Eschatology and Individual Responsibility in Old English Literature

by

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Abstract

The treatments of eschatological issues in Old English literature reflect the fundamental concerns of the writers and reveal a distinct purpose in their writings. These concerns stem from the scriptural promise that Christ will return to judge humankind, which in turn will mark the end of earthly existence. Exploring these concerns enables Anglo-Saxon authors to not only understand eschatological ideas but also to conceptualise the responsibility of and emphasise the need for every individual to prepare actively for the end of earthly existence. It is to encourage such preparation that eschatological themes are evident in both the prose and the poetry. The themes themselves do not differ significantly from the issues explored by the Church fathers whose writings set the tone and scope of most Anglo-Saxon theology. The deliberate way that these themes are explored and the distinct purposes of the writers, however, are uniquely Anglo-Saxon.

The aim of this thesis is to determine which eschatological issues are of fundamental concern to the writers and whether the inclusion of these issues in the literature serves the specific purposes of conceptualising the responsibility of the individual and emphasising the need for every individual to prepare actively for Judgement Day. This will involve comparing 'traditional' eschatological issues, as defined by this study, with various other key narrative, doctrinal and thematic elements that frequently recur in Anglo-Saxon literature. The 'traditional' issues stem from the scriptural exegesis of early Christian writers and relate to death, judgement, the nature of the soul, the specific timing, signs and events that herald the return of Christ as well as the precise nature of the eternal state that humankind will subsequently enter. The various other elements that recur in Old English literature include the concept of sin, the role of the devil both as a character and as a rhetorical device, the use of psychomachia allegory, penance and penitential discourses. While these elements may not always be associated with eschatological exegesis, this study will show that they provide considerable insight into the writers' purposes and are inextricably linked to the eschatological themes in Old English literature.

Declaration of Originality

This is to certify that –

(i) the thesis comprises only my original work except where indicated,

(ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,

(iii) the thesis is below the maximum limit of 100,000 words in length, inclusive of footnotes but exclusive of tables, maps, appendices, and bibliography.

Fotini Toso

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Contents

Introduction

The early medieval obsession with eschatological theology and its discourses is also evident in Anglo-Saxon thought and culture. The treatments of eschatological issues in Anglo-Saxon literature, in particular, reflect the fundamental concerns of the writers and reveal a distinct purpose in their writings. These concerns stem from the scriptural promise that Christ will return to judge humankind, which in turn will mark the end of earthly existence. For these writers, however, this promise entails two critical consequences: the sequence of events that will constitute Judgement itself and the destiny of every individual soul that will follow from Christ's judgement of humankind. Exploring these concerns enables Anglo-Saxon authors not only to understand eschatological ideas but also to conceptualise the responsibility of and emphasise the need for every individual to prepare actively for the end of earthly existence. It is to encourage such preparation that eschatological themes are returned to again and again in both the prose and the poetry. The themes themselves do not differ significantly from the issues explored by early Christian writers whose writings set the tone and scope of most eschatological theology. The deliberate way that these themes are explored and the distinct purpose of the writers, however, are uniquely Anglo-Saxon. The questions that remain are whether the eschatological themes evident in Old English literature reflect the writers' actual concern for the future day of judgement or whether those themes emphasise a present need for the moral reform of their audiences. Furthermore, are these themes directed at the community as a whole and the collective responsibility of all Christians, or do they articulate the responsibility of each individual with respect to their future fate? Finally, do the writers adopt the eschatological themes in the literature deliberately as a rhetorical device aimed at changing their audience's behaviour, or does their turn to eschatology reflect a genuine attempt to contribute to the history of eschatological discourse with a uniquely Anglo-Saxon perspective? This thesis will

examine these questions by undertaking a contextual analysis of the treatment of eschatological themes in Old English poetry and prose.

Eschatology is the theological concern with death, judgement and human destiny collectively referred to as 'last things'. In terms of Christian chronology, these 'last things' constitute the end of the linear progression of time and the consummation of God's final intentions as Creator. As such, eschatology is integral to Christian faith and doctrine, as it represents the fulfilment of God's divine plan for humanity. This definition is fairly simplistic and implies a coherent set of doctrines concerning the impending return of Christ, his judgement of humankind and the end of earthly existence. Eschatology, however, is a broad area of theological study that is both speculative and open to interpretation, particularly in the early Christian period. The scriptural promise that Christ will return to judge humankind is explicit and definite. However, the specific details of the timing and character of this return are incomplete, complex, and, at points, inconsistent or ambiguous. Most early Christian writers act on a fundamental need to resolve ambiguities and reconcile apparent contradictions through scriptural exegesis. This need is based on the expectation of Christ's immediately impending return that then had to be adjusted when Christ did not return. The core issues that emerge through such exegeses relate not only to death and judgement but also to the nature of the soul, the specific timing, signs, and events that herald the return of Christ, as well as the precise nature of the eternal state that humankind will subsequently enter.

These issues reveal that eschatology is essentially a theology of both tribulation and hope. It expects that at the end of time, God's divine plan will be revealed and all the trials and hardships of earthly existence will be both overcome and understood. It also expects that God's justice, once the divine plan has been revealed, will reward the good and punish the

evil thus restoring the faithful to their rightful place in paradise with God.[1] The development of eschatological thought and doctrine in response to these issues varies significantly amongst early Christian writers and is strongly influenced by their particular contexts. Those living in oppressive conditions including famine, disease, war, persecution, and violence, for example, produce eschatologies that may be more dramatic and urgent than those that arise in calmer conditions with more stability and leisure for reflection.[2] This is certainly evident in the works of writers from different times and locales, such as Augustine of Hippo and Gregory the Great. But it can also be evident amongst contemporaries such as Ælfric and Wulfstan in Anglo-Saxon England. Despite the effects of differences in location, time, and context, the core eschatological issues, outlined above, remain largely the same. This does not imply, however, that the treatment of the issues is the same amongst all writers or that their specific contexts are irrelevant to their eschatological perspective. On the contrary, the latter provides considerable insight into both the motivation of their eschatological thought and the factors that influence their exegeses. The unique contributions of each writer to the history of eschatological discourse can be subtle but the various perspectives, subtle or not, contribute to a tradition whose writers seek consistently to resolve ambiguities in Scripture. In terms of Anglo-Saxon eschatology, this is only one aspect of the writers' purpose and it is a relatively minor one compared to the main purpose of encouraging moral reform.

The eschatological tradition in Anglo-Saxon England derives ultimately from Scripture but also from the inherited thought and imagery of the early Christian and patristic authors. Theologians such as Ælfric and Wulfstan demonstrate their awareness of Church tradition through their liberal use of quotations from prior authorities, sometimes with acknowledgement of their source and sometimes without, in their own writings. Their heavy reliance on early Christian writers has resulted in modern claims that Anglo-Saxon

[1] Brian Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 2.
[2] Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, 1.

eschatology is conservative, "unoriginal", and does not contribute anything new to the history of eschatological discourse.[3] The highly selective treatment of the source materials in Anglo-Saxon writings, together with their specific cultural context, however, combine to create an eschatological discourse that is uniquely Anglo-Saxon. Furthermore, the treatment of eschatological issues in both the poetry and the prose together with the other literary motifs that are characteristic of the literature provide considerable insight into the motivations of the writers and, when considered as a whole, a common purpose amongst them. This purpose is not to simply reiterate the arguments of their predecessors or even to provide an accurate representation of eschatological ideas in order to cement their place in the history of theological and eschatological transmission of ideas. Their purpose is also not, unlike some of their predecessors, to resolve all the Scriptural ambiguities with respect to the end times, though they do seek to clarify and understand them. Their treatment of eschatological issues is less concerned with the actual end-times at some point in the future and more focused on the present and how faithful Christians need to prepare themselves before the end-time sequence begins. To this end, their purpose is to emphasise the need for moral reform and to encourage their audience to take responsibility for the individual fate of their souls after Judgement Day. Moral reform is also a major theme in the works of earlier writers such as Gregory the Great, but the unique aspects that define Anglo-Saxon culture make this focus all the more prominent in Old English literature.

These aspects are unique in Anglo-Saxon England as they reflect the fusion between the heroic-warrior culture of the Germanic people who invaded Britain and the learned, literate culture of Rome that brought Christianity to the land.[4] The former is characterized by a strong tradition of heroic deeds, loyalty to a lord, honour and the oral transmission of

[3] Milton McC. Gatch, *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan,* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977) 4-5.
[4] R.D. Fulk and Christopher M. Cain, *A History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: John Wiley and Sons, 2013) 2.

history while the latter introduced literacy, learning, and the Christian tradition that emphasized loyalty to God. The literature that has survived illustrates the way that both poetry and prose retained aspects of both as well as how effectively the heroic-warrior culture was integrated into the Christian. The process, of course, was not so simple or so seamless as the evidence might at first suggest. Fulk and Cain state that the difficulty in providing a concise description of Anglo-Saxon England is that the 'Anglo-Saxon period' as such is long, beginning from the invasions of the fifth century and continuing for over a century after the Norman invasion of 1066.[5] During this time, the Anglo-Saxons experienced numerous invasions, political upheaval, the merging of various kingdoms, their conversion to Christianity, the introduction of literacy, learning and written records, and monastic reform, as well as further invasions that redefined the culture. Of all of these, the conversion to Christianity effected the most profound transformation as, with all conversions, it did not mean simply a change in beliefs but a fundamental shift in all aspects of society.[6] For the Anglo-Saxons, this meant that they now had an ideological link with the continental mainland, but it also meant the conversion of the king ceded considerable power to the Church and ecclesiastical law.[7] This led to a mode of learning that was based on the western Latin tradition and the production of written records that were far more permanent and standardized than they had been previously. In turn, this Latin learning formed the basis for a new vernacular tradition that acknowledged the authority of the past yet simultaneously distinguished itself as specific to the Anglo-Saxon context. This tradition intricately wove the theoretical exegeses of the early Christian tradition with the practical application of Christian ideology that was relevant to an Anglo-Saxon audience.[8] It combined aspects of the heroic-warrior past with the new values of Christianity and enabled the writers to re-evaluate the

[5] Fulk and Cain, *A History of Old English Literature*, 3.
[6] Fulk and Cain, *A History of Old English Literature*, 10.
[7] Fulk and Cain, *A History of Old English Literature*, 11.
[8] Clare A. Lees, *Tradition and Belief: Religious Writing in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999) 7.

core issues identified by the early Church fathers in the context of their present reality. Finally, it introduced a level of pastoral care that was simultaneously directed at the individual and at the community as a whole. The result is the production of poetry and prose that redirects key eschatological ideals from some point in the future to one very firmly placed in the present. This literature gives due reverence to the teachings of the past but also enables the writers to demonstrate their concern for the spiritual wellbeing of their audience and to emphasise the need to prepare actively in the present for the future return of Christ.

The study of Old English literature has, until recently, followed conventional methods of analysis that focus on either the prose or the poetry and/or the traditions from which they derive.[9] This method has provided invaluable insight into the way that various traditions influenced the development of the vernacular tradition in Anglo-Saxon England. The dating of texts written in Old English, however, is difficult to determine, though it is generally accepted that the law codes of Æthelberht in the late sixth to early seventh century are the first.[10] These early texts only survive in later revisions and do not represent any extensive culture of vernacular text in those early centuries. Extensive use of the vernacular, in prose at least, is attributed to King Alfred and his call for an extensive program of translation in the late ninth century.[11] Alfred himself translated major Latin texts such as Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Care* and Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* into English, and he also wrote his law codes in the vernacular.[12] That Alfred translated these major Latin texts emphasizes the significant and continuing influence of the Latin west. As such, any study of Old English literature must, at the very least, acknowledge this influence. In terms of the eschatological themes evident in Old English literature, this influence accounts for the core issues that the

[9] Lees, *Tradition and Belief,* 4.
[10] Janet Bately, 'The Nature of Old English Prose', Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (eds) *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 71.
[11] Bately, 'The Nature of Old English Prose', 72.
[12] An indepth analysis King Alfred and the works attributed to him is beyond the scope of this thesis but does provide scope for further study. See Patrick Wormald. *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century, Legislation and Its Limits* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2001).

writers are dealing with even though their treatment of these issues is adapted to suit the Anglo-Saxon context.

After the ninth century, texts written in Old English appear to be, from the surviving texts, far more common, effectively standard practice. The reasons for this could be various, the main two associated with English identity and the decline in Latin learning. The considerable increase in Viking incursions after 865 deepened the disruption of monastic culture that had been taking place since the sack of Lindisfarne in 793. It might also have induced writers to solidify their English identity through the production of texts in the vernacular. Similarly, the writers may have wanted to distinguish their writing from the Latin tradition that they had inherited. The writers, who are generally assumed to be elite ecclesiastics, may also have intended their texts to be read or heard by not only lay people but also by clergy who may not have had access to the same Latin learning that they had. The latter is certainly evident in Ælfric's *Preface* to the first series of *Catholic Homilies* where he states that he has relied on the authority of key Latin figures such as Augustine of Hippo, Jerome, Gregory, and Bede but has made them accessible to the uneducated in his audience.[13] He does not elaborate on who these 'uneducated' people are but presumably he is referring to anyone who does not know Latin well enough to read the texts of the Church Fathers. In addition to the Latin tradition, Old English literature, particularly the poetry, also reflects the influence of the Irish missions and the pre-conversion, aristocratic warrior society within which it developed. Peter Clemoes states that the function of poetry is to provide form to the transformation from active being to narrative living.[14] That is, to document the pattern of experience and to establish a continuum of time from the past to the present.[15] In this, he is

[13] Peter Clemoes, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series* EETS 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) lines 14-17. From herein reference to *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series* will be abbreviated to *CHI* followed by the homily and line numbers. This reference, for example, *CHI* 'Praefatio', 14-17.
[14] Peter Clemoes, *Interactions of Thought and Language in Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 117.
[15] Clemoes, *Interactions of Thought and Language,* 117.

referring to the stories of the heroic-warrior tradition where the deeds of these warriors were transmitted to future generations through song. He goes on to state that the conversion to Christianity resulted in a fundamental shift in society and permanently altered perspective on fundamental aspects of human existence such as its morality and conceptions of individuality.[16] The changes brought about by Christianity have been well documented and tracing them is beyond the scope of the present study. The formal tracing of these influences as well as the source texts for Old English literature, while invaluable in how it can locate lines of influence and establish the general climate of ideas in which Anglo-Saxon authors worked, can also be limiting. One of its limitations is the tendency of scholars to treat the prose and the poetry as exclusive phenomena, with the former strongly influenced by the Latin tradition and the latter influenced by the native (and vernacular) heroic-warrior tradition. The possibility that the writers of the prose and the poets are working with the same purpose has not received considerable scholarly attention. A further limitation is that a focus on tracking the traditional elements within the literature and the sources from which they derive, leads to an assumption, often implicit and insufficiently thought through, that the writers of Old English did not contribute anything original to the history of theological discourse. This stems, at least in part, from the heavy reliance of writers such as Ælfric and Wulfstan on the writings and authority of their predecessors that they acknowledge freely. This thesis will take a slightly different approach by demonstrating that, in terms of eschatology, the Latin tradition provides the basis for Old English texts but, at the same time, the writers expand on this basis to produce texts that are uniquely Anglo-Saxon.

The aim of this thesis, therefore, is to demonstrate that while the eschatology of the Anglo-Saxons is traditional in terms of the issues, it is also highly selective, deliberate, and unified in terms of purpose. It will also examine the way that the exhortation to prepare

[16] Clemoes, *Interactions of Thought and Language,* 229.

actively for Christ's return through repentance, confession, and penance extends beyond the explicitly penitential and eschatological texts. This will involve the following: analysing the treatment of eschatological themes in the literature and examining why some themes receive greater emphasis than others; comparing and contrasting the representation of these themes in the poetry and the prose; and contextualising these themes in terms of Anglo-Saxon thought and culture generally. This will also involve comparing 'traditional' eschatological issues, as defined by this study, with various other key narrative, doctrinal, and thematic elements that frequently recur in Old English literature. The 'traditional' issues stem from the scriptural exegesis of early Christian writers and relate to death, judgement, the nature of the soul, the specific timing, signs, and events that herald the return of Christ, as well as the precise nature of the eternal state that humankind will subsequently enter. The various other elements that recur in Old English literature include the nature of sin, the role of the devil both as a character and as a rhetorical device, the use of the psychomachia allegory, penance and penitential discourses as well as the representation of heaven and hell. While these elements may not always be associated directly with eschatological exegesis, this study will examine the way that they provide considerable insight into the writers' purpose and are inextricably linked to the eschatological themes in Old English literature.

This thesis will adopt a contextual, critical approach to trace the linear development of ideas amongst writers who are acknowledged as not only influencing each other but Anglo-Saxon theologians as well. With respect to the aims above, this linear development of ideas will focus on the writings of Augustine of Hippo, Gregory the Great, and Bede the Venerable and the way that these early Church Fathers influenced Anglo-Saxon theologians such as Ælfric and Wulfstan. The focus on Augustine, Gregory, and Bede will highlight the 'traditional' elements that are evident in the Old English texts and will demonstrate how these elements are transmitted and modified from Augustine's early Christian context in North

Africa to Bede's context as a monk at Wearmouth-Jarrow. Augustine was certainly neither the first nor the only early Christian writer to address eschatological themes, but his influence on western eschatology and theology in general is unparalleled. The context in which each writes is highly significant, as it reveals parallels with that of the Anglo-Saxons and the specific circumstances that lead to certain aspects being emphasized over others. These three Church Fathers were well known to the Anglo-Saxons, as evidenced in the writings of Ælfric and Wulfstan, and hence provide the necessary background to interpret the treatment of eschatological issues in Old English literature.

The key eschatological arguments in Gregory and Bede's respective works develop within an established tradition and are particularly influenced by Augustine's thought. Despite this influence, however, these three writers develop their eschatological thought in different social, political and intellectual contexts. Born in 354 CE, Augustine was baptised in 387 CE and became Bishop of Hippo in 396 CE. During his lifetime in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, the Roman Empire experienced a series of political crises that were characterised by invasions in both the Italian peninsula and North Africa.[17] In the early fifth century, the west was experiencing the social upheaval that had been culminating for centuries, including political assassinations, a troubled economy, migration to cities from the country, and a military establishment incapable of dealing with the consequences of all these stresses.[18] In response to these crises, a considerable number of eschatological theories and end-time predictions developed. Augustine revised a lot of these theories, downplaying the heated apocalyptic rhetoric that associated the crises of the time with the end times and attempting to redirect public perspectives towards hope in God's salvation.[19] For its citizens,

[17] Kari Kloos and Kim Paffenroth, 'Introduction' in John Doody, Kari Kloos and Kim Paffenroth (eds), *Augustine and the Apocalyptic* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), 1-2.
[18] J. Kevin Coyle, 'Augustine and Apocalyptic: Thoughts on the Fall of Rome, the Book of Revelation, and the End of the World' in John Doody, Kari Kloos and Kim Paffenroth (eds), *Augustine and the Apocalyptic* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), 23.
[19] Kloos and Paffenroth, 'Introduction', 2.

the Roman Empire reflected the proper order of things and its tribulations had a profound psychological impact on the confidence of the general public.[20] Pagans blamed Christians, claiming the conversion to Christianity had angered the old gods, who were perhaps avenging their own neglect. According to Coyle, Augustine formulated four sermons addressed to Christians in order to assist them in dealing with the crises and the pagan recriminations, though he moves quickly away from interpreting the events themselves or associating them with the end times.[21] As the *City of God* developed, Augustine's intention was less about addressing the fall of Rome and pagan recriminations and more about reflecting on the history of human existence as a tale of two cities: the earthly city and the city of God. The development of his eschatological thought within this work significantly influenced the development of eschatological thought in general and forms the basis from which Gregory the Great addresses the issues.

Gregory's primary objective in developing his eschatology is to prepare the individual, the community, and the Church for the end of earthly existence. This objective stems from his unfaltering conviction that the return of Christ and subsequent judgement of humankind is imminent. As a result, there is an intensity and sense of urgency in his works that is not as evident in the writings of Augustine. Gregory, like Augustine, is writing in a time of crisis. Gregory was born around 540CE, a time that is characterised by political uncertainty and invasions, much as it was in Augustine's time. There are constant wars to reclaim territory under the control of Germanic rulers, a plague that swept through Europe around 542 and had devastating effects both physically and spiritually on the people, and the flooding of the Tiber river that brought about famine and further disease.[22] For Gregory, all the calamities of his time are a reflection of God's anger with humankind and a form of punishment for the decline in faith that he sees around him. He desires the contemplative,

[20] Coyle, 'Augustine and Apocalyptic', 24.
[21] Coyle, 'Augustine and Apocalyptic', 26.
[22] R.A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 3-4.

monastic life but he also has a strong sense of his pastoral responsibilities to the community. For Gregory, one of his chief pastoral responsibilities is to communicate the imminence of Christ's return and impending judgement of humankind to his fellow Christians.[23] In this, Gregory hopes to purify the Church from secular corruption, to encourage his audience to prepare actively for Christ's return, and, to some extent, to reorient his audience's focus away from the calamities around them and back towards God. The latter also involves converting the pagan Germanic tribes, which inspired him to send a mission to England, which in turn led to his being revered by theologians such as Bede for bringing Christianity to the Anglo-Saxons.

Bede inherits a complex Latin tradition, and while he works within the tradition established by Augustine of Hippo, Tyconius, Jerome, and Isidore, he is influenced in particular by Gregory's writings. His eschatological ideas develop in response to this tradition but also highlight a significant shift in focus from his predecessors. Until recently, however, Bede's arguments with respect to the 'last things' have not received considerable scholarly attention. Rather, modern scholars, with notable exceptions such as Peter Darby, tend to refer to Bede solely as the historian who comprehensively documented the ecclesiastical history of the English people. Bede is also, however, a prominent theologian with an extensive list of scriptural commentaries that reflect the same eschatological and theological concerns as those of earlier writers. Bede's method of exegesis transforms late Antique eschatological traditions and influences Anglo-Saxon ideas about the 'last things'. This transformation is partly attributed to the influence of Gregory's eschatological arguments but primarily to Bede's primary objectives and agenda. According to De Gregorio, there is a 'spiritual affinity' between Gregory the Great and Bede that extends beyond the

[23] Daley, *Hope of the Early Church,* 211.

direct eschatological arguments evident in Bede's texts.[24] This 'affinity' is particularly evident in Bede's *Expositio Apocalypseos, The Reckoning of Time,* and the poem *De Die Iudicii*. In these works, Bede explores key eschatological themes including the timing of the end, the 'six Ages' of the world, the signs of the end, and the nature of the eternal state after Judgement Day. In addition to Gregory's eschatology, these themes are also influenced by and develop in response to the eschatological arguments of the early Church Fathers noted above. By comparing and contrasting Bede's works with Gregory's *Moralia on Iob* and *Homilies on the Gospels*, the 'spiritual affinity' between the two writers can be established. Simultaneously, this comparison will highlight the theological background and the late Antique theological tradition that Bede transforms so adeptly.

The aim of this thesis is also to demonstrate the way that writers of Old English literature adapt eschatological themes in order to emphasise the responsibility of individuals for their future fate. This will involve an analysis of core issues evident in Old English literature and the treatment of these issues within a specific context. As will be shown in Chapter One, however, a considerable amount of work has been undertaken with the respect to the contextual background of this aim that does not need to be repeated in this thesis. As such, this thesis will explore the eschatological ideas in the writings of Augustine, Gregory, and Bede but will maintain a narrow focus. It will not attempt to trace the development of thought prior to Augustine or the numerous other writers that influence the development of his thought. It will pursue a similar course with Gregory and with Bede, whose writings are influenced by many predecessors with different views, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine these in detail. Even with these three writers, all of whom compose numerous works on a range of different topics, a critical, contextual analysis of all of their works lies beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, this thesis will focus on the eschatological ideas

[24] Scott DeGregorio, "The Venerable Bede and Gregory the Great: exegetical connections, spiritual departures." *Early Medieval Europe* 18, no. 1 (2010): 43-60.

evident in Augustine's *City of God,* Gregory's *Moralia on Job* and *Homilies on the Gospels* and Bede's *Commentary on Revelation, The Reckoning of Time, Commentary on the Gospels* and the poem attributed to him *De Die Iudicii,* with other texts referred to if they are relevant.[25] In terms of Old English, this thesis will not attempt an analysis of the entire corpus of literature that has survived, though expanding the scope of this study to include more texts would provide valuable insight as to the 'unified' purpose of the writers that is evident beyond the Christian texts. It will also not attempt to provide an overview of Anglo-Saxon history and the specific details of the Anglo-Saxons' conversion to Christianity, this has been undertaken by numerous scholars, as will be summarised in Chapter One. While this thesis will account for the development of eschatological ideas in the writings of the Church Fathers, it will focus less on the possible sources for each text or the transmission of Latin texts into the vernacular and more on the broad eschatological issues and the treatment of these issues within the texts. In addition to these thematic limitations in the present study, this thesis will also not undertake an etymological study of the Latin texts and their translation into Old English. As such, modern English translations of the Latin texts above will be used for ease of reference and accessibility. The translations of the Old English texts will be my own unless otherwise stated. These limitations will ensure that the thesis remains focused and

[25] From herein references to Augustine's *City of God* will be from John O'Meara (ed), *St Augustine Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans,* Henry Bettenson (trans) (London: Penguin, 1984) and will be cited as Augustine, *City of God,* book:chapter number; references to Gregory's works will be from Gregory the Great, *Morals on the Book of Job*, Vol I, II, and III (John Henry Parker (trans), (Oxford: F. and J. Rivington, 1845) and will be cited as Gregory, *Mor,* book.chapter.line numbers and Gregory the Great, *Forty Gospel Homilies*, David Hurst (trans), (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1990) and will be cited as Gregory, *Homilies*, page number; references to Bede are from Faith Wallis (ed), *Bede: Commentary on Revelation* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013) cited as Bede, *Revelation,* followed by Chapter and page number, and Faith Wallis (ed), *Bede: The Reckoning of Time* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012) cited as Bede, *Reckoning of Time,* followed by chapter and page number, Lawrence T. Martin & David Hurst (ed), *Bede the Venerable: Homilies on the Gospels, Book One: Advent to Lent* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1991) and Lawrence T. Martin & David Hurst (ed), *Bede the Venerable: Homilies on the Gospels, Book Two: Lent to the Dedication of the Church* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1991) cited from herein as Bede, *Homilies I,* and Bede, *Homilies II,* followed by chapter and page numbers, and references to Bede's *De Die Iudicii* from Michael J.B. Allen and Daniel G. Calder (ed and trans), *Sources and Analogues of Old English Poetry: The Major Latin Sources in Translation* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1976) 208-212 cited as Allen and Calder, *Sources and Analogues,* followed by the page number.

draws on the scholarship of others in order to demonstrate that the treatment of eschatological issues in the texts emphasise the responsibility of the individual.

Chapter One is a literature review which sees to demonstrate that, to date, scholars have not really explored the treatment of eschatological issues as a deliberate and purposeful literary device in Old English literature. What it will review, however, is the extensive scholarship that has already been undertaken in Anglo-Saxon studies and forms the basis for this thesis. These studies include the nature of Anglo-Saxon culture and its various influences, the effect of the conversion to Christianity on Old English literature and on the development of both prose and poetry in this period as well as other studies that have looked at eschatological issues in Old English literature, whether in the poetry or the prose.

Chapter Two will explore the development of ideas with respect to core eschatological issues in the writings of Augustine, Gregory, Bede, Ælfric, and Wulfstan. These core issues include the specific timing, signs, and events that herald the return of Christ, as well as the precise nature of the eternal state that humankind will subsequently enter. The arguments put forth by each of these writers provides considerable insight into which issues were most important to each of them and the way that the treatment of these issues reflects the specific context in which they were writing. Gregory's emphatic insistence that Christ's return is imminent, for example, contrasts significantly with Bede's more theoretical exposition during the Northumbrian renaissance. The comparison of early Christian texts–those of Augustine, Gregory, and Bede in particular–with the writings of Ælfric and Wulfstan will also reveal the highly selective way in which the Anglo-Saxon theologians adapted their sources to suit their own specific context. This chapter will examine whether Ælfric and Wulfstan are actually responding to the approaching end of the millennium or whether it offers them merely a rhetorical device to elicit an active response from their audience. Furthermore, given the influence of the early Christian tradition on their

understanding of last things, are their concerns, attitudes, arguments and treatments entirely their own, or are they simply reiterating the views of their predecessors and relying on the authority of the Latin Fathers to substantiate their arguments?

Chapter Three will examine the explicitly eschatological poems *Judgement Day I, Judgement Day II,* and *Christ III.* These three poems deal directly with the theme of Christ's return and judgement of humankind. They have not received considerable scholarly attention in terms of their contribution to the history of eschatological discourse, yet they provide considerable insight into what the poets deemed to be important with respect to the last things. This chapter will examine what distinguishes the poems from the prose accounts in terms of their treatment of eschatological issues; and, more importantly, what do both the differences and the similarities in how writers in those different genres express this common purpose reveal about both the Anglo-Saxon thought-world and society as a whole.

Chapter Four explores the treatment of sin and penance in the literature as well as the conceptualisation of free will in the prose and the poetry. The authors of Old English religious texts sought to encourage their audiences to prepare actively for judgment by amending their ways and turning away from sin towards God. Their aim, in effect, is to encourage repentance. Anglo-Saxon authors are also aware that true repentance requires self-reflection and introspection, an awareness of what constitutes sin and what defines good, as well as a significant degree of remorse and a commitment to the deliberate choice of good over evil. In order to encourage and assist their audiences, the writers adopt various methods and motifs to explore key themes such as sin, penance, and free will. In this way they seek to enable their audience to identify sinful deeds, to be aware of what is required to atone for those deeds, and, most importantly, to make a free choice between evil and good. This chapter, therefore, will explore the way that sin and penance are represented, comparing the poetry and the prose to determine if the techniques adopted by the authors differ significantly

in different texts. This comparison will demonstrate what the writers' considered important with respect to these issues and how they contributed to their purpose of encouraging their audience to prepare actively for judgement.

Chapter Five will explore the subtle yet pivotal role that the psychomachia played in the eschatological discourse of Anglo-Saxon England. The poets, in particular, adapted the allegory in creative ways in order to emphasise the need to prepare actively in the present for Christ's future return and his judgement of humankind. The word 'psychomachia' refers to the internal, spiritual battle between good and evil within each individual. To an Anglo-Saxon audience, with its heroic-warrior culture pre-conversion to Christianity, the martial imagery associated with the psychomachia might well have been particularly appealing. The psychomachia enabled such writers to demonstrate the need to fight actively against spiritual wickedness in the same way that warriors would fight against physical enemies. This chapter will explore the way that the writers, and the poets in particular, adapt the psychomachia allegory as a deliberate literary device to encourage the moral reform of their audience. It will examine also how the treatment of the allegory provides the writers with a platform to conceptualise the free will of the individual and the responsibility that they have in choosing good over evil. This, in turn, will demonstrate the way that the writers of Old English literature appear to have a 'unified' purpose in their writing that extends beyond traditional eschatological boundaries and will highlight the further work that needs to be undertaken in order to understand this better.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

The treatments of eschatological issues in Old English poetry and prose function as a link between the early Christian period and the unique context of the Anglo-Saxon world. The themes themselves are traditional in that they do not differ significantly from the issues explored by early Church Fathers such as Augustine of Hippo and Gregory the Great. Yet at the same time, the treatment, presentation, and purpose of these issues is uniquely Anglo-Saxon and reflects the fusion of the Christian with the heroic-warrior past that defines the Anglo-Saxon thought-world. The result is an eschatological discourse that is less concerned with the actual end times and more focused on the responsibility of the individual in the present. The highly selective, and sometimes seemingly inconsistent, treatment of these issues may be attributed to the influence of numerous sources and a lack of concern for harmonizing their details. A close reading of the texts, however, reveals that the purpose of the writers is far more deliberate and consistent than it appears initially. The writers of both the prose and the poetry certainly address the core eschatological issues that are central to the eschatological discourse of the early Church Fathers. These issues centre around death and judgement but also the nature of the soul, the specific timing, signs, and events that herald the return of Christ as well as the precise nature of the eternal state that humankind will subsequently enter after Christ's judgment. Old English authors appreciate the significance of these issues and their views do not necessarily differ significantly from those of their predecessors. But their treatment of these issues and their emphasis on particular issues over others demonstrates a deliberate use of their source material. This, combined with the weaving of these issues into key narrative, thematic, and literary elements that recur in Old English literature, reveals not only a deliberate but also a consistent purpose in both the poetry and the prose. To date, however, scholars have not explored the eschatological themes

in Old English literature as a deliberate and calculated rhetorical device adopted by the writers.

As stated previously, eschatology is fundamental to Christian faith and doctrine. Despite this, however, the Christian influence on Anglo-Saxon England and the eschatological themes prevalent in Old English literature tend to be discussed separately in scholarship. In *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, for example, Henry Mayr-Harting explores the Christian conversion and distinct development of Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England. He states that "traditions of great variety and richness come together to create early Anglo-Saxon Christianity".[1] Mayr-Harting explores the development of this distinct Christianity from the conversion of the pagan kingdoms to the time of St Boniface under both Roman and Irish influences. In this analysis, he explores the Gregorian and Irish missions to England as well as the formation of Anglo-Saxon monasteries. Mayr-Harting's study considers the contrasting roles of these missions and examines the accuracy of the traditional view that there was conflict between them.[2] The study also examines the religious and cultural achievements of the earliest Christian period in England in terms of art, liturgy and educational ideals. In particular, Mayr-Harting explores the development of and contrast between prayer and worship, books and studies, saints and warrior heroes, as well as the relationship between Church and laity. He aims to provide an overview of the development of Anglo-Saxon Christianity and hence does not directly consider the eschatological themes in Old English literature.

The influence of Christianity on the development of Anglo-Saxon thought and culture is significant to the present study, but an in-depth analysis of this influence lies beyond its scope. It is, however, well documented by various scholars. Their studies rarely consider the impact of eschatology in Anglo-Saxon thought or writings, but they do serve to establish the

[1] Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England* 3rd ed.(London: B.T. Batsford, 1991) 3.
[2] Henry Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, 4.

broader Christian contexts of the eschatological themes in Old English literature. In *Trinity and Incarnation in Anglo-Saxon Art and Thought,* Barbara Raw explores the way that art and literature articulate complementary expressions of religious truths. She states that art and theology are linked by the theme of the divine image. This image enables the believer "to know God, rather than merely knowing about him".[3] Raw briefly mentions the last days but does not explore the poetry in any great depth; she does, however, provide a good starting point for the exploration of these ideas in the poetry. She focuses on the writings of Ælfric and Wulfstan, who are key figures in the eschatological discourses of Anglo-Saxon prose and who will be explored in this thesis.

In *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, John Blair explores the Church as a force for change: in ritual and social behaviour, in economic life, and in the organisation of the landscape and settlement. Blair is more concerned with the externals of Christian culture than with theology, learning or conversion; particularly with churches as social and economic centres rather than as sites of scholarly or religious life. At the same time, he explores the centrality of ritual and organised devotion in the Anglo-Saxons' perceptions of themselves and the world around them, in their senses of identity, and in their ways of articulating the communities in which they lived.[4] He is not concerned with an in-depth contextual analysis, however, and does not explore eschatological themes in the literature or elsewhere. In *Rites and Religions of the Anglo-Saxons*, Gale R. Owen explores the pagan culture prior to the conversion to Christianity for the majority of the book and has only one chapter dedicated to the arrival of Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England.[5] In *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England,* Francesca Tinti gathers together a collection of essays on pastoral care during this period. The pieces she assembles explore the role of the Church in society as a whole,

[3] Barbara C. Raw, *Trinity and Incarnation in Anglo-Saxon Art and Thought* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1997) 6.
[4] John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 1.
[5] Gale R. Owen, *Rites and Religions of the Anglo-Saxons* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1981).

particularly through preaching, baptism, penance and visitation of the sick.[6] The essays in this collection do not explore eschatological themes directly in either the prose or the poetry, but they do help to ground the present study as they deal with issues such as penance, pastoral contracts, and caring for the dead (albeit in terms of burial rites). The unity of purpose evident in Old English religious literature stems from Anglo-Saxon conceptions of pastoral care, and hence this book is an important source for this study.

In *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England c. 600-900,* Sarah Foot explores the monastic life in England and the way that monastic rules reveal with particular clarity the ideals that shaped the evolution of the communal religious life in the Christian Latin West. Her aim in this study is to build a picture of the monastic life in England before the tenth-century monastic reform. She does this by collecting references and allusions from a range of sources in order to illustrate particular elements of religious behaviour or to cast light on specific elements of the monastic day.[7] *The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching* is a collection of essays that explore the Christian tradition in Anglo-Saxon England from as wide a variety of approaches as possible. Included in this collection are essays on the Bible, manuscript evidence, individual poems and prose, archaeology, and the role of pictorial elements in books.[8] The essays do not explore eschatology specifically; however, they do provide a significant overview of current understanding of Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England. *The Liturgy of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church* is a collection of essays on Anglo-Saxon liturgy and the way that this liturgy functions as a source of evidence for Anglo-Saxon history.[9] A key theme of these essays is the Benedictine reform and the way that this contributes to the various influences,

[6] Francesca Tinti (ed), *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2005).
[7] Sarah Foot, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 10.
[8] Paul Cavill (ed), *The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching* (Cambridge: DS Brewer, 2004) xiv.
[9] Helen Gittos and M. Bradford Bedingfield (Eds), *The Liturgy of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church* (Boydell & Brewer, 2005).

compilations, and performances of the liturgy in Anglo-Saxon England. While these essays provide considerable insight into the rituals and function of the liturgy generally, the essay by Sarah Hamilton on the rites of public penance together with the essays by Sarah Larratt Keefer, Karen Louise Jolly, and Catherine E. Karkov on the Cross are particularly relevant to the present study.[10] These essays inform the sections of this study on penance and on the treatment of the cross as a symbol in Old English poetry.

The depth of scholarship on Old English literature includes broad studies that explore style, syntax, and the various genres within the literature generally as well as studies on specific works or collection of works. The broad studies such as Michael Alexander's *A History of Old English Literature* provide a general overview of the literature, including the heroic poetry such as *Beowulf*, the riddles, elegies, Christian verse and prose, and the context within which this literature developed.[11] The collection of essays in *Old English Literature in its Manuscript Context*, however, focuses less on the development of the literature and more on the issue of textual identity, particularly in terms of the intervention of editors in the process of textual transmission. This collection is based on Fred C. Robinson's article 'Old English Literature in its Immediate Context', which is a call to return to study of original Anglo-Saxon manuscripts and not to rely solely on critical editions.[12] The essays by Joyce Tally Lionarons on Wulfstan's *De Temporibus Antichristi* and Thomas A. Bredehoft on the boundaries between verse and prose in this collection are particularly relevant to the present study.[13] Broad studies such as the essays in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English*

[10] Sarah Hamilton, "Rites for Public Penance in Late Anglo-Saxon England", 65-104; Sarah Larratt Keefer, "The Veneration of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England", 143-184; Karen Louise Jolly, "Cross-Referencing Anglo-Saxon Liturgy and Remedies: The Sign of the Cross as Ritual Protection", 213-244; Catherine E. Karkov, "The Sign of the Cross: Poetic Performance and Liturgical Practice in the Junius 11 Manuscript", 245-270 in Gittos and Bedingfield (Eds), *The Liturgy of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church* (Boydell & Brewer, 2005).
[11] MichaelAlexander, *A History of Old English Literature,* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2002).
[12] Joyce Tally Lionarons, *Old English Literature in its Manuscript Context* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2004). The article that these papers are based on is Fred C. Robinson "Old English literature in its most immediate context." *Old English Literature in Context* (1980): 11-29.
[13] Joyce Tally Lionarons (ed), 'Textual Appropriation and Scribal (Re)Performance in a Composite Homily: The Case of a New Edition of Wulfstan's *De Temporibus Anticristi*', 67-94 and Thomas A. Bredehoft, 'The

Literature provide an overview of various themes in the literature and are often the starting point for many students and scholars.[14] Essays by Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe on 'Heroic Values and Christian Ethics' and Joseph B. Trahern Jr on 'Fatalism and the Millennium' form the basis for the present study and, while broad, they provide the foundation from which key themes with respect to eschatology and individual responsibility are examined.[15] Other studies such as the collection of essays in *Anglo-Saxon England and the Visual Imagination* aim to promote interdisciplinary dialogue with respect to the significant role of the visual in the production of culture.[16] In terms of the present study, the essays by Helen Foxhall-Forbes on visualising purgatory, Karin Olsen on the visual imagination in the *Soul and Body* poem, Annina Seilor on factual and fictional inscriptions, and Matthew T. Hussey on the materiality of writing in *Daniel* are of particular interest.[17] While examining the visual and material representations in addition to the texts is beyond the scope of this thesis, the essays in this volume reveal the way that the Anglo-Saxons represented intellectual, moral, and spiritual themes visually.[18] This is significant for a culture that was largely illiterate. Further work in this area is needed in order to determine how the material, written, and visual sources contribute to the idea that the main aim is to encourage the audience to prepare actively for Christ's future return and judgement of humankind.

Boundaries Between Verse and Prose in Old English Literature', 139-172 in Joyce Tally Lionarons (ed), *Old English Literature in its Manuscript Context* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2004).

[14] Malcolm Godden (ed), *The Cambridge Comp to Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[15] Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, 'Heroic Values and Christian Ethics', Malcolm Godden (ed), *The Cambridge Comp to Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 107-125. Joseph B. Trahern Jr, 'Fatalism and the Millennium', Malcolm Godden (ed), *The Cambridge Comp to Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 160-171.

[16] John D. Niles, Stacy S. Klein, and Jonathan Wilcox (eds), *Anglo-Saxon England and the Visual Imagination* (Arizona: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2016) ix.

[17] Helen Foxhall-Forbes, '*O Domine libera animam meam!* Visualizing Purgatory in Anglo-Saxon England', 115-140, Karin Olsen, 'Earthworms, Fire Serpents, and the Visual Imagination in the Old English *Soul and Body'*, 199-210, Annina Seiler, 'Factual and Fictional Inscriptions: Literacy and the Visual Imagination in Anglo-Saxon England', 211-236, Matthew T. Hussey, 'Scarlet Letters: The Old English *Daniel* and the Materiality of Writing', 237-264 in John D. Niles, Stacy S. Klein, and Jonathan Wilcox (eds), *Anglo-Saxon England and the Visual Imagination* (Arizona: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2016)

[18] John D. Niles, 'Introduction' in John D. Niles, Stacy S. Klein, and Jonathan Wilcox (eds), *Anglo-Saxon England and the Visual Imagination* (Arizona: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2016) 23.

In terms of the texts themselves, however, the depth of scholarship is extensive. In *The Textuality of Old English Poetry*, Carol Braun Pasternack explores the textuality of the poetry in terms of the conventions and codes that enable the poets to communicate with the audience.[19] Pasternack states that her study will establish a different hermeneutic method of interpretation that considers the format of the poem in its manuscript context, the formulaic aspects of the diction as well as the structure and meaning that the words convey to the audience as listeners rather than readers.[20] While Pasternack does not examine the poems in the present study in any great depth, opting instead for a broad scope to address as many poems as possible, the argument that post-modern assumptions with respect to the poetry differ from those of Old English poetry is insightful. It allows the interpretation of Old English to move beyond the focus of who wrote the poems and where their ideas came from in the Latin sources to the distinct purpose of the writers and the key message that is being conveyed. Like Pasternack, various scholars examine different aspects of Old English poetry in order to broaden the way that these poems are interpreted by modern scholars. In *The Guest Hall of Eden,* for example, Alvin A. Lee explores the major recurrent metaphors in Old English poetry in order to determine the imaginative logic that defines the poetry.[21] The overall aim is to determine the dominant mythology and symbolism of the poetry that, as Lee states, functions as a unity between Germanic, didactic, and Christian influences.[22] In *The Life of the Mind,* Antonina Harbus explores the beliefs in Anglo-Saxon England with respect to the mind and the psychological aspects of existence.[23] Harbus argues that the relationship between the mind and the self, where the self is defined as individual agency or identity, is of

[19] Carol Braun Pasternack, *The Textuality of Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
[20] Pasternack, *The Textuality of Old English Poetry*, 2.
[21] Alvin A. Lee, *Guest-hall of Eden: Four Essays on the Design of Old English Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972).
[22] Lee, *The Guest Hall of Eden*, 6.
[23] Antonina Harbus, *The Life of the Mind in Old English Poetry* (Rodopi: Brill, 2002).

significant interest to the Anglo-Saxons.[24] Like Pasternack, Harbus does not undertake an in-depth analysis of the eschatological issues or the poems examined in this thesis specifically. Her study, however, forms the basis for exploring themes of moral agency, free will, and the responsibility of the individual in Old English literature.

The fusion of the heroic-warrior culture of the Germanic past and the literacy of Christianity after the conversion also reveals the tension between the oral and written transmission of narrative in Anglo-Saxon England. In *Anglo-Saxon Oral Poetry: A Study of the Traditions,* Jeff Opland explores the traditions of oral poetry in Anglo-Saxon England in order to determine the characteristics of this tradition, the role of this poetry in society, and the way that it operated within society.[25] Opland traces the history of the oral poetic tradition in society from the pre-Christian period in England to the post-Christian and post-Viking invasion period despite the difficulty in establishing a precise history. This difficulty relates not only to the lack of evidence, which is based on oral narratives not being recorded in written form in the pre-Christian period, but also, as Opland highlights, because oral traditions are revised and reformed as the ideals of society altered.[26] While the conversion to Christianity also brought learning, literacy, and written records, the oral tradition continues to be significant, particularly in the poetry. The performative and dramatic aspects of the poetry provide significant evidence that the message of the poem was intended to be heard, not necessarily read. These aspects also form the basis for exploring the relationship between the narrative, the poet, and the audience. In *The Lyric Speakers of Old English Poetry,* Lois Bragg explores the literacy and orality of the lyric genre as well as the relationship between the poet, the poem, and the audience.[27] He does this by dividing the poems according to five types of speakers that, Bragg argues, not only characterise the poems better than conventional

[24] Harbus, *The Life of the Mind,* 5.
[25] Jeff Opland, *Anglo-Saxon Oral Poetry: A Study of the Traditions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980)
[26] Opland, *Anglo-Saxon Oral Poetry* 265.
[27] Lois Bragg, *The Lyric Speakers of Old English Poetry* (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1991).

genre definitions but also reveal different relationships between the speaker and the audience. These types include the "inanimate speaker", the "adoptable speaker", the "nonpersonal speaker", the "fictive speaker", and the "personal speaker". While Bragg provides numerous examples for each of these types and the relationship between the speaker and the audience is significant, this thesis will focus on the message of the poems rather than on the relationship between the poet, speaker/narrator, and the audience. The poet and narrator/speaker will not be distinguished in this analysis, and will be referred to interchangeably as the poems will be treated as though the key message and the intention of the message is the same whether it is from the poet directly or through the figure of the speaker.

The influence of Christianity on Old English literature specifically is particularly relevant to the present study as it forms the basis for exploring the eschatological themes in the poetry and the prose. Various other scholars have explored this influence; however, like those reviewed above, their scholarship does not generally consider the eschatological themes in the literature. In *The Irish Tradition in Old English literature,* Charles D. Wright explores the literary impact of the Irish mission, and of the continuing cultural relationship it established. He examines this relationship not through a cultural survey but through a detailed analysis of the Irish background of Vercelli IX, an Anglo-Saxon homily that embodies the literary motifs, stylistic features, and theological preoccupations characteristic of much Irish-Christian literature and of certain other Old English literature formed under Irish influence.[28] In *The Construction of Christian Poetry in Old English,* John Gardner explores Anglo-Saxon allegorical styles as the basic means by which early English Christian poets tried to achieve resonance, depth of vision, and power in their poetry. He studies Anglo-Saxon allegorical styles in the poetry in a systematic way by working from the poem to the theory and not the reverse. In doing so, he undertakes a close analysis of the style of individual poems that aims

[28] Charles D. Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

to discover the relationship of the given poem's parts and its relationship to the broader poetic tradition. He briefly mentions eschatological themes such as judgement, reward and punishment but does not undertake a specific, in-depth analysis of these themes.[29] *The Old English Homily and Its Backgrounds* is a collection of essays that explore the homilies of Ælfric compared to the anonymous and slightly older Old English Homilies. The first essays in the collection provide an overview of the historical, ecclesiastical, and literary contexts that enabled Old English prose to flourish in the tenth century. The remaining essays explore the homilies in terms of style, structure and theme while, at the same time, adopting source criticism, descriptive analysis and comparison. [30] In *Doctrine and Poetry: Augustine's Influence on Old English Poetry,* Bernard Huppé explores the way that Augustine's formulation of a Christian theory of literature provides the basic program for medieval Christian culture. He argues that Augustine's thinking had an overwhelming influence upon the early practice of poetry in the vernacular, specifically in Old English.[31] Huppé 's study begins with his exposition of the literary theory formulated in the *De Doctrina.* The continuing influence of the theory is highlighted in reference to Isidore of Seville, Vergil of Toulouse, to Bede and his continental successors Alcuin, Rabanus and Scotus Erigena. Huppé 's study of Christian poetry in the Old English vernacular is preceded by a glance at Christian poetry in Latin to elucidate its influence on vernacular practice through detailed analyses of several brief poems and of *Genesis A.* Finally, some concluding remarks are made on the implications of the theory for a systematic study of the body of Old English poetry.[32]

In '*The Riddle of Creation': Metaphor Structures in Old English Poetry,* Ruth Wehlau explores Creation through its metaphors relating to architecture and the body in Old

[29] John Gardner, *The Construction of Christian Poetry in Old English* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975).
[30] Paul Szarmack and Bernard Huppe (eds), *The Old English Homily and Its Backgrounds* (Albany: University of New York Press, 1978) 1.
[31] Bernard Huppé , *Doctrine and Poetry: Augustine's Influence on Old English Poetry* (Albany: State University of New York, 1959).
[32] Huppé , *Doctrine and Poetry*, 4.

English poetry. Her study is based on the assumption that individual poems participate in large networks of images that underlie all the poetry. She states that by choosing to read the poems in relation to one another, one develops a sense of this underlying pattern of images.[33] Wehlau does not explore the association between these metaphors and the eschatological themes in Old English poetry. The same assumption that metaphors based on a central image or theme form patterns in the poetry, however, will also form the basis for the present study. In *Christian Theology and Old English Poetry,* Chris Wilson explores the idea that Old English poetry is a part of the medieval allegorical tradition. He examines the interaction between allegory and theology in the elegies, *the Wanderer, the Seafarer* and the poems attributed to Caedmon and Cynewulf respectively.[34] He briefly alludes to the last judgement, though eschatology is not explored in any depth. The collection of essays in *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and Their Contexts,* edited by Paul Szarmach, focus on the substantial body of saints' lives in Anglo-Saxon literature, particularly the vernacular lives written or translated by Ælfric.[35] These essays do not undertake an analysis of Anglo-Saxon eschatology specifically. They do, however, explore the writings of Bede and Ælfric, who were influential in the development of Anglo-Saxon ideas with respect to the 'last things'. Their writings enable the eschatological themes in the literature to be contextualised.

In *Tradition and Belief: Religious Writing in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, Clare A. Lees explores the vernacular religious prose of Anglo-Saxon England – including sermons, homilies and saints' lives – from the tenth and eleventh centuries, particularly the works of Ælfric. She states that these institutional, ecclesiastical genres are the main evidence for the preaching mission of the later Anglo-Saxon church and hence for the way that it was both

[33] Ruth Wehlau, '*The Riddle of Creation': Metaphor Structures in Old English Poetry* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1997).
[34] Chris Wilson, *Christian Theology and Old English Poetry* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974).
[35] Paul E. Szarmach (ed),*Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and Their Contexts* (Albany: State University of New York, 1996).

constructed and received. She views this as evidence for a specific cultural process in which the traditional structures of the early medieval church – its institutional knowledge, its genres, and beliefs – combine to produce a new Anglo-Saxon formulation: preaching in English. This process shapes the overlapping ecclesiastical and secular worlds of late Anglo-Saxon England. Lees has three theoretical concerns. First, by re-contextualising preaching texts as evidence of cultural influences, she analyses preaching in Anglo-Saxon England as a powerful rhetorical, social, and epistemological process. She states that preaching draws on the religious and theological traditions of its age as the source of its knowledge. Preaching is also active; it is directed toward an audience or congregation and employs a distinctive aesthetic to achieve its goal. Second, by concentrating on Anglo-Saxon preaching, she restores to the mission of cultural studies two aspects of culture often neglected: the analysis of traditional formulations and analysis of religious belief. Third, Lees' general aim is to direct the focus of cultural studies toward the analysis of historical cultural processes, and thereby to complement its more dominant interest in popular and contemporary phenomena.[36] Lees' scholarship provides the critical background for understanding the association between cultural and religious beliefs in late Anglo-Saxon England. This association is significant to the present study as it enables a contextual analysis to be undertaken of the key eschatological ideas and their representation in Old English literature.

The collection of essays in *Apocryphal Texts and Traditions in Anglo-Saxon England* explores what constitutes an apocryphal text in Anglo-Saxon terms in order to evaluate the canonical texts and the traditions that relate to them.[37] While not all eschatological discourses stem from apocryphal texts, texts such as *The Apocalypse of Thomas* and *The Vision of St Paul* were known in Anglo-Saxon England. The present study will explore whether these

[36] Clare A. Lees. *Tradition and Belief: Religious Writing in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).
[37] Kathryn Powell and Donald Scragg (eds). *Apocryphal Texts and Traditions in Anglo-Saxon England* (Suffolk: D.S. Brewer, 2003).

apocryphal texts influence the representation of eschatological issues in the literature. In *Interactions of Thought and Language in Old English Poetry,* Peter Clemoes explores the poetry of the Anglo-Saxon aristocratic warrior society and the transformation of poetry after the advent of Christianity. The book is divided into these two sections accordingly. The latter surveys the changes that were implemented when the symbolic interactive mode of vernacular poetry became a branch of a narrative system with its centre beyond vernacular tradition. His principal themes in this section are the poets' adaptations to a more schematic network of ideas, alterations in their conceptions of the natural world, redefinition of individuality and establishment of a new system of personal responsibility interrelating human society and the spiritual realm of God.[38] The latter forms the basis for the present study as it will explore this new system of personal responsibility through the prevalent eschatological themes in the literature.

The core eschatological issues are consistent in all eschatological inquiries; however, the definition and interpretation of these issues vary considerably. These variations develop in response to Scripture and stem from a need to understand the future fate of humankind. The early Christian eschatological tradition evolved across various traditions and times. As such, the tradition contained elements that were not always consistent or concordant. The Anglo-Saxon understanding of the 'last things' develops within and in response to this tradition. In *The Hope of the Early Church*, Brian Daley undertakes a broad chronological survey of the development of the eschatological tradition during the Patristic period.[39] His analysis begins with the earliest Palestinian Christian communities and the apocalyptic hopes of salvation that were central to their faith. He then dedicates two chapters to each century, one for the east and one for the west up to the sixth-century. The basic premise of his

[38] Peter Clemoes, *Interactions of Thought and Language in Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
[39] Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

investigation is that the early Christian hope in salvation and development of eschatological ideas is inextricably linked to the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.[40] While Daley's survey does not extend to the Anglo-Saxon period, he does provide an in-depth overview of the eschatological tradition that influenced the development of Anglo-Saxon ideas with respect to the 'last things'. The collection of essays in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* trace the development of eschatological ideas from early Christian writers such as Augustine and Tyconius through to Dante's *Divine Comedy*.[41] Each essay explores the interpretation, representation, and application of the Apocalypse of St John in medieval culture, history, religion, art and literature. Similarly, the collection of essays in *Last Things: Death and Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* examines the way that eschatological attitudes changed over time. They explore the way that eschatological understanding influenced human experience.[42] The collection is divided into three sections: the first contains essays that explore the significance of death and the afterlife; the second relates to the timing and the specific events that will mark the world's advance toward Judgement Day; and the third contains three essays on the eschatological imagination in literature. The collection does not contain any reference to the Anglo-Saxon period; however, it does provide an overview of the development of eschatological ideas over time and in different cultures. These studies provide a general overview of key arguments in the development of the eschatological doctrine and tradition. Other scholars, however, explore specific eschatological issue in their studies. Charles E. Hill, for example, explores early Christian chiliasm, or millennialism, which refers to the ancient belief in a thousand-year reign of Christ and his saints between his return and Judgement Day. He contrasts this belief with what he terms "non-chiliasm", an

[40] Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, 4.
[41] Richard K. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn (ed), *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1992).
[42] Caroline Walker Bynum and Paul Freedman (ed) *Last Things: Death & the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) 1.

alternative interpretation of the primitive Christian hope that posits no such interval.[43] Similarly in *The Formation of Hell*, Alan E Bernstein traces the history of ideas of hell in the ancient and early Christian worlds.[44] He explores, in particular, the way that the concept of hell was formed and the way that this concept developed into a place of torment and punishment. Bernstein pursues his study up to the early Christian period and hence does not include the perception of hell after the fifth century. He does, however, provide considerable insight into the history and development of ideas that, in the Anglo-Saxon period, are associated with the punishment and eternal damnation or salvation of humankind. Anglo-Saxon writers refer to hell frequently as they explore eschatological issues and hence this study is particularly relevant.

From these studies it is evident that Anglo-Saxon ideas with respect to the 'last things' develop within and in response to a complex tradition. An in-depth analysis of this tradition, taking into consideration all the various arguments that developed in the early Christian period, is beyond the scope of the present study. A contextual analysis of the eschatological themes in Old English literature, however, must at least account for the prior traditions that influence the Anglo-Saxon understanding of the 'last things'. The transmission and development of eschatological arguments in the writings of Gregory the Great and the Venerable Bede are particularly relevant since their writings mediate the world of patristic theology and eschatological speculation to later Anglo-Saxon writers. Numerous scholars have explored the development of these arguments, and their scholarship forms the basis for the present study. In *Gregory the Great and his World*, R.A. Markus provides considerable insight into Gregory's world and thought.[45] Markus' study includes the following: Gregory's ministry in the Church, including both his contemplative and active life; his scriptural

[43] Charles E. Hill, *Regnum Caelorum: Patterns of Future Hope in Early Christianity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) 1.
[44] Alan E. Bernstein, *The Formation of Hell: Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.
[45] R.A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 40.

understanding and exegesis; and his conviction that the world had entered its last Age. Similarly in *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection*, Carole Straw undertakes an in-depth analysis of Gregory's life and writings.[46] Unlike Markus, who briefly alludes to Gregory's eschatological arguments, Straw explores Gregory's ideas on death, judgement and human destiny throughout her analysis, with specific examples from his writings. In addition to these fundamental issues, Straw also examines Gregory's thoughts on issues such as sin, the role of the devil, the imminence of the end, penance and the need to prepare actively for Judgement Day. These issues are also evident in Old English literature. While Straw provides a broad overview of Gregory's writings, Kevin L. Hester specifically explores Gregory's eschatology in his *Moralia in Iob.*[47] Hester argues that the two major themes in Gregory's *Moralia* are eschatology and the experience of pain, which are connected and reconciled in Gregory's imAge of Christ as judge. Hester's aim in undertaking this analysis is to highlight the underlying principle supporting these themes in Gregory's Christology.[48] This study includes the tradition that influences Gregory's Christology, his exegesis of Scripture, and an in-depth analysis of his *Moralia.* As such, this scholarship is invaluable to the present study as it helps to establish the essential theological background that influences the Anglo-Saxons.

The tradition that influences Gregory's ideas, the way that his arguments develop in response to this tradition, and the transmission and influence of these arguments on the Anglo-Saxon thought-world are significant in terms of exploring the deliberate use of eschatological themes in Old English literature. Anglo-Saxon authors, largely due to the influence of Bede's *History,* acknowledge Gregory's role in evangelizing their pagan forefathers and revere him as the father of Anglo-Saxon England. In this transmission, Bede functions as the link between the early Christian and Anglo-Saxon periods. In his article 'The

[46] Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
[47] Kevin Hester, *Eschatology and Pain in St Gregory the Great: The Christological Synthesis of Gregory's Morals on the Book of Job* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007) 40.
[48] Hester, *Eschatology and Pain*, 42.

Venerable Bede and Gregory the Great', Scott De Gregorio explores the spiritual affinity between the two writers and traces the influence of Gregory's writing on the development of Bede's ideas.[49] Gregory, together with other early Christian writers such as Augustine of Hippo, are also mentioned throughout the collection of essays edited by De Gregorio though the influence of the early Christian eschatological tradition is not explored in any depth.[50]

Unlike Gregory's writings, however, an in-depth analysis of Bede's eschatological arguments has not been undertaken by many scholars. Scholars do not generally study Bede as a prominent theologian but tend to focus instead on the historiography of his *Ecclesiastical History*.[51] The collection of essays in *Famulus Christi*, however, do acknowledge Bede as a prominent theologian. While these essays do not explore Bede's eschatology, they do provide considerable insight into Bede's world, his theology, and the influence of the early Christian tradition on the development of his thought.[52] In his article 'St Bede in the Tradition of Western Apocalyptic Commentary', Gerald Bonner explores the influence of Tyconius' writings on the Bede's *Commentary on the Apocalypse.*[53] In *The World of Bede*, Peter Hunter Blair also provides a broad overview of Bede's world and his writings. Blair does, however, include a chapter on Bede's arguments with respect to time including his calculations and arguments with respect to the return of Christ and end of earthly existence.[54] Similarly, in the introduction to her translation of Bede's *Reckoning of Time,* Faith Wallis also provides an overview of Bede's arguments with respect to the 'end times'.[55] This overview is helpful in understanding both the translated text and Bede's views overall. These views are explored

[49] Scott De Gregorio, 'The Venerable Bede and Gregory the Great: Exegetical Connections, Spiritual Departures' *Early Medieval Europe* (2010) 18:1 43-60.
[50] Scott De Gregorio (ed) *Innovation and Tradition in the Writings of the Venerable Bede* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2006).
[51] Bede. *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Colgrave, Bertram (ed). (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
[52] Gerald Bonner (ed), *Famulus Christi : essays in commemoration of the thirteenth centenary of the birth of the Venerable Bede* (London: S.P.C.K., 1976).
[53] Gerard Bonner, 'Saint Bede in the Tradition of Western Apocalyptic Commentary' *Church and Faith in the Patristic Tradition* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996) XII 1-29.
[54] Peter Hunter Blair, *The World of Bede* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1970) 259-71.
[55] Faith Wallis. Ed and Trans., *Bede: The Reckoning of Time* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999).

further in the comprehensive study by Peter Darby. In *Bede and the End of Time,* as the title suggests, Darby explores Bede's eschatological views with respect to the timing, signs, and events that will constitute Christ's return and judgement of humankind.[56] Darby provides a comprehensive assessment of Bede's ideas with respect to these issues and also positions Bede's views in relation to both Gregory the Great and the wider context of Bede's other theology. These studies are particularly relevant to the present study as they provide insight into the tradition that also influences the Anglo-Saxon understanding of eschatological issues.

The early Christian tradition forms the basis for the development of Anglo-Saxon eschatology. Simultaneously, however, the eschatological ideas evident in the literature are distinctly Anglo-Saxon. The unique contribution by the Anglo-Saxons to the history of eschatological thought has been explored in various studies. In *Heaven and Earth in Anglo-Saxon England,* Helen Foxhall-Forbes examines the relationship between Christianity and society in Anglo-Saxon England.[57] The aim of this study is to explore the way that the theology was transmitted from the scholarly and ecclesiastical context in which it developed to the broader application of this theology in the daily lives of Anglo-Saxon Christians. Similarly, this study also explores the reciprocal relationship between theology and society, particularly the way that social practices contributed to the development of the theology.[58] This comprehensive study contributes significantly to the understanding of Anglo-Saxon eschatology and sacramental theology. While Foxhall-Forbes focuses on the prose more than the poetry, the inclusion of key themes such as heaven, hell, penance, judgement, and sin makes this an invaluable resource, both to the present study and the understanding of Anglo-Saxon eschatology as a whole. In *Death and Dying in Later Anglo-Saxon England,* Victoria Thompson integrates different sources and methodology to demonstrate the underlying

[56] Peter Darby, *Bede and the End of Time* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2012).
[57] Helen Foxhall-Forbes, *Heaven and Earth in Anglo-Saxon England: Theology and Society in the Age of Faith* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013).
[58] Foxhall-Forbes, *Heaven and Earth,* 2.

coherence of the understanding of death and dying in Anglo-Saxon England. She explores ideas about the sacred, neutral and profane, the body and its boundaries, sexuality, the living, dying and dead, the present life in linear time and the future life beyond time. In particular, Thompson examines the way that these ideas continuously structured each other and the way that they affected social and cultural experience at every level.[59] In *Beasts of Time: Apocalyptic Beowulf*, Edward Risden explores the usefulness of the apocalyptic metaphor in *Beowulf*. His aim is to pull together related scholarship and offer a unique and relatively complete reading of the poem that lends support to the argument for the importance of certain themes and structures in the poem, as well as to trace the impact of Anglo-Saxon apocalyptic thought on *Beowulf.*[60]

In *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan,* Milton McC. Gatch explores the prose of Ælfric and Wulfstan as well as their place in the history of Christian thought and in the history of preaching. This study addresses two topics: the uses for which the Old English preaching materials were prepared; and, the theological method of the homilists, which has been addressed a number of times. The book is divided into three sections: the first is an introduction to Ælfric and Wulfstan, the second explores the uses of Old English sermons and the third explores the eschatology of Ælfric and Wulfstan. This is a valuable resource on eschatology in the homilies and forms the basis from which to explore eschatology in the poetry.[61] Similarly, *Eschatology and Christian Nurture: Themes in Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Religious Life* is a collection of essays also by Gatch that further adds to the topics covered in *Preaching and Theology*. These essays highlight Gatch's central preoccupation with eschatology, the doctrine of the 'last things', by which is meant the 'ultimate destiny' not only of the individual but also of creation. Gatch states in the

[59] Victoria Thompson, *Death and Dying in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodridge: Boydell Press, 2006).
[60] Edward Risden, *Beasts of Time: Apocalyptic Beowulf* (New York: P. Lang, 1994).
[61] Milton McC. Gatch, *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Aelfric and Wulfstan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977).

'introduction' that his aim is not only to understand the theological development of belief but also to explore the ways that belief "has been expressed in and impinged upon the life of Christians".[62] The collection consists of three general papers, including a review of eschatology in Christian theology from the beginnings to the Reformation, a survey of basic instruction given the laity in the Church of the Middle Ages, and reflections on the motif of the Harrowing of Hell. The remaining articles are on various aspects of Christian faith and practice in Anglo-Saxon England, including a chapter on Anglo-Saxon perceptions of eternity, the use of Apocrypha in the homilies, eschatology in the anonymous homilies, two papers on what the homilies and sermons tell us about the congregations who presumably heard them, the place of preaching texts from Anglo-Saxon England in European literary and religious history, a paper on the office in later Anglo-Saxon monasticism, and two papers on the Old English *Vision of Leofric*.[63] In both of these studies, Gatch undertakes a contextual analysis of the fundamental issues prevalent in Anglo-Saxon thought and culture that, at the time, were rarely noted by scholars. As such, his scholarship is critical to the present study and lays the foundation for exploring the eschatological issues in Old English literature.

In *Paradise, Death and Doomsday in Anglo-Saxon Literature,* Ananya Jahanara Kabir explores the rarely noted conjunction between paradise and the soul's condition in the interim between death and Judgement Day. She also pursues the use of techniques in the literary analyses and source-studies to trace the history of the interim paradise in Anglo-Saxon England. Her aim in tracing this history is also to understand some of the processes of the

[62] Milton McC. Gatch, *Eschatology and Christian Nurture: Themes in Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Religious Life* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorium, 2000) ii.
[63] Milton McC. Gatch, "I- Some Theological Reflections on Death from the Early Church through the Reformation", 99-136; "IV-The Anglo-Saxon Tradition", 225-234; "V-Perceptions of Eternity", 190-205; "VII-Eschatology in the Anonymous Old English Homilies", 117-165; "VIII- The Unknowable Audience of the Blickling Homilies", 99-115; "XIII- Piety and Liturgy in the Old English *Vision of Leofric*", 159-179 in *Eschatology and Christian Nurture: Themes in Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Religious Life* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2000).

production and consumption of literature in this period.[64] In terms of the present study, Kabir's scholarship provides considerable insight into the development of ideas with respect to the interim paradise as being distinct from heaven and as the potential destiny of individual souls. Furthermore, her methodology includes contrasting Apocryphal descriptions with Augustinian exegesis and undertaking an in-depth contextual analysis of Anglo-Saxon prose. This highlights the significant influence of the early Christian tradition on Old English literature as well as the way that Anglo-Saxon writers appropriated, modified, and explored these ideas in their writings. A similar methodological approach will be adopted for the present study in order to emphasise the way that Anglo-Saxon eschatological ideas developed within and in response to the established tradition. In '*DIUIDUNTOR IN QUATTUOR:* The Interim and Judgement in Anglo-Saxon England*',* Helen Foxhall-Forbes explores the division of souls in the afterlife. She seeks to clarify and explore some of these divisions as they were explored in the works of Boniface, Bede, Ælfric and Goscelin.[65] She explores, in particular, evidence in these writings of an interim paradise in the vision literature of the period and the tradition that influenced them. These studies by Kabir and Forbes are significant as they reveal the Anglo-Saxon understanding with respect to the fate of the soul between death and Judgement Day. While the interim period between death and Judgement Day is beyond the scope of this thesis, these studies highlight key aspects of theological argument and form the basis for further study.

Further to this scholarship, Karma Davey Lochrie's unpublished dissertation "Judgement and Spiritual Apocalypse in Old English Eschatological Poetry" is particularly relevant to the present study.[66] In this dissertation, Lochrie explores the themes of judgement

[64] Ananya Jahanara Kabir. *Paradise, Death and Doomsday in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[65] Helen Foxhall Forbes, '*DIUIDUNTUR IN QUATTUOR:* The Interim and Judgement in Anglo-Saxon England' *The Journal of Theological Studies* NS, 61:2 (Oct 2010).
[66] Karma Davey Lochrie, "Judgement and Spiritual Apocalypse in Old English Eschatological Poetry." PhD Diss. Princeton University, 1981.

and spirituality in the Old English poems *Judgement Day I, Judgement Day II,* and *Christ III.* Her aim in this study is to refute the common scholarly argument that the poets "were primarily concerned with instilling fear in their audiences by means of sensational description and undisguised didacticism".[67] She argues, instead, that the poets initially instil fear and dread into the audience in order to dislodge man's love of the temporal world to render him receptive to God's love. She also states that God's judgement is the last in a series of "self-judgements" that the individual soul performs on itself. This, she states, is the purpose of the vivid descriptions of the horrors of the world's destruction and of Judgement Day.[68] Lochrie's scholarship is useful in developing the argument of the present study and for exploring the Anglo-Saxon treatment of eschatological issues in the literature. In 'Reconstructing the Old English Cultural Model of Fear', Javier E. Diaz Vera explores the cultural conceptualizations of fear in Old English texts. His analysis includes the definition and "onomasiological" arrangement of fear terms, a weighing of words and determination of their relative relevance, and a determination of their literalness within the scale "literal meaning-metonymy-metaphor".[69] This study provides considerable insight into the terms for fear in Old English literature and enables Lochrie's ideas to be contextualised. The present study will examine the use of vivid descriptions in the poetry in order to encourage the 'self-judgement' of the individual soul in order to understand the writers' overall purpose. This will provide considerable insight into the way that the poets conceptualise individual responsibility and emphasise the need to prepare actively for Judgement Day. This study, however, will also expand on Lochrie's arguments by examining this concept of 'self-judgement' in relation to other fundamental issues evident in a range of Old English poetry and prose.

[67] Lochrie, "Judgement and Spiritual Apocalypse" 2.
[68] Lochrie, "Judgement and Spiritual Apocalypse" 3.
[69] Javier E. Diaz Vera, 'Reconstructing the Old English Cultural Model of Fear', *Atlantis: Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies* 33:1 (June 2011): 85-103.

In *The Judgement Day Theme in Old English Poetry,* Graham Caie explores the themes of glory and judgement in the poems *Judgement Day I, Judgement Day II, and Christ III.* The aim of Caie's study is to examine whether the Old English word *dom* can refer to the pagan consolation of worldly fame and to the Christian concept of God's judgement, which, if favourable, will unite the believer with God's glory.[70] His in-depth analysis of these poems reveals the way that the language of the heroic warrior ideal enables the poets to conceptualise and emphasise the Christian ideal of eternal glory in Christ. The way that the poets appropriate the imagery and language of an aristocratic warrior culture towards their purpose of emphasising active preparation for Judgement Day also reveals the links between the traditional eschatological issues and various other themes in the literature. As such, Caie's scholarship forms the basis for exploring these links and expanding the present study beyond the treatment of traditional eschatological issues by the writers.

The treatments of Judgement Day and subsequent fate of humankind in the literature are explicit representations of the writers' eschatological concerns. These representations, however, also reveal various other themes that also provide considerable insight with respect to the conceptualisation of individual responsibility. These include the use of the psychomachia allegory as well as the treatment of sin, the devil, penance, reward and punishment in the literature. Various scholars focus on these individual themes and their scholarship informs the present study. In *Allegories of War: Language and Violence in Old English Poetry,* John P Hermann explores the relationship between violence and spirituality in the Old English poetry. Hermann divides this study into two parts. The first explores the literary modes of personification and exegetical allegory that form the background for his arguments. The second part explores the use of allegory as a hermeneutic mode for uncovering the spiritual significance of battle narratives in the poems *Exodus, Elene,*

[70] Graham Caie, *The Judgement Day Theme in Old English Poetry* (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 1976).

Andreas, *Juliana*, and *Judith.*[71] Similarly in *Soldier Saints and Holy Warriors: Warfare and Sanctity in the Literature of Early England*, John Edward Damon explores the spiritual warfare exemplified in the hagiographic narratives of Anglo-Saxon England. Damon traces the history of the 'Soldier of Christ' motif from its Latin origins and focuses on the Old English prose narratives. Damon states that this motif follows the new model of heroism exemplified in the Gospel accounts of Christ. He states that Christ represents the ascendancy of peaceful resistance, self-sacrifice, humility and spiritual integrity over armed combat, personal gain, pride in prowess and material victory.[72]

By following this model, the individual Christian embodies the soldier of Christ and undertakes the spiritual battle against the devils that attack the soul. In 'The Soldier of Christ in Old English Prose and Poetry', Joyce Hill explores the significance of the *miles Christi*, or solider of Christ, motif in Old English literature. Her aim is not only to define the general tradition available to the writers from patristic and Anglo-Latin writings but also to define the vernacular expression of the imagery in order to determine the details and vocabulary are adopted by the writers.[73] The Soldier of Christ and the psychomachia allegory represent the life of the Christian as a constant battle against evil and sin. Despite this, however, they are not generally associated with the treatment of eschatological issues in the literature. As such, neither Hermann nor Damon explore these themes in relation to Judgement Day or the subsequent destiny of humankind after God's judgement. The psychomachia allegory, however, is an effective rhetorical device in conceptualising the responsibility of the individual and emphasising the need to prepare actively for Christ's return. The present study will expand on the scholarship of Hermann and Damon by examining the link between the

[71] John P Hermann, *Allegories of War: Language and Violence in Old English Poetry* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1989).
[72] John Edward Damon, Soldier Saints and Holy Warriors: Warfare and Sanctity in the Literature of Early England (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003) 2.
[73] Joyce Hill, 'The Soldier of Christ in Old English Prose and Poetry' *Leeds Studies in English* 12 (1981), 57.

representation of spiritual conflict and the treatment of eschatological themes in Old English literature.

The psychomachia allegory emphasises the need for every individual to play the part of the soldier of Christ and arm themselves with spiritual weapons against the spiritual warfare that threatens the salvation of the soul. The motif develops from the metaphoric and allegorical images of war that permeate the Bible and are most fully articulated in Ephesians 6 attributed to St Paul. This Epistle describes the metaphorical strength of the soul against spiritual adversaries by putting on the "armour of God", which includes the "breastplate of justice" and the "shield of faith". This is a well-known passage from his epistle to the Ephesians, in which Paul offers an allegory of Christian virtues that represents each with a different piece of Roman legionary arms and armour.[74] Despite this, however, scholars tend to explore the significance of the allegory independently from the eschatological issues prevalent in Old English literature. The two are not mutually exclusive. Rather, the psychomachia allegory is an effective rhetorical device that enables the writers to conceptualise the responsibility of the individual and emphasise the need to prepare actively for Judgement Day. This is further articulated in the representation of the devils that are key figures in this spiritual warfare. In *Satan Unbound: The Devil in Old English Narrative,* Peter Dendle undertakes an in-depth contextual analysis of the devil as a recurring and significant character in Old English narrative literature. He explores the way that the representation of the devil, or devils, in Old English literature enables the writers to be flexible. He argues that the devil performs a range of narrative and thematic functions that often do not have anything to do with human sin. Rather, Dendle states, the devil's functions include disrupting harmony and narrative equilibrium, commenting from the sidelines and providing an alternative perspective to the viewpoints expressed by the characters. He further states that the conflict

[74] Ephesians 6:10-17. All references to the Bible are from *The Holy Bible: The New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989). From herein references to books of the Bible will be cited standard biblical format. This reference, for example, Eph. 6:10-17.

between the saint and the devil in hagiographic narratives, in particular, is an ontological symbol of the boundaries between holy and unholy.[75] Dendle's scholarship is significant to the present study as it introduces thematic aspects of Old English literature that are not generally explored by scholars in association with traditional eschatological issues. The present study, therefore, will expand on Dendle's scholarship by exploring whether the character of the devil contributes to the conceptualisation of individual responsibility with respect to Judgement Day.

Unlike Dendle, other scholars rarely focus directly on the representation of sin in Old English literature. In 'The Sun Shall be turned to Darkness and the Moon to Blood', on the one hand, Thomas J. Hefferman explores the transmission of the idea in the Transfiguration homily that sin diminished the light in the heavens. By sin, Hefferman is referring to the Original Sin of Adam that "infected all creation" and "dimmed the brightness of the sun and moon."[76] He argues that the Transfiguration homily provides considerable insight into the complex relationship between sin and the natural, which, in Anglo-Saxon period, is also a moral world. Hefferman's focus is exclusively on the effect of Original Sin on the natural world and he does not explore this effect beyond the Transfiguration homily. He does, however, establish the link between sin and the natural world that is also evident in the eschatological themes that dominate Old English literature. This link is particularly significant to Anglo-Saxon ideas with respect to the transience of earthly existence as well as in terms of the signs that will mark the return of Christ and are directly related to human sin. In 'Suicide in the Works of Ælfric', Mary Clayton, on the other hand, explores Ælfric's views on the temporal and eternal consequences for the individual who has committed the sin of suicide. She states that, while evidence with respect to suicide is sparse between the sixth

[75] Peter Dendle, *Satan Unbound: The Devil in Old English Narrative Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003) 3.
[76] Thomas J. Hefferman, "The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood': How sin and redemption effect heavenly space in an Old English Transfiguration homily," in *Place, Space, and Landscape in Medieval Narrative in "Tennessee Studies in Literature,"* ed., Laura Howes, (University of Tennessee: Knoxville, 2007).

century and the end of the millennium, suicide is of interest to Ælfric and the scattered references in his writings provide considerable evidence as to his thoughts on the issue.[77] Ælfric, like many early Christian writers, considered suicide to be a heinous crime and an abominable sin against God. The consequence for the individual who has committed suicide, therefore, is eternal damnation without exception, with no possibility of repentance or mitigating prayers from the living. Clayton's scholarship is significant as references to suicide in Anglo-Saxon sources, and consequently in studies examining these sources, are limited or non-existent. Her study also reveals the types of sins that will be condemned without judgement upon Christ's return and provides a concrete example to Forbes' study above of the division of souls in the afterlife. In terms of the present study, Clayton's scholarship reveals the contrast between the sins that can and cannot be repented in preparation for Judgement Day. This contrast is critical to the conceptualisation of individual responsibility with respect to both judgement and the subsequent fate of the individual after the end of earthly existence.

The concept and understanding of sin is fundamental to articulating the responsibility of the individual with respect to Judgement Day. While understanding sin is necessary in order to prepare actively for Christ's return, Anglo-Saxon writers do not generally define sin specifically when they explore eschatological themes in the literature, particularly in the poetry. This information, however, is not entirely absent in Anglo-Saxon sources. The handbooks of penance, also known as penitentials, contain a list of sins and subsequent punishments. In *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England,* Allen J. Frantzen explores the way that these handbooks function as a guide for the priest in hearing confession and prescribing acts of atonement proportionate to the offences. He argues that the key functions of the penitentials are to reduce "complex situations to clearly formulated

[77] Mary Clayton, 'Suicide in the Works of Aelfric', *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, 60:245, 341.

generalisations about human behaviour" and to provide clear examples with respect to the benefits of conforming to the truths contained in them.[78] Frantzen does not attempt to explore the full historical, sociological and literary meaning of penitentials and penance. He does, however, undertake a contextual analysis of the sources themselves and explores the textual problems that they raise as well as their relevance to Anglo-Saxon literature generally. In 'Bishops, Priests and Penance in late Saxon England', Catherine Cubitt expands on Frantzen's scholarship and examines the evidence for penitential practice in late Saxon England. She states that, on the one hand, the linguistic and textual evidence indicates that penance is a key aspect of lay piety while, on the other hand, manuscript evidence suggests that penitentials are linked to canon law as they are used by bishops.[79] In 'An Old English Penitential Motif', M.R. Godden explores a particular motif that is rare in Latin works but in wide circulation in Old English literature, particularly in the penitential homilies. The motif, Godden states, is as follows:

> It is better to be shamed for one's sins before one man (the confessor) in this life than to be shamed before God and before all angels and before all men and before all devils at the Last Judgement.[80]

Godden concludes that the representation of this motif in Old English literature provides considerable insight into modes of composition and relations between texts, the primarily Anglo-Saxon character of the motif, and, most importantly, the relationship between two central concerns in the Old English penitential genre –exhortation to repentance warning about future judgement. In 'Public Penance in Anglo-Saxon England', Brad Bedingfield explores whether the practice of public penance is also part of the penitential tradition in Anglo-Saxon England. He examines the evidence to determine the extent of public penance

[78] Allen J. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1983) 12.
[79] Catherine Cubitt, 'Bishops, Priests and Penance in Late Saxon England' *Early Medieval Europe* 14:1 (2006) 41-63.
[80] M.R. Godden, 'An Old English Penitential Motif' *Anglo-Saxon England* 2 (1973) 222.

and the form of this public penance compared to private penance in this period.[81] In 'The 'Baptism of Tears' in Early Anglo-Saxon Sources', T. O'Loughlin and H. Conrad-O'Briain explore the prevalence of the penitential-tears motif in Old English literature. They explore the motif in terms of both the individual's penitential tears for their own sins and the concept of penitential tears for the sins of others.[82] All these studies reveal that penance, whether public or private, is a key aspect of and inextricably linked to the eschatological themes evident in Old English literature. The present study will expand on the findings by these scholars and explore the way that the practice of penance contributes to the conceptualisation of individual responsibility and preparation for Christ's return.

The penitentials prescribe the means for the individual to atone for sins and to prepare actively for Judgement Day. This active preparation also functions to counteract the apocalyptic expectations and fear of the events that will mark the end of earthly existence. The essays in *The Apocalyptic Year 1000* explore the apocalyptic expectations in the cultures and communities around the first millennium.[83] Within this collection, two essays explore the Anglo-Saxon perspectives with respect to the millennium and hence are particularly relevant to the present study. In 'Millennium, Time and History for the Anglo-Saxons', Malcolm Godden explores the apocalyptic arguments in the writings of Ælfric and Wulfstan. He argues that there are two contradictory perspectives in these writings: first, the Augustinian perspective that declares that the precise date and time of Christ's return cannot be determined or known; and, on the other hand, the more urgent sense that the judgement of humankind and end of earthly existence is imminent.[84] In 'Satan's Bonds are Extremely

[81] Brad Bedingfield, 'Public Penance in Anglo-Saxon England' *Anglo-Saxon England* 31 (2002) 223-255.
[82] T. O'Loughlin and H. Conrad-O'Briain, 'The 'baptism of tears' in Early Anglo-Saxon Sources' *Anglo-Saxon England* 22 (1993) 65-83.
[83] Richard Landes, Andrew Gow, and David C. Van Meter (eds) *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change 950-1050* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
[84] Malcolm Godden, 'Millennium, Time, and History for the Anglo-Saxons' in Richard Landes, Andrew Gow, and David C. Van Meter (eds) *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change 950-1050* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 155-180.

Loose', William Prideaux-Collins argues that there was a heightened apocalyptic anxiety as well as an increased interest in biblical prophecy and doomsday-prediction schemes in Anglo-Saxon England around this time.[85] In 'The Final Countdown: Apocalyptic Expectations in Anglo-Saxon Charters', Rolf H. Bremmer contradicts this view and states that in the Anglo-Saxon charters, there is a considerable lack of concern with respect to the millennium. He argues that there is no allusion in the charters to the apocalyptic end of earthly existence and the fear associated with Christ's return is "given no official foothold."[86] The timing and imminence of Judgement Day are fundamental concerns to early Christian writers. Anglo-Saxon writers, particularly the poets, however, do not attempt to predict or calculate the specific timing of Christ's return. Rather, they maintain the orthodox view that the timing of Judgement Day cannot be determined. The writers do, however, illustrate the mutability and transience of earthly existence and the passage of time in order to highlight further the responsibility of the individual with respect to their fate after Christ's judgement. In 'The *Ubi Sunt* Motif and the Soul-and-Body Legend', Claudia Di Sciacca explores the sources for the relationship between the *ubi sunt* motif and the soul-and-body legend. She argues that the writers of the anonymous homilies adopt this motif in order to highlight the transience of the temporal world.[87] In 'Time and Eternity in the Anglo-Saxon Elegies', John Dennis Grosskopf explores the Anglo-Saxon concern with the passage of time in the *Wanderer* and *Seafarer* poems. He argues that these poems provide insight into the Anglo-Saxon strategies for dealing with the passage of time.[88] In 'Discourse and Ideology in the Old

[85] William Prideaux-Collins, '"Satan's Bonds are Extremely Loose": Apocalyptic Expectation in Anglo-Saxon England during the Millennial Era' in Richard Landes, Andrew Gow, and David C. Van Meter (eds) *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change 950-1050* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 189-310.
[86] Rolf H. Bremmer, 'The Final Countdown: Apocalyptic Expectations in Anglo-Saxon Charters' in Gerhard Jaritz and Gerson Moreno-Riano (eds) *Time and Eternity: The Medieval Discourse* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2003) 501-514.
[87] Claudia Di Sciacca, ' The *Ubi Sunt* Motif and the Soul-and-Body Legend in Old English Homilies: Sources and Relationships' *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* (2006) 365-387.
[88] John Dennis Grosskopf, 'Time and Eternity in the Anglo-Saxon Elegies' in Gerhard Jaritz and Gerson Moreno-Riano (eds) *Time and Eternity: The Medieval Discourse* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2003) 324-330.

English ‘The Wanderer’: Time and Eternity’, Juan Camilo Conde-Silvestre explores the textual construction of time and eternity in the *Wanderer*. He explores, in particular, the themes of exile and the *ubi sunt* motif in the poem as well as the contrast between the Christian linear passage of time and the pagan cyclical passage of time evident in the poem.[89] These studies reveal inconsistencies in Anglo-Saxon literature with respect to apocalyptic expectations and the passage of time. These inconsistencies imply that the ‘imminence’ of Christ’s return in the literature is an effective rhetorical device that substantiates the writers’ emphasis of the need to prepare actively for Judgement Day. The present study will explore the evidence in the literature with respect to these apocalyptic expectations and the Anglo-Saxon perspectives with respect to time and eternity. This evidence will then be contextualised with respect to the eschatological issues that dominate the literature to determine whether the timing of Christ’s return is significant in terms of the active preparation for this return.

By exploring eschatological issues in the literature, Anglo-Saxon writers are able to conceptualise the responsibility of the individual and emphasise the need to prepare actively for Judgement Day. While scholars do not explore Old English literature in this context, their studies on key aspects of Anglo-Saxon thought form the basis for exploring the writers with respect to eschatological issues in the literature. The aim of the present study is to undertake a contextual analysis of the treatment of these issues that includes an in-depth analysis of all the issues identified in this overview. This will expand on current scholarship and enable a more comprehensive examination of the eschatological issues evident in Old English literature.

[89] Juan Camilo Conde-Silvestre, ‘Discourse and Ideology in the Old English ‘the Wanderer’: Time and Eternity’ Gerhard Jaritz and Gerson Moreno-Riano (eds) *Time and Eternity: The Medieval Discourse* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2003) 331-353.

Chapter 2: Two Preachers and a Millennium

The treatments of eschatological issues in the writings of Ælfric and Wulfstan reveal a single distinct purpose. As preachers, Ælfric and Wulfstan have a profound understanding of their pastoral responsibilities and are not interested in a merely rhetorical interpretation of Scripture. Rather, they seek to inspire the individual, the community, and the Church to moral reflection and repentance in anticipation of Christ's return, his judgement of humankind, and the end of earthly existence. As such, their treatment of eschatological issues is highly selective and relates specifically to their present time. As preachers conscious that they were living towards the end of the first millennium, the issues that draw their attention relate specifically to the timing, signs, and events that will signal the return of Christ. The issues themselves derive from the Gospel accounts, but Ælfric and Wulfstan are also influenced by the complex and varied traditions that developed in the early Christian period, particularly in the writings of Augustine of Hippo, Gregory the Great, and the Venerable Bede. The questions that remain, however, are whether Ælfric and Wulfstan are actually responding to the approaching end of the millennium as a critical historical/theological juncture or whether it offers them a rhetorical device to elicit an active response from their audience. Furthermore, given the influence of the early Christian tradition on their understanding of last things, are their concerns, attitudes, arguments and treatments entirely their own, or are they simply reiterating the views of their predecessors and relying on the authority of the Latin Fathers to substantiate their arguments?

The general consensus amongst scholars is that Anglo-Saxon writers such as Ælfric and Wulfstan are conservative in their arguments and do not contribute anything original to the history of eschatological discourse.[1] As such, scholars have not explored the eschatological themes in Old English literature extensively, particularly as a calculated device

[1] Gatch, *Preaching and Theology* , 4-5.

adopted by the writers. Even Milton McC. Gatch, whose work on Ælfric and Wulfstan forms the basis for exploring these issues, describes their eschatological thought as "profoundly conservative, traditional and even unoriginal" but at the same time "so original" that their authorship cannot be mistaken.[2] His first observation, that is that Ælfric and Wulfstan are "conservative, traditional and unoriginal", is not entirely without merit, at least on the surface. The treatment of and attitudes towards eschatological issues in their writings, while they stem from the Gospel accounts in the New Testament, also appear to reflect, almost identically, the arguments, attitudes, and intentions of early Christian writers such as Augustine, Gregory, and Bede, whom they repeatedly translate in their texts.

Ælfric and Wulfstan themselves acknowledge their free use of these early Christian writers. Ælfric, for example, devotes an entire homily in the *First Series* of his *Catholic Homilies* to acknowledge and emphasise his reverence for Gregory that is rooted in his awareness of Gregory's role in the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons. Ælfric states that "he is rihtlice engliscre ðeode Apostol.for ðan ðe þurh his ræd.and sande us fram deofles biggengum ætbræd.and to godes geleafan gebigde".[3] Reverence for Gregory is not unique to Ælfric but is also evident in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Bede states that "it is through his [Gregory's] zeal that our English nation was brought from the bondage of Satan to the faith in Christ".[4] The similarity between these two statements does not make Ælfric 'unoriginal' either. Rather, the common sentiment and reverence for Gregory stems from the mutual affection and concern for the spiritual welfare of the English people that they all share. Their concern, in particular, reinforces their pastoral responsibility to ensure that the English people remain steadfast in Christian faith and that they do not regress back into the

[2] Gatch, *Preaching and Theology*, 128.
[3] "he is rightly the apostle of the English for he, through his counsel and mission, took us away from worship of the devil and turned us to belief in God." Malcolm Godden (ed). *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series Text*, EETS, SS 5, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), lines 3-6. All references to *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies* will be in the abbreviated format CHI for *The First Series* and CHII for *The Second Series* followed by homily and line numbers. For this citation, for example, *CHII* 9.3-6.
[4] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, 98.

"bondage of Satan" or "worship of the devil" that Gregory saved them from, especially as the accounting of the years Bede invented was about to reach a dramatic and significant number. Despite their common reverence for Gregory, Ælfric and Wulfstan draw on the arguments of their various authorities in specific contexts, and the differences between their treatments of eschatological issues are just as significant as the similarities between them.

Eschatology is the theological concern with death, judgement and human destiny, collectively referred to as 'last things' as it constitutes the end of the linear progression of time that began at Creation. It is also a theology of hope that allows Christians to look towards the future where God's intentions will be revealed and where the promise of everlasting life with God is fulfilled. This hope, however, takes on various forms and is highly dependent on the specific context in which it develops. A society that experiences frequent calamities, such as war, plague, and invasion for example, is more likely to have an urgent expectation that Christ's return is imminent than a group of people living in relative peace and prosperity. This, together with the speculative and varied interpretation of both Scripture and the theories of early Christian writers, leads to faith in the scriptural promise that Christ will return but also confusion with respect to the specific details of this return. In turn, this leads to a desire to resolve ambiguities and provide clarity around the timing, signs, and events of Christ's return as well as the future fate of humankind after judgement. The need to address inconsistencies in Scripture is even more urgent when the trials of earthly existence continue unabated and the expected signs of Christ's return are not evident. The core issues that emerge relate not only to death and judgement but also to the nature of the soul, the human capacity for free will and subsequent accountability for sin, the specific timing, signs, and events that herald the return of Christ, the responsibility of the individual, and the nature of the eternal state that humankind will subsequently enter. For Ælfric and Wulfstan, such issues, while important, are not of primary concern. Instead, the Anglo-Saxon

homilists prioritise issues that they consider relevant to their present time and that support their purpose in emphasising the need to prepare spiritually for Christ's return. In this regard, the timing, signs, and events surrounding Judgement Day that they point to in their texts are intended to encourage present repentance more than to predict future events.

Ælfric and Wulfstan inherit, and have to contend with, a complex and varied tradition with respect to the timing of Christ's return. This complexity is evident in their writings but also in their highly selective treatment of eschatological issues. Throughout their writings, for example, Ælfric and Wulfstan emphasise the imminence of Christ's return, at which he will judge humankind and bring an end to earthly existence. This emphasis stems from their consistent conviction that the world is in its 'last Age'; a conviction that is reinforced by events in the world around them, particularly in the unstable politics of Æthelred's reign. As preachers living around the end of the first millennium of the Common Era, Ælfric and Wulfstan also have to address speculation in relation to the anticipated return of Christ in or around the millennial year 1000CE. At the same time, however, both Ælfric and Wulfstan are reluctant to specify any exact date and time of Christ's return. These issues do not differ significantly from the issues explored by early Christian writers, nor are they mutually exclusive in eschatological discourse. Rather, the understanding that the world is in the 'last Age' forms the basis for calculations with respect to the timing of Christ's return and to the millennial expectation that the world will end after a thousand years. The early Christian tradition of scriptural exegesis and speculation with respect to the timing of Christ's return evolved across various traditions and times. As such, the tradition contained elements that were not always consistent or concordant. An in-depth analysis of this tradition, taking into consideration all the various arguments, speculations, and calculations with respect to Christ's return, is beyond the scope of this chapter. A contextual analysis of the arguments in the writings of Ælfric and Wulfstan, however, must at least account for the prior traditions

that influence their understanding. The transmission and development of ideas with respect to the timing of Christ's return in the writings of Augustine, Gregory, and Bede are particularly relevant as their influence is explicitly evident in Ælfric and Wulfstan's treatments of these issues. Both Ælfric and Wulfstan work within the tradition attributed to Augustine that is then further developed by Gregory and Bede.

Wulfstan's treatment of eschatological issues deliberately and carefully pursues a direct objective: that is, to prepare his audience for the return of Christ, the subsequent judgement of humankind, and the end of earthly existence. In his homilies, his single purpose is moral reform that is emphasised in his detailed accounts of the persecution by Antichrist that will precede them. These persecutions are the central focus of his eschatological homilies and all other eschatological issues are treated in relation to the reign of Antichrist. This is a deliberate rhetorical tactic on Wulfstan's part and is fundamental to his methodology in preparing his audience for judgement. It is also a most drastically historicized account of the last times that provides considerable insight into not only his primary concerns and objectives but also into the political and social situation that characterises his world. According to Joyce Tally Lionarons, the centrality of Antichrist in Wulfstan's preaching and writings stems from his belief that this persecution is the only sign of the end that can and must be resisted actively.[5] It also reveals that Wulfstan's primary concern is the spiritual wellbeing of the English people and that he has a profound understanding of his pastoral responsibility towards his audience. This responsibility includes not only preparing his audience for Christ's future return and judgement but also enabling them to make sense of their suffering in the present. As Clare Lees states in *Tradition and Belief*, "awareness of the eschatological future governs the moral understanding of the present".[6] For Wulfstan, this "awareness" means that he is less concerned with either a rhetorical interpretation of Scripture or with the

[5] Joyce Tally Lionarons, *The Homiletic Writings of Archbishop Wulfstan*, (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2010) 49.
[6] Lees, *Tradition and Belief*, 79.

specific details of the numerous and varied arguments with respect to key eschatological issues. He is, however, concerned with the practical application of these issues that enables him to contextualise events around him within a moral framework and to emphasise the need to prepare actively for Christ's impending judgement.

According to R.A. Markus, Christians have referred to the time between the first and second advent of Christ as the last Age.[7] The notion of the world's Ages stems from late Jewish tradition which developed a linear conception of time that begins at the Creation and ends in some final scene of God's judgement of human conduct.[8] Early Christians, driven by a need to adjust the earliest Christians' expectations of Christ's imminent return as the wait for it grew more protracted, devised various methods and calculations to determine the chronology of the world based on the events outlined in Scripture. By synthesisng the biblical history of the world into a coherent chronology, early Christian writers hoped to calculate accurately the timing of Christ's return and to anticipate the sequence of events that will herald the imminent judgement of humankind and end of earthly existence. According to the tradition attributed to Augustine, the chronology of the world, based on the evidence in Scripture, can be divided into six Ages, of which five have already occurred and the present sixth Age is yet to end. The division of Christian chronology into six Ages, however, is not unique to Augustine. Rather, Augustine works within and develops the chronology established by Eusebius of Caesarea. Augustine adopts Eusebius' synchronisation of eras but reduces his pre-Christian Ages to five instead of six.[9] The sixth Age, according to Augustine, began at the birth of Christ and will end on Christ's return. The significance of Augustine's chronology is the analogy he draws between the six Ages of the world with both the six days

[7] R.A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
[8] Exploring the development of eschatological thought from the Old to the New Testaments is beyond the scope of this thesis. See Donald Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament* (London: T & T Clark, 2000, Charles, Robert Henry Charles, *Eschatology: The Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, Judaism, and Christianity: A Critical History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1963) and Hans Schwarz, *Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000) 31-60.
[9] Faith Wallis, 'Commentary', *Bede, The Reckoning of Time*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999) 356.

of Creation and the sixAges of human life. While the association between the six Ages of the world and the days of Creation is common in patristic literature, Augustine elaborates this analogy considerably. According to his reckoning, each Age, like a day, has a morning, a noontide, and an evening; that is, each Age has a bright beginning, a zenith, and a troubled period of decline into darkness. In terms of the analogy between the six Ages and the stages of human life, Augustine identifies the first Age with infancy, the second with childhood, the third with adolescence, the fourth to young adulthood, the fifth to adulthood, and the sixth to old age.

Unlike other early Christian writers, however, Augustine does not develop his chronology in order to calculate the specific timing of Christ's return. On the contrary, Augustine is adamant that the timing of Judgement Day is known only to God and cannot be predicted by human calculation. In order to support his arguments in this regard, Augustine cites Acts 1:7, which states "it is not for you to know the times and seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority", and Matthew 24:36, which states "but of the day and hour, no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." For Augustine, attempts to calculate the exact time of Christ's return ignore Scriptural injunction and are thus contrary to the practice of true faith. The faithful Christian, he argues, should patiently await the return of Christ by persevering in the faith and rejoicing at the prospect of his return, whenever this might occur. Augustine does not, therefore, attempt to calculate the specific timing of Christ's return and remains agnostic and dismissive of the millennial expectation that Christ will return to judge humankind after a thousand years, or that there will be a thousand-year reign of Christ and his saints that will end on Judgement Day.[10] The expectation of a thousand-year reign stems from a literal interpretation of Revelation 20 in the New Testament, which states that an angel from heaven will bind Satan for a thousand

[10] Charles E. Hill, *Regnum Cælorum: Patterns of Future Hope in Early Christianity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) 1.

years (20:2). During this time, the saints will reign with Christ on earth (20:6) and after a thousand years Satan will be unleashed (20:7). In turn, this will signal Christ's return to judge humankind according to the book of life and anyone whose name is not recorded in the book will be "cast into the pool of fire" (20:15). In *The City of God,* Augustine states that the thousand-year reign referred to in Revelation 20 is symbolic of "the whole period of this world's history, signifying the entirety of time by a perfect number".[11] Augustine's model, including his chronology of the world, his interpretation of the thousand-year reign, and his reluctance to specify or speculate about the specific timing of Christ's return, forms the basis for the treatment of these issues in the writings of Gregory, Bede, Ælfric and Wulfstan.

Gregory's primary objective in developing his eschatology is to prepare the individual, the community and the Church for Christ's return and the subsequent end of earthly existence: the same objective that informs the treatment of eschatological issues in the writings of Ælfric and Wulfstan. This objective stems from Gregory's unfaltering conviction that the return of Christ and his judgement of humankind were in his own time imminent. As a result, there is an intensity and sense of urgency in his works that is not evident in the writings of Augustine. According to R.A. Markus, this difference can be attributed to the different social, political, and intellectual contexts within which Augustine and Gregory develop their eschatological arguments. Augustine, Markus states, develops his eschatology in a complex social context that embraces both Christian and non-Christian elements, where Christians had to deal with the fall of the Roman Empire and recriminations from pagans for the crisis, and where Christian doctrine requires definition, is speculative and constantly debated.[12] Augustine's aim, therefore, is to define Christianity in a way that will enable clear distinctions to be made between Christians and non-Christians as well as to establish Christian doctrine in response to and against the Pelagian, Donatist, and Manichean ideas and

[11] Augustine, *City of God,* 20:7.
[12] Markus, *Gregory the Great,* 40.

arguments.[13] Gregory, on the other hand, develops his eschatological arguments in a far more homogeneous context where Christianity has come to define the social, political, and intellectual climate.[14] Gregory is not worried about any reversion to old Roman paganism or that any would dispute or contradict his Christian premises. As such, he is able to focus his attention on his own Christian present and identify the crises around him as signs that the end of the world is imminent. While Augustine's arguments form the basis for Gregory's understanding of these issues, the intensity evident in his treatment of these issues highlights the significant shift in emphasis between the two writers. Their similarities, however, provide sufficient evidence of the direct transmission and influence of Augustine's thought on the development of Gregory's ideas, particularly in how Gregory addresses the timing of Christ's return.

For Gregory, Augustine's arguments form the basis for the practical application of eschatological ideas, and he adopts the key aspects of Augustine's thought that reinforce his own objectives and primary concerns. In the 'Preface' of his *Moralia,* for example, Gregory reiterates Augustine's arguments with respect to the millennium. He states that the thousand-year reign referred to in Revelation 20 "denoted not the quantity of time but the universality with which the Church exercises dominion".[15] Gregory rejects the literal interpretation of the thousand-year reign and the millennial expectation of Christ's return as he believes this interpretation to be too closely associated with the physical world and a corporeal, human conception of time.[16] Furthermore, despite the sense of urgency in his writing, Gregory, like Augustine, is reluctant to specify the exact timing of Christ's return and adopts Augustine's arguments with respect to the six Ages that constitute the chronology of the world. By not

[13] James J. O'Donnell, *Augustine Saint and Sinner: A New Biography*, 194-98 and J. Kevin Coyle, 'Augustine and Apocalyptic: Thoughts on the Fall of Rome, the Book of Revelation, and the End of the World' in Jim Doody, Kari Kloos, and Kim Paffenroth, *Augustine and Apocalytpic*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014) 26.
[14] Markus, *Gregory the Great*, 40-41.
[15] Gregory, *Mor*,18.42.67.
[16] Kevin L.Hester, *Eschatology and Pain in St Gregory the Great: The Christological Synthesis of Gregory's Morals on the Book of Job*, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007) 40.

adopting a literal interpretation of Revelation 20, however, Gregory does not draw back from his conviction that Judgement Day is imminent. Rather, Gregory insists that as a specific date cannot be determined, the uncertain but imminent prospect of Christ's return calls for even greater spiritual vigilance. This will encourage each individual Christian to prepare actively for the day of judgement, regardless of when that might occur. This active preparation is his primary concern and motivation for addressing eschatological issues. As such, he is not interested in a rhetorical interpretation of Scripture, nor does he attempt to verify Augustine's chronology of the world or develop his own calculations to disprove the millennial expectation of Christ's return. Gregory is also not concerned with the discrepancies amongst different Scriptural accounts of the chronology of the world and subsequent end of time. Rather, Gregory readily accepts Augustine's rationale and demurs from the more specific calculations undertaken by later writers such as Bede. Augustine and Gregory both wrote in moments of immediate crisis – Augustine in the immediate aftermath of the sack of Rome and Gregory in the chaos of the Lombard invasions two centuries later. In the midst of chaotic circumstances, therefore, Gregory is far more interested in immediate action rather than the more measured, theoretical, and technical approach evident in Bede's writing, which he pursued from the relatively calm heart of the Northumbrian renaissance just prior to its disruption by Viking incursions.

As such, unlike Gregory, the measurement of time and the calculations that underwrite the synthesis of Christian history are of primary importance to Bede's eschatological arguments. Bede, like Gregory, adopts the Augustinian tradition of the chronology of the world and the timing of Christ's return. Bede also adopts Gregory's argument for the spiritual interpretation of the thousand-year reign and his purpose in emphasising the need to prepare actively for Christ's return and judgement of humankind. But he significantly modifies these arguments into his own unique chronology for his own

distinct purpose. Unlike Gregory, Bede does not simply accept Augustine's chronology, nor is he content to ignore the inconsistencies in other traditions. Rather, Bede actively attempts to disprove the arguments of earlier Christian writers, along with their assumption of a thousand-year duration for each Age and their expectation that Christ will return a thousand years after his incarnation. The key modification that Bede introduces is his adoption of Jerome's Latin translation of the Hebrew of the Old Testament as the basis for his chronology of the first two Ages rather than the Greek Eusebius-Septuagint chronology.[17] As Faith Wallis highlights in her commentary on *The Reckoning of Time*, this has a significant effect on the number of years assigned to each Age.[18] The Eusebius-Septuagint chronology assigns 2242 and 942 years to the first and second Age respectively. Jerome's translation that forms the basis for Bede's chronology assigns 1656 and 292 years to the first and second Age respectively. The difference is not significant for the first and second Age as such but it is significant for the birth of Christ, and beginning of the sixth Age, as the Septuagint dates the birth of Christ to *annus mundi* 5197 while Bede assigns the birth of Christ to *annus mundi* 3952.[19] While Bede is concerned with presenting a more accurate chronology based on evidence in Scripture, his main aim is to emphasise that the duration of each Age is not restricted to one thousand years. Rather, Bede asserts that each Age is of varying length and hence the end of the sixth Age cannot be calculated or anticipated with any certainty. Bede, like Gregory, is adamant throughout his writings that only God knows the exact timing of the end.

In this regard, Ælfric and Wulfstan's treatment of the timing of the end and the millennial expectation of Christ's return is highly conservative. Both work within the tradition attributed to Augustine and subsequently incorporated into the further development of this tradition by Gregory and Bede in their own writings. They do not, however, simply

[17] Wallis, 'Commentary', 358.
[18] Wallis, 'Commentary', 358.
[19] Wallis, 'Commentary', 358.

reiterate the arguments of their predecessors. Their own highly selective treatments of this issue, and even their occasional inconsistencies, reflect both their particular pastoral concern for the spiritual wellbeing of the English people and their specific purpose in preparing their audience for the return of Christ. Unlike Bede, for example, neither Ælfric nor Wulfstan is concerned with developing a coherent chronology of human history, nor is either keen to engage with any specific details or arguments concerning millennial expectations of Christ's return. Despite this shift of emphasis, Ælfric, in particular, does comment on the Ages of the world, the millennium, and the timing of Christ's return, while Wulfstan does not address these issues in any great depth. At the same time, however, Ælfric and Wulfstan, like Gregory, emphasise the imminence of Christ's return and his judgement of humankind throughout their eschatological writings. Their accounts thus embody some inconsistencies of tone and detail, which, however, emphasise Ælfric and Wulfstan's concern about the timing of the end as an urgent spiritual issue their hearers have to address. Both Ælfric and Wulfstan, like Augustine and Gregory before them, lived in tumultuous times, experiencing the dislocation of the later years of Æthelred's reign including renewed Viking attacks, the breakdown of social cohesion, and the deterioration of public morals. In their own ways, both writers are aware of confronting a major crisis and that they must, above all else, help their audience to understand and redress it. Their methods for achieving this, however, differ considerably, in that while both are urgent, Ælfric crafts careful and patient explanations of the issues and their theological underpinnings and imports, while Wulftstan effectively appoints himself emergency safety officer and shouts orders.

In the fifth homily of the Supplementary Collection of his homilies, Ælfric states that the Apostles long ago sowed the seeds of Christianity and that it is the responsibility of every

present-day Christian to "tend the crop", which is currently mixed with weeds.[20] The "crop" in this regard refers to the Church and its faithful Christians who live according to the word of God, while the "weeds" denote the spreading sins that threaten both to corrupt church and society and to turn the faithful from God. These "weeds", according to Ælfric, are particularly rampant in the present Age because it is the last Age of the world before the return of Christ and the subsequent end of earthly existence. Ælfric's analogy here reflects the influence of Augustine's idea of the world in decline before the reign of Antichrist. The metaphor of crops and weeds also reflects Ælfric's calm, explanatory approach, as weeding calls for patient and constant diligence. Ælfric also identifies this 'last Age' with the sixth Age of the world in accordance with Augustinian tradition. This is evident in the fourth homily of the *Second Series* where Ælfric interprets the six water vessels of the marriage at Cana as an analogy for the six Ages of the world. According to this analogy, the six Ages are: Adam to Noah; Noah to Abraham; Abraham to David; David to Babylonian captivity; the captivity to the birth of Christ; and from the incarnation "extended with uncertain ending to the coming of Antichrist".[21] Gatch states that this analogy reveals Ælfric's interest in the chronology of the world and that Augustine's six-Age scheme is fundamental to his understanding of history.[22] Ælfric also comments on a seventh and eighth Age, which he states complete God's plan for Creation. The seventh Age, according to Ælfric, is a sabbatical Age of rest for the saints that runs parallel with the sixth Age rather than in addition to it. These two parallel Ages will merge into the eighth Age, which is scarcely an 'Age' in the temporal sense but rather the eternity which will follow Christ's return, his judgement of

[20] John Pope, *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, vol 1. EETS 259 (London: Oxford University Press, 1967) V.247-64.
[21] Malcolm Godden, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series* EETS 5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) lines 37-50. From herein reference to *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series* will be abbreviated to *CHII* followed by the homily and line numbers. This reference, for example, *CHII* 4.37-50.
[22] Gatch, *Preaching and Theology*, 78.

humankind and the end of earthly existence.[23] In another homily, however, Ælfric also adopts the five-Age scheme as follows: Adam to Noah; Noah to Abraham; Abraham to Moses; Moses to Christ; Christ to Doomsday.[24] According to Gatch, Ælfric is aware of the inconsistencies but not troubled by them, because, unlike Bede, he is not concerned with the specific details or in defining an exact chronology of the world.[25] As such, the exact date on which the world turned from the fifth Age into the sixth is no great concern. What matters for Ælfric is that the world has entered its *last* Age: this recognition frames his moral lessons and emphasises the need for moral reform prior to Christ's return in order to be ready when he does return.

The chronology of the world is, ultimately, even less relevant to Wulfstan's eschatological writings and purpose. On the one hand, writing out of the disruptions and political crises provoked by the Danish incursions during the later part of Æthelred's reign, Wulfstan emphasises the imminence of the end and the active presence of Antichrist throughout his writings. Despite his urgent tone, however, Wulfstan remains surprisingly ambiguous about the specific timing of the end and projects the Age of Antichrist into the near future. In his homily II (*Lectio Sancti Evangelii Secundum Marcum*), Wulfstan states:

> Þusend geara 7 eac ma is nu agan syððan Crist wæs mid
> mannum on menniscan hiwe, 7 nu syndon Satanases bendas
> swyðe toslopene, 7 Antechristes tima is wel gehende, 7 ðy hit
> is worulde a swa leng swa wacre.[26]

[23] Gatch, *Preaching and Theology*, 78.
[24] *CHII* 5.49-72.
[25] Gatch, *Preaching and Theology*, 79.
[26] "A thousand years and more have now passed since Christ was among the people in human form, and now Satan's bonds are very loose, and Antichrist's time is well at hand." All references to Wulfstan's Homilies are from Dorothy Bethurum (ed), *The Homilies of Wulfstan,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) 5.44-47. From herein these homilies will be cited as W followed by the homily number in Bethurum and the line numbers. This reference, for example, W5.44-47. For further discussion on the significance of the millennial year 1000CE in Anglo-Saxon England see Milton McC. Gatch, 'The Unknowable Audience of the Blickling Homilies', *Anglo-Saxon England* 18 (1989), 113; Lees, *Tradition and Belief,* 47, 83; William Prideaux-Collins, ' 'Satan's Bonds are Extremely Loose': Apocalyptic Expectation in Anglo-Saxon England during the Millennial Era', Richard

We can see here how he manages to establish a tone of present danger and emergency, without actually committing himself to any sort of specific timetable. Satan's bonds have fallen dangerously slack, and Antichrist is due to arrive any day now, but Wulfstan will not venture a precise prediction.

Wulfstan's treatment of eschatological issues is significantly influenced by his political, social, and pastoral responsibilities. He was bishop of London from 992 to 1002, bishop of Worchester from 1002 to 1016, and Archbishop of York from 1002 to 1023CE. During this period, and in addition to his ecclesiastical roles, he is also advisor to both Æthelred II and his Danish successor Cnut, he writes law codes for both rulers, and he witnesses first-hand the consequences of Æthelered's incompetent rule as well as the suffering of the English people in the face of renewed Viking assaults and invasions.[27] He is aware that these invasions threaten the political, social and spiritual fabric of his world, which reinforces his concern for the spiritual wellbeing of the people both in their present plight and in their future persecution by Antichrist. In his treatment of eschatological issues, therefore, Wulfstan's aim is multi-faceted. He wants to enable his audience to understand the present situation; he wants to contextualise these events in terms of the future judgement of humankind; and he wants to provide some sort of remedy that will prepare his audience for the trials of earthly existence now and in the future. In order to achieve these aims, Wulfstan must maintain a delicate balance between both traditional eschatological arguments and the conditions of virtual nation-collapse that characterise his world. The result is a sometimes inconsistent expression of eschatological concerns about tribulation to come and analyses of present failures and crises. Such inconsistency is not, however, without its purpose. Wulfstan wants his audience to focus on the present situation while being mindful that the reign of

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Landes, Andrew Gow, David C. van Meter (eds) *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950-1050*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 289-310.

[27] Matthew Townend (ed), 'Introduction', *Wulfstan Archbishop of York: Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004) 1.

Antichrist, the return of Christ and his judgement of humankind are imminent. For Wulfstan, the remedy for both present and future suffering is to prepare actively through repentance and steadfast Christian faith.

Wulfstan's priority throughout his writings is to edify and fortify his audience against the Danish invasions as well as to prepare them for the persecution of Antichrist and the subsequent return of Christ.[28] Throughout his writings, therefore, there is a sense of urgency that the time of Antichrist is imminent, yet at the same time distant enough to enable his audience to prepare. This is particularly evident in his treatment of the timing of the end and the millennial expectation of Christ's return. On the one hand, Wulfstan maintains the Augustinian argument that the timing of the end cannot be known or calculated by humankind. In the homily *Lectio Sancti Evangelii Secundem Matheum,* for example, Wulfstan reiterates Matthew's insistence that the timing of Christ's return is known only to God. He states that "7 syððan wyrð se ende swa raðe swa þæt God wile" and that "and swaþeahhwæðere nis se man on eorðan ne se encgel on heofonan þe wite þæne andagan butan Gode sylfum."[29] In the very next line, however, Wulfstan seemingly contradicts this statement by emphasising that each individual must be prepared for judgement "we witan mid gewisse þæt hit þærto nealæcð georne."[30] Malcolm Godden states that the "we know" in this sentence is strong and raises the possibility that Wulfstan is aware of the approaching end of the millennium and the expectation of Christ's return in the year 1000CE. At the same time, Godden states, Wulfstan expands on the Gospel of Matthew by projecting the return of Christ, and hence the persecution of Antichrist, into the undetermined future by adding that

[28] Patrick Wormald, 'Archbishop Wulfstan: Eleventh-Century State-Builder', Matthew Townend (ed), *Wulfstan Archbishop of York: Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004) 17.
[29] "the end will come quickly as God wills it" and "there is no one on earth nor any angel in heaven who knows the appointed hour except God himself." W 2.59-62.
[30] "for we know with certainty that it is very near." W 2.64.

these events will not occur until the gospel has been preached throughout the entire world.[31] This inconsistency is not accidental, however, as the juxtaposition of a sense that the time of the end is very near and a different sense of the end time projected into some indeterminate future is evident throughout his homilies. In the Old English version of *De Anticristo*, for example, Wulfstan states that "And us þincð þæt hit sy þam timan swyðe gehende, forðam þeos woruld is fram dæge to dæge a swa leng swa wyrse."[32] Further down in the same homily, however, Wulfstan states that "7 ðeah þæt geweorðe þæt ure ænig þe nu leofað þonne ne libbe."[33] So, on the one hand, Wulfstan indicates that the time of Antichrist is at hand as is evident in the declining state of the world yet, on the other hand, he states that no one who is alive in his present time will live to see the reign and persecution of Antichrist. According to Joyce Hill, the millennial expectation of Christ's return forms the basis for Wulfstan's moral framework and enables him to emphasize the urgent need to prepare actively for Christ's return that is evident in the turmoil of his time.[34] The sense of urgency in his tone is not solely for the benefit of his own audience. Wulfstan is also addressing his fellow clergy in order to encourage them also to emphasise to their own audience the urgent need to prepare. Wulfstan states that "Nu is mycel neod eac eallum Godes bydelum þæt hy Godes folc warnian gelome wið þone egesan þe mannum is towerd" and that every preacher must do so repeatedly "þæt hit man gehyre oft 7 gelome, þe læs ðe hit geweorðe þæt þurh larleste Godes folc losie".[35] For Wulfstan, any individual who claims to be Christian but does

[31] Malcolm Godden, 'The Millennium, Time, and History for the Anglo-Saxons' in Landes, Richard Allen, Andrew Colin Gow, and David C. Van Meter (eds) *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950-1050* (Oxford: Oxford University Press on Demand, 2003) 168.
[32] "it seems to us that that time is very near at hand, for this world is from day to day always the longer the worse" W1B.22-24.
[33] "and although it may happen that none of us who are now alive will live then," W1B.30-31.
[34] Joyce Hill, "Ælfric and Wulfstan: Two Views of the Millennium." Jane Annette Roberts and Janet Laughland Nelson. *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy* (Essays on Anglo-Saxon and related themes in memory of Lynne Grundy,Vol. 17, (King's College London, Centre for Late Antique & Medieval Studies, 2000) 233.
[35] "there is a great need for all God's preachers to warn God's people constantly about the terror that is coming"; "'so that the people hear it often and constantly, lest through want of instruction God's people are lost" W1B. 25-26; 29-30.

not live as a true Christian and does not teach correct Christianity to others is contrary to Christ.[36] Though his writing does strike an urgent note, it does not suggest any conviction on Wulfstan's part that either the time of Antichrist or the return of Christ is currently at hand. He certainly feels that it to be imminent in a broad sense that demands attention, but like his patristic predecessors he defers from saying it is happening or about to happen right now. It does, however, highlight Wulfstan's acute awareness of the political, social and spiritual situation that characterises his world. He could see for himself the ruinous effects of Æthelred's incompetent reign, and he also witnessed the devastation and suffering caused by recurring Danish attacks and invasions. These events heightened his frustration and concern for the spiritual wellbeing of the English people. His intensity and sense of urgency throughout his eschatological homilies clearly reflect his frustration and concern. This sense of urgency, however, is also fundamental to his overall purpose. Wulfstan is aware of what fear and uncertainty the renewed Viking attacks were causing amongst the people. By injecting a sense of urgency into his homilies, he hopes to motivate his audience to prepare actively for both the persecution of Antichrist in the future and to address their suffering in the present.

The political situation that characterises Wulfstan's world is also evident in his treatment of chronology. Unlike his predecessors, Wulfstan is not interested in resolving different schemes of the Ages of the world or in accurately documenting the chronology of human history. Rather, he accepts the Augustinian idea that his present Age, from the birth of Christ to Judgement Day, is the last Age. For Wulfstan, the trials and tribulations experienced by all caught up in the political turmoil and the Viking invasions are sufficient evidence that the world is in a state of decline. In *IV De Temporibus Anticristi*, Wulfstan states that humankind must be aware of the terror that is coming in the reign of Antichrist as "nu we

[36] Lionarons, T*he Homilies of Wulfstan*, 56.

þæne fyrst nabbað þe þa hæfdon þe wiðforan us wæron."[37] By stating that we "do not now have the time", Wulfstan is implying that the state of the world is worse in his present time then ever before and is clearly in decline. He does not, however, attribute this national near-collapse exclusively to the political situation and Viking attacks but identifies human sin as contributing to the state of the world. This is particularly evident in his homily XX *Sermo Lupi*, where the trials and tribulations inflicted upon the English by the Vikings are attributed to the sins of the nation.[38] In the opening lines of the homily, Wulfstan states:

> Leofan men, genawað þæt soð is: ðeos worold is on ofste, 7
> hit nealæcð þam ende, 7 þy hit is on worolde aa swa leng swa
> wyrse; 7 swa hit sceal nyde for folces synnan ær Antechristes
> tocyme yfelian swyþe, 7 huru hit wyrð þænne egeslic 7 grimlic
> wide on worolde.[39]

These opening lines reveal that the Viking invasions are not the main focus of the homily: its aim is rather to rebuke the English for their sins.[40] Wulfstan also declares that the English people have endured "many injuries and insults" on account of their sins as divine punishment from God and that the people must in turn obtain the remedy for their woes from God by amending their ways. In the remainder of the homily, Wulfstan provides a detailed, specific and scathing catalogue of the sins of the nation, which are the cause of all their misery. At the end of the homily, however, Wulfstan also identifies what is necessary in order to remedy the relationship between the English people and God. He states:

> And utan don swa us þearf is, gebugan to rihte 7 be suman dæle
> unriht forlætan 7 betan swyþe georne þæt we ær bræcan. And

[37] "for now we do not have the time that those before us had", W4.32-33.
[38] Alice Cowen, '*Byrstas* and *Bysmeras*: Wounds of Sin in the *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*', Matthew Townend (ed), *Wulfstan Archbishop of York*, 397.
[39] "Beloved people, know that which is true: this world is in haste and it nears the end. And therefore things in this world go ever the longer the worse, and so it must needs be that things quickly worsen, on account of people's sinning from day to day, before the coming of Antichrist." W20(EI).7-11.
[40] Cowen, 'Wounds of Sin', 397-8.

utan God lufian Godes lagum fylgean, 7 gelæstan swyþe georne
þæt þæt we behetan þa we fulluht underfengan, oððon þa þe æt
fulluht ure forespecan wæran. And utan word 7 weorc rihtlice
fadian 7 ure ingeþanc clænsian georne 7 að 7 wed wærlice
healdan 7 sume getrywða habban us betweonan butan uncræftan.[41]

This remedy, according to Wulfstan, will not only put an end to the suffering incurred by the Viking invasions, which is divine punishment from God, but will also ensure that the individual is prepared for the persecution by Antichrist and subsequent judgement by Christ. By preparing actively in the present, the individual Christian will stand ready for Judgement Day, irrespective of whether this will occur at the end of the first millennium or not. Wulfstan shows little interest in the literal interpretation of Revelation 20 that led many early Christian writers to believe and anticipate Christ's return in or around the millennial year 1000CE. Rather, Wulfstan refers to the thousand-year reign only briefly in the homily *Secundum Marcum*, as discussed earlier, where he highlights that over a thousand years has passed since Christ walked amongst mortals in earthly existence. Wulfstan is well aware that he is preaching and writing around the end of the first millennium of the Common Era, just as he is also aware of the speculation and millennial expectation of Christ's return. While, on the one hand, he shifts the focus away from the anticipated return of Christ in the year 1000CE, on the other hand he stresses that the events experienced in his specific time are evidence that the time of Antichrist is imminent. It is unclear if Wulfstan actually believed that the reign of Antichrist was imminent or whether the association between the turmoil of the crisis around him and the persecutions of Antichrist simply provided him with a useful rhetorical tool to spur his audience into action. If Wulfstan truly believes that the time is now or imminent,

[41] "Turn towards the right and abandon wrong-doing, and eagerly atone for what we previously transgressed; and let us love God and follow God's laws . . . and let us order words and deeds justly, and cleanse our thoughts with zeal, and keep oaths and pledges carefully, and have some loyalty between us without evil practice." W20(EI).190-97.

then the seeming contradiction in his writing may be due to his careful balancing between his own belief and the insistence of his patristic authorities that the timing of Christ's return simply cannot be known. If, however, he is using the horror that will characterise the reign of Antichrist as a rhetorical device for moral reform, then the seeming contradictions reflect his relative lack of concern for the specific chronology of Christ's return, as this is not the point of his writing. Instead, Wulfstan hopes that the terror inspired both by his present reality and by the prospect of persecution under Antichrist will motivate his audience to amend their wicked, sinful ways and atone for their transgressions. For Wulfstan, such reform is a far higher priority that interpreting the signs of the end and trying to calculate the exact timing of Christ's return and judgement of humankind.

The prophetic signs of the end listed in various scriptural texts, particularly in the Synoptic Gospels and the Book of Revelation, reinforce the idea that the world is in its last Age and that Christ's return is imminent. The interpretation, treatment, and practical application of these signs though differ considerably in the eschatological discourses of early Christian writers. For Ælfric and Wulfstan, these signs emphasise the need for every individual to prepare actively for Christ's return. Their treatment of these signs also reveals the highly selective way in which they incorporate the arguments of their predecessors into their eschatological discourses, revealing a closer affinity with Gregory's approach to the signs of the end than to Augustine's discourse. Throughout book XX of *The City of God*, Augustine identifies numerous signs of Christ's imminent return in judgement, though not necessarily in this order: the return of Elijah for the conversion of the Jewish people to faith in Jesus; the persecution of Antichrist; the second advent of Christ as Judge; the resurrection of the dead; the separation of good from the wicked; and the burning and renewal of the material world.[42] While Augustine catalogues these signs of the end, he is hesitant to interpret

[42] Augustine, *City of God*, 20:11,14,20,23.

them specifically, remaining cautious about the identity and evil actions of Antichrist, and he does not associate the apocalyptic signs of the end with the disasters or events that had recently shaken his world.[43] According to Gerard O'Daly, Augustine wrote *The City of God* in response to the sack of Rome in August 410CE and to refute the pagan attempts to blame Christians for this event.[44] During this time, many Romans, even among the ruling class, practiced both paganism and Christianity. The sack of Rome, however, threatened to undermine the political and social foundation of Christianity and the Church.[45] There were accusations that the fall of Rome was a direct consequence of its conversion to Christianity and that the Christian martyrs failed to protect the city as the pagan gods had done in the past. In *The City of God*, therefore, Augustine attempts to refute these accusations by outlining the positive outcomes of Rome's conversion to Christianity rather than by focusing on events around him.[46] Aside from the sack of Rome, Augustine is also adamant that the timing of Christ's return is known only to God, so that Christians should not attempt to predict the timing of the end by 'signs' or preceding events. Furthermore, his reluctance to speculate on the specific details of these signs highlight that Augustine is not concerned primarily with the events surrounding Judgement Day, particularly the events prior to the return of Christ. Rather, his eschatological discourse is based on the sharp metaphysical distinction between time and eternity. Time, according to Augustine, refers to existence in a changeable, finite and material universe that is restricted by space and time and subject to mutability and decay. Eternity, on the other hand, refers to existence in an infinite, unchanging, and incorporeal

[43] Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 134.
[44] Gerard O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God: A Reader's Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 27.
[45] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 28.
[46] The irony is that the book of Revelation in Scripture was written in direct response to the Roman persecutions of early Christians and looks forward to the ruin of the Church's great persecutor. Augustine, on the other hand, has to minimize the significance of all the savage anti-Babylon rhetoric as he is trying to demonstrate that Christianity has a place within the culture and empire of Rome. See G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999) 28-33, and Richard Bauckman, *Theology of the Book of Revelation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

universe that is beyond the limitations of time and space.[47] As such, eternity is of far greater importance and concern for Augustine than any temporal events.

For Gregory, on the other hand, the signs of the end provide sufficient evidence that Christ's return is imminent. As highlighted earlier, Gregory's world is governed by Christianity far more uniformly than Augustine's world. As such, Gregory is less concerned about establishing Christianity's superiority over paganism and more focused on events around him and on emphasising the need to prepare actively for Christ's return. In his writing, these signs are distinguished according to whether they have already appeared or whether they are yet to appear. In terms of the signs that have already appeared, Gregory identifies the general decay of society, the persecution of the Church, the cessation of miracles, and the widespread preaching of the Gospel. In his *Homilies on the Gospels*, he describes the decay of society in response to Luke's statement that "nation will rise against nation…there shall be great earthquakes, and pestilences and famine and terrors of heaven" (20:10-11), Gregory states that these signs are evident in the wars, invasions, plagues and natural disasters that characterise his world. Throughout his works, he emphasises the urgent need for Christians to respond spiritually to these temporal dislocations. While the Gospels identify specific signs of the end, Gregory interprets the events occurring around him as the fulfilment of those signs and as evidence of God's push-back against evil. In particular, the plagues, natural disasters, the economic and social upheavals caused by the Lombard invasions as well as the political decline of Rome are for Gregory all signs that the world is in its last Age. By aligning these events with Luke's eschatological discourses, Gregory emphasises the apocalyptic nature of the impending judgement in order to "let fear make them [the people] ever alert, and alertness to strengthen them in good works".[48] For Gregory,

[47] O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God,* 132.
[48] Gregory, *Homilies*, 16.

fear is of paramount importance in preparing each Christian for the return of Christ and is thus a prominent theme in his writings.

The persecution of the Church, according to Gregory, is further evidence that Christ's return is imminent. In the *Moralia*, Gregory states that this persecution arises from "left" and "right". The "left" refers to the persecutors who are outside the Church, that is, those who neither professed their faith nor have been exposed to the Gospels and the word of God. Gregory states that the aim of this persecution is to "put out the light of faith and (silence) the voice of preaching."[49] This is achieved through "words" that attempt to entice the faithful away from God and by "swords" that attempt to remove the faithful from the Church by violent, physical force. According to Gregory, God has rendered this group incapable of seeing the good of the Church and permits this persecution in order to test the faith of the Church. Markus states that the Lombard invasions and the defence of Rome were a constant source of anxiety and apprehension for Gregory.[50] In a homogeneous political, intellectual and social climate that is governed by Christianity, the pagan Lombards posed a doctrinal threat as well as a physical threat of war. As such, Gregory's main priority is the defence of Rome, which requires his involvement in political, military, and ecclesiastical affairs.[51] For Gregory, this persecution is a necessary tribulation for the Church as "words" (i.e., a verbal challenge to true faith) can exercise wisdom and "swords" (i.e. the threat of outright violence), can be a spur to patience in the faithful.[52]

The persecutors from the "right", on the other hand, are from within the Church and Gregory subdivides them further into two significant groups. He identifies the first group as "heretics" who attempt to mislead the faithful and their rulers by preaching false doctrine. The second group, however, refers to those who profess their faith but who refuse to alter

[49] Gregory, *Mor.* 20.29.59
[50] Markus, *Gregory the Great,* 99.
[51] Markus, *Gregory the Great,*100.
[52] Gregory, *Mor.*18.2.3

their behaviour or submit to the penitential system of the Church.[53] Gregory identifies this group as "hypocrites" and believes they are far more dangerous than the persecutors from the "left". This group is particularly dangerous as they can confuse the faithful, the newly converted as well as other younger Christians, with their plausible example and lead them away from the path of righteousness. As such, these "hypocrites" will be judged harshly upon Christ's return, as their sin is one of "intention" rather than of "ignorance."[54] According to Gregory, both of these groups appear to be faithful to Christ, but through their actions they reveal themselves as enemies of the Church. These persecutors arising from the "right" are associated with the return of Antichrist, the final sign of the end that is yet to appear. The "hypocrites", in particular, are governed by pride and their life is filled with iniquities.[55] These enemies already participate in the evil of Antichrist, even though, Gregory observes, Antichrist has yet to appear. Still, the sense of urgency in his writings reinforces his purpose in emphasising the need to prepare actively for Christ's return. This purpose in turn informs Bede's eschatological arguments. Bede, however, adopts a slightly different approach to the same matter that does not communicate all of Gregory's sense of urgent immediacy.

Gregory's primary concern throughout his writing is to communicate the imminence of Christ's return in order to prepare the individual for Judgement Day. For Gregory, earthly existence is a pilgrimage towards the eternal kingdom. As a result, the faithful should ascend to the heights of contemplation rather than remain entangled in the physical world. He also states, however, that "those established in good works rejoice in the sure hope in God."[56] This highlights a constant tension in his writing between the active and contemplative life as well as between physical and spiritual existence respectively. The eschatological purpose of this tension is to emphasise the necessary balance between contemplation and the good works that

[53] Hester, *Eschatology and Pain*, 29.
[54] Gregory, *Mor.* 25.10.26-12.30
[55] Hester, *Eschatology and Pain*, 31.
[56] Gregory, *Mor* 6.16.26.

demonstrate the grace of God to the individual.[57] In the *Homilies*, Gregory states that at the appearance of Christ as the severe Judge, humankind will need to give an "exact account of all things our unseen Creator patiently tolerates."[58] The good works necessary for this balance are enabled and reinforced by an alertness to the eschatological moment, grounded in an awareness of impending judgement. Writing in times of fearful material, social and political disruptions, Gregory insists that fear should spur the faithful to repent for past sins, to be open to the Gospels, and amend wicked behaviour before the return of Christ. Furthermore, the fear of the severe judgement of God should also result in self-judgement and analysis in order to heal the soul from the wounds of sin.[59] According to Gregory, this self-judgement encourages the faithful to wash away the stain of sin through tears of contrition and prepares the soul for the impending return of Christ as Judge.

For Bede, the timing of judgement day cannot be determined and hence attempts to predict the return of Christ by interpreting events as signs of the end are futile. As such, compared to Gregory's discourse, there is a considerable lack of intensity and urgency in Bede's eschatological writings. This is a significant distinction between the two writers that can be attributed to the different contexts in which they wrote their eschatological discourse. As highlighted above, Gregory was concerned about the constant threat posed by the pagan Lombards and participated actively in both political and military affairs in addition to his ecclesiastical responsibilities. Bede, on the other hand, lived in Wearmouth-Jarrow at the height of its prosperity and influence and was entrusted to the monastery from a young Age to be educated by Abbots Biscop and Ceolfrith.[60] Bede, unlike Gregory, was not directly involved in political and military affairs but spent his entire life in the monastery. In his

[57] Markus, *Gregory the Great*, 58-9.
[58] Gregory, *Homilies,* 16.
[59] Carol Straw, *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) 175.
[60] Michelle Brown, 'Bede's life in context', Scott De Gregorio (ed) *The Cambridge Companion to Bede*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 5.

Ecclesiastical History of the English People, Bede states that his life at Wearmouth-Jarrow was devoted "entirely to the study of the Scriptures."[61] Bede did not have to contend with the threat of invasion as he died before the Viking assaults on England began. In discussing the signs of the end, therefore, Bede relies on the evidence of Scripture rather than his own experience of any doctrinal threat to his faith or physical threat of war.

In *The Reckoning of Time*, Bede states that there are only two certain signs that the return of Christ is imminent: the conversion of the Jewish people to faith in Christ and the reign of Antichrist. According to Bede, the conversion of the Jewish people is a significant part of God's divine plan for humanity. He states that this plan is tripartite in that the Jewish were the chosen people of God, their rejection of Jesus resulted in the Gentiles becoming the chosen people of God, and prior to the end of time, the Jewish people will be welcomed into the Church.[62] As such, the conversion of the Jewish people functions as the first stage of the end-time sequence and the last stage of salvation history. In chapter 69 of *The Reckoning of Time*, Bede states that this conversion will occur as a result of the return and preaching of Enoch and Elijah.[63] This is Bede's interpretation of a cryptic reference to two witnesses in the Book of Revelation, which states "I will give unto my two witnesses" who will "prophesy a thousand two hundred and sixty days" (11:3). Augustine also discusses the significance of this conversion but states that only Elijah has a significant eschatological role in the end-time sequence.[64] In book XX of *The City of God*, Augustine discusses the return of the prophet Elijah and the significant role he has in the end-time sequence. Unlike Bede, Augustine relies on evidence in the book of Malachi and the book of Kings that describe Elijah. There is no such sustained treatment of Enoch in Scripture and hence Augustine does not identify Enoch with the end-time sequence. Bede, however, believes that both Enoch and Elijah have a

[61] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, 9.
[62] Peter Darby, *Bede and the End of Time,* (New York: Routledge, 2016) 109.
[63] Wallis, *Reckoning of Time*, 241.
[64] Augustine, *City of God*, 20.29.

significant role to play in the conversion of the Jews. They are the only characters in the Old Testament who, we are told, did not die but were somehow translated bodily into heaven. Christians read this as a sign they were waiting to take part in the contention with Antichrist. According to the Book of Revelation their role is to "prophesy against the Antichrist", to be martyred and then raised from the dead. As such, their return signals the imminent appearance of Antichrist. Despite this warning, however, Bede maintains the Augustinian position that, even though the appearance of Antichrist may be imminent, people should not presume to know or be able to predict the timing of Christ's return as this is known only to God. Bede maintains this caution in his comments on the natural and cosmological signs that are to herald the imminent return of Christ.

While Bede identifies the two certain signs that Judgement Day is approaching, he also addresses such natural and cosmological signs that, according to Scripture, will herald the return of Christ. In the poem *De Die Iudicii*, Bede lists nine signs that will herald Christ's return, his judgement of humankind, and the end of earthly existence:

> Remember what signs will proceed Him; suddenly the earth
> will tremble and the mountains crumble down; the hills will melt
> and the sea confound men's minds with its terrible roar; the sky
> will be covered sorrowfully with black shadows; the stars will fall
> and the sun grow dark in the crimson east; the pale moon will not uncover her nightly lamp; and signs threatening death will come from the sky.[65]

While these signs are listed in scriptural prophecy, Bede does not identify any natural disasters in his own time as instances of such portents. Rather, he interprets these as "open" signs from God, indications of the fallen world's general instability that should act as

[65] Allen and Calder (trans), *Sources and Analogues*, 210.

warnings to individuals to consider the fate of their souls, repent for their sins and amend their behaviour in the present.[66]

Like Bede, Ælfric's aim is also to encourage his audience to prepare actively for the return of Christ and his subsequent judgement of humankind. Ælfric's identification of events around him as signs of the end reveals the significant influence of Gregory's writings on the development of Ælfric's eschatology. Gatch states that in discussing the signs of the end, Ælfric expands on a homily by Gregory and heightens Gregory's sense of urgency with respect to the imminence of Judgement Day.[67] In homily forty of the *First Series*, Ælfric states that the rise of nation against nation is worse in his own time than it has ever been before. He also states that the evidence of natural disasters, pestilences, and famine in the world further supports the claim that it is in decline and the reign of Antichrist is at hand.[68] Despite these declarations, there is a distinct lack of intensity and sense of urgency in Ælfric's treatment of the signs of the end. In both this homily and in homily thirty-seven of the *The Second Series*, Ælfric discusses both the signs that have already appeared and the cosmological signs that are yet to appear.[69] In both series of *Catholic Homilies*, however, Ælfric addresses neither the Viking invasions nor the Benedictine reforms, nor does he refer to incompetent rule of Æthelred as Wulfstan does.[70] Ælfric, like Bede and influenced by Bede's *Reckoning of Time*, does not associate cosmological signs with the imminent persecution by Antichrist or the return of Christ and his judgement of humankind. Rather, like Bede, Ælfric maintains that these signs should remind Christians to correct the way they

[66] Darby, *Bede and End of Time*, 101.
[67] Gatch, Preaching and Theology, 80.
[68] *CHI* 40.32-46.
[69] *CHII* 37.41-65.
[70] Clare Lees, *Tradition and Belief*, 86. Homily 22 in the *Supplemental Series* of Ælfric's homilies (*Wyrdwriteras us secgað* 'Historians tell us') is all about how great kings of the past delegated combat duties to their generals without being thought any the less of. It never mentions Æthelred by name, but it sounds like a somewhat apology for his own backward temperament when it came to taking on Vikings.

live and amend their ways.[71] Ælfric's treatment of the signs of the end, therefore, differs considerably from Wulfstan's in terms of tone and intensity.

Wulfstan's treatment of the signs of the end is brief yet deliberate and critical to his overall purpose in preparing his audience for both the persecution of Antichrist and Christ's judgement of humankind. Unlike his predecessors, Wulfstan is not concerned with the specific details of each sign listed in Scripture, though he does associate events around him as signs of the impending persecution of Antichrist. He does, however, borrow a considerable amount from the eschatology of Ælfric but reduces it to emphasise only the main points rather than the detail of Ælfric's work. As such, his treatment of the traditional signs of the end appears to reflect his conviction that the reign of Antichrist, in particular, and the subsequent return of Christ are imminent. Whether Wulfstan actually believed that Antichrist's advent was imminent or not, the signs of the end listed in Scripture enable Wulfstan both to illustrate the importance of preparing for the actual reign of Antichrist and to emphasise his fundamental concerns to his audience. For Wulfstan, the natural and cosmological signs of the end are of secondary importance when compared to the actual reign of Antichrist, which should be of primary concern to every individual. Wulfstan does not state this explicitly, but his treatment of the other signs of the end provide considerable insight into his rationale. Aside from the reign of Antichrist, the other signs of the end listed in Scripture have a cosmological significance and will affect every individual without distinction or exception. The earthquakes, famine, pestilence, wars, as well as the darkening of the sun and moon, will afflict all humankind. These events, however, are transient and directly associated with physical, earthly existence. No individual act can prevent them from occurring. Despite the severity of these events, however, these dislocations cannot imperil the spiritual well-being of each individual: their effects are temporal and material rather than

[71] Aaron Kleist, 'The Influence of Bede's *De temporum ratione* on Ælfric's Understanding of Time', Gerson Moreno-Riano (ed) *Time and Eternity: The Medieval Discourse,*(Turnhout: Brepols, 2003) 81.

eternal. As stated above, Wulfstan's primary concern is the spiritual wellbeing of the English people. Temporal signposts that merely signal the onset of the end times do not threaten the spiritual wellbeing of the individual in the way the persecutions of Antichrist will. Still, while not a matter of primary concern, the cosmological signs of the end do have a function in Wulfstan's eschatological discourse.

The signs of the end in Scripture enable Wulfstan to invoke a sense of urgency to his moral lessons by associating these signs with the events that characterise his world. Despite this association, however, his treatment of the signs of the end is brief. In *Secundum Matheum*, he mentions, as do Bede and Ælfric, that nations will strive against each other and that many earthquakes and misfortunes must occur in the world before the world ends.[72] Similarly in *Secundum Marcum*, Wulfstan only briefly alludes to the 'traditional' signs of the end that will be seen prior to the return of Christ and his judgement of humankind. He states:

> Eac sceal aspringan wide 7 side sacu 7 clacu, hol 7 hete 7 rypera
> reaflac, here 7 hunger, bryne 7 blodgyte 7 styrnlice styrunga, stric
> 7 steorfa 7 fela ungelimpa. And mænigfealde tacna beoð wide
> gesawene on sunnan 7 on monan 7 on mistlican tunglan, 7 fela cynna
> egesan geweorþað on eorðan folce to heortgryre 7 to egeslican
> fære on mænigfealde wisan.[73]

These signs of the end have been taken from the gospel accounts, and their inclusion here reflects Wulfstan's traditional and conservative approach to eschatological issues on the one hand and his highly selective, unique style on the other. Wulfstan, unlike his predecessors, associates these signs primarily with the reign and persecution of Antichrist rather than as signs preceding the second coming of Christ.

[72] W 2.14-16.
[73] "Strife and contention will also arise far and wide, and slander and hatred, plunder and rapine, war and hunger, burning and bloodletting and violent disturbances, plague and pestilence and many other evil events. And many signs will be seen widely in the sun and the moon and in various stars, and many kinds of terror and many sudden dangers will occur on earth to terrify people's hearts." W 5.103-108.

For Wulfstan, as these signs are transient and do not threaten the spiritual wellbeing of the individual, they should not be matters of primary concern except in their proper function as signs of the times. They do, however, have a specific and calculated function within his homilies, as they enable Wulfstan to emphasise the urgent need to prepare actively for both the reign of Antichrist and Christ's subsequent judgement of humankind with tangible examples. This is particularly evident in his *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, in which Wulfstan associates the traditional signs of the end in Scripture with the events that characterise his world. Early in the *Sermo Lupi*, Wulfstan provides a scathing and detailed rebuke in order to substantiate the association between the state of decline in the world and the sins of the nation:

> Understandað eac georne þæt deofol þas þeode nu fela geara
> dwelode to swyþe, 7 þæt lytle getreowþa wæran mid mannum,
> þeah hy wel spæcanm 7 unrihta to fela ricsode on lande. And næs
> a fela manna þe smeade ymbe þa bote swa georne swa man scolde,
> ac dægh wamlive man ihte yfel æfter oðrum 7 unriht rærde 7 unlaga
> manege ealles to wide gynd ealle þas þeode.[74]

He does this, not to herald Christ's impending return, but to insist that the persecution of Antichrist is already at hand and the need to prepare actively against the direct threat to spiritual wellbeing is urgent. Wulfstan's method in emphasising this need is twofold: first, he uses the widespread devastation of the Viking invasions as concrete examples of the world's decline into its last Age, and as evidence that the persecution of Antichrist, while not yet here, is palpably imminent; second, he interprets the widespread devastation as evidence of

[74] "Understand also well that the Devil has now led this nation astray for very many years, and that little loyalty has remained among men, though they spoke well. And too many crimes reigned in the land, and there were never many of men who deliberated about the remedy as eagerly as one should, but daily they piled one evil upon another, and committed injustices and many violations of law all too widely throughout this entire land." W20(EI).11-17.

the nation's sins, for which the only remedy is sincere repentance. Wulfstan, however, sees little evidence of sincere repentance in the events around him, and so his rebuke continues:

> Forþam mid miclan earnungan we geearnedan þa yrmða þe us onsittað, 7 mid swyþe micelan earnungan we þa bote motan æt Gode geræcan gif hit sceal heonanforð godiende weorðan. La hwæt, we witan ful georne þæt to miclan bryce sceal micel bot nyde, 7 to miclan bryne wæter unlytel, gif man þæt fyr sceal to ahte acwencan. And micel is nydþearf manna gehwilcum þæt he Godes lage gyme heonanforð georne 7 Godes gerihta mid rihte gelæste.[75]

Such amended conduct will help to relieve his audience's suffering in the present and subsequently steady them against future persecution by Antichrist.

In *The City of God*, Augustine dedicates books 20-22 to the last days but does not discuss the reign of and persecution by Antichrist in any great depth. The only discussion is found in book 20:8, where he discusses the binding and unloosing of the devil. He relies on accounts in Scripture for his descriptions of both the binding and loosing of the devil. He states that, once loosed, the devil will lead nations astray around the whole world and will draw them into war against the Church.[76] Augustine goes on to explain that once the time comes, the devil will "rage with all his powers" for three years and six months. Unlike the timing of the end, Augustine does not hesitate to give the reign of Antichrist a precise length, which he draws from Scripture. Augustine asserts that the persecution of Antichrist before the end of time is part of God's divine plan for humanity and God permits this persecution in

[75] "For with great deserts we have earned the misery that is upon us, and with truly great deserts we must obtain the remedy from God, if henceforth things are to improve. (8) Lo, we know full well that a great breach of law shall necessitate a great remedy, and a great fire shall necessitate much water, if that fire is to be quenched. (9) And it is also a great necessity for each of men that he henceforth eagerly heed the law of God better than he has done, and justly pay God's dues." W 20(EI).20-27.
[76] Augustine, *City of God*, 20:8.

order to test the faithful and the Church. Aside from these brief allusions, Augustine does not much elaborate any particulars of the Antichrist's persecutions.

Gregory, similarly, also does not speculate about the Antichrist's character or his specific actions. In his *Moralia*, he states that the appearance of Antichrist is the last sign heralding the return of Christ and the end of earthly existence.[77] He states that this is already evident in the false prophets and preachers that beset the world, though even these evils will pale in comparison to the reign of the actual Antichrist. Elsewhere Gregory observes that the Antichrist, once loosed, will draw under his influence all those who are unprepared and whose faith is weak, in order to assist him in waging war against Christ and the Church.[78] Bede provides more detail in his homily for Palm Sunday by stating that Antichrist will come in his own name and that, while he is the most wicked companion of all, he is a companion of the devil.[79] He describes Antichrist and the devil as two separate entities. The relative lack of detail in their accounts of the persecution by Antichrist does not imply that Gregory and Bede are not concerned with what this persecution will entail. They simply focus their attention on other key concerns and do not feel the need to elaborate on the details found in Scripture.

Ælfric's primary objective throughout his writings is to provide accurate information in a clear and concise manner in order to instruct his audience.[80] In the *Preface* to the first series of Catholic Homilies, Ælfric provides detailed description of Antichrist so that:

> Gehwa mæg þe eaðelicor þa toweardan costnunge acumen ðurh
> godes fultum. gif he bið þurh boclice lare getrymmed. for ðan ðe
> ða beoð gehealdene þe oð ende on geleafan þurhwuniað.[81]

[77] Gregory, *Mor.* 33.35.59-60.
[78] Gregory, *Mor.* 15.61.72; 32.15.24-5.
[79] Lawrence T. Martin & David Hurst (trans), *Bede The Venerable: Homilies of the Gospels, Book Two,* (London: Cistercian Publications, 1991) 29.
[80] Kathleen Davis, 'Boredom Brevity and Last things: Ælfrics Style and the Politics of Time', Hugh Magennis and Mary Swan (eds) *A Companion to Ælfric*, (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 335.
[81] "Everyone will the more easily withstand the future temptation, through God's support, if he is strengthened by book learning, for they shall be preserved who continue in faith to the end." *CHI* '*Præfato'* 67-69.

The "future temptation" is, of course, the Antichrist's persecution of the faithful. To fortify his audience against such persecution, Ælfric proceeds with a more detailed description of Antichrist. He states that Antichrist is human and devil just as Jesus is man and God. It is typical of Ælfric that he should seek a formulation that so precisely captures the antithetical character of the Antichrist. Beyond this, however, Ælfric is not as concerned with the precise character of Antichrist as he is about the persecution he will pursue for the duration of his reign.[82] He tells of how Antichrist will perform what appear to be miracles and will claim to be God himself. Antichrist will be permitted openly to heal those whom he had previously injured in secret and will attempt to lure the faithful away from God. Once again Ælfric's point here is precise: genuine healing is one of Christ's signature gestures in the gospels, so the Antichrist's mimicry would, of necessity, have to be fraudulent. He will also cause fire to appear to come from above, as if from heaven (when in fact it will be from hell below) to slay those who resist him.[83] In the homily *De Die Iudicii*, Ælfric states that the character and purpose of Antichrist reflects true paganism, particularly in the subtle assault on Christians through his false teachings.[84] Ælfric does state, however, that this persecution is permitted by God in order to test the faithful, though God will not permit this persecution to continue for too long, lest even the elect succumb. When Ælfric reminds his audience that the Antichrist will claim to be God and will perform miracles in an attempt to deceive the faithful, he adduces two principles that will assist Christians in resisting the deception. First, that when Christ actually returns to judge humankind, no one, good or evil, will doubt him. Second, as Antichrist is contrary to Christ, so too will his actions during his tenure directly contradict the

[82] Lynne Grundy, *Books and Grace: Ælfric´s Theology*, (Exeter: Short Run Press, 1991) 245.
[83] Ælfric here alludes indirectly to an episode from 1 Kings 18, in which the prophet Elijah enters into a competition with the priests of Baal. When they are unable to get their sacrifice to Baal to ignite, Elijah calls down real fire from heaven that ignites his sacrifice, and the priests themselves. There, the fire of heaven is a mark of Elijah's authenticity, but in the last days, the Antichrist will in effect mock that miracle by producing fraudulent fire from heaven.
[84] Pope, *Supplementary*,18.296-99.

Church's traditional teachings concerning faith and just behaviour.[85] As such, Ælfric exhorts his audience to remain steadfast in their devotion to Christ and in their observance of the teachings of the Church. Overall, however, Ælfric's description of the persecution conducted by the Antichrist marshals its copious detail with quiet care and a patient tendency to teach more than to admonish. In this it lacks some of the intensity and sense of urgency that is evident in Wulfstan's treatment of the same issue.

Wulfstan focuses on the tribulations to be suffered by the faithful under Antichrist more than on the return of Christ and his subsequent judgement of humankind. Yet the two are not mutually exclusive for Wulfstan: by preparing actively for the reign of Antichrist, each Christian individual will be better able to resist his persecutions and join the ranks of the elect, who need not fear either Christ's return or his judgement. For Wulfstan, those who persevere through all the trials and tribulations, even during the reign of Antichrist, will be saved. A key aspect of Wulfstan's treatment of Antichrist is the constant juxtaposition between Wulfstan's sense of urgency that the time of Antichrist is imminent and the projection of Antichrist's persecution to some point in the future. Wulfstan's method here is twofold: first, he wants to encourage his audience into immediate action; and second, at the same time he does not want his audience to feel that it is too late to amend their sinful ways. Wulfstan, like his predecessors, emphasises that the world is and will be in continual decline before the actual reign of Antichrist and subsequent return of Christ. Even in his present time, he states, there are many who are considered to be "Antichrists". In *De Anticristo,* he states

> Forðam ælc þæra þe ongean þæt to swyðe deð oððon oðerne ongean þæt læreð þe his cristendome to gebyreð, ælc þæra bið antecrist genamod. Anticristus is on læden *contrarius Cristo*, þæt is on Englisc, Godes wiðersaca. Se bið Godes wiðersaca þe Godes

[85] Pope, *Supplementary,* 18.383-5.

lage 7 lare forlæt, 7 ðurh deofles lare of ðam deð his cristendome
to gebyreð, 7 on synnum hine sylfne to swyðe befyleð oððon oðerne
man on synna belædeð.[86]

Here, Wulfstan identifies not only the responsibility of the individual Christian but, more importantly, the responsibility of the clergy with respect to the moral reform of their congregations. In this, he follows Ælfric's line of argument closely. Despite the homily's title, which suggests that its main theme will be the figure of the Antichrist, the majority of the homily is concerned mainly with calling on preachers, including Wulfstan himself, to warn their congregations on a daily basis about the impending moral dangers and traumas of the last days. In that way neither they nor their audience will be found wanting in how they confronted the horrors of the latter days. He spends only a very brief amount of time addressing what the persecution of Antichrist might actually involve, namely that kin will betray kin and individuals will lose their faith as the persecutions of Antichrist continue. While Wulfstan identifies these tumults with the time of Antichrist, he is well aware that similar dislocations are evident in the present world known to him and his audience. Throughout these homilies, therefore, he balances his depiction of the future reign of Antichrist against the tribulations visited upon Anglo-Saxon England by the resurgence of Viking incursions in his day. The need for this balance stems from his desire to enable his audience to cope with their sufferings in the present without suggesting that it might be too late to prepare: to encourage amendment he must allow it at least some time. The sins that will characterise the persecution of Antichrist are catalogued in the *Sermo Lupi*, but they are identified as well with the present moment. Wulfstan identifies the sins of the nation as a whole as the cause of the Viking attacks and the suffering of the people. He is well aware of

[86] "For those who do too much that is contrary to it [Christianity] or who do not teach it to others, each of those is named antichrist. Antichrist in Latin is 'contrary to Christ', that is in English, God's adversary. He is God's adversary who abandons God's laws and teachings and through the devil's teaching makes ill use of that which belongs to Christianity, and then, being himself in sin, severely befouls or leads other people into sin." W1B.5-12.

the fear and uncertainty that the breakdown of the present military and political situation presents for his audience. But he also recognises in that fear an opportunity to land some home truths about the need for greater penitence and amendment, home truths that will achieve his objective both in his present moment and beyond.

It is the present moment, however, that is his main concern. This concern is driven by the need for moral reform now during life and earthly existence. As such, Wulfstan pays considerably less attention than his predecessors to the nature of the eternal state that humankind will enter after Christ's judgement. Even when he does refer to it, it is brief and focused more on the nature of hell than on the rewards of heaven. In the homily *Secundum Lucam,* he states:

> Wa þam þonne þe ær geearnode helle wite. Đær is ece bryne grimme gemencged, 7 ðær is ece gryre; þær is granung 7 wanung 7 aa singal heof; þær is ealra yrmða gehwylc 7 ealra deofla geþring. Wa þam þe þær sceal wunian on wite. Betere him wære þæt he man nære æfre geworden þonne he gewurde. Forðam nis se man on life areccan mæge ealle þa yrmða þe se gebidan sceal se ðe on þa wita ealles behreoseð; 7 hit is ealles þe wyrse þe his ænig ende ne cymð æfre to worulde.[87]

Wulfstan does not elaborate, in this homily at least, on what these torments are as he is not concerned with these details, suffice to say that they will be horrendous and eternal. For Wulfstan, that is the fundamental point; that hell will punish the unrepentant for eternity. His

[87] "Woe to the one who earlier earned the torment of hell. There are eternal flames flickering darkly and there is eternal horror; there is groaning and lamentation and perpetual wailing; there is a crowd of demons and every terror. Woe to the one who must dwell there in torment. It would be better for him if he had never become a man than that he endure this. For there is no one living who may tell of all the horrors that he must endure, he who falls completely into torment. And it is worst of all that there will be no end at all for him in this world." W3.65-73.

inclusion of the brief description of hell reinforces his purpose of moral reform and, he hopes, will be sufficient to spur his audience into immediate action.

Wulfstan is not alone in emphasising the horrors of hell over the rewards of heaven as his predecessors, with the possible exception of Bede, also adopt this method. This is particularly evident in Gregory's *Moralia* where his description of hell is far more emphatic than his description of heaven. For Gregory, the day of judgement is a portal through which humankind will pass into the eternal state.[88] In passing through this portal, the individual will either bow before Christ the Lord or will cower before Christ the Judge. He argues that this eternal state is divided into two realms, heaven and hell, both of which exist under the dominion of God. The individuals without sin and those who have adequately repented for their sins will pass through to the realm of heaven, while the unrepentant, sinful individuals will enter the realm of hell. Gregory, however, is reluctant to describe the heavenly realm with physical imagery that is grounded in earthly existence. Instead, he prefers to emphasise heaven as a spiritual union between the individual and God. This union characterises the dual aspect of heaven as the contemplation of God and the realm of reward.[89] Furthermore, Gregory states, heaven is the fulfilment of human existence where the experience of this existence is understood fully as part of God's divine plan for humanity.[90] These brief allusions to heaven in the *Moralia* may sound familiar and that is because they do not differ significantly from Augustine's two centuries earlier. For Augustine, heaven is the fulfilment of God's divine plan for humanity and where the souls of the righteous spend eternity in God's presence. Augustine is also reluctant to describe heaven in material terms as it is beyond the understanding of humankind in earthly existence. This reticence with respect to heaven does not apply to descriptions of hell, which in the *Moralia* are vivid and without restraint.

[88] Hester, *Eschatology and Pain*, 49.
[89] Gregory, *Mor*, 35.15.42.
[90] Gregory, *Mor*, 4.33.67.

Hell, according to Gregory, is the eternal consequence for unrepentant sinners who do not show remorse for their sins and amend their ways. As with his description of heaven, he states that there are two aspects of hell, the separation of the soul from God and imposition of punishment. While he does not elaborate greatly on the eternal rewards in heaven, he does provide considerable detail with respect to the punishments in hell. He states that this punishment is physical, in terms of the never-ending fire that torments sinners but never consumes them.[91] The punishment is also spiritual in that sinners despair with confusion and the pain of being separated from God.[92] He states:

> And these punishments both torture those that are plunged therein beyond their powers, and at the same time preserve them alive, extinguishing in them the forces of life, that the end may so afflict the life, that torment may ever live without end, in that it is both an end through torments, and failing holds on without end…Therefore whereas death at the same time slays and does not extinguish, pain torments but does not banish fear, the flame burns but does not dispel the darkness.[93]

This description emphasises the eternal nature of these torments and, for Gregory, provide sufficient evidence that the sinner should repent for their sins. Descriptions such as this occur frequently throughout the *Moralia* and reflect, to some extent, the tumultuous times that Gregory lived in. They also contrast significantly with Bede's approach as Bede lived in the calmer conditions of the Northumbrian renaissance, which is reflected in his emphasis on heaven more than his descriptions of hell.

For Bede, the true nature of heaven remains a mystery to humankind. Scriptural accounts can provide a guide but this guide is speculative as heaven is only revealed to those

[91] Gregory, *Mor* 9.65.98.
[92] Gregory, *Mor*, 8.18.34.
[93] Gregory, *Mor*, 9.66.100.

who have gained access to it.[94] This does not stop Bede from devoting the final chapter in *The Reckoning of Time* to the eighth Age of perennial bliss. In this eighth Age, Bede states, time will not expire nor will it be constrained by the temporal cycles of days, months, years, that characterise earthly existence. Instead, the righteous will enjoy eternal rewards in the presence of God with immortal bodies and the absence of night. These immortal bodies, Bede states, will be physical bodies but free from mortality, illness, and corruption.[95] This view is reinforced in *De Die Iudicii,* which states

> [In heaven] he will rejoice together with the saints, world without end. United to Christ, he will live in the kingdoms of heaven where no night exists to snatch away the splendour of the pleasing light; and no grief or lamentation will come, nor feeble old age. No thirst is present there, no hunger, sleep, or any labour; no fevers, diseases, or injuries; no frosts, flames, weariness, sadness, anxieties, thunder, snow, hail, tempests, anguish, poverty, sorrow, death, accidents or need.[96]

All of these are associated with the trials and tribulations of earthly existence but they will not exist in heaven. Instead, the righteous will enjoy an abundance of peace, love, goodness, wealth, joy, happiness, virtue, light, eternal life, glory, praise, tranquillity, and the honour that God will provide to all who gain access to heaven.[97] In the context of the poem, however, equal space is given to the torments in hell, which, like Gregory and Wulfstan's descriptions, function as a warning to all who are complacent in preparing actively for Christ's return. The region of hell, according to the poem, is filled with black fires, icy colds mingled with burning flames, eyes weeping, teeth gnashing, pitch darkness, the stench of decay, worms

[94] Darby, *Bede and the End of Time,* 135.
[95] Bede, *The Reckoning of Time,* 71.247-248.
[96] Allen and Calder (trans), *Sources and Analogues,* 211-2.
[97] Allen and Calder (trans), *Sources and Analogues,* 212.

with fiery teeth that tear at bones, pain, lamentation, and no comfort ever.[98] This vivid description is unusual for Bede as he generally avoids elaborating on the torments of hell in favour of describing the pleasures of heaven.[99] The language and context of the poem in contrast to the technical prose of *The Reckoning of Time* may explain the inclusion of the torments of hell in such detail. Amongst the writings of Augustine, Gregory, Ælfric and Wulfstan, Bede's focus on heaven is quite unusual, as all the others place far more emphasis on hell. Even Ælfric, in his measured, descriptive approach, describes hell far more than he focuses on the details of heaven. In the twenty-first homily of *The Second Series,* for example, Ælfric reiterates the vision of Drihthelm from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History.* In this homily, Drihthelm returns from the dead to describe what he saw in terms of punishments and rewards in hell and heaven respectively. In terms of hell, Drihthelm describes how he was transported to a valley that had burning flames on one side and chill on the other where the souls of sinners were tossed between one and the other in torment, though even this is not hell.[100] Drihthelm is then taken to an abyss that is pitch black with an immense flame, a flame that is filled with the souls of humankind. The description goes on for many more lines until Drihthelm is led by the angel to heaven, which Ælfric simply describes as the place of immense light, great melody, and wondrous frangrance.[101] Ælfric, like Wulfstan, is far more concerned with the preparation of the individual and moral reform in the present, not in the precise detail of the eternal state. For both Anglo-Saxon theologians, the death of the individual, at which body and soul are separated, functions as the end of the available time to repent for sins and amend wicked ways. The timing of Judgement Day after this event is irrelevant as the fate of the individual, based on their deeds during life, is already assured.

[98] Allen and Calder (trans), *Sources and Analogues,* 210-211.
[99] Darby, *Bede and the End of Time,* 137.
[100] *CHII* 21.31-55.
[101] *CHII* 21.57-79.

Chapter 3: The Explicitly Eschatological Poems

Old English poetry develops from various traditions and across different mediums. Prior to the advent of Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England, the poetry of that pagan culture would have reflected the values of its warrior aristocracy. In its originally pre-literate setting, it would have been dramatic and intended for oral performance. With Christianity came literacy, Latin texts as well as the authority of scripture and the early Church Fathers. While the influence of these is particularly evident in Old English religious texts in prose, the monastic culture of Latin literacy also makes itself felt in much of the vernacular poetry, including not only a corpus of poetry that adapts and translates Latin texts but also in the development of Christian themes in ways that suit a vernacular literature, composed in Old English for an Anglo-Saxon audience. The conversion to Christianity, moreover, did not simply replace one tradition with another. Rather, the poetic diction of this warrior culture enables the poets to present their Christian material in a new, dramatic way that, while reflecting the Christian influences brought by the first missionaries in 597, could also speak in the style of the pre-conversion *scop*, the professional wordsmith of the pre-literate Anglo-Saxons prior to their conversion.

The general consensus amongst scholars is that Old English literature is conservative and does not contribute anything original to the history of eschatological discourse.[1] As such, scholars have not explored the eschatological themes in Old English literature extensively either as expressions of theology or as literary devices, particularly as a calculated device adopted by the writers who have a distinct purpose. Of those who do explore these themes, more scholars focus on the homilies of Ælfric and Wulfstan than on the three explicitly eschatological poems, *Judgement Day I, Judgement Day II,* and *Christ III,* though Graham

[1] See Gatch, *Preaching and Theology* , 4-5. In relation to the explicit poems addressed here, see Stanley B. Greenfield and Daniel G. Calder, *A new critical history of Old English literature* (New York: New York University Press, 1996) 131 and Charles William Kennedy (ed) *Early English Christian Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) 255.

Caie and Karma Davey Lochrie are the exceptions to this generalisation, as both undertake an in-depth contextual analysis of these poems. Despite their analyses of these poems, however, scholars of Old English literature rarely undertake a comparison between the poetry and the prose. Even scholars who explore Old English poetry specifically do not pay considerable attention to these poems, though they are more likely to mention *Judgement Day II* and *Christ III*, albeit briefly. A number of reasons can be adduced for this lack of scholarly attention. Unlike the writings of Ælfric and Wulfstan, nearly all the surviving corpus of Old English poetry is anonymous. A handful of poems bear Cynewulf's's runic signature, but his name is about all we know of him. It is difficult to speculate about the motivations and intentions of anonymous authors. Ælfric and Wulfstan, on the other hand, are preachers who have a profound understanding of their pastoral responsibilities, and their various writings, to most modern scholars, embody their different voices both distinctly and very publicly. The homilists are also conscious that they are living towards the end of the first millennium so the eschatological issues that draw their attention relate specifically to the timing, signs, and events that will signal the return of Christ. Their sensibilities are rooted in the eschatological discourses in the Gospels, but Ælfric and Wulfstan are also influenced by the complex and varied tradition that developed in the early Christian period, particularly in the writings of Augustine of Hippo, Gregory the Great, and the Venerable Bede. Ælfric and Wulfstan themselves acknowledge their free use of these early Christian writers and their eschatological arguments reflect, sometimes identically, the arguments, attitudes and intentions of their predecessors. For these poems, with the possible exception of *Judgement Day II*, as it is based on a poem attributed to Bede, a single or direct source is also difficult to determine. Furthermore, according to Fulk and Cain, the poems retain something of their oral heritage of dramatic performance.[2]

[2] Fulk and Cain, *A History of Old English Literature*, 139-141.

The prose, though it may have been meant to be read out during liturgical performance, lacks the same sense of dramatic immediacy. Rather, the purpose of the prose is to inform and to educate the audience, either in Ælfric's calm expositions or Wulfstan's more urgent harangues. The poems, however, contain distinctive language that includes heroic vocabulary and values and employs traditional poetic diction and metre to illustrate fundamental concepts and to evoke an emotional response from the audience. In this, the poetry can achieve considerable insights into the spiritual, intellectual, social, and artistic preoccupations of the Anglo-Saxons, insights that run parallel to those of the homilists, but which speak in a subtly different voice. In the poems *Judgement Day I, Judgement Day II,* and *Christ III,* the heroic warrior-ethos is creatively adapted to the explicit eschatological context of the poems. Through this adaptation, the poets reveal both the range of their fundamental concerns and their single purpose. While the central focus of each poem is the day of judgement, the poets, like the homilists Ælfric and Wulfstan, direct their narration of the impending day of judgement toward their own present time.[3] In turn, this concern for present moral and spiritual amendment grounds their rhetorical and didactic purpose in writing the poems; that is, to emphasise the need to prepare actively for the return of Christ, his judgement of humankind, and the end of earthly existence. This purpose, like their narrative focus, is identical to that of the preachers Ælfric and Wulfstan. If the concerns and purpose of both poets and homilists are the same, the questions that remain relate to what distinguishes the poems from the prose accounts in terms of their treatment of eschatological issues; and, more importantly, what do both the differences and the similarities in how writers

[3] Similarly, the poem *Christ and Satan,* redirects the story of the fall of the angels to make it relevant to the Anglo-Saxon context and shares the same purpose as these three poems. While an in depth analysis of this poem is beyond the scope of the present study as it does not fit the narrow definition of 'explicitly eschatological', further analysis of the relationship between these explicit poems and more implicit references to the Judgement Day theme will provide more depth to the present theme. See Charles Robert Sleeth, *Studies in Christ and Satan*. Vol. 3. (Toronto; University of Toronto Press, 1982).

in those different genres express this common purpose reveal about both the Anglo-Saxon thought-world and society as a whole.

According to Peter Clemoes, the primary aim of Old English heroic poetry is the celebration and maintenance of social continuity, in pursuit of which it constantly depicts the actions of the past in order to emphasise their moral significance and relevance to living in the present.[4] The function of poetry in this regard, Clemoes states, is to provide form to the progression from active being to narrative living, based on a linear progression of time, that anchored present experience in the authority of the past.[5] Clemoes defines this aim as the transformation of "active being into narrative living" where the poetic narrative tests the accumulated wisdom of the past against the strains of 'real' life in the present.[6] While Clemoes restricts this definition to the pre-Christian, heroic-warrior poetry of Anglo-Saxon England, it also suits Old English Christian poetry, although their method may reverse that of the traditional poems. Poems such as *Judgement Day I*, *Judgement II*, and *Christ III* can quite accurately be defined, as this thesis will show, as seeking to transform 'narrative living into active being'. The poets draw their sense of 'narrative living' from scriptural narratives and the ideas developed in the early Christian tradition. This they then adapt to their Anglo-Saxon context in order to encourage or inspire their audience to 'active being', by preparing for Christ's future return and judgement of humankind in the present. Most scholars focus on the poems' traditional narrative elements with respect to Judgement Day, which they tend to devalue as unoriginal, lacking unity, and not contributing anything to the history of eschatological discourse.[7] The criticism is not entirely without merit, at least on the surface. While the poets do draw on scriptural and early Christian accounts with respect to the day of

[4] Peter Clemoes, *Interactions of Thought and Language*, xi.
[5] Clemoes, *Interaction of Thought and Language*, 117.
[6] Clemoes states that the transmission of Old English poetry from its Germanic past reflects both society's collective wisdom about itself as well as the established perception on the "environment it needed to control and its human resources for doing so." (p68). For an in-depth discussion of active being into narrative living, see chapter 2, *Interactions of Thought and Language*, 68-116.

judgement, they are not interested in a rhetorical interpretation of Scripture, nor do they intend the poems to function as either prophecy or an accurate representation of the events that will constitute Judgement Day. They leave the scriptural promises that Christ will return to judge humankind explicit and largely unexplored. However, the specific details of the scriptural narratives of Christ's return (and their expansion and interpretation in later Church tradition) are incomplete, complex, and at points inconsistent or ambiguous. Most early Christian writers act on a fundamental need to resolve these ambiguities and reconcile apparent contradictions through scriptural exegesis. This need is based on their expectation of Christ's imminent return, which eventually had to be adjusted when Christ did not return during the first generations of the Church's existence. For the Old English poets, such specific details are not as important to the overall purpose of the poems. *Judgement Day I*, for example, does not actually provide a full account of the sequence of events that will precede the judgement of humankind. Caie observes that the poet does not attempt either to reiterate the descriptions of doomsday in Scripture or to engage with the events defined in the early Christian tradition as signs of the imminence of Judgement Day, nor is the central focus of the poem the actual judgement of the sinful and the blessed or the cataloguing of sins and virtues with their concomitant punishments and rewards.[8]

In all three poems, the poets adapt eschatological themes in order to conceptualise the responsibility of the individual in relation to the future return of Christ and judgement of humankind. Their whole approach to eschatology is based on a fundamental concern for the spiritual wellbeing of the English people. While the poets share this concern with preachers such as Ælfric and Wulfstan, their method of representation and their treatment of eschatological issues is significantly different. Ælfric, as a homilist and preacher, approaches eschatological issues in his homilies in a calm and methodical manner. He explains the need

[8] Caie, *The Judgement Day Theme*, 95.

to prepare actively for Christ's return and judgement of humankind with selective but careful reference to both Scripture and the ideas that developed in the early Christian tradition. This results in a traditional yet distinctly Anglo-Saxon treatment of eschatological issues that lacks an immediate sense of urgency. Wulfstan's treatment of eschatological issues, on the other hand, relies on just such a sense of urgency in order to encourage his audience to moral reform and repentance. Despite his strident exhortations, which draw their vigour in part from the dramatic political and military distress to which England was subjected under the reign of Æthelred, Wulfstan also carefully explains the need to prepare actively in the present for the future reign of and persecution by Antichrist that will precede Christ's return and judgement of humankind. This careful explanation, which is in contrast somewhat to his emphatic exhortations, stems from his use of Ælfric's writings and reliance on Ælfric's authority to support his own claims. The poets, however, rely on vivid imagery in their treatment of eschatological issues rather than the rhetorical conventions of either Scripture or the early Christian tradition. That is not to say that the poets disregard Scripture or the ideas that developed by early Christian writers. Instead, their central focus is on the present time and on the meaning of Judgement Day rather than the prediction of events that will constitute Christ's return and judgement of humankind.

The poems evoke the judgement of humankind as a present reality rather than a chronological anticipation of future events that will constitute the actual day of judgement. According to Lochrie, the poem *Judgement Day I*, for example, focuses on images rather than events, associations rather than explicit references to authorities such as Scripture or the writings of the early Church Fathers, and on audience perception rather than participation.[9] This accounts somewhat for the discrepancies with respect to the specific details within the poem compared to both the prose accounts and Scripture, which are present as well in the

[9] Karma Davey Lochrie, "Judgment and Spiritual Apocalypse in Old English Eschatological Poetry." PhD Diss., Princeton University, 1981, 83.

poems *Judgement Day II* and *Christ III.* In all three poems, the poets evoke the apocalyptic present that is also evident in the writings of Gregory the Great, Ælfric, and Wulfstan discussed earlier. In this apocalyptic present, the future return of Christ and his judgement of humankind functions as a conceptual scheme that reinforces the need to prepare actively through self-reflection and self-judgement in the present. As such, they are not concerned with eschatological issues such as the chronology of human history or speculation about the specific timing of Christ's return, or the specific signs that will herald Judgement Day. The poets are also not trying to predict or analyse future events. Instead, their aim is to encourage moral reform through evocative imagery that, as Lochrie highlights, focuses on redirecting audience perception away from mortal, earthly existence, to eternal, spiritual existence.[10] Unlike Ælfric and Wulfstan, however, who attempt to achieve this aim through careful explanation, grounded in Scripture and to the writings of Church fathers such as Augustine, Gregory and Bede, the poets assemble allusions to judgement day from their sources to conjure a vivid tableau of what every individual will face when Christ returns to judge humankind. Their method for achieving this is simple: a combination of traditional narrative and distinct but methodical dramatization.

The traditional aspects are evident in the common motifs that the poets integrate into their poems. These motifs are 'common' as they derive from Scripture and are evident in the treatments of the Judgement Day theme from the early Christian tradition to the Anglo-Saxon period. By including them, the poets evoke the authority of the Latin monastic and patristic tradition and reveal what they accept as fundamental truths in relation to Christ's return. While the poets do not provide a comprehensive or sequential treatment of the events that will constitute the end times, these common motifs reinforce continuity with the eschatological tradition that informs them while also revealing the way that the poets adopt

[10] Lochrie, "Judgement and Spiritual Apocalypse", 83.

these motifs in a creative, entertaining, and dramatic way to suit their purposes. According to the poets, the specific timing of Judgement Day cannot be determined or calculated as Christ's return will be swift and sudden. But when it comes, this return will be heralded by the sound of trumpets as well as changes in the sun, moon, and stars. All will experience fear and agitation at the sight of these unambiguous signs of Christ's return, since they will understand it will then be too late to repent. An apocalyptic fire will burn through Creation, the dead will be reunited with their bodies, and all will be summoned from the four quarters of the world to face Christ and his squadrons of angels. The blessed and the sinful will view Christ differently—the former as benign saviour and the latter as stern judge—and each will have a concomitantly different experience of Judgement Day. Despite this difference, all will be judged equally, regardless of their wealth or status, and all secrets will be revealed to all on that day. The sinners will be placed on Christ's left hand and the blessed on his right before being assigned to their eternal fates in hell and heaven respectively. There is nothing original or remarkable about this description. On the contrary, the treatment of the Judgement Day theme in these poems is traditional and conservative, as each of its aspects can be traced back to Scripture and the eschatological discourse of early Christian writers. What is remarkable, and what distinguishes these poems, is the way that the poets creatively adapt these traditional elements in order to represent Judgement Day in a uniquely Anglo-Saxon way.

The measurement of time and the synthesis of Christian history are significant in the development of eschatological discourse. Early Christians devised various methods and calculations to determine accurately the chronology of human history based on the events outlined in Scripture. In doing so, some early Christian writers sought to clarify the scriptural predictions of Christ's return and the events that would constitute Judgement Day. Amongst the complex and varied traditions that developed in this regard, Augustine makes a clear

distinction between the chronology of the world and the timing of Christ's return. Though in his writings Augustine divides the chronology of human history into six definite Ages, he is adamant throughout his works that the specific timing of Christ's return cannot be determined or calculated. In terms of the latter, Augustine cites Acts 1:7, which states "it is not for you to know the times and seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority", and Matt 24:36, which states "but of the day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only" in order to support his arguments. Gregory also maintains that the exact time of Christ's return cannot be known, despite his unfaltering conviction that Judgement Day is imminent. Bede agrees but, unlike Augustine, he does not absolutely separate the timing of the end and the chronology of human history. Rather, Bede carefully documents the chronology of human history according to Scripture in order to prove that the duration of the sixth and final Age cannot be determined. Ælfric and Wulfstan's treatments of the timing of the end is both highly conservative and selective. They, unlike Bede, are not interested in the specific details with respect to the Ages of the world. They do, however, emphasise throughout their writings that the exact time of Christ's return cannot be determined, yet, at the same time, they share Gregory's sense of urgency that Judgement Day is imminent. The *Blickling and Vercelli* homilies reflect the same idea that while the exact timing cannot be known, Christ's return must be imminent as the Scriptural signs of the end are already evident.[11] The prose accounts reflect the long, speculative tradition with respect to the timing of the end and acknowledge the ambiguities in both Scripture and in the writings of early Christians. As homilies and sermons, they attempt to address these issues in a way that carefully evades providing a definitive explanation. Their methods, while they aim for moral reform, are also attempts to synthesise human history up until their present time, an approach that is not shared by the poets.

[11] In particular Blickling Homily 10 in R. Morris (ed), *The Blickling Homilies* EETS O.S. 58. 63. 73. (London: Oxford University Press, 1997) 106-115 and Vercelli Homily 15 in D.G. Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, EETS 300 (London: Oxford University Press, 1992) 249-265.

The poems are more absolute than the prose accounts in how they ignore any issue of the timing of the end. In *Judgement Day I,* the poet begins the first two passages by stating first that "It shall happen" (*ðæt gelimpan sceal*) followed in the next passage by "The Lord has fixed the time when he will come here" (*Hafað him geþinged þeoden user hider on þam mæsten dæge*).[12] These lines, while they do insist the end will have *a* definite timing, also refuse entirely to specify it. The poet is not interested in the various traditions and complex arguments that attempt to predict the exact timing of Christ's return. Neither is he interested in synthesizing the chronology of human history according to Scripture or in resolving the various discrepancies between various traditions with respect to the Ages of the world. Rather, these two lines reveal that the poet accepts the basic Scriptural promise that Christ will return to judge humankind and that this return will mark the end of earthly existence. For the poet, the exact timing of the end is less important than the need to prepare actively in the present, as Christ's return will be sudden and it will be too late once the sequence of events that constitute Judgement Day are underway. For the poets, the day of judgement is thus a perpetually imminent mystery—always about to happen, but without a definite timetable. This reveals the way that poetry transcends temporal horizons, similar to the way that the *Beowulf* poet blurs and blends its vistas of pagan past and Christian present. As such, the poets seek to communicate a timeless psychological fact and necessity that Christ will return and judgement will happen but its exact timing is irrelevant. The prose writers are more involved in articulating a temporal process, and there is a little bit of both in the prose and the poetry, but the poems are less focused on the temporal process than the prose.

[12] Bernard J. Muir (ed), "Judgement Day I", *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry (Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies)*. University of Exeter Press, 2007, 334-338. From herein all references to this poem will be cited as *Judgement Day I* followed by the line numbers. This citation, for example, *Judgement Day I* 1,5.

This sense that the return of Christ will be sudden is also evident in *Judgement Day II* and *Christ III.*[13] As in *Judgement Day I*, the poets of these two poems also accept the Scriptural promise that Christ will return to judge humankind and are not interested in engaging with the various arguments or traditions that developed in relation to the specific timing of Christ's return. As such, the references to the timing of the end in these poems are traditional yet also brief and dismissive. For the poets, the key message is that Christ will return to judge humankind and it is the responsibility of every individual to prepare actively in the present. In *Christ III*, this is emphasized in the opening passage:

Đonne mid fere foldbuende
se micla dæg meahtan dryhtnes
æt midre niht mægne bihlæmeð
870 scire gesceafte, swa oft sceaða fæcne
þeof þristlice þe on þystre fareð
on sweartre niht, sorglease hæleð
semninga forfehð slæpe gebundne,
eorlas ungearwe yfles genægeð.[14]

The reference specifically to midnight in this passage is significant, but not because the poet is stipulating the exact timing of Christ's return. Rather, the poet is reiterating the Augustinian idea that the timing cannot be known and that Christ will return when he is least expected. The reference to midnight recalls the Gospel accounts, particularly Matt 25:6, which states "But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to

[13] All references to *Christ III* will be from Bernard J. Muir (ed), "Christ in Judgement", *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry (Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies)*. University of Exeter Press, 2007, 334-338. While the text will be taken from Muir, references to the modern title of the poem will retain that in the Anglo-Saxon poetic records of *Christ III* to avoid any confusion in reference. From herein all references to this poem will be cited as *Christ III* followed by the line numbers.

[14] "Then with sudden swiftness upon the midnight…just as an insidious vandal, an audacious thief who goes abroad in the dark, in the black night, will often suddenly take careless, sleep-bound men by surprise, it will painfully cast down those people unprepared." *Christ III* 1-8.

meet him' " and Mark 13:35, which states "Therefore, keep awake – for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn." Similarly, key terms such as 'sudden' and associating the return of Christ with a thief in the night also derives from Scripture. In Mark 13:36-37, for example, Christ himself warns, "or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. \ and what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake." Similarly, in Luke 12:39-40 he exhorts to the same vigilance:

> "But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour."

In 1 Thess 5:2-4 St Paul strikes the same note:

> For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief;

The treatment of the timing of the end in *Christ III* clearly stems from the Gospel accounts. All of these poems are also influenced by the native oral tradition that aims to *move* an audience. In this regard, the poems have a closer affinity with the Gospel accounts than with the exegesis of these accounts in the writings of the early Church Fathers, which is far more cautious, expository, and forensic in its approach. The parables of Jesus, similarly, do not attempt to convince the audience through careful, methodical, and reasoned argument. Instead, like the poems, they aim to challenge and provoke the audience through more indirect means that seek to challenge ordinary thought and expectations rather than convince

through rhetoric. The poets demonstrate a thorough understanding of this technique, creatively adapting their sources to create vivid imagery that is succinct and to the point, only emphasizing what they want and need to emphasise. In this regard, the poet of *Christ III*, as in the Gospels, is not citing midnight as a specific time but is playing the paradox of Christ's return as both utterly certain yet an absolute surprise, and his reference to sleep is not literal. Instead, it refers to complacency rather than actual sleep. This is evident in the association with the "thief in the night" who will attack individuals who are unprepared (*ungearwe).* Without explicitly saying so, the poet is warning the audience that they should remain vigilant in their faith and preparing constantly for Christ's return through prayer and penance. The message, however, is far more implicit then in the prose accounts and adds to the dramatic imagery of the poem.

In *Judgement Day II,* the treatment of the timing of the end is far more implicit than in *Judgement Day I* or *Christ III*, though it does draw on the same notion that Christ's return will be sudden. The opening of *Judgement Day II* is similar to its Latin source, the poem *De Die Iudicii* attributed to Bede, though with subtle yet significant differences. Both poems, for example, reiterate that Christ's return will be unexpected, sudden, and swift yet neither poem indicates that Judgement Day is currently underway in each poem's present. Instead, both poems begin when the narrator is reminded of what is to come when Christ does return.[15] The way that this is presented, however, differs slightly in each poem. In *Judgement Day II,* the poet states:

> Hwæt! Ic ana sæt innane bearwe
> mid helme beþeht, holte tomiddes,

[15] This study will not distinguish between the poet, narrator, and/speaker of the poems but will focus more on the message of each poem rather than either the narrator/speaker or the intended audience. For discussion on the relationship between the poet, narrator, and audience, see Lois Bragg, *The Lyric Speakers of Old English Poetry* (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1991) and for a discussion on the communal vs the individual speaker see Hugh Magennis *Images of community in Old English poetry*. Vol. 18. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

þær þa wæterburnan swegdon and urnon
on middan gehæge (eal swa ic secge);
eac þær wynwyrta weoxon and bleowon
innon þam gemonge on ænlicum wonge
and þa wudubeamas wagedon and swegdon
þurh winda gryre. Wolcn wæs gehrered
and min earme mod eal wæs gedrefed.[16]

This sudden change from tranquillity to the sky being "churned up", however, reminds the narrator with what violent suddenness Christ's return will explode upon human consciousness, how swiftly all will be brought to judgement. Where the prose accounts *name* this sudden violence, the poetic accounts seek to *show* it. Compared to Bede's text, these opening lines also reveal a subtle yet significant shift from the Latin source to the Old English poem. In Bede's *De Die Iudicii,* the narrator is also sitting in a peaceful setting under a tree. The poem begins:

While I sat sad and alone under the covering of a shady
tree, among the flowering grasses of the fertile earth, with
branches echoing on every side from the wind's breath,
I was suddenly disturbed by a bitter lament.[17]

These opening lines of the Latin poem reveal both the similarities and significant differences between the two texts. While both narrators sit in a seemingly peaceful setting, the speaker in the Latin poem is shaded by a single tree, while the speaker of the Old English poem sits in a grove in the middle of the forest that has a sheltering canopy over it. A grove in the middle of

[16] "Alone I sat within the grove canopied over with a sheltered roof in the forest's midst…And the treesstirred and murmured at the roughness of the winds, the sky was churned up and my miserable spirit was quite thrown into confusion." All references to *Judgement Day II* are from Graham D. Caie (ed) *The Old English Poem Judgement Day II* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000). From herein, references to this poem will be cited as *Judgement Day II* followed by the line numbers. This citation, for example, *Judgement Day II*, 1-9.
[17] Allen and Calder (trans), *Sources and Analogues,* 208-209.

the forest depicts are far more enclosed, sheltered, and protected setting than sitting under the shade of one tree. The Old English poet, according to Caie and Lochrie, describe this scene in terms that replicate the garden of Eden on earth. Caie states that the description of the enclosed grove implies, on the one hand, a sense of security and protection, just as Adam and Eve enjoy divine protection before the Fall.[18] Lochrie develops this association further by suggesting that the opening lines of *Judgement Day II* evoke a monastic vision and the model of contemplation that monasteries inspire.[19] Lochrie further states that the monastic paradise alluded to in the poem also functions as a link between the garden of Eden before the Fall and the eternal paradise of Heaven post-Judgement Day.[20] Caie also suggests, however, that the tranquil grove represents complacency and the sudden change reminds both the narrator and the audience of the transience of earthly existence.[21] The poet's intention in the opening lines, while difficult to determine with any certainty, may comprise elements of both. The poet may have been evoking a monastic setting, possibly even the monastic setting in which he lived. In a culture of severely restricted literacy, a literary consciousness such as the poet displays could only have been acquired in an Anglo-Saxon monastic milieu. It is plausible to assume, then, that the poet was an ecclesiastic or someone associated and familiar with the monastic setting. At the same time, however, the idea that the opening lines' images of withdrawn calm serve as a caution against complacency is perhaps even more plausible. In the context of the entire poem, though, whether or not the poet is evoking a monastic setting in the opening lines is largely irrelevant. His overall focus is on the contrast between calm tranquillity on the one hand and stormy, sudden change on the other. The poet emphasises how suddenly

[18] Caie explores the idea of a garden in paradise and compares the *Judgement Day II* poem to the imagery in the *Phoenix* and *The Wife's Lament.* While an in depth analysis of these poems is beyond the scope of this thesis, Caie's analysis does invite further investigation. See Caie, *Judgement Day Theme*, 121-24.
[19] Lochrie also explores how the monastic paradise also represents the time between the Garden of Eden before the Fall and the eternal paradise after judgement. She explores this idea in Smaragdus and Gregory. See Lochrie, "Judgement and Spiritual Apocalypse", 135-144.
[20] Lochrie, "Judgement and Spiritual Apocalypse", 136.
[21] Caie, *Judgement Day Theme*, 127.

things can transform from peaceful to violent and from the concerns of earthly existence to the violently thrown-open perspectives of Judgement Day, a point that is reinforced further by the narrator's state of mind. This reveals the second major amendment to the Latin source. In Bede's poem, the narrator is sitting "sad and alone" under the shade of a tree and is then troubled by a "bitter lament". In the Old English poem, the poet notes that the narrator is sitting in the grove alone but does not, at least in the first line, indicate that the narrator is sad or miserable. Instead, the implication in the first few lines is that the narrator is seemingly at peace in the tranquil grove, which, perhaps deliberately, is described in a way that reflects the garden of Eden. Further along, the poet states that his miserable spirit is thrown into confusion once the wind breaks the tranquillity of the grove and the sky is churned up. It is unclear in the way that this scene is constructed in the Old English poem whether the narrator's spirit is miserable from the outset or whether the sudden change in weather reminds them that they are not, in fact, sitting in the garden of Eden but still very much within earthly existence. If the latter, then the poet is on the one hand emphasising to the audience the mutability of human existence, while on the other hand suggesting how swiftly the spirit will go from complacency within this existence to the terror of Judgement Day. As such, the poem functions as a warning to the audience against complacency and to prepare actively for Christ's return in the present.[22] While the change of weather in the opening scene does not herald Christ's actual return, it does emphasise how in its swift and sudden advent, Christ's return will prove both wholly unexpected and yet also shockingly clear and immediate to all concerned. No one is going to be able to mistake it, however unwelcome that recognition may prove for some. While Bede's aim is the same in *De Die Iudicii*, the method of representation differs significantly, so much so that it reveals the way the Old English poem is unique to the Anglo-Saxon context. The main difference is that Bede

[22] Caie, *Judgement Day Theme*, 127.

declares from the outset that the state of mind of the speaker in the poem is in contrast to the peaceful, external surroundings. The speaker is "sad and alone" in a peaceful setting who is then disturbed by a bitter lament, even though the external setting has not changed dramatically. As such, Bede presents the turmoil experienced by the speaker as being wholly inward and psychological. In the Old English poem, the poet implies that the speaker is at peace in the tranquil grove and then the miserable spirit is thrown into confusion when the sky is churned up with an impending storm. Here, the poet presents the inner, psychological state of mind of the speaker and external, material setting as being synchronised and in balance. The inner and outer turmoil represented here reminds the audience that earthly existence is transient, going from peaceful to tumultuous in an instant. This modification to Bede's poem also reveals that the poets are highly selective in the way that the source material is used and is adapted to suit their specific context.

This highly selective treatment of the Judgement Day theme also highlights that the poets have an in-depth understanding of both Scripture and the early Christian tradition. They creatively adapt and integrate scriptural references to suit both the eschatological context of the poems and the conventions of Old English poetry. Their scriptural references, however, are not restricted to eschatological issues. Rather, a significant aspect of all three poems is the way that the poets integrate broader scriptural references that are not generally associated with the sequence of eschatological events in order to illustrate their purpose. In *Judgement Day I,* for example, the poet begins the poem by stating:

> Đæt gelimpan sceal, þætte lagu floweð
> flod ofer foldan; feores bið æt ende
> anra gehwylcum.[23]

[23] "It shall happen: the sea will rise in flood over the world, life will be over for every single person. *Judgement Day I,* 1-3a.

In these opening lines, the poet is alluding to an apocalyptic flood that, according to Caie, has no biblical source and may have derived from other, non-biblical sources.[24] Caie cites Genesis 9:11, which states "that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be flood to destroy the earth" and was taken by patristic tradition as a binding promise that God would keep to the end, refraining from including floods among the tribulations of the last days. There are, however, several passages in Scripture that suggest otherwise, including Wisdom 5:23 and 19:12.[25] Despite God's covenant with humankind in Genesis above, this passage highlights that God commands all things and has the power to pour the sea over the earth if he chooses to do so. The transience of earthly existence is evident in Ezechiel 27:34, which states "Now you are wrecked by the seas, in the depths of the waters, your merchandise and all your crew have sunk with you." This passage also characterises the sea as a punitive/cleansing agent on the one hand, and as a broader agent of instability in earthly existence on the other, devouring the material treasures human beings seek to accumulate and hoard. The purifying aspect of the sea is combined with its power to obliterate in Micah 7:19, which states "He will again have compassion upon us; he will tread our iniquities under foot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." The power of the Lord is again invoked here as well as the function of the sea in purifying humankind of their sins. The matter-of-fact way that the Old English poet declares that the apocalyptic flood will occur is difficult to account for. Is the poet alluding to possibly three different scriptural traditions? In terms of the apocalyptic flood, the opening line could represent the poet's attempt to conflate Luke 21:25, which states "There will be signs…and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves", with

[24] Caie, *Judgement Day Theme*, 98.

[25] In addition to these passages, there are also several passages in Scripture that emphasise the ability of God to command the sea's vast power, the sea being a common image in Patristic writings for the transience of earthly existence, as well as a primordial symbol of chaos going back to Babylonian myth and the ability of the sea to purify humankind of sin. The power of God is evident in Amos 9:6, which states "who builds his upper chambers in the heavens and founds his vault upon the earth; who calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out upon the surface of the earth – the Lord is his name."

Rev. 20:13, which states "And the sea gave up the dead that were in it…and all were judged according to what they had done." Furthermore, by attaching the imagery of the apocalyptic flood with the statement "It shall happen", the poet indicates, in a single line, the certainty that it will happen, on the one hand, and the uncertainty as to when it will happen and by what means. Like the timing of the end, the method by which it will end is not known nor can it be determined by humankind, except for the broad assumption in all traditions that it will entail trial and tribulation for those who must experience it. As a natural phenomenon, floods are inherently apocalyptic (in the broader modern sense of that word, more or less synonymous with 'catastrophic' or 'cataclysmic') in that their violence is commonly sudden, unexpected, overwhelming and destructive. The sheer psychological power of flood imagery alone can account for the poet's use of it here, even without reference to Scripture.

While Christ's return will be swift and sudden, various signs will give certain notice that Judgement Day is underway. As with the timing of the end, the sequence of events that will herald Christ's actual return in the poems is traditional. The treatment of these events and their representation in the poems, however, reflect the specific aims and purpose of the poets in a way that is uniquely Anglo-Saxon. As such, the poets exhibit a thorough, in-depth knowledge of Scripture and tradition, not only by reiterating the key elements but by creatively adapting this detail to express the same idea in a dramatic and immediate way. In *Judgement Day I,* following on from the flood that will cover the earth as described earlier, the poet describes the apocalyptic fire that will occur upon Christ's return. The poet states:

> Wile þone forbærnan brego moncynnes
> lond mid lige . . . .
>
> Hat bið onæled
>
> siþþan fyr nimeð foldan sceatas,
> byrnende lig beorhte gesceafte;

bið eal þes ginna grund gleda gefylled.[26]

This fire will burn through all of Creation, destroying earthly existence and preparing the world for both judgement and its transformation into an eternal post-judgement state. There is, according to the poet, no greater terror than this apocalyptic fire for the "stars will not be visible to us here any more" and all "earthly prosperity and distinction will be gone" (*Ne tytaþ her tongul, ac biþ tyr scæcan, eorþan blædas*).[27] The fire itself will be announced by the sounds of trumpets. The poet first describes the fire, then the terror that will ensue and the changes to the visibility of the stars, followed by the statement that this fire will be announced by trumpets. This order reflects Rev. 8:5-6:

> And the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar
> and cast it on the earth;...Now the seven angels, who had the seven
> trumpets made ready to blow them.

Changes to the sun, moon, and stars are noted in Rev 9. In *Judgement Day I,* the poet describes the fire, terror and stars before the trumpets that will announce this apocalyptic fire. This is not because the poet is confused about the scriptural details. Rather, the order of events here is secondary to the poet's aim of dramatising the terror of Judgement Day to encourage moral reform. The poet represents these phenomena from an earthly perspective while the biblical apocalypses adopt a wider, more cosmic angle reflecting God's perspective rather than that of humankind. The earthly perspective enables the poet to emphasise the immediate need for repentance during earthly existence, a point that is reinforced in the final lines of the poem. The poet states:

Siþþan æfter þam lige lif bið gestaþelad,

[26] …the ruler of mankind will burn the land with fire . . . . A blaze will be kindled, once fire has seized the earth's surface, the burning flame has taken the bright creation. All this wide world will be full of glowing coals." *Judgement Day I*, 7-8a, 9b-12.
[27] *Judgement Day I,* 45-46.

welan ah in wuldre se nu wel þenceð.[28]

For the poet, according to Caie, the present determines the future in that future joys result from present sorrow and ignorance while future punishment stems from present evil and worldliness.[29] While present meditation and active preparation during earthly existence will, according to the poet, save the individual from the eternal torment of hell, it does not release the individual from the experience of Judgement Day.

The sequence of events in each poem is significant as it reveals the fundamental concerns of the poets and the rhetorical tools that they use to emphasise these concerns. Where the poet of *Judgement Day I* focuses on the external signs and events that will constitute Judgement Day in order to encourage immediate action, the poet of *Judgement Day II* is more concerned with the internal, psychological dimension. As such, the statement in the opening lines of the poem that the poet's mind is "troubled" (*min earme mod eal wæs gedrefed)* sets the tone for the entire poem, making the signs of the end of secondary importance. After describing the sudden change in weather, the narrator is reminded of how swiftly Judgement Day will happen and is fearful of God's wrath on that day for all the sins and wicked thoughts committed during life.[30] This fear leads the narrator to lament and rebuke himself in a way that is reminiscent of the soul's address to the body in the *Soul and Body I and II* poems. The poet states:

"Nu ic eow, æddran, ealle bidde
þæt ge wylspringas well ontynan,
hate of hleorum, recene to tearum;

[28] "Then after the flame life will be established, eternal prosperity in glory for him who meditates deeply now." *Judgement Day I*, 118-119.
[29] Caie, *Judgement Day Theme*, 97.
[30] Thomas Austin Tutt explores the specific Anglo-Saxon rhetoric of fear and the way that texts such as the prose sermons of Ælfric and Wulfstan together with the verse hagiography, riddles, and elegies employ a variety of rhetorical tropes to inspire fear in their audiences. While Tutt does not explore the explicitly eschatological poems *Judgement Day I, Judgement Day II, and Christ III*, the discussion is worth noting as the basis for further study. See Thomas Austin Tutt, "The Destroyer of Souls: The Rhetoric of Fear in Old English Literature" PhD diss., University of Texas at Arlington, 2012. https://uta-ir.tdl.org/uta-ir/handle/10106/24015.

þænne ic synful slea swiðe mid fyste
breost mine beate on gebedstowe,
and minne lichaman lecge on eorðan
and geearnade sar ealle ic gecige.
Ic bidde eow benum nu ða
þæt ge ne wandian wiht for tearum,
ac dreorige hleor dreccað mid wope
and sealtum dropum sona ofergeotaþ
and geopeniað man ecum drihtne.
Ne þær owiht inne ne belife
on heortscræfe heanra gylta,
þæt hit ne sy dægcuð, þæt þæt dihle wæs,
openum wordum eall abæred,
breostes and tungan and flæsces swa some".[31]

While reminiscent of these poems, the rebuke here differs in that the narrator still has the opportunity to repent for their sins. In the *Soul and Body* poems, on the other hand, the situation is far more dire as the soul addresses the body after they have been separated by death, when, as is emphasised throughout Old English literature, it is too late to repent. The narrator implores his spirit, and his audience, to open up and flood the face with penitential tears while his hands beat the sinful breast and the body lies prostrate on the earth, invoking the punishment that it deserves. The poet calls for confession of every sin that afflicts the

[31] "Now I beg you all, streams, quickly open your wellsprings quickly for tears, hot down the cheeks. Then I, sinful, strike severely with my fist beat my breast in the place of prayer and lay my body on the earth, invoking all the pains I deserve. I beg you now with prayers to not turn away now from crying, but torment this blood-stained cheek with lamentation and let it overflow immediately with salty drops and reveal the shameful deeds to the eternal Lord. Let no trace of sins remain in the recesses of the heart, where that which was secret might not be known by day, but be revealed – of the breast, and tongue and flesh – be laid bare with open words." All quotations from *Judgement Day II* are from Graham D. Caie (ed and trans), *The Old English Poem Judgement Day II* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000). From herein all references to the poem will be cited as *Judgement Day II* followed by the line numbers. This citation for example, *Judgement Day II*, 26-42.

spirit and stains the soul. Only through such complete transparency, the poet states, where nothing is left concealed within the heart, can the soul begin to heal. He continues:

Ðis is on hæl earmre sauwle
and þam sorgiendum selest hihta,
þæt he wunda her wope gecyðe
uplicum læce se ana mæg
aglidene gyltas mid gode gehælen
and ræplingas recene onbindon.[32]

These few lines contain key literary motifs, ideas, and themes, with respect to not only Judgement Day but also to sin, confession, and penance. The penitential tears are a common motif in Old English and medieval literature as is the association between the 'wounds of sin' that can only be cured by Christ the Physician.[33] The cure for these wounds is confession and penance, at which point Christ will "unloose the enchained". That the individual is enslaved or bound by sin is an idea emphasised as early back as Augustine but it also reflects the Anglo-Saxon development of the idea. As will be discussed in Chapter four, Augustine argued that the individual will could be enslaved by evil and require God's grace to free it. Later Anglo-Saxon theologians like Ælfric and Wulfstan agree with this statement but also emphasise that the individual is not completely incapacitated by evil but can seek good and pray for God's grace by their own choice. The allusion to Christ the Physician in the above passage brings these ideas together in that the individual may be wounded by sin and

[32] "This is the one cure for the miserable soul, and for the grieving the best of hopes: that here, with weeping, he makes known his wounds to the celestial Physician who alone can heal by his virtue felonies slipped into and gloried in, and can swiftly unloose the enchained." *Judgement Day II*, 43-48. The line "aglidene gyltas mid gode gehælen" is a different reading to that in *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, which Caie accounts for in the Commentary. See note 47 on page 113 of Caie, *The Old English Poem 'Judgement Day II'*.

[33] The concept of Christ the Physician who can heal the wounds of sin was well established by the Anglo-Saxon period. See Augustine, *City of God*, 4.16. For a discussion of Augustine's ideas in this regard see Rudolph Arbesmann, "The Concept of *Christus Medicus* in St Augustine", *Traditio* 10 (1954) 1-28 and Thomas F. Martin, "Paul the Patient: Christus Medicus and the "Stimulus Carnis"(2 Cor. 12: 7): A Consideration of Augustine's Medicinal Christology." *Augustinian Studies* 32, no. 2 (2001): 219-256, Caie, 'Literary Analysis', *Judgement Day II*, 70-72.

incapacitated by these wounds but can still be healed by Christ the Physician through penitential tears and confession, as implied by the poet inlines 80-81 "Hwi ne bidst þu þe bepunga and plaster \ lifes læcedomes æt lifes frean".[34] The time for penance, the poet states, is now, and the individual should neither despise nor fear lamenting and weeping, for Christ will be more gracious to those who suffer remorse and condemn themselves for sins prior to Judgement Day.

The key here, which is also evident in Old English prose and in the writings of Gregory and Bede, is an emphasis on self-judgement. While this is fundamental to any call for penance, it is of particular interest to the writers of Old English. Both the prose and the poetry are particularly focused on self-judgement, so much so that the treatment of eschatological themes, as well as other literary motifs, centres around its necessity. For *Judgement Day II*, this is the poet's only concern. The first person narrative, in which the speaker admonishes himself to remember, seemingly provides the audience with a view into the narrator and poet's mind while also exhorting the same audience to the same.[35] The first-person narrative is a rhetorical technique that appears to draw the audience into a privileged circle of trust, almost as though it is providing a safe space, of which self-reflection, judgement, and confession form the focus. By providing his own self-judgement and reflection, the poet encourages his audience to do the same. But he is not confessing: there is no indication in the poem that he is actually reflecting on specific personal sins of his own, as they are neither enumerated nor even referred to in any way. The poet's aim, therefore, appears to be to establish a relationship with the audience rather than simply providing a checklist of what they should do before Judgement Day. The description of what will constitute Judgement Day and the events surrounding it has the same purpose: to establish a shared, communal awareness of what will occur that encourages the audience to band

[34] "Why did you not pray for poultice and plaster, for life-medicine from the Lord of life?"
[35] Caie, *Judgement Day Theme*, 119.

together as a community and, through their penitential exertions, pre-empt the terror that will otherwise unfold for them.

In this regard, the description of the events of Judgement Day is not intended as a prediction or an accurate representation grounded in scriptural prophecy. The poet is not concerned either with the accuracy of his description or even with the events themselves. Instead, his aim is to represent Christ's return in the most graphic, detailed, and dramatic way to remind his audience of what is to come and what can be done to negate its potential horror. The description of Judgement Day begins from line 92, where the narrator implores his own self, and the poet implores his audience, to remember the extent of God's wrath and punishment on Judgement Day toward those who failed to repent while there was still adequate time. From line 99b, the poet states:

> Eall eorðe bifað,
> eac swa þa duna dreosað and hreosað
> and beorga hliðu bugað and myltað,
> and se egeslica sweg ungerydre sæ
> eall manna mod miclum gedrefoð.
> Eal bið eac upheofen
> sweart and gesworcen, swiðe geþuxsað,
> deorc and dimhiw and dwolma sweart.
> Þonne stedelease steorran hreosað
> and seo sunne forswyrcð sona on morgen;
> ne se mona næfð nanre mihte wiht
> þæt he þære nihte genipu mæge flecgan.[36]

[36] "All the earth will tremble, and the mountains will crumble and collapse also, and the slopes of the hills will subside and melt, and the appalling tumult of the turbulence of the sea will greatly bewilder all men's minds. The whole firmament too will become black and bedimmed – very murky it will become - dark and drab of hue,

These fairly traditional signs of the end will herald Christ's immediate return to judge humankind and are just a hint of the terror that will occur when the individual actually faces judgement. Christ will appear, according to the poet, and will summon all of humankind where all its concealed sins—the secret thoughts, concealed desires, evil that the heart has contemplated, malicious words spoken, and wicked deed—will be revealed to all. The idea that all will be revealed when Christ appears is common in both Old English literature and early Christian literature.[37] As humankind is summoned and all will be revealed before Christ, the sky fills with a bitter, fierce flame. The poet states:

> Đonne fyren lig blaweð and braslað
> read and reðe, ræset and efesteð
> hu he synfullum susle gefremme.
> Ne se wrecenda bryne wile forbugan
> oððe ænigum þær are gefremman
> buton he horwon sy her afeormad
> and þonne þider cume þearle aclænsed.
> Þonne fela mægða, folca unrim,
> heora sinnigan breost swiðlice beatað
> forhte mid fyste for fyrenlustum.
> Þær beoð þearfan and þeodcyningas,
> earm and eadig, ealle beoð afæred.
> Þær hæfð one lage earm and se welega,

black as chaos. Then, loose from their places, the stars will fall and the sun will forthwith grow bedimmed not will the moon have any strength, that it can put the night's shadows to flight." *Judgement Day II,* 99-110.

[37] See, for example, Blickling Homily X, which states "on the last day the body shall be as transparent as glass and no least bit of its wickedness will be concealed." *(biþ þonne se flæschoma ascyred swa glæs, ne mæg þæs unrihtes beon awiht bedigled.)* All references to the Blickling Homilies are from R. Morris (ed and trans), *The Blicking Homilies,* EETS (London: Oxford University Press, 1997) 110-111.

forðan hi habbað ege ealle ætsomne.[38]

This raging fire that will fill the entire expanse of the sky will, according to the poet, cause fear in anyone who has not repented for their sins. The poet reinforces here two fundamental points: that the flame will torment those who have not prepared adequately by confessing and repenting for their sins during earthly existence, and that all individuals will be bound by the same law. That is, the wealthy and the poor will be treated the same, under the same law, and afflicted according to their sins rather than their status. These points are not unique to the poet, however, and are also noted by Bede in *De Die Iudicii.*

The similarities and differences between Bede's description and that in *Judgement Day II* are significant. Both descriptions personify the flame and emphasise that the flame's vengeance is only for the sinful. The implication is that those who prepare actively in the present will not fear or be affected by this apocalyptic flame on Judgement Day. While the message of both poems is the same, Bede's description lacks the intensity achieved by *Judgement Day II*. There, the poet's language can be vivid and kinetic, as in such phrases as "red and fierce" or his description of flames that "roar and bluster" and cause "torment for the sinful". This language is intentionally evocative as the poet wants the audience to understand and, more importantly, to visualise just how frightening this apocalyptic fire will be. Darby states that Bede believed the fire on Judgement Day would have an expiatory purpose in that it will serve to cleanse the elect while tormenting the sinful.[39] Bede cites Augustine and Gregory as authorities in this regard, though in *De Temporum Ratione* he cites the example of the three Hebrew youths in the furnace in the Book of Daniel as evidence that the righteous

[38] "Then the fiery flame will bluster and roar, red and fierce, and crackle and run apace, by which it will cause torment to the sinful. The avenging blaze will not spare or show pity on anyone there, unless he is purged here of his defilements, and then arrives there rigorously cleansed. Then many nations, a countless tally of people, will violently beat with fist their sinful breast, afraid, because of their wicked lusts. Paupers will be there and kings of the people; the poor and the affluent will all be frightened. There the poor and the wealthy will have one law, for they will be subject to fear together." *Judgement Day II*, 151-163.
[39] Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, 131-2.

need not fear the avenging fire of Judgement Day.[40] The idea that this apocalyptic fire will purge humankind of lesser sins is evident in 1 Cor 3:12-15 and Psalm 50:3. In *Judgement Day II*, there is no sense that the apocalyptic fire will have a purgative effect on those who have prepared actively for Christ's return as this is not the poet's intention. The poem's inclusion of signs and events that will constitute Judgement Day function as a warning of what will befall those who do not take responsibility for their eternal fate and fail to repent before these events are have begun. The same purpose is evident in the poem *Christ III*, though the poet is far more elaborate in the detail surrounding Christ's return and judgement than the poets of either *Judgement Day I* or *Judgement Day II*.

In *Christ III*, the poet employs numerous literary and narrative devices to make the day of judgement vividly immediate while at the same time emphasising that it is not too late to repent. While this is the aim of all apocalyptic literature and eschatological discourse, the method adopted in this poem is uniquely Anglo-Saxon. The description of the end-time sequence, while considerably more detailed than that in either *Judgement Day I* and *Judgement Day II*, is traditional in its detail but, at the same time, not intended to be a comprehensive account of these events. The poet does not appear overly concerned with accuracy of detail or with the prophetic appeal of his description. Instead, he provides brief but strategic allusions to this sequence in the opening passages in a way that draws on the authority of tradition but also reveals the primary aim of the poem. This aim is to remind the audience in a dramatic and explicit way of the need to repent and to prepare actively in the present *before* the end-time sequence is underway. In this, the poet cleverly marshals language around sense-perception, ensuring that the audience can practically see, feel, hear, and smell what Judgement Day will be like. The vivid descriptions almost transport the audience to the event itself to ensure that there is no ambiguity or doubt as to what will

[40] Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*,132.

happen when Christ does return. As outlined above, the poet begins by stating that Christ's return will be sudden, like a thief in the night and announced by angels blowing on trumpets.[41] Christ will appear from the east, causing the sun to be more luminous than ever before. Prior to Christ's appearance, an apocalyptic fire will burn through the earth, splitting the heavens and causing the stars and moon to fall, while the sun turns the colour of blood.[42] Christ will then appear with a host of angels, the trumpets will be heard throughout the world, and winds will howl from seven sides.[43] A jarring crash will then be heard and humankind will be flung into the flame, which will also destroy the fish in the sea, the mountains of the earth, and the stars in heaven.[44] All of Creation will burn in the ravaging flame, which will raze buildings and mountains to the ground until all the sin and filth in the world has been purged.[45] After this apocalyptic fire, all of humankind that ever existed will rise, body and soul will be reunited but humankind will not yet be purified, as each individual will be marked with their sins or virtues during life, a point that is also evident in *Judgement Day II* and *Blickling Homily* X as discussed earlier. All of humankind will then rise up to face Christ's judgement, and no deed, thought or intention will be concealed before Christ. The poet jumps between accounts of the events prior to Christ's appearance to Christ's appearance itself and then back to the events prior to judgement. The repetition of these representations is significant in terms of understanding the poet's primary concerns and demonstrates how the poet transports, figuratively of course, the audience to the event itself, on the one hand, while emphasising that it is not too late to repent on the other. The poet needs to maintain a delicate balance in this regard; if the audience perception is that it is too

[41] Bernard J. Muir (ed), "Christ in Judgement", *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry (Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies)*. University of Exeter Press, 2007, 82-110. From herein all references to this poem will be cited as *Christ III* (as the more common title) followed by the line numbers. This citation, for example, *Christ III*, 878-881.
[42] *Christ III*, 930-36.
[43] *Christ III*, 941-52.
[44] *Christ III*, 953-71.
[45] *Christ III*, 972-81.

late to repent, then the moral reform and active preparation that the poet seeks will not happen. If, however, the audience perception is that there is plenty of time to amend their ways and there is no sense of urgency, then this moral reform will also not happen.

This balance is based on a clever interplay between contrasts that reveals the poet's in-depth understanding of eschatological issues and the way that these issues are adapted to ensure that the aim of the poem is explicit. There are various contrasts in this poem that reinforce the poet's fundamental message of moral reform and the need for immediate action with respect to the inevitable, yet not immediate, return of Christ. These contrasts are not always treated separately or even highlighted so explicitly, but they are intertwined within the narrative to present the audience with a balanced view that enables them to make an informed decision as to the future fate of their souls. The narrative is clearly biased towards choosing good over evil and active repentance over complacency, as the poet is not interested in emphasising the freedom to choose evil. On the contrary, the poet draws on the comparisons and contrasts to emphasise that choosing evil57u and neglecting repentance is not a viable option. The overarching contrast that informs the structure of the entire poem is the subtle interplay between present and future. The majority of the poem is set at some unknown point in the future with the vivid descriptions of the events that will unambiguously mark Christ's return.

The poet of *Christ III* describes these signs and events in a fairly traditional way, as outlined above. Before Christ's return, the poet states, a devastating fire will sweep across the earth causing the heavens to split, the stars to fall, the sun will turn the colour of blood, and the moon will also fall.[46] This fire will burn through the earth, the sea, and the heavens, destroying everything in its path with a ferocious appetite. The poet states:

Swa se gifra gæst grundas geondseceð

[46] *Christ III*, 930-40.

hiþende leg heahgetimbro
fylleð on foldwong fyres egsan,
widmære blæst woruld mid ealle,
hat, hreorogifre. Hreosað geneahhe.
tobrocene burgweallas. Beorgas gemeltað
ond heahcleofu, þa wið holme ær
fæste wið flodum foldan sceldun,
stið and stæðfæst, staþelas wið wæge,
wætre windendum. Þonne wihta gehwylce,
deora and fugla, deaðleg nimeð,
færeð æfter foldan fyrswearta leg,
weallende wiga.[47]

This description elaborates on the changes to the sun, moon, and stars found in both Scripture and the writings of the early Church Fathers. It is also evident in the Old English prose accounts as well as in the poems *Judgement Day I* and *Judgement Day II.* As such, that there will be changes to the sun, moon, stars, and that the fire will burn through Creation is not remarkable in itself, but what is remarkable is the unambiguous description of these events in the poem. The poet adopts vivid, graphic, and visually stimulating imagery accessible to his audience, appealing to their sense-perception of what they can see in front of them in their present time and replacing it with what will become of these things on Judgement Day. The sun that now brightens their day will be darkened and turn to the colour of blood, the moon and stars that light their path at night will fall out of the sky, and the cliffs that protect them

[47] "So the ravenous guest pervades the ground with ravaging flame will raze tall buildings to the ground with the terrifying fire, and the notorious blast, hot and voracious, will ruin the world. The shattered city walls will collapse. Mountains will melt as will the cliffs that once shielded the land from waves, against the flood, firm and stable foundations against the leaping waters. Then every creature, beast, and bird, will be caught in the deadly flame the fiery darkened flame will travel across the land like a raging fighter." *Christ III*, 292-984.

from the waves and ferocity of the sea will melt away and no longer protect them.[48] The very real effects of this devastation, the poet states, will cause humankind to weep, wail with weary voices, be morbid of mind, anxious, agitated, and tormented with the realisation that it is too late to repent.[49] The ravenous fire, however, does not only burn through Creation to raze buildings and melt mountains, it also burns through personal possessions. The poet states:

> Seoþeð swearta leg synne on fordonum,
> ond goldfrætwe gleda forswelgað,
> eall ærgestreon eþelcyninga.
> . . . Þonne ænig ne mæg,
> firendædum fah, frið gewinnan,
> legbyrne losian londes ower,
> ac þæt fyr nimeð þurh foldan gehwæt,
> græfeð grimlice, georne aseceð
> innan and utan eorðan sceatas,
> oþþæt eall hafað ældes leoma
> woruldwidles wom wælme forbærned. [50]

The fire will destroy everything, including the earthly wealth that humankind valued so highly and will purge the earth of "filth". The idea that fire will burn through Creation on Judgement Day derives from Scripture, particularly in Revelations 8:5, 8:7, 8:8 and 16:8, and is a common sign of the end-times in the writings of the Church Fathers. Even in Anglo-

[48] This is also a precise reversal of God's ordering of creation in the first chapter of Genesis. An anti-creation, of sorts.
[49] *Christ III*, 991-993.
[50] "The black flame will destroy the sins of the corrupt and the embers will devour the gold ornaments, all the wealth of the ancestral kings. No one stained with sinful deeds will be able to find sanctuary nor escape the burning fire anywhere in the land but the fire will burn through every nation and fiercely delve and eagerly scour the earth's regions inside and out, until the fiery blaze has burned up in its path all the pollution of worldly filth." *Christ III*, 999-1006.

Saxon England, references to the purging fire are evident in the prose, particularly in Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies.* In homily twenty of the *The Second Series,* for example, Ælfric describes the four fires at the edge of the earth that are kindled and waiting to purify the souls of the wicked.[51] In homily forty of *The Second Series,* Ælfric describes the building of the faithful Church and explains the meaning behind 1 Corinthians 3:12-13, which states:

> Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious
> stones, wood, hay, straw the work of each builder will become visible,
> for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and
> the fire will test of what sort of work each has done.

In his explication of this passage, Ælfric identifies the gold with faith and good knowledge (*geleafan ond god ingehyd*), silver with righteous and eloquence of speech in God's law (*rihtlice spræce and getingnysse on Godes lore*), and precious stones with holy virtues (*deorwurðan*). He goes on to explain that a church built with this figurative gold, silver, and precious stones will not perish in the fires of Judgement Day.[52] The poet of *Christ III*, however, is being far more literal in the above passage by stating that the fire will destroy the accumulated actual, earthly wealth. These three lines reveal the subtle way that the poet employs contrasts for a visually-dramatic effect. The lengthy, detailed description of the signs of the end directs the visual perspective of the audience away from the individual to the broader world that will, according to the poet, be destroyed before their eyes. By including the reference to the gold, and implicitly to all earthly wealth and treasure, the poet redirects the audience perspective back to the individual and the items that were valued during life. In maintaining the balance between the urgent need for action and trusting that it is not yet too late to repent, the poet also ensures that the events described in the poem are not too far

[51] *CHII*, 20.93-111.
[52] *CHII*, 40.223-279.

removed from the individual and that the emphasis remains on the way that these events will affect the individual personally.

While the brief allusion to the gold goes some way in achieving this redirection of focus, the contrast between the sinful and the blessed on Judgement Day reinforces this far more effectively. To the wicked, that is, those who have not lived a virtuous life or have not prepared actively through true repentance, Christ will appear fearsome and terrifying on the day of judgement.[53] They will stand before the Cross that will appear as the brightest sign on Judgement Day, moistened with blood and covered in gore.[54] The Cross is a powerful symbol to humankind of Christ's sacrifice at the Crucifixion and a reminder that Christ will demand payment for this sacrifice upon his return. To the sinful, the appearance of the Cross will be a terrifying spectacle and a threatening reminder of their transgressions and lack of acknowledgement of Christ's sacrifice. In addition to the Cross being moistened with blood, the sinful will also see Christ's wounds. The poet states:

> Ond eac þa ealdan wunde and þa openan dolg
> on hyra dryhtne geseoð dreorigferðe,
> swa him mid næglum þurhdrifan niðhycgende
> þa hwitan honda ond þa halgan fet,
> ond of his sidan swa some swat forletan,
> þær blod on wæter bu tu ætsomne
> ut bicwoman fore eagna gesyhð,
> rinnan fore rincum, þa he on rode wæs.[55]

[53] *Christ III*, 918.
[54] *Christ III*, 1081-1088.
[55] "And also the ancient wounds and gaping sores upon their Lord they will see, desolate in spririt, just as malicious-minded men pierced with nails those white hands and those holy feet, and also caused blood to flow from his side, where blood and water flowed before their eyes, running out in front of those men, when he was on the rood." *Christ III*, 1107-1114.

This vision emphasises the significance of Christ's suffering in no uncertain terms. The sinful gathered before the Cross have not acknowledged this significance and continued to sin, even though, the poet states, all of Creation including the earth, trees, and animals, acknowledged Christ's sacrifice at the time.[56] The sinful, unlike even the inanimate objects at the Crucifixion, failed to acknowledge that Christ freely chose to suffer to ensure that humankind could live free from evil and attain everlasting life in heaven. For this, the poet states, the sinful will be filled with agitation and fear upon Christ's return, as it will be too late to repent and the realisation of the eternal fate awaiting them will be terrifying.

While the sinful are fearful at the sight of the Cross and Christ's gruesome, gaping wounds, the blessed will be granted a different perspective. To the good, the poet states, Christ will appear beautiful and gracious, a true joy to behold. He will shine brightly and they will be pleased that his return is mild, to them, and fills them with happiness.[57] The poet does not, however, seem to suggest that the blessed will not experience the cosmic events of Judgement Day in terms of the raging fire that will burn through Creation and the changes in the sun, moon, and stars. Without explicitly saying so, the poet may here imply that the blessed will also experience these events but will not be fearful of them as these events cannot harm them. Once all deeds are exposed, the poet continues, the good will bring a bright countenance to the Lord and will be rewarded for their sinless deeds during life.[58] They will be placed on the right hand of God and their virtuous deeds will be marked by three distinct signs: they will shine brighter than the sun, they will know God's grace in its entirety and be permitted to enjoy all the pleasures of heaven, and they will be able to see the eternal

[56] *Christ III,* 1115-1198. Caie also states that while colours rarely feature in Old English poetry, the contrast of colours in this poem are very effective, the red cross in place of the sun, the black sinners, the white hands of Christ and the red blood. See Caie, *Judgement Day Theme,* 203. For a more general discussion see Nigel F. Barley, "Old English colour classification: where do matters stand?." *Anglo-Saxon England* 3 (1974): 15-28, Laurence D. Lerner, "Colour Words in Anglo-Saxon." *The Modern Language Review* 46, no. 2 (1951): 246-249, and C. P. Biggam, "Sociolinguistic aspects of Old English colour lexemes." *Anglo-Saxon England* 24 (1995): 51-65.
[57] *Christ III*, 910-917.
[58] *Christ III,* 1076-1080.

torments of the wicked in hell. This last marker, the poet states, ensures that the blessed thank God all the more earnestly for their heavenly reward and for saving them from such torments.[59] This idea is not unique to the poet and is also evident in Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies.* In the twenty-third homily of *The First Series,* Ælfric states that the wicked will be able to see the rewards of the blessed so that their torment is all the greater while the blessed will see the torments of the wicked so that their gratitude towards God is greater.[60]

While this comparison between the sinful and the blessed on Judgement Day is evocative and unambiguous, the poet ensures that the audience's perspective is redirected to their own present. The poet states that "we" – as a collective whole – need to turn our gaze inward to locate all the sin and evil hidden in the heart.[61] This self-reflection, as seen also in the writings of Gregory the Great, Ælfric, and Wulfstan, is fundamental to preparing actively for Christ's judgement and to avoiding the experience of the wicked upon Christ's return. The conflation of the present and future, however, is articulated in greater depth in Christ's direct speech to humankind, explicitly to humankind on Judgement Day and implicitly to all of humankind in their present time. This speech draws past, present, and future together to summarise the history of humankind from God's perspective and to illustrate the way that humankind continues to hurt God through sin. The speech begins with God's creation of humankind from clay and the living soul. The first humans did not know any suffering but only prosperity and all the rewards of paradise. Instead of being grateful, God states, the first humans willingly chose to disobey God's commands and, while it pained God to do so, they were cast out of paradise to suffer the afflictions and turmoil of earthly existence.[62] The speech goes on to tell of Christ's incarnation and free will choice to return in human form to redeem mankind. This was not, God states, out of pride but out of love for humankind that

[59] *Christ III,* 1232-1261.
[60] *CHI* 23.104-122.
[61] *Christ III,* 1327-1329.
[62] *Christ III,* 1379-1414.

Christ endured physical affliction, suffering, torture, and death to enable humankind to return unblemished to their rightful home in heaven.[63] The aim of all of this is to remind the sinful, and the audience as a whole, that Christ freely chose to free humankind in the past and will expect that debt to be repaid at the future judgement. The time to repay this debt, however, is in the present. God states:

> For hwan þu þæt selegescot þæt ic me swæs on þe
> gehalgode, hus to wynne,
> þurh firenlustas, fule synne,
> unsyfre bismite sylfes willum?
> Ge þu þone lichoman þe ic alysde me
> feondum of fæðme, ond þa him firene forbead,
> scyldwyrcende scondum gewemdest.
> For hwon ahenge þu mec hefgor on þinra honda rode
> þonne iu hongade? Hwæt, me þeos heardra þynceð.
> Nu is swærra mid mec þinra synna rod
> pe ic unwillum on beom gefæstnad,
> þonne seo oþer wæs þe ic ær gestag,
> willum minum, þe mec pin wea swiþast
> æt heortan gehreaw, þa ic þec from helle ateah,
> þær þu hit wolde sylfa siþþan gehealdan.[64]

[63] *Christ III*, 1428-68.
[64] "For what reason did you, of your own free will, through wicked lusts and foul sins, pollute the beloved house that I hallowed inside you for my delight? And why did you soil with shame through evil works the lodging that I freed myself from the grasp of fiends and forbade it to sin? For why do you hang me more grievously on the cross of your hands than I hung before? Lo! This seems more harsh to me. Now it is more grievous to me to be fastened to the cross of your sins unwillingly than it was before, which I once ascended of my own free will when your woe moved my heart, so that I led you out of hell on the condition that you would keep yourself out afterwards." *Christ III*, 1480-1494.

The continued sins of humankind oppress Christ and are more painful to him than the Crucifixion. Christ ascended the cross of his own free will, but the sins of humankind fasten him to the cross unwillingly. Humankind, according to the poet, has abused their free choice, prioritizing the wellbeing of their body and material things over the wellbeing of their soul, of Christ, and spiritual things. This is not the way to repay the debt for Christ's sacrifice and the horrific experience of the sinful on Judgement Day together with the eternal torment of hell will repay this debt that was not repaid during life. These individuals, who had neither self-reflection or remorse, will be condemned to hell, marked as criminals, and will then shed the tears and lament for the sins that they did not shed during life. But, the poet states:

Ne bið þær ængum godum gnorn ætywed,
ne nængum yflum wel, ac þær æghwæþer
anfealde gewryht ondweard wigeð.
Forðon sceal onnettan, se þe agan wile
lif æt meotude, þenden him leoht ond gæst
somodfæst seon. He his sawle wlite
georne bigonge on godes willan,
ond wær weorðe worda ond dæda,
þeawa ond geþonca, þenden him þeos woruld,
sceadum scriþende, scinan mote,
þæt he ne forleose on þas lænan tid
his dreames blæd ond his dagena rim
ond his weorces wlite ond wuldres lean,
þætte heofones cyning on þa halgan tid
soðfæst syleð to sigorleanum

þam þe him gæstum georne hyriað.[65]

For the poet, the remedy is simple: care for the wellbeing of the soul during life and be wary of words, deeds, and thoughts while the soul and body are united in life. While not explicitly stated in this verse, given the description in the rest of the poem, the individual should also exhibit true remorse and repentance for past sins while ensuring that they choose good in the future. Only by these means can the individual avoid the gruesome and fearful experience of Judgement Day.

[65] "There will be no sorrow shown there by any good man and in no evil man wellbeing, but everyone present there will be weighed according to their individual desert. Therefore he who wishes to embrace life before the Lord must hurry while soul and body are secure together. May he eagerly care for the state of their souls in God's will and be wary of words and deeds, practices and thoughts for as long as this world, wandering through the shadows, is permitted to shine on him, so that in this transient time he does not lose the abundance of joys, and count of his days, and the beauty of his works, and the reward of eternal glory that the King of Heaven, steadfast in truth, will grant in that sacred time, as victory rewards to those who diligently obey him in their spirit." *Christ III*, lines 1575-1591.

Chapter 4: Sin, Penance, and What the Will Wants

The authors of Old English religious texts sought to encourage their audiences to prepare actively for judgement by amending their ways and turning away from sin towards God. Their aim, in effect, is to encourage repentance. The concept of repentance—the individual sense of remorse, compunction, and/or contrition for wrongful deeds—existed long before the word entered the language in the fourteenth century. Anglo-Saxon authors use the compound *dæd-bot* (literally, 'deed-remedy' or 'deed-amendment') to denote penance as they understood it. They realise, however, that simply encouraging their audience to repent cannot guarantee true penitence. They are aware that individuals endure internal conflict between the attractions of vice and the rigours of virtue and that concern for the wellbeing of the soul may be weakened by the demands of the body. The conventional psychomachia narratives of the early Middle Ages dramatise the terrific struggle faced by the individual soul who seeks to choose good over evil. Anglo-Saxon authors are also aware that true repentance requires self-reflection and introspection, an awareness of what constitutes sin and what defines good, as well as a significant degree of remorse and a commitment to the deliberate choice of good over evil. In order to encourage and assist their audiences, the writers adopt various methods and motifs that explore key themes such as sin, penance, and free will. In this way they seek to enable their audience to identify certain deeds as sinful, to be aware of what is required to atone for those deeds, and, most importantly, to make a free choice between sinful and virtuous acts. As with these texts' treatment of eschatological issues in general, their theology stems initially from Scripture and then from the elaboration of Scripture in the writings of early Christian writers such as Augustine, Gregory, and Bede. Anglo-Saxon authors, however, are as highly selective in what they choose to emphasise, as they are with all the theological arguments inherited from their predecessors. In terms of sin,

penance, and free will, this highly selective treatment results in a significant shift in focus, particularly in the poetry, which allows for a more creative representation of the issues.

This shift of focus moves away from accounts of Original Sin and its subsequent consequences for all of humankind to the impact of personal sin on the individual. It is not entirely unique to the Anglo-Saxon writers; it can be found in the writings of Augustine, Gregory, and Bede. Augustine, for example, spends a considerable amount of time defining what constitutes sin, particularly as a direct and significant consequence of the Original Sin of the first humans. Augustine does not, however, write long prescriptive lists of sins and their respective penances. Once Augustine and other early Christian writers defined what constitutes sin, later authorities such as Gregory and Bede were able to focus more on the consequences of sinful behaviour on the individual. Their approach is far more pragmatic in terms of the implications of issues such as sin, repentance, and free will on the lives of individual Christians. For Augustine, writing in the early Christian period, defining and understanding the consequences of Original Sin for all of humankind is paramount to understanding the vagaries of human experience and the disordering of the human will that followed Adam and Eve's primordial transgression.

All human sin, according to Augustine, stems from the Original Sin inherited, after the Fall of Adam and Eve, by their descendants. Psychologically, he also attributes sin to pride, to a creaturely presumption of knowing a more compelling good than that ordained by the Creator. For Augustine, defining sin and evil also requires a definition of what is good, which, he proposes, consists of form, order, and unity that participates in God's providence. Evil is the opposite of good and hence results in deformity, disorder, and disunity. If God is the source of existence and all that is good, then evil is the wilful turning away from God, the

loss of valid existence and the absence of good.[1] This is not to suggest that the individual who commits evil ceases to exist. Rather, they cease to exist in God's presence, particularly after the final judgement of humankind.[2] The key aspect of Augustine's definition of evil is that it consists in the 'wilful' turning away from God. For Augustine, the free will of the individual must be oriented towards God as the Supreme Good. If it is not, then it becomes disoriented and corrupt. Augustine states:

> The will which turns from the unchangeable and common good and turns to its own private good or to anything exterior or inferior, sins. It turns to its private good when it wills to be governed by its own authority; to what is exterior, when it is eager to know what belongs to others and not to itself; to inferior things when it loves bodily pleasures. In these ways a man becomes proud, inquisitive, licentious.[3]

This passage articulates Augustine's view that sin is a consequence of pride and that evil is the absence of good caused by the wilful turning away from God. As a result, the will becomes disoriented and corrupt as it comes to value bodily good over the good of the soul. The responsibility of the individual Christian, therefore, is to direct the will towards good

[1] Carol Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology: An Argument for Continuity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 88. Augustine does distinguish between two types of evil: natural evil and moral evil. 'Natural evil' refers to the phenomenon that are beyond human control including death, illness, pain, and suffering as well as natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and droughts, for example. These 'natural evils' are present in nature but do not coincide with the Augustine's argument for the absence of good. The distinction should be acknowledged, even though 'natural evils' are not relevant to this discussion of evil, sin, and free will. From herein, the term evil will refer to Augustine's discussion of 'moral evil' as it relates to the free will of the individual. For further discussion on Augustine's discussion of 'natural evils' see Donald X Burt, *Augustine's World: An Introduction to his Speculative Philosophy* (Maryland: University of America Press, 1996).

[2] In the *City of God*, Augustine distinguishes between first and second death. The first death refers to the death of the whole, mortal individual and is the process by which the soul is separated from the body, marking the end of earthly existence. After this separation, the souls of the faithful rest while the souls of the wicked pay their penalty. (*City of God* 13:8). The second death is the death of the soul that occurs after Judgement Day when the damned are consigned to the eternal torments of hell. This second death, then, is not experienced by the blessed but is reserved only for the damned as God forsakes their souls and their existence is without the presence of God for eternity.See *City of God* book 13.

[3] Ronnie Jae Rombs (trans), *Saint Augustine and the Fall of the Soul: Beyond O'Connell and his Critics.* (Washington: The Catholic University America Press, 2006), 63.

over evil. By emphasising that the choice between good and evil hinges critically on the will of the individual, Augustine insists that the capacity for both good and evil, as well as the responsibility for choosing the one or the other, stems from within the human being. But what of the devil? Augustine acknowledges that the devil has the power, permitted by God, to corrupt the human soul and lead it toward sin. This does not imply, however, that either evil or the devil are an actual force that attacks the Christian soul and drives it away from the good. Rather, Augustine maintains that the power of the devil is only apparent: he cannot force the will to turn towards evil but rather insinuates the possibility of evil into its cognitive field.

By defining evil as a "departure from nature", Augustine distinguishes between creatures that possess free will and those that don't. Evidently, only beings endowed with free will are able to depart from nature and, as a result, can be held accountable for choosing evil over good. Augustine states that there are three types of truly free beings: God, angels, and humans. All three, however, cannot be held accountable for human sin.[4] He argues that God is only accountable if humans were created without free will and the capacity to choose between good and evil. This is clearly not the case, according to Augustine, as humankind does have this capacity. Similarly, angels can be blamed if they are able to force humans to sin against their will. While fallen angels, he states, are the originators of evil through their wilful departure from the good and through their attempts to corrupt human will, their power is only apparent and can be resisted through virtue. As such, angels cannot force human beings to act against their will. The only beings truly accountable for human sin are humans themselves. Augustine states that humans were created by God in his image and were given the gift of free will, so that human virtue, freely undertaken, would be a genuine, self-

[4] The concept of sin was a significant aspect of Augustine's philosophy. He distinguishes between sin and evil by arguing that sin precedes and is the cause of evil. For a more detailed discussion of this distinction see Neil Forsyth, *The Old Enemy: Satan and the Combat Myth*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), 396-408.

validating good. In order to be truly free in their choice, however, humans must possess the ability to choose evil over good. After the sin of Adam and Eve, humans remain responsible for their choices, both good and evil, and are rewarded or punished accordingly. The difference, however, is that, after the Fall, humans can choose evil of their own accord but they cannot choose good without the intervention of God's grace.[5] Augustine states:

> It is by free will that a person either sins or lives rightly…. However, unless the will is freed by the grace of God from the condition of servitude by which it is the slave of sin and is helped to overcome its vices, no human can live rightly and piously this side of death.[6]

In order to resist the insinuating influence of evil, human beings require assistance through God's gift of grace. Augustine argues that the function of grace is to counter the damage to the relationship between God and humankind occasioned by sin.[7] This grace is necessary in order to enable the individual to resist evil and to restore the freedom of the individual, who is otherwise enslaved by evil, to choose good.[8] The individual is enabled to choose good by becoming receptive to divine revelation in the eternal word of God and thus, through self-knowledge and introspection, acquires knowledge from God. For Augustine, this is the pursuit of the ideal Christian self and is the criteria against which the individual will be measured on Judgement Day.

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[5] Ilham Dilman, *Free Will: An Historical and Philosophical Introduction.* (London: Routledge, 1999), 71.
[6] Peter King (ed), *Augustine: On the free choice of the will, on grace and free choice, and other writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 267.
[7] J. Patout Burns, "Grace". *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia.* Ed. Allan D Fitzgerald (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 391-8.
[8] In relation to grace, Augustine also discusses the issue of predestination, whereby some are chosen for salvation while others are not. Augustine states that those chosen for salvation are a part of God's plan, which is beyond human understanding and is not determined solely on living a virtuous life. This aside, however, Augustine states that, while God knows which humans are chosen or not, humans are not released from their responsibility to be open and receptive to salvation. For further reading on predestination see Mathijs Lanberigts, 'Predestination', *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 677-79 as well as John Rist, 'Augustine on Free Will and Predestination', *Augustine and his Critics: Essays in Honour of Gerald Bonner,* eds. Robert Dodaro and George Lawless (London: Routledge, 2000) and James Wetsel, 'Predestination, Pelagianism and Foreknowledge', *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine,* eds. Eleanore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

For Gregory, as for Augustine, pride is the cause of sin and the Fall of Adam and Eve, passed on to their descendants as Original Sin.[9] While humankind was created to be immortal, Original Sin has caused an inversion of nature, introducing mutability and mortality into earthly existence. In his *Moralia,* Gregory states that the Fall has resulted in "the miseries of this mortal life".[10] Mortality and mutability are divine punishment for Original Sin of the first humans, which, in turn, is inherited by all of humankind and thus defines the quality of earthly existence. Human existence in the earthly realm is subject to constant change that is experienced through the body, which is itself also constantly changing. While this mutability is a punishment, this does not mean that the body and earthly existence are necessarily evil. Gregory, like Augustine, affirms the goodness of the body in Creation but also acknowledges that personal sin, as an extension of Original Sin, exists in earthly existence only where the body tends to bully the spirit into serving its appetites and inclinations, when the proper relationship between body and soul should be the exact opposite. This attempt results in warfare between the body and the mind, the psychomachia between flesh and spirit, that, according to Gregory, defines human existence. Gregory states that "this life of man is not said to *have* trial, but is described as itself *being* trial".[11] This conflict is central to Gregory's thought about the corruption of the human will, and in many respects his condemnation of the body is harsher than Augustine's.[12] Gregory does follow Augustine, however, in perceiving sin as external, that is, the wilful turning away from the interiority of contemplating God, as humankind was intended to do, and turning instead to the external, mutable world and mere bodily well-being.[13] While Augustine focuses more on Original Sin and the consequences of the Fall for humankind, Gregory's focus shifts from the

[9] Kevin L. Hester, *Eschatology and Pain in St Gregory the Great,* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), 61.
[10] Gregory, *Mor 24.4.7.*
[11] Gregory the Great, *Mor.* 8.6.8.
[12] Carol Straw, *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 113.
[13] Straw, *Perfection in Imperfection,*115.

actual Original Sin of Adam and Eve to the personal sins of the individual that enslave them to further sin.[14] Gregory states:

> But since he voluntarily subjected himself to his enemy, now being bound with the chains of his sins, he serves him in some things even against his will, and suffers clamours in the mind, when the flesh strives against the Spirit.[15]

While he implies that the enemy here is Satan, Gregory is referring literally to the flesh and the inherited corruption and frailty of the mind to resist sin. Hester highlights that for Gregory, the warfare experienced by the individual does not come from an external source but from the internal antagonism between body and mind.[16] Satan, as Augustine also emphasised, does not have the power to force humankind to sin against their will. Gregory states:

> For in the heart it is committed by the suggestion, the pleasure, the consent, and the boldness to defend…For the serpent tempted, Eve was pleased, Adam yielded to consent, and even when called in question he refused in effrontery to confess his sin. The serpent tempted, in that the secret enemy silently suggests evil to man's heart. Eve was pleased, because the sense of the flesh…presently gives itself up to pleasure. And Adam…yielded consent, in that while the flesh is carried away in enjoyment, the spirit also being deprived of its strength gives in from its uprightness.[17]

The real warfare constitutes an internal spiritual conflict, not between the flesh and the world around it, not between human foes, but between the body and the mind.[18] While the battle

[14] Aaron J. Kleist, *Striving with Grace: Views of Free Will in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc, 2008), 50.
[15] Gregory, *Mor.* 4.28.54
[16] Hester, *Eschatology and Pain,* 65.
[17] Gregory, *Mor.* 4.27.49.
[18] Hester, *Eschatology and Pain,* 65.

plays out within, so does the power to resist sin and to repent for sinful deeds through the gift of God's grace lie within reach of each individual human soul.

God provides the gift of grace to assist humankind, a gift which, Gregory argues, frees the individual to choose good over evil, to cooperate with God's grace or to reject it. This gift, however, is not automatic and does not provide unconditional protection against evil, nor does it guarantee that the individual will inevitably choose good. On the contrary, the responsibility for this choice rests with the individual, who must merit this gift of grace by participating actively in God's providence. The individual should not, Gregory warns, become complacent or make any presumptions about their own ability to choose good without any assistance from God. He states:

> For what are we, when bereft of the protection of the Maker? A protection which is considered to be less necessary, if always enjoyed. But it is withdrawn, generally, for our own good, that it may be shown to a man's own self how worthless he is without it. The hand of God, then, which bears us up, even when we know it not, in prosperity, brings us to a true knowledge of ourselves in adversity. And when we begin to fall, from being deprived of it, we are yet supported by its aid. It is a warning to us, that we are trembling to our fall, and His protection, that we remain steadfast.[19]

In this passage, Gregory reminds his audience that God can withdraw his gift at any time if the individual does not earn this assistance and that without this gift, humankind cannot choose good. Gregory does not assume his audience knows how to earn the grace of God. Instead, he outlines the way to do so in order to prepare actively for the future judgement. For Gregory, it is not simply a matter of choosing good. The individual must also truly repent for their past deeds and true repentance requires individuals to reflect on their conduct, to confess

[19] Gregory, *Mor.* 23.27.53.

and to show remorse for their sins, to complete the necessary penance for their transgressions, and to amend their ways by always choosing good in future. Sin separates humankind from God's communion and the individual should, Gregory affirms, fear God's wrath more than any affliction or adversity experienced during mortal life. The judgement and punishment from God will be far worse than anything imposed by individuals on themselves. While self-reflection is confronting, Gregory urges his audience to have the courage to be harsh in judging themselves in order to avoid a harsher judgement from God.[20] Gregory's emphasis on the need for critical self-judgement and reflection is heightened by a sense of urgency that the time to do so is now. This reflects his sense that the return of Christ and his judgement of humankind is imminent, as explored earlier. This emphasis could, in part, be attributed to the time and context in which he was writing, particularly with the Lombard incursions into the northern regions of the Italian peninsula from late in the sixth century. As such, his writings resonate with later Anglo-Saxon writers, who also faced the threat and reality of Viking invasions, and Gregory's influence can be discerned in later Anglo-Saxon ideas about the responsibility of the individual. As one of the major Church Fathers and the father of Anglo-Saxon Christianity, his writings also influence Bede in the development of his thought. Bede, however, was writing in less fraught times, which gives his debts to Gregory a somewhat different cast.

Bede, recognised as a Church Father in his own right since the ninth century, is a prominent intellectual figure in Anglo-Saxon history. Based at Wearmouth-Jarrow, he produced writings on a diverse range of topics that are both traditional and original in terms of the development of his thought. His reverence for Church Fathers such as Augustine and Gregory is evident throughout his writing and forms the basis for his inclusion of traditional elements into his work. The influence of Gregory, in particular, is evident throughout the

[20] Gregory, *Mor* 25.8.18.

development of Bede's eschatological ideas and theology in general.[21] In terms of grace and free will, Bede adopts Augustine's view that God's gift of grace grounds any and all good to be found within the individual. At the same time, however, Bede asserts that the gift of grace enables the individual to choose to accept or reject further grace.[22] His views, which blend the ideas of his predecessors and his own original contribution, significantly influence the development of ideas in the writings of later Anglo-Saxon homilists and theologians such as Ælfric and Wulfstan.[23] While a prolific writer on a range of issues, Bede dwells less than some later writers on various aspects of sin and its implication for the individual believer, though he does devote serious attention to eschatological concerns, including the timing of Christ's return to judge humankind. Scholars rarely discuss how Bede's writings address sin, though a few do refer to the penitentials attributed to him.[24] Aaron Kleist, however, provides a thorough analysis of Bede's view of free will and grace as well as the sources that were available to Bede and his subsequent influence on later Anglo-Saxon writers.[25]

Bede addresses the issue of Original Sin in his commentary *On Genesis.* Unlike in Augustine's *De Genesi ad litteram*, which influences Bede and is heavily quoted in this commentary, Bede does not spend as much time exploring the fall of the angels as he does the fall of humankind. In this regard, his approach to sin, grace, and free will is more in line with Gregory's, even though Gregory's writing does not appear to be quoted frequently in this commentary. Bede affirms, quoting Augustine, that Original Sin stems from pride, where

[21] Numerous studies have explored the influence of Gregory the Great on Bede. See Peter Darby, *Bede and the End of Time* (Oxon: Ashgate Publishing, 2012) 147-164, Scott De Gregorio, 'The Venerable Bede and Gregory the Great: Exegetical Connections, Spiritual Departures', *Early Medieval Europe* 18:1 (2010) 43-60, Allen J. Frantzen, 'Bede and Bawdy Bale: Gregory the Great, Angels, and Angli', Allen J Frantzen and John D Niles (eds) *Anglo-Saxonism and the Construction of Social Identity* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 1997).
[22] Kleist, *Striving with Grace*, 61
[23] Kleist, *Striving with Grace*, 62.
[24] Frantzen highlights the complex issues surrounding the penitentials attributed to Bede and Egbert of York. See Allen J. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1983), 69-78, 108-109 and Allen J. Frantzen, "The Penitentials Attributed to Bede," *Speculum* 58, no. 3 (1983): 573-597.
[25] Kleist, *Striving with Grace*, 58-82.

Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command, thus scorning his authority.[26] This disobedience, Bede reiterates, cost humankind dearly, causing the death of the soul when God withdrew from it, which in turn condemned humankind to be bound by sin.[27] God withdrawing from the soul is the direct cause of the mutability of earthly existence, the mortality of humankind and the corruption of the will. In the *Homilies on the Gospels*, he states:

> …life-giving judgement, through which all things are arranged and ruled, does not enlighten every creature, but only a rational one, so that it may be able to have consciousness. Human beings, who are made in the image of God, can attain wisdom; beasts cannot.[28]

Bede goes on to explain that human beings can become like beasts: their share of a fully human condition is reduced as they corrupt their own reason and are enslaved by sin. Quoting 1 Cor 2:14 and Ps 49:12, Bede affirms that when this happens, human beings are "deprived of the light of truth."[29] That is, they turn away from God and choose not to avail themselves of God's grace. But even these human beings can be cured and saved if they turn back towards God.

As they are currently bound by sin, Bede observes that individuals need God's grace in order to unbind them. In his homily for Palm Sunday, Bede draws on the analogy in Matthew 21:1-7 of the donkey that is bound and then unbound to enable Christ to ride into Jerusalem to illustrate his point.[30] At this point, Bede does not elaborate on whether God's grace frees the will to choose good or whether it frees the will to choose whether it

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[26] Bede, *On Genesis*, Calvin Kendall (trans) (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008) 1.2.16-17.
[27] Kleist, *Striving with Grace*, 69.
[28] Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst (trans) *Bede the Venerable Homilies on the Gospels*: *Book One – Advent to Lent* (Collegeville: Cistercian Publications, 1991). From herein cited as Bede, *Homilies,* I (book one) followed by homily number and page numbers. This reference, for example, Bede, *Homilies,* I.8, 76.
[29] Bede, *Homilies,* 1.8.
[30] Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst (trans) *Bede the Venerable Homilies on the Gospels*: *Book Two – Lent to the Dedication of the Church* (Collegeville: Cistercian Publications, 1991). From herein cited as Bede, *Homilies,* II (book two) followed by homily number and page numbers. This citation for example Bede, *Homilies,* II.3, 64-5.

cooperates with grace or not.[31] The donkey in the analogy did not have the choice. Bede does, however, emphasise that baptism unbinds the individual from the bonds of sin, but that the individual then has the responsibility to choose good freely over evil after baptism.[32] This responsibility is further emphasised in his homily for Holy Saturday, where Bede relates the parable of the deaf and mute man who Christ heals.[33] The key message that Bede wishes to emphasise is that Christ heals those who deserve to be free from the bonds of sin, that is, those who earn the freedom by living righteously and freely choosing good.[34] This is reinforced further in the *Commentary on the Epistles:*

> The grace of Christ becomes the grace of those who accept it with a pure heart, for the person who rejects the grace of Christ does not diminish this grace but causes it not to be his, that is, he causes it to be of no benefit to him.[35]

This passage together with his views on baptism above reveal his view that grace is bestowed upon individuals at baptism, which frees them from Original Sin. The individual merits further grace by accepting this gift "with a pure heart" and cooperating with this gift by freely choosing good. For individuals who choose not to cooperate with this grace and reject it by choosing evil, this gift is of no benefit to them. Bede is quick to affirm, however, that while God's grace is of no benefit to them, it is also not withdrawn entirely. This implies, without explicitly saying so, that individuals who initially reject this gift can always reverse this choice and are free to choose to cooperate with and earn God's further grace. Bede expands on this idea, and it is developed further in the writings of Ælfric and, in particular, Wulfstan.

The treatment of exegetical and theological concerns in Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies* provides considerable insight into his primary concerns. In the first series of *Catholic*

[31] Kleist, *Striving with Grace*, 70.
[32] Bede, *Homilies*, I.18, 182.
[33] Bede, *Homilies*, II.6, 3-4.
[34] Kleist, *Striving with Grace*, 72. (See also Bede, *Homilies*, I.3, I.7, I.14 and II.11).
[35] Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst (trans) *Bede the Venerable Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles* (Collegeville: Cistercian Publications, 1985) I Pt 11.5, lines 77-8.

Homilies, for example, Ælfric states that the purpose of the work is to teach correct belief and enable access to Holy texts for those unable to read Latin.[36] In the Preface, Ælfric declares that he is saddened to discover significant errors in the English books that were being taken for divine wisdom in the ignorance of his time. His aim, therefore, is to address this concern by translating authoritative texts from Latin into the vernacular.[37] This is unique in a number of ways, mainly in that texts that addressed the laity in Anglo-Saxon England focus on broad moral instruction more than on methodological interpretation of Scripture.[38] Ælfric relies heavily on the writings of the Church Fathers to support his arguments and freely acknowledges his sources in both the text and the Prefaces to the *Homilies*. Ælfric, while he sometimes quotes directly from his sources, does not simply reiterate their arguments with respect to sin, penance, free will, and grace. Instead, he uses the writing of one author to complement or reinforce the ideas of another, and he also contributes original thought to his writings in order to address his own concerns.[39] His highly selective method results in a text that is traditional and orthodox on the one hand, yet unique and targeted on the other.

In homily nineteen of *The First Series*, Ælfric makes a distinction between temptation (*costnung)* and trial (*fandung)*. God does not 'tempt' humankind directly, but neither does he accept anyone into the kingdom of heaven who has not been 'tried'. By "trial" Ælfric here refers to temptations by the devil, as God himself does not tempt humankind but allows the devil to do so in order to test their faith. If individuals withstand the temptation, then they will flourish and find favour with God. If, however, they yield to temptation, Ælfric holds they can still be reconciled to God, provided they earnestly atone and, more importantly, cease from committing the sin again. Ælfric here acknowledges that resisting temptation is difficult and that the individual will almost certainly succumb to temptation on occasion. He

[36] Mary Swan, 'Identity and Ideology in Ælfric's Prefaces', Hugh Magennis and Mary Swan (eds) *A Companion to Ælfric* (Leiden: Brill, 2009) 252.
[37] Ælfric , 'Preface', *CHI*, 44-55.
[38] Ælfric , 'Preface', *CHI*, 44-55.
[39] Kleist, *Striving with Grace*, 171.

intends this point not as any inducement to despair but rather as an incentive to persevere in a halting but necessary pursuit of perfect righteousness. Ælfric does, however, also point out that frequent sin will have dire consequences. He states:

> Se man þe wile gelomlice syngian. 7 gelomlice betan. he gremað god; And swa he swiðor syngað. swa he deofle. gewylda bið. 7 hine þonne god forlæt. 7 he færð swa he deofol wissað. swa swa tobrocen scip on sæ. þe swa færð. Swa hit se wind drifð…And se yfela. swa he oftor on þære fandunge abryð: swa he forcuþra bið. 7 deofle near oð ðæt he færð of þysum life to þam ecan wite gif he ær geswican nolde þa ða he mihte 7 moste.[40]

The frequent sins referred to here probably denote the repetition of a given sin rather than a multiplicity of different sins. This repetitive cycle reveals an imperfect repentance: remorse and compunction will not suffice without a refusal to repeat the sin. While frequent sinning and atoning angers God, Ælfric emphasizes that it is still possible to repent truly, to cease from sin, and to choose freely to cooperate with God's grace. Ælfric goes on to say that God provides humankind with adequate time to repent during earthly existence and the individual should pray for forgiveness in this life, for the individual who does not will not find forgiveness in the next life.[41] This is the condition of all of humankind living after Christ's sacrifice and God's gift of grace.

In the twelfth homily of the *Second Series*, Ælfric describes the time since Christ's passion as being "under God's grace" (*under Godes gife*)*'*, as it is in this time that Christ's atoning sacrifice allows God's gift of grace to assist humankind in choosing good. Following a description of the Age that preceded the advent of God's grace in the person of Christ,

[40] "The man who frequently sins and frequently atones angers God; and the more he sins the more he will be subject to the devil, and God will then forsake him, and he will go as the devil shall direct him, as a shattered ship at sea, which goes as the wind drives it…and the evil man, the more he sinks under trial, the more wicked he will be, and the nearer to the devil, until he goes from this life to eternal torment, if he would not cease previously, when he could and might." Ælfric, *CHI* 19.160-64, 167-69.
[41] Ælfric, *CHI* 19.203-5.

Ælfric enumerates the eight sins that the individual must resist in order to achieve righteousness.[42] While Ælfric observes that there are many more sins committed by humankind, he argues that resisting the eight chief sins will also deal with the minor sins that derive from them. The eight chief sins as listed in the homily are: greediness (*gyfernyss)*; libidinousness (*galnyss*); covetousness (*gytsung)*; passion (*weamod)*; discontent (*unrotnys)*; slothfulness (*asolcennyss)* or aversion (*æmelnys*); vainglory (*gylp*); and pride (*modignyss)*.[43] Greediness is described as being a sin whereby the individual takes food before his time, or consumes far more than he needs during meals. Sub-sins in this category include gluttony (*oferfyll)*, drunkenness (*druncenyss)*, uncleanness of body (*unclænnys lichaman)*, unsteadiness of mind (*modes unstæðdignys)*, and idle obscenity (*ydel gafferung)*.[44] The second chief sin, libidinousness, Ælfric describes as incontinence in sexual connection and voluptuousness of mind for fleshly lusts. Its sub-sins include imbecility of mind (*modes mægenleast)*, immoderate love (*ungemetegod lufu)*, hatred of God's commandments (*hatung Godes beboda)*, senseless play (*higeleas plega)*, obscene speech (*fracodlic spræc)*, and unsteady eyes (*eageba unstæðdignyss)*. The third chief sin is covetousness, which is distinct from greediness in that it inflames the mind of individuals always to want more possessions even though those possessions never satisfy their wanting more. Greediness is distinguished here by being more specifically about physical appetite for food, while covetousness refers to the desire for material possessions. The sub-sins in this category include envy (*andan)*, fraud and rapine (*facn and reaflac)*, stealing and forswearing (*stala and forswerennys)*, false witness (*leas gewitnyss)* and immoderate violence *(unmæðlic neadung)*. The fourth chief sin is passion or irascibility (more accurately anger or wrath). In this sin, the individual does not

[42] *CHII* 12.476-541.
[43] *CHII* 12.483-486.
[44] Ælfric does not refer to them as sub-sins in the homilies, stating instead that greediness gives rise to these other sins. 'Sub-sins', however, is an apt term to describe them, as in the context of Ælfric´s homilies, these 'other' sins are subsistent to the chief sin of greediness and hence if the chief sin is resisted, then so will all the 'other' sins.

have control of their mind or rationality. Its sub-sins include uproar (*hream)*, irritation (*æbilignys)*, fool-hardiness (*dyslic dyrstignys)*, and murder (*mansliht)*. This would suggest that Ælfric regarded murder is a consequence of irrational anger or wrath. The fifth sin is discontent with the world, which causes the individual to blame God for the mishaps and trials of mortal life. Its sub-sins here are evilness (*yfelnys)*, cowardice or weakness *(wacmodnys)*, bitterness of heart (*heortan biternys)*, and despair of the self (*sylfes orwennys)*. Ælfric does distinguish here between two different types of discontent, one that is pernicious and the other that is salutary, which he characterizes as penitential regret for sins committed. Of course only pernicious discontent is sinful as it directs blame for the trials of mortal life toward God. Ælfric identifies the sixth chief sin as slothfulness or disgust (disdain, weariness, falsehood), which he describes as the loss of desire to do anything and a turning away from the practice of virtues with weary disgust. Ælfric does concede that this sin is not 'perilous', by which he might mean that it is not the direct cause of deeper and more deadly sins. He does, however, insist that it can encourage sub-sins such as idleness (*idelnysse)*, sleepiness (*slapolnysse)*, petulance (*gemagnysse)*, babble (*wordlunge)*, rambling (*worunge)*, and idle curiousity (*fyrwitnysse)*.[45] The seventh chief sin is vainglory (*ydelum gylpe)*, where an individual desires earthly glory with insufficient concern for how mortality sharply curtails the reach of earthly fame or for how such self-centered ambition will injure the soul. Ælfric identifies the sub-sins of vainglory as pride (*pryte)*, irritation (*æbilignys*), discord (*ungeðwærnys*), hypocrisy (*hywung*), and lust of false praise (*lustfullung leasre herunge*). Pride (*modignys*) is the eighth capital sin, and, according to Ælfric and the early Church Fathers, it is the beginning and end of all evil. It includes the sub-sins of contempt

[45] The reference to sleep here is interesting as sleep is often identified as the time when reason recedes. It can be culpable, like a solder falling asleep on watch, yet at the same time the early Church Fathers were fairly unanimous in their view that 'sins' (usually sexual) committed in dreams do not count as the dreamer does not act in a fully conscious, morally rational way. There are several references to sleep in both the poetry and the prose that do not refer to actual sleep at all but refer to complacency and not being constantly vigilant against temptation, which is what Ælfric is referring to here in his list of sins. See chapter two for references to sleep in the poetry.

(*forsewemysse*), disobedience (*ungehyrsumnysse*), envy (*andon*), evil strife (*yfel-sacunge*), murmuring (*ceorunge*), and frequent calumnies (*gelomlice tala*). Among the many treatments of sin in Old English homilies, this list is quite thorough, and Ælfric is the only homilist to provide details that associate the chief sins with particular sub-sins, and with the virtues that would counteract and resist these vices. Vercelli homilies II and III also provide lists of sins but focus primarily on the eight chief sins and thus lack the detail of Ælfric's treatment. Ælfric also counters each sin with a corresponding and corrective virtue, advising his hearers to overcome greediness with moderation (*gemetegunge*), libidinousness with chastity (*clænysse*), covetousness with a pure mind (*cystignysse ures clænen modes*), irascibility with wise patience (*wislicum geðylde*), discontent with ghostly joy (*gæstlicere blisse*), slothfulness with steadfastness (*soðre anrædnysse*), vainglory by inward love (*incundre lufe*), and pride with great humility (*micelre eadmodnysse*).[46]

In homily twenty-four of *The First Series*, Ælfric states that there are people in the world who have never committed deadly sins and who have not experienced or pursued a hard course in life.[47] Others may have committed grievous sins in their youth but in later life are troubled with great remorse. This is partly self-inflicted, as they shun earthly existence and everything in it, preferring instead to weep tears of repentance and yearning for their spiritual home. They chastise and humble themselves because they are conscious of their separation from God and their need of his grace. As such, there will be greater joy in heaven for those who have acknowledged and truly repented of their sins, than for those who have never sinned and have thus never had to undergo the rigours of penitence. Without such self-reflection and self-judgement, the individual is unlikely to take proper heed either of God's commandments or of the needs of their souls to any great length, even if they do follow

[46] Ælfric's taxonomy reduces the inherently wayward and incoherent tendencies of sin to a tidy taxonomy, a kind of quasi-medical handbook that allows its user to negotiate the labyrinth of sin safely and to a good end. It's typical of Ælfric to want to present his matter in a neatly packaged rhetorical bundle.
[47] Ælfric, *CHI* 24.50-55.

God's commandments in not sinning. As Gregory pointed out, the common courses of life in a fallen world make such self-judgement a necessary element of Christian spiritual hygiene.

By freely choosing to practice these virtues during earthly existence, the individual can prepare actively for Christ's future judgement of humankind. Ideally, balanced Christian souls will no longer need to prepare actively, as they will have schooled themselves to choose virtue over sin and evil. They will, ideally, live moderately, be chaste and pure of mind without wicked thoughts, patient, demonstrate humility and their love for God, and be steadfast in their Christian faith. But neither Ælfric nor his predecessors expected the Christian individual to be completely free from sin. On the contrary, Ælfric, and the early Christian writers before him exert themselves to remind their audiences what constitutes sin as well as each sin's corresponding virtue. Aside from the need to remind his audience, Ælfric also reinforces Scriptural passages such as Luke 15:7, which states "…there is more joy in heaven over one sinful man, if he rue his sins with repentance, than there is over ninety and nine righteous, who need not repentance." Ælfric states that this requires further investigation, not because the meaning is unclear to himself necessarily but to clarify the meaning to the audience who may misinterpret it. Taken literally, this passage in Luke could be interpreted that it is far better to sin and then repent for those sins than to have never sinned. Ælfric, however, does not accept this literal interpretation and clarifies this passage by distinguishing between different types of sinners. He states that there are those who have not "fallen" (*befeollen)* into deadly sins (*healice*) and are careless (*orsorge)* precisely because they have not committed deadly sins, in their opinion. These individuals, Ælfric states, are confident that they have not committed any of the chief sins, whether this is the case or not, and hence do not endure difficult conditions (*earfoðlican drohtnunge).*[48] Even Ælfric's clarification here requires clarification. The implication is that while these individuals shun

[48] Ælfric, *CHI* 24.50-52.

the chief sins and do not acknowledge committing these sins, they also lack the capacity for self-reflection and judgement as they are confident in their 'sinless' state. This, in turn, can make them complacent with respect to the needs of the soul and slack in their observance of God's commands to confess and merit further grace. Being slack and complacent though falls into Ælfric's description of the sixth chief sin outlined above, and so he is implying that just by being so, these individuals are sinning.[49] This reinforces Ælfric´s belief, also discussed earlier, that God does not accept anyone into heaven without trial.[50] 'Trial' in homily twenty-four refers to the self-imposed trial that stems from acknowledgement and true repentance of sins, irrespective of how major or minor those sins are, which Ælfric reinforces with his second type of sinner. These individuals, he states, acknowledge the sins they have committed in their youth and impose great afflictions (*micelre sarnysse)* upon themselves.[51] Ælfric states:

> Hi forseoð alyfedlice þing 7 gesewenlice: 7 mid wope gewilniað þa ungesewenlican. 7 þa heofonlican; Hi forscoð hi sylfe. 7 geeadmettað on eallum ðingum: 7 for þi ðe hi dwenliende fram heora scyppende gewitan: hi willað geinnan þa æfran hynðe: mid þam uferan gestreonum.[52]

Such individuals exhibit the ideal characteristics of true repentance. They, first and foremost, acknowledge their sins, which demonstrates a strong capacity for the self-reflection and self-judgement that is fundamental to Anglo-Saxon penitential ideals. Ælfric states that they "despise permitted and visible things", which refers to all material things in earthly existence, and they strive for the "invisible and heavenly" with lament or weeping. This lament is for their fallen state after the Original Sin of Adam and Eve, and for the sins committed within

[49] Ælfric, *CHI* 24.59-63.
[50] Ælfric, *CHI* 19.147-48
[51] Ælfric, *CHI* 24.53-55.
[52] "They despise permitted and visible things, and with tears desire for the invisible and heavenly. They despise themselves and are humble in all things; and as they have departed from their Creator through their error, they desire to repair the injury with heavenly gains." Ælfric, *CHI* 24.55-59.

this earthly realm. They despise and humble themselves in all things because they are aware that through error, both of the first parents and through their own sins, they have turned away from God and seek to repair this injury with heavenly gains. While not stated explicitly here, Ælfric implies that these 'heavenly gains' refer to prayer, confession, penance, and prioritizing the wellbeing of the soul over the wellbeing of the body. Unlike the first, potentially complacent group of individuals, this group is constantly vigilant and they impose harsher judgement on themselves by way of repentance, a practice Ælfric is encouraging his own audience to adopt. It is for these reasons, according to Ælfric, that there will be greater joy in heaven for one repentant sinner than for ninety-nine complacent individuals who are not always as vigilant as they should be during life.

Ælfric does, however, also identify a third type of individual who is above the repentant sinner in terms of God's reverence. These individuals are righteous and guiltless of deadly sins (*rihtwise unscyldige wið heafodleahtrum)* yet they impose upon themselves harsh conditions as though they are afflicted with all sins as, in a way, they are. This is a monastic ideal that seeks to enact a kind of vicarious atonement for the sins of the world. That is, the self-judgement that these individuals impose on themselves gives them a further sense of sin, over and above those sins that lie within their personal moral agency, so that they seek to intercede with penance on behalf of their fellow human beings. Ælfric is aware, however, that this last group is ideal and that the simply repentant sinner is a more likely occurrence. As such, for Ælfric, as for Gregory, self-reflection and self-judgement are fundamental to preparing actively for Christ's future judgement of humankind. Without this self-judgement, the individual may experience harsher judgement upon Christ's return, when it is too late to repent and atone for sins. This emphasis on self-judgement also reflects Ælfric's perspective, and that of Anglo-Saxon theology generally, on free will and grace. By freely choosing good,

the individual also acknowledges their sins and repents for them in a conscious effort to earn God's grace.

For Ælfric, free will is fundamental to the fate of the individual soul as the individual must choose freely to resist evil and repent for sins, only then will the individual be in an approriate state to receive God's grace.[53] In homily seven of *The First Series*, Ælfric states that when God created Adam and Eve, he created them with the capacity to choose freely whether they would live in happiness through obedience or would become mortal through disobedience.[54] They chose to disobey God's commandments, guilty of their own volition according to Ælfric, and they, together with all their offspring became mortal. Humankind, however, is not enslaved by evil as Christ has redeemed us through his humanity, but only if we obey his commandments. Ælfric states:

> Ne se nan man to þan arleas þæt he adam wyrige oððe euan. Þe nu on heofenum mid gode rixiað: ac geearnige swiþor godes mildheortnysse: swa þæt he wende his agene cyre to his scyppendes gehyrsumnysse 7 bebodum for þan ðe nan man ne bið gehealden buton þurh gife hælendes cristes; ða gife he gearcode. 7 forestihte on ecum ræde ær middangeardes gesetnysse.[55]

Through Christ's sacrifice and God's gift of grace, the individual can choose eternal life, but if an individual chooses evil, according to Ælfric, then the blame falls on the individual, not on Adam and Eve, and not on God or the devil. Here Ælfric reinforces Augustine´s idea that of the truly free beings – God, angels, and humans – only humankind is accountable for their

[53] Robert K. Upchurch, 'Catechetic Homiletics: Ælfric's Preaching and Teaching During Lent', Magennis and Swan (eds) *Companion to Aelfric*, 231.
[54] Ælfric, *CHI* 8.150-53.
[55] "Let no man be so impious that he curse Adam or Eve, who now reign in heaven with God, but let him earn God's mercy, so that he turns his own choice to the obedience and commandments of the Creator; for no one will be saved but through the grace of Jesus Christ: that grace he prepared and preordained to last forever, before the foundation of the world." Ælfric, *CHI* 7.193-98. The word *geearnige* is often translated as 'merit', that is "let him *merit* God's mercy", however, 'meriting' grace is a contradiction in terms, theologically. It is more about the sinner achieving a *receptive* state, an openness toward God that allows his grace to descend. *Ge-earnian* means 'to earn' in the sense of 'to toil after', and the toiling here would be the struggle to achieve that receptive state in which God's grace can flow. It is a subtle distinction, but a necessary one.

own individual sin as they are created with the capacity to choose. In homily eleven of *The First Series,* Ælfric states that God allows devils to tempt humankind, but they cannot compel or force individuals to sin against their will. Ælfric reinforces this throughout this homily, particularly from line 138 where he describes the three stages of sin. The first is instigation, where the devil or devils tempt the individual to sin, the second is the pleasure the temptation holds out to the mind, and the third is consent, where that pleasure induces the mind to consent to and commit the sin.[56] Ideally, Ælfric states, the individual should resist the initial instigation from the devil, but even if the temptation is pleasurable to the mind, then the individual should resist consenting and lapsing into sin. These three stages result in a continual spiritual struggle or psychomachia that is the most important work of human existence. Its outcome depends on the moral agency and responsibility of individuals to choose good of their own free will.[57] This responsibility includes not only resisting temptation but also having the capacity to reflect and repent for past sins, impose self-judgement, and prioritise the wellbeing of the soul over the well-being of the body.

In homily twenty-four of *The First Series,* Ælfric reinforces this responsibility by urging his audience to not procrastinate or to defer their self-judgement and repentance. Instead, they should reflect urgently on past and present deeds and appeal to God with penitential tears for mercy.[58] These, together with other penitential exertions such as fasting, prayers, and almsgiving, along with the promise never to commit the same sin again, serve to demonstrate the sincerity of repentance. If repentance is sincere, God can then freely and gratuitously confer his own forgetfulness of sins. This forgetfulness, according to Ælfric, is symmetrical, in that if the righteous turn away from righteousness to sin, then God will forget their righteousness. Conversely, if the unrighteous turn away from unrighteousness and freely

[56] Ælfric, *CHI* 7.138-145.
[57] Upchurch, 'Catechetic Homiletics', MAgennis and Swan (eds) *Companion to Aelfric,* 238.
[58] Ælfric, *CHI* 24.199-207

choose good, then God will forget their unrighteousness, as if it had never happened.[59] The individual cannot recompense God for the offence caused by the sin in the first place, but God's grace generously allows God to forget and forgive on the basis of present disposition rather than past actions. Ælfric provides many examples of his perspective on free will, grace, sin, and penance throughout his homilies, which subsequently influenced his younger contemporary Wulfstan of York, though the latter's treatment of sin and penance is far more urgent and dramatic than Ælfric's measured detail.

Wulfstan's position as both an ecclesiastic and a statesman gives his writings a unique context and perspective. As an advisor to both Æthelred and Cnut, Wulfstan witnessed firsthand the impact of the Viking invasions, which in turn had a significant impact on his sermons and homiletic writing. His homilies and religious writings also influenced the development of his law tracts.[60] The two roles, as representative of the Church and of the state, are not exclusive of each other, nor did Wulfstan treat them as such. As Helen Foxhall-Forbes states, Wulfstan believed in and advocated for a "holy society" where individuals obeyed both God's commandments and secular law.[61] As such, Wulfstan integrated his ideas on sin, penance, and repentance into both his sermons and his law codes in order to realise his vision of this 'holy society' that maintained a good relationship with God.[62] This is evident particularly in his *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, where he characterises the violence of the Viking invasions as both a rebuke to the English people for their complacency and an indication of how urgently they need to repent.

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[59] Ælfric, *CHI* 24.194-7.

[60] A comparison between Wulfstan's law codes and his homilies is beyond the scope of this thesis though the connection between the homilies and the law codes provides considerable insight into Wulfstan's unique position as both Archbishop and statesman. See Dorothy Whitelock, "Wulfstan and the Laws of Cnut." *The English Historical Review* 63, no. 249 (1948): 433-452, M. K. Lawson, "Archbishop Wulfstan and the Homiletic Element in the Laws of Æthelred II and Cnut." *English Historical Review* (1992): 565-586, Jonathan Wilcox, "Wulfstan's Sermo Lupi ad Anglos as Political Performance: 16 February 1014 and Beyond'." Matthew Townend (ed), *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: the proceedings of the second Alcuin Conference* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004) 375-96.

[61] Foxhall-Forbes, *Heaven and Earth*, 172.

[62] Foxhall-Forbes, *Heaven and Earth*, 173.

By associating the Viking attacks with divine punishment, Wulfstan expresses, his exasperation at the present situation in England and shapes his emphatic plea to his audience to amend their ways and hope for God's grace. The title identifies the *Sermo* as an address to the English when the Danes were persecuting them in the year 1014. The title's specificity might lead us to expect a homily that directly confronts the issue of the Viking attacks and provides its audience with some means of understanding and responding to what has gone wrong. And in some ways it does. But the sermon is less about the present Viking invasions than it is a rebuke to the English people for bringing divine punishment upon themselves through their past sinful coduct. Wulfstan states:

> Forþam mid miclan earnungan we geearnedan þa yrmða þe us on sittað 7 mid swyþe micelan earnungan we þa bote motan æt Gode geræcan, gif hit sceal heonanforð godiende weorðan. La hwæt we witan ful georne þæt to miclan bryce sceal micel bot nyde, 7 to miclan bryne wæter unlytel, gif man þæt fyr sceal to ahte acwencan. 7 micel is nydþearf eac manna gehwilcum þæt he Godes lage gyme heonanforð georne bet þonne he ær dyde, 7 Godes gerihta mid rihte gelæste.[63]

This short passage provides considerable insight into Wulfstan's view on sin, God's grace, and the responsibility of the individual. It is manifest, according to Wulfstan, that the English have brought upon themselves the "many injuries and insults" (*byrsta 7 bysmara*) they have experienced on account of their sinful ways.[64] Less directly, Wulfstan implies that these sinful ways have not only brought on the trauma of the Viking invasions but, more importantly, they have also brought about a rupture in the relationship between God and the English people. In order to remedy this rupture, individuals must take responsibility for their actions

[63] "For with great deserts we have earned the misery that is upon us, and with truly great deserts we must obtain the remedy from God, if henceforth things are to improve…And it is also a great necessity for each of men that he henceforth eagerly heed the law of God better than he has done and justly pay God's dues." W 10(EI).20-27.
[64] W 10(EI).17-18.

and obey God's law and "justly pay God's dues". There is no indication in this or any of his sermons that sin incapacitates individuals to the extent that they are trapped by evil and unable to choose good or earn God's grace.[65] Instead, while they require God's assistance to reject evil, that assistance is freely available to every individual Christian, who need only seek it. In the *Sermo de Baptismate,* Wulfstan states:

> Þonne is ærost se fruma þæt man gedo þurh gode wissunge þæt he his Drihten ongyte rihtlice 7 þæt he eac wiðsace anrædlice deofles gemanan; þæt is, þæt he forsace 7 forbuge his unlara, þæs ðe æfre mæge, 7 ðæt he geswutelige eac þæt he hæbbe 7 æfre habban wille anræde geðanc 7 anrædne geleafan on ænne soðne 7 ealmihtigne Godd.[66]

The individual with a resolute will and faith in God can *always* strive against the devil's temptations and choose good over evil. Earlier in the *Sermo Lupi,* Wulfstan declares that the "devil has led the nation astray for many years"(*deofol þas þeode nu fela geara dwelode to swyþe*) not because the devil has such power over humankind but because humankind permitted this to occur through a weakness of the will.[67] The devil may tempt humankind, but it is the individual who chooses evil over good and, as Wulfstan states above, the individual always has the capacity to reverse this choice. In the sermon titled *To Eallum Folke,* Wulfstan reinforces this view by stating that, because humankind has the ability to choose to earn eternal life or eternal death, then they must know how to "repay" (*geleanian*) Christ for all he has endured and suffered for humankind.[68] This idea that humankind should "repay" Christ is also evident in the *Christ III* poem explored earlier where Christ rebukes the sinners on the day of judgement for their failure to acknowledge the severe torments he undertook on their

[65] Kleist, *Striving with Grace,* 150.
[66] "First then is the beginning that a man should undertake through goodly guidance: that he understand his Lord correctly and that he reject resolutely the devil's prompting. That is, that he he forsake and turn away from his false teachings, since he may always do so, and show that he has and ever shall have a resolute will, and faith in the one true and almighty God." W 8c.10-15.
[67] W 8.11-12.
[68] W 7.74-78.

behalf. This is a reflection of the judgement day scenes in the gospels, in Matt. 25:32-33 for example, where the 'sheep' are separated from the 'goats'. Unlike the poet of *Christ III*, however, Wulfstan lists the sins of humankind that, in his view, have earned the English the "misery" of their present context.

In the *Sermo Lupi*, Wulfstan calls for a remedy, as both God's dues and observance of the law and social obligation have deteriorated.[69] He adduces considerable evidence of this deterioration in society, from widows being forced into unjust marriages to poor men being betrayed and defrauded, to infants being enslaved by cruel injustices. The rights of free men are taken away as is their independence, while the rights of slaves are restricted and charitable obligations are diminished.[70] Wulfstan goes on to state that society experiences God's anger as his laws and teaching are despised, an experience, he states, that will become universal in the absence of God's protection.[71] This anger is evident in the punishment afflicting the English people including hunger (*hungor*), burning (*bryne)* and bloodshed (*blodgyte),* stealing (*stalu),* slaying (*cwalu),* plague (*stric)* and pestilence (*steorfa),* murrain (*ofcwealm)* and disease (*uncoþu*), malice (*hol)* and hatred (*hete),* robbery (*rypera),* excessive taxes (*ungylda),* and poor weather leading to crop failure (*unwedera foroft weoldan unwæstma).*[72] Wulfstan observes that these afflictions, the direct result of God's anger, are not surprising, as the nation as a whole has become very corrupt through its manifold sins (*mænigfealde synna*) and misdeeds (*misdæda*); sins such as murder (*morðdæda*) and evil deeds (*mandræda*), avarice (*gitsunga*) and greed (*gifernessa*), stealing (*stala*) and robbery (*strudunga*), man-selling (*mannsylena*) and heathen vices (*hæþene unsida*), betrayals (*swicdomas*) and frauds (*seacræftas*), attacks on kinsmen (*mægræsas*) and manslaughter (*manslyhtas*), injury of holy men (*hadbrycas*), adultery (*æwbrycas*), incest (*siblegeru*), and

[69] W10(EI).39-40.
[70] W 10(EI).47-49
[71] W 10(EI).57-60.
[72] W 10(EI).61-69

various fornications (*mistlice forligru*).[73] Wulfstan's description of the sins and misdeeds of the English here reflects the descriptive treatment of sin in Ælfric's homily, but in a manner more emphatic than prescriptive. Wulfstan is more concerned to detail the stains of sin and then to let them speak for themselves.

The wounds of sin is a popular literary trope in both Old English and wider medieval discourses, though in Old English it is more prevalent in the poetry than in the prose. Ælfric, for example, does call for medicine administered to heal the body to be accompanied by penitence, but he does not state outright that sin is the direct and only cause of disease.[74] In the poetry, particularly in the explicitly eschatological poems, this motif is often associated directly with the motif of Christ the physician who has the power to heal the wounds of the soul. The most common Old English epithet for Christ, *se hælend*, means literally 'the healing one' and translates the Latin *salvator*, from which modern English 'saviour' is derived. In *Christ III*, the narrator expresses his dismay that, in life, individuals are unable to see the "wounds of sin" (*synna wunde*) on their souls. If they could, the poet declares, they would inevitably want to apply a salve to heal these wounds before they are revealed on Judgement Day.[75] Similarly in *Judgement Day II*, the most illustrative example of this motif is when the poet questions why those in need will not confess to Christ the physician and pray for "poultice and plaster" (*beþunga and plaster)* to heal the wounds of sin.[76] This question is posed to the poet's own will but is also directed out to the audience in order to emphasise their need to repent and confess sins in the present, since it will be too late to do so after either death or Judgement Day.

Despite his seeming despair that the nation is wounded and stained by sin, which has brought about the miseries and afflictions experienced by the English people, Wulfstan

[73] W 10(EI).129-36.
[74] Thompson, *Death and Dying*, 96
[75] *Christ III*, 1313-1317.
[76] *Judgement Day II*, 75-81.

believes that there is still hope. Wulfstan, like Ælfric, believes that the English people are not wholly incapacitated by their sins, a point he emphasises to his audience at the end of the *Sermo Lupi*, where he observes:

> And utan don swa us þearf is, gebugan to rihte 7 be suman dæle unriht forlætan 7 betan swyþe georne þæt we ær bræcan. And utan God lufian 7 Godes lagum fylgean, 7 gelæstan swyþe georne þæt þæt we behetan þa we fulluht underfengan, oððon þa þe æt fulluhte ure forespecan wæran. And utan word 7 weorc rihtlice fadian 7 ure ingeþanc clænsian georne 7 að 7 wed wærlice healdan 7 sume getrywða habban us betweonan butan uncræftan.[77]

Wulfstan believes that the English people can still amend their ways by obeying both human and divine law, by rejecting evil and choosing good. While this sentiment is also evident in Ælfric's writings, Wulfstan appears in the *Sermo Lupi* to be significantly more concerned with the responsibility of individual Christians for the fate of their souls, while Ælfric focuses more on the responsibility of the clergy to teach their congregations to choose good.[78] In this regard, Wulfstan's treatment of sin and the responsibility of the individual in the *Sermo Lupi* aligns far more closely with the treatment evident in the poetry, which focuses on the individual rather than the role of the clergy.

Where the homilies are generally measured, sophisticated, selectively doctrinal, and more or less traditional, the poetry is dramatic, embellished, and creative in its representation of key issues such as sin, penance, and the role of the devil. In its own way it explores issues that involve the free will of the individual and the moral agency dependent on that free will. That the poetry does not merely reiterate the homiletic treatment of these themes is

[77] "And let us do as is necessary for us, turn towards the right and to some extent abandon wrong-doing, and eagerly atone for what we previously transgressed; and let us love God and follow God's laws, and carry out well that which we promised when we received baptism or those [promised] who spoke on our behalf at our baptism. And let us order words and deeds justly, and cleanse our thoughts with zeal, and keep oaths and pledges carefully, and have some loyalty between us without evil practice." W10(EI)190-197.
[78] Foxhall-Forbes, *Heaven and Earth*, 183.

interesting in itself and implies that poetry and prose may have served complementary purposes. As with all Old English poetry, it is difficult to determine with any certainty the authors' intentions, or to arrive at any definite sense of their audience. Their methods of representation are necessarily distinct, as any stylistic comparison between poetry and prose illustrates. But whether the authors of prose and poetic texts intended their works to complement each other, or whether they intended both to be used during the liturgy and/or personal devotion, remain largely speculative questions, since no record of the intentions of any poet survived beyond the texts themselves. Based on the content, however, it is sufficiently clear that the prose authors' concerns with sin, penance, and free will are also evident in various poems. In this regard, the poetry and the prose are complementary. Even to a largely lay audience, the homilies would relate the formal doctrinal matters while the dramatic poetry would reinforce doctrine in a more entertaining and dramatic way. This is particularly evident in the treatment of sin and penance in the poetry compared to the prose. Where the homilies focus on specific themes, the poems juxtapose and suggest many different themes, which can make them difficult to categorise but can also allow them broader insights into their often varied matter. In general we can say that the concern of the poets is to *dramatize* their audience's need to take thought for the future fate of their souls and encourage active preparation for the return of Christ and his judgement of humankind, the imminence of which the dramatic resources of poetry can communicate powerfully.

Unlike Ælfric's homily twelve in *The First Series*, discussed earlier, the surviving poetry does not contain detailed lists of sins and corresponding penances or vices and their respective virtues. Most of the poems only refer to sin in a very general way and do not mention specific sins, or if they do, only very briefly. The most explicit poem that deals with the issue of sin is *Genesis B,* which offers a sometimes startling and unorthodox narrative account of Adam and Eve's original transgression. The treatment of Original Sin in *Genesis*

B is unique to the poet, who expands on the biblical text in a way that dramatizes the self-judgement and remorse that figure prominently in any homiletic account of the ways to remedy sin once it has been committed. This expansion also reveals the significance of free will in the development of the poet's ideas and the emphasis placed on the responsibility of the individual for their future fate. The fundamental message of *Genesis B* insists that the individual is wholly responsible for his or her choices and their consequences, and it uses all the resources of heroic poetry to give that message its dramatic and rhetorical power.

The story of the Fall in the Old English poem *Genesis B* expands significantly on the text found in Scripture. This expansion emphasises the poet's ideas concerning the doctrine of Original Sin and gives scope to his wider concerns with human psychology. These concerns involve issues such as temptation, sin, moral agency, remorse, and penance. One significant amendment that the poet makes to the scriptural text is the description of the tree of knowledge and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The poet takes the two trees of the biblical account and names them instead the tree of life and the tree of death. The two trees, according to the poet, were planted by God in order for each person to choose between good and evil. The poet states:

460 And him bi twegin beamas stodon
þa wæron utan ofætes gehlædene,
gewered mid wæstme, swa hie waldend god,
heah heofoncyning handum gesette,
þæt þær yldo bearn moste on ceosan
465 godes and yfeles, gumena æghwilc,
welan and wawan. Næs se wæstm gelic!
Oðer wæs swa wynlic, wlitig and scene,
liðe and lofsum, þæt wæs lifes beam;

moste on ecnisse æfter lybban,
wesan on worulde, se þæs wæstmes onbat,
swa him æfter þy yldo ne derede,
ne suht sware, ac moste symle wesan
lungre on lustum and his lif agan,
hyldo heofoncyninges her on worulde, .
habban him to wæron witode geþingþo
on þone hean heofon, þonne he heonon wende.
Þonne wæs se oðer eallenga sweart,
dim and þystre; þæt wæs deaðes beam,
se bær bitres fela.[79]

Clearly, these two trees are not alike, with the tree of life described as pleasant, radiant, beautiful, and praiseworthy, enabling whoever ate from it to live eternally without aging or enduring severe illness. The tree of death, on the other hand, is described as being entirely black, dark, shadowy, and bringing much bitterness. The individual who eats from this tree, the poet states, will become aware of the divergent ways of good and evil, will have to live by sweat and sorrow, will be subject to punishment, and will be mortal. The poet goes on to state that old age will rob the individual of valorous deeds, pleasures, authority, and eventually life. After death, the individual will go to the darkest realm and the fire of that realm to endure the greatest perils for eternity.[80] The description of the two trees not only makes

[79] "And between them stood two trees; they were covered with fruits, full of blossoms, just as the Sovereign God, the exalted King of Heaven had put them there with his hands so that each person could choose between good and evil, prosperity or trouble. The fruit was not alike! One was beautiful, radiant and bright, soft and praiseworthy, that was the tree of life; one who ate of this fruit would live in the world for eternity, so old age would not harm them, nor harsh sickness, but they would be allowed to exist and keep their life, the favour of the King of Heaven here in the world. They would have the pledge of sure protection in high heaven when they went hence. The other was entirely black, dark and shadowy; that was the tree of death, it bore many bitter things." All references to the Old English *Genesis* poem are from George Philip Krapp (ed), 'Genesis', *The Junius Manuscript* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931, rpt 1969) lines 460-479a. From herein cited as *Genesis,* followed by the line numbers. This reference, for example, *Genesis*, 460-479a.
[80] *Genesis*, 480-490.

manifest the human capacity to choose freely between good and evil, it also dramatises the consequences of either choice: eternal life without illness on the one hand or hardship, affliction, old age, death, and eternal punishment on the other. The trees of life and death embody the ramifications of these different choices in their outward physical appearance. The choice before Adam and Eve, one would think, could scarcely be more clearly marked.

In the biblical book of Genesis, the serpent asks Eve why God has forbidden the fruit of one tree in paradise, to which Eve repeats God's warning that, were they to eat it, they would die. To this, the serpent replies:

> "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your
> eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good
> and evil." (Gen. 3:4-5)

Drawn by the forbidden fruit's fair appearance, and with only the serpent's reassurance that they will not die, Eve eats the fruit from the tree and also gives it Adam to eat, which he does. In *Genesis B*, however, the poet significantly expands the biblical account of this temptation. He describes how an "adversary of God" transforms himself into a snake, selects a fruit from the tree of death and first approaches Adam with an elaborate story that he has been sent by God himself, who commands that Adam *should* now eat the fruit. By doing so, the adversary affirms, Adam will improve his strength, skill, and mind significantly, his body will become more beautiful, and he will no longer know of any desire for or lack of the good things in the world.[81] Adam, however, refuses the devil's false bidding, who has offered him no clear token that he indeed has come from God, and who, Adam can see, does not resemble God's other angels. Adam recalls God's commands, particularly in relation to the tree and the fruit that the adversary is offering to Adam, and he recalls the warning that he not "be brought to

[81] *Genesis*, 496-503.

ruin and utterly betrayed" by eating the fruit from that tree.[82] By introducing this un-scriptural temptation of Adam in lines 496-546, the poet illustrates the relentless nature of temptation on the one hand, and Adam's steadfast resistance on the other. Adam remembers his right relationship as God's thane, which strengthens him against the adversary's temptation and false promises. The poet also emphasises for his audience how remembering one's relationship with God is fundamental to resisting evil and how the moral responsibility for this rests with the individual. The poet here illustrates the complex nature of temptation and sin, on the one hand, while, on the other hand, he emphasises the capacity of the free human will to resist temptation. The poet highlights the fact that that capacity can be compromised when temptation, as it often does, comes concealed by lies and deception. The aim of these lies is to deceive the individual into believing that the transgression he has so far resisted is now no sin at all, despite God's clear command. By *not* eating the fruit, the adversary asserts, Adam would directly disobey a commandment from God and prompt his wrath. Such is the deceptive nature of temptation, as the poet insists: sin can masquerade as good. Adam, however, is not convinced, and his response to the adversary demonstrates how temptation can be resisted. Adam recalls God's actual words and states that God:

"Þonne ic sigedrihten,
mihtigne god, mæðlan gehyrde
strangre stemne, and me her stondan het,
his bebodu healdan, and me þas bryd forgeaf,
wlitesciene wif, and me warnian het
þæt ic on þone deaðes beam bedroren ne wurde,
beswican to swiðe, he cwæð þæt þa sweartan helle
healdan sceolde se ðe bi his heortan wuht

[82] *Genesis,* 529.

laðes gelæde. Nat þeah þu mid ligenum fare

þurh dyrne geþanc þe þu drihtnes eart

boda of heofnum".[83]

This passage reveals the key message that the poet wants to emphasise to his audience with respect to temptation. Adam's clear recall of God's command leads him to doubt the validity of the adversary's claims. He recalls the words spoken to him directly by God, that eating from the tree of death will betray him and bring him to ruin. Adam also points out that the adversary does not appear to be like any of God's angels and has not, during this exchange, produced any token that proves God's favour and grace. For these reasons, Adam asserts that he cannot obey the command to eat the fruit from the tree and dismisses the adversary by affirming his steadfast trust in God.[84] The poet addresses several issues at once in Adam's response to the temptation, namely, that temptation is often deceptive, that while tempted, individuals choose whether to give in to temptation of their 'own volition', and that resisting temptation relies both on a firm trust in God and a right recognition of one's obligations to him.

The subsequent temptation of Eve reinforces these key issues by having the tempter present a different case, which achieves a different outcome. Unsuccessful in convincing Adam to eat the fruit, he turns his attention to Eve and continues with the lie that he is a messenger from God. But he uses Adam's refusal to eat the fruit to his advantage, surprising Eve with his account of how Adam has directly disobeyed God's command, courting his

[83] "When I heard Almighty God, the Lord of Victory speak with a strong voice and command me to abide here, and he gave me this woman, my beautiful, radiant wife, and warned that I should not be brought to ruin or utterly betrayed over the tree of death, he declared that he would have to inhabit black hell who of his own volition did anything evil. I do not know whether you might have come with lies, from a hidden motive, that you are a messenger of the Lord from heaven." *Genesis,* 523b-533a.

[84] This recalls the scenes in *Beowulf* where, when Beowulf comes to Hrothgar's realm he is confronted first by the coast-watcher and next by the hall-warden, both of whom *recognise* his good faith and good will and so allow him to pass to an audience with their king. In the traditional mode, the perceived character of the messenger partly dictates whether his message (or person) are credited. While an analysis of *Beowulf* is beyond the scope of this thesis, effectively, this scene indicates that it is a part of a proper warrior's role to be able to assess character quickly and accurately, which is what Adam also does in *Genesis B* (but Eve subsequently does not).

lord's displeasure. He appeals to Eve, the 'compliant woman', to consider the extent of God's anger towards them and the punishment that will follow.[85] Thus he plays on her wholly virtuous concern for her own lord's wellbeing. He promises Eve that if she eats the fruit and convinces Adam to do the same, then her eyes will become so clear that she will be able to see as widely as beyond the whole world.[86] As with Adam, the adversary is persistent in attempting to convince Eve to eat the fruit and it is this persistence that the poet is emphasising. The poet states:

Lædde hie swa mid ligenum and mid listum speon
idese on þæt unriht, oðþæt hire on innan ongan
weallan wyrmes geþeaht, (hæfde hire wacran hige
metod gemearcod), þæt heo hire mod ongan
lætan æfter þam larum; forþan heo æt þam laðan onfeng
ofer drihtnes word deaðes beames
weorcsumne wæstm. Ne wearð wyrse dæd
monnum gemearcod! Þæt is micel wundor
þæt hit ece god æfre wolde
þeoden þolian, þæt wurde þegn swa monig
forlædd be þam lygenum þe for þam larum com.[87]

The adversary is both persistent and manipulative. He exploits the relationship between Adam and Eve and convinces Eve that by eating the fruit she will actually be helping Adam, her lord. He manipulates Eve's own anxiety that Adam, by the devil's account, has angered

[85] *Genesis*, 551-563.
[86] *Genesis*, 565-6.
[87] "So he led her on with lies and by cunning coaxed on the woman in that mischief until the adversary's thinking began to seethe up inside her – the ordaining Lord had defined for her a frailer resolution – so that she began to let her mind go along with these counsels. Therefore she received from the abhorrent foe, against the word of the Lord, the tree of death's injurious fruit. A deed more evil was not defined for humankind. It is a great wonder that eternal God, the Prince, would ever tolerate it that so many a servant should be led astray by lies as happened because of those counsels." *Genesis*, 588-598.

God by directly disobeying his messenger. The lies, the manipulative justification of his own agenda, Eve's anxiety, and the adversary's persistence combine to convince Eve to eat the fruit in the mistaken belief that she is helping Adam and deflecting the possibility of God's anger. Once she does, she is able to see "far afield", where heaven and earth appear brighter, with God's creation appearing great and mighty.[88] The poet, however, quickly affirms that Eve's expanded vision is in fact a diabolical deceit. The adversary "deluded her in her spirit" in order to further convince Eve that his claims are genuine, and he continues his deception by suggesting that if she convinces Adam to eat the fruit, God will forgive his initial reluctance. He encourages Eve to go to Adam and relate what she has experienced after eating the fruit.[89] Eve's falsely heightened vision convinces Adam of the 'truth' of the adversary's words and the benefits of eating the fruit. Eve "talked to him repeatedly and coaxed him the whole day", according to the poet, until Adam's resolve finally wavers and he also eats the fruit. Unlike the verse or two of the temptation in Scripture, the description of the temptation and sin in *Genesis B* extends from lines 496 to 764. This dramatic expansion has a distinct purpose: to educate the audience on the nature of temptation. That is, that temptation may present itself under various guises: it can be relentless and manipulative by playing on any weakness or anxiety of the mind, it can persist even after initial resistance, and it can come from different avenues or directions. The only way to resist temptation is to remember the true relationship with God, remain steadfast in faith, and freely choose good over evil.

Despite his great elaboration of the temptation of Adam and Eve, the poet gives his account of the sin itself and its subsequent consequences a far more restrained and traditional treatment. Thus he describes Adam and Eve's confession to God that they ate from the

[88] *Genesis,* 599-604.
[89] *Genesis,* 605-608, 611-622. The exact nature of the tempter's deceit here is open to speculation. It's possible the fruit confers *true* vision, which proves deadly here because Eve takes it in illicitly. So that her vision is in fact real, but received untimely, in a spirit of fear and ignorance rather than of true love.

forbidden tree, with Adam blaming Eve and Eve blaming the serpent, as they do in Scripture.[90] He then relates God's punishment of the first humans and of the serpent in traditional, conservative terms without adding much detail. The distribution of additional detail in *Genesis B*'s account of Adam and Eve's temptation provides considerable insight into the primary concerns and priorities of the poet. The highly selective and deliberate treatment of the scriptural text is both traditional in some respects and unique to the poet in others. The poet describes the sin itself, the confession to God, and God's subsequent punishment of Adam, Eve, and the serpent in fairly conventional terms, without adding significant detail. The treatment of the preceding temptation, however, is much expanded with elaborate detail. The poet's purpose is clear, in that the aim of the poem is not simply to repeat the biblical story of the Fall but to illustrate the consequence of the transgression for all of humankind as developed through centuries of both Jewish and Christian commentary. As outlined above, the poet emphasises in great detail the nature of temptation to educate his audience and enable them to identify the role of deceptive good in softening human resistance to sin's allure. The sin itself does not preoccupy the poet to the same degree. This echoes the idea, found elsewhere in Scripture and in the early Church Fathers such as Augustine, that once the thought of sin has entered the heart and mind, the action is irrelevant as the individual has already sinned. The poet is far more concerned with the psychological and emotional aspects of sin rather than the act itself or even the subsequent physical punishment. This is also evident in the elaborate description of the state of mind of both Adam and Eve after they eat the fruit from the forbidden tree.

In *Genesis B,* the poet communicates the sense of shame evident in the scriptural text but also describes Adam and Eve's sorrow and remorse. The latter is a significant addition and complements the poet's purpose of encouraging the audience to prepare actively for

[90] *Genesis,* 883-902.

Christ's return and future judgement of humankind. In the book of Genesis, the description of Adam and Eve after they eat the fruit is very brief:

> And the eyes of them both were opened: and when they perceived themselves to be naked, they sewed together fig leaves, and make themselves aprons. And when they heard the voice of the Lord God . . . Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord God, amidst the trees of paradise. (Gen. 3:7-8)

When they hear God, Adam and Eve hide themselves out of shame and fear. The shame results directly from their eating of the fruit; it opens their eyes to the sin they have committed, and they perceive themselves to be naked. Their shame, in turn, causes them fear when they hear God walking in paradise, a fear that they had previously not known before. In the Old English poem, the realisation that they are naked and the shame attached to it are of secondary importance. Instead, the poet emphasises the sorrow, remorse, and most importantly the repentance experienced by Adam and Eve after eating the forbidden fruit. The poet states:

765 Sorgedeon ba twa,
Adam and Eue, and him oft betuh
gnornword gengdon; godes him ondredon,
heora herran hete, heofoncyninges nið
swiðe onsæton; selfe forstodon
770 his word onwended. Þæt wif gnornode,
hof hreowwigmod, (hæfde hyldo godes,
lare forlætan), þa heo þæt leoht geseah
ellor scriðan þæt hire þurh untreowa
tacen iewde se him þone teonan geræd,
775 þæt hie helle nið habban sceoldon,

hynða unrim; forþam him higesorga

burnon on breostum.[91]

The remorse suffered by Adam and Eve here comes after their realisation that they have been deceived by the adversary and have disobeyed God, but the poet tells us how the woman in particular grieves, laments, and is repentant at heart. The poet goes on to describe the way that the couple "fell to praying together" and calling on God to impose the penalty for their breaking of his command. The description of their sorrow and remorse is a significant addition to the scriptural text. While their lament for a lost good sounds a note similar to that we hear in Old English poetic elegies such as *The Wanderer*, *The Ruin,* and *The Wife's Lament*, there is a subtle difference between lament and sorrow expressed in these poems and that experienced by Adam and Eve in *Genesis B.* According to Christine Fell, these poems have been grouped together as elegies because of their common focus on loss, suffering, transient existence, and mortality.[92] The lament of the speakers in *The Wanderer* and other Old English elegiac poems, however, is not the same as the lament and remorse evident in this poem. In *Genesis B,* Adam and Eve´s remorse is in recognition of their new relationship to God, from whom they have been estranged. Just as Adam correctly stated his relationship to God to the adversary before the Fall, now both express their grief and lament at the new relationship with God after their sin. In the elegies, the speakers lament and grieve for their loss in earthly existence where humankind is exiled on account of the Fall of Adam and Eve.[93] The reason for this distinction is fairly straightforward: Adam and Eve's transgression

[91] "The couple, Adam and Eve, were both suffering remorse, and between them anxious words often passed. They dreaded the punishment of God their Master and greatly feared the hostility of the King of Heaven. They realised themselves that his word had been transgressed. The woman grieved and lamented, repentant at heart – she had forfeited the favour and counsel of God – when she saw slip elsewhere away that radiance which he who had prompted them into that calamity, so that they were to receive the affliction of hell and countless humiliations, had by false means shown her as a sign. Therefore heartfelt sorrows smouldered in their breasts." *Genesis,* 765b-777a.

[92] Christine Fell, 'Perceptions of Transience', *Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature,* 172.

[93] The role of *Genesis B* as the archetype for the lament in the elegies is interesting, particularly as the lament in the elegies could also be significant in blurring the boundaries between the wellbeing of the body vs the wellbeing of the soul. While this is beyond this thesis, more work needs to be undertaken to explore the link

in paradise is the archetype of all subsequent loss, it is the reason that humankind wanders in 'exile' from the heavenly home, and it is the fundamental cause of human mutability and mortality. That is, the very real lament in *Genesis B* is not just for the fate of Adam and Eve but for all of humankind after them.

The transference of blame from Adam to Eve and from Eve to the serpent is traditional; it is present in the biblical text. This scene, while brief in both Scripture and *Genesis B*, raises significant questions about moral agency and the role of the devil or devils in human sin, particularly in relation to both the temptation and the remorse scenes explored above. Dendle argues that the depiction of the tempter in *Genesis B* is fairly traditional and reflects the behaviour of devil-tempters at major points both in cosmic history and in earthly human existence.[94] That the devil dispatched by Satan tempts Adam and Eve in order to bring about both their Fall and that of all humankind is widely recognised as the motivation behind the serpent's tempting of Eve in the biblical book of Genesis. The specific treatment of this devil by the Anglo-Saxon poet reveals the concerns and purpose of the poet, particularly in establishing the evil will of God's adversary. From line 442, the poet describes the way that the adversary of God prepares himself for the temptation of Adam and Eve:

Angan hine þa gyrwan godes andsaca,
fus on frætwum, (hæfde fæcne hyge),
hæleðhelm on heafod asette and þone full hearde geband,
445 spenn mid spangum; wiste him spræca fela,
wora worda.[95]

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between lament and the psychomachia as well as lament and penance. The significance of these links in preparing actively for Christ's return and judgement of humankind also fit in here.

[94] Peter Dendle, *Satan Unbound: The Devil in Old English Narrative Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001) 7.

[95] "Then the adversary of God began to eagerly gird himself into his gear – he had a lying spirit – he placed on his head the deceitful helm, and fastened it very tightly, fixed it by its clasp. He knew an abundance of speeches, of bent words". *Genesis*, 442-446.

He has an evil sense of purpose and knowledge of perverse words as he clasps a concealing helm upon his head.[96] This description brings to mind the description of the soldier of Christ in Ephesians 6, which states "take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph6:17). Whether this is a deliberate reference to Ephesians 6 in order to highlight the antithesis of the adversary to the *miles Christi* is difficult to determine. Far more explicitly, the poet is emphasising that the adversary intends to deceive Adam and Eve and hide both his true identity and purpose from them.

The poet provides considerable and elaborate detail with respect to the deceptive nature of the adversary, frequently referring to him as malignant, abhorrent, and cunning.[97] The lies that he presents first to Adam and then to Eve reinforce these characteristics and further emphasise the deceptive nature of evil and temptation. But it is the adversary's persistence in convincing the first humans to eat the fruit that provides insight into the poet's view with respect to moral agency. This distinguishes the representation of the adversary in this poem from the representations of the demons in hagiographic poems such as *Guthlac A* and *Juliana*. In *Guthlac A,* for example, many demons assail Guthlac and try to convince him to leave his newly adopted abode on an island in the fens. They attack him verbally at first and then physically by transporting him to the gates of hell when Guthlac resists their words. Their attempts to convince Guthlac appear to be more irrational and driven by anger rather than a premeditated and calculated attack to bring about his downfall. In *Juliana,* by contrast,

[96] *Genesis,* 144. *Hæleð-helm* literally means 'hero-helm', though many critics have identified it as a helmet of invisibility on various linguistic and folkloric grounds. Either way it seems to be deliberate on the poet's part to be the opposite to the "helmet of salvation" in Eph. 6.17.

[97] This description in *Genesis B* is common in relation to devils or demons. A different representation is evident in the story of the ´Negligent Nun and the Lettuce´, which appears in Old English in a translation of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* commissioned by King Alfred. In this story, a nun is walking through a garden when she sees an appealing lettuce, in her greed to eat the lettuce, she bites into it without doing the sign of the cross, not realizing that a demon is *innocently* sitting on the lettuce. The nun becomes possessed by the demon and one Father Equitius instructs the demon to leave the nun alone, the demon states "Hwæt dyde ic hire? Hwæt dyde ic hire? Ic sæt me on anum leahtrice, þa com heo and bat me!" ("What did I do? What did I do? I was just sitting on a lettuce, and then she came and bit me!") While this story presents the demon in a more entertaining manner, the message is the same in that the nun is responsible for her actions and had she made the sign of the cross before eating the lettuce, she would not have been possessed by the demon.

the ‘temptation’ scene is very brief, after which the saint compels the demon to spend more time revealing his methods of deceiving humankind than in attempting to convince Juliana to yield to temptation. Dendle states that hagiographic poetry removes the weakness of human will as the devil encounters complete defiance from the outset.[98] The adversary in *Genesis B* also meets with complete defiance from Adam initially but his persistence and manipulative nature lead, eventually, to achieving his aim, that of corrupting the first humans. Regardless of how the devil or demons are represented or what their narrative function is, the message is the same; that, while the devil or demons may tempt humankind and attempt to deceive them, the decision to sin rests with the individual. In this, the homilist and the poet communicate the same message. It is their *means* that differ: the homilist presents patient exposition of the patristic elaborations of the concept and taxonomy of sin, while the poet seeks out dramatic *instances* of how sin actually operates in the human psyche, a point that is reinforced in the treatment of the psychomachia allegory in the Old English verse saints lives.

[98] Dendle, *Satan Unbound*, 8.

Chapter 5: Psychomachia and the Ongoing Battle for the Soul

The psychomachia played a subtle yet pivotal role in the eschatological discourse of Anglo-Saxon England. The poets, in particular, adapted the psychomachia allegory in creative ways in order to emphasise the need to prepare actively in the present for Christ's future return and his judgement of humankind. The word 'psychomachia', which means, literally, 'spiritual combat', refers to the internal battle, partly spiritual, partly what we would now call 'psychological', between good and evil in which each individual seeks to discriminate between the two moral poles and to act on that discrimination. While the concept existed earlier, the term itself was coined by the late Latin poet Prudentius as the title for his early fifth-century epic poem that illustrates the battle between Christian virtues and their respective vices in graphic detail. Prior to Prudentius, this concept is given a particular articulation in Paul's epistle to the Ephesians (6:10-17), which contains a signature passage of proto-psychomachia allegory which is one of the governing texts in the development of the spiritual warfare theme in Christian theology. Paul's text, through its analogy of 'spiritual armour', emphasises the role of the *miles Christi* ('soldier of Christ'), which requires every Christian to take up spiritual arms and fight for victory in the battle between good and evil. The martial imagery associated with both the psychomachia and the soldier of Christ might well have been particularly appealing to an Anglo-Saxon audience. Prior to the advent of Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England, the poetry of that pagan culture would have reflected the values of its warrior aristocracy. With Christianity came literacy and Latin texts, as well as the authority of Scripture and the writings of the early Church Fathers. Christianity, however, did not simply replace and override the pagan, aristocratic-warrior culture that existed earlier. Rather, New Testament martial allegories such a Paul's, when conjoined with the poetic diction of Anglo-Saxon warrior culture, enabled Anglo-Saxon poets to represent

their Christian material in a dramatic way that would have appealed to their likely audiences. In this context, Prudentius' *Psychomachia* evidently appealed to Anglo-Saxon writers and audiences alike, particularly in its depiction of the life of the soul through the imagery of war and conflict.[1] The writers of Old English poetry, however, also expand the definition of 'psychomachia' to include a more active figure who fends off outward attacks by devils. This, in turn, provides considerable insight into not only the Anglo-Saxons' understanding of spiritual combat but also their views on free will and the role of the demonic in this battle. The fundamental idea underpinning the psychomachia is that the most significant spiritual warfare takes place internally, in the realm of the individual soul. Thus it relies on the individual's free will to choose between good and evil. The innovative aspect of the psychomachia allegory is its personification of the choices themselves, or of the spiritual agencies who promote one or the other.

According to Christian doctrine, a human being is composed of an incorporeal soul and a corporeal body. This ultimately derives from the book of Genesis, which states that God created "man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (2:7). For Augustine, the existence of the soul accounts for the fact that that humans are capable of rational thought and hence are distinguished from both the lower pre-rational realms of animal or vegetable existence and the higher, bodiless spiritual life of angels. In the *City of God,* he states:

> The soul of the human being is specifically a rational soul, that is,
>
> a principle of life which can support such activities as thinking and

[1] Prudentius was well-known in Anglo-Saxon England, though tracing the evidence of his manuscripts in Old English literature is beyond the scope of this thesis. For further studies that have explored this see Mark Atherton, 'The Image of the Temple in the *Psychomachia* and Late Anglo-Saxon Literature', *Bulletin* (1997) 79:3, 263-285, John P. Hermann, *Allegories of War: Language and Violence in Old English Poetry,* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1989) 17-36, Gernot R. Wieland, 'The Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*', *Anglo-Saxon England* 16 (1987) 213-31, Gernot R. Wieland, 'The Origin and Development of the Anglo-Saxon *Psychomachia* Illustrations', *Anglo-Saxon England* 26 (1997), 169-186, Neil R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), Helmut Gneuss, 'A Preliminary List of Manuscripts writtern or owned in England up to 1100' *Anglo-Saxon England* 9 (1981) 1-60.

deliberate choice. Any body with any other sort of soul can be described as a living body but it is not a human body.[2]

The soul came to represent more than simply the original Jewish notion of a life-force that animates the body. In later Jewish and Christian traditions (partly under the influence of Platonic philosophy and Platonically-inclined Jewish thinkers such as Philo of Alexandria), it was also regarded as the seat of the human capability for rational thought and the ability to make conscious moral choices. Characterising the fit of the inner 'soul' to outer body in plant and animal life, Augustine emphasises that the function of the soul with respect to rational thought is only manifested when the rational soul is united with the human body. As a result, the rational soul of a human being specifically distinguishes the human from other orders of earthly being and enables Augustine to explore the model of individual responsibility that distinguishes Christians from non-Christians in terms of the position of the soul in the hierarchy of being.

According to Augustine, the soul is an incorporeal substance, created by God and the best reflection of the divine in all creation.[3] God creates the soul in his image; however, it is not identical to God. Rather, the soul is created to be close to God. In the *Confessions*, Augustine substantiates this distinction by stating that God, as the Supreme Being, is incorruptible, inviolable, and immutable, while the soul is created good but is corruptible, violable, and mutable.[4] These characteristics of the soul are substantiated in the Church's teaching that, while the soul is created to be close to God, it suffers alienation from God as a result of the wilful sin of Adam and Eve. This disjuncture in the relationship between God and humankind needs to be rectified in order to re-integrate the soul with God. In order to

[2] All references to the *City of God* are from St Augustine, *Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans,* Henry Bettenson (trans), (London: Penguin Books, 1972). From herein, this text will be cited as follows, *City of God* followed by the book and chapter number. This passage, for example, *City of God 13:23).*
[3] Donald X. Burt, *Augustine's world: An Introduction to his Speculative Philosophy* (Maryland: University Press of America, 1996) 60.
[4] St Augustine, *The Confessions,* J.G. Pilkington, *Basic Writings of St Augustine Vol One,* (New York: Random House, 1948) 7:1:1.

assist with this reintegration, the soul is cleansed of Original Sin through baptism and is endowed with free will when it is created so that it may choose virtue over vice after baptism.[5] The ability to choose between virtue and sin also illustrates that the alienation from God contributes to a sense of lack, which prompts the soul somehow to fill the void created by this separation. This desire, however, is often disoriented by the soul's interaction with the body and the material realm as a whole.

The body, on the other hand, is a corporeal substance that exists purely in the material realm. Augustine employs the term *corpus* to refer to a body. This term, however, is not restricted to the human body, or solely to its fleshy properties. He states:

> Well, I should, to begin with, like to know how you define *body*.
> For if that is not 'body' which does not consist of limbs of flesh,
> then the earth cannot be a body, nor the sky, nor a stone, nor water,
> nor the stars, nor anything of that kind. If, however, 'body'is whatever
> consists of parts, whether great or less, which occupy greater or smaller
> spaces, then all the things which I have just mentioned are bodies; the
> air is a body, the visible light is a body.[6]

This highlights Augustine's intention to broaden his meaning of *corpus* to include all corporeal entities and substances. These are limited spatially and can be measured by the division of their parts. This body interacts with other corporeal entities, which are also limited spatially. Unlike classical philosophers such as Plato and Plotinus, Augustine does not

[5] Exploring the development of the sacraments, including baptism, is beyond the scope of this thesis. It does, however, play a pivotal role in discussions of sin, penance, and the need to prepare actively for Christ's future return and judgement of humankind. More work needs to be done on sacramental theology in relation to the themes of this thesis. By Augustine's time, there were various perspectives on the role of baptism in the salvation of the individual, he addresses these perspectives in the *City of God* 21:21, 21:24, 21:25, and 21:26. For a more general discussion of Augustine's view on baptism in the early church see Everett Fergusan, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Michigan: WB Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), David F. Wright, 'Augustine and the Transformation of Baptism', Alan Kreider (ed) *The Origins of Christendom in the West* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), John M. Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptised* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[6] St Augustine, *On the Soul and its Origin*, website, Available http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1508.htm. Accessed 15 June 2016.

associate the body with evil nor does he view the soul as being trapped in the body. Rather, Augustine argues that the body is good, as it is also created by God. Anything created by God, the Supreme Being and ultimate good, must itself be good, of necessity. This argument expands on the idea in the Epistle to the Ephesians attributed to Paul, which states, "No one ever hated his own flesh" (5:29). By defining the body as good, Augustine implies that it is the soul that sins and that these sins, while committed by the soul with the body, are inflicted upon the body by the soul.[7] While the soul is also created by God and is good, as highlighted above, the soul is responsible for rational thought and is endowed with free will when it is created. As a result, the soul is responsible for the rational choice between vice and virtue. While this Christian perspective defines the body as good, Augustine also betrays the influence of Plato by emphasising the moral 'problem' posed by the body.

Augustine seeks to reconcile these two perspectives. The soul, once it is separated from the body at death, is no longer influenced by evil nor capable of sin. While the body in itself is not evil, as a corporeal substance it is necessarily lower than the soul in the hierarchy of being. As a lower being, subject to the endless distractions of physical desire, the body is susceptible to the influence of evil and is the primary means by which the soul may have cause to sin. On its own, the body cannot resist this influence. As already stated, a pure soul, as an independent entity, is not subject to evil. It is the unity of these separate substances into the one being that enables the soul, through the body, to be affected by evil. Unlike the body, the soul has the capacity to resist this influence and thus to determine the fate of the individual through its choices. This perspective highlights a significant shift between the classical philosophy of Plato and the Christian understanding of human existence. For a Christian such as Augustine, the body is not capable of acting directly against the will of the soul. Rather, the experience of the individual is determined according to the freely willed

[7] Rist, *Ancient Thought Baptised*, 96.

choice of the soul. 'Freely willed', yet at the same time susceptible to a kind of corporeal distraction that originates in the body and bodily senses. For Augustine, this perspective rationalises his experience of bodily desire as opposed to the desires of his soul and, by distinguishing the binary of soul and body from that of good and evil, enables him to clarify the responsibility of the individual with respect to this existence.

Gregory, following Augustine, affirms that the body was created good as it was created by God.[8] At the same time, however, Gregory also views the body as a serious threat to the wellbeing of the soul. This threat stems from the union between soul and body that distinguishes humankind from other forms of being. This union, Gregory states, is between the invisible spirit of God and the visible dust of the earth, where one is created rational and strong while the other is mutable and weak.[9] The body, while not created evil or weak, has become so after the Fall of Adam and Eve, and its interaction with the corruptible, material world reinforces this weakness. It is the body, according to Gregory, that keeps the soul removed from the perfection of beatitude.[10] The union between these two entities causes conflict, a conflict that is characterised by the wellbeing of one being at the expense of the other.[11] The wellbeing of the body, for example, results in an appetite for pleasure and the instant gratification that these desires provide, without any consideration for the future or wellbeing of the soul. The soul, however, desires to be close to God through contemplation and resisting physical desires, even at the sacrifice of the wellbeing of the body. The latter, for Gregory, is far more important and requires a high degree of self-control to ensure that the individual is not bewitched by pleasure, enslaved by sin, and focused on instant

[8] Gregory, *Moralia,* 9.36.58.
[9] Gregory, *Moralia,* 14.15.17.
[10] Gregory, *Moralia,* 9.49.75.
[11] Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) 45.

gratification.[12] Gregory places far more emphasis on the pollution of the body than Augustine, an emphasis that is not shared by either Ælfric and Wulfstan. Throughout their writings, Ælfric and Wulfstan focus more on the need to prioritise the wellbeing of the soul and resisting temptation than on placing any considerable emphasis on the nature of the soul as being distinct from the body.

The writers of Old English literature generally are not interested in redefining or even debating the precise nature of the soul or the body as distinct entities. What does interest them is the spiritual conflict that arises as a result of the union between the spiritual and the material that defines humankind and distinguishes it from other forms of being. Even the respective moral agencies of the soul and the body are less explicit than the responsibility of the individual as a whole with regard to sin, penance, and eternal fate. The question of moral agency, at least on the surface, is explored in the *Soul and Body* poems in the Vercelli and Exeter manuscripts. In the surviving corpus of Old English poetry, these poems are the only examples of the soul and the body being treated as distinct entities. Despite this, however, the aim of the poems is to reinforce the idea that repentance for sins is only possible during life, before death separates the soul from the body, and to exhort its audience that the time for repentance is now. While this is the aim, the representation of the soul and body in these poems does raise the question of which is ultimately responsible for deeds performed during life, and, consequently, which should be punished or rewarded both after death and after Judgement Day. The poems, perhaps inadvertently as the poets' true intentions cannot be known, also provide considerable insight into the Anglo-Saxon perspective with respect to the nature of the soul and the nature of the body, without engaging in the theological debate directly. The questions that remain relate to the extent to which the poems provide evidence

[12] Straw, *Perfection in Imperfection*, 110. Straw also states that this perspective exalts monastic life and justifies asceticism, a tradition that he inherits from Cassian and desert monasticism. This would account for the different emphasis placed on the body in Gregory's writings compared to Augustine. See Straw 111-127 for a more in-depth discussion of the influence of monasticism on Gregory's thought.

of the spiritual conflict that defines human experience and the subtle, yet poignant, message that they convey to an audience who may have been familiar with more traditional forms of physical combat. Furthermore, how do the poets, both of the *Soul and Body* poems and of other poems in the Old English corpus, emphasise their purpose through the use of the spiritual conflict motif and psychomachia allegory? A contextual analysis of this in Old English literature will reveal how this conflict is adopted in order to encourage moral reform and to emphasise the need to be vigilant in the battle that rages within each individual.

Since the Original Sin of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from Eden, the soul seeks instinctively to redress the loss entailed by the alienation from God. Yet it cannot always distinguish between the transient, material desires that tend to distract it from the higher spiritual desires that direct it toward the good. From this perspective, evil is less an external force that attacks the soul and more an inward pathology that disables the reason that guarantees true moral agency. In the classical philosophies, the responsibility of the individual is defined in relation to the universe and existence as a whole. The Old and New Testaments have their own inflections of this fundamental concept and locate the sphere of individual responsibility in terms of the individual's relationship with God. The disjuncture in this relationship is attributed to the wilful sin of Adam and Eve, which is inherited subsequently by every individual soul descended from them. Each Testament, however, represents the consequences of this inherited sin differently. The sin of Solomon in 1 Kings 11:11-13 of the Old Testament, for example, which involves his allowing his many foreign wives to have idolatrous temples to their false gods built in Jerusalem, dramatizes the sin of the individual against God's covenant, of which the subsequent punishment is borne by the nation. As every individual soul inherits the sin of Adam and Eve (according to Patristic amplification of the basic New Testament theology of Christ as the second Adam), the individual is open to the grace that allows them to reintegrate themselves with God in the new

covenant. This grace acknowledges that, while the individual is born into sin, God has provided every soul with the ability to wash away sin through baptism and every soul has been granted free will to enable the individual to choose good after baptism. The example of Solomon reinforces Augustine's theory of inherited sinfulness that must be actively combated in order for the soul to return to its rightful home with God.

In the early Middle Ages, particularly in Anglo-Saxon England, lay believers would rarely have possessed the theological concepts and vocabulary to articulate even such basic doctrine. Their common illiteracy would leave them less familiar with Scripture than many believers today. The full patristic elaboration of Scripture would have lain even further beyond their reach. In such a condition, the internal pathology of this battle between conflicting wills must have been an abstraction both counter-intuitive and difficult to grasp and conceptualise. As such, writers adopt physical, concrete descriptions in order to illustrate the concept in a way that is familiar to the intended audience. This method is particularly significant in the New Testament and its emphasis on inwardness, whereby the battle fought by the Christian soldier has moved from material reality, among embodied human foes, to the interiority of the mind and soul of each individual believer. The Gospel of Matthew states:

> Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather
> fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matt.10:28)

This passage redirects its audience's attention from violent descriptions of combat against physical enemies in the Old Testament toward the inward spiritual conflict addressed in the New Testament. The threat of physical foes, according to the Gospel, is less significant than the threat of spiritual adversaries and the potential loss of salvation. The wellbeing of the soul should be prioritised over the wellbeing of the body, as the soul survives the death of the body and the consequences of its neglect are eternal. This metaphorical use of martial imagery and language in the New Testament marks a significant departure from the Old

Testament, particularly in terms of the influence of this language on the development of the psychomachia allegory. While in addition to its accounts of historical warfare, the Old Testament can employ military language metaphorically, the New Testament consistently associates this kind of metaphorical conflict directly with the individual soul. This is illustrated in the Epistle to the Ephesians attributed to Paul, in its signature passage of proto-psychomachia allegory, which serves as the governing text in the subsequent development of the spiritual warfare theme in Christian theology. In Ephesian 6 Paul states:

> Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph. 6:10-17)

The spiritual armour in this passage draws its details from the actual kit worn by Roman legionaries, but it uses the elements of that kit to illustrate the implications of spiritual conflict. This armour allows the individual to resist the temptation to sin, and wearing and wielding its elements effectively will pre-empt the constant threat to salvation. The military metaphor communicates a sense of necessary discipline demanded for such proper use.

While Ephesians 6 is the definitive text for the soldier of Christ motif, the *miles Christi* tradition continued to develop in the early Christian and medieval periods.

One aim of the New Testament is to illustrate a new relationship between God and humankind under a new covenant. This new relationship grounds itself in a dramatic realignment of reality across the polarities of inner and outer, higher and lower, and material and spiritual. Traditional Judaism had come to regulate transactions between the human and the divine via public temple ritual and other outward gestures, such as dietary restrictions and circumcision, of Jewish identity. All of this was thrown into question and, ultimately, displaced by Christianity's insistence of the primary value of the spiritual and inward over the purely bodily, which called traditional embodiments of the holy and the moral into question. Judaism has, of course, always articulated a profound spirituality; Christianity simply gave it different bearings. The early Church's need to communicate such new and, at points, revolutionary insights into a new community of believers attuned to the older way of doing spiritual business thus demanded different kinds of discourse. This new discourse depended far more frequently on analogy, symbolism, metaphor and allegory. Christ's parables are perhaps the earliest and most powerful examples of this transformation. His reiterated parabolic question 'To what may the kingdom of heaven be compared?' signals the incipiently metaphoric and allegorical character of his own teaching. The authors and editors of the New Testament, in their different ways, respond to Christ's example and deploy physical imagery in order to illustrate the abstract, spiritual concepts. The psychomachia tradition is a later and fuller expansion of this tendency.

The psychomachia allegory develops from the metaphoric and allegorical images of war that permeate the Bible, particularly in New Testament discourses such as Ephesians 6. As a literary trope, allegory has had a mixed reception in different critical traditions, sometimes taken to task for a lifeless formalism and overly schematic conceptual patterning.

Whatever its limitations, it can enable the representation of abstract concepts in more vivid, concrete and tangible forms.[13] Biblical allegory highlights the individual's struggle to know, acknowledge and serve God in a fallen world that can violently resist such endeavour. Such struggle is fashioned into a more tangible and dramatic form by early Christian writers such as Prudentius. In the Old Testament, depictions of conflict are dominated by physically violent contentions between individual antagonists, nations, or peoples. The New Testament shifts the locus of conflict inward, drawing in part on the Platonic regard for the soul as a scene of moral and spiritual conflict. Prudentius highlights this transition in the 'Preface' to the poem by recounting the Old Testament stories of Abraham, namely the battle between Abraham and the 'barbarians' who had captured Abraham's kinsman Lot (Gen. 14:10).[14] In Prudentius' condensed version, upon hearing that Lot has been captured, Abraham arms three hundred and eighteen of his own servants to overtake the enemy while they are still burdened with their spoils of war. Abraham, armed with a sword and filled with God's spirit, defeats the enemy and frees Lot as well as the women, children, gold, clothing, and livestock that had also been captured. Following this victory, Abraham is brought heavenly food, has the privilege of entertaining a triad of angels, and is told how Sara, who is beyond natural child-bearing age, will conceive an heir. Prudentius then states:

[13] The word allegory is derived from the abstract Greek noun *allegoria*, which in turn is derived from the verb *allegoreo* literally meaning 'to say one thing and mean another'. This is the most common interpretation of allegory; however, in the history of literary criticism allegory has many connotations, associations and interpretations. For a general theory of allegory see Angus Fletcher, Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode (New York: Cornell University Press, 1965),261. and N. Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973). For discussion on medieval allegory specifically see C.S. Lewis, The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967). and Jon Whitman, Medieval Allegory: The Dynamics of an Ancient and Medieval Technique (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). For discussion on the association between allegory and religion see Deborah L. Madsen, Rereading Allegory: A Narrative Approach to Genre (New York: St Martin's Press, 1994). and Stephen L. Wailes, Medieval Allegories of Jesus' Parables (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).. For discussion on the association between allegory and personification see James John Paxson, The Poetics of Personification (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For discussion of allegory as an ornament of style see G.R. Boys-Stones, Metaphor, Allegory, and the Classical Tradition : Ancient Thought and Modern Revisions (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[14] Prudentius, 'Preface', H.J. Thomson (trans), 'The Fight for Mansoul', *Prudentius Vol 1, Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000) ll. 50-8 'Preface'. All references to Prudentius will be from this translation but will be referred to as *Psychomachia* as the more common title within the text and will be cited as follows *Psych,* line numbers. This reference, for example, *Psych,* 'Preface', 50-8.

> This picture has been drawn beforehand to be a model for our life to trace out again the true measure, showing that we must watch in the armour of faithful hearts, and that every part of our body which is in captivity and enslaved to foul desire must be set free by gathering our forces at home; that we are abundantly rich in servants born in the house we know through the mystic symbol what is the power of three hundred with eighteen more.[15]

This passage, following on from the story of Abraham, highlights Prudentius' awareness of the critical shift in perspective from the physical warfare in the Old Testament to the new emphasis on inwardness in the New Testament. That is, the battle has shifted from physical combat amongst embattled human foes (often comprising whole peoples such as the nations of Israel or Judah, the Egyptians or the Philistines) into the arena of the mind and soul of each individual believer. For Prudentius, the "home" mentioned in this passage refers to the soul and "gathering our forces" refers to the spiritual armour articulated in Ephesians 6. The individual believer must arm themselves with the breastplate of righteousness and the shield of faith in order to succeed in the spiritual battle as the capacity for both good and evil exists within the individual. The soul seeks instinctively to redress the loss entailed by its alienation from God. Yet it cannot always distinguish clearly between transient, material desires that lead it toward evil and its higher spiritual desires that direct it toward the good. From this perspective, evil is less an external force that attacks the soul and more an inward pathology that disables the reason whose sound function guarantees true moral agency. *Psychomachia* illustrates this through the allegorical battles between vice and virtue within the soul. The aim of the poem is to clearly identify the Vices that are capable of corrupting the soul and the

[15] Thomson notes in the text that 'three hundred with eighteen more'= the Greek letters TIH represent 318; but they are also a symbol of Christ crucified, T representing the cross, while IH are the first two letters of the name of Jesus (IHSOYS). Prudentius, 'The Fight for Mansoul', H.J. Thomson (trans), *Prudentius Vol 1, Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000) 279.

Virtues gifted by God that assist the individual to resist the temptation of the Vices. The first spiritual battle is between Faith (*Fides)* and Worship-of-the-Old-Gods (*Veterum Cultura Deorum)*:

> Worship-of-the-Old-Gods ventures to match her strength against Faith's challenge and strike at her. But she, rising higher, smites her foe's head down, with its fillet-decked brows, lays in the dust that mouth that was sated with the blood of beasts, and tramples her eyes under foot, squeezing them out in death. The throat is choked and the scant breath confined by the stopping of its passage, and long gasps make a hard and agonising death. (*Psych. 28-36)*

Prior to this, Prudentius describes Faith as being disordered, with bare shoulders, untrimmed hair and arms exposed. The appearance of Faith does not fit the general appearance of a warrior going into battle and suggests an out-of-control distress. The strength of faith, however, does not rely on her physical appearance or on worldly practical wisdom and prudence. Faith's defence lies in her glowing ambition that does not require arms or armour, only complete trust in a stout heart. The threat of Worship-of-the-Old-Gods is the worship of other, non-Christian gods and its destruction is as violent as the violence idolatry does to theological truth.

Unlike Faith, who relies on a stout heart to win the battle, Chastity is a defensive virtue who enters the battlefield in a suit of shining and unblemished armour. As she steps onto the field, Lust the Sodomite falls on her "girt with the firebrands of her country".[16] Lust attacks Chastity by thrusting a torch of pinewood that is burning with pitch and sulphur into Chastity's face, attacking her "modest eyes" with flames and attempting to cover them with foul smoke. The eyes were commonly thought to be the Achilles heel that enabled Lust to undermine Chastity and the torch is a common classical icon associated with Venus and

[16] Prudentius, *Psychomacia*, 44.

sexual attraction. This is comparable to Christ's parabolic injunction in Gospel of Mark to "pluck" out your eye rather than allow it lead to sin. In this passage of the poem, however, Christ's injuction is turned inside out, with the mutilation now directed at a personified adversary. In response to this attack, Prudentius states:

> [Chastity] smites with a stone the inflamed fiend's hand and the cursed whore's burning weapon, striking the brand away from her holy face. Then with a sword-thrust she pierces the disarmed harlot's throat, and she spews out hot fumes with clots of foul blood, and the unclean breath defiles the air nearby. (*Psych* 48-52)

The threat posed by vices such as Lust to individual salvation justifies the violence of the virtues in defeating them, just as the book of Joshua depicts the ancient Israelites pursuing a kind of holy ethnic cleansing, following divine commands to eliminate anything that might have led them back to idolatry from their new-found worship of the true God. Despite this justification for violence, there are only two more physically violent battles in the poem, the battles between Long-Suffering and Wrath, and between Hope and Pride. These four violent battles transpose abstract spiritual concepts into physical combat scenes in order to make the abstract psychology of spiritual conflict more concretely present to the audience. After the death of Pride, the vices no longer attempt to attack the virtues through direct assault and physical violence, though the language employed by Prudentius to narrate their attacks is still fraught with images of violence and destruction.

The battle between Soberness and Indulgence marks the transition between the external battle against physical adversaries to the internal battle between spiritual foes within the individual. Prudentius states that Indulgence, a single vice who incorporates gluttony,

sloth and lechery, enters the battlefield from the western boundaries of the world.[17] She is described as having sensually attractive features such as perfumed hair, shifting eyes, and a voice abandoned to voluptuousness, while, at the same time, she belches after a night-long feast and is unsteady on her feet as a result of her excessive consumption of wine. Despite the latter, Indulgence arrives in a beautiful chariot and, instead of arrows, a lance, or a sword, this vice attempts to captivate the virtues by scattering baskets of flowers over them. Soberness, rather than smiting Indulgence with a stone, urges the other virtues on the battlefield to stand firm and resist the alluring temptation of this vice. She leads by example, standing firm against the temptation of the vice and strengthened not by armour or a sword but with a crucifix. Soberness holds the crucifix in front of the horses pulling Indulgence's chariot, which causes them to panic and career down a steep embankment. Prudentius then states:

> Their driver [Indulgence], leaning far back and pulling on the reins,
> is carried helplessly along, her dripping locks befouled with dust; then
> she is thrown out and the whirling wheels entangle her, for she falls
> forward under the axle and her mangled body is the brake that slows
> the chariot down. Soberness gives her the death-blow as she lies,
> hurling at her a great stone from a rock. As chance has put this weapon
> in the standard-bearer's way…chance drives the stone to smash the
> breath-passage…the teeth within are loosened, the gullet cut, and
> the mangled tongue fills it with bloody fragments. Her gorge rises at
> the strange meal; gulping down the pulped bones she spews up again
> the lumps she swallowed. (*Psych.* 414-26)

[17] Hermann, *Allegories of War,* 13. Hermann goes on to explain that sensuality has frequently been associated with the Orient, however, in the Middle Ages the West was symbolically evil. The note in the translations also raises this question and states that luxury is generally associated with the east. While this question has been explored by many scholars with various interpretations, Thomson states, the west here refers to Rome. See note in the translation, Prudentius, 'The Fight for Mansoul', on page 300.

In this battle, Prudentius is illustrating the subtle, sensual power of temptation and reinforcing the Christian idea that the psychological aspects of temptation are primary. The brutal death of this vice parallels Homer's unsparing descriptions of violent death on the plains of Troy and probably owes something as well to the chariot-race spectaculars that figured regularly in late Roman culture, while it also inverts the sensual corporeality through which Indulgence operates.[18] Indulgence is thrown from the chariot and her "mangled body" serves as the "brake that slows down the chariot". But, on the spiritual end of the allegory for the individual, the power to resist temptation and sin stems from Christ rather than physical armour and military weapons. The crucifix plays a critical role in this battle, as it embodies and symbolises Christ's submission to the physical dangers and indignities of earthly life and death and paradoxically enables the faithful individual to resist the temptations of this life. The imagery in this and in all the other battle sequences is explicitly evocative. It seeks to elicit a reaction from the audience, encouraging them actively to resist the Vices. At the same time, however, the battle is more passive than its outward appearance might at first suggest. The poem implies that the battle takes place within the soul, though this is not explicitly stated. Superficially at least, the structure of the poem suggests that moral agency and responsibility have been taken from the individual and disassociates the battle itself from the human capacity to choose the outcome of the battle freely. In Prudentius' allegory, the virtues conquer the vices after their epic battles, and then build a shrine to Wisdom, though Prudentius does acknowledge that this battle is constant and ongoing. He states:

> We know that in the darkness of our heart conflicting affections fight hard
> in successive combats and, as the fortune of battle varies, now grow strong in
> goodness of disposition and again, when the virtues are worsted, are dragged

[18] The graphically depicted violence recalls Homer's accounts of the conflict outside the walls of Troy. The resemblance seems deliberate and could be, as Macklin Smith states, Prudentius' "ringing Christian classicism". Macklin Smith, *Prudentius' Psychomachia: A Reexamination* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976) 20.

away to live in bondage to the worse, making themselves the slaves of

shameful sins, and content to suffer the loss of salvation. (*Psych.* 893-899)

The vices are conquered and often die gruesome deaths, but these are really only temporary defeats, since sin poses a continual struggle for the human will. For the individual, however, the internal battle between vice and virtue is far less explicit than it is in the poem: the battles are fluid and the outcome far less certain. While the virtues are victorious in Prudentius' epic, the fallibility of humankind blurs the distinction between the vices and virtues that stem from conflicting desires, and the virtues are not always victorious. If they were, there would be no sin or evil in the world.

Prudentius' work, including the *Psychomachia*, was well known in Anglo-Saxon England. The strictly doctrinal content together with the allusions to classical writers such as Ovid and Virgil appealed to medieval writers and audiences.[19] To a culture that retained many facets of its aristocratic-warrior past, the graphic, martial imagery of the *Psychomachia* would have appealed to both the writers and the audience of Old English literature.[20] Despite its popularity, the epic, sustained personification allegory of Prudentius' *Psychomachia* is not evident in the surviving corpus of Old English literature.[21] This does not imply that the writers of Old English were not interested in spiritual conflict or that the psychomachia allegory is absent entirely from the literature, only that their treatment of this motif differs in form from that of Prudentius. Early Christians recognised that spiritual conflict was fundamental to the human condition, and the Anglo-Saxons were not any different.[22] According to Damon, the Anglo-Saxons are responsible for creating a new sub-genre of

[19] Mark Atherton, 'The Image of the Temple in the *Psychomachia* and Late Anglo-Saxon Literature" *Bulletin* (1979) 79:3, 263.
[20] Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, ' Heroic Values and Christian Ethics', Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 107.
[21] Hermann, *Allegories of War*, 37.
[22] Katherine Allen Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture*, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011) 71.

hagiography of martyred, warrior kings.[23] In earlier hagiographic models, based mainly on Sulpicius' *Vita Martini,* warfare and sainthood were incompatible as the saint had to renounce all material things, including weapons.[24] The Anglo-Saxons, however, permitted saints to wield swords and fight in bloody, earthly battles while also encouraging their audience to adopt the spiritual armour outlined earlier in Ephesians 6. Ælfric states:

> Mid þisum gastlicum wæpnum we sceolon ongean ðam
> awyrigedum gastum, þurh Godes mihte, stranglice feohtan,
> gif we willað sigerfæste to ðam behatenan earde heofenon
> rices becumen.[25]

While Ælfric implies that the "cursed spirits" are external, he is referring to the internal, spiritual conflict between the virtues and the vices within the individual. This is evident in the long, detailed description of the eight capital sins, all of their sub-sins, and the corresponding virtues that counteract them.[26] His description of the sins is grounded in earthly existence and reflects the inherent tension between the soul and body that is fundamental to the psychomachia motif in Old English literature and to the human condition as a whole. It also reinforces the idea that the soul governs the body and, ultimately, is responsible for the choice to sin or not to sin.

The idea that the soul is responsible for the fate of the individual in the afterlife can take different shapes in Old English literature. The poems *Soul and Body I* and *Soul and Body II*, found in the Vercelli and Exeter Books respectively, record the soul's address to the body after death. The basic premise of the poems is the periodic return of the soul to its entombed body, which it then addresses. The damned soul scolds its former body, which, it complains,

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[23] John Edward Damon, *Soldier Saints and Holy Warriors: Warfare and Sanctity in the Literature of Early England* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2003) 27.
[24] Damon, *Soldier Saints and Holy Warriors,* 26-27. For a further discussion on the *Vita Martini,* see pages 10-21.
[25] "With these spiritual weapons we must fight strenuously through God's might against the cursed spirits, if we will return triumphant to the promised country of heaven's kingdom." *CHII* 12.473-476.
[26] *CHII* 12.477-559.

has compromised its capacity to resist sin and so bears some responsibility for its fate in the afterlife. In the Vercelli version, there are two verses that describe the return of the soul to its entombed body every seventh night for three hundred years. The first passage describes a soul that has been condemned to suffer punishment in hell and the address of this soul to the body it occupied. This soul reproaches the body for indulging in a sinful life without any consideration for the fate of its soul in the afterlife. The second passage, on the other hand, describes a blessed soul that praises its body for cooperating in the soul's efforts to resist the temptation to sin during their union and thus helping to ensure the salvation of the soul in the afterlife. In *Guthlac A* and *Juliana*, this tension forms the basis for the dynamic episodes of conflict in the poems and enable the poets to illustrate complex issues of theology, conscience, and moral discrimination in a dramatic and entertaining way. The *Soul and Body* poems dramatize the pathology of the body's sensual appetites that can entrap and compel the soul, whereas hagiographical poems celebrate the triumph of the saint's soul in firm command of itself and its body. The underlying principle in both, however, is the same: that the soul ought to guide and lead the body. Both the *Soul and Body* poem and these verse saints' lives highlight how, in different ways, the interaction between the soul and the body is of considerable interest to Anglo-Saxon writers. This interest stems from a fundamental concern with the need to prepare actively in the present for the future return of Christ and his judgement of humankind.

In both the *Soul and Body* poems, the conflict continues after death has separated the soul and the body as the soul returns to where the body is buried to address it for its deeds during life. The Vercelli version of the poem contains the address of both the damned and blessed soul to their respective bodies, while the poem in the Exeter version contains only the

address of the damned soul to its body.[27] The poem begins by stating that every individual should consider the wellbeing of their soul before death separates them, which reveals the poet's true intention in what follows. The wellbeing of the soul should be considered, the poet states, because after death it will return to its body on the seventh night for three hundred years or until God brings about the end of the world, whichever happens first.[28] The poet, at this point, does not distinguish between the souls of the damned and of the blessed as all souls will return to their bodies for this period of time. What distinguishes each soul's return is the way that it addresses the body, which is based on its own experience after death. The damned soul berates the body for giving it no consideration during life of the torment the soul would suffer after death. The soul states:

> Hwæt, þe la engel ufan roderum sawle onsende þurh his sylfes
> hand, meotod ælmihtig, of his mægenþrymme, and þe gebohte
> blode þy halgan, and þu me mid þy heardan hungre gebunde and
> gehæftnedest helle witum![29]

Here the soul reminds the body, and the poet reminds his audience, that God created humankind by breathing his spirit into the body and that Christ redeemed humankind from sin at the Crucifixion. The individual, therefore, has an obligation and responsibility towards God to prioritise the wellbeing of the soul. This the body has not done, according to the soul in this section of the poem, but has instead been proud (*wlanc)* and satiated with wine (*ond wines sæd).* The soul also implies that it was trapped in the body (*Eardode ic þe on innan)* and that the desires of the body oppressed it (*ond me fyrenlustas þine geþrungen).* The soul´s complaint, however, is unfounded. As discussed earlier, the soul, according to Augustine, is

[27] This thesis will focus on the Vercelli version as it contains the address of both the damned and the blessed soul. All references to the *Soul and Body I* poem will be from George Philip Krapp (Ed) *The Vercelli Book* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961) 54-59 and will be cited as V followed by the line numbers of the poem. This reference, for example, V, 54-59.
[28] V.1-14.
[29] "Lo! The almighty Lord, with his own hand, sent you a soul via an angel and he bought you with holy blood; and you bound me with a severe hunger and enslaved me in hell!" V.27-32.

higher in the hierarchy of being than the body and hence the body is not capable of acting against the will of the soul. There is no evidence to suggest that the Anglo-Saxons disputed Augustine's arguments in this regard or were even concerned by it. Likewise, the poet here is not suggesting that the body is to blame for the sins committed during life. Instead, the structure of the poem emphasizes, fairly explicitly, that the soul's complaints here are without reasonable basis. The soul addresses an inanimate body that cannot respond and defend itself against the soul's recriminations, a point that the soul also acknowledges. The soul states:

> Ligeð dust þær hit wæs, ne mæg him ondsware ænige gehatan,
> geomrum gaste, geoce oððe frofre. Bið þæt heafod tohliden, handa
> toliðode, geaglas toginene, goman toslitene, sina beoð asocene,
> swyra becowen, fingras tohrorene. Rib reafiað reðe wyrmas, beoð
> hira tungan totogenne on tyn healfa hungregum to frofre; forþan
> hie ne magon huxlicum wordum wrixlian wið þone werian gast.[30]

The soul implies that the body cannot respond because the tongue has been destroyed by worms but the body cannot respond because it is inanimate without the soul. The poet reinforces this point in the second half of the poem where the blessed soul addresses its respective body. Unlike the damned soul, the blessed soul praises the body for considering its wellbeing during life and for not indulging in sin. The praise of the blessed soul, like the recriminations of the damned, is also unfounded as it is the soul that is responsible for resisting temptation. The body in this case is also inanimate and unable to respond, but unlike the graphic description of the damned soul above, the blessed soul simply states "þeah ða wyrmas git gifre gretaþ".[31] In this stark comparison between the two souls, the poet is emphasising that the fate of the body is the same after death for both the blessed and the

[30] "The dust lies where it was, it cannot respond to the wretched soul, or provide any support or comfort. Its head is split, its hands dismembered, its jaws agape, its gums torn asunder, its fingers gnawed and destroyed. The ribs are plundered by fierce worms, the tongue torn to pieces in ten different ways to comfort the hungry; for this reason it cannot exchange scornful words with the weary soul." V.105-115.
[31] "though the worms attack you with greedy appetite". V135-136.

damned, both will return to the earth and be eaten by worms. It is, however, the fates of the souls that differ significantly and the contrast established between the two serves to reinforce, on the one hand, the spiritual conflict between the distinct desires of the soul and the body. On the other, the poet also emphasises,the priority of the soul's wellbeing and the need to prepare actively for both death and judgement during life. The *Soul and Body* poems are unique in this regard as they are the only example in the surviving corpus that are explicitly after the death of the individual, reinforcing the idea that it is too late to repent once death separates the soul from the body. As such, it provides a very different perspective from the treatment of spiritual conflict in the verse saints lives.

In *Guthlac A* and *Juliana,* this conflict enables the poets to explore the complex philosophical issues with respect to moral agency and individual responsibility as well as the soul-body duality that distinguishes human beings from other forms of being.[32] The aim of these poems is not to explore the individual characteristics that define the body as opposed to those that define the soul. The poets adopt the Christian idea, emphasised by Augustine, that a human being is a union between an incorporeal soul and a corporeal body, which are both created by God. As saints, Guthlac and Juliana are exemplary individuals in whom the interaction between soul and body is one of unity and solidarity. There is no conflict between soul and body for either; rather, the conflicts they encounter are externalised. The poets

[32] A considerable amount of scholarship has explored the gender differences in the representation of the body in these poems. In *Guthlac A,* the saint is introduced as an individual who, prior to becoming a hermit, pursued material gain and physical pleasures. In *Juliana*, however, the saint is described as a virgin both in terms of her own body and in terms of pursuing material wealth or indulgence. This representation of a female saint in terms of purity and chastity is common in *vitae* of female saints. For general studies on female saints in the medieval period see John Wayland *Cookley, Women, Men, and Spiritual Power: Female Saints and Their Male Collaborators* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), Anna Roberts, *Violence Against Women in Medieval Texts* (Gainsville: University of Florida Press, 1998), and Elizabeth Petroff, *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. For specific scholarship on English female saints see Jane Chance, *Woman as Hero in Old English Literature* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1986), Clare A. Lees, *Tradition and Belief: Religious Writing in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), and Catherine Sanok, *Her Life Historical: Exemplarity and Female Saints' Lives in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). The gender differences in these representations, while beyond the scope of this thesis, are significant in terms of the gendered representation of vice and virtue and the different, as represented in the literature, temptations facing men and women in this period. This provides the potential for further investigation.

explore the experience of the individual as an integral whole comprising body and soul in an intimate union. As a result, external experience in these poems involves the interaction of the individual, as a union of body and soul, with both the material and social aspects of existence that are external to the individual psyche. These aspects include the way that the individual functions in the material realm, the experience of evil within this realm, and the interaction of the individual with other human beings who may be of a different moral fibre to themselves. The internal experience, on the other hand, refers to the interaction of the soul with the body and the spiritual aspects of individuals that distinguish them from other beings and from other humans. These include the spiritual strength of the soul that enables the individual to resist evil in the material realm, the freewill of the individual, and the responsibility associated with this freewill and its choices that influences the fate of the individual in the afterlife. These poems seek to show their audiences how the interaction of the soul with the body and the interaction of the individual with the material realm are not exclusive and weave the texture of human existence as a whole. This existence is governed by the common experience of conflict and temptation and the responsibility of the individual for the fate of the soul after Christ's return and judgement of humankind. The spiritual conflict motif enables the poets to explore the conflict between internal and external experience in a creative and tangible way that is accessible to their audience.

In *Guthlac A,* the poet emphasises the inherent tension between spiritual and physical existence by associating external experience with the demons and internal experience with the saint. In ll.182b-199, the poet states:

We þæs Guðlaces
deorwyrðne dæl dryhtne cennað.
He him sige sealde ond snyttrucræft,
185 mundbyrd meahta, þonne mengu cwom

feonda færscytum fæhðe ræran.
Ne meahton hy æfeste anforlætan,
ac to Guðlaces gæste gelæddun
frasunga fela. Him wæs fultum neah,
engel hine elne trymede, þonne hy him yrre hweopan
frecne fyres wylme. Stodan him on feðehwearfum,
cwædon þæt he on þam beorge byrnan sceolde
ond his lichoman lig forswelgan,
þæt his earfeþu eal gelumpe
modcearu mægum, gif he monna dream
of þam orlege eft ne wolde
sylfa gesecan, ond his sibbe ryht
mid moncynne maran cræfte
willum bewitigan, lætan wræce stille.[33]

This passage highlights the contrast between internal and external experience that the ordinary person encounters during their earthly existence but may not be able to discriminate between. The poet also emphasises the dichotomy between spiritual and physical existence according to the Christian ideal that dominates the entire poem. This is evident in the way Guthlac's spirit is strengthened by God and protected by his 'mighty powers'. Guthlac's spirit is divinely fortified against the demons' threats in the latter half of the passage, which

[33] "Guthlac's precious part in this we attribute to God; He gave him victory and the strength of prudence, the protection of mighty powers, when with sudden volleys a multitude of devils came to begin feuding. In their malice they were incapable of leaving him alone and they brought many temptations to Guthlac's spirit. Help was close by him; the angel fortified him with courage when they furiously menaced him with greedy turbulence of fire. They appeared to him in troops and said that he was going to burn on the hill and flame engulf his body so that his suffering would absolutely entail misery for his kinsmen, if he was not willing himself, to turn from that contest back to human conviviality and to attend with a will and with greater industry to his familial duty." All references to *Guthlac A* are from Bernard Muir (ed) *The Exeter Anthology in Old English Poetry, An Edition of the Exeter Dean and Chapter MS 3501 Vol 1* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994) 111-139. From herein, the poem will be cited in abbreviated form *GthA* followed by the line numbers. This reference for example, *GthA* 170-99.

promise pain and destruction to Guthlac's *body.* Here, the poet deploys the demons in his narrative in order to emphasise the interaction of human beings with the material realm and the impact of this interaction on the internal experience of the person. The poet acknowledges that the ordinary person lives in the tangible, physical realm, and that experience of this realm is conceptualised according to sense perception.

The demons are also trying to manipulate Guthlac and play on his loyalties. The reference to "familial duties" seeks to appeal to his old life and his warrior/kin loyalties, which he renounced when he turned away from his material existence to live a spiritual life as a hermit. In this, the demons are appealing to the physical reality of Guthlac's isolation and trying to make him return to the kinship and comfort of the mead hall. They insinuate that his wretched demise in the desolate fen would cause his people undue grief. The spiritual existence of the individual, however, comprises far more than just ordinary sense perception and social obligation. These can mask the full spiritual dimension of Guthlac's undertaking, making it difficult to comprehend, a difficulty the devils here seek to exploit. By externalising the inherent tension between soul and body, the poet attempts to illustrate this distinction in terms of the conflict between good and evil.

The interplay between the physical and the spiritual and good and evil in this passage are subtle yet they enable the poet to explore the complexities of these contrasts. The demons are wholly spiritual and evil but they threaten Guthlac with physical harm. Guthlac is vulnerable to such physical harm through his *corporeal* nature but defies their threats through both his own spiritual fortitude and, from without, through God's fortification of that fortitude. According to Christian doctrine, while the human body is defined as a corporeal substance that exists in the material realm, neither body nor material world are evil in themselves, as both are created by God. But the present world fell with Adam and the body is similarly compromised. Hence it is inferior to the rational soul and thus susceptible to evil as

a result of its destabilised interaction with the material realm. In order to illustrate the susceptibility of the body, the poet identifies the demons with the material realm by emphasising that they cannot harm Guthlac's soul directly but can only threaten to harm his body. The demons state:

"Đu þæt gehatest þæt ðu ham on hus
gegan wille, ðe eart godes yrming.
Bi hwon scealt þu lifgan, þeah pu long age?
Ne þec mon hider mose fedeð;
beoð þe hungor ond þurst hearde gewinnan,
gif þu gewitest swa wilde deor
ana from eþele. Nis þæt onginn wiht.
Geswic þisses setles. Ne mæg þec sellan ræd
mon gelæran þonne þeos mengu eall.
We þe beoð holde gif ðu us hyran wilt,
oþþe þe ungearo eft gesecað
maran mægne, þæt þe mon ne þearf
hondum hrinan, ne þin hra feallan
wæpna wundum. We þas wic magun
fotum afyllan; folc inðriceð
meara þreatum ond monfarum.
Beoð þa gebolgne, þa þec breodwiað
tredað þec on tergað, ond hyra torn wrecað,
toberað þec blodgum lastum. Gif þu ure bidan þencest,
we þec niþa genægað. Ongin þe generes wilnian,

far þær ðu freonda wene, gif ðu þines feores recce".[34]

A literal interpretation of this passage implies that the demons are only interested in the hillside dwelling that Guthlac now occupies. They are angry that the saint has been permitted by God to invade their space and effectively cast them out of the place that they were previously permitted to occupy. As a result, the demons attempt to persuade the saint to abandon the hillside dwelling under the pretence of friendly advice and an apparent concern for Guthlac's wellbeing in terms of finding sustenance. Once again, they are also appealing to Guthlac's isolation from family and the solidarity of his fellow warriors. This superficially friendly advice and concern contrasts with the violent threats against Guthlac's body, which the demons claim will be scattered in "bloody remnants". The aim here is far more subtle than simply illustrating the deceptive nature of evil. The demons are using a few practical home truths falsely as distractions. Their 'concern' about how Guthlac will feed himself alludes to his removal from the mead-hall culture of reciprocal regard and support. He has freely chosen the material realm of the exile, normally a condition of horror and despair, as it is for the speaker in the *Wanderer*, who would rather be anywhere but where he is. As a successful warrior prior to becoming a hermit, Guthlac inhabited the very world that the demons are trying to entice him back to. He has renounced both its sinfulness and distractions, but also its support and benefits.

In *Juliana*, the deceptive nature of evil is emphasised by the poet in the saint's encounter with a devil whilst in prison. The devil attempts to deceive the saint by entering the prison cell disguised as one of God's angels, the same ploy tried on in *Genesis B* by the devil

[34] "You vow that you mean to wrest a home from us, you who are one of God's wretches. On what will you live even if you do own the ground? No one will supply you here with food; hunger and thirst will be stern foes to you, if you alone, like the wild beasts, stray from your native place. This is not at all a good plan. Abandon this seat. You could not be taught better counsel than this company's. We shall be friendly to you if you will listen to us; otherwise we shall seek you out again, unprepared, with a bigger force, in such a way that it will not be necessary to lay hands upon you nor for your corpse to fall from the wounds of weapons. With our feet we can raze this dwelling-place; the throng will come trampling in with troops of horses and armies. They will be enraged; they will knock you down and tread on you and harass you and wreak their anger upon and scatter you in bloody remnants." *GthA* 271-291.

sent to tempt Adam and Eve. This 'angel' claims that God has sent this messenger to persuade Juliana to end her physical torment by sacrificing to the heathen idols and by agreeing to the marriage with Eleusius. Unlike in *Guthlac A,* the devil in this encounter does not directly threaten any physical harm to the body of the saint. In fact he behaves exactly like the tempter in *Genesis B,* pretending to bring word that his intended victim need no longer obey some scruple that God is no longer concerned about. The devil puts on a show of concern for the saint and the physical torment she has endured as a result of her steadfast Christian faith. This, however, masks the true intention of the devil, which is to persuade Juliana to relinquish her vowed virginity, thus accepting a physical impairment on false spiritual grounds and sacrificing her eternal salvation by turning away from God. In this encounter, the *Juliana*-poet seems to integrate the devils' false concern for Guthlac's physical wellbeing with the deceptive appearance of Indulgence adopted by Prudentius in the *Psychomachia* in order to emphasise the illusory but sensually attractive stratagems of evil.

In the *Psychomachia,* as discussed above, the allegorical battle between Faith and Indulgence emphasises the deceptive nature of evil. The apparent beauty of Indulgence captivates the Virtues as the Vice arrives in a beautifully adorned chariot and scatters baskets of flowers over the battlefield. The Vice is described as having perfumed hair and a voluptuous voice that contrasts with the description of Indulgence belching and unsteady on her feet as a result of an excessive consumption of wine. Prudentius' aim in illustrating this contrast is to emphasise to his audience that while temptation may appear beautiful and attractive, yielding to it will produce unpleasant and eternal consequences. The illusion created by this superficial beauty distracts the individual from the true nature of temptation and the potential danger to individual salvation that is posed by vice. The emphasis on the deceptive nature of evil in these poems enables the poets to explore the contrast between

internal and external experience in terms of the interactions of the soul with the body as well as the interaction of the individual with existence as a whole.

According to Michael Swanton, the initial attacks by the demons in *Guthlac A* intensify the doubts and natural craving for human companionship that torment the hermit in his isolated abode.[35] This is evident in the previous passage where the demons remind Guthlac of the comfort and responsibility of his previous existence. In the above passage the demons appeal to Guthlac's physical needs in terms of finding provisions to preserve both his corporeal body and his mortal life. These doubts and anxieties, however, are not restricted to hermits or to individuals living in isolation but reflect basic human needs. Similarly in *Juliana,* the saint's encounter with the devil outlined above intensifies the natural doubt that torments the saint in terms of the pain she has endured on account of her faith and reflects the basic human instinct to protect the body from harm. The poets externalise these doubts in the characters of the devil in *Juliana* and the demons in *Guthlac A* in order to illustrate to the audience the deceptive nature of evil that exists within the individual. By identifying these basic needs with the temptations of the demons, the poet is illustrating the Christian ideal that the body is clearly the weaker and more vulnerable member of the soul-body partnership.

According to this ideal, the individual should resist the temptation to sin and the evil associated with the material realm in favour of an unchanging, spiritual existence associated with God. While acknowledging that the needs of the body differ significantly from the needs of the soul, this resistance involves prioritising the wellbeing of the soul over the wellbeing of the body, even if the body suffers as a result. This is justified by the semi-platonic Christian idea that the body belongs to the transient, material world, and regardless of whether the wellbeing of the body is prioritised or not, it is destined in time to die. The soul, on the other hand, survives the death of the body and whether or not an individual pays heed to the good

[35] Michael Swanton, *English Poetry before Chaucer* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002) 151.

of the soul in this world will determine the soul's fate in the next. Judith Perkins explores the way that the saints' lives function to create a reality where to be Christian is to suffer.[36] While Perkins explores this suffering in terms of physical afflictions of the body such as illness, suffering also includes the potential spiritual conflict endured by the individual. In the poems, this conflict enables the poet to explore the tension between this Christian ideal and the experience of the ordinary person.

This tension stems from an innate awareness that the capacity for good and evil exists within each individual and that, in the material realm, there can be immediate consequences for actions. Unlike in the poems, common experience tells us evil is not always a clearly identifiable, external adversary that can be defeated with prayers for divine intervention. Rather, the spiritual conflict that is fundamental to the human condition is a direct result of the individual's inability to distinguish between good and evil desires, as all desires are the subject of individual responsibility. They arise from bodily infirmity, confused by the weakening of the soul's command over the vulnerability brought about by the Fall. The recognition of these desires' full nature is made more difficult by human emotion, which interferes with rational thought and obscures reason. Furthermore, while every practicing Christian would understand the *principle* of the soul's priority over the body, there is no immediate gratification for living by it. This is the reason that human beings can be attracted by sin. By pursuing the Christian ideal and resisting the temptation to sin, the individual, from an earthly perspective, must wait until after death in order to benefit fully from this choice. Sins rooted in sensory experience and desire afford an immediate gratification, hence the distinction between good and evil is often blurred. The poets of *Guthlac A* and *Juliana* are aware of all these facets of common human experience and incorporate them into the poems in order to distinguish between these two aspects of the ordinary person.

[36] Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Individual Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era*, (London: Routledge, 1995) 205.

In order to clarify these distinctions, the method of representation adopted by the poets is an allegorical distinction between the responsible individual and an 'other' who seeks to seduce or coerce the individual away from their moral and spiritual responsibility. In this distinction, the saint's individual responsibility respects the union of the body and soul that incorporates the Christian definition of good. The demons, on the other hand, are adversaries to the saint's individual responsibility and seek to disable and overturn it. In *Juliana,* the 'other' is also identified with the character of Eleusius who represents the worldly ideals of social status and comfort, which Juliana must reject as thoroughly as the blandishments of her diabolic tempter. The poet states:

Ða wæs sio fæmne mid hyre fæder willan
welegum biweddad; wyrd ne ful cuþe,
freondrædenne hu heo from hogde,
geong on gæste. Hire wæs godes egsa
mara in gemyndum, þonne eall þæt maþþumgestealdþe in þæs æþelinges æhtum wunade.
Þa wæs se weliga þære wifgifta,
goldspedig guma, georn on mode,
þæt him mon fromlicast fæmnen gegyrede,
bryd to bolde. Heo þæs beornes lufan
fæste wiðhogde, þeah þe feohgestreon
under hordlocan, hyrsta unrim
æhte ofer eorþan.[37]

[37] "Then this virgin, at her father's will, was pledged to the wealthy man; he was not quite aware of the situation, how in her spirit the young girl despised the married state. To her mind the fear of God was greater than all the treasures which lay among the nobleman's possessions. So the wealthy, gold-abounding man yearned in his mind for the marriage, longed for the virgin to be made ready for him as urgently as possible, as a bride for his house. She steadfastly rejected the man's love though he had in store treasures upon the earth, a countless quantity of jewels." All references to *Juliana* are from Bernard Muir (ed) *The Exeter Anthology in Old*

Eleusius is a wealthy, aristocratic governor who exercises great power over the fortified cities that he governs, and who desires to marry Juliana. Elsewhere, the poet identifies Eleusius as a pagan who worships heathen idols against the advice of the Christian God (ll 21-2). As a result, this character functions as an 'other' alongside the demonic 'other' who visits Juliana in her prison. He represents the good of the body without due care for the good of the soul. For Juliana, on the other hand, the fate of the soul in the afterlife, her steadfast faith in Christ, and the Christian values inform her stalwart sense of her own individual responsibility are her primary goals and motivations. In describing the character of Eleusius, the poet acknowledges that not all human beings adopt the model of the Christian ideal. While there are exemplary, virtuous individuals who embody the Christian ideal during life, there are also individuals who have chosen evil over good and who are governed by the desires of the body rather than the soul. This further illustrates the subtle power of temptation that is manifested in these individuals who harm and torment the responsible individual through torture. Despite declaring his desire for her, Eleusius does torture Juliana physically for her refusal to marry him. He hangs her by her hair to a beam, where she endures being whipped for six hours a day.[38] When she continues to refuse him, he orders that she is thrust into boiling lead though the flame disperses and the burning lead kills seventy-five of his own men.[39] Juliana is protected by God who ensures that she remains unharmed but the intention to harm her is there. Throughout the torture, Juliana remains strong in her faith and steadfast in her resistance, even when faced with gruesome torture and physical harm. As a saint, she exemplifies the ideal soldier of Christ and merits both God's further grace and protection. In theory, this is also possible for any true believer who remains steadfast against adversity. For the ordinary, non-exemplary individual, however, physical torture can blur the line between

English Poetry, An Edition of the Exeter Dean and Chapter MS 3501 Vol 1 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994) 191-213. From herein, the poem will be cited in abbreviated form *Jul* followed by the line numbers. This reference for example, *Jul* 32-42a.

[38] *Jul.* 227-230.

[39] *Jul.* 580-589.

prioritising the wellbeing of the soul over the wellbeing of the body. The pain and suffering endured by the body as a result of this torture can compel even the most virtuous soul to yield its principles in order to avoid injury or pain and to protect the body. The poet is emphasising the Christian ideal that this suffering should be endured; ideally the saint resists the natural instinct to protect the body in order to ensure the salvation of the soul. Those who behave more 'naturally' pose a threat to their own souls, as they are compelled by their corporeal limitations and do not understand the significance of spiritual pursuits. In having Juliana cope with both human and demonic antagonists, the poet highlights the need to resist temptation and coercion from both spiritual and physical quarters.

This method of representation is also evident in Prudentius' *Psychomachia.* In that poem, Prudentius develops scriptural notions that distinguish between the individual and an opposed agency that inclines to sin by pairing characteristics of a particular vice with a particular virtue. The poets of *Guthlac A* and *Juliana* adopt a similar method in their distinctions. In *Juliana,* for example, the characteristics attributed to Eleusius and Juliana that function to define 'other' and the individual respectively, are comparable to Prudentius' battle pairs. In the *Psychomachia,* the first of the battle pairs to enter the field are Worship-of-the-Old-Gods and Faith, followed by a battle between Lust and Chastity. Similarly in *Juliana,* the pagan worship of Eleusius is directly contrasted with Juliana's Christian faith while his lust and desire for the saint directly contrasts with Juliana's chastity. The aim of these descriptions is to ensure that the nature of temptation is clearly identifiable and to illustrate the ability of the individual to resist temptation. The difference in representation between the *Psychomachia* and these verse accounts of the saints is that Prudentius maintains that both vice and virtue exist within the individual. The poets of *Guthlac A* and *Juliana* externalise the 'other' in order to reiterate the ideas that govern individual behaviour in accordance with the Christian ideal. Juliana never falters. Guthlac, however, does suffer the odd moment of

despair, particularly when the devils take him to monasteries where his fellow monks are behaving shamefully. By cutting at his sense of solidarity with his fellow monastics, they undermine the heroic sensibilities that suffuse the poem and Guthlac's character, and shift the battle with external adversaries to an internal spiritual conflict, albeit momentarily. This method of representation depicts spiritual conflict in a dynamic, entertaining and accessible manner that allows its audience to distinguish between good and evil both without and within: between the evil that assaults us via external circumstances and the evil that saps our inmost will by undermining our individual moral agency and responsibility. Between the proximate goods of the outer world and the ultimate good of the inward soul, the worldly goods must always be subordinate.

In the Gospels, Christ regularly advocates passive resistance, humility, and spiritual integrity over armed combat, personal gain, pride in prowess, and material victory. [40] This passive resistance is also reflected in the description of the armour of God explored previously in Ephesians 6:10-17. This armour includes a helmet, a shield, which are defensive rather than offensive. The saints embody the Christian ideal and, while they are identified as soldiers of Christ, do not seek or actively engage in battle. Rather, they guard their souls with righteousness, virtue, and truth against the potential attacks of adversaries. In *Guthlac A*, the poet states:

"Wid is þis westen, wræcsetla fela,
eardas onhæle earmra gæsta.
Sindon wærlogan þe þa wic bugað.
Þeah ge þa ealle ut abonne,
ond eow each gewyrce widor sæce,
ge her ateoð in þa tornwræce

[40] Damon, *Soldier Saints and Holy Warriors*, 2.

sigeleasne sið. No ic eow sweord ongean
mid gebolgne hond oðberan þence,
worulde wæpen, ne sceal wong gode
þurh blodgyte gebuen weorðan,
ac ic minum Criste cweman þence
leofran lace. Nu ic þis lond gestag,
fela ge me earda þurh idel word
aboden habbað. Nis min breostsefa
forht ne fæge, ac me friðe healdeð
ofer monna cyn se þe mægna gehwæs
weorcum wealdeð. Nis me wiht æt eow
leofes gelong, ne ge me laþes wiht
gedon motun. Ic eom dryhtnes þeow –
he mec þurh engel oft afrefreð.
Forðon mec longeþas lyt gegretað,
sorge sealdum, nu mec sawelcund
hyrde bihealdeð. Is min hyht mid god,
ne ic me eorðwelan owiht sinne,
ne me mid mode micles gyrne,
ac me dogra gehwam dryhten sendeð
þurh monnes hond mine þearfe".[41]

[41] Wide is this wilderness and the multitude of fugitive settlements and the secret dwellings of wretched spirits, and those who inhabit these lodging-places are devils; but even if you summon out all those and work yourself up for strife more widely still, you will be taking on a profitless venture here in these acts of vengeful bitterness. I do not intend to carry against you a sword, a weapon of the world, with hand enraged, nor shall this site be colonised for God through the shedding of blood, but I intend to please my Christ with a gift more acceptable. Now I have climbed onto this land, you have urged many dwellings on me with your empty words. My heart is neither frightened nor faint, but he who controls the workings of every mighty force keeps watch over me above mankind. Not a thing agreeable to me is dependent upon you, and you may do nothing disagreeable to me. I am the servant of the Lord; through an angel he often comforts me. Cravings therefore affect me little, and anxieties

This passage highlights the poet's awareness of the heroic warrior values of Anglo-Saxon culture, represented here in the broadest sense of Guthlac's firm loyalty to his lord, God. A considerable amount of literature, particularly the poetry of the surviving Anglo-Saxon corpus, represents the ideals of this aristocratic, warrior society. The basis of these values is the reciprocal relationship between lord and retainer, where the lord obliges the retainer and ensures continuing loyalty through the giving of gifts.[42] In return, the retainer enhances his reputation and the reputation of his lord through the glory and honour of battle together with unfaltering loyalty to the lord for future service. Poems such as *Beowulf, The Battle of Maldon, the Battle of Brunanburh, Widsith,* and the so-called *Finnsburh Fragment* represent the conventions, imagery, and values of this warrior society. In these poems, the warrior's aim is to establish a lasting reputation in matters of honour, including active participation in the personal feuds of their lord, administering vengeance on their lord's behalf, and engaging in battle against the lord's adversaries.[43] As highlighted in the Gospels and in the writings of King Alfred the Great, however, these secular values contrast with the ideals of Christianity. The Gospels, as stated earlier, encourage peaceful resistance over armed combat, and spiritual integrity over material victory. Similarly, Alfred observes the vanity of pursuing a lasting reputation by the fact that this reputation is as transitory as the life of the body.[44] The honour and glory achieved by the warrior are only relevant in the material realm and are rendered irrelevant after the soul is separated from the body after death.

The very existence of *Guthlac A* suggests that its Anglo-Saxon audience would have been aware of these conflicting perspectives. In order to reconcile the two and illustrate the Christian ideal to the ordinary person, the poet incorporates the basic principles of these

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seldom, now that a spiritual guardian looks after me. My hope is with God; I care nothing at all for earthly wellbeing, nor do I yearn in my heart after much for myself, but every day the Lord provides me with my wants by the hand of man." *GthA* 296-322.

[42] O'Brien O'Keefe, 'Heroic Values and Christian Ethics', 107.

[43] O'Brien O'Keefe, 'Heroic Values and Christian Ethics', 108.

[44] O'Brien O'Keefe, 'Heroic Values and Christian Ethics', 115.

heroic, warrior values into the poem. Guthlac is an embodiment of the Christian ideal as he is able to transcend the evil associated with the material realm, which includes a refusal to engage in physical combat against the demons. Yet at the same time he acts as the perfect thane to his heavenly Lord. Similarly in *Juliana* the saint expresses her absolute loyalty to her heavenly Lord, as great as any shown by earthly warriors to earthly lords:

210 "Ne ondræde ic me domas þine,
awyrged womsceaða, ne þinra wita bealo.
Hæbbe ic me to hyhte heofonrices weard,
mildne mundboran, mægna waldend,
se mec gescyldeð wið þinum scinlace
215 of gromra gripe, þe þu to godum tiohhast.
Ða sind geasne goda gehwylces,
idle, orfeorme, unbuþyrfe,
ne þær freme meteð fira ænig
soðe sibbe, þeah þe sece to him
220 freondrædenne. He ne findeð þær
duguþe mid deoflum. Ic to dryhtne min
mod staþelige, se ofer mægna gehwylc
waldeð wideferh, wuldres agend
sigora gehwylces. Þæt is soð cyning".[45]

This Christian ideal, however, does not exist in isolation and is reinforced by the poets in terms of a reciprocal relationship between the saint and God. The saints demonstrate

[45] "I do not fear your judgements, you condemned sinner, nor the hurt of your tortures: I have as my hope the Guardian of heaven, the merciful Protector, the Lord of Hosts, who will shield me against your delusion and from the clutches of the demons whom you regard as gods. They are devoid of every virtue, worthless, unprofitable, useless, nor shall anyone encounter there that benefit, true peace, even if he does seek their friendship. He will not find companionship there, amid devils. I shall fix my mind upon the Lord who, as glorious Ruler, forever disposes over every virtue, every triumph: he is the true King." *Jul* 210-224.

unfaltering loyalty to God by refusing the temptations presented to them. This is evident when Guthlac declares "I am the servant of the Lord"; thus physical cravings and material anxieties do not affect him because he has placed his concern for his spiritual wellbeing above his physical wellbeing. Similarly, Juliana declares, "I have as my hope the Guardian of heaven", and is able to transcend the evil associated with the material realm by not allowing fear of the 'other' to deter her from her spiritual pursuits. The saints also enhance their own reputation through the glory and honour associated with the battle of the soldier of Christ (*miles Christi)*. In return for this loyalty, the saints are rewarded with God's grace that protects them from evil during life and ensures salvation in the afterlife.

The saints are exemplary individuals and ideal examples of what can be achieved by resisting sin, renouncing earthly existence, and focusing on the wellbeing of the soul over the body. As examples, the verse saints' lives together with Prudentius' *Psychomachia* illustrate the spiritual conflict of the individual in creative, entertaining, and accessible ways. The desires of the body and those of the soul differ considerably but for the audience of these poems, the distinction between the two is often blurred and disoriented. By illustrating these desires in poetry, the poets attempt to define the parameters of human experience and, in doing so, to enable their audience to identify the struggle and arm themselves with the necessary spiritual armour to resist sin. So armed, the individual has no need for repentance if, like the saints, they resist all temptation and choose good over evil.

Conclusion

The eschatological issues evident in Old English literature imply that the writers have as much concern for the end-times as their predecessors in the Patristic traditions they drew on so freely. The Anglo-Saxons inherited a complex and varied tradition with respect to the return of Christ and the subsequent judgement of humankind. Both the poetry and the prose refer to core eschatological issues such as the timing, signs, and events that will herald Judgement Day, as well as the nature of the eternal state that humankind will subsequently enter. Their perspectives on these key issues often reflect, sometimes identically, the views of the early Church Fathers such as Augustine of Hippo, Gregory the Great, and Bede the Venerable. The similarities between the Anglo-Saxon perspectives and those of these early Church Fathers is so explicit that some scholars have described Anglo-Saxon eschatology as being "unoriginal" and not contributing anything significant to the history of eschatological discourse.[1] This description is not completely unfounded, particularly in terms of the general purpose and function of eschatological discourse from the early Christian past to the Anglo-Saxon present. In the early Christian period, eschatology was a broad area of theology, both speculative and open to variable interpretation. It encompassed all the concerns and issues identified as 'last things' such as death, judgement, and the eternal fate of humankind. However powerfully the early Church proclaimed Christ's victory over death, it has remained, for the rest of the human race, a stubborn and grim reality across all the centuries since. While death will most assuredly come to us all, it remains for most of us, an uncertain variable: no one knows when he or she will die. In the same way, the specific details of the timing and manner of Christ's return to judge humankind are incomplete, complex, and, at points, inconsistent. He will most assuredly come, but none can say when. Most early

[1] Gatch, *Preaching and Theology*, 4-5.

Christian writers seek to resolve the apparent contradictions or inconsistencies in the scriptural accounts of Christ's return through exegesis.

The issues that are explored by early Christian writers are strongly influenced by their specific contexts. Those living in oppressive conditions tended to produce more dramatic and urgent eschatological arguments. These specific contexts, however, resulted in some issues being emphasised over others, which, on the one hand, contributes to the inconsistencies and, on the other hand, makes each eschatological discourse unique to the writer composing it. This is certainly evident in the writings of Augustine, Gregory, Bede, who were writing under very different circumstances, but also in the writings of Ælfric and Wulfstan, who were contemporaries and writing in roughly the same time period. While their fundamental arguments are similar to those of their predecessors, the treatment of these issues, including their emphasis on particular issues that differ subtly from those taken up in Old English poetry, distinguishes their eschatological discourse, though it remains uniquely Anglo-Saxon. For all Anglo-Saxon writers, eschatological themes are less concerned with the future day of judgement as such and more focused on the present need for the moral reform of their immediate audiences. Their treatment of these issues is certainly directed at the community as a whole and the shared responsibility of all Christians, but their primary aim is to articulate the responsibility of individuals for their future fate. As such, the eschatological themes in the literature are adapted deliberately as a rhetorical device aimed at changing their audiences' behaviour, rather than a genuine attempt to resolve scriptural ambiguities about the timing of Christ's return. This is evident in not only their highly selective treatment (and often creative representation) of the issues but also in their loose control of the consistency of their representations and the specifics of their narrative details. Their purpose, even as they seek to clarify and understand the issues, does not aim at resolving all the scriptural ambiguities about future-time scenarios, but remains more focused on the present and how their audience

can be encouraged to take more responsibility for their fate before any end-time sequence begins. This is particularly evident in Ælfric and Wulfstan's treatment of such core issues as the timing, signs, and events that will herald Christ's actual return to judge humankind.

Both Ælfric and Wulfstan inherit a complex and varied tradition with respect to the timing of Christ's return but work within the tradition attributed to Augustine, which is subsequently developed further by Gregory and Bede. Augustine, drawing on scriptural evidence and the chronology established by Eusebius of Caesara, synchronises the history of Creation into six Ages, of which five have already occurred and the sixth is yet to end. This sixth Age is the present Age, which began at the birth of Christ and will end on Christ's return. While early Christian writers before him hoped to calculate accurately the timing of Christ's return by synthesizing the biblical history of the world into a coherent chronology, Augustine pursues a different purpose. His chronology stresses the fundamental uncertainty of Christ's return, how its timing is known only to God, so that it cannot be predicted by mere calculation from the hints that can be gleaned from Scripture. For Augustine, any attempt thus to map out God's intentions beforehand constitutes an impertinence contrary to the practice of true faith. Augustine's model informs the writings of Gregory, Bede, Ælfric, and Wulfstan, though Gregory and Bede's interpretation of this model differ significantly. Gregory's primary objective in his eschatological discourse is to prepare the individual, the community, and the Church for Christ's return and subsequent judgement of humankind. Gregory, like Augustine, is reluctant to specify the exact timing of Christ's return and emphasizes how it cannot be calculated according to any corporeal, human conception of time. Despite this, he communicates a sense of urgency and intensity that reveals his unfaltering conviction that Christ's return and the end of earthly existence are indeed imminent. While this appears to contradict his insistence that the timing of Christ's return cannot be determined, Gregory exploits the twin notions of inevitability and uncertainty to

hammer home his overall point: that the prospect of Christ's return, however uncertain its timing (and, indeed, precisely *because* of that uncertainty), demands greater vigilance on the part of all believers. This vigilance should motivate each individual Christian to prepare actively in the present, regardless of when judgement might occur. Bede, on the other hand, reiterates Gregory's idea that individuals need to prepare actively in the present, but focuses primarily on proving that Christ's return cannot be calculated. By adopting Augustine's model together with Jerome's Latin translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, and through a detailed analysis of the scriptural chronology of human history, Bede asserts that each Age is of varying length and hence the end of the present sixth Age cannot be determined. Compared to the intensity and sense of urgency in Gregory's writings, Bede's approach is calm, methodical, and careful in its explanation; a distinction that is also evident in the writings of Ælfric and, to a lesser extent, Wulfstan.

Both Ælfric and Wulfstan demonstrate a pastoral concern for the spiritual wellbeing of the English people, which in turn drives their purpose in urging moral reform and preparing their audiences for Judgement Day. Ælfric, however, constructs careful, methodical arguments, while Wulfstan in contrast all but shouts orders in a manner that reflects the intensity and sense of urgency in Gregory's writings. Both Anglo-Saxon writers are highly selective in their treatment of the timing of the end, which gives rise to some inconsistencies of tone and detail between their respective accounts. They readily adopt Augustine's model with respect to the chronology of human history, without any indication that they are overly concerned with its precise details. Ælfric refers to it by associating the six water vessels of the marriage of Cana with the six Ages of the world and draws an analogy between the seeds of Christianity strewn by his parabolic sower, which grow mixed with weeds, and the last Age of his own present time. Wulfstan, however, does not address either of these issues in any great depth. Writing during the disruptions and political crises provoked by the Viking

invasions towards the end of Æthelred's reign, Wulfstan focuses on the imminence of the end and the active presence of Antichrist throughout his writings. Yet at the same time, Wulfstan remains ambiguous about the specific timing of the end and projects the actual persecution of Antichrist into a near but not immediate future. He establishes a tone of present danger and need for immediate action without actually committing to any sort of specific timetable or prediction. This method, which is also evident in Gregory's work, enacts a specific purpose. Wulfstan wants his audience to focus on the present while being mindful of Christ's return and judgement of humankind as both imminent and immediate possibilities. He understands fully that in order to achieve his aim of moral reform, he must maintain a delicate balance between urging the pressing need for action *now* and offering some reassurance that it is not too late to repent. The Viking invasions threatened the political, social, and spiritual fabric of his world in the present. Wulfstan was also able to contextualize them in terms of the future judgement of humankind and thereby suggest some sort of remedy that can prepare his audience for the trials of earthly existence now and in the future. This remedy, according to Wulfstan, is to prepare actively through repentance and steadfast Christian faith, a remedy for both present and future suffering that every believer needs to implement right now.

The concern for the spiritual wellbeing of the English people is also evident in Ælfric and Wulfstan's respective treatment of the signs and events that will precede the end of earthly existence. Ælfric reinforces Augustine, Gregory, and Bede's common insistence that the world is in its last age, a condition of relentless decline. He states that the natural disasters, pestilences, famine, and war in his own time provide sufficient evidence of this decline and herald the reign of Antichrist and the return of Christ, as imminent but not immediate likelihoods. His careful explanation lacks the intense tone of both Gregory's and Wulfstan's arguments. Instead, he aligns his own view with Bede's tendency to view these events not so much as immediate heralds of Judgement Day but as reminders to Christians of

the need to amend sinful ways before the end-time sequence begins. For all his more urgent vehemence, Wulfstan follows more or less the same inclination. His treatment of the signs of the end is brief yet deliberate. His main focus is the persecution of Antichrist and while he alludes to the traditional scriptural signs of the end, he does not dwell on them at any great length. Their function in his writing is to lend a sense of urgency to his call for moral reform by associating these signs with the historical events that characterise his world. His focus on the persecution of Antichrist, however, reveals the true purpose and rationale for his treatment of these issues. The traditional signs, which include earthquakes, famine, pestilence, wars and the darkening of the sun and moon, have a cosmological significance but are also transient and associated with earthly existence. These events cannot be prevented by any single person but at the same time, despite their severity, they do not threaten or imperil the spiritual wellbeing of the individual. The persecution of Antichrist, however, does have the potential to threaten the spiritual wellbeing of each individual and its effects are eternal rather than temporal and material like the other signs. As such, according to Wulfstan, the reign of Antichrist that is palpably imminent should be of concern to every Christian individual primarily as a spur to moral vigilance and repentance. This reminder applies not only to his lay audience but also to his fellow clergy who have the responsibility for their own moral reform and for that of their congregations.

While for Wulfstan the cosmological signs are of secondary importance compared to the persecution of Antichrist, these signs form the basis for the explicitly eschatological poems *Judgement Day I, Judgement Day II,* and, *Christ III.* These poems, like the prose of Ælfric and Wulfstan, reveal the fundamental concerns and single purpose of the poets. The poems are distinguished from the prose accounts by their sense of dramatic immediacy, by their distinctive language that includes heroic vocabulary and values, and by the use of traditional poetic diction to illustrate fundamental concepts and to evoke an emotional

response from the audience. While each poem focuses explicitly on the future day of judgement, the poets, like Ælfric and Wulfstan, redirect their narratives toward their own present time. Their purpose is identical to that of the homilists, that is, to encourage their audience to prepare actively for Christ's return, his judgement of humankind, and the end of earthly existence. While their concerns and purpose are the same, their treatment of eschatological issues in the poems is distinct from that of the prose accounts. Unlike the early Christian writers, the poets do not act on a fundamental need to resolve ambiguities and reconcile apparent contradictions of the scriptural accounts through exegesis. For the poets, the specific details and their interpretation are not as important as their overall purpose, which is to articulate and dramatise the responsibility of individuals with respect to their future fate. Where Ælfric and Wulfstan, despite his strident exhortations, explain the need for moral reform, the poets rely on vivid imagery to convey their purpose in a dramatic and compelling way. Through this imagery, the poets evoke the apocalyptic present where the future return of Christ functions as a conceptual scheme that reinforces the need to prepare actively through self-reflection and self-judgement in the present. Their method for achieving this is simple: a combination of traditional narrative and distinct but methodological dramatisation.

The traditional aspects are evident in the common motifs that the poets integrate into their poems, common because they derive from Scripture and are also evident from the early Christian tradition to the Anglo-Saxon period. The poets do not attempt to provide a comprehensive or sequential treatment of these motifs, but their inclusion reinforces the continuity of the eschatological tradition that informs them. They also distinguish the poems by revealing the way that the poets adapt these motifs in a creative, entertaining, and dramatic way to suit their purpose. They include the idea that the specific timing of Christ's return cannot be determined, the cosmological signs of the end such as changes to the sun, moon,

and stars, and the apocalyptic fire that will consume all of Creation. While early Christian writers attempt to determine the chronology of human history, the poets are far less concerned about the timing of the end, apart from emphasising that it will be swift and sudden. They show little interest in engaging with the traditions and complex arguments in relation to either the exact timing of Christ's return or any synthesis of human history. For the poets, even more than to the homilists, the timing of the future day of judgement is less important than the present need for moral reform. As such, the poets seek to communicate a timeless psychological fact that Christ will return and judgement will happen, but they scarcely consider exactly *when* it might happen; for them its certainty far outweighs any consideration of chronology, and to motivate their audience to preparedness constitutes their whole concern.

In order to be prepared for judgement and the eternal fate that humankind will subsequently enter, the Christian individual must amend their ways and turn away from sin towards God. They must truly repent, that is, they must demonstrate remorse, compunction, and/or contrition for wrongful deeds through penance. Anglo-Saxon writers realise, however, that simply encouraging their audience to repent cannot of itself guarantee true repentance. They are aware that individuals endure internal conflict between the attractions of vice and the rigours of virtue where concern for the wellbeing of the soul may be weakened by the demands of the body. They are also aware that true repentance requires self-reflection and introspection, an awareness of what constitutes sin and what defines good, as well as a significant degree of remorse and a commitment to the conscious choice of good over evil. In order to encourage and assist their audiences, the writers adopt various methods and motifs that emphasise key themes such as sin, penance, and free will. The key is to shift the focus away from Original Sin and its subsequent consequences for all humankind to the impact of personal sin on the individual and the consequences of the freely willed choices of that

individual. As with the other eschatological issues, the aim of the poets and the homilists in this regard is the same, though their treatment and representation of the particulars differs significantly.

The homilies are generally measured, sophisticated, selectively doctrinal, and more or less traditional. Ælfric relies heavily on the writings of the Church Fathers to support his arguments and freely acknowledges his sources. Ælfric asserts that God does not accept anyone into the kingdom of heaven without trial, and by trial he means the temptations that God permits to test humankind. Ideally, individuals should resist all temptation, but Ælfric concedes that this may not always be possible given the fallible nature of humankind after the Fall. If the individuals yield to temptation, they can still reconcile with God if they truly repent and cease from committing the sin again. To assist his audience in resisting sin, Ælfric provides detailed lists of the eight chief sins together with their subsequent sub-sins, as well as the contrasting virtues that counteract their allure. The result is a taxonomy that reduces the inherently wayward and incoherent tendencies of sin into a tidy rhetorical bundle that seeks to enable the individual freely to negotiate the labyrinth of sin to a good end. Ælfric's method encourages introspection and self-judgement in a calm and methodical, almost forensic, manner. Wulfstan's method, as with his treatment of other eschatological issues, is more emphatic than prescriptive. He associates the Viking attacks of his Age with divine punishment on the sins of the nation, which, according to Wulfstan, have ruptured the relationship between God and humankind. He provides a list of sins but unlike Ælfric's calm, rhetorical taxonomy, Wulfstan expresses his exasperations at the present situation in England and lists the sins as a stinging rebuke to the English. Despite his exasperation, however, Wulfstan, like Ælfric, is adamant that the relationship with God can be repaired if the individual is truly repentant and freely chooses good over evil. The free will choice of the individual, while not often addressed in eschatological discourse, is fundamental to the

distinct purpose of the writers of Old English literature, even in the dramatic, embellished, and creative representation of these issues in the poetry.

While the exact intentions of the poets and the prose homilists cannot be determined with any certainty, based on their treatment of themes such as sin, penance, and free will, they appear to complement one another. The homilies relate formal doctrinal matters while the poems reinforce the same doctrine in a more immediate and accessible way. The poets seek to *dramatise* their audiences' need to take responsibility for the future fate of their souls and through active preparation for the return of Christ. Nowhere in the surviving poetry do we find carefully coordinated catalogues of sins and corresponding penances. The most explicit example of poetry that addresses the whole subject of sin is *Genesis B.* In this poem, the poet expands on the biblical account of Adam and Eve's original transgression, but in a way that explicitly illustrates the self-judgement and remorse that are fundamental to moral reform. The poem also draws significant attention to the issues of free will, moral agency, human accountability, and the responsibility of the individual with respect to their future fate. The representation of the adversary is key here as the poet goes to great lengths to emphasise the deceptive and persistent nature of evil and temptation. The narrative function of the adversary in this context, while reflecting the scriptural account, is that while devils or demons may tempt humankind, the choice to sin rests entirely with the individual. Unlike the homilists, who present patient expositions of the patristic elaborations of the concept of sin, the poets seek out dramatic instances of how sin operates in the human psyche, a point that is reinforced further in the treatment of the psychomachia allegory.

The psychomachia allegory played a subtle yet pivotal role in the eschatological discourse of Anglo-Saxon England, though it is not often addressed in relation to eschatology. The psychomachia stems from Paul's epistle to the Ephesians (6:10-17), which contains a signature passage of proto-psychomahia that governs the development of the

spiritual conflict theme in Christian theology. The theme is developed further by the late Latin poet Prudentius in a poem that illustrates the battle between Christian virtues and their respective vices in graphic detail. The New Testament martial allegories such as Ephesians 6 and Prudentius' epic battle, when conjoined with the poetic diction of Anglo-Saxon warrior culture, enabled the Anglo-Saxon poets to represent the life of the soul through the imagery of war and conflict. The fundamental basis for this conflict stems form the unity between distinct entities, the incorporeal soul and the corporeal body that defines a human being. The distinction between the soul and the body, however, also reveals a significant departure by the Anglo-Saxon writers from their patristic predecessors. Early Christian writers such as Augustine and Gregory take great pains to define the nature of the body, the nature of the soul, and the consequences for the individual that ensues from the intimate relationship between the two. The writers of Old English literature though are generally not interested in revisiting the arguments with respect to the precise nature of the soul or the body as distinct entities or as elements in any historical discussion. Ælfric and Wulfstan focus more on the need to prioritise the wellbeing of the soul by resisting temptation, while the poets are more interested in the conflict between the two rather than on what might constitute their distinct natures.

While a sustained personification allegory such as that found in Prudentius' poem is not evident in Old English literature, the concept of internal conflict between vice and virtue, soul and body, good and evil, enables the poets to explore the temptation faced by humankind and the free will choice that the individual faces on a daily basis. Ælfric briefly alludes to the conflict while Wulfstan does not address this explicitly. Ælfric's lists of sins are grounded in earthly existence and reflect the inherent tension between the soul and the body that is fundamental to the psychomachia motif, a tension that is also evident in the *Soul and Body* poems as well as the verse saints lives *Guthlac A* and *Juliana.* These poems highlight how, in

different ways, the interaction between the soul and the body is of considerable interest to Anglo-Saxon writers and fundamental to their purpose in articulating the responsibility of the individual with respect to future judgement and fate. The *Soul and Body* poems record the soul's address to the body after death and dramatise the pathology of the body's sensual appetites that can entrap and compel the soul. In *Guthlac A* and *Juliana,* the tension between the soul and the body forms the dynamic episodes of conflict that enable the poets to illustrate complex theological issues and celebrate the triumph of the saint's soul in firm command of itself and its body. The underlying principle in both, however, is the same: that the soul ought to guide the body and, ultimately, that the soul is responsible for the free will choices to sin or not to sin. Using their ancestral resources of native poetic diction, the poets seek to define the parameters of human experience and, in doing so, to enable their audience to identify the struggle in order to arm themselves adequately with the spiritual weapons necessary to resist sin.

This study has sought to explore which eschatological issues are of fundamental concern to the writers of Old English literature and how the inclusion of these issues serves the specific purpose of articulating the responsibility of the individual with respect to their future fate. More work needs to be done in order to determine whether the single, distinct purpose of the writers evident here extends beyond the texts and themes explored in this thesis. This would include a broader theological study on the various eschatological traditions that influenced Anglo-Saxon writers, an analysis of the broader corpus of Old English literature including heroic poems, law codes, and anonymous homilies as well as evidence from visual and material culture, as well as other key issues and motifs such as the Anglo-Saxon perspective on the interim period between death and judgement. This, in turn, will reveal not only the distinct, unified purpose of the writers but also the unique contribution of Anglo-Saxon writers to the history of eschatological discourse.

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