxi
- Speculum devotorum*, xxiv, xliii, 86n
- Stabat mater*, 122n
- Suso, Henry, xxiii–xxiv, xxix, 46n, 66n, 85n. *See also* Eternal Wisdom
- Synderesis, xxxiii, 6, 116–17
- Syon Abbey, xliii
- Theological debates, 93–94, 140–41
- Thomas à Kempis, xxiii
- Thomas Aquinas, xxxviii, 80n
- Translations. *See* Methley, Richard, translations by
- Unknowing, 38–41. *See also* Apophatic theology; *Cloud of Unknowing*
- Veni sancte Spiritus*, 37n
- Virgin Mary, 54, 100, 105, 116; compassion of, 122; name of, 120; prayers to, 53, 89–90, 92, 118, 141, 146, 153; visions of, li, 73, 89
- Virginité, xxxvii, 147–48
- Visionary literature, xxiv
- Visions: of Christ, 85–86; of Virgin Mary, li, 73, 89; types of, xxxix, 134–35
- Voaden, Rosalynn, xxxvi
- Watson, Thurstan, xxxv, liii
- Witham Charterhouse, x, xlvi, 153n
- Writing, process of, 84–85, 88, 103, 124, 126, 128
- Zieman, Katherine, xxiii, li