PRESCRIPTIONS FOR SALVATION: CHRIST AS THE SUFFERING PHYSICIAN PRESENT IN THE EUCHARIST IN THE *CROXTON PLAY OF THE SACRAMENT* AND RELATED TEXTS.

By

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If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord who heals you.

(Exodus 15:26)[1]

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Contents

Introduction

> *The eucharist became a pivot for mystical flights, it served in healing and magic...*
>
> *-Miri Rubin*
>
> *The Eucharist and the Construction of Medieval Identities (1992:52)*

Health has always been an issue of central importance to human beings: without it, one cannot function effectively in the world. In earlier times physical health and strength were essential in order to provide the basic necessities of life such as food and shelter; today physical and mental health are still important in enabling one to secure a livelihood.

Spiritual health has been attributed varying degrees of importance at different times in different cultures. The absence of spiritual health in this life has often been viewed as leading to death or misery in the next life. Amundsen (1987:319) argues that religion is largely involved with the well-being of humanity in a broad sense while the goal of medicine is similar though more limited, dealing only with physical wellness. According to *Webster's Comprehensive Reference Dictionary and Encyclopedia*, health can be defined as: 'freedom from bodily pain or disease; vigor of mind; moral purity; righteousness', while to heal is: 'to restore to health; cure; make sound; reconcile' (1954:239).

As this definition demonstrates, health applies not only to the physical, but also to the mental and spiritual aspects of humanity.

The word 'health' derives from the Old English 'hal' meaning 'well, healthy, sound, whole, hale'. Both 'whole' and 'holy' are derived from this root (Bradley, 1891:319 and 321). Thus physical and spiritual health, from the point of view of language and etymology, are intimately connected.

In this study the idea of Christ as the great, Divine Physician in medieval society will be investigated in relation to the *Croxton Play of the Sacrament*. The Dutch play, *Dat es Tspel vanden Heiligen Sacramente van der Nyeuwervaert*, will also be dealt with in some detail in this regard. Furthermore, the French sacrament play, *Le jeu et mystère de la Saincte Hostie*, and an Italian sacrament play from Orvieto, the *Miracolo del Corporale di Bolsena*, will be considered.

In the view of Morgan (1937:9),

> The description of our Lord as the great Physician is warranted by the fact that He Himself employed that designation illustratively in reference to the whole fact of His mission.

Christ uses the epithet in Luke 4:23 when referring to a potential criticism of Himself in His native town of Nazareth: 'You will surely say this proverb to Me, "Physician, heal yourself!"'[2]. Morgan notes that this quotation alone does not

provide a sufficient basis for referring to Christ as a physician, but that another quotation found variously in Matthew 9:12 and 13, Mark 2:17 and Luke 5:31 and 32, does so:

> Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance (Mark 2:17).

The *Croxton Play*, which is the main focus of this investigation, has been studied from a number of different perspectives. It has been considered in terms of 'anti-Lollard propaganda' (Cutts, 1944:45); as a form of documentation of the perceived identity of the Jew in late medieval English society (Dox, 1997:97-115); as containing devotional themes in its humour and violence (Homan, 1986:327-340); and in terms of the host's absorption into mercantilism (Reid-Schwartz, 1994:1-2), for example. The play's theatrical history has also been examined (Jones, 1999:223-260). Only one recent article (Scherb, 1990:161-171) has specifically considered the allusions to Christ as a physician in the play.

This study aims at a more in-depth investigation of the representation of Christ as a physician in the *Croxton Play* and other selected western European medieval sacrament dramas. In addition to this His presence as a physician in the form of a consecrated host forms an important part of the discussion. Christ is present in these plays in the form of a consecrated communion wafer (host), believed in the medieval Catholic Church (the dominant religious body in Europe and England at the time) to have become at the consecration the real body of Christ

(referred to as the Real Presence) by means of transubstantiation. Transubstantiation has been the subject of much debate and controversy, but according to the Catholic Doctrinal Guide (1966:23) of *The Holy Bible* (Catholic Life Edition), it may be explained in the following terms:

> After the consecration bread and wine are present no longer, merely their appearances are present; the entire Christ is present. Christ, whole and entire, exists under the species of bread and under each particle of that species; whole and entire, He is under the species of wine, and under its separate parts. The Holy Eucharist is the *living* Christ; as a living body is not without its blood, or living blood is not without a body, so Christ is received whole and entire under either form of bread or wine.

Thus, in the plays discussed here, the consecrated host <u>is</u> Christ and His role as humankind's Physician (whether physical and/or spiritual) is frequently demonstrated in various ways. By the same token, humanity is cast, in terms of this belief, in the role of the patient, thus identities are constructed on both sides of the divine-human relationship.

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the manner in which Christ, perceived as present in the eucharistic host, is portrayed as the Suffering Physician in a number of selected medieval sacrament dramas. Christ can be seen as suffering in these plays, as there is usually a symbolic re-enactment or reminder of His Passion involving a consecrated host. He may be

viewed as a physician, as His Passion was often seen and portrayed as the ultimate act of healing for the souls of humankind, offering salvation, the ultimate cure. Furthermore, in the dramas, physical and/or spiritual healing usually takes place as a result of one or more miracles performed by the power of the host (i.e. Christ). The host is usually present in these plays in order to emphasise the truth of the doctrine of transubstantiation.

The theme of healing is most clearly present in the sole remaining English sacrament play. It is also found in the Dutch play. The French and Italian plays tend to concentrate mainly on spiritual healing without using physical healing as an indicator of, or corollary to, spiritual healing as in the English and Dutch plays. Nevertheless, due to the strongly religious nature of the age, spiritual healing was often seen as being of paramount importance[3].

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a prescription as: 'A direction or formula (usually) written by a physician for the composition and use of a medicine' (Simpson & Weiner, 1989:391). The host miracles which take place in the plays discussed here may be viewed as 'prescriptions' for spiritual health or salvation as they frequently lead (in the medieval Catholic view) to the spiritual healing of a character, such as his or her conversion to Christianity or renewed belief in the Real Presence. Such miracles can therefore be seen as 'spiritual medicines' prescribed by Christ the Physician in order to heal

the 'spiritual illnesses' of the characters. Thus the crucifixion may be viewed as a prescription prescribed by God so as to make salvation (the ultimate spiritual healing) possible for humanity. Other aspects of these dramas which may be seen as 'prescriptions' to improve spiritual health and which will be discussed include prayer, pilgrimage and the sacraments of baptism and penance.

Aspects such as performance and staging are not of concern in this discussion; it is the plays' treatment of the theme of the Suffering Physician which is under consideration. The specific focus here is on Christ, the Physician's Real Presence in the host and the manner in which this is portrayed in the *Croxton Play*, the *Nyeuwervaert Play*, the *Saincte Hostie* and the sacrament play from Orvieto, the *Miracolo del Corporale di Bolsena*.

Chapter One

Earthly and Divine Prescriptions in the *Croxton Play of the Sacrament*

> *The sick slew the Physician; but the Physician by being slain healed the frantic patient.*
>
> *-Saint Augustine*
>
> *Sermons on New Testament Lessons*
>
> *(Schaff, 1887:351)*

Christianity in the form of the Roman Catholic Church was a dominant force in Europe and England during the later Middle Ages and this is reflected in a great deal of the drama, literature and other art of the period. The Christianity of the medieval Roman Catholic Church was an integral part of the lives and cultures of most people living in England and western Europe at the time.

The Middle Ages was also a period of controversy and reflection upon the eucharist. From about the ninth century it continually occupied a chief position in the theological discussions which progressively composed a theory of the character of the sacraments, their method of operation, their effects and their place in religion (Srawley, 1974:556-557).

At the Council of the Lateran in 1216 the Catholic Church formulated a dogma expressing the Church's belief in transubstantiation. The belief was renewed at the Council of Constance in 1415. In 1551 at the Council of Trent it was declared that

> ...by consecration of the bread and wine a conversion of the whole substance of the bread is made into the substance of the Body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His Blood (Hitchcock, 1948:59).

Two prominent authorities appealed to by medieval writers were Saint Augustine (354-430) and Saint Ambrose (*c*.339-397). Saint Augustine's teaching formed the point of departure for those who made a sharp distinction between the sign and the thing signified and who tended towards a belief in a spiritual presence of efficacy and power. Those who inclined to a view of the conversion of the elements in a miraculous manner into the body and blood of Christ found the teachings of Saint Ambrose more appealing. In general, however, both parties endeavoured to make the teachings of these two Church Fathers mutually compatible and to explain them in terms of their own standpoint on the consecration (Srawley, 1974:556).

According to Srawley (1974:556) there are three reasons why the conversion doctrine (transubstantiation) eventually gained widespread ascendancy during the Middle Ages. First, it allowed an easy and literal interpretation of the words 'This is my body'

and 'This is my blood', suitable for simple minds. Secondly, it was in agreement with the 'realism of popular thought' which viewed the world in concrete terms. Thirdly and finally, 'the language of conversion lent itself to the growing love of the miraculous' (Srawley, 1974:556).

Most people in medieval society would have been familiar with the concept of Christ's Real Presence in the host. However, those with differing levels of education at various levels of society would most likely not have attained similar levels of understanding of transubstantiation. The poorer and less well educated would most likely have had a more rudimentary conception of the doctrine than the more wealthy (and thus probably somewhat better educated) or the clergy. There were, for instance, simple prayers in English expressing the idea of transubstantiation for the laity to say during the Mass (Chrisp, 1996:14), such as:

> Jesu, lord, welcome thou be
> In form of bread as I thee see.
> Jesu, for thy holy name
> Shield me today from sin and shame.

Beliefs concerning the Real Presence could also be expressed through drama, as can be seen in this extract from the second Passion Play from the N. Town manuscript (Meredith, 1990:146), where Christ states:

> For man I haue mad my body in brede,
> His sowle for to fede
>
> (lines 1450 - 1451).

According to Hitchcock (1948:60-61) reports of hosts and corporals (cloths) stained with blood were familiar at the time and also in agreement with the prevailing Roman Catholic view. He states that there is no doubt that sixteenth-century Roman Catholic writers associated the sacrament with blood. Kelly (1968:196) views it as only natural that early Christians should have thought of the eucharist as a sacrifice, the rite itself being shrouded in the sacrificial aura with which Christ invested it at the Last Supper. Since the eucharist brings Christians into union with Christ, it is a bond and mediates communion among them. It is described by Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) as 'a medicine which procures immortality' and 'an antidote against death which enables us to live in the Lord forever' (Kelly, 1968:197-198). Cyprian (*d.*258) speaks of the terrible consequences for those who profane the sacrament and recounts stories which confirm his literal belief in the Real Presence (Kelly, 1968:212). These beliefs are of interest here as the *Croxton Play* deals not only with the profanation of a host and the consequences of this, due to the Real Presence, but also with the eucharist and the Passion (which are closely related to one another) as forms of medicine and cures for the body and particularly for the soul.

The *Croxton Play*[4] (written in the late fifteenth century, after 1461) has as its central action a physical attack on the host which, as is now clear, was seen as the real body of Christ. Attacks on the host and their consequences not only argue for the truth of transubstantiation but also place Christ's Passion

within a medieval context, making the Passion and its implications more accessible to a medieval audience. One of the main implications is that Christ's Passion brings the possibility of salvation for all. This was viewed in various ways. The lyric *Timor Mortis Conturbat Me* by John Awdelay (Silverstein, 1971:106) presents it in terms of (a) healing:

> The v wondis of Jhesu Crist
> My midsyne now mot thai be
> The fyndis pouere downe to cast.
> Passio Cristi conforta me
>
> (lines 27 - 30).

The Passion is a ransom in the lyric *Somer Is Comen and Winter Gon* (Silverstein, 1971:29),

> Det he nam, the suete man,
> Wel heye opon the rode
>
> (lines 61 - 62),

and in *Iesu Nostra Redempcio* (Brown, 1924:27):

> Iesu our raunsoun
>
> (line 1).

Langland, in *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, passus eighteen (Schmidt, 1978:220), represents it as a knightly battle:

> This Jesus of his gentries wol juste in Piers armes,
> In his helm and in his haubergeon - *humana natura*.
>
> (lines 22 - 23).

Many similar images are used to depict the Passion in the Middle Ages, but the image of healing and Christ as the Divine (and suffering) Physician is the focus of this discussion.

The *Croxton Play* opens with the banns which give a short description of what will happen in the play, followed by the play proper. At the beginning of the play we are introduced to Aristorius, a rich Christian merchant; Isoder, his chaplain, and Peter Paul, his clerk. We are then introduced to Jonathas, Jason, Jasdon, Masphat and Malchus, a group of Jews, Jonathas being the dominant Jewish character.

The Jewish characters discuss the fact that they do not believe in the transubstantiation of the host as the Christians do and plan to prove themselves correct. Jonathas then bargains with Aristorius to steal a host for them. Aristorius at first protests that he could not do such a thing, but eventually agrees, for one hundred pounds.

The Jews then proceed to torture the host in order to disprove the Christian belief in transubstantiation. They first pierce the host, making five wounds, thus paralleling the Five Wounds of Christ. The host then bleeds. At this point the host sticks to Jonathas's hand. His associates nail the host to a post and try to pull his hand free, but his hand separates from his arm and remains attached to the host.

At this point a comic scene is interposed. Here Colle and his master, Doctor Brundyche of Brabant, appear and discuss the doctor's skill in healing. The long and detailed list of his supposed curative abilities resembles those in the 'quack doctor' scenes in folk plays (Scherb, 1990:167). Doctor Brundyche offers

his services to Jonathas, but is chased away.

The Jews then continue their torture of the host by wrapping it in cloth and boiling it in a cauldron of oil, upon which the oil becomes bloody. They then place the host in an oven, which proceeds to explode. A vision of Christ in the form of a child with the bloody wounds of the Passion then appears and addresses the Jews. They repent their sins and Jonathas is healed when he places his arm in the cauldron at Christ's instruction. The Bishop is called and the vision of Christ disappears.

A procession then follows to return the host to the church. Aristorius and Isoder see it pass and Aristorius, guessing the cause, confesses to Isoder that he stole the host. They follow the procession to the church where Aristorius confesses his sin to the Bishop. He is ordered thenceforth to live for good deeds alone and never to buy or sell as a merchant again. Isoder is chastised and ordered to take better care of the communion hosts in future (as the church from which the host was stolen had been under his care). The Jews then confess their sins and are baptised. The play ends with the singing of the *Te Deum Laudamus*.

There are a number of instances where the connection between the Passion, the eucharist and healing, or Christ as the Physician, are alluded to in this play. The meal shared by Aristorius and Isoder will be considered first, followed by the torture of the host, which can be seen as a re-enactment of the Passion (ultimately an act of spiritual healing). Next, the 'quack

doctor' scene with Master Brundyche and his boy, Colle, where earthly, physical medicine and physicians can be seen to be compared with the Divine Physician and His spiritual remedies, will be discussed. Finally, what can be seen as other 'prescriptions' for salvation or spiritual health presented in the play, such as the sacraments of baptism and confession (including repentance and penance), will be noted.

Scherb (1990:164) has observed the eucharistic and medicinal terms used in the short scene which presents the meal shared by Isoder and Aristorius (lines 336-355). The meal is clearly a secular version of the eucharistic feast. The 'Romney red' (line 340) alludes to the consecrated wine and the 'lofe of lyght bred' (line 342) refers to the host. Scherb (1990:164) explains that

> The medicinal qualities of the dinner's unconsecrated bread and wine obliquely serve to introduce the important motif of the *Christus Medicus*, tied to the image of the Eucharist, as developed in the dialogue between Syr Isodyr and Aristorius.

The clerk first states that

> ...a lofe of lyght bred -
> Yt ys holesom as sayeth the fesycyon [physician]
>
> (lines 342 - 343),

and Aristorius responds by extolling the wine's merits:

> Thys Romney ys good to goo with to reste;
> Ther ys no precyouser fer nor nere,
> For all wykkyd metys yt wyll degest
>
> (lines 345 - 347).

As Scherb (1990:164) notes, these apparently unimportant remarks lead to the development of one of the most significant motifs of the play, the metaphor of Christ the Physician, developed from Mark 2:17 (as well as Matthew 9:12 and 13 and Luke 5:31 and 32). Thus the playwright creates a contrast: the unblessed wine and bread, despite their alleged medicinal properties, will produce only sloth (one of the seven deadly sins) and drunkenness, as Isoder soon after eating and drinking retires to his bed (lines 348-351), while the real eucharistic feast will produce true spiritual health.

The *Middle English Dictionary* defines Romney as 'A sweet red wine of Mediterranean origin' (Lewis, 1986:804). The playwright thus uses the name of a wine well-known for its strong red colour and then further accentuates this fact by adding the word 'red' (line 340) to the name. This would surely have led the audience to associate it more strongly with the blood of Christ shed on the cross for the salvation of all humanity (a spiritual healing) and celebrated in the eucharist (also with red wine). The addition of the word 'red' (line 340) would also have enlightened any members of the audience unaware of the colour of Romney.

The words in lines 345 to 347 may also be understood on two levels. On one level they can be seen in relation to the actual food and drink being consumed and on another, more spiritual level, to the Passion and eucharist, where '...Romney ys good to goo with to reste' (line 345) could imply that Christ's blood ('Romney') shed on the cross allows us to die ('goo to reste')

knowing that we have salvation, and is therefore 'good'. Of course there is no blood more precious to a Christian (line 346) because it can 'degest' (line 347) or 'dissolve' (Hawkins, 1988:224) any 'wykkyd metys' (line 347), or our sins[5]. Thus the diction and action of this scene are closely connected not only with the eucharist, but also with the Passion and its meaning for a predominantly Christian medieval audience.

This scene can be viewed as having an even greater connection with the Passion when one considers that it can be seen as a type of Last Supper, where the eucharistic feast was instituted. That the meal is a supper is made clear not only by the fact that it is eaten at night (as Isoder goes to bed after it in line 350), but also in Aristorius's prospective references to it:

> And syt[h] com agen and ye shall suppe your fyll
>
> (line 235), and
>
> He shall sone cum home, he wyll nat be long,
> Hys sopere for to eate (lines 326 - 327).

Shortly before this scene Aristorius has agreed to sell a consecrated host to Jonathas (lines 285-331) and directly after it he steals a host and delivers it to the Jews (lines 360-384). Thus Aristorius may be associated with Judas, who made an agreement with the Jewish authorities to betray Jesus before the Last Supper (Mark 14:10-11) and then betrayed Him with a kiss (Mark 14:44-46), after which Christ was physically tortured and crucified during the Passion (a symbolic re-enactment of which takes place in this play in the torture of the host). Also, both

Judas and Aristorius betray Christ (whether in the flesh or in the form of the host) for money. Aristorius is therefore guilty of the deadly sin of covetousness just as Judas was, as is shown in the first Passion Play from the N. Town Manuscript (Meredith, 1990:69) where Judas says:

> Mony I wyl non forsake,
> And ȝei profyr to my plesyng;
> For covetyse I wyl with hem wake,
> And onto my maystyr I xal hem bryng
>
> (lines 595 - 598).

Later, Aristorius realises that he was guilty of covetousness:

> I sold yon same Jewys owr Lord full ryght
> For covytyse of good, as a cursyd wyght
>
> (lines 853 - 854).

Furthermore, when Aristorius enters the Church to steal the host in order to sell it to Jonathas, one is reminded of the merchants and money-changers trading in the temple (Mark 11:15-19) whom Christ chased out shortly before His Passion (Harris, 1992:1). Jonathas's report that:

> Thys merchant from the Crysten temple
> Hathe gett us thys bred that make us thus blynd
>
> (lines 387 - 388),

also makes this association of Aristorius (a merchant stealing a host from the 'Crysten temple' to sell to Jonathas) with the money-changers in the temple clearer for the audience.

Isoder can be seen as a reminder of Jesus at the Last Supper as

he, being a priest, would have been seen as Christ's representative on earth, and he is about to be deceived by his friend, Aristorius, just as Christ was betrayed by one of His own disciples. Of course, being a man and not God, Isoder is completely unaware of Aristorius's intentions and of what is about to happen. (Aristorius will steal a consecrated host from Isoder's church using Isoder's key and hand it over to be tortured.) Christ, however, had foreknowledge and was perfect. It is interesting to note here that Aristorius's clerk, Peter Paul, is called only Peter (line 339) in this scene, thus reminding the audience of the disciple Peter, who was also present at the Last Supper and who later denied Christ three times. Both Peter and Judas were seen as betrayers of Christ - just as all humanity 'betrays' Him by the sins for which He died to save or heal us.

The significance of the use of the words 'Romney red' (line 340), 'bred' (line 342) and 'fesycyon' (line 343) in one speech (the clerk's) within four lines of one another seems clear, as all of these are images or symbols of Christ. It is apparently a deliberate and subtle connection of the image of Christ in the eucharist with the image of Christ as the Divine Physician. This image of Christ is then carried further in lines 345 to 347, which have already been discussed above. As Scherb (1990:164) claims, the eucharist, medicinal qualities and the physician are connected, creating a *Christus Medicus* motif. This is even more noteworthy when one recalls the medieval Catholic belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the eucharist. It is not only the

potential medicinal qualities of the eucharist that must be considered, but Christ as the true Divine Physician present in the eucharist, and His great healing abilities, both physical and spiritual. This makes the following action of the sale of Christ's body (the host) and its subsequent torture all the more meaningful, dreadful and horrific.

The re-enactment of the Passion scene will now be discussed. This section will be divided into three parts. Firstly, the Passion and how it can be viewed as a healing act will be considered. Secondly, the ways in which Christ, present in the host, can be viewed as the Suffering Physician will be noted. Finally, the 'illnesses' of the Jews such as their madness, spiritual blindness or doubt, and the dismemberment of Jonathas will be examined.

The playwright has paid close attention to making the torture of the host a re-enactment of the Passion (by including eucharistic allusions, for example), and it is even described as such in the play:

> They grevid our Lord gretly on grownd,
> And put hym to a new passyoun;
> With daggers goven hym many a greuyos wound;
> Nayled hym to a pyller, with pynsons plukked hym doune.
>
> (lines 37 - 40);
>
> For we have grevyd owr Lord on ground

And put hym to a new paynfull passioun

(lines 932 - 933).

Cassell's New Latin-English English-Latin Dictionary defines 'passion' as 'the act of suffering' and in the case of Christ's Passion notes its derivation from the Latin *passio* (Simpson, 1977:784), while the *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List* glosses *passio* as referring predominantly to the Passion or the martyrdom of saints (Latham, 1965:334). Furthermore, the *Middle English Dictionary* defines 'passioun' as 'that which must be endured, suffering, pain' and 'the suffering of Christ; the sufferings and death of Christ, the Passion' (Kuhn, 1982:698-699). Thus this word was more meaningful in the Middle Ages than today, perhaps.

It is worth noting that Saint Gregory (*c*.540-604), the first Pope of that name, who believed in the doctrine of the Real Presence, saw the service of the Mass as a literal re-creation of Christ's Passion, a renewal of the sacrificial act so as to gain renewed absolution from sin for all Christians (Harris, 1992:7). Others, such as Cyprian, seem to have held similar views. The priest was seen as sacramentally re-enacting 'the oblation of His [Christ's] passion which the Saviour originally presented to the Father' (Kelly, 1968:215). Thus the eucharistic feast was sometimes seen as a new Passion in itself, making the re-creation of the Passion in drama through the use of a eucharistic host possible and even probable. This is an important point relating to the mentality of the time - the drama audience would find it familiar because they were also the Mass 'audience' (congregation), and thus participants in the sacramental re-enactment. In the drama, of

course, an unconsecrated host, or a prop of similar appearance, would be used, to avoid sacrilege, to represent the consecrated host.

Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that the Christian society of the Middle Ages had a 'taste for parallelism and prefiguration' (Tydeman, 1986:76). Harris (1992:7) states that medieval society did not possess the comprehensive kind of knowledge of the universe which was necessary to search for the concealed systems of cause-and-effect. They believed that a divine scheme was incorporated within the very fabric of life and this caused them to place immense value on any similarities or analogies which they could discern in the world about them. They believed that God had placed such correlations in the world in order to instruct humanity (Harris, 1992:8).

In terms of drama this notion is significant as it led to the idea of images which are physical while simultaneously full of intellectual and emotional associations (Harris, 1992:8). Furthermore, drama itself is like a 'figure' of the real world (for religious drama, the real spiritual world). So the medieval mentality's experience of drama differs from that of later periods in this respect (as well as in others). In terms of this knowledge of the medieval world-view, searching for deeper or possible hidden meanings in the religious drama of the Middle Ages can be seen as justified, provided that some form of substantiation of these (possible) views is provided.

A number of parallels, references and figurae may be found in the *Croxton Play*, especially in relation to the Passion. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (Simpson & Weiner, 1989:895) defines 'figura' as 'A person who represents some higher or supervening reality' or 'An act or deed that is representative or symbolic'. In medieval usage an example would be the wood of the Ark which allowed the salvation of Noah and his family from the flood, which can be seen as a prefiguration of the wood of the cross which makes the salvation of all humanity possible.

Jonathas orders Jason to cover the table with a cloth before they place the host on it (line 391). This is reminiscent of the altar and the corporal used during Mass. In lines 397 to 404 Jonathas refers to the Last Supper and Christ's breaking of the bread there and Maltman (1974:152) states that in its reference to the Last Supper of Christ, it calls forth the words of the hymn *O sacrum convivium* (line 840), meaning 'O sacred banquet'. Jonathas further states that they will test the host in order to determine whether or not it is:

> ...he that in Bosra of us had awe.
> Ther staynyd were hys clothys, this may we belefe;
> Thys may we know, ther had he grefe
>
> (lines 443 - 445).

This is a reference to Isaiah 63:1-6:

> Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this One who is glorious in His apparel, traveling (sic) in the greatness of His strength? - 'I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.' Why is

> Your apparel red, and Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? 'I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes. For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed has come. I looked, but there was no one to help, and I wondered that there was no one to uphold; therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; and My own fury, it sustained Me. I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, made them drunk in My fury, and brought down their strength to the earth.'

Maltman (1974:153) believes that the reference comes from Isaiah 'through the Holy Week liturgy'. This passage may be seen as a prophecy of the Passion (and a reminder of the wine of the eucharist), as in Isaiah 63:2 we see that His garments are red 'like one who treads in the winepress' and references are made to 'blood' (63:3) and 'salvation' (63:5). This idea of redness, blood and wine is continued when Jason refers to Christ as

> ...he that on Caluery was mad red
>
> (line 449).

Reference is also made to the fact that Christ was crucified like a thief (line 447) and Jasdon states

> ...with owr strokys we shall fray hym as he was on the rood
>
> (line 455).

The Jews make 'woundys fyve' (line 458) in the host, echoing the Five Wounds which Christ received during the Passion. The host then bleeds and they decide to throw it into a boiling 'cawdron full of oyle!' (line 486) to boil for 'thre howrys' (line 488). Raftery (1996:78) notes that cooking metaphors were commonly used for Hell, in medieval drama in particular, and this type of metaphor would appear to be employed here as well. The boiling cauldron of oil can be seen as a reminder that Christ had to descend to Hell while the three hours' cooking time can be understood as a reference to the fact that Christ was dead for three days. Boiling oil was also used to torture saints, like Saint John (Ferguson, 1966:126), and perhaps heretics as well. Boiling liquids were often poured onto adversaries from castle battlements during military conflict, too (Bishop, 1971:99).

The nailing of the host to a post with three nails (lines 507-511) recalls the crucifixion (where three nails were thought to have been used). This is done by the Jews in an attempt to release Jonathas's hand from the host which is sticking to him, but they only succeed in severing his hand. Beckwith (1992:75) has noted that Jonathas can be regarded as a grotesque parody of Christ as he is 'crucified' with Him; 'the Jew with Christ's body on his hands is irrevocably implicated in the act of crucifixion'. According to Lascombes (1998:269) this scene illustrates in visual terms the belief that the body of the Redeemer and the body of the sinner are one. This is an important aspect of contemporary Catholic catechism. Furthermore, as Homan (1986:332) notes, the playwright has Jonathas echo Christ's words

at the end of the scene of his suffering:

> Ther ys no more; I must enduer!
>
> (line 520).

As the scene re-enacts the suffering of Christ during the Passion (using the host) it is apt to end it with an echo of Christ's final words (John 19:30). The fact that Jonathas speaks these words further emphasises his role as a grotesque parody of Christ.

At this point the action is interrupted by the scene with Master Brundyche, the physician, and his boy Colle. A number of scholars, such as Hardin Craig (1955:326), Norman Davis (1970:lxxv) and John Coldewey (1993:274), believe this scene to be a later addition, but whether or not this is the case, the scene is well-placed in order to convey a pointed message concerning Christ as the true, Suffering Physician. The same is true of the Jonathas/Christ parody above (whether a later addition or not). This scene will be discussed in greater detail at a later stage (pages 44-63) so as to delineate its meaning within its context more clearly.

After the quack doctor scene, the Jews wind the host in a cloth which could symbolise Christ's body being wrapped in a shroud to be placed in the tomb (Maltman, 1974:154). The host is then thrown into the cauldron where it bleeds (lines 661-675). The blood is another reminder of Christ's blood which was shed during the Passion and which cleanses (or heals) humanity from sin.

The Jews then place 'straw and thornys' (line 693) in a fire to heat up the oven. The straw recalls Christ's birth in a stable and the thorns raise associations with the crown of thorns which He was forced to wear at the crucifixion. The oven can be seen as the tomb where Christ's body was placed (Tydeman, 1986:56). This view is given greater credence by the fact that Jasdon tries to seal the oven with the host inside (lines 709-712), just as Pilate allowed Christ's tomb to be sealed in Matthew 27:62-66. This scene is also depicted in the second Passion Play from the N. Town manuscript (Meredith, 1990:140-141) where Cayphas, Annas and Pilatus personally seal the tomb (lines 1276-1310) in much the same way as Jasdon tries to seal the oven:

> On þis corner my seal xal sytt
> And with þis wax I sele þis pytt.
> Now dare I ley he xal nevyr flytt
> Out of þis grave, serteayn
>
> (lines 1284 - 1287).

Furthermore, Maltman (1974:154) notes that the oven may be seen as representing the mouth of Hell, another cooking metaphor for Hell. In this case the explosion of the oven may be seen as a representation of the Harrowing of Hell, while Tydeman (1986:56) views it as symbolising the resurrection.

Christ's appearance to the Jews in the play (lines 717-740 and 762-777) parallels the Biblical account of His resurrection and His appearance to His disciples. The ultimate reversion of Christ to the form of the host echoes His ascension into Heaven, after which His followers believed without seeing. This is unlike His

disciple 'doubting' Thomas, and the Jews in the play, who need to see Christ and have Him speak to them in order to believe:

> There he [Christ] apperyd with wondys all bloody
>
> (line 942), and
>
> In hys [Christ's] law to make us stedfast,
> There spake he to us woordys of grete favore
>
> (lines 944 - 945).

The development of the motif of Christ's Passion as the ultimate act of healing can be seen as simultaneously postulating the idea of Christ as the Suffering Physician. The Passion refers specifically to Christ's suffering (as indicated on page 20). As was stated earlier (see page 11), various images were applied to the Passion during the Middle Ages such as the orthodox 'ransoming' (Christ paying the price of humanity's sins), a knightly battle, a legal release of humanity from the fault incurred at the Fall, or the specific idea of healing (souls) which this study investigates. According to Potter (1987:63) it was believed in the Middle Ages that the souls of humanity were of such great value to God that He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, down to earth, not only to live and suffer as human beings do, but to die in extreme agony on the cross in order to save those souls (whether viewed in terms of ransoming, healing, or some other image). Thus, in spite of the physical misery endured by many in the Middle Ages, this teaching, as well as numerous rituals and ceremonies of the Church which encouraged them to accept this belief, provided people with tremendous spiritual comfort (Potter, 1987:63).

Furthermore, there is Biblical precedent for connecting the views of Christ as the Suffering Servant and His Passion as a healing act for humanity. According to Blomberg (1992:306), it may be argued that the Passion was a healing act:

> And He [Christ] cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses' (Matthew 8:16-17).

The above quotation may be seen as a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies such as Isaiah 53, where Christ is portrayed as the Suffering Servant (Blomberg, 1992:303) whose Passion will heal humanity (53:5). Christ is also referred to here as 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief' (53:3). This idea will be considered in greater detail below (see pages 29-32). As can be imagined, Christ's suffering was often depicted in medieval art.

According to Homan (1986:335) the playwright makes use of the *Arma Christi*, the instruments of the Passion, which in the early Middle Ages formed a theme in devotional art, but from the fourteenth century onwards developed a deeper significance. In lines 657 to 712 the Jews not only continue their torture of the host, but specifically verbalise their actions as well. The objects of torture are named aloud every time they are used, and as a result the audience not only witnesses the torture, but hears it described as it happens. The 'naylys' are removed with 'pynsonys'; the host is wrapped in a 'clothe' and thrown in a 'cawdron'; the host and Jonathas's hand are pushed down in the

'oyle' with a 'dagger'; the oil 'waxyth redde as blood'; the 'fere' is kindled with 'straw and thornys' and the host is sealed in the 'ovyn' (Homan, 1986:335).

As Homan (1986:336) indicates, a medieval audience would not have struggled to identify the objects in this scene with those of the original Passion, as artists of the time often showed much imagination and creativity in adding to the instruments which (they believed) could be associated with Christ's physical pain. The artistic depiction of these objects was meant as an aid to meditation and generally did not show the historical scene. The action of the scene is retarded by the apparent over-emphasis on the physical instruments. The observer is supposed to realise how his/her own sins have contributed to the sufferings of Christ; thus, the spontaneous confession of the Jews is consistent with the *Arma Christi*.

Connected with the *Arma Christi* is the *Imago Pietatis* or the concept of the Man of Sorrows (referred to in Isaiah 53:3). 'In the many instances of this common theme, Christ appears with the physical effects of all the tortures of the Passion fully apparent, sometimes exaggerated beyond literal possibility' (Homan, 1986:337). Woolf (1968:389) indicates that there is much controversy concerning the origins of this theme in art, but that there is certainty regarding the manner in which it achieved its final and most popular form. Suitably enough in terms of the discussion of this play, it became associated with a eucharistic miracle connected with Gregory the Great. In an early life of

Saint Gregory written by Paul the Deacon a vision of the host as a little finger bleeding restores a doubting communicant to faith. The belief arose, however, that Saint Gregory saw not a bleeding finger but Christ under the appearance of the Man of Sorrows in his Mass. This story developed into two popular iconographic forms which were widespread in fifteenth-century England. In the first Christ is depicted appearing above the altar while the celebrant kneels before it. The second form, which was more widespread, depicts Christ alone surrounded by 'the arms of the Passion' or *Arma Christi* (Woolf, 1968:390).

An intriguing connection can be discerned between the idea of the Man of Sorrows and a medical diagram known as the 'man of sores'. According to Piltz (1978:46) the 'man of sores' figure, from Hieronymus Braunschwig's *Buch der Cirurgia, Handwirckung der wundartzny*, printed in 1497 in Strasbourg by J. Grüninger, was intended to illustrate a number of medical methods and theories of treatment discussed in the attached text. (Refer to diagram 1 in the Appendix.) This diagram is 'reminiscent of a grotesque variant of a motif familiar in ecclesiastical art, namely that of St Sebastian riddled with arrows' (Piltz, 1978:46). Saint Sebastian was a martyr sentenced to death by being shot with arrows. He was, however, healed by Saint Castulus. As a result, the arrow is Saint Sebastian's emblem (Attwater, 1965:304). The 'man of sores' medical figure is reminiscent of the Man of Sorrows type in medieval religious art. It is also interesting to note that in this diagram there is a nail in the right foot and a thorny branch at the left foot, both reminders of

instruments of the Passion.

Homan (1984:234) identifies this image in the *Croxton Play* as the Child of Sorrows, as a child appears with the wounds of the Passion, instead of an adult which would be more common. (In fact Homan states that this image is foreign to the devotional art of Christianity.) Existing variations on the Child of Sorrows, for instance in the lyrics, depict His foreknowledge of His end, such as in *It is My Fader Wyll*, where the baby Jesus has a premonition of His crucifixion and repeatedly says (Silverstein, 1971:107-109):

> Suffre the paynes that I may
> It is my Fader wyll
>
> (lines 15, 16, 27, 28, 39, 40, 51 and 52)

He is, however, not made to suffer as He is in the *Croxton Play*. Furthermore, the playwright makes the child express the sentiment associated with the Man of Sorrows theme:

> Why ar ye to yowr kyng onkynd,
> And [I] so bytterly bowt yow to my blysse?
> Why fare ye thus fule with yowre frende?
> Why peyne yow me and straytly me pynde,
> And I yowr love so derely have bowght?
>
> (lines 720 - 724), and

> Why blaspheme yow me? Why do ye thus?
> Why put yow me to a newe tormentry,
> And I dyed for yow on the crosse?
> Why consyder not yow what I dyd crye?

Whyle that I was with yow, ye ded me velanye.
Why remember ye nott my bytter chaunce,
How yowr kynne dyd me awance
For claymyng of myn enherytaunce?
I shew yow the streytnesse of my greavance,
And all to meve yow to my mercy

(lines 731 - 740).

This seems to have been done in an attempt to invest this apparently new image with devotional relevance (Homan, 1984:244).

Homan (1984:242) notes a sermon from Lincoln Cathedral Library MS. 50 as an analogue to the *Croxton Play*. In this exemplum, the devil, disguised as the holy water clerk of a church, persuades a woman to steal a host and cut it in half in order to test the doctrine of transubstantiation, whereupon an image of the Christ child appears with the wounds of the Passion, just as in the *Croxton Play*:

& withe the stroke þat sche stroke sodenly there stode
up a lytyll childe as it had ben a ȝere of age
and in every honde and foote & in his syde he had a
grete wounde and over þe woman blede
& þet childe lokyd as pituosly upon hyr as who seythe
þou haste hurt me sore
wherefore þe woman cried Lowde and withe grete
lamentacion sche seyde to þe fende alas þou cursyd
creature what haste þou made me to do
for ever I have had my feythefull beleve in þe blessyd
lorde Jhesu criste his flessche and bloode in forme of

brede

(ff. 126^{v} - 127A^{r}).

The image of the child recalls not only the wounds of the Passion, but also the massacre of the innocents, which was seen as figural. The fact that the woman repents after the blood of Christ flows over her connects her with the soldier Longinus who makes the wound in Christ's side (and thus also with Jonathas in the play). Longinus was healed of his physical and spiritual blindness when Christ's blood touched his eyes. The tradition concerning Longinus will be dealt with in greater detail (and in relation to Jonathas) in the section dealing with the 'illnesses' of the Jews (see pages 40-43).

In the Lincoln sermon, Christ later prevents the woman from killing herself, thus saving her from the fate of Judas, who, after betraying Christ, hanged himself and thus in the medieval view damned himself by rejecting Christ's forgiveness. At the end of the sermon the host is returned to the church in a procession of priests (f. 127A^{v}) as in the *Croxton Play*.

It should now be clear that the playwright went to a great deal of trouble to re-create the Passion using the figure of Christ present in the host, and thus must have had some purpose in doing this. Clearly one of his/her major aims was to prove the truth of the medieval Catholic belief in transubstantiation.

Another aim should, however, also be noted. Through His Passion, death and resurrection, Christ was believed to be taking the

place of sinful humanity, which should die and suffer in Hell for eternity due to its sinful nature after the Fall. Due to His Passion, humanity had the chance of salvation from such a grim end. As a result the Passion can be seen as the ultimate act of healing, the most important act of healing that ever took place in the history of the world. It was believed that Christ suffered in the place of all humanity for sin, and His resurrection signals His victory over death so that all may have the opportunity of eternal life in Heaven. This was an extremely important belief in medieval England and Europe. Saint Augustine in his *Sermons on New Testament Lessons* refers to Christ's blood as a medicine (Schaff, 1887:350):

> If all are whole, wherefore hath so great a Physician come down from heaven? why hath He prepared for us a medicine not out of His stores, but of His own blood?

It is therefore not surprising that the playwright, who had already introduced the idea of *Christus Medicus* into the play, should carry the idea further in this manner.

Scherb (1990:165) believes that the 'patristic popularity' of the *Christus Medicus* topos can be related to the eagerness of the Church Fathers to counter the cult of Asclepias, 'the physician-healer of Epheseus' (sic). Christ's healing power is identified with His humility by Saint Augustine. This contrasts with Aristorius's pomp and Jonathas's 'intellectual self-satisfaction'; thus, both characters have to alter their attitudes to 'the humble, spiritual physician' (Scherb, 1990:165).

There is thus an interesting connection between the concept of Christ's suffering (and the humility which it demonstrates) and His role as the Divine Physician. Asclepias was the Greek god of healing, the physician (Oswalt, 1969:455), and his sign was the caduceus, a staff with a snake curled round it (Burr, 1993:36 and Daly, 1992:19), which has been stylised and become the emblem of the medical profession (Evans, 1970:8).

In the art of the Middle Ages there was an S/Z icon in which Christ was depicted writhing (like a snake) in pain on the cross (Pickering, 1980:13). This iconography draws on the fulfilment of the Old Testament prefiguration (figura) of the crucifixion referred to in John 3:14 and 15 in which Moses had to place a bronze snake on a pole so that the Jews would be healed of snake bite if they looked at it (Numbers 21:4-9). This could also possibly indicate some sort of spiritual healing, since looking at the bronze serpent required a choice (for God) on the part of each individual, and the live serpents had been sent as a punishment for the 'discouraged' and therefore spiritually ill 'soul of the people' (Numbers 21:4). The bronze serpent can thus be seen as a prefiguration of the crucifixion as it allows each individual the choice of whether or not to accept the spiritual healing which Christ's death offers humanity in the Christian view. This Old Testament incident is described in the book of Wisdom from the *New Catholic Edition of the Holy Bible* in this way: 'But as a warning, for a short time they were terrorized, though they had a sign of salvation, to remind them of the precept of your Law' (Wisdom 16:6). Furthermore, in Wisdom

16:10-12 it is stated that:

> ...not even the fangs of poisonous reptiles overcame your sons, for your mercy brought the antidote to heal them. For as a reminder of your injunctions, they were stung, and swiftly they were saved, lest they should fall into deep forgetfulness and become unresponsive to your beneficence. For indeed, neither herb nor application cured them, but your all-healing word, O Lord!

Thus God's superiority as a healer was recognised in both physical and spiritual terms in relation to this Old Testament incident, which also serves as a prefiguration of the Passion (another healing act).

The snake on the pole (which probably could have been a branch of a tree) and Christ on the cross (or tree) contrast with the image of the devil in the form of a snake in the tree in the Garden of Eden which led to the Fall of Man, thus bringing sin and disease into the world (which Christ's death overcame in a spiritual way). Thus there is a connection in imagery between the Greek god of healing (via the caduceus) and Christ, the Divine Physician.

The fact that snakes were (and still are) viewed in a negative way in Christian society, due to the role believed to have been played by the snake in the Fall (Genesis 3:1-24), cannot be overlooked. In the *Croxton Play* the Bishop refers to the devil as a serpent, whose intention it is to destroy the souls of

humankind (lines 866-883). Furthermore, as Gregory Nazianzen (c.330-389) indicates, the Passion may be seen as a healing for humanity which leads 'us to the tree of life, from which the tree of knowledge estranged us', thus 'tree is set over against tree' (Schaff & Wace, 1893:210). Such imagery depicts Christ as in direct opposition to the devil.

In the Middle Ages the Jews were believed by Christians to be mad for not accepting Christ as their Saviour, and this madness was considered to be a spiritual sickness. This can be seen in the quotation from Saint Augustine which opens this chapter: 'The sick slew the Physician; but the Physician by being slain healed the frantic patient' (Schaff, 1887:351). This quotation also demonstrates the fact that Christ's Passion was seen as a healing act. Saint Chrysostom (c.347-407), in Homily LXXXV, which deals with the gospel of Matthew, views those who put Christ to His Passion in this way (Schaff, 1888:506):

> Wherefore did they these things, when they were to put Him to death?...That thou mightest learn their intemperate spirit by all things, and that having taken Him like a prey, they thus showed forth their intoxication, and gave full swing to their madness; making this a festival, and assaulting Him with pleasure, and showing forth their murderous disposition...giving full swing in every way to their own madness.

In the play, madness is referred to a number of times by the

Jewish characters, once in reference to the host:

> Of thys wyrk I am in were;
> Yt bledyth as yt were woode iwys;
> But yf ye helpe, I shall dyspayre
>
> (lines 482 - 484);

but usually in relation to themselves:

> I wylle goo drenche me in a lake.
> And in woodnesse I gynne to wake!
> I renne, I lepe ouer this lond.
>
> *Her[e] he renneth wood, with the Ost in hys hond*
>
> (lines 501 - 503);
>
> I am so aferd I am nere woode
>
> (line 676), and
>
> Alas, that ever I dyd agaynst thy wyll,
> In my wytt to be soo wood
> That I so ongoodly wyrk shuld soo gryll!
>
> (lines 786 - 788).

Thus the Jewish characters, by their own confession, can be seen as suffering from the illness of madness in not accepting Christ as the Saviour, as the Church Fathers had noted. After the appearance of Christ, however, they repent and beg for mercy four times within twenty-four lines and eventually confess to a Bishop (lines 798-805 and 931-947), are converted to Christianity (lines 948-951) and resolve to do penance (lines 960-971). Thus, having accepted Christ as their Saviour, they are healed of their madness - all due to the appearance and appeal of Christ (lines

717-740), as they admit later:

> There he [Christ] apperyd with wondys all bloody
>
> (line 942), and
>
> In hys law to make us stedfast,
>
> There spake he [Christ] to us woordys of grete favore
>
> (lines 944 - 945).

The madness of the Jews is also referred to in the sixteenth pageant of the Chester Plays (Thomas, 1966:126), where one of the Jewish characters says to Longinus:

> Take this spear and take good heede;
>
> And do as the bishopp thee badd
>
> A thing that is great need.
>
> To werne, I hould thee wood
>
> (lines 345 - 348).

This is ironic in that, to the audience of the day, it was the Jewish character who was mad in not accepting Christ as the Saviour (as Longinus will do in lines 369-372). He is, however, right that piercing Christ's side was a necessary action, as it was believed that Christ had to suffer fully in order to redeem the souls of humankind. It was also believed that when blood and water ran out of the wound, it signified that Christ had given every last drop of His blood for humanity.

The initial failure of the Jews to accept Christ as their Saviour and their determination to test the host in an attempt to disprove the doctrine of transubstantiation can also be seen as a form of spiritual blindness. Concerning transubstantiation Jonathas states that the Christians would '...make us [the Jews]

blynd' (line 203) by means of a trick. The intended irony of this utterance would not be lost on a medieval Christian audience according to whom the Jews were blind to the truth of the Christian religion.

Jonathas, specifically, is closely related to the idea of spiritual blindness. It is clearly stated that he makes the final wound in the host, which would be the wound in Christ's side:

> When ye have all smytyn, my stroke shalbe sene;
> With this same dagger that ys so styf and strong,
> In the myddys of thys prynt I thynke for to prene;
> On[e] lashe I shall hyme lende or yt be long
> (lines 465 - 468).

During the Middle Ages the wound in Christ's side was associated with Longinus, a blind knight, who traditionally pierced Christ's side with a lance, as can be seen in *The Golden Legend*, translated by William Caxton and published in 1493. Christ's blood then ran onto Longinus's hands and when he (Longinus) rubbed his eyes, his sight was restored and he recognised Christ as the Saviour (Ellis, 1900:70), thus also being cured of his spiritual blindness. Erler (1994:453) sees Jonathas as assuming Longinus's role in the re-enactment of the Passion, metaphorically attacking Christ's side with his dagger in the same way that Longinus pierces Him with his lance:

> Now am I bold with batayle hym to bleyke,
> The mydle part alle for to prene;
> A stowte stroke also for to stryke -

In the myddys yt shalbe sene!

(lines 477 - 480).

Jonathas's hand, which is torn off when he attempts to desecrate the host, is restored when he immerses it in the cauldron of Christ's blood (lines 776-778), in the same way as Longinus's sight is restored by Christ's blood (Erler, 1994:453). This similarity is also noted by Nichols (1988:129) who further observes that while in Longinus's case physical healing precedes spiritual healing, Jonathas professes his faith in Christ (lines 741-745) before he is physically cured (lines 770-778). In early English medicine there was a narrative charm prescription associated with Longinus: For a charm to oppose 'the stitch, draw a Cross and sing three times this over the place with a Paternoster: Longinus, the soldier pierced our Lord with a lance and the blood stopped and the pain ceased' (Rubin, 1974:114).

In the second Passion Play from the N. Town manuscript (Meredith, 1990:135) the ideas of madness and spiritual blindness are connected when Longinus (after his spiritual blindness has been healed) states:

Now, good lord, forgyf me that
Þat I to þe now don have,
For I dede I wyst not what.
Þe Jewys of myn ignorans dede me rave

(lines 1151 - 1154).

Meredith (1990:310) glosses 'rave' here as to 'act madly/foolishly, become distraught'. In contrast, Christ's

Passion from the Chester Plays (Thomas, 1966:126) concentrates on Christ's healing of Longinus:

> But this, I hope, very Christ be,
> That sick and blynd, through his pitty,
> Hath healed before in this citty,
> As thou has done me today
>
> (lines 365 - 368).

Jonathas's dismemberment contributes to the idea of Christ as the Suffering Physician within the context of the play in a number of ways[6]. Obviously, it provides a pretext for the scene with the quack physician, Master Brundyche, which then acts as a contrast with the scene in which Christ, the true Physician, not only heals Jonathas's hand, but cures the faithless state of the Jews who torture Him (in the form of the host). It is also notably Jonathas's right hand which is severed:

> Here ys a Jewe, hyght Jonathas,
> Hath lost hys ryght hond
>
> (lines 628 - 629).

This is significant when the symbolism attributed to right and left during the Middle Ages is considered. The right was associated with paradise and the Gentiles, and the left with Hell and the Jews (Hardison, 1965:265). Longinus was traditionally placed to the right of Christ in depictions of the crucifixion, often as a symbol of the Christian Church (which accepted Christ as the Messiah), while a Jewish character, Stephaton, was depicted to the left as a symbol of the Synagogue, which rejected Christ. (Stephaton traditionally offered Christ the sour wine at

the crucifixion as a symbol of the corrupt old doctrine.) The wound in Christ's side was also usually depicted on the right as a symbol of the birth of the Church from the right side of the Redeemer (Timmers, 1974:91).

Thus by identifying Jonathas with Longinus the playwright associates him and the other Jews with the Church and not with the Synagogue, thus possibly indicating that they are about to become part of the Church and therefore also part of the body of Christ. According to William of Saint Thierry (c.1085-1148) there are three senses in which 'the body of Christ' can be understood. It can refer to Christ's historical body which hung on the cross, which he viewed as the body which was sacrificed on the altar; it is the body which brings eternal life when the believer eats it, and it is also the Church. He explains that all three are, however, one in unity, essence and effect (Evans, 1993:103). The Jews thus eventually become part of the body of Christ (which they attacked in the form of the host) by being baptised (lines 948-951) and thus becoming part of the Church.

In this way the Jews in this play are also associated with the true spiritual healing of Longinus and not with the false and even subversive healing associated with Stephaton. John 19:29 describes how sour wine was offered to Christ on a branch of hyssop while he was on the cross. As quotations from medieval texts in the *Middle English Dictionary* (Kuhn, 1977:530) indicate, it was believed that the wine offered to Christ at the crucifixion contained myrrh. This mixture was believed to have

pain-relieving properties. *The Oxford Paperback Dictionary* (Hawkins, 1988:399 and 539) states that hyssop is 'a small fragrant bushy herb formerly used in medicine' while myrrh is described as 'a kind of gum resin used in perfumes and medicine and incense'. However, as it was believed that Christ had to suffer to save humanity from sin, any attempt to alleviate His pain could be seen as an attempt to undermine His divine plan, even if the person concerned were trying to be merciful. This is similar to Pilate's wife who, in the second Passion Play from the N. Town manuscript, lines 528-563 (Meredith, 1990:110-111) and the Tapiteres and Couchers play from the York Mystery cycle, lines 159-196 (Toulmin Smith, 1885:277-278), is used by the devil to attempt to prevent the crucifixion.

Physicians were often viewed in a negative light in the Middle Ages, especially by the clergy. This was fuelled by the fact that their remedies often did not work. Furthermore, the clergy in charge of the shrines of saints which claimed healing abilities were in competition with physicians. As a result those clerics responsible for recording miraculous healings often demonstrated a negative attitude when referring to medical practices not involving religion. Also, those who went to shrines had often gone to physicians first and if they were subsequently 'cured' at a shrine were only too happy to derogate the physicians' efforts. Not only did the clergy consistently emphasise the superiority of healing by means of the sacred over the profane; the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, as well as repeated diocesan legislation in England during the thirteenth century, constantly

reminded Christians that spiritual health was more important than physical health (Finucane, 1977:63-64).

Medieval physicians used a number of means to treat their patients, many of which seem ridiculous in today's scientifically advanced societies. The movements of the planets were believed to greatly influence the prognosis for a patient and astrological computations were used to determine the appropriate times to change or commence treatment. Such astrological calculations were often combined with Galen's (129-199) instruction on the bodily 'elements' or 'qualities' and 'humours' (Rubin, 1974:191).

In order to reach a diagnosis a urine sample was often taken from a patient. There were manuscripts with colour charts indicating the hues of urine (twenty to twenty-two in all), arranged neatly from lighter yellows to darker yellows and browns, along with suitable diagnostic information (Finucane, 1977:62). It should therefore be clear that medical science had laid down specific rules for handling such samples. For instance, the sample had to be taken in the morning the first time the patient urinated that day and it was not to be left standing for too long. Primarily, samples of urine were believed to provide information concerning the arteries, bladder and liver (Piltz, 1978:157). It thus lends no authority to Doctor Brundyche that he and Colle seek a urine sample from Jonathas.

> In a pott yf yt please yow to pysse,
> He can tell yf yow be curable
>
> (lines 648 - 649).

Not only would such a urine sample not offer information concerning the hand, but the diagnosis of a severed hand would have been patently obvious.

According to Finucane (1977:62) herbal lore was used by both professionals and folk-healers for almost every disorder. Lay herbalists of both genders were to be found in a variety of social classes. The Arab invasion of Persia during the seventh century had a great influence on the use of plants in Europe and England. Instead of destroying the civilised culture which they found there, the Arabs absorbed it and brought a number of its aspects to Europe by invasion through southern Spain. As a result, Greek and other pharmaceutical texts were introduced after being translated from Greek into Arabic and from Arabic into Latin. Thus European medical practitioners of the time were introduced to lengthy lists of medicinal plants when they were trained in the new medical schools (Landsberg, 1995:4). Monastery gardens often included an infirmary garden. The infirmarian can be seen as a nursing-home administrator who employed gardeners and made use of apothecary prescriptions or consulted a physician when his own remedies were not considered sufficient. However, it should be noted that here 'God was considered the supreme physician' (Landsberg, 1995:38).

A common complaint against physicians in the Middle Ages was the high fees they demanded. Finucane (1977:64-65) states that almost every collection of miracle stories (written mainly by clerics in charge of shrines of healing) contains some version of Saint

Luke's narrative of the woman who spent nearly all her money on physicians but was not cured (Luke 8:43-48). As a result (in an attempt to prevent clerical practitioners from financially abusing people through the medical services which they provided), in 1139 the clergy were barred from the study of medicine by Pope Innocent II (*d.*1143), and in 1163 at the Council of Tours monks were banned from teaching or practising medicine or absenting themselves from their monasteries for more than two months. It was even thought that physicians were so fond of charging high fees that they prescribed gold as medicine so as to enable them to charge outrageously high fees (Rubin, 1974:193). As a result the fees charged by physicians (and their love of gold) were not only denounced at shrines of healing, but also by authors such as Langland and Chaucer (Finucane, 1977:65).

Concerning his Doctour of Phisik in the General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* (Benson, 1987:30) Chaucer ironically states:

> Of his diete mesurable was he,
> For it was of no superfluitee,
> But of greet norissyng and digestible.
> His studie was but litel on the Bible.
> In sangwyn and in pers he clad was al,
> Lyned with taffata and with sendal.
> And yet he was but esy of dispence;
> He kept that he wan in pestilence.
> For gold in phisik is a cordial,
> Therefore he lovede gold in special
>
> (lines 435 - 444).

Thus the doctor follows a healthy diet which is moderate and full of nourishment, but spends little time studying the Bible. He wears rich silken clothes and keeps all the money he earns from the suffering of others during plague years. He also supposedly loves gold because it is a medicine for the heart, but has an arrangement with the apothecary which is profitable for them both (lines 425-427)! It therefore appears that he is guilty of the deadly sin of avarice. Also, despite the fact that he keeps himself in good physical health, the fact that he spends little time on spiritually enriching activities such as studying the Bible appears to indicate that he is spiritually unhealthy. Thus instead of being a good medicine for the heart, gold actually leads to spiritual illness through avarice.

This is in contrast with Chaucer's touchstone character, the Parson (lines 476-528), who although he is not financially well off is spiritually rich and healthy:

> A good man was ther of religioun,
> And was a povre persoun of a toun,
> But riche he was of hooly thoght and werk
>
> (lines 477 - 479).

In passus twenty of *The Vision of Piers Plowman* (Schmidt, 1978:256), Langland also condemns physicians for their love of gold and notes the futility of a doctor's aid as one will inevitably die eventually:

> And Lif fleigh for feere to Phisik after helpe,
> And bisoughte hym of socour, and of his salve hadde,

> And gaf hym gold good woon that gladede his herte -
> And thei gyven hym ageyn a glazene howve.
> Lyf leeved that lechecraft lette sholde Elde.
> And dryven awey deeth with dyas and drogges.
> And Elde auntred hym on Lyf - and at the laste he hitte
> A phisicien with a furred hood, that he fel in a palsie,
> And there dyed that doctour er thre dayes after.
> 'Now I se,' seide Lif, 'that surgerie ne phisik
> May noght a myte availle to medle ayein Elde.'
>
> (lines 169 - 179).

Even as late as Shakespeare (1564-1616), the distrust of physicians is still apparent. In *Timon of Athens* (Oliver, 1959:115) this distrust is expressed when Timon comments to a bandit:

> ...for there is boundless theft
> In limited professions...
> Trust not the physician;
> His antidotes are poison, and he slays
> Moe than you rob.
>
> (lines 430, 431 and 434 - 436).

The quack doctor scene can be seen as a corrupt earthly contrast to the actions of the true Suffering Physician, Christ. There are grotesque parallels not only with the Passion, but also with the

sacrament of the eucharist. In referring to his master, Colle states:

> Mayster Brendyche of Braban,
> I tell yow he ys that same man,
> Called the most famous phesy[cy]an
> That ever sawe uryne
>
> (lines 533 - 536).

The reference to this earthly physician (possibly a quack) as the most famous would, in the context of the play, most likely bring to mind the belief that the true (and most famous in medieval Christian society) physician is Christ. It also becomes clear that the earthly physician must rely on outward, physical elements in order to make a diagnosis and will then attempt to heal a patient in a physical way only. In contrast, Christ can see the true spiritual nature of every person and heal the soul, thus ensuring the eternal life and health of the soul and not merely the temporary health of the body which will eventually die.

Colle also states concerning Master Brundyche:

> He syttyth with sum tapstere in the spence
>
> (line 531).

This image implies that the doctor may be guilty of the deadly sins of lechery (lust) and sloth (which drunkenness can lead to) and may therefore not be spiritually healthy himself. Furthermore it reminds one of the wine served at the Last Supper and the eucharistic wine used at Mass (a reminder of the blood of Christ shed to heal humanity of sin). However, here we see wine being

put to a 'low' and unholy use, while in the Church the wine is holy and used for 'higher' purposes such as the eucharist, which can lead to spiritual health.

Next the doctor is described thus:

> He ys allso a boone-setter;
> I knowe no man go the better;
> In every tauerne he ys detter;
> That ys a good tokenyng
>
> (lines 541 - 544).

This passage is full of double meanings. A 'boone-setter' can be a surgeon or a dice-player (Coldewey, 1993:292). *The Oxford Paperback Dictionary* (Hawkins, 1988:74) states that, 'better' can refer to being 'of a more excellent kind' or to be or allow someone to be 'partly or fully recovered from an illness', or 'a person who bets', while Coldewey (1993:292) glosses the word as 'better (and a bettor)'. Furthermore, 'tokenyng' can mean a 'sign' or 'the use of bet markers' (Coldewey, 1993:292), but according to the *Middle English Dictionary* also refers to 'the sign of the cross, the Christian emblem; the sign of the cross made with the hand' (Lewis, 1996:850). All these references to gambling recall the soldiers who gambled (at the foot of the cross) to determine who would win Christ's robe at the crucifixion, a scene which is re-enacted in the sixteenth pageant of the Chester Plays (lines 25-50) using Jews instead of Roman soldiers (Thomas, 1966:115). This aligns the doctor with the negative image of those who were responsible for Christ's death. It may be speculated that the belief that all humanity is guilty

of His death through the sins of each individual would have been understood by the original medieval audience.

Furthermore Colle exclaims:

> Yf any man can hym aspye
> Led hym to the pylleri.
> In fayth, yt shall be don
>
> (lines 562 - 564),

and

> A therde-bare gowne and a rent hoose;
> He spekyt[h] never good matere nor purpoose;
> To the pyllere ye hym led!
>
> (lines 570 - 572).

According to *Webster's Comprehensive Reference Dictionary and Encyclopedia* (1954:396) a pillory is 'a wooden frame supported by an upright post, having holes through which the head and hands of a person exposed to disgrace were passed and secured' and to be pilloried is to be 'expose[d] to public disgrace or abuse', while *The Oxford Paperback Dictionary* (Hawkins, 1988:611) describes it as 'a wooden framework with holes for the head and hands, into which offenders were formerly locked for exposure to public ridicule'. This creates a noteworthy, if grotesque, parallel with the crucifixion of Christ. When He was crucified, Christ was exposed to public abuse, ridicule and disgrace, as is recorded in Matthew 27:27-31; Mark 15:16-20; Luke 22:63-65 and John 19:1-3. Furthermore, the stance of someone secured in a pillory would be roughly similar to that of someone being

crucified, with the arms extended outwards on either side of the body. Also, both instruments of punishment were made of wood. This relates to the medieval notion referred to on page 22 that the wood of the Ark may be seen as a figura of the wood of the cross. (See the Appendix, diagrams 2(a) and 2(b) which illustrate these similarities.) This correspondence must have been noted in medieval England as well, as according to the *Middle English Dictionary* (Kuhn, 1983:932), the word 'pillory' was also used to refer to: 'a cross for crucifixion, especially the cross of Christ'.

The idea of the communion host, Christ's crucifixion and medieval forms of public punishment are brought together in the Coliphizacio play in the Towneley Cycle (Cawley, 1958:83) when Cayphas says concerning Christ:

> Shall I neuer ete bred to that he be stald
> In the stokys
>
> (lines 202 - 203).

The Oxford Paperback Dictionary (Hawkins, 1988:805) defines the stocks as 'a wooden framework with holes for the legs of a seated person, used like the pillory'. Clearly, however, the choice of the pillory in the *Croxton Play* is even more significant in terms of crucifixion imagery.

While Christ did not deserve the punishment meted out to Him, He accepted it in order to save the souls of all humanity. Doctor Brundyche would no doubt deserve his punishment (to be pilloried) and he and all humanity also deserve the punishment Christ

suffered, while Christ did not. This reference would have made it clear to the medieval audience that all humanity (including themselves) is sinful and deserves the forfeiture of the soul, but that Christ's death created the possibility for spiritual health and salvation for all.

Next, Colle and Doctor Brundyche discuss one of the doctor's patients and the treatment that he gave her. Brundyche claims to have given her a drink including 'oxennell' (line 586), which contains vinegar, and 'Letwyce' (line 587), which was considered to be bitter, thus reminding one of the drink which Christ was offered shortly before His death on the cross (Matthew 27:48, Mark 15:36, John 19:29). Also, the list of herbs contained in the medicinal concoction is full of latent meanings.

According to the *Middle English Dictionary* (Kuhn, 1981:539) 'oxennell' (line 586) or oximel is a 'preparation of vinegar and honey, often with other herbal ingredients, principally used as a medicinal drink or component'. Honey is one of the symbols of the Passion, as the disciples offered Christ fish and honey in Luke 24:42 when He appeared to them after the resurrection (Lurker, 1973:183 and 474). The resurrection and later events are not strictly part of Christ's Passion, but they often form part of Passion plays and are therefore considered here as part of the Passion. Vinegar can also be viewed as a symbol of the Passion as Christ was offered sour wine or vinegar while He hung on the cross. Thus these medicinal components contain a number of latent references to Christ's Passion, creating a connection between the

Passion and medicine or healing in the play. Some of these deserve further discussion.

Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language (Gove, 1961:2025) defines 'scamoly' (line 586) or scammony as 'a twining plant...having...white flowers'; 'the resin obtained as an exudation from the living root of scammony or prepared by extracting the dried root with alcohol and precipitating with water and used as a drastic cathartic'. The fact that the plant is mixed with alcohol and water reminds one of the eucharist (and thus also the Last Supper) where wine (an alcoholic beverage) is served mixed with water, apparently due to the fact that water (and blood) ran from Christ's side when it was pierced at the crucifixion (Harris, 1992:5). According to *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* (Gove, 1961:1845) a cathartic or purgative has a 'cleansing or purifying' effect, 'especially from sin or sinful inclinations'; it can also mean 'freeing legally from fault or blame: clearing from guilt'. Thus on the physical level scamoly can cleanse the body of unwanted matter, but on the spiritual level (in the context of the play) the audience is reminded of the cleansing or purgative effect which Christ's death had on the souls of humanity. It could also be seen as Christ legally releasing humanity from the fault or blame they incurred at the Fall through sin[7].

Furthermore, 'pympernelle' (line 587) is a root which was

formerly used for its diaphoretic and diuretic properties. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* defines a diaphoretic as a substance 'having the power to increase perspiration' (Gove, 1961:624) while a diuretic is 'an agent that increases the flow of urine' (Gove, 1961:662). Thus, both scamoly and pimpernel are forms of purgative. On one level the playwright could be having the quack doctor use all these references to purgatives in an attempt at low humour. On a more spiritual level, while these plants have the power or potential to purge the physical body, Christ (through the Passion) has the power to purge the soul of sin.

The reference to the use of lettuce appears to be more significant than may at first be apparent. In the Middle Ages 'letuse' was, according to the *Middle English Dictionary* (Kuhn, 1972:931), 'in biblical translation and commentary: the bitter herbs of the Passover meal'. Thus, the reference to lettuce can be understood on the level of the herb's medicinal value or in relation to its religious connotations. In reminding one of the Passover meal it recalls the Last Supper which Christ shared with His disciples, which (in Christian understanding) may simultaneously be seen as the final Passover and the first celebration of the eucharist. As lettuce was believed to be the bitter herb served at the Passover meal it relates not only to the sorrow and bitterness of the captivity of the Jews in Egypt (Stowell, 1962:116) in the Old Testament, but also to the (bitter) suffering and sorrow of Christ's Passion in the New Testament (which released all humanity from the bitter captivity

of sin as the Jews were released from the captivity of the Egyptians). This can thus also be seen as relating to the Man of Sorrows type which is prevalent in medieval art and evident in the *Croxton Play*.

As can be ascertained from the *Middle English Dictionary*, sage was a herb well-known in the Middle Ages, especially for its medicinal qualities. It was specified as an ingredient for certain recipes specially prepared near Easter (or Passover) as well as being used in conjunction with religion in a medicinal capacity (Lewis, 1986:116). According to *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* sage was also used as a 'mild tonic and astringent' (Gove, 1961:1999).

The etymology of the word 'sage' (in relation to the plant) is worthy of attention here. The modern term, sage, derives from the Middle English words 'sauge' and 'sage', which in turn derive from the Middle French 'saulge' or 'sauge', from the Latin 'salvia' which comes from 'salvus', meaning 'safe, whole, healthy' (Gove, 1961:1999). *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* also derives the word 'sage' from the Latin 'salvia' and describes it as 'the healing plant' (Onions, 1973:1874). It is interesting to note that in Middle English, 'hal', also means 'healthy' and 'whole' and 'halig', meaning holy, derives from 'hal' (Bradley, 1891:319 and 321). Thus (as indicated on page 2) from the perspective of language and etymology, spiritual and physical health are closely connected, and the use of sage here is especially interesting when one considers its root meaning.

Furthermore, as the *Middle English Dictionary* indicates, both sage and pimpernel were recommended to heal the heart (Kuhn, 1983:938 and Lewis, 1986:116). It is unsure whether many members of a medieval audience would have been aware of these uses, but it is likely that due to the widespread medicinal use of herbs (Finucane, 1977:62) a number may have been. Certainly the playwright (probably an educated cleric, if one considers the use of Latin and the extensive knowledge of eucharistic belief demonstrated in the play) could well have been aware of it. Nevertheless, whether accidental or intentional, these allusions are worthy of closer attention. The playwright has the quack doctor use two herbs that are physically beneficial to the heart, yet he can offer only a physical cure, while Christ offers a spiritual cure for the heart: salvation. The very word 'sage' reminds one of a salve or balm (a type of medicinal cream, which heals wounds and eases pain).

Thus, an apparently passing reference by Doctor Brundyche to the treatment of a patient is seen to have much deeper and more significant religious meaning in the context of the play. On the literal level, the herbs listed were medicinal components considered to have healing qualities for the physical body in medieval times. On the spiritual level the list reminds one that one may be purged (scamoly, pimpernel) of one's sins by means of Christ's Passion (oxennell, lettuce) so that one may be whole and healthy (sage, pimpernel). It is, therefore, clear that while the earthly physician can offer only a temporary and temporal cure, Christ offers a permanent spiritual cure. Thus, the patient

treated by the doctor may be 'full save' (line 588) physically, but not necessarily spiritually. In fact, there is the suggestion that Doctor Brundyche may even have placed this female patient in great spiritual danger by tempting her into the deadly sin of lechery (lust), as Colle suggestively states:

> On wydowes, maydese and wyfe
> Yowr connyng yow have nyhe spent
>
> (lines 595 - 596).

Furthermore in line 619 it is claimed that Doctor Brundyche may even make a healthy person sick, which may be understood both spiritually and physically.

Doctor Brundyche states:

> Here ys a grete congregacyon,
> And all be not hole, without negacyon;
> I wold have certyfycacyon:
> Stond up and make a proclamacion.
> Have do faste, and make no pausa[c]yon,
> But wyghtly mak a declaracion
> To all people that helpe w[o]lde have
>
> (line 601 - 607).

Here he is clearly trying to attract clients from among the audience. The specific choices in vocabulary which he makes are, however, worth noting. He refers to the audience as a 'congregacyon' (line 601) and, although the medieval usage of the word was not exclusively religious, *The Oxford Paperback Dictionary* (Hawkins, 1988:168) defines a congregation as 'a group of people gathered together to take part in religious worship'.

It thus follows that while all the members of the audience are most likely 'not hole' (line 602) or healthy physically, the same is probably true of the spiritual state of many. This reference also reminds one of Christ's prophetic reference at the Last Supper (Mark 14:18-21) to His prospective betrayal by Judas (Mark 14:18-21) who, as a result of his intention to betray Christ, was not spiritually whole or healthy. It is thus also implied that the audience should take action concerning the state of their souls or spiritual health as eagerly as they would seek help for a physical illness or injury.

A connection between the *Croxton Play*, *Everyman* and *Elckerlijc* relating to medieval Catholic views on holy dying may be noted when Colle states concerning Doctor Brundyche:

> He wyll never leve yow tyll ye be in yow[r] grave
>
> (line 611),

which, of course, is where his treatment may well put one! Although an earthly doctor will leave one when one dies, Christ will never leave one, even in death, once one has chosen Him as one's Saviour (in the medieval Christian view). A similar situation is made evident in both *Everyman* (Cawley, 1956:232) and *Elckerlijc* (Schutte & De Klerk, 1987:91 and 94)[8] where the Everyman character (representing all humanity) is only accompanied in death by his own Good Deeds as he commends his soul to God:

> Nay, Everyman; I [Good Deeds] will bide with thee.
> I will not forsake thee indeed;

Thou shalt find me a good friend at need

(line 852 - 854), and

Into thy hands, Lord, my soul I commend;
Receive it, Lord, that it be not lost

(lines 880 - 881).

Ic [Doecht] en sal niet wyken,
Om leven, om sterven, oft om geen torment

(lines 824 - 825), and

In uwen handen, vader, hoe dat sij,
Beveel ic u minen geest in vreden.
Ic vaer metter doecht

(lines 854 - 856).

It is thus not surprising that in the *Croxton Play* the Bishop should order Aristorius:

Ever whyll thou lyvest good dedys for to done

(line 914).

Colle's statement that Doctor Brundyche will not leave a patient until he/she is dead (line 611) could also be considered to refer to the fact that doctors cannot cure everything, while Christ can 'cure' anything He wants to. What is more, doctors can also kill a patient by making mistakes (due to human fallibility) or negligence, or through a lack of knowledge and could then simply bury their mistakes, while their successes were to be seen by all. In *Hieroglyphics of the Life of Man* Francis Quarles (1592-1644) wrote:

Physicians of all men are most happy; what good success soever they have, the world proclaimeth, and

> what faults they commit, the earth covereth (Moore, 1997:263).

As can be seen in Smith (1970:193), similar sentiments concerning doctors were expressed from as early as the 1500s and well into the 1700s.

According to Colle, Doctor Brundyche lives in:

> ...the colkote, for ther ys hys loggyng,
> A lytyll besyde Babwell Myll, yf ye wyll have
> und[er]stondyn[g]
>
> (lines 620 - 621).

From this quotation it is clear that the reference to Babwell Mill was intended to have some additional, possibly local, meaning for the original audience of this play. According to McMurray Gibson (1989:37) the 'colkote' (line 620) has been mistakenly glossed as a coal-shed instead of a tollhouse (which makes more sense in reference to doctors' supposed love of money). It was assumed that the original audience would have been aware of the fact that Babwell Mill was located close to the North Gate tollhouse, as well as near to Saint Saviour's Hospital, considered the most fashionable and famous of the numerous hospices in Bury Saint Edmunds.

Saint Saviour's Hospital, which was owned and administered by the Bury Saint Edmunds monastery, came closer to the modern conception of a hospital than other abbey hospices. Saint Saviour's was staffed by a resident community of eminent physicians and had been well-known for its care of the infirm and

ill since the twelfth century. Due to its immense popularity (particularly among the nobly born and wealthy) during the fifteenth century, those requiring access had to be placed on a waiting list and their cases were reviewed by an elected committee of town burgesses and monks! Colle's joking in the play is based on such inside knowledge, with the fame of Saint Saviour's being compared with Doctor Brundyche's own implied lack of skill (McMurray Gibson, 1989:37-38).

A deeper reference exists in the name of the hospital, Saint Saviour's, which affirms that the true physician is 'Saint Saviour' Himself, Christ (who became the Saviour of all humankind when He sacrificed Himself on the cross to gain salvation for all). In the play He will not only heal Jonathas's hand, but also effect the spiritual healing of all the Jewish characters as well as Aristorius (McMurray Gibson, 1989:37-38).

A number of other 'prescriptions' for spiritual health or salvation are suggested in the remainder of the play, which (in addition to the eucharist) deals mainly with the sacrament of penance, including contrition or repentance, confession, absolution and the actual act of reparation or penance. After Christ makes His complaint to the Jews (lines 717-740), they are immediately repentant and beg His mercy and forgiveness:

> Of thy gret mercy lett us receyve the showre;
> And mekely I aske mercy, amendys to make
>
> (lines 744 - 745);
>
> Oh thow blyssyd Lord of mykyll myght,

> Of thy gret mercy, thou hast shewyd us the path,
> Lord, owt of grevous slepe and owt of dyrknes to lyght
> (lines 750 - 752);
> O gracyows Lorde, forgyfe me my mysdede!
> With lamentable hart: *miserere mei, Deus!*
> (lines 756 - 757).

Malchus states:

> Lord, by the water of contrycion lett me aryse:
> *Asparges me, Domine, ysopo, et mundabor*
> (lines 760 - 761).

Here the playwright is referring to Psalm 51:7, which is a prayer of repentance written by David after he had sinned with Bathsheba: 'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow'. This quotation is a fascinating choice on the part of the playwright. It is clearly suitable in the context of the play as a prayer of repentance, but the reference to hyssop is still more interesting. Not only was a branch of hyssop used at the crucifixion to offer Christ the sour wine, but bunches of it were, as Pfeiffer (1961:234) notes, 'used to sprinkle blood in various sacrificial and purification ceremonies of the Jews'. It thus not only reminds one of the Passion, but also indicates that Christ made the ultimate sacrifice, and indeed was the ultimate sacrifice, which allows all humanity to be purified of sin by the shedding of His blood. This coincides with the medieval view (see pages 42 and 43) that the sour wine offered on a hyssop branch at the crucifixion was a symbol of the old law which had passed away with the coming of the new law through Christ. No longer would the blood of any

sacrifice suffice to cleanse one's soul; only the blood of Christ is sufficient to purify the souls of sinful humankind. Maltman (1974:156) notes that the words from the above quotation are derived from the penitential psalm *Miserere mei, Deus*, the words of which also form the antiphon which is 'sung every Sunday except during Eastertide at the Aspersion of Holy Water'.

In lines 766 to 769 Christ indicates that He is ready to forgive them and later He says:

> Thow wasshest thyn hart with grete contrycion
>
> (line 775).

Line 765 again makes a reference to healing. As Maltman (1974:157) notes, this is the answer Jesus gives to the lepers in Luke 17:14 when He heals them. Thus the audience is again reminded of the healing power of Christ. He healed the lepers in the Bible; He is at this point in the play healing the Jews spiritually, and He is about to heal Jonathas physically (lines 776-778). An interesting point is that in the Bible reference Christ refers to 'the' priests (Strong, 1890:1307), while in the play He refers to 'my' priests, perhaps also indicating the coming of the new law which in the medieval Christian view meant that Christianity superseded Judaism. Scherb (1990:169) notes that the dramatist's use of 'my priests' links Christ's original Biblical actions with the medieval clergy's 'miracles of spiritual healing, most obviously manifested in their ministration of the Sacraments'.

After his hand has been healed, Jonathas carries out Christ's

order and goes to the Bishop before whom he kneels and confesses his sins and those of his associates (lines 798-805). Later, the Jews again confess their sin of the desecration of the host in detail (lines 928-951). Here Jonathas asks for absolution for their sins.

> I aske for us all a generall absolucion
>
> (line 930).

Masphat states:

> In hys law to make us stedfast,
> There spake he [Christ] to us woordys of grete favore;
> In contrycyon owr hartys he cast
> And [bad] take us to a confessore
>
> (lines 944 - 947),

which they do, and finally Malchus expresses their desire to be baptised into the Catholic Church:

> For to be crystenyd ys owr intent;
> Now all owr dedys to yow shewyd have we
>
> (lines 950 - 951).

The Jewish characters are thus completely absorbed into the medieval Catholic community by following the rules for salvation set down by the Catholic Church. In *Everyman* and *Elckerlijc* one can see the importance placed on the sacraments of the Catholic Church (and their power to heal) and the priests who administered them:

> There is no emperor, king, duke, ne baron,
> That of God hath commission
> As hath the least priest in the world being;
> For of the blessed sacraments pure and benign

He beareth the keys, and thereof hath the cure
For man's redemption - it is ever sure -
Which God for our soul's medicine
Gave us out of his heart with great pine.

(lines 713 -720).

Later, the priest is referred to as a:

...surgeon that cureth sin deadly

(line 744),

while in *Elckerlijc* it is also stated:

Van alden sacramenten reene
Draecht hi [the priest] den slotel, al doer bereit
Tot des menschen salicheit,
Die ons god teender medicine
Gaf uut der herten sijne
Hier in desen aertschen leven

(lines 684 - 689).

Aristorius repents and confesses his sin to his priest, Isoder, when he sees the eucharist being carried in a procession including the Bishop and the Jews:

Alas that ever thys dede was dyght!
An onlefull bargayn [I] began for to beat;
I sold yon same Jewys owr Lord full ryght
For covytyse of good, as a cursyd wyght

(lines 851 - 854).

Isoder then promises to try to gain absolution from the Bishop for Aristorius (line 861). Aristorius confesses again, this time to the Bishop (lines 900-911). Confessors and physicians were

sometimes classed together in the Middle Ages, as a quotation from *Metamorphosis of Ajax* by Sir John Harington (1561-1612) (Stevenson, 1958:465) indicates:

> From your confessor, lawyer and physician,
> Hide not your case on no condition.

The Bishop then gives him penance (lines 912-919). Thus the course of contrition, confession, absolution and penance is followed. The Jewish characters resolve to follow an apparently self-imposed penance in lines 964 to 971.

In lines 866 to 887 the Bishop explains to the characters of the play, as well as the audience, that they are in a battle with the devil who wants to win their souls from God, but that through Christ's Passion their souls may be saved. He prescribes other actions to keep one's soul healthy, such as arming oneself with the seven virtues (line 873) of faith, hope, charity, justice, prudence, temperance and fortitude (Cross, 1958:1246) and confessing one's sins fully to one's confessor (lines 874-875). Furthermore, the Bishop baptises the Jewish characters:

> Now, that fendys powre for to make lame,
> In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Gost,
> To saue yow from the devyllys flame,
> I crysten yow all, both lest and most
>
> (lines 956 - 959).

Thus baptism is described as another cure, or part of the spiritual cure prescribed for the soul in order to ensure salvation. The specific use of the word 'lame' which was also used in relation to Jonathas's physically injured hand (lines 770

and 791) is significant. Jonathas's sin not only led to the physical injury of his hand; the spiritual illness brought about by the devil can also be referred to in similar terms.

In the last speech of the play the Bishop outlines some final prescriptions for the salvation of all humanity (including the audience). It is stated that one should serve the Trinity as well as Mary, the mother of Christ, and keep oneself in perfect charity and love (lines 993-995). The audience is encouraged to obey the Ten Commandments and do as the Bishop commands them (a clear message that the clergy should be obeyed by the laity). By keeping all these commands to ensure spiritual health, the bliss of Heaven may be attained by humankind, but only as a result of Christ's sacrifice:

> Crystys commandementys ten there bee;
> Kepe well them; doo as I yow tell.
> Almyght God shall yow please in every degre,
> And so shall ye saue yowr sollys from hell.
> For there ys payn and sorow cruell,
> And in hevyn ther ys both joy and blysse,
> More then eny towyng can tell,
> There angellys syng with grett swetnesse;
> To the whyche blysse he bryng us
> Whoys name ys callyd Jhesus,
> And in wyrshyppe of thys name gloryows
> To syng to hys honore *Te Deum Laudamus*
>
> (lines 996 - 1007).

It should thus be clear that the Middle Ages was indeed a period of controversy and reflection upon the eucharist, especially in relation to the notion of the Real Presence. The *Croxton Play* deals with the concept of Christ present in the host by means of transubstantiation, and presents a number of host miracles. The idea of Christ as the Suffering Physician may also be discerned in the play, and this chapter has been devoted to pointing out and discussing such references.

First, the relevance of allusions to the eucharist, the Passion and health, which may be found in the scene which presents the meal shared by Aristorius and Isoder, was noted. It was demonstrated that the meal parallels the Last Supper and the eucharist, both of which may be viewed as meals which promote spiritual health.

Secondly, the torture of the host was shown to be an elaborate re-enactment of the Passion. The relevance of this re-enactment was illustrated by a discussion which indicated how the Passion may be viewed as a healing act. As a result, it was determined that Christ in the host may be seen as the Suffering Physician. The spiritual 'illnesses' of the Jewish characters, such as madness and blindness, were demonstrated and shown to be subsequently healed by the host.

Thirdly, the 'quack doctor' scene, where earthly, physical medicine is negatively compared with the Suffering Physician and His spiritual remedies, was considered. It was determined that

this humorous scene contains subtle references to the 'medicinal' and healing aspects of the Passion.

Finally, other 'prescriptions' for salvation and spiritual health such as the sacrament of penance including repentance, confession, absolution and the actual act of reparation; the sacrament of baptism, as well as obeying the Ten Commandments and the clergy, were discussed.

In the following chapter, the manner in which Christ in the host is portrayed as the Suffering Physician in selected medieval sacrament dramas from the Low Countries, France and Italy will be considered, mainly in relation to the *Croxton Play*.

Chapter Two

Divine and Earthly Prescriptions in *Dat es Tspel vanden Heiligen Sacramente van der Nyeuwervaert* and related Continental Sacrament Drama

> *For without doubt it is not without a meaning, that those miracles were done, and something they figured out to us bearing on eternal saving health.*
>
> *-Saint Augustine*
> *Sermons on New Testament Lessons*
> *(Schaff, 1887:474)*

The *Croxton Play* is the only known surviving play concerning miracles performed by the sacrament of the eucharist in England. Such dramas were more widely found in western Europe and a selection of these which deal specifically with host miracles will be considered in relation to the *Croxton Play* in this chapter. The Dutch sacrament play, *Dat es Tspel vanden Heiligen Sacramente van der Nyeuwervaert*, will be the main focus of this

chapter, while the French play, *Le jeu et mystère de la Saincte Hostie*, as well as an Italian sacrament play from Orvieto, the *Miracolo del Corporale di Bolsena*, will also be discussed.

Dat es Tspel vanden Heiligen Sacramente van der Nyeuwervaert deals with a host which is discovered in a marsh by Jan Bautoen and two women. When he touches the host, it begins to bleed. He is immediately repentant and one of the women runs to Nyeuwervaert to fetch the Priest (Prochiaen). The host is then moved to the town, where it performs various miracles which are reported, but usually not seen.

Two devils, Sondich Becoren and Belet van Dueghden (who appear at regular intervals and often report miracles that have taken place through the power of the host), try to stop people from travelling to Nyeuwervaert to pay homage to the host and to ask for miracles (such as healing). They do this by causing inclement weather. Their plan backfires, however, when the host is moved to a larger town, Breda, where it will be even more accessible to those seeking miracles and wishing to pay homage to it. The devils also tempt the investigating priest, Meester Macharius, into doubting the authenticity of the host. As a result he pierces the host five times to test it. The wounds (which, as in the *Croxton Play*, recall the Five Wounds of Christ) then begin to bleed. The names of the devil characters characterise them as a 'symbolic pair' in their aim of damning humankind, one tempting to vice (Sondich Becoren); the other preventing virtue (Belet van Dueghden).

Before the host is moved to Breda a battle scene between Christians (kerstenen) and non-Christians (heidene) is presented. Here the Christian forces are overpowered and taken hostage. It is decided that one of the captives must be burnt to death, the victim to be decided by the drawing of lots. He who chooses the black bean, dies, while he who draws the white bean, lives. Their leader, Heer Wouter van Kersbeke, prays to the host to be spared from the fire, promising to forgo meat and wine until he goes to Nyeuwervaert on a pilgrimage to the host if he is spared. Heer Wouter is indeed saved and goes on a pilgrimage to see the host. The play ends with the devils having failed in their attempts to keep the host away from humanity, but ominously stating that there are still many people for them to deceive and tempt into sin.

The *Nyeuwervaert Play* was written circa 1463 and is the oldest surviving miracle play in the Low Countries. It was written shortly after a 'Brotherhood of the Holy Sacrament of Nyeuwervaert' was established to honour the miracles performed by a host found in a marsh near Nyeuwervaert. These events are the subject of the drama, as well as of a lengthy poem in praise of the host, and a chronicle (Strietman, 1991:243). The discussion of the *Nyeuwervaert Play* which follows will be divided into an investigation of the miracles performed by the host and an examination of the references to and/or re-enactments of the Passion in the play. The first section will concentrate on the miracles of physical healing reported in the play and their connection with the concept of Christ as a healer, or physician.

The second section will contain a discussion of references to the eucharist and the Passion (including any re-enactments of the Passion) and how these can be related to the idea of Christ as the Suffering Physician, and to healing.

The physical healings brought about by Christ in the transubstantiated host are the most straightforward illustration in this play of the belief in Christ as a physician. One of the first desires that the Priest expresses concerning the host is that it will bring about healing, thus introducing the idea of Christ as a healer, or the *Christus Medicus* motif:

> Ick hoop minklijc noch wesen sal
> Blijnde, cropelen, siecken genesen sall,
> Diet aenroepen met caritaten
>
> (lines 242 - 244)[9].

The fact that the Priest says this immediately after Jan Bautoen has reported that the host bled when he touched it (lines 226-232) creates a connection between Christ as a physician and Christ's suffering on the cross (where His blood was shed in order to heal humanity of sin, thereby making salvation possible). As the host would have been in Jan Bautoen's hand when it 'bled', it may have reminded the audience even more strongly of the Passion, as Christ's hands were pierced and bled. Thus the idea of Christ as the Suffering Physician is introduced relatively early in the play.

The host possesses the particular property of bleeding when touched by someone who is not a priest. This may reflect the fact

that at the ordination of a priest, one of the rituals is the anointing of his hands with holy oils (Ludwig, 1987:103). Hence priests are, by virtue of their office and their role as Christ's representatives, sanctified to handle the host, as lay people were not, in the Middle Ages. Furthermore, at the Synod of Laodicea (343-381), it was stated that the clergy could be viewed as 'physicians of the soul' (Schaff & Wace, 1899:158), probably via their duties of hearing confession, offering absolution and administering the other sacraments (such as the eucharist). The view of the clergy as spiritual physicians may have come about because they were considered to be Christ's representatives on earth, and Christ was often viewed as a physician; thus the clergy may as a result have been seen as the Physician's 'assistants'. This view is given credence in this play because after the Priest wishes the host to perform miracles of healing, a number of such miracles take place. Furthermore, the Priest takes care of the host in the church in Nyeuwervaert (lines 289-290) and records the miracles that take place (lines 1028-1032), thus allowing people to gain access to it and to learn more about it and its miraculous power. Later the Bishop allows it to be moved to Breda (lines 1207-1209), affording many more people access to Christ, the Physician, present in the host, as a result.

It is interesting to note in this context that the Arabs had taken care to differentiate between the theory of medicine and its practice. As a result, in the late Middle Ages a clear distinction existed between those involved in these two branches

of medicine: 'the theoreticians were called *physicus* and the practitioners *medicus*' (Piltz, 1978:156). It is thus clear that Christ (*Christus Medicus*) was viewed as a practitioner of medicine, actively involved in healing humanity, instead of merely theorising about it (*physicus*). The same is true in the *Nyeuwervaert Play* where Christ (in the host) brings about a number of miraculous physical healings, thereby practically demonstrating His healing power (both physical and spiritual). The fact that the play is said to be based on a true story of a healing host (see page 74) makes this image even more effective. As Pleij (1988:14) points out, knowledge concerning astrology, mathematics and medicine had reached the Low Countries from the Arab world via Spain as early as the twelfth century. It is thus likely that the author of this play (along with many other educated people) was well aware of the Arabian distinction. This is especially likely when one considers that the *Nyeuwervaert Play* was probably written by a member of the clergy, as they were best acquainted with the subject matter (Van der Merwe, 1969:19).

The idea of Christ as a physician was not an alien concept in medieval Dutch literature. In *Van den Doechden der Vuriger ende Stichtiger Susteren van Diepen Veen* (Brinkerink, 1904:64-65), Christ is described as a great doctor who heals souls with His medicine:

> Want onse lieve here is een groet medycus ende een wijs meyster. Ende weet alre best, hoe dat hij die sieckten der zielen genesen sal. Want myt deser medycijnen quam sie tot enen volcomenen leven als men

hijr na noch wal horen sal

(paragraph 34*f* - 35*a*).

The play *Vander Siecten der broosscer naturen* also deals with the concept of Christ as a physician (Pleij, 1990:192-194).

A number of physical healings take place through the power of Christ in the host, throughout the *Nyeuwervaert Play*. The Bible relates that Christ would sometimes heal a person as a result of faith (for example, the woman who touched Christ's cloak in Mark 5:25-34) and sometimes to instill faith (for example, the healing of the nobleman's son in John 4:46-53). A miraculous change in the appearance of a host was also sometimes considered to occur to reward faith or to convince doubters (Srawley, 1974:556). The play as a whole, and the healings presented in it in particular, may be seen as serving a similar purpose. Part of the author's intention may have been to strengthen the faith of the faithful in the audience and to create faith in the faithless through the presentation of this drama.

From as early as the prologue it is made clear that the host brings about healing and health:

Dese miracule woirt alom hier gehoert,
Dwelc veel bedructe menschen aenriepen,
Uut grooter devocië̈n om haer confoert.
Ter Nyeuwervaert daer sij henen liepen.
Ghesondicheit dat sij daer schiepen

(lines 29 - 33).

Many of the healings (and other miracles) that take place in this

play may be seen as manifestations of inner or spiritual healing in the physical world. A precedent for this idea can be found in the Bible where Christ forgave the sins of a paralytic man and then also healed him physically (Matthew 9:1-8). Thus, physical healing and spiritual healing can go hand in hand. A similar situation is evident in the *Croxton Play* where Jonathas is first healed spiritually when he repents of the sins he committed against the host, and is then healed physically when his severed hand is restored. As Blomberg (1992:303) states, a study of Luke's Gospel reveals that physical healing can be viewed as part of the holistic health (salvation) which Christ offers. Furthermore, in his anti-Pelagian writings, Saint Augustine had established the images of Christ as a physician and sin as a disease (Harmless, 2000:6). This provides an additional basis for describing the physical healings which the host performs in the play as having a component of spiritual healing, as Saint Augustine's writings greatly influenced the thinking of the Middle Ages. An example of this can be seen in line 904 where it is reported that a blind person has been healed. This could be relevant to both physical and spiritual blindness, as the tradition of Longinus (where Christ's blood heals the soldier of both physical and spiritual blindness) testifies (see page 40).

While performing miracles of healing on earth (as recorded in the Bible), Christ was often recognised by demons, even when human beings were unaware of His identity and divinity. Such instances are demonstrated in Mark 1:24 and 5:7 (the man with an unclean spirit in the synagogue at Capernaum and the man with an unclean

spirit living among the tombs in Gadarenes, respectively). Demons also recognise Christ as the Son of God who is triumphant over them, as can be seen in Luke 4:41 and 8:28 where Christ healed the demon-possessed in Capernaum and the man from Gadarenes, respectively (Blomberg, 1992:300 and 303). The same is true in the *Nyeuwervaert Play* where the devil characters, Belet van Dueghden and Sondich Becoren, recognise Christ as present in the host and acknowledge His power over them (lines 1074-1075). It is interesting to note that these devil characters report most of the miracles, many of which include healing, to the audience. Miracles brought about by the host are reported in lines 578-580, 582-587, 730-736, 871-889, 901-909, 1225-1235, 1239-1249 and 1253-1272 of the play, as well as in lines 14-16 of the epilogue. Only the miracles in the epilogue and lines 730-736 are not reported by the devil characters. They thus recognise the power of Christ (present in the host) to heal and to perform miracles (thus being victorious over the forces of evil), just as they did when He performed similar miracles in the form of human flesh.

None of the miracles of healing is physically enacted on stage, possibly due to the potential difficulties of staging some of them, as well as the need for more actors (who may not have been available) in order to stage these scenes. As Strietman (1991:243) points out, only six players were required. This would have made production simpler and more efficient than if a very large cast were required. A possible benefit of not staging the miracles, but merely reporting them, is that many more miracles can be attributed to the host within the space of one play. This

is especially important when one considers that the play was written to honour real miracles of the host which had taken place in the area (see page 74). The disadvantage of this approach, on the other hand, is that the miracles of healing do not have the same impact when they are simply reported rather than being enacted. For example, in one of the lists of healings related by Sondich Becoren, he states that Christ, present in the host, has healed someone who had lost limbs: 'sijn leden had verloren' (line 903). The *Croxton Play* demonstrates how dramatically effective the enactment of the loss and healing of a limb can be, while in the *Nyeuwervaert Play* the event is simply and undramatically dealt with in one line.

As the play was written to honour genuine host miracles that had apparently taken place in the Breda area, and the only known performance took place in Breda on 24 June (Saint John's Day) 1500 (Strietman, 1991:243), it is likely that many members of the original audience were familiar with the stories behind a number of the miracles of the host (the stories possibly becoming more and more elaborate with each retelling). As a result it would have been unnecessary to explain what had happened in each instance, and simply listing the miracles would have impressed upon the audience the great number and variety of wonders (many of them healings) that had taken place. Furthermore, if the different stories were known in various versions, none of the versions would have been discredited by a mere listing. Thus, each audience member would have been free to 'fill in the blanks' using his or her own memory and imagination and could, as a

result, have become more involved in the play. Furthermore, due to the play's supposed basis in reality, the original audience would most likely have viewed both the miracles of the host and Christ's role as a physician not simply as ideas or the clever use of imagery, but as a reality in their medieval Catholic world. Christ was, no doubt, for many of them, the true (and greatest) physician of both body and spirit. This idea is echoed a century later in Christopher Marlowe's (1564-1593) *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, where Faustus laments the limitations of his role in the medical profession (Steane, 1969:266):

> Yet art thou still but Faustus and a man.
> Couldst thou make men to live eternally,
> Or being dead, raise them to life again,
> Then this profession were to be esteemed
>
> (lines 23 - 26).

The implication (whether intended by Faustus or not) is that Christ is the greatest physician and the principal reason why the profession should be held in esteem, because He rose from the dead (Luke 24:6-7), raised Lazarus (John 11:38-44) and offers eternal life to those who accept Him as their Saviour.

A Biblical precedent for viewing the Passion as a healing act can be found in 1 Peter 2:24 where Christ (the Suffering Physician) is referred to as an example,

> who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness - by whose stripes you were healed.

According to Strong (1890:37) the word 'healed' in this verse,

coming from the Greek, means 'to cure (literally or figuratively): - heal, make whole'. As in other dramas on the theme of the sacrament, one of the central premises expressed in the *Nyeuwervaert Play* is the belief in transubstantiation. Early in the play the First Man makes this belief apparent by stating that the host is God Himself:

> Om dit heilich sacrament te halen,
> Soe sijnder hoogher werdicheit dient,
> Want tes God selve
>
> (lines 193 - 195).

The Priest confirms this in line 195 and later expresses this belief again:

> Tsacrament, dwelc God es selve
>
> (line 286).

Even the devil characters accept the Real Presence:

> Lucifer sal ons die leden breken,
> Wort gevonden dit heilich sacrament,
> Want tes God selve
>
> (lines 35 - 37) and
>
> Tsacrament heeft ons veel te groote cracht:
> Tes de man met den cruce al zelve
>
> (lines 1074 - 1075).

As a result, the Passion references (and re-enactments), even those made in relation to the host (or eucharist), may be considered to contain allusions to Christ as the Suffering Physician and/or healing.

As has been indicated, the devil characters recognise Christ as present in the host, and thus lead Macharius into doubting this (their temptation being truly potentially soul-damning). As a result, in the same way as the Jews in the *Croxton Play*, Macharius sets out to test the host:

> God heves de macht wel, tes waer, ic kent,
> Maer ic en cans niet gheloven nochtan:
> Dus ben ic ter Nijeuwervaert gheseijnt
> Om dit te proevene, op dat ic kan
>
> (lines 376 - 379).

Macharius does not seem to doubt the Real Presence, but just that this particular host is authentic:

> Maer ic heb een ander inden sijn:
> Ik salt met eender griffien steken
> Tot vijff steden
>
> (lines 421 - 423),
>
> Willet tot gheen der vijff steden bloeden,
> Soe en houdict voer gheen sacrament volmaect
>
> (lines 425 - 426).

The devil characters have suggested various methods by which Macharius may test the host, such as burning (lines 401-403), immersion in water (lines 409-415) and cutting the host into pieces (lines 417-419). According to Hummelen (1958:302-303), the dialogue in this scene seems to indicate that the devil characters are invisible to Macharius and that he simply hears their words as demonic whisperings. He does not, presumably, recognise them as devils and is thus possibly influenced by them more easily. This scene may have been presented on stage by

allowing the devil characters to approach Macharius from behind (for instance) and to speak to him, while he responded to their suggestions without ever acknowledging their presence. This would allow the audience to see the temptation being dramatically enacted and perhaps be more effective than simply allowing the devil characters to speak to Macharius (on stage) from off stage, thus only being heard, and not seen, by the audience.

Macharius, however, rejects all of the suggestions offered by the devil characters in favour of piercing the host five times. This is significant as it parallels the Five Wounds which Christ received during the Passion, and can thus be seen as a re-enactment of the Passion, like the five stab wounds made in the host by the Jewish characters in the *Croxton Play*. The wounds made by Macharius begin to bleed (lines 519-520), which testifies to the truth of transubstantiation as well as to Christ's suffering during the Passion for the sake of humanity. This view is substantiated when the Priest says:

> Loff sij dijnen preciuesen vijf wonden,
> Die ghij voir onse sonden ontfingt
>
> (lines 532 - 533).

The First Woman clarifies the connection between Macharius's attack on the host and the Passion (a re-enactment) when she expresses the belief that Christ is as fully present in the host as He was at the Passion:

> Ghelijck ghij aen theilich cruce hinght,
> Soe sijdij hier volmaect in gedaente

Van desen broode

(lines 534 - 536).

Therefore, Macharius parallels the soldiers who crucified Christ as he inflicts the wounds of the Passion on the host. He also resembles Longinus in that he makes the fifth of the five wounds. Furthermore, he is referred to as blind (clearly in the spiritual sense) a number of times by various characters (in line 48 of the prologue, in lines 435-436 by Belet van Dueghden, in line 482 by the Priest and in lines 1156-1163 by the Bishop). In line 435, Belet van Dueghden states: 'Hij es steeck blindt'. This is particularly interesting as, according to the *Middelnederlandsch Woordenboek*, 'stekeblint' means to be completely blind, while 'steke' or 'steek' also refers to a wound made with a pointed instrument or piercing (Verwijs & Verdam, 1912:2040 and 2044), and Macharius is so spiritually blind that he is about to test the host (Christ) by re-enacting the Passion in exactly that way. Macharius also corresponds with 'doubting' Thomas, as he refuses to believe that the host is real (lines 434, 482 and 484) until he stabs it and it bleeds. Macharius thus, suffers from a spiritual illness similar to that of the Jews in the *Croxton Play* (see pages 39-41). The Jews are, however, healed both spiritually and physically, while Macharius may be seen as being only partially 'healed'. After testing the host, he admits that it is real:

Ic merck nu wel te deser steden,
Dat een sacrament es

(lines 525 - 526).

However, he appears to remain blind to his sin of having subjected Christ to a new Passion (as occurs in the *Croxton Play*), having doubted, and having put Christ to the test (Luke 4:12):

> Ic en hebber niet veel aen misdaen:
> Ic hebbe vanden prelaten tconsent,
> En daer met *adyeu*
>
> (lines 528 - 530).

He remains unrepentant. Thus he rejects a 'prescription' for spiritual health, namely repentance. This is in contrast to Jan Bautoen, who (after touching the host and causing it to bleed, as can be seen in lines 110 and 111) is immediately contrite and repents, begging God for forgiveness (lines 122-123). Jan Bautoen also tells the Priest exactly what happened (lines 221-237), thus following a further 'prescription' for spiritual health, confession. Although it is not specifically stated, it can be assumed that Jan Bautoen is absolved (the Priest's words in line 237 seem to indicate this) and carries out some sort of penance or reparation, thus following the entire 'prescription' for the sacrament of penance as Aristorius and the Jewish characters in the *Croxton Play* do.

It appears that Macharius's soul is lost, as after he has tested the host, the devil characters indicate gleefully that he will be punished for eternity in Hell (lines 562-569) and that Christ will punish all those who test the host:

> Men sal hem leeren tsacrament te proeven;

De gecruyste sal hem wel loonen!

(lines 566 - 567).

Later Belet van Dueghden and Sondich Becoren report that all is not well with Macharius's soul (lines 849-852). It thus seems that he comes to an unhappy end. Mak (1949:298) offers a possible reason for this. It may have been a protest against a rule (concerning the host) determined at the provincial Synod at Keulen in 1452 under the leadership of Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464). It was stated that if a host was

> ...transformed into bloody flesh, or into visible blood, it would be hidden...completely according to the tradition of justice, and not howsoever divulged or shown to the people, so that they might not be led astray, and the mercenary crowd of the common people be kept away[10].

According to Van Leeuwen (1951:43), the entire play may be viewed as a battle between evil, represented by Sondich Becoren and Belet van Dueghden, and good, represented by the host. If this is the case, then one of the major victories of the devil characters would appear to be having led Macharius into testing the host. It is, however, ironic that their 'victory' involves a re-enactment of what would have been considered by the original audience to be Christ's ultimate victory, allowing humanity to be released from sin. Furthermore, the devil characters celebrate for only about thirteen lines before realising that their 'victory' is ruined (lines 572-576) because the host is performing a variety of miracles, including healings (lines 578-587). Sondich Becoren and Belet van Dueghden then brighten up

again at the prospect of winning many souls for Satan in a battle which is to take place between the Christians and the Saracens (lines 594-598).

The battle scene (lines 607-831) at first seems out of place in this play, but upon closer inspection actually makes a significant contribution to the movement and meaning of the play. As Van Leeuwen (1951:43) states, the scene 'sluit goed in het geheel' (fits in well with the whole).

Spiritual truths and values were often conveyed by secular texts (in the Netherlands as well as in other western European countries) during the Middle Ages. Thus spiritual or religious references would naturally have been understood by audiences which were accustomed to interpreting the situations and events represented on the stage in the light of salvation history (Strietman, 1991:236). The battle scene would, therefore, have been easily interpreted in spiritual ways by a medieval audience, and a number of references which relate to the Passion are apparent in it.

The scene begins with a speech by Heer Wouter (lines 607-621) which contains reminders of the Passion such as being wet with sweat (as Christ was during the agony in Gethsemane, as recorded in Luke 22:44) and blood (as Christ would have been on the cross):

> Al muegdij nat, bezweedt, bebloet sijn
>
> (line 610).

There are also echoes of suffering (as Christ did during the Passion) and mourning (which relates to His mother, Mary):

> Al muegdij in veel rouwen sijn
>
> (line 612),

as well as death (as Christ died):

> Wordi verslaghen oft duersteken
>
> (line 616).

As well as being a symbol of the Passion, the blood shed in the battle also serves as a reminder of the wine of the eucharist (which is red) which is itself a symbol of the blood which Christ shed during the Passion. Furthermore, Saint Augustine refers to Christ as a great physician who uses His own blood as a medicine to heal humanity of sin (Schaff, 1887:350). Christ as the Suffering Physician is thus possibly alluded to by the bloodshed of the battle. In the Middle Ages, the Passion is often described as a battle between Christ and Satan. In *The Vision of Piers Plowman* (Schmidt, 1978:220) passus eighteen, for example, Christ is portrayed as a medieval knight:

> 'That Crist be noght biknowe here for *consummatus Deus*,
> In Piers paltok the Plowman this prikiere shal ryde;
> For no dynt shal hym dere as *in deitate Patris*.'
> 'Who shal juste with Jesus?' quod I, 'Jewes or scrybes?'
> 'Nay,' quod Feith, 'but the fend and fals doom to deye'
>
> (lines 24 - 28).

The same often occurs in the Harrowing of Hell plays in the

mystery cycles, as in the York Harrowing of Hell (Toulmin Smith, 1885:382-383), lines 177 to 194. Thus the battle scene is not inappropriate in this play.

The fact that Heer Wouter then ends his speech by stating that his soldiers should continually call out the name of Jesus while they fight (which they do):

> Ende roept alle *Jhesus*, sonder verlaet
>
> (line 621),

further serves to associate the references quoted above with Christ (and His Passion). The war-cry was a normal part of medieval battle and was frequently used to call on divine assistance (Contamine, 1980:229 and 299). Such war-cries as 'Help us, God!' were employed by crusaders (Bishop, 1971:110-111). As a result the use of 'Jhesus, Jhesus!' (lines 622, 625, 628 and 632) as a war-cry by the Christians in this religious battle is both suitable in this context and in line with common medieval practice. This war-cry may also be seen as an earthly 'prescription' for salvation. Through it they were calling upon God to ensure their victory in battle. Furthermore, most were probably keen to evade any serious physical harm or death, but in the event of death to be assured of salvation. In fact, battles were commonly surrounded by religious rites and ceremonies which could be viewed as 'prescriptions' to ensure salvation. As Contamine (1980:298) states, battle was often preceded by 'confession, communion, [and] mass' and combatants made the sign of the cross before risking their lives. Almoners and chaplains often prayed for the success of their party while

the battle was in progress, and after the battle there were 'the obsequies and burial of the dead' as well as 'masses for favours shown' (Contamine, 1980:299-300).

Heer Wouter's speech (lines 607-621) also contains allusions to being pierced:

> Al muegdij duersteken, duerhouwen sijn
>
> (line 609), and
>
> Wordi verslaghen oft duersteken
>
> (line 616).

These references would remind the audience of the Five Wounds of Christ, especially as the scene where Macharius inflicts five wounds upon the host takes place shortly before this scene. Even during the battle the audience is again reminded of the Five Wounds, but in an ironic manner. One of the Saracens cries out: 'Hulp Mamets wonden!' (line 632), which would surely have reminded the original medieval Christian audience, by contrast, of the wounds inflicted on Christ during the Passion which made salvation possible for humanity, as the shedding of Christ's blood from these wounds was seen as the remedy for sin.

Later in the battle, one of the Saracens threatens to pierce one of the Christians with a lance:

> Ic duersteke u met deser lanssen
>
> (line 652).

Being wounded by a weapon such as a lance was a common occurrence in medieval battles, but it also reminds one of the tradition of

Longinus (see page 40). This forms a connection with the *Croxton Play* where the wound in Christ's side (and therefore Longinus) appears to receive special emphasis. The association of the Saracen soldier with Longinus could indicate the spiritual blindness of this character, as a non-Christian. There is, however, no indication that this character is healed of that blindness.

The above quotation may also have served as a reminder of healing to any members of the original audience who had knowledge of the saints. According to Ferguson (1966:114) Saint Cosmas and Saint Damian 'were twin brothers of Arabian birth who were brought up in the Christian faith'. They are the patron saints of medicine and surgery (to which they devoted their lives) and helped the wounded and the sick. They were believed to have performed a number of miracles of healing. These brothers were customarily shown holding a surgical instrument, usually a lancet, in one hand (Ferguson, 1966:182). *The Oxford English Dictionary* (Simpson & Weiner, 1989:616) defines a lancet as a 'surgical instrument of various forms usually with two edges and a point like a lance, used for bleeding'. A lance is not exactly a lancet, of course, though it could serve as a reminder. A further connection is the fact that the non-Christians are described as Saracens (lines 601 and 663). *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (Onions, 1973:1886) defines a Saracen as an 'Arab; by extension, a Moslem, especially with reference to the Crusades' and Saint Cosmas and Saint Damian were traditionally Arab. Furthermore, as Landsberg (1995:4) and Pleij (1988:14) have indicated, a great deal of

medical knowledge was brought into the Low Countries and England during the Middle Ages from the Arabs via Spain.

The section of the battle scene which deals with the drawing of lots and the martyrdom of the Youth (De Knape) contains further allusions to the Passion and healing. The Saracens apparently win the battle and decide that their Christian captives must draw lots to determine which of them will be burnt. There is Biblical precedent for the drawing of lots: the disciples used this method to select a replacement for Judas after his betrayal of Christ (Acts 1:26). It also acts as a reminder of the Passion, as the soldiers cast lots to determine which items of Christ's clothing each would take (Mark 15:24). Furthermore, according to Ferguson (1966:48), it was traditionally believed (though not Biblically confirmed) that lots were drawn to determine whether Barabbas or Christ would be released (before the Passion).

The Saracens' burning of the Youth may also be seen as a 'prescription' (though evil and earthly) for their spiritual health or salvation. In terms of their religion they consider it to be just (and probably spiritually beneficial to themselves by gaining the favour of their god) to sacrifice a Christian every day (lines 670-676). Furthermore, as a result of their actions the Youth dies a martyr's death (line 782), which in medieval Christian society was believed to be sure to lead to the salvation (and thus the spiritual health) of the martyr.

Minderaa (1956:146) criticises Heer Wouter for failing to note

that his prayers to the Nyeuwervaert host (and thus by implication, to Christ) to be saved from the fire serve as an indirect request for the death of the Youth (one of his own soldiers). Such a negative reaction to Heer Wouter's behaviour is unnecessary if one views the Youth as a type or figure of Christ. As has been noted, the drawing of lots (here using beans) serves as a reminder of the Passion. The Youth does not pray to be saved from the fire, but that his soul may be spared from the devil and that the fire will cleanse him of sin, if he must die. This recalls Purgatory, defined by the Catholic Doctrinal Guide of *The Holy Bible* (1966:63) as the 'place and state in which souls suffer for a time after death and are cleansed of their sins, before entering into Heaven' and which is often associated with fire that cleanses the soul. (His prayer thus also serves as a 'prescription' for spiritual health, as does Purgatory.)

In contrast, Heer Wouter calls on Christ, who rose on the third day (a Passion reference), to save him from the fire (lines 716-717), which may be seen here as a symbol of Hell. There are thus different connotations to the fire for the various characters. Heer Wouter furthermore appeals to the host at Nyeuwervaert, which bled from the five wounds inflicted by Macharius (another Passion reminder) and also performed a number of miracles of healing, to help him as well:

> Alsoe waerlic als ghij voer desen dach
> Den croepel hebt doen gaende maken,
> Den blijnden aen sijn licht geraken,

Den doven doen horen, den stommen spreken,
Ende hondertich ander ghebreken
Den menschen met gracien hebt afgenomen,
Soe wilt my oec te hulpe comen,
Ende doet aen mij miracule scoene

(lines 730 - 737).

It is interesting to note that Heer Wouter refers only to miracles of bleeding and healing performed by the host. This creates a vivid image of Christ's blood, shed during the Passion (and indeed of the Passion itself), as a medicine for the souls of humanity. The connection made between the bleeding host and healing in the first half of this speech (lines 722-737) suggests the idea of Christ as the Suffering Physician. Thus, Heer Wouter's escape from the fire may also be seen as symbolic of the salvation of his soul (and the souls of the rest of humanity) from Hell by means of Christ's Passion.

As a result, the Youth may be considered to be a type or figure of Christ as his death saves Heer Wouter from the fire. Later, Heer Wouter praises the host (i.e. Christ) for saving him, using vocabulary that reminds one of the discourse of salvation (in Christian terms):

...desen sacramente,
Dat mi verlost heeft vander doot

(lines 958 - 959), and

Loff, sacrament vol alder virtuten,
Die mi beschermt hebt vanden brandt,

Vander doot verlost en uut der muten

(lines 1008 - 1010).

These references help to create a connection between the fire as a symbol of Hell, from which Heer Wouter was saved by Christ (in the host) and Christ's Passion (here represented by the martyrdom of the Youth) which leads to the salvation of the souls of all humanity. Furthermore, in this part of the battle scene, the Youth serves as a figure of Christ and His sacrifice. The fact that Heer Schoutet uses similar terms to state that the host has saved many people (line 973) intensifies this image. The Youth is also mocked by the Saracens because his God does not save him from death (line 761-764). This corresponds with the manner in which Christ was mocked at the crucifixion (Matthew 27:43). In the medieval Christian view this is ironic as it was believed that Christ had to die to make salvation possible for all humanity (even for those who were mocking Him for not saving Himself or having God save Him). Similarly, the Youth does not need to be saved from physical death because his soul has been saved from spiritual death by Christ.

The Youth's final words:

Vader, in u handen bevelic mijnen geest

(line 792)

echo the last words which Christ spoke on the cross (Luke 23:46). According to Evans (1998:168), these were the words that every medieval Christian wanted on their lips when they died. In both *Everyman* and *Elckerlijc*, for instance, which deal with holy dying (in the medieval Catholic view), the final words of the

protagonists are similar:

> Into thy hands, Lord, my soul I commend;
> Receive it, Lord, that it be not lost
> (lines 880 - 881);
> *In manus tuas*, of mights most
> For ever, *commendo spiritum meum*
> (lines 886 - 887), and
> In uwen handen, vader, hoe dat sij,
> Beveel ic u minen geest in vreden.
> (lines 854 - 855).

Thus, these words can be seen as indicating spiritual health at the point of physical death.

Twice during the battle scene Heer Wouter promises to forgo wine and flesh (meat) until he has seen the host at Nyeuwervaert (lines 740-746 and 829-830). These references would have reminded the audience of the eucharist and of the Last Supper which are both closely connected with the Passion (as well as with each other). Furthermore, it was the norm in the Middle Ages to fast before receiving the eucharist. According to *The Catholic Encyclopedia*[11], such a fast would last from the previous midnight and include abstinence from all food and drink. (Fasting, like pilgrimage, can be seen as a 'prescription' for spiritual health.) Later, when Heer Wouter reaches Nyeuwervaert, Heer Schoutet refers to two figurae of the eucharist: Melchizedek, who served Abram bread and wine (Genesis 14:18-20), and the manna which the Israelites received in the desert (Exodus 16:15). Such allusions recall not only the host (a major focus in this play),

but the entire eucharistic feast (and all its associations with the Passion and healing). In *The Golden Legend*, translated by William Caxton and published in 1493, the eucharist is referred to as a 'feast healthful' (Ellis, 1900:141). It is also stated that: 'None other sacrament is not of so much merit, nor so full of health as this sacrament is' (Ellis, 1900:142). Furthermore, it is stated that although the Israelites ate manna, they all eventually died, while those who receive the eucharist will 'never die eternally' (Ellis, 1900:144-145). As a result, the eucharist can be seen as being 'healthy' for the soul. It was, however, also occasionally used in attempts to heal the body. As Finucane (1977:64) states, there were 'healing rites such as the priests' blessing of sufferers from eye trouble or curing with blessed bread'.

As the above discussion indicates, the battle scene may be regarded as an extension and an elaboration of the re-enactment of the Passion in the scene where Macharius stabs the host five times, and it has also been shown to fit in well with the rest of the play.

An illustration taken from a medieval Dutch manuscript, *Vander Siecten der broosscer naturen*, printed in approximately 1510 in Brussels by Thomas van der Noot (Pleij, 1990:193), brings together the idea of Christ as the Physician and the notion of His Passion as a healing act, thus demonstrating the idea of Christ as the Suffering Physician in the medieval Dutch context (See diagram 3 in the Appendix.)

In the illustration (a woodcut) Christ is presented as a physician examining the urine sample of a patient. Two lines above the illustration indicate who the patient is, her condition, and what Christ can do about it: 'Dit es vander siecten der broosscer naturen, ende hoe haer ons heere gheneest' (Pleij, 1990:192): This is about the illness of fragile (human) nature, and how Our Lord healed her.

This illustration (along with the story with which it is presented) makes the image of Christ as the Suffering Physician very clear. Not only is Christ presented examining a urine sample, a common method of medical diagnosis in the Middle Ages (see page 45), but the frames of the windows behind Him form two crosses, one on either side of Him. A medieval audience would obviously be reminded of the Passion, where Christ was crucified between two thieves. The cross on His halo would, therefore, not only indicate His holiness and divinity, but also remind the viewer of the cross on which He died at His Passion and how His Passion served as the remedy for sin, allowing humanity (with its fragile nature) to be healed of the illness of sin. Thus the connection between the Passion and healing is made apparent here.

Raftery (1993:160) has noted that a line in *Mariken van Nieumeghen* (Leendertz, 1907:303) may refer to the idea reflected in the above diagram. In a speech made by Moenen (a devil) while he is planning to win souls from God, he says:

> Als een kijcpisse, dies staet mi elck te prisene
>
> (line 578).

The fact that the image of a 'kijcpisse' (vulgar term for a physician, literally meaning 'one who looks at urine') may be an ironic reference to Christ's role as a 'soul doctor' is noteworthy (Raftery, 1993:160). It serves as an indication that the image of Christ as a physician was well enough established in the Low Countries during the Middle Ages to make an inversion of the image (in order to create irony) possible and meaningful in a popular play.

At the end of the *Nyeuwervaert Play* Sondich Becoren and Belet van Dueghden spend about forty-seven lines (lines 1225-1272) lamenting all the miracles (a number of them healings) that the host has performed. They then relate how the host was brought to Breda (lines 1275-1292). The play ends with Sondich Becoren and Belet van Dueghden seeking other people to tempt into sin, an ominous reminder that evil is still present in the world. The epilogue restates the belief in transubstantiation (lines 29-32) and the healing abilities of the host (lines 14-16).

In sum, the *Nyeuwervaert Play* may thus be seen to be very different from the *Croxton Play*. The Dutch play is much longer (1461 lines) than the English play (1007 lines) and is also more static, with less dramatic action and fewer special effects. For instance, while both contain enactments of miraculously bleeding hosts, the Dutch play does not have such special effects as exploding ovens and the severing and restoration of a hand. Both nevertheless achieve their goals (though in different ways) of demonstrating the truth of the medieval Catholic belief in

transubstantiation and illustrating the idea of Christ as the Suffering Physician. The *Croxton Play* does, however, appear to have greater impact and effectiveness. It is also more humorous in linguistic terms, though one must remember that pairs of devils such as Sondich Becoren and Belet van Dueghden in the Dutch play traditionally performed a good deal of comic 'business'.

Like the *Nyeuwervaert Play*, the *Saincte Hostie* deals with a local host miracle. It was first recorded in the *Acte de Paris*, a type of 'police report' to the 'Official de Paris' (Aronberg Lavin, 1967:3). According to this report a Jew was arrested for the profanation of a host on Easter day in 1290. In 1294 a monk from the monastery of Saint Bavon (in Ghent) described the incident. According to him a Parisian Jew bought a consecrated host from his Christian serving girl for ten pounds. He placed the host on a table, saying to other Jews who were present that Christians are fools to believe in the efficacy of the host. The Jews then attempted to destroy the host using such instruments as knives, but were unsuccessful. Eventually one of them struck the host with a large knife, at which point the host broke into three and began to bleed profusely. A number of the Jews were converted to Christianity at the sight of this miracle. The host was then boiled in a cauldron of water in order to destroy it, but it turned into 'flesh and blood'. After seeing this the Jew and his family converted to Catholicism (Aronberg Lavin, 1967:3). The tradition also developed that the Jew had obtained the host by blackmailing a Christian woman who owed him money. He then

attempted to 'kill' the host. His family, horrified by his attack on the host, were converted to Christianity and reported him to the authorities. The Jew remained unrepentant and was, as a result, condemned and burned (Muir, 1999:89). Thus, many versions of this story developed in the form of traditions, tales and drama.

The drama to be discussed here, *Le jeu et mystère de la Saincte Hostie*[12], deals with a Jew who obtains a host in order to torture it, by blackmailing a Christian woman who owes him money. She acquires the host at Mass on Easter day (receiving it, but not consuming it). She then delivers it to the Jew. After obtaining the host, the Jew proceeds to abuse it. He beats it with a scourge, makes five wounds in it, nails it to a column, tries to burn it in a fire, pins it to a chimney with a lance, attacks it with a kitchen knife and boils it in a cauldron of water. While this takes place the host bleeds and the Jew's wife and daughter plead with him to stop, but he becomes more and more enraged as he goes on. The Jew's wife, daughter and son are converted to Christianity when the host turns into a crucifix (after being boiled), to which they pay homage. They leave the Jew lying on his bed in a rage and report him to the authorities. The Jew is then tried and found guilty of profaning the host. He remains unrepentant, however, and is burned. In the second part of the play, the Christian woman who stole the host flees to Senlis where she works in a hostel for seven years. She too is burned after she bears an illegitimate child which she kills, and finally admits to stealing the host. In contrast to the Jew, she

is repentant and is absolved, but she is nevertheless executed for the sacrilege.

The re-enactment and reminders of the Passion present in this play will be considered first. This discussion will be followed by an examination of the Jew's 'madness' as a spiritual illness, and the 'prescriptions' for spiritual health which are referred to, such as conversion to Christianity and confession.

As has been noted in relation to the *Croxton Play* and the *Nyeuwervaert Play*, Christ's Passion may be seen as the ultimate act of healing in the medieval Christian view. This is due to the fact that the Passion was believed to make salvation possible for the souls of humanity. As Saint Augustine stated: 'the Church has been redeemed from sin by the blood of a Mediator [Christ] who had no sin' (Schaff, 1887:257). The *Middle English Dictionary* defines salvation as 'Deliverance from sin and damnation, redemption; admission to eternal life'. It was also defined in terms of physical health: 'the process of healing, curation; also, that which heals' (Lewis, 1986:129 and 130). Thus salvation may be seen as the ultimate act of healing as it ensures the spiritual well-being of the soul for eternity. It can, therefore, be considered to be more important than mere physical health (which can only be temporary as death is inevitable), as the medieval Church often emphasised (see endnote 3 and pages 44 and 45). According to Metzger & Coogan (1993:670) most of the occurrences in the New Testament of the Greek verb '*sōzō*' (meaning 'to save') and its derivatives, particularly the noun

'*sōtēria*' (meaning 'salvation') refer to the ultimate salvation of Christ's followers. However, the same phrase that is used for the forgiveness of sin (for example, when Christ forgives the sinful woman after she anoints His feet with fragrant oil in Luke 7:48-50) is also used in stories of healing, and in the story of the paralytic man referred to earlier (see pages 78-79) the forgiveness of sin is a type of spiritual healing concomitant with the restoration of physical health. Therefore, for the one who is forgiven, this spiritual healing is 'salvation', meaning the admission of one's soul into heaven (Metzger & Coogan, 1993:670). Thus even in the Bible, in the words of Christ Himself, health (whether physical or spiritual) and salvation are closely related. As a result, in terms of this investigation, re-enactments of and references to the Passion are of importance, especially as they usually lead to the miracle of a bleeding host (a reminder of the healing power of Christ's blood shed at the Passion). This often results in some sort of spiritual healing such as a character's conversion to Christianity or the repentance of sin (although physical healings do also take place).

This play presents a re-enactment of the Passion from Judas's decision to betray Christ (Matthew 26:14-17), in that when the Christian woman agrees to obtain the host for the Jew she compares herself to Judas, who sold Christ for profit and was therefore damned (Biᵛ). The Jew carries out the rest of the re-enactment of the Passion. He first strikes the host with a scourge (Civ). The manner in which he describes this action

simultaneously reminds the audience of the fact that Christ was scourged at Pilate's order (Matthew 27:26) and that He was beaten (and mocked) by the soldiers (Matthew 27:30). The Jew also specifically relates these actions to Christ and to the shedding of His blood:

> A ce coup ie vous frapperay
> De ceste escourgee singlant
> Tant que verray couler le sang
> De voz flans et de voz costez
> Aussi bien que le temps passe
> Fut oncques Jesus...
>
> (Civ)
>
> (With this blow I will strike you
> With this stinging scourge
> So that I shall see the blood flow
> From your sides and your flanks
> As indeed in times past
> Jesus was [scourged]...)[13]

After this attack the host begins to bleed. This is noteworthy because, as has been stated earlier, Christ's blood (shed during the Passion) was frequently viewed as a spiritual medicine in medieval Christian society (see pages 90 and 96). Unperturbed, the Jew attacks the host with a knife, making five wounds (Civ), which serve as a reminder of the Five Wounds which Christ received during the Passion. This is similar to the five wounds which are made in the host by the Jews in the *Croxton Play* and by Macharius in the *Nyeuwervaert Play*.

Next, the Jew states that he will crucify Christ (in the form of the host) just as his ancestors did. He then nails the host to a column, upon which blood flows to the ground from the host (Ciir). This is clearly a re-enactment of the actual crucifixion of Christ, not only because the Jew specifically draws the comparison himself, but because of the striking visual parallel which such a scene would create when enacted on stage. This would have been especially true for the intended medieval audience who would most likely have been familiar with Passion plays, whether performed individually or as part of a cycle.

The Jew then tries to burn the host in a fire, but cannot hold it there and is thus again unsuccessful in his attempt to destroy it. The use of fire here may be seen as a metaphor of Hell and may thus refer to Christ's descent into Hell after His death. The fact that the Jew can apparently not keep the host in the fire because (as his daughter observes) God is stopping him may recall the Harrowing of Hell, where Christ's power over evil is demonstrated. An example of this can be seen in the Harrowing of Hell in Langland's *The Vision of Piers Plowman* (Schmidt, 1978:228), passus eighteen:

> A spirit speketh to helle and biddeth unspere the yates: '*Attolite portas.*'
> A vois loude in that light to Lucifer crieth,
> 'Prynces of this place, unpynneth and unlouketh!
> For here cometh with crowne that kyng is of glorie.'
> Thanne sikede Sathan, and seide to helle,
> 'Swich a light, ayeins oure leve, Lazar is fette;

> Care and combraunce is comen to us alle!
> If this kyng come in, mankynde wole he fecche,
> And lede it ther Lazar is, and lightliche me bynde
> (lines 261 - 269).

The Jew then pins the host to the chimney with a lance (Ciiv). This Passion reminder recalls the tradition of Longinus (who made the wound in Christ's side) and thus creates a connection with the *Croxton Play* and the *Nyeuwervaert Play*, which also allude to this tradition. The reference to this tradition may serve to indicate the spiritual blindness of this character as a non-Christian (who also does not convert as his family eventually does). The actual pinning of the host to the chimney also creates a parallel with the nailing of Christ to the cross. In terms of this parallel, the Jew's subsequent attack on the host with a kitchen knife (Ciiv) may also be seen as a reminder of the wound that Christ received in His side. Finally the Jew boils the host in a cauldron of water which becomes bloody, just as the Jews in the *Croxton Play* boil the host in oil. Both incidents may be seen as cooking metaphors of Hell (see page 24), and thus serve as reminders of Christ's descent into Hell. At this point a crucifix appears above the cauldron of water. The bleeding of the host and the appearance of the crucifix demonstrate the medieval Catholic belief in transubstantiation. The appearance of the crucifix also indicates that the torture of the host may indeed be seen as a symbolic re-enactment or reminder of the Passion and may also relate the belief in the 'sacrifice' of the eucharist (see pages 10 and 119) to Christ's sacrifice at the Passion. The host is

later referred to as being 'blanche, rouge, et noire' (Diii^{v}), thus white, red and black. This image reminds one of a bruised and bleeding body, as Christ's would have been from the abuses of the Passion. This reference makes the parallel of the sacrifice of the eucharist and the Passion even more clear.

During the trial of the Jew, the elements of torture (like the instruments of the Passion) are listed and shown (similar to the torture scene). This creates a connection with the *Arma Christi* (arms of the Passion) theme found both in medieval devotional art and the *Croxton Play* (see pages 28-29). Items such as the water in which the host was boiled and the lance with which the Jew stabbed the host are shown at the trial in the case against the Jew. Specific emphasis is given to the blood in and/or on the elements of torture. For example the water is bloodied:

> Doicy leau toute sanguine:
> Du voullue lont: regardez...
>
> (Eiv^{r}),

and the lance is covered to the hilt with blood:

> Doicy vne grande demye lance
> Ensanglantee iusques au manche
> Dont percee lont vilainement...
>
> (Eiv^{r}).

This creates a connection with the references to the shedding of Christ's blood (thought to have healing properties) referred to in the scene where the host is tortured (see pages 106-108).

As has been stated in relation to the *Croxton Play*, the Jews were

often viewed as being mad for not accepting Christ as the Saviour (see pages 37-39) and this madness may be seen as a type of spiritual illness (in the medieval Christian view). As Saint Augustine stated in his *Sermons on New Testament Lessons* (Schaff, 1887:343):

> The Physician [Christ] understood how those frenzied men were in their madness putting the Physician to death, and in putting their Physician to death, though they knew it not, were preparing a medicine for themselves.

The Jew is referred to as being full of madness and anger. He states this about himself while he is attacking the host, and his daughter then begs him calm his wrath (Ciiiᵛ). Finally, his family leave him lying on his bed 'tout enrage'; thus, in a fit of madness or rage (Civᵛ). Shortly before the Jew is put to death he seems to be reduced to a somewhat confused state of babbling (asking for his book), thus making him appear to be in a state of madness or confusion. This is of interest as he has refused to repent and accept Christ as his Saviour. Furthermore, with his final words he calls to the devil to carry him off:

> Debles venez hastiuement
> Et m'emportez...
>
> (Hiiᵛ),

Thus, this may have been a deliberate attempt on the part of the playwright to present this character as the 'typical' Jew suffering from the spiritual illness of madness. In his 'madness' he thus subjects Christ (in the form of the host) to a new Passion, just as his ancestors (who were believed to have

suffered from the same 'illness') crucified Christ.

The fact that the Jew refuses to repent or convert and thus dies in a state of sin indicates that he is not 'healed' spiritually before he dies and is therefore damned (in the medieval Christian view). This is, of course, emphasised by the fact that he calls to the devil before he dies. As a result the Jew serves as a contrast to the Christian woman who sells him the host. Her sins include stealing the host, fornication and infanticide, but she eventually confesses (Iii^{v}) and begs for forgiveness (Iiii^{v}). She may thus be seen to be following the 'prescriptions' of the Church for spiritual health or salvation. The Book of Sirach (38:1-15) in the *New Catholic Edition of the Holy Bible* (1957:807) exhorts one to honour earthly physicians for their services, but it is indicated that any successes they may have come from God (38:1-8). Furthermore, emphasis is placed on the confession and repentance of sins before any real healing can take place (38:9-15). This is one of the few texts in the Bible which refers to earthly physicians in a positive manner, but God is still shown to be the ultimate source of healing (both physical and spiritual). In the play, the Christian woman follows the prescription of Ben Sirach in order to regain her spiritual health. She may be connected with the Youth in the *Nyeuwervaert Play* (who is also put to death by burning) and the Everyman character in *Everyman* and *Elckerlijc* (see pages 97-98), as she dies with Christ's words on her lips:

Bon Jesus Jesus. In manus

Tuas commando mon esprit

(Iiii^{v}).

(Good Jesus, Jesus. Into your

Hands I commend my spirit).

Therefore, she clearly dies in a state of spiritual health and it may be assumed that her soul will achieve salvation even though her body is about to die.

Another 'prescription' for salvation dealt with in the *Saincte Hostie* is conversion to Christianity. After seeing the host bleed when the Jew attacks it, his family plead with him to pray for pardon for what he has done (Ciii^{r}). After a crucifix appears above the cauldron in which the host is boiled, they confess Christ as Saviour of the world:

Car ie confesse et si cognois

Due tu es le sauueur du monde

(Civ^{r}).

Their change of heart is demonstrated by the fact that they report the Jew (the woman's husband and the children's father) to the Christian authorities and even testify against him at his trial. Later, they are formally converted when a creed for their conversion is said by the Bishop (Fiii^{r}). The original medieval Christian audience would thus have viewed the Jew's family as having been spiritually healed (achieved salvation) by Christ, by means of the host miracle.

The *Saincte Hostie* differs from the *Croxton Play* and the *Nyeuwervaert Play* in a number of ways. The Jew acquires the host

in order to abuse it, not to test it as Jonathas and Macharius do. He also remains a villain to the end and dies unredeemed, unlike Jonathas and his friends who are converted to Christianity. Although Macharius appears to die unredeemed, he is not presented as a villain, but as having been misled by the devil characters. Jonathas is presented in a more sympathetic manner than the Jew in the French play as can be seen in his opening speech (lines 149-204) where he is allowed to speak in a more reverent tone than Aristorius (lines 81-124), who is a Christian (Lascombes, 1998:266 and 270). The French play is also more concerned with severe punishment as both the unrepentant Jew and the repentant Christian woman are burned for their sacrilege, while no one is put to death in the English play (although the characters have committed similar sins). Nevertheless, both plays demonstrate the medieval Christian belief in transubstantiation. They also present spiritual healings such as conversion and repentance, which often take place as a direct result of a host miracle occurring after the host is attacked or submitted to a 'second Passion'. This indicates the underlying belief in the potentially healing aspects of the Passion and the eucharist.

The Italian sacrament drama, *Un miracolo del Corpo di Cristo*, states in its introduction that it was drawn from the Paris legend. As no modern edition of this play is available, it will not be discussed in detail. The following summary is taken from Aronberg Lavin (1967:5-6). The play opens with a scene which refers to the Orvieto sacrament play, *Miracolo del Corporale di Bolsena*, where a host bleeds and stains the corporal in order to

convince a priest of the Real Presence. (The Orvieto play will be discussed later in this chapter.)

The action proper of *Un miracolo del Corpo di Cristo* starts with a scene of gambling and drinking in a tavern. After losing at dice, Guglielmo (the owner of the tavern) pawns his coat with a Jewish usurer, Manuel. Guglielmo then loses a second time and pawns his wife's gown. She is furious because, as a result, she will have nothing suitable to wear at Easter, which is fast approaching. The wife goes to Manuel and begs to get her gown back. The pawnbroker then persuades her to bring him a host in exchange for the gown, saying that he needs it for his sick son and that he and his family will soon be baptised. After the wife delivers the host to him, Manuel stabs it with a knife. The host begins to bleed profusely, filling the entire courtyard with blood. The blood is seen and the king's cavalieri arrive to arrest Manuel and bring him before the judge. Manuel implicates Guglielmo's wife who subsequently also appears before the judge, who has mercy on her, believing her claim that the Jew tricked her.

The next scene takes place in the king's chambers where he laments the fact that Christ has been subjected to a 'second Passion'. He and the bishop then go to the Jew's house where they kneel before the host and pray to it. The bishop compares the Jew's attack on the host to the tradition of Longinus. As has been indicated, this tradition plays a part in the torture of the

host in the *Croxton Play*, the *Nyeuwervaert Play* and the *Saincte Hostie*. It thus appears to have been a popular part of the crucifixion story, possibly due to the great symbolism attributed to the wound made in Christ's side (see pages 42 and 43).

In the judgement scene which follows, Manuel is offered baptism and redemption, but like the Jew in the *Saincte Hostie* he refuses and is burned. He is thus unwilling to follow any of the prescriptions of the Church for salvation (spiritual health) and is damned as a result. The wife is then brought in to be judged. At this point the action returns to the king, who has a vision of Thomas Aquinas standing between two angels and speaking to him. As a result, the king sends a message to the judge to release the woman, upon which she makes a promise to repent and to carry out all her devotional obligations. In contrast to the Jew, she resolves to follow the Church's prescriptions for spiritual health (and will thus achieve salvation). The king resolves to build a church, and the play ends with every Jew in the town being called onto the stage by name to be beaten by soldiers. As Aronberg Lavin (1967:6) indicates, the main lesson of this play is that eternal salvation may be achieved through penitence (and as has been stated previously, penitence may be viewed as a prescription for spiritual health or salvation).

The predella at Urbino cathedral painted by Paolo Uccello (Italian) in 1467-1468, also depicts a host miracle. Francastel (1952:180-191) has linked this painting with the host miracle

which purportedly took place in Paris in 1290, which the *Saincte Hostie* also deals with. Elements of the painting were also drawn from *Un miracolo del Corpo di Cristo* and other sources. Thus the tradition of the Paris host miracle appears to have had a significant influence on medieval European sacrament drama, as well as other forms of art focusing on the sacrament. The description of the predella is drawn from Aronberg Lavin (1967:6-8). The predella depicts a series of paintings. In the first scene a woman is depicted selling a host to a Jew. Scene two shows the host being cooked in a frying pan by a Jew while his wife and children watch in horror as the host bleeds. A similar scene occurs in the *Saincte Hostie*. Soldiers are depicted arriving outside the Jews' house in order to arrest them. The third scene presents a procession of clerics returning the host to a church. Such a procession is also presented in the *Croxton Play* and the Lincoln Cathedral Library MS. 50. Scene four illustrates the pardoning of the Christian woman who sold the host. She is about to be hanged when an angel arrives with the heavenly pardon. Scene five shows the Jew (and his family) being burnt for his profanation of the host. The sixth and final scene depicts the Christian woman on her death-bed receiving her final communion or *viaticum* from an angel. This scene thus serves to demonstrate the importance of the eucharist as one of the final prescriptions for spiritual well-being.

The *Saincte Hostie*, *Un miracolo del Corpo di Cristo* and the *Croxton Play* (and even Uccello's predella) all differ in detail, but share a number of general similarities. All involve some sort

of economic transaction between a Christian and a Jew in which the Jew acquires a host. The Jew then abuses it, often in such a manner that it may be viewed as a re-enactment or reminder of the Passion. The host then bleeds and in the French and English plays Christ miraculously appears in some form recalling His Passion. In the French and Italian plays (and on the predella) the Jew is brought to justice and put to death after refusing to repent or convert. The *Croxton Play* differs in this respect as Jonathas and his friends willingly repent, confess their sins and actively seek to be baptised into the Christian faith. In the French and Italian plays (and on the predella) it is women who sell the host and one is put to death and the other (two) sentenced to death, but eventually pardoned. In the *Croxton Play* there is no indication that Aristorius (a man) will be put to death. He simply has to give up his role as a merchant and live for good deeds (as penance). The *Nyeuwervaert Play* differs greatly from the rough formula found in these sacrament dramas. Another sacrament play that differs from this pattern while still achieving many of the same ends is the *Miracolo del Corporale di Bolsena*, which will now be discussed[14].

This sacrament play from Orvieto deals with a German priest who doubts the Real Presence. He discloses this to his confessor who is horrified and sends him to Rome as penance. He is further required to say Mass every day of his journey. Although saying Mass is a normal part of a priest's duties, here saying daily Mass is specifically part of his penance. This may be due to the difficulties involved in achieving this when travelling in

foreign parts. After visiting Rome, the priest is still full of doubt. On his return journey he stops at a small town near Orvieto, called Bolsena. Here an innkeeper assures him that the priests at Santa Cristina cathedral have everything prepared for foreign priests to say Mass. Before the service the priest prays that he may be persuaded of the truth of the Real Presence. Shortly afterwards two onlookers see him fall abruptly. They hurry forward, and on the altar see the miracle, later explained as blood dripping from the host onto the corporal, and the host turned red:

> Vidi el corpo di Dio
> ne le suo mano del prete tenere,
> e d'esso, signor mio,
> sopra del corporal sangue cadere,
> e, ie stando a vedere,
> l'ostia bianca diventar vermeglia!
> Si grande maraviglia,
> com'ie v'ho detto, egli è per certo el vero
>
> (lines 149 - 156),
>
> (I saw the body of God
> held in the hand of the priest,
> and from it, my lord,
> blood falling on the corporal,
> as I stood and watched,
> the white host became vermilion!
> So great a marvel/miracle,
> as I have told you it is all certain and true).

After being summoned, the Bishop of Orvieto goes to Rome, attains

the right to the miraculous corporal from the Pope, and subsequently forces the clergy of Bolsena to turn the corporal over to him. The German priest seems to vanish from the play at this point. In the meanwhile the Pope summons the College of Cardinals, and all go to honour the relic while Thomas Aquinas is sent for. The Pope explains that a great miracle of the Corpus Domini has taken place and instructs Aquinas to prepare the Propers for the Office of the new Feast. According to *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Urban IV (*c.*1200-1264) requested Aquinas to compose the office for the Corpus Christi Feast in 1264 (Cross, 1958:1353).

Unlike the *Croxton Play*, the *Nyeuwervaert Play* and the *Saincte Hostie*, the Orvieto sacrament play does not contain a scene in which a host is tortured, or which may be viewed as a re-enactment of the Passion. It does, however, include an enactment of the Mass (Muir, 1995:314). According to Kelly (1968:215), Cyprian was the first to propose a theory of the eucharist as a sacrifice and even referred to 'the dominical victim (*dominica hostia*)' in the Mass. Thus the priest was seen as re-enacting the oblation of Christ's Passion which Christ originally presented to God (Kelly, 1968:215). Pope Gregory also believed that the Mass was a literal re-creation of the Passion, a renewal of Christ's sacrificial act, carried out so as to gain renewed absolution from sin for all Christians (Harris, 1992:7). This perceived connection is made clear in the First Passion Play from the N. Town manuscript (Meredith, 1990:83) when an angel brings Christ a chalice and bread during His agony in the garden

of Gethsemane, shortly before the crucifixion:

> Þis chalys ys þi blood, þis bred is þi body,
> For mannys synne evyr offeryd xal be
> To þe Fadyr of heffne þat is almythty;
> Þi dysciplis and all presthood xal offere fore the
>
> (lines 945 - 948).

Indeed, in the Orvieto play the priest refers to the sacrifice of the host and the wine: 'l'ostia e el vin per lo sacrifizio' (line 98). The Orvieto sacrament play is therefore the only one of the four sacrament plays discussed here that shows definite connections with the Feast of Corpus Christi (Muir, 1989:318). In fact, the play was created for performance at this feast: '*si fa ne la solennità dell'ofizio del Corpo di Cristo*' (De Bartholomaeis, 1943:368).

The first Corpus Christi feast was celebrated in Liège in 1246. It was inspired by a vision received by Saint Juliana (1192-1258), prioress of Mount Cornillon. The historically applicable Feast of the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament (Holy Thursday) took place during a period of lamentation in the Christian calendar. Thus a new feast separate from the emotional character of Holy Week was necessary so that the institution of the sacrament could be celebrated with a jubilant ceremony (McDonald, 1983:119). Urban IV, a previous archdeacon of Liège, was so greatly affected by the host miracle that took place at Bolsena that he issued a bull in 1264 (some eighteen years after the feast had been instituted in Liège) ordering the observance of

the feast to be extended to the entire Church (Kelly, 1986:195-196). Due to the fact that he died later in the same year, his order was not executed until it was confirmed by Clement V (1264-1314) at the Council of Vienne in 1311 (McDonald, 1983:119). According to the Orvieto sacrament play, however, the feast was established due to the host miracle which it enacts and the insistence on the German nationality of the doubting priest may be seen as an attempt to disparage the feast's official origins in (German-speaking) Liège. The miracle's association with Corpus Christi was, nevertheless, recognised in Italy during the Middle Ages (Muir, 1995:22-23 and 186). Thus, the primary focus of the play is the miracle of the bleeding host which demonstrates the medieval Catholic belief in transubstantiation.

The Orvieto sacrament play does not present any physical healings taking place through the power of the host, as can be found in the *Croxton Play* and the *Nyeuwervaert Play*. Furthermore, no specific instance of spiritual healing, such as the conversion of the Jewish characters in the *Croxton Play* and the *Saincte Hostie*, is enacted. Nevertheless, a spiritual healing can be seen as taking place and allusions to the idea of Christ as the Suffering Physician may be found. The first half of the play may be described as a quest for spiritual healing on the part of the German priest (his journey may be seen as serving as a metaphor of this inner development or healing) which is, apparently, eventually successful.

The priest's doubt of the Real Presence may be considered to be

a spiritual 'illness'. Saint Basil the Great (*c*.330-379), Archbishop of Caesarea, expressed a similar understanding of spiritual well-being when he stated: 'all vice is a sickness of the soul as virtue is its health' (Schaff & Wace, 1894:103). As a result, the priest follows various spiritual 'prescriptions' (repentance, confession, penance and prayer) offered by God and the medieval Catholic church in an attempt to be 'healed'. He confesses his sin to his confessor who prescribes a penance which the priest carries out. Confession may be seen as containing allusions to healing as, in his moral treatise on lying, Saint Augustine referred to confession as a 'medicine' (Schaff, 1887:473). Neither of these 'prescriptions' seems to 'cure' the priest's doubt, however, and he eventually appeals directly to God in prayer. This request to the Divine Physician does not fall on deaf ears, and the miracle of the bleeding host subsequently takes place.

Although it is not directly stated, it may be assumed that this finally 'heals' the priest of his doubt, as he falls in a faint and has been sincerely seeking 'healing' (through confession, penance and prayer) from his sin, which indicates that he is repentant. The 'prescriptions' of confession and penitence may also be seen as part of the larger 'prescription' of the sacrament of penance for spiritual health. When this milder 'prescription' fails, however, a more drastic remedy (the host's miracle) is called for or 'prescribed'.

When one considers that the Passion was often viewed as an act

of healing which was re-created in the Mass, a number of allusions to the Passion may be noted which remind one of Christ as the Suffering Physician. The host was seen as Christ's actual body; therefore, the blood which it shed would have been viewed as His real blood, as shed at the Passion. The bleeding host thus serves as a potent reminder of Christ's suffering at the Passion and, as has been noted earlier (see page 34), Christ's blood was often viewed as a spiritual medicine. According to *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, it was recorded in the tenth century that it was decreed at the Council of Rheims that the corporal was to be made of only the purest and finest linen, as Christ's shroud was made of linen. This not only reminds one of Christ's death and burial, but also of the Resurrection (Christ's victory over death) and the occasion when the disciples found only the grave clothes lying in the tomb (John 20:4-7). Furthermore, the German priest in the Orvieto play, like the Jews in the *Croxton Play* and *Saincte Hostie* and Macharius in the *Nyeuwervaert Play*, parallels 'doubting' Thomas who had to see Christ and touch His wounds in order to believe that He had risen (John 20:24-29). In the play the priest has to see the host bleed before he can overcome his disbelief in the Real Presence. Thus the miracle of the bleeding host may be seen as the remedy offered by the Suffering Physician to cure the priest of his spiritual illness of doubt.

The Mass in the Orvieto play may be seen as a variant of the popular tale of Saint Gregory's Mass (Muir, 1995:186), discussed in chapter one in relation to the *Arma Christi* (instruments of

the Passion) and *Imago Pietatis* (Man of Sorrows) in the *Croxton Play* (see pages 28-32). In the earlier form of this story a woman in the congregation sniggers while Gregory is celebrating Mass. When questioned about her behaviour, she replies that she can not believe that Christ resides in the host (bread) as she herself baked the bread. Gregory then prays that she will be persuaded of the Real Presence. A vision of the host as a bleeding finger then restores her faith (Rubin, 1991:121). Thus visions of the shedding of Christ's blood during the eucharist (reminders of the Passion) were used in medieval stories to restore faith to those doubting the Real Presence. This also happens in the Orvieto sacrament play.

The miracle of the host enacted in the Orvieto play is also depicted (slightly differently) in a wall-painting in the Corporal Chapel of Orvieto cathedral. Here the doubting priest faces the viewer and in the host a child holding a cross can be discerned (Rubin, 1991:122). This creates a connection with the *Croxton Play* (line 804) where one of the miracles of the host includes Christ's appearance in the form of a child with the wounds of the Passion. The same apparition occurs in the miracle of the host described in Lincoln Cathedral Library MS. 50 (f.126^{v}-f.127A^{r}). The painting in Orvieto cathedral also creates a connection between the Christ-child and the suffering of the Passion by depicting Him as holding the cross.

All of these images make the medieval Catholic belief in transubstantiation, as well as the perceived connection between

the eucharist and the Passion, very clear. Both were often viewed in spiritually medicinal terms. According to Kelly (1968:197-198), Ignatius not only believed literally that the bread was Christ's flesh, and the wine His blood, but also that:

> ...the eucharist brings Christians into union with their Lord, it is the great bond between them; and since it mediates communion with Christ, it is a medicine which procures immortality...an antidote against death which enables us to live in the Lord forever.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that Christ Himself was occasionally seen as a medicine for all ills, as can be seen in the York carpenters' play (Toulmin Smith, 1885:406) dealing with the Resurrection and the fright of the Jews: 'Of ilke a myscheue he [Christ] is medicyne' (line 195). It is thus possible for the Orvieto sacrament play, like the other plays discussed above, to be considered in terms of the concept of Christ as the Suffering Physician and of healing, as a number of aspects of medieval Catholic society referred to in the play were generally understood in terms of medicine, health and healing. The Passion was understood as a healing act. The eucharist was seen as closely related to the Passion and was believed to offer spiritual health to the faithful. Christ's blood was seen as a spiritual medicine. Finally, sin was often viewed as a spiritual 'illness' and both confession and Christ Himself were, on occasion, referred to as spiritual medicines.

In the Orvieto Play the audience is never actually shown the 'bleeding host' and the host is not tortured. This play is thus more reverent and reserved than the *Croxton Play* where the audience sees the host being tortured in a number of ways and also sees it bleed. Furthermore, there are no comic scenes or elements in the Orvieto Play such as the 'quack doctor' scene in the *Croxton Play* or the devil characters in the *Nyeuwervaert Play*.

Similarly, the *Saincte Hostie* is also a more reserved play containing little humour. It is, however, more sombre than the other plays discussed here as the Jew appears to be more malicious in intent in his attack on the host than Jonathas or Macharius. Furthermore, not only is the Jew burned for his crime, but so is the repentant Christian woman who sold him the host. Although, as Strietman (1991:243) states, the devil characters in the *Nyeuwervaert Play* provide some 'comedy and movement in an otherwise static play', their intention at the end of the play to seek more people to lure into sin does tend to temper the humour.

The generally more comic nature of the *Croxton Play* may be attributed to various aspects. First, even though the 'quack doctor' scene contains a number of deep and significant messages, as has been demonstrated, it is highly entertaining and helps create a more humorous tone in the play as a whole. Secondly, no one really gets hurt and all the characters willingly repent their sins by the end of the play. Even the amputation of

Jonathas's hand seems grotesquely humorous and he is eventually completely healed (both physically and spiritually). Furthermore, the Jews are presented in a more sympathetic manner than in the *Saincte Hostie* or *Un miracolo di Corpo di Cristo*. For example, as was shown, Jonathas (a Jew) is allowed to speak in a more reverent manner than Aristorius (a Christian), rather than simply as 'a Jewish villain' (Lascombes, 1998:266 and 270).

Despite their difference, these sacrament dramas all make the medieval Catholic belief in transubstantiation and Christ as a physician (especially a spiritual physician) very clear. Thus, in all of the plays discussed, the consecrated host is presented as Christ's real body which is then involved in some sort of re-enactment or reminder of the Passion. These re-enactments and reminders serve as an indication of His role as a spiritual physician due to the fact that the Passion brings about salvation which may be viewed as the ultimate spiritual healing. In the *Croxton Play* the host performs miracles of both spiritual and physical healing. A number of miracles of physical healing are reported in the *Nyeuwervaert Play* and it has been demonstrated that these may be seen as indicators of simultaneous spiritual healing. The *Saincte Hostie* and the *Miracolo del Corporale di Bolsena* do not report any miracles of physical healing, but concentrate on spiritual healings such as the conversion of the Jew's family to Christianity and the restoration of the German priest's faith in the Real Presence. Actions and processes which may be seen as 'prescriptions' for spiritual health (or salvation), such as the sacrament of penance (including

contrition, repentance, confession, absolution and the act of reparation), prayer and obeying the rules of the medieval Catholic Church, are considered in all the plays discussed here.

Thus, despite their differences, the plays discussed here all serve to reveal (whether to a greater or lesser extent) that part of the medieval Catholic mentality which views Christ (in all His forms) as the Physician of humanity.

Conclusion

> *This name Jesus is such a medicine that...it attempereth the thirst of avarice, and it dryeth all rotten wretchedness.*
>
> *-William Caxton (tr.)*
> *The Golden Legend (1493)*

As with any medieval literature (or other art), sacrament dramas can reveal a great deal about the medieval Catholic mentality. The focus of this investigation has been the portrayal of Christ (perceived as a Real Presence in the eucharistic host) as the Suffering Physician in the *Croxton Play of the Sacrament*, *Dat es Tspel vanden Heiligen Sacramente van der Nyeuwervaert*, *Le jeu et mystère de la Saincte Hostie*, the *Miracolo del Corporale di Bolsena* (from Orvieto) and related texts.

The sacrament plays discussed here all present a consecrated host which bleeds (whether due to being tortured or in answer to a prayer to be convinced of the doctrine of transubstantiation), thus demonstrating the truth of the Real Presence. Physical and/or spiritual healings take place in the plays as a result of the healing power of the host. The plays also frequently contain some sort of re-enactment or reminder of the Passion so as to impress upon the audience Christ's suffering at the crucifixion (which was often viewed as the ultimate act of healing for

humanity, by offering salvation). Furthermore, whether to a greater or lesser extent, the plays also touch on the role of penance as part of the 'prescription' for spiritual health or salvation. Other 'prescriptions' such as prayer and obedience to the rules of the medieval Catholic Church are also referred to in some instances. It thus becomes clear that Christ is often presented as a healer in medieval sacrament drama and that His suffering (at the Passion) is frequently alluded to before a physical and/or spiritual healing takes place. This may be due to the fact that healings (especially spiritual ones) often take place as a result of a character's seeing the miracle of the bleeding host.

Other associated elements are often manifested in these sacrament plays. The *Arma Christi*, or instruments of the Passion, are emphasised in the *Croxton Play* during the torture of the host and in the *Saincte Hostie* both during the torture of the host and in the trial scene. As a result, the abuse of the host and the abuse of Christ during the Passion are, through these plays, shown to be intimately connected in the medieval mentality. Related to this is the iconography of the *Imago Pietatis* or Man of Sorrows. When related to the abuse of the host, it seems at times to become the Child of Sorrows. In both the *Croxton Play* and the Lincoln Cathedral Library MS. 50, the host transforms into the Christ-child with the wounds of the Passion after the host is attacked. An example of this was also noted in the painting in Orvieto cathedral, which depicts the miracle of the host dealt with in the Orvieto play. Here the Christ-child holding a cross

may be discerned in the host. Thus, these sacrament plays make use of medieval Passion iconography in order to relate attacks on the host to the Passion and its associated meanings. The use of the Christ-child in relation to the Passion may be an attempt to elicit greater sympathy for Christ's suffering and thus lead the audience (or viewer) to contrition and repentance for their sins.

Furthermore, certain linguistic choices appear to have been made in an attempt to create images of, and associations with, the Passion and other perceived forms of healing. The *Croxton Play* makes use of such methods in the 'quack doctor' scene, in particular. Here the careful use of specific words helps produce a scene which may be understood in terms of simple low humour or on a much deeper religious level, principally in relation to the Passion and Christ's role as the Physician of humanity. The references to medicinal plants are particularly significant. They indicate that one may be purged physically or spiritually by means of a plant or the Passion in order to achieve physical health or spiritual health (salvation). Spiritual methods for achieving spiritual health are, therefore, discussed in terms of earthly methods of attaining physical health and so may be presumed to be related in some way in the medieval mentality.

In all the plays discussed, various characters are related to Judas, 'doubting' Thomas and Longinus, often to indicate their spiritual illness, such as the betrayal or sale of Christ in the form of the host (Judas), doubting Christ or His Real Presence

in the host (Thomas) or blindness (Longinus). Most of these characters are eventually spiritually healed or saved. The medicinal and/or sacrificial qualities of the eucharistic feast are referred to in the *Croxton Play* and the Orvieto play, while the Five Wounds of Christ are dealt with in the *Croxton Play*, the *Nyeuwervaert Play* and the *Saincte Hostie*. In all the plays discussed here the host bleeds. As has been demonstrated, Christ's blood was frequently viewed as a medicine in the Middle Ages.

Although ideas and beliefs concerning Christ as the Suffering Physician are not always the dominant theme of a specific sacrament play, they are frequently present, whether as an intricately developed *Christus Medicus* motif as in the *Croxton Play*, or as a part of the underlying understanding and mentality which would probably have been shared by a medieval audience and thus have affected their interpretation of the play, as in the sacrament play from Orvieto.

The drama (and other forms of art) of a society often serves as an indicator of its general nature and beliefs. The fact that drama was a more popular form in the Middle Ages than some other literature means that it is more generally relevant and revelatory. The numerous cycle plays in which entire towns (at virtually all levels of society) became involved testify to this popularity and accessibility. Drama, therefore, frequently deals with issues which are of importance and concern to its society in order to be relevant to its audience. Thus, medieval drama is

of value to the modern scholar because of what it can reveal of the life and mentality of the society which produced it. The focus is not merely on an isolated portion of that society such as the upper classes (as may be the case in a study of Romance), but on the mentality of medieval society in general.

This investigation of sacrament drama has not only sought to indicate the importance of the doctrine of transubstantiation to a number of medieval Catholic communities in western Europe and England, but has also demonstrated their belief in Christ as the Suffering Physician working through His Passion, the host, the clergy and the sacraments of the medieval Catholic Church to heal both physical and spiritual illness. As Dox (1997:106) has stated: 'Popular piety assigned the host mystical properties and divine potential. The host's magical powers were invoked for cures, for protection, and to work against one's enemies'.

Drama was often used in the Middle Ages to create and confirm attitudes in its audience, whether negative, such as implicating the Jews in host desecration, or positive, such as instilling and/or increasing faith in Christ in its predominantly Catholic audience. Sacrament drama, therefore, not only informed its target audience's own attitudes and beliefs (mentality), but also reveals much to a modern audience about the society which produced and viewed these plays.

Endnotes

1.This illustration is taken from *Nederlandse Literatuur van de Late Middeleeuwen* by Herman Pleij (1990:193) and represents Christ as a physician studying the urine sample of a patient. For a detailed discussion of this illustration see the Appendix, diagram 3.

2.Unless otherwise specified, all Biblical references and quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible* (New King James Version) published by Thomas Nelson Publishers (1982).

3.Examples of the medieval belief in the supremacy of spiritual health over physical health can be found in Sermon LXXV of Saint Augustine's *Sermons on New Testament Lessons*. Here he indicates that physical health is of little value when compared with spiritual concerns (Schaff, 1887:474). Furthermore, Finucane (1977:64) states that at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 and in recurring diocesan legislation in England in the thirteenth century, Christians were reminded that spiritual health should take precedence over the physical, and that the priest was to be preferred above the physician. Scherb (1990:161) has also noted that medieval English writers were often more concerned with spiritual health than physical health.

4.All quotations from the *Croxton Play* are taken from *Early English Drama: An Anthology* (Coldewey (ed.), 1993:277-305).

5.This reference reminds one of II Thessalonians 2:8:

> And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the

> Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

Here the word 'consume' comes from the Greek, meaning to 'destroy' or 'consume' (Strong, 1890:11). *The Oxford Paperback Dictionary* defines consume in the following way: 'to use up...to eat or drink up...to destroy completely', while to eat is defined as 'to destroy gradually, to consume' (Hawkins, 1988:172 and 254). Thus although this Biblical reference may probably be best understood in terms of the destruction of evil by fire, it may also be interpreted in terms of the destruction of evil by ingestion and digestion.

6. Another connection between dismemberment and Christ as the Suffering Physician (and the Passion) is the fact that one of the Jews is, as Cutts (1944:57) notes, named Malchus. This was the name traditionally given to the servant of the high priest whose ear was cut off in the garden of Gethsemane and whom Jesus subsequently healed. This episode is enacted in a number of mystery cycles.

7. The idea of Christ legally releasing humanity from the fault or blame incurred at the Fall through sin touches on a complex concept which has been surrounded by controversy since the twelfth century: the idea of the devil's rights in the redemption. Simply put, it was determined by the Church Fathers (Saint Augustine in particular) that God decided to win humanity back from the devil by means of justice rather than power so as to set a good example for humanity. He did this by allowing the devil to carry out the unjust act of killing the sinless Christ (disguised in human flesh). As a result, the devil forfeited the souls of the faithful (Marx, 1995:8-11).

This helps explain the idea of the devil using Pilate's wife in an attempt to prevent the crucifixion (see page 44). This theory later developed into new versions of the Harrowing of Hell and the debate between Christ and Satan (Marx, 1995:4).

8. All quotations from *Everyman* are taken from *Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays* (Cawley (ed.), 1956:207-234). All quotations from *Elckerlijc* are taken from *Den Spieghel der Salicheit van Elckerlijc* (Schutte & De Klerk (eds.), 1987).

9. All quotations from the *Nyeuwervaert Play* are taken from *Middelnederlandsche Dramatische Poëzie* (Leendertz (ed.), 1907:213-276).

10. This translation was provided by Prof. L. Cilliers by means of personal communication on 11 October 2000.

11. All information from *The Catholic Encyclopedia* is taken from the on-line edition (1999), http://newadvent.org/cathen.

12. All quotations from *Le Jeu et mystère de la Saincte Hostie* are taken from the on-line edition by the Bibliotheque Nationale Française, Rés. Yf-21915, (electronic:N071490), http://gallica.bnf.fr

13. This translation is taken from Muir (1999:95).

14. All quotations from the *Miracolo del Corporale di Bolsena* are taken from *Laude Drammatiche e Rappresentazioni Sacre*, vol.1 (De Bartholomaeis (ed.), 1943:368-381).

Appendix

Diagram 1 is taken from *The World of Medieval Learning* by Anders Piltz, translated into English by David Jones (1978:47).

As discussed on page 30, an interesting connection can be noted between the idea of the Man of Sorrows and a medical diagram known as the 'man of sores' (diagram 1). As Piltz (1978:46) states, the 'man of sores' figure, taken from Hieronymus Braunschwig's *Buch der Cirurgia, Handwirckung der wundartzny*, printed in 1497 in Strasbourg by J. Grüninger, was meant to illustrate a number of medical theories of treatment discussed in the text.

Furthermore, this diagram serves as a reminder of a bizarre variant of a motif common in ecclesiastical art where Saint Sebastian is depicted riddled with arrows (Piltz, 1978:46). Saint Sebastian was a martyr sentenced to death by being shot with arrows. He was, however, healed by a widow, Saint Castulus. When this was discovered, he was beaten to death with cudgels. As a result, the arrow is Saint Sebastian's emblem (Attwater, 1965:304). The 'man of sores' medical figure may be seen as reminiscent of the Man of Sorrows type in medieval religious art. It is also worth noting that in this diagram there is a nail in the figure's right foot and a thorny branch at the left foot (from the figure's point of view), both of which serve as

reminders of the instruments of the Passion (*Arma Christi*). The pattern on the floor also forms crosses.

Thus there are reminders of the Passion (considered to be a spiritually healing act) in a medieval medical diagram. The diagram also recalls the tradition of a saint who was sentenced to death by being shot with arrows, but was healed of his wounds. This indicates a close association between physical and spiritual healing. As Piltz (1978:152) states, no clear division existed between religious knowledge and other forms of knowledge in the Middle Ages. Thus medical illustrations could easily be accompanied by Biblical quotations or parallel the iconography of certain traditions in religious art.

Diagram 1

Diagrams 2(a) and 2(b) are taken from *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* (Gove, 1961:545 and 1716).

Diagram 2(a) is of a pillory, which *The Oxford Paperback Dictionary* (Hawkins, 1988:611) describes as 'a wooden framework with holes for the head and hands, into which offenders were formerly locked for exposure to ridicule'. By comparison, a cross is defined as 'an upright post with another piece of wood across it, used in ancient times for crucifixion' (Hawkins, 1988:191). As Metzger and Coogan (1993:141) note in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, crucifixion is the 'act of nailing or binding a person to a cross or tree, whether for execution or for exposing the corpse. It was considered the cruelest (sic) and most shameful method of capital punishment'.

As a result, a noteworthy (though grotesque) parallel with the crucifixion of Christ, as illustrated in diagram 2(b), is created. When He was crucified, Christ was exposed to public abuse, ridicule and disgrace, as is recorded in Matthew 27:27-31; Mark 15:16-20; Luke 22:63-65 and John 19:1-4. Furthermore, as the diagrams illustrate, the stance of someone secured in a pillory would be similar to that of someone being crucified, with the body in an upright position, the arms extended outwards on either side of the body and the legs more or less together. It is therefore hardly surprising that, as the *Middle English Dictionary* indicates, the cross of Christ was referred to as a 'pillory' in the Middle Ages (Kuhn, 1983:932).

Thus the author's choice of the pillory in the *Croxton Play* seems to be significant in terms of crucifixion imagery, not only because of the use of the specific word (which clearly had a more significant meaning for a medieval audience than a modern one), but due to the physical image which it creates in the mind.

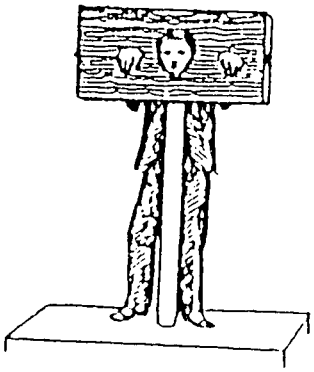

Diagram 2(a)

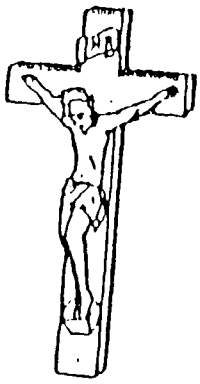

Diagram 2(b)

Diagram 3 is taken from *Nederlandse Literatuur van de Late Middeleeuwen* by Herman Pleij (1990:193). The diagram is from the title page of *Vander Siecten der broosscer naturen*, printed circa 1510 in Brussels by Thomas van der Noot, and also appears on the frontispiece of this dissertation.

In this diagram (a woodcut) Christ is represented as a physician examining the urine sample of a patient (Pleij, 1990:192), a method of diagnosis frequently used in the Middle Ages. The two lines of text above the diagram indicate who the patient is: frail human nature. Thus Christ is clearly portrayed as a physician who is concerned with the spiritual health of humanity, although the use of the urine sample indicates this in terms of 'physical medicine', making the idea more concrete or tangible for the viewer. It helps create a striking and memorable visual image of Christ as the Physician of the souls of humanity.

Christ's suffering in His role as the Physician is indicated in this diagram by means of visual reminders of the crucifixion. The frames of the windows behind Him form two crosses, one on either side of Him. A medieval audience would certainly be reminded of the Passion, where Christ was crucified between two thieves. The cross on His halo would, therefore, not only indicate His holiness and divinity, but also remind the viewer of the cross on which He died at His Passion.

The image of Christ in the role of the Physician, along with this visual reminder of His Passion, indicates that His Passion was,

in the Middle Ages, seen as the cure for sin, allowing humanity (with its frail human nature) to be healed of the illness of sin. Thus the connection between Christ's Passion and His capacity as a healer is made evident here.

Dit es vander sleeten der broosser na
turen. eñ hoe haer ons heere gheneest/

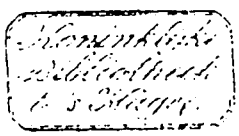

Diagram 3

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Abstract

The object of this dissertation is to investigate the manner in which Christ, perceived as present in the eucharist (by means of transubstantiation), is portrayed as the Suffering Physician in various medieval sacrament dramas from England and Europe. Central to the medieval sacrament drama is the belief in transubstantiation. This refers to the teaching of the medieval Catholic Church (the dominant religious body in western Europe and England at the time) that a communion wafer (host) becomes at the point of consecration the real body of Christ (referred to as the Real Presence) by means of transubstantiation, (although retaining the appearance of bread).

Christ may be perceived as suffering in these plays, as there is usually a reminder or a symbolic re-enactment of His Passion involving a consecrated host. He may be seen as a physician, as His Passion was often viewed and portrayed as the ultimate act of healing for the souls of humankind, offering salvation, the ultimate healing. Furthermore, in these dramas, spiritual and/or physical healings often take place as a result of one or more miracles performed by the power of the host (i.e. Christ).

Chapter one concentrates on the *Croxton Play of the Sacrament*, which is the main focus of this dissertation. The discussion concentrates on a number of aspects of the play where the connection between the Passion, the eucharist and healing (or

Christ as the Physician), are demonstrated. The meal shared by Aristorius (the merchant) and Isoder (the priest) is considered first, followed by the torture of the host, which may be viewed as a re-enactment of the Passion. The 'quack doctor' scene, where physical, earthly physicians and medicine are negatively contrasted with the spiritual remedies of the Divine Physician, is then discussed. Finally, what may be viewed as other 'prescriptions' for spiritual health or salvation presented in the play, such as obedience to the Ten Commandments, and sacramental actions such as baptism, repentance, confession and absolution, are noted. These acts may be described as 'prescriptions' as they are prescribed by the Bible and/or the medieval Catholic Church as methods which contribute to the maintenance of a 'healthy' soul in order to ensure the possibility of salvation in a society which often valued the spiritual above the physical.

The second chapter focuses on *Dat es Tspel vanden Heiligen Sacramente van der Nyeuwervaert* (Dutch). The discussion concentrates on the numerous miracles of physical healing (performed by the host) reported in the play and their relation to the idea of Christ as a physician. The references to the Passion and the eucharist and their connection with the concept of Christ as the Suffering Physician are also considered.
Le jeu et mystere de la Saincte Hostie (French) and the *Miracolo del Corporale di Bolsena* (Italian) both contain spiritual healings (in the medieval Catholic view). These healings include the conversion of Jews to Christianity and the restoration of a

priest's faith in transubstantiation, both of which take place as a result of host miracles. Prescriptions for spiritual health or salvation such as the sacramental actions of repentance, confession, absolution and the actual act of reparation are also discussed in relation to these plays. Relevant similarities and differences between the *Croxton Play of the Sacrament* and the Dutch, French and Italian plays are also noted.

From the discussion it becomes clear that the action, dialogue, themes and other dramatic elements of these plays not only reflect the medieval acceptance of the doctrine of transubstantiation, but also point to a pervasive belief in Christ as a spiritual and at times even physical physician.

Opsomming

Die doel van hierdie dissertasie is om die manier te ondersoek waarop Christus, wat waarneem word as teenwoordig in die Nagmaal (deur middel van transubstansiasie), as die Lydende Geneesheer in verskeie Middeleeuse sakramentdramas vanaf Engeland en Europa, afgebeeld is. Van sentrale belang in die Middeleeuse sacramentdrama is die geloof in transubstansiasie. Dit verwys na die Katolieke Kerk (die destydse dominante godsdienstige liggaam in wes Europa en Engeland) se leerstelling dat die hostie, tydens die wyding, die werklike liggaam van Christus word (alhoewel die hostie nog soos brood lyk).

Christus mag as lydend in hierdie toneelspele beskou word want daar is gewoonlik 'n simboliese heruitbeelding van Sy Passie waar 'n hostie betrokke is. Hy mag as 'n geneesheer gesien word want Sy Passie was dikwels as die beslissende daad van genesing vir die mensdom beskou. Verder vind daar geestelike en/of fisiese genesings in hierdie toneelstukke plaas, gewoonlik as gevolg van een of meer wonderwerke, wat deur die krag van die hostie (Christus) teweeggebring word.

Die eerste hoofstuk handel oor die *Croxton Play of the Sacrament*, wat die hooffokus van die dissertasie vorm. Die handeling konsentreer op daardie aspekte van die toneelspel wat die verbintenis tussen die Passie, die Nagmaal en genesing (of Christus as die Geneesheer) demonstreer. Die toneel waar

Aristorius (die handelaar) en Isoder (die priester) hulle aandete nuttig sal eerste in aanmerking geneem word. Daarna sal die marteling van die hostie, wat as 'n heruitbeelding van die Passie beskou mag word, oorweeg word. Die kwaksalwertoneel, waar fisiese dokters en medisyne op 'n negatiewe manier met die geestelike geneesmiddels van Christus die Geneesheer gekontrasteer word, sal dan bespreek word. Ten slotte word ander 'voorskrifte' vir geestelike gesondheid of verlosssing, byvoorbeeld, die Tien Gebooie en sakramente soos doop, berou vir sonde, belydenis en absolusie, ondersoek. Hierdie dade mag as 'voorskrifte' beskryf word want die Bybel en/of die Katolieke Kerk skryf hulle voor as metodes om die siel 'gesond' te hou en om sodoende verlossing te verkry.

Die tweede hoofstuk fokus op *Dat es Tspel vanden Heiligen Sacramente van der Nyeuwervaert*. Die verhandeling konsentreer op die wonderwerke van fisiese genesing wat deur die hostie uitgevoer word en hulle verbintenis met die idee van Christus as 'n geneesheer. Verwysings na die Passie, die Nagmaal en hulle verbintenis met die konsep van die Lydende Geneesheer wat in die toneelspel gevind mag word, word ook bespreek. *Le jeu et mystère de la Saincte Hostie* (Frans) en die *Miracolo del Corporale di Bolsena* (Italiaans) wat ook in hoofstuk twee onder die loep geneem word, sluit albei voorbeelde van geestelike genesing (in die Middeleeuse Katolieke siening) in. Geestelike genesings soos die omkering van Jode na die Christendom en die teruggawe van 'n priester se geloof in transubstansiasie, vind as gevolg van wonderwerke van die hostie plaas. Voorskrifte vir geestelike

gesondheid of verlossing, soos die sakramentele aksies van berou vir sonde, belydenis en absolusie, word ook hier in verbintenis met die Nederlandse, Franse en Italiaanse teneelspele bespreek. Relevante ooreenkomste en verskille tussen die *Croxton Play* en dié toneelspele word ook hier oorweeg.

Van die onderhandeling blyk dit dat die aksie, dialoog, temas en ander dramatiese elemente van die toneelspele nie net die Middeleeuse geloof in transubstansiasie weerspieël nie, maar ook 'n deurdringende geloof in Christus as 'n geestelike (en soms ook 'n fisiese) geneesheer aandui.

Key Terms

Medieval

Drama

Sacrament drama

Medieval mentality

Transubstantiation

Eucharist

Host

Spiritual remedies

Christ the Physician

Symbolic re-enactments of the Passion