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THE ORDERING OF BOOK ONE OF
THE FAERIE QUEENE

by

WILLIAM ALEXANDER MAIN
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Department of ENGLISH

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

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ABSTRACT

Book One of The Faerie Queene is a neatly patterned, moral allegory based on a series of tests of Red Cross Knight's Holiness. Holiness is treated as a virtue compounded of faith, hope, and charity, and the tests are organized according to this triple division.

Intimately associated with the triple division of Holiness is the psychological scheme by which moral behaviour, and hence character, is represented in the legend. Each of the parts of Holiness is associated with a portion of the soul which is divided according to the Neoplatonic, tripartite conception. Faith is associated with intellection, hope with reason, and charity with appetite. The tests of the knight's faith, hope, and charity are tests of the moral character of the intellectual, rational, and appetitive soul, and in sum the trial of Holiness is a trial of the knight's soul.

The knight faces two series of tests, each comprised of tests of faith, hope, and charity. The knight fails the first set of tests, chiefly as a result of his innocence and his inability to bridle the appetites of the flesh. In the second set, having been perfected in Holiness in the House of Holiness, he succeeds.

In the first set of tests of the knight's Holiness, he faces, in order, a test of faith, a test of charity, and a test of hope. The tests, however, are not distinctly separate, as each is a test of the knight's Holiness with a focus on one of its three parts. In the second set of tests, the knight faces, in order, a test of charity, a

test of hope, and a test of faith. The order of the first series of tests is based on the order of generation and is emblemized in the antagonists of the three parts of Holiness, the brothers Sans foy, Sans loy, and Sans joy. The knight's initially imperfect Holiness is tried according to the order in which these gross imperfections of faith, charity, and hope were created by their satanic father. In the second set of tests, the perfected knight is tried according to the order of perfection of the three parts of Holiness.

The relationship between the flesh and reason figures prominently in the legend, with Prince Arthur as the chief representative of reason and Orgoglio the chief representative of the flesh. As well, there is a hierarchy of figures representing various states of control of fleshly appetite, and ranked from beast to rational man. The figures in the hierarchy are all associated with Una, and the set of relationships involved serves the moral allegory by presenting various states of charity.

Rather than using the method of choosing parts of the text to illustrate general conclusions about the nature of Book One, I have chosen the method of sequential, textual analysis. I have tried to be as careful as possible in my schematization of the legend, noting where my scheme separates tests which, in the legend, are overlapped.

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I

Introduction

Commentary on the first book of The Faerie Queene has slowed to a trickle of late, as other books have gained the attention of critics.¹ Yet while this shift reflects the previous lack of close analysis of the remaining books, it does not reflect a resolution of the difficulties of Book One. Further, many aspects of the poem as a whole still are not fully understood because of the unsuccessful criticism of Book One.

Examples of remaining difficulties in Book One are manifold. There is, for instance, general agreement that the three brothers Sans foy, Sans loy, and Sans joy are parallel with the three theological virtues represented by the sisters Fidelia, Speranza, and Charissa. So far, though, no critic has explained why the order of these parallel sets of characters differs with regard to their generation. As well, no critic has explained why two of the three brothers, Sans foy and Sans joy, attack the hero, Red Cross Knight, while the third, Sans loy, attacks the hero's companion, Una. There is general agreement with the argument that the three brothers are emblems of decayed moral states which Red Cross Knight suffers. But as well, there is general agreement that Una is a character who is proof against all temptation, and therefore is distinct from Red Cross. Yet the text describes Sans loy attacking Una. Any argument concerning the significance of the three

brothers and concerning Una must embrace the fact that Una is attacked by Sans loy, and further that she is unable to overcome him without divine assistance.²

A further example of the failure of commentary on Book One to account for textual details concerns the character and role of Prince Arthur. Because Arthur participates significantly in all of the books of the poem, a failure to account for his role is serious as it leads to misapprehension about his place in the poem as a whole.³ Critics have called Arthur "heavenly grace."⁴ While it is true that by Spenser's own admission Arthur is the norm of moral action in the poem,⁵ it does not necessarily follow that he is a supra-human character. If he is the exemplar of moral action, then to tag him as "heavenly grace" is to play fast and loose with the tropological significance of his role in Book One and in the whole poem. Anagogy ought to be at least suspected as a misleading kind of allegorical explanation of a character whose moral meaning the author points to as central to the meaning of the poem.

The view that Arthur's role is to be understood in terms of heavenly grace creates problems in comprehending details in the action of Book One. If Orgoglio represents pride of some kind, then must not Arthur's fall before Orgoglio, brief as it is, suggest a moral fall? This is at odds with the tag "heavenly grace." Also, critics point out that the exchange of gifts between Arthur and Red Cross Knight suggests the divine aid without which the knight can not survive the tribulations of the flesh.⁶ As well, it should be suspected that the gift

given Arthur by Red Cross Knight has the same kind of significance. Finally, while Arthur is able to take the cover off his shield, and while he knows its capability, he does not do this during his battle with Orgoglio. Rather, it slips off by chance. Contrary to suggesting that Prince Arthur is to be identified with the heavenly grace reflected by the shield, this incident suggests that he is in need of heavenly grace.

A final example of the problems yet to be solved in Book One is the question of the ordering of kinds of divine assistance given Red Cross on the first and second days of his battle with the Dragon at the end of his journey with Una to her parent's city. It is clear that both the well of life and the tree of life enable the knight to survive the battle of the first two days, but it is not made clear by commentary on Book One why they should appear in the order they do.⁷ It is surely unlikely that Spenser has randomly scattered types of miraculous assistance during this crucial battle. Even the details of the battles of the two days differ, and particularly the knight's reaction to near defeat differs on the two days. One common explanation of the battle resorts to typology for exposition--viz., Red Cross Knight is a type of Christ, and this battle is a type of Christ's harrowing of hell.⁸ This, however, does not account for any of the details nor for the moral significance of the battles. Added to this is the tendency for such an explanation to isolate this penultimate test of the knight from the final test presented by the counterfeit messenger Archimago on behalf of Duessa.

One premise underlying the criticism of The Faerie Queene is quite simple: either the poem, and hence individual books, is or is not a consistent allegory. All critics are agreed that allegory is involved, but seldom has there been agreement about the kind of allegory transmitted by the narrative materials. James R. Lowell argued that the allegory was naive and an unwarranted intrusion on the picturesque qualities of the poem.⁹ This shot drew fire from Edward Dowden. He countered with the formal and historical argument that the skeleton of the poem was its moral allegory, and that this was in accord with the spirit of the age as Sidney expressed it in his An Apologie for Poetry. B. E. C. Davies, wading into the fray at a later date, complained that the narrative suffered from the burden of an excrementitious allegory. Both C. S. Lewis and W. B. C. Watkins have fired shots at those who do not consider consistent allegory as the soul of the poem.

Contemporary criticism is divided on the issue of allegory. On the one hand, Paul J. Alpers and Roger Sale, hybridizing linguistics and rhetoric, focus on the stylistic qualities of the poem. Alpers argues that the strict allegorists, a crew he represents by John Ruskin, treat the poem wrongly by translating "narrative materials . . . into abstract terms." He complains that "[t]he main initial impediment to our understanding of The Faerie Queene is a false assumption about the relation in it between narrative events and poetic meaning."¹⁰ This complaint is lodged in order to assert the view that schematic form is an extension of textual detail, and that the unfolding of the materials of a poem is the structure of that poem. Sale's argument really

amounts to a simplified version of that offered by Alpers.¹¹ The view these critics take is not unattractive, it is like an attempt to define the nature of a river by its flowing waters rather than by its bed, and its philosophic roots are older than Plato's insistence on becoming. Like Heraclitus' theory of the flux which serves to explain existential reality, it is really a theory of poetic reality as dynamic, and as such it is a useful antidote to the anatomists who schematize every aspect of a poem according to some abstract design. However, as a serious effort to explain The Faerie Queene the argument falls short of being satisfactory. It rejects, out of hand, the possibility that the poem is an anatomy of particular types of moral behaviour in relation to some normative view of types of ethical action. That it is, in fact, an argumentative poem. Spenser's "Letter" strongly suggests that this is the scheme of the poem. While we might say with Graham Hough that Spenser is not to be trusted as a critic of his own poem,¹² neither this nor Alpers' theory of poetic reality offers sufficiently strong a critical position to dispense with the possibility that Spenser's commentary is the best introduction to the poem.

The opposing camp of contemporary critics is best represented by William Nelson who argues that "the governing principle of Spenser's poem is intellectual and thematic rather than narrative, dramatic, or symbolic."¹³ Nelson is a cautious critic with a knack for citing parallels. The pulling together of parallels means that Nelson's commentary ignores to a great extent the manner in which the poem unfolds. His view is akin to that of the earlier and equally cautious Richard

Hurd who concluded that the poem's order was one of design and not of action.¹⁴ This form of criticism of the poem is responsive to Spenser's declared intentions and to the literary theory of Spenser's day. Further, Nelson is able to account for much of the detail in each of the books. The problem lies not merely with instances of specific detail which are not accounted for, but with Nelson's dispute with the need to account for the order in which the materials of the poem unfold. It is plausible to argue that principles of dramatic action are not evident in the poem, but somewhat implausible to argue careful, thematic construction of each episode without pursuing this with an analysis of the ordering of episodes and of the books themselves.¹⁵

It seems to me that the positions of Alpers and Nelson need to be amalgamated by any critic who wishes to pursue the question of the ordering of all or parts of The Faerie Queene. Alpers' tendency to encourage readers to approach the poem as though it were a classical epic strangles much of its meaning. Nelson's tendency to encourage readers to approach the poem as though it were an emblem overlooks the serial mode in which the materials are presented. Both, in their way, provide very useful, though I think incomplete, theoretical arguments about the nature of the poem.

There is, however, yet another area of theoretical dispute important to any practical analysis of The Faerie Queene, and it involves, again, the question of allegory. The previous discussion dealt with the problem of degree of allegory; this extends the province of that discussion to comprehend the theory of levels of allegorical

meaning. The issue of allegorical levels is standard to commentary on the poem, and has occupied such critics and editors as Upton, Todd, Winstanley, and Greenlaw, and most recently Douglas Waters.¹⁶ Upton, Todd, and Winstanley present the idea of The Faerie Queene as a historical cum political roman à clef, while Greenlaw concludes that this is only intermittently the character of the poem.¹⁷ Waters, on the other hand, argues that much of Book One is only comprehensible on the level of anagogy.¹⁸ All of this is indicative of the further problem facing the critic of the poem: in asking questions about the allegory, should some theoretical construct governing single or multiple levels of meaning be invoked at least as a companion to the suspicion that the poem is an allegory organized schematically and intellectually?

The most cogent discussion of the theory of allegorical levels applied to The Faerie Queene is delivered by Robert Kellogg and Oliver Steele.¹⁹ They argue that the poem, and particularly Book One, conforms to the commonplace conventions of Medieval and Renaissance allegory. This scholastic tradition they derive from the conventions of biblical exegesis. They describe four ways, or levels, in which the Bible was understood: the literal or historical, the typological, the tropological, and the anagogical.

The first level of allegory is that at which the events described are literally true, with the sequence of time and the spatial relationships being accepted as real to material experience. This is the level of plot, the level at which Augustine speaks when he describes the Bible as the history of man.²⁰ Sidney describes this level as "a

narration of things done with beginnings, causes, and appendices thereof."²¹

The other levels of signification differ from the first level in that the literal narrative is taken as earnest of something else in each case. This division is reflected in the criticism of Alpers and Nelson, with Alpers favouring retention of as much of the literal narrative as possible, and Nelson searching for abstract levels of meaning. The second level of allegory in biblical exegesis is the typological, the reading of an Old Testament personage or event as a foreshadowing of Christ. In literary criticism this usually means the search for a specific model for a character, whether in the Bible, classical epics, or elsewhere. Allegory at the third level is tropology, in biblical exegesis the foreshadowing in the Old Testament, of some part of the life of Christ with a specific doctrinal meaning which is applicable to the life of the individual Christian. Generally, in literary criticism this means the search for a moral precept which will account for an act, or set of actions, in a literary work. And finally, anagogy, the fourth level of allegorical meaning, occurs in biblical exegesis when an Old Testament type foreshadows "the union at the end of time of the resurrected membership of the church and God."²² Usually in literary criticism this means the search for theological doctrine which will explain an episode or act. This fairly complex theory of meaning bears the mark of St. Paul's view that the Old Testament veiled truth made obvious in the New Testament, and Augustine is greatly responsible for the theory of levels of meaning.²³

Waters and Virgil Whitaker approach Book One as an allegory at the level of anagogy, Ruskin explains it according to tropology, and Nelson tackles the book in terms of tropology and typology.²⁴ Only Kellogg and Steele seek to consistently apply the theory of exposition of allegory at four levels. This means, of course, that for each element they analyse in Book One they are bound to seek four explanations. The task is burdensome and, in most cases, the method unsatisfactory. While it is certainly probable that a complex theory of exegesis existed, the value of its application to literary works, at least of the Renaissance, is not, I think, very certain. Over against this theory, there are comments concerning meaning in literary works germane to any discussion of Renaissance literature.

Sidney, in An Apology for Poetry, makes a clear case for tropology being the most significant level of meaning for the poet in constructing his poetry. He consistently argues that all devices, techniques, borrowings, and uses of genre should aim toward moral instruction for the purpose of moving men to virtuous behaviour.²⁵ As well, he describes a literal level of meaning of concrete events and personages which serves to attract the reader.²⁶ Sidney's argument suggests concentration on the tropological level of meaning in conventional biblical exegesis, and a concern for the literal level of meaning.

Tasso, in the preface to his epic, argues that,

Heroical Poetry (as a living Creature, wherein two Natures are conjoyned) is compounded of Imitation and Allegory: with the one she allureth unto her the Minds and Ears of Men, and marvellously delighteth them; with the other, either in Vertue or Knowledge, she instructeth them.²⁷

Golding, explicating parts of the Metamorphoses, writes,

Now when thou readst of God or man, in stone, in beast, or tree
It is a mirrour for thy selfe thyne owne estate too see.
For under feyned names of Goddes it was the Poets guyse,
The vice and faultes of all estates too taunt in covert wyse.
And likewyse too extoll with prayse such things as doo deserve.²⁸

He describes the Metamorphoses as an argument under four headings: "To natural philosophy the formest three pertyne,/ The fowrth too morall. . . ."²⁹ This fourth head Golding describes in detail both in terms of method and purpose.

Sir John Harington's summary of the allegory of Orlando Furioso is similar to Golding's prefatory remarks to the Metamorphoses. All of this suggests that the core of allegory in the Renaissance is tropology. In the first place, types were defined in terms of moral behaviour, and in the second place, anagogy, or theological doctrine, a nearly constant feature of Medieval literature, is an intermittent feature of Renaissance, humanist literature.

Spenser, in his "Letter," describes his poem's allegory in tropological terms, and his explanation suggests that, like Tasso and Sidney, he operates within a poetic of two headings. The first is that the poem tell a story which entertains (he calls himself a "Poet historical"),³⁰ and the second that the worth of a poem lies with its moral purpose.³¹ This does not mean either the absence of anagogical meaning in the poem or the absence of discernible types in the action of the poem. Rather, it suggests, strongly, that if an argument for a consistent allegory can be made, it lies at the level of tropology.

Consistency of allegory, as mentioned above, is itself an issue over which critics of the poem divide. A recent critic, beginning with Spenser's own description of the poem as a "continued allegory," argues that,

[o]ne must . . . make a distinction between "continued allegory" as a consistent level of meaning over and above the literal one, and "continued allegory" as an episodic romance tale in which one may continuously observe moral overtones. The latter approach, restricted only by ingenuity of the interpreter, tends to fragment the unified structure of a work and denies that the writer of "continued allegory" is a conscious artist. But the former approach not only allows one to understand the parts, but allows one to see them in relationship to a poetic whole.³²

William Nelson holds the view that analysis of the poem is not served by the assumption of a "consistent level of meaning over and above the literal one." He argues, in defense of his view, that,

Renaissance allegorical explanations of the Aeneid . . . depend indifferently upon the elucidation of "continued" metaphors and the lessons to be learned from the example of the characters of the story. Spenser himself makes no sharp division between allegory and fictional example: although at one point he describes his work as "clowdily enwrapped in Allegorical devises," at another he declares the method of the Cyropaedia to be doctrine "by ensample" and adds, "So have I laboured to doe in the person of Arthure."³³

Taking the second of these arguments first, "doctrine 'by ensample'" is carefully applied only to the person of Arthur in Spenser's "Letter." Spenser is suggesting that, like Odysseus or Aeneas, Arthur is an irreducible type, but he is not suggesting that Arthur does not fit into an allegorical pattern. His actions in the poem argue that he combines the qualities of the heroes of each of the succeeding books.

He strides the poem as an ideal of moral behaviour applied to specific virtues, while each succeeding hero is the centre of a legend about a specific virtue. But this does not mean that whatever allegorical scheme might be present in each book does not include Arthur, only that his function differs from those of each of the heroes. In Arthur's case, Spenser's "doctrine" is elaborated "'by ensample'" rather than by being "'clowdily enwrapped in Allegorical devises.'"

The argument for a "consistent level of meaning over and above the literal one" does not mean that the poem need be brutally simplified to fit an abstract scheme. The point the critic opposing Nelson makes is that the assumption of conscious artistry on Spenser's part should embrace consistency of allegory. He does not add that the relationship between the action of the poem and its allegory is simple.

It seems to me that missing from most of the criticism to date is some mode of conceiving character, and hence moral behaviour, in a systematic fashion. In short, some scheme by which to bridge the gap between whatever allegory might be involved and the action of the poem. It is arguable, I think, that Spenser employed such a scheme, and that the scheme is, at least in part, one of faculty psychology.

Faculty psychology has been applied in some of the criticism of The Faerie Queene. Harry Berger Jr. applied Aristotle's scheme to Book Two, assuming that Spenser's confessed debt to Aristotle's ethical scheme meant a debt to the psychological scheme Aristotle used to describe ethical behaviour.³⁴ Other critics have offered blends of Aristotelean, Platonic, and Neoplatonic psychology to explain the poem.³⁵

Winstanley argued that in Book Two Spenser used Aristotle's scheme, but modified it to fit the issues the book deals with.³⁶ In a recent book, Maurice Evans argued that in Book One the "most insistent of all . . . is the psychological level of allegory."³⁷ Evans applies a Neoplatonic scheme in his analysis, although without outlining the scheme.³⁸

Other critics who do not overtly apply a psychological scheme in their analysis of the poem, apply schemes compatible with the main elements of traditional, faculty psychology. Nelson points to various instances of paradox in Book One as evidence that the book is essentially dualistic in its patterning. This dualism, he argues, is the conventional dualism of the spirit in opposition to the flesh.³⁹ He describes the centre of this conflict as "the crisis of soul about which the Legend of Holiness is constructed."⁴⁰ John Ruskin also saw the first book as ordered on the opposition of the life of the soul and that of the flesh.⁴¹ Winstanley's view, mentioned above, is that Book Two is patterned on the opposition of the faculties of reason and sense, and this view is developed, generally, like those of Nelson and Ruskin.

There are many details in Book One to warrant support for a theory of dualistic patterning. To name a few with thematic significance, night is contrasted with day, good with evil, beauty with ugliness, blindness with sight, ignorance with knowledge, despair with joy, and appearance with reality. Characters also have their opposites. The three brothers Sans foy, Sans joy, and Sans loy are polar opposites

of the three sisters Fidelia, Speranza, and Charissa. Duessa is opposed to Una, Arthur to Orgoglio, and Red Cross Knight in turn to Error, Sans foy, Sans joy, Orgoglio, Despair, the Dragon, and others.

In addition to the dualistic details of Book One, there are many significant details fitting a tripartite pattern. It is difficult to escape the observation that the brothers Sans foy, joy and loy are three in number, that the essential division of the House of Holiness is tripartite, that Red Cross Knight meets and fails, to varying degrees, three tests prior to his entry into the House of Holiness, and that the introductory description of the knight conforms to a triple pattern. These tripartite details are not incompatible with the dualistic details described above, however, but rather the two sets suggest that there is a scheme within a scheme. Thematic details are organized dualistically, while character is patterned according to a tripartite scheme. Nelson's argument that Spenser presents character in a basically Christian fashion, is, I think, accurate, but this does not mean that the basic scheme of representing character is dualistic. The opposition of soul to body, a characteristic of Book One, has added to it a sophisticated, tripartite, psychological scheme which accounts for the moral behaviour of the book's characters, and, in part, for the ordering of the book.

The scheme is the Neoplatonic, tripartite conception of the soul, that portion of man responsible for his actions and whose condition is reflected in his behaviour. Pico Della Mirandola's "Commenta copra una canzona de amore da H. Benivieni" describes this scheme as follows:

As desire generally follows knowledge, so severall knowing are annexed to several desiring Powers. We distinguish the knowing into three degrees; Sence, Reason, Intellect; attended by three desiderative Vertues, Appetite, Election, Will. Appetite is is Bruits; Election in Men; Will in Angels. The Sense knows only corporeal things, the Appetite onely desires such; the Angelick Intellect is wholly intent on Contemplation of spiritual Conceptions; not inclining to Material Things, but when divested of Matter, and spiritualiz'd, their Will is onely fed with intemporal spiritual Good. Rationall Nature is the Mean betwixt these Extreames; sometimes descending to Sense, sometimes elevated to Intellect; by its own Election complying with the desires of which she pleaseth. Thus it appears that corporeal Objects are desired, either by Sensual Appetite, or Election of Reason inclining to Sense; Incorporeal by Angelick Will, or the Election of Reason elevated to Intellectual Height.⁴²

The dualism in Book One is provided by objects of the sense and objects of the intellect, with reason operating as a mean. Hence, it appears that the basic pattern of the book is dualistic, but in fact the order is tripartite. Spenser differs from Mirandola on the issue of the way by which "corporeal Objects are desired." While Mirandola provides both for the Intellectualist view of the "Election of Reason" and for the Voluntarist view of the "Sensual Appetite," Spenser argues basically for the Voluntarist view of the dethroning of reason. If sin is involved in the desire for a material object, it is not the case for Red Cross Knight that reason is perverted, commits an error in logic, but rather that reason is dethroned, that it is insufficient.⁴³

Spenser departs from Mirandola's description of the tripartite soul by his distinction of two kinds of appetitive desires, particularly during the efforts made by Archimago to separate Red Cross Knight from Una. Spenser suggests the presence of both concupiscible and irascible appetitive inclinations, both of which are found in Platonic psychology.⁴⁴

Apart from this, Spenser's psychological treatment of moral behaviour is Neoplatonic.

Spenser focuses his psychological scheme, from the outset of the book to Red Cross Knight's entrance into the House of Holiness, on the inherent antagonism of the body and the soul, and the fusion of the two with body triumphant. Following the House of Holiness, Red Cross Knight is re-tested according to the scheme of tests he faced and failed earlier. In temporal terms, the sequence presented is the sequence of the Bible. Red Cross Knight's failure is comprehensible in terms of the covenant of the Old Testament, his success, finally, is understandable in accordance with the New Testament. While the psychological and moral scheme of the book is constant, the change in the nature of man's responsibilities described by the historical progress of the Bible is reflected in the remission granted Red Cross Knight.

The psychological scheme in Book One is partnered by the tripartite moral scheme of the virtue of Holiness. Faith, hope, and charity are virtues specifically attached to portions of the Neoplatonic soul in the Legend of Holiness, and Spenser establishes this in the first three stanzas of the first canto. In relating the soul to the virtue of Holiness, Spenser parallels Aquinas, as he does as well in presenting the order of absence of these virtues in terms of Sans foy, Sans loy, and Sans joy.⁴⁵

NOTES

¹An exception is D. Douglas Waters, Duessa as Theological Satire (Columbia, 1970). A chapter on Book One appears in Maurice Evans' book, Spenser's Anatomy of Heroism (London, 1970).

²Waters, for instance, explores the meaning of Sans foy and Sans joy, but ignores Sans loy.

³See above, section four. Arthur is consistently the exemplary "rational man" throughout The Faerie Queene, which, for instance, accounts for his minor role in Book Three, wherein the nature of the virtue of Chastity is explored. In Spenser's scheme of faculties, Chastity is associated with the appetitive rather than rational soul.

⁴See F. M. Padelford, "Spenser and the Theology of Calvin," MP, XII (1914), 13; Virgil K. Whitaker, The Religious Basis of Spenser's Thought, Stanford Univ. Pubs. in Lang. and Lit., VII, No. 3 (Stanford, 1950), pp. 42-43; A. S. P. Woodhouse, "Nature and Grace in The Faerie Queene," ELH, XVI (1949), 202; and Merritt Y. Hughes, "The Arthurs of The Faerie Queene," EA, VI (1953), 193-213.

⁵"A Letter of the Authors expounding his whole intention in the course of this work," The Works of Edmund Spenser, ed. Edwin Greenlaw et al. (Baltimore, 1932-49), I, 167-170. This edition cited hereafter as Works.

⁶Evans, p. 105; and Waters, p. 94.

⁷Spenser, Books I and II of "The Faerie Queene", ed. Robert Kellogg and Oliver Steele (New York, 1965), pp. 45-46; William Nelson, The Poetry of Edmund Spenser (New York, 1963), pp. 166-67; and Waters, pp. 115-119.

⁸See Nelson, pp. 176-177.

⁹This summary of the debate over the allegorical character of The Faerie Queene is condensed from Jewel Wurtsbaugh, Two Centuries of Spenserian Scholarship (Baltimore, 1936).

¹⁰Paul J. Alpers, The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene" (Princeton, 1967), p. 4.

¹¹Roger Sale, Reading Spenser: An Introduction (New York, 1968), p. 32.

¹²Graham Hough, A Preface to "The Faerie Queene" (London, 1962), p. 4.

¹³Nelson, p. i.

¹⁴Cited in Wurtsbaugh, p. 119.

¹⁵Nelson, p. 145, Nelson dismisses the problem by arguing that, like a tapestry, the episodes are arranged to provide contrast and emphasis, and that there is no causal, narrative pattern.

¹⁶"The Faerie Queene," Book One, ed. Lillian Winstanley, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1955), pp. lxii-lxxviii; for Upton's views, see Wurtsbaugh, pp. 73-102, and Works, I, 320-24; for Todd's views, see Wurtsbaugh, pp. 139-157; Edwin Greenlaw, Studies in Spenser's Historical Allegory (Baltimore, 1932); Waters, pp. 1-3.

¹⁷Greenlaw, p. 93.

¹⁸Waters, p. vii.

¹⁹Kellogg and Steele, pp. 6-10.

²⁰St. Augustine, City of God, trans. Marcus Dodd (New York, 1950), xv.1.

²¹"Letter to Robert Sidney," Sir Philip Sidney, Selected Prose and Poetry, ed. Robert Kimbrough (New York, 1969), p. 92.

²²John Gardner links anagogy with typology, and describes tropology as the most profound of the levels of allegory. For his views on biblical exegesis see The Complete Works of the Gawain-Poet, ed. John Gardner (Chicago, 1965), Introduction.

²³2 Corinthians 3:14, and Augustine, City of God, xvii.3, and 17-21.

²⁴Waters, see especially pp. 1-20; Virgil K. Whitaker, "The Theological Structure of The Faerie Queene, Book I," in That Sovereign Light, ed. William R. Mueller and D. C. Allen (Baltimore, 1952), pp. 11-84; John Ruskin, Stones of Venice (London, 1892), III, 205-209, quoted in Works, I, 422-425; Nelson, see especially pp. 129-130.

²⁵Sidney, pp. 117-131.

²⁶Pp. 118 and 123-124.

²⁷Tasso, Godfrey of Bulloigne, trans. Edward Fairfax (London, 1858), p. xxxvii.

²⁸Ovid, Metamorphoses, trans. Arthur Golding (New York, 1966), p. 16.

²⁹p. 2.

³⁰Works, I, p. 167.

³¹p. 168.

³²Vern Torczon, "Spenser's Orgoglio and Despaire," TSSL, III (1961), 123.

³³Nelson, p. 130.

³⁴Harry Berger Jr., The Allegorical Temper (New Haven, 1957), pp. 7-16.

³⁵T. K. Dunseath, Spenser's allegory of Justice in book five of "The Faerie Queene" (Princeton, 1968), p. 142; Lillian Winstanley, "The Faerie Queene," Book II (Cambridge, 1919), pp. liv-lxxii; and Torczon, 125.

³⁶Winstanley, Book II, p. lix.

³⁷Evans, p. 90.

³⁸See especially p. 94.

³⁹Nelson, p. 147.

⁴⁰Pp. 151-152.

⁴¹Works, I, 205-207.

⁴²Thomas Stanley, Poems and Translations, ed. G. M. Crump (Oxford, 1962), p. 206.

⁴³Evans, p. 92, argues, wrongly I think, that reason is lazy.

⁴⁴"The Republic," The Dialogues of Plato, trans. and ed. B. Jowett (London, 1871), II, 295.

⁴⁵The "Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas Aquinas, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London, 1915), II, 151-154.

II

Holiness Untested

Spenser introduces the Legend of Holiness with a description of Red Cross Knight, followed by a description of Una and of her Dwarf. In the method of these descriptions, there is embedded a central concept which reveals, at the outset, a great deal of what Spenser is presenting in this legend. The descriptions broadcast the antithesis of illusion and reality.

Terms like "seemd" and "as" are rife in the first few stanzas, and qualifying conjunctions such as "but" and "yet" introduce frequent disclaiming statements. The point Spenser makes by his descriptive method is obvious: the legend occurs in the fallen world wherein illusion and reality are generally at odds.

Red Cross Knight first appears before us as a knight with experience revealed by the battered nature of his armour with its "cruell markes of many a bloody field."¹ An explicit disclaimer of this interpretation of the evidence is entered immediately: "Yet armes till that time did he never wield" (i.1). The mettlesome behaviour of the knight's horse appears to suggest disdain for the bridle, and this is not explicitly refuted. Spenser enters the notion of disdain on the part of the horse without attaching any value to it. What value it has lies in the meaning of the relationship between horse and rider which is lodged implicitly in the description as it continues in the

second and third stanzas. The first stanza concludes with yet another interpretation of the appearance of the knight which includes the equivocal term, "seemd." This conclusion is taken up in the next stanza, and indirectly disclaimed by way of qualification.

Red Cross Knight, we are told at the end of the first stanza, seems like a "jolly knight" who sits fairly on his horse "[a]s one for knightly guists and fierce encounters fitt" (i.1). Untrue whispers the second stanza, where it is pointed out that the badges sported on his armour are evidence that he is not the usual chivalric figure, nor, we have learned to us, is he as jolly as he seems. We are told that he "of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad" (i.2). The ambivalence securely lodged in this unfolding description, and the method of presenting it by offering interpretations which are refuted or confuted, represents one of the major issues explored in the Legend of Holiness. The evidence of the senses is not testimony of truth. On a solution to the problem this raises rests the outcome of Red Cross Knight's soul, to a significant degree.

We are told that the hero of the legend bears on "his brest a bloudie Crosse" in remembrance of his dying Lord (i.2). The Lord is clearly Christ, and the breast plate an appropriate place for Red Cross Knight to bear an emblem of his love of Christ. The shield is also marked with the same emblem, but here it signifies the "soveraine hope, which in his helpe he had" (i.2). This is followed by a statement about the nature of Red Cross Knight's faith ["Right faithfull true he was in deede and word" (i.2)].

The description of the knight in the second stanza particularizes his nature. The usual method of dealing with this description is to argue, after invoking Spenser's own confession of source, that this is merely derivative of Paul's description of the armour of the Christian.² Accordingly, the shield is glossed as representing faith, and the other elements of the armour generally not taken as significant.³ There are several problems incumbent on this approach. First, Holiness is a compound virtue, and each of faith, hope, and charity are requisite to its existence, as is evident in the spiritual curriculum through which Red Cross Knight passes in the House of Holiness. Second, the commonplace assumption that the knight bears the shield of faith argues that Spenser presents faith as a shielding virtue, and as will become evident, this is clearly not the way in which he presents it. Finally, to acknowledge this commonplace of scholarship is to overlook the obvious detail that Spenser does not describe the shield in terms of faith, but rather in terms of hope. That Spenser does not directly follow the source he indicates is not evidence of sloppiness on his part, but rather of a specific plan by which he presents the compound virtue of Holiness. Following hope, Spenser completes his description of the theological character of the knight by mention of his faith ["Right faithfull true he was in deede and word" (i.2)].

The order of description of the knight's character in the second stanza is love, or charity, hope, and faith. The evidence of faith is not scored on Red Cross Knight's armour as it is associated

with intellection and evident by statement and act.⁴ Hope, represented by the shield, is described as "soveraine" (i.2). Attaching special significance to this virtue suggests that it will be pivotal in the knight's quest, and the legend bears this out. Hope shields the knight against the blows of forces set to undermine his character. Given the state of man active in a fallen world the stress on the virtue of hope is not incomprehensible. Charity is fittingly lodged on the breast-plate of the knight. Love is a passion associated with the heart by long tradition, and charity is a perfect form of love.

Apparently, at the end of stanza two we have before us a knight of unimpeachable, Christian virtues. However, given the strong presence of ambivalence in Spenser's description of the knight in the first stanza, this assumption bears examination. The knight's state of charity is described by the equivocal statement "and dead as living ever [Christ] ador'd" (i.2). Nelson argues that this suggests the mystery of life and death in the person of Christ. He calls this "the Christian paradox which is the principal subject" of the legend, and adds:

Christ dying is the focus, dying and in torment, but about to pass by means of death into life. The riddle "dead as living" develops the theme. Superficially, the words mean only that the Knight loved his Lord both before and after His death. But beneath this meaning is the essential one, that Christ dead is Christ living. About the reconciliation of death and life cluster related ideas: the life of the body, inevitably sinful and therefore damnable by God's law, is as a death, yet the sacrifice of the dying Christ is God's gift of a true life.⁵

While Nelson detects a paradox central to the Legend of Holiness, he

misses the ambiguity of this statement. By making a conventional paradox of it, he misses Spenser's elaborate method of establishing the thematic antithesis of illusion and reality.⁶

The statement "dead as living" qualifies the charity of the knight. It is joined by parallel statements qualifying the knight's hope and faith. The knight loves Christ as though He were living, not with the sophisticated understanding that a dead Christ is a living Christ. Later in the Legend, with his near escape from the clutches of Error, and his falling into the clutches of Fideſſa, his lack of understanding is demonstrated. Fideſſa describes her hunt for the body of Christ (ii.24), demonstrating her ignorance and, indirectly, that of Red Cross Knight. "Dead as Living," to summon a conventional description, suggests that the knight's love for Christ is blind, that his charity is flawed by not being supported by the knowledge of faith.

Hope is qualified by the statement that the knight is "of his cheere . . . too solemne sad" (i.2). The state of hope is a state of joy, as is made evident by the infernal parody of hope in the legend, Sans joy. The description of the apparently "jolly" knight who seems "too solemne sad" is in fact a statement of flawed hope. There remains faith, and this virtue is also a qualified one as it applies to the character of the knight.

Red Cross Knight is described as "right faithful true . . . in deede and word" (i.2), and this fulfils the requisite behaviour of a faithful character.⁷ However, the issue is not merely one of behaviour. According to the Book of Common Prayer, faithfulness must be lodged in

"thought, word and deed."⁸ The absence of the term "thought" in the description of the knight's faith argues a flaw in his possession of this virtue. His faith is not supported by knowledge of the truth, it is lodged merely in appearance. The third stanza bears this out by describing the knight's desire "his knew force to learne" (i.3). Thus, the knight's Holiness is qualified by the flaws present in each of the three virtues of faith, hope, and charity he possesses as a Christian knight. The second stanza ends with a denial of the knight's lack of courage ("Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad"). This statement forestalls the possible interpretation of the knight's apparent sadness as stemming from a lack of courage.

Virtues are a function of the soul, according to traditional, ethical theory, and Holiness is a state of the soul in possession of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity.⁹ Aquinas consigns hope and charity to the appetitive portion of the soul, and faith to its rational part. Charity he attaches to the concupiscible soul, and hope to the irascible soul. Charity is the theological perfection of the concupiscent soul, while hope is the theological perfection of the irascible soul. Faith perfects the rational soul.¹⁰ Spenser somewhat follows this scheme, attaching the theological virtues to appropriate parts of the soul. However, while Aquinas associates hope with the irascible soul, Spenser follows Plato's famous alignment of the irascible with the rational.¹¹ Hence, at the end of the second stanza, Spenser places a remark alluding to the condition of the hope applied to the knight in conjunction with a remark describing the knight's

courage. And also, later in the legend, the knight faces the test of Lucifera and Sans joy in the company of the Dwarf who is commonly understood as an emblem of reason.¹² Following the scheme of Renaissance Neoplatonists, Spenser divides the soul into the three parts of intellect, reason, and appetite, placing faith in the province of intellect, hope in the province of reason, and charity in the province of appetite.¹³ On the knight's release from Orgoglio's castle, Despair attacks the knight's hope by paralogical appeals to his reason, not, as would be appropriate to Aquinas' scheme, merely by appeals to his appetite (ix,38-47).

By presenting the Red Cross Knight in the second stanza as a flawed figure of Holiness, Spenser reveals the condition of the knight's soul, and indicates that the legend is patterned according to the psychological scheme by which he describes the knight. As the evidence of stanza one suggests, the knight's quest is threatened by the presence of illusion in a postlapsarian world, which, when added to the flawed character of his soul makes his quest perilous indeed. The quest itself, quite basically, is for union with truth, negatively an overthrow of the powers of deceit. Truth, of course, both serves to uncover illusion and to perfect the knight's soul, so that the theme of illusion and reality and that of the perfecting of a soul are intimately bound together in the quest undertaken by Red Cross Knight.

The third stanza of canto one explains the knight's quest as it appears at the outset, and further underlines the obstacles to its successful completion:

Upon a great adventure he was bond,
 That greatest Gloriana to him gave,
 That greatest Glorious Queene of Faerie Lond,
 To winne him worship, and her grace to have,
 Which of all earthly things he most did crave;
 And ever as he rode, his hart did earne
 To prove his puissance in battell brave
 Upon his foe, and his new force to learne;
 Upon his foe, a Dragon horrible and stearne. (i,3)

Red Cross Knight holds at the outset of his "adventure" a set of desires which imperils the success of his quest. He desires "worship" and to possess the "grace" of the Faerie Queene. Also he desires to prove his own "puissance," and to learn his own "new force." Plainly, these are perverse desires, each marked by pride. His desire for worship is mocked in the legend by, among other instances, the earthly city of Lucifera. His desire to possess grace is mocked by the miraculous gift of grace which occurs during Arthur's battle with Orgoglio to free Red Cross Knight. His desire to prove his "puissance" is mocked during his battle with Error and with the Dragon, and his desire to learn of his new force is mocked by his completely losing what force he has prior to his acquiring the knowledge he acquires in the House of Holiness. Each of these desires are an impediment to the perfecting of his soul in Holiness through faith, hope, and charity. His desire "his new force to learne" is perverse given that reason can not achieve the truth of revelation but that the intellect can apprehend it once given. This desire qualifies the knight's faith, as does the desire to possess grace. The desire to prove "puissance" is perverse given that reason dictates that what strength is man's is

derived from God. This desire qualifies the knight's hope, by arguing a self-reliance which cuts the knight off from his source of strength (at his most abject level, the knight is sans puissance and hopeless in the clutches of Despair). Red Cross Knight's desire for worship is also perverse as it is a desire for "earthly things." This desire qualifies his charity, which is a love marked not by the desire to possess but to give.

Una is next presented, and, as with the knight, she appears in terms which suggest the difficulty of evaluating evidence gathered by the senses:

A lovely Ladie rode him faire beside,
 Upon a lowly Asse more white then snow,
 Yet she much whiter, but the same did hide
 Under a vele, that wimpled was full low,
 And over all a blacke stole she did throw,
 As one that inly mournd: so was she sad,
 And heavie sat upon her palfrey slow:
 Seemed in heart some hidden care she had,
 And by her in a line a milke white lambe she lad. (i,4)

Yet while Spenser maintains the ambiguous nature of the knight's character throughout his description, with Una he strikes solid ground immediately. Her appearance of mourning is real evidence of mourning. She is in fact whiter than her palfrey, and,

So pure an innocent, as that same lambe,
 She was in life and every vertuous lore. (i.5)

Even Una is caught in the veil of appearance, yet her truth is absolute as the description reveals. Her veil is a testimony to the present condition of her parents who once held dominion over the world

before "that infernall feend with foule uprore forwasted all their land, and them expeld" (i.5). The parents, of course, are Adam and Eve, and their present condition a result of the Fall from Grace.¹⁴ That Una, the figure of truth, is caught in the web of illusion enforces the pervasiveness of illusion in the legend, and indicates, once again, the difficulty facing Red Cross Knight in his quest.

The fall from grace into a world ruled, to a significant degree, by falsehood, was corrosive of man's faculties. It beclouded his reason so that while reason still naturally inclined to truth it was capable of clearly distinguishing between real and apparent truth.¹⁵ Red Cross Knight is free to choose, has free will, but his choices rely on the strength of his reason, leaving him vulnerable to error. That reason is a toiling figure in a fallen world is made evident by the description Spenser gives of the Dwarf who serves as Una's servant, and as Red Cross Knight's advisor.

The Dwarf who completes the group introduced at the beginning of the knight's quest represents reason.¹⁶ Spenser's description is informative:

Behind [Una] farre away a Dwarfe did lag,
That lasie seemd in being ever last,
Or wearied with bearing of her bag
Of needments at his back. (i.6)

He appears either to be lazy or wearied by his task of carrying Una's "bag/ Of needments." Evan's, overlooking the ambiguity of the description, argues that Spenser presents reason as lazy.¹⁷ However, none of the details in the story will serve to support this interpretation.

Even the mundane examples of the Dwarf's zealous efforts to save Red Cross Knight both in Lucerfer's city and after he is captured by Orgoglio suggest that laziness is not an appropriate description of the Dwarf. What is suggested by Spenser's initial description of the Dwarf is the difficulty of reason's task. Reason, in short, is never lazy, it is merely insufficient.

The task the Dwarf is charged with at the outset of the quest is that of bearing Una's "bag of needments." This suggests that he is responsible for the needs of the body, a suggestion that is reinforced by his disappearance from the story at the point at which Una leads the Red Cross Knight into the House of Holiness which is governed by Caelia. Caelia's "joy," her task, is "to relieve the needes/ Of wretched soules . . ." (x.3). The Dwarf and Caelia have adjoining ministries over the body and the soul, respectively. The Dwarf performs his duties himself, while Caelia, whose charge is tripartite, performs her duties through the three governesses of these three parts, faith, hope, and charity.

What is represented by the pairing of the Dwarf and Caelia is a commonplace division of reason. The dwarf is practical reason, what Aristotle called phronesis.¹⁸ Aquinas distinguished between ratio inferior and ratio superior, as did Augustine before him.¹⁹ The Neoplatonists called these two faculties reason and intellect.²⁰ Caelia represents the heavenly wisdom that guides the soul, ordering its civil hierarchy, while the Dwarf represents the practical wisdom that guides the body through reason's rule over the body. When she enters into

the legend, Caelia takes over the Dwarf's task as her ministry embraces that of the Dwarf.

The Dwarf's position far behind Una and the knight suggests the difficulty of his task. Reason's ministry of the body, as the legend bears out, is a difficult one. The Dwarf is barely able to extricate the knight from the perilous city of Lucifera, and is unable to prevent the knight's lust from gaining sway when enticed by Fidessa. At this later point, the Dwarf is separated from the knight, suggesting the overthrow of reason (vii,7 and 19).

At the beginning, the association of Una and Red Cross Knight is an emblematic presentation of the relationship between native virtue and the truth which is the fit end for virtue.²¹ The knight, at the start, is courting truth. The metaphor of courtship serves the allegory well, providing as it does for the exploration of a fairly complex psychological relationship. In conjunction with the description of the Dwarf, Una's relationship with Red Cross Knight indicates what Castiglione exposes as the psychological character of man. According to Castiglione, man is by nature rational, placed as in the middle between what the senses perceive and the "intelligible things" the intellect is able to contemplate. Man is able to "choose (by descending to sense or rising to intellect) to turn his desires now in one direction and now in another."²² The knight's courtship with Una indicates reason "rising to intellect." The career of this courtship during the knight's quest charts the movement of reason descending to sense, then rising to intellect. The marriage of Una and the knight

at the end of his quest is clearly a proper conclusion to the courtship. This marriage represents the ideal state of man's soul, but it is a state which can not endure in a fallen world. Una and the knight separate, although the state of marriage continues. The point made finally is that while man can know this ideal, it is actually beyond the limits imposed by the Fall.

With the abandonment of Una by the knight which occurs in the second canto, the Dwarf is promoted from lagging servant to the knight's companion. The change argues that the knight has moved back, figuratively descended, from his companionship with truth, and now must face his trials relying on reason no longer in the immediate presence of truth.

NOTES

¹The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser, ed. J. C. Smith (Oxford, 1964), I, 5. Citations from Book Once in my text are from this edition.

²See Works, I, p. 176.

³P. 425, and 434. Evans, p. 91, and Kellogg and Steele, p. 16, are exceptions. They argue that the shield is an emblem of hope. Kellogg and Steele gloss the cross on Red Cross Knight's breast as the crucified Christ, and Evans glosses it as faith.

⁴Aquinas, 152.

⁵Nelson, p. 147.

⁶This description of the knight's love of Christ fits into the pattern of ambiguous statements which describe Red Cross Knight at the beginning of the legend. Nelson, by focusing on this one statement in the description, overlooks the contest.

⁷James 3:13.

⁸For this formula see "The Order of Baptism for those of Riper Years."

⁹See The Dialogues of Plato, II, 300; and Aquinas, 149-150.

¹⁰Aquinas, 152.

¹¹"Phaedrus," The Dialogues of Plato, III, 153.

¹²Nelson, p. 157; Kellogg and Steele, p. 16.

¹³A description of the soul remarkably similar to the one, quoted earlier, by Pico Della Mirandola occurs in Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier, trans. Charles Singleton (New York, 1959), p. 336.

¹⁴Kellogg and Steele, p. 16.

¹⁵E. M. W. Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture (London, 1966), pp. 91-92.

¹⁶Kitchin, Works, I, 178, glosses the Dwarf as "common sense," a description which, while not pointing to the psychological scheme of the legend, does indicate the lower form of reason the Dwarf represents.

¹⁷Evans, p. 92.

¹⁸The Ethics of Aristotle, trans. J. A. K. Thomson (London, 1955), pp. 176-177.

¹⁹St. Thomas Aquinas, Theological Texts, selected and trans. Thomas Gilby (London, 1955), pp. 306-309; Augustine, City of God, X.2.

²⁰Ficino uses the terms "intuition" and "reason." See, P. O. Kristeller, The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino (New York, 1943), p. 380.

²¹Aristotle, p. 190, distinguishes between "natural" and "true" virtue. Spenser follows this division by having Red Cross Knight initially naturally suited to wear the armour of Holiness and later acquiring true Holiness, burnished armour, in the House of Holiness.

²²Castiglione, p. 336.

III

The Test of Faith

The first test Red Cross Knight faces on his quest is a test of his faith. The test is comprised of a series of assaults on the intellectual portion of his soul, and involves also the test of the knight's charity. However, while the test of faith occurs at the beginning of the legend, the test of charity is protracted to the point of the knight's imprisonment in Orgoglio's castle, and is charted principally by the events that befall Una following her abandonment by the knight. Therefore, while the test of charity overlaps the test of faith, it will be dealt with at a later point.

The test of faith begins with the knight and Una taking refuge in a forest from a violent summer storm. It ends, by way of recapitulation, with the knight firmly attached to Fidessa and the two taking refuge from the summer's heat under the human trees, Fradubio and Fraelissa. Between these two events, Red Cross Knight fails, significantly, his first test.

By way of allusion, Spenser announces that the storm the knight and Una are driven to refuge by is not a common one. The storm is described as being the result of an "angry Jove" who, in his anger, "an hideous storme of raine/ Did poure into his Lemans lap" (i.6). The Leman is mother earth, of course, but the description alludes to Ovid's tale of Jove and Danäe, a tale Spenser utilizes again, later in the

poem (III.xi.31). The allusion reveals a disorder in natural government, with lust and anger combining to produce violent, irrational, behaviour. In short, the skies of reason are darkened by the passions, and this serves as a prophetic emblem of the fate in store for Red Cross Knight during this test of his faith.

The pair are forced to take shelter in a forest laden with emblematic significance:

A shadie grove not far away they spide,
That promist ayde the tempest to withstand:
Whose loftie trees yclad with sommers pride,
Did spred so broad, that heavens light did hide,
Not perceable with power of any starre:
And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
With footing worne, and leading inward farre:
Faire harbour that them seemes; so in they entred arre. (i.7)

Nelson notes the parallel between this forest and the selva oscura in which Dante finds himself at the beginning of the Inferno.¹ It is also akin to Tasso's allegorical forest, which he explains as signifying "no other thing than the Falsity of the Reasons and the Perswasions which are ingendred in the Wood; that is, the variety and multitude of Opinions and Discourses of Men."² Red Cross Knight meets the figure of Error, spawning opinion, at the centre of the forest. Servius' gloss of "silva" in the Aeneid also reveals the perilous character of the forest:

From this wood, which is the business of this world, let us emerge into the light; the goal is the golden bough, this is sapientia Because the stars draw us into various perturbations, it is difficult to hold always to the right way; or the woods, that is, the passions of the body, obstruct virtue.³

That the wood is the "business of this world" in Spenser's scheme is evident from the catalogue of trees which follows upon the description of the knight and Una entering the forest. The catalogue is no less than a list of the earthly occupations of man. The pair are figured as praising these trees ["Much can they prayse . . . " (i.8)], and the allusion, albeit indirect, is to the tree by which man first fell into error.

The wide, worn path which leads into the forest suggests the road to destruction which St. Matthew warns against, and also the path which Augustine describes as leading into the City of Man.⁴ The end, in both cases, is worldliness, a turning away from faith and intellection to the material and the bodily, and, consequently, the imperiling of the soul. The trees of the forest shut out "heavens light," and their foliage is described as "sommers pride." The forest is a giant emblem of man's preoccupation with the things of this world. The Red Cross Knight is in danger of the sin of Pride of Life. He gives evidence of this when he erroneously refutes Una's plea to retreat from Error by arguing that "virtue gives her selfe light" (i.12), and consequently relying on his own strength rather than strength derived from God.⁵

Once in the forest, the couple are led forward "with delight" (i.10) until they are unable to find their way out. In this state they follow the most obvious path, again an allusion to the biblical advice of St. Matthew, but as well a foreshadowing of their coming meeting with Error. They follow the most common path as a resolution

to their "diverse doubt" (i.10), a path which suggests opinion.

It seems anomalous that Una should be represented as being in a state of doubt along with the Red Cross Knight, and even that she should be engulfed by the forest. Yet the point Spenser makes is first that Una represents truth active in the world, and not the kind of truth represented by the isolated figure of contemplation described in the House of Holiness later in the Legend (x.48-67). Also Spenser implies that truth active in the world inevitably becomes ensnarled in the illusions of the fallen world, and is forever threatened by falsehood. Yet while she wanders in the wilderness both at this point with the knight, and later after he has abandoned her, she is never completely lost. She recognizes Error when confronted by it and realizes the forces required to overcome it, and later, when she is imperiled by Sans loy, divine Providence intervenes to save truth for the world.

The broad path chosen by the knight and Una leads to the den of Error, located, fittingly, in the centre of the forest where the light is dimmest. At the mouth of this cave, Una pleads with the knight to be cautious, and the knight argues, imprudently, that this would be a sign of cowardice on his part. He bases his argument on the erroneous opinion that virtue provides its own light "through darknesse for to wade" (i.12). His argument, while laudable according to the classical conception of virtue, is heretical in terms of the Christian view of virtue. Even his fear of demonstrating cowardice is suspect when considered from the Christian view of courage with its insistence on prudence.⁶ That his insistence on virtue's own light is

erroneous is evident in Spenser's description of this light being "much like a shade" (i.14), and the later descriptions of Arthur blazing with the reflected light of God (vii.29 and viii.19), and Red Cross Knight facing the Dragon with arms "that heaven with light did fill" (xi.4). Before the cave of Error, Red Cross Knight is in error, holding a classical but erroneous opinion about the nature of virtue.

The Error Red Cross Knight forces out of the den to face him is a composite figure, half serpent, half woman. This description of Error as a satanic Eve-figure alludes to the seduction of Adam into error. In the medieval glosses, Eve is read as a figure who tempts Adam to act contrary to his reason, while she, herself, is figured as an archetype of the desiring, appetitive soul perverted and seeking to pervert the governing, rational soul.⁷ She is a cardinal example of the worldly body overthrowing reason. However, the ugliness of the figure the knight here faces suggests it is not the error which Tasso, in explaining the allegory of Gerusalemme Liberata called "that temptation which layeth siege to the Power of our Desires."⁸ Rather, by virtue of the obvious satanic qualities displayed by the figure, this first test of faith is made by way of erroneous reasoning, which the knight has already demonstrated his propensity for.⁹

Error's first method of attack is to face the knight directly, and when this fails she seeks to baffle him by wrapping him with her tail so that he is unable to move (i.17-18). Essentially what is described is Error's method of argument: when refutation fails, confutation is resorted to. Spenser marks this second method of attack with

the general statement, "God helpe the man so wrapt in Errours endlesse traine" (i.18). At this crucial point in the battle, Una counsels the addition of faith to the knight's forces ["Add faith unto your force, and be not faint" (i.19)]. The nature of the knight's opponent requires that faith, knowledge of truth, be enlisted in the battle, but the knight does not understand the advice ["he heard, in great perplexitie" (i.19)]. Instead, he summons his strength which frees him but does not defeat Error.

Una, while giving the knight advice about the need for faith, also gives him advice about the tactic to employ ["Strangle her, else she sure will strangle thee" (i.19)]. This the knight understands, and, with all his force, proceeds to the task. The effort succeeds in freeing him, but not in killing Error. Following the advice of truth, but for suspect reasons ["His gall did grate for griefe and high disdaine" (i.19)], he is in the position to resume battle with Error. The point Spenser makes is that with the truth of faith beside him, the knight can elude Error, despite his lack of comprehension. Truth comes to the aid of man whose propensity is naturally towards it, and assists him with practical advice in his battle with Error.

The effect, however, of the knight's efforts to strangle Error is Error's natural response of vomiting, suggesting that when threatened Error merely pours out erring doctrines to defend itself. The spawn Error vomits forth is blind, unapproachable by the light of truth which shines so very dimly in this worldly forest. The effect on the knight is an immediate diminishing of his forces. His pride, however rallies him:

Thus ill bestedd, and fearefull more of shame,
 Then of the certaine perill he stood in,
 Halfe furious unto his foe he came,
 Resolv'd in minde all suddenly to win,
 Or soone to lose, before he once would lin;
 And strooke at her with more than manly force,
 That from her body full of filthie sin
 He raft her hatefull head without remorse;
 A streame of cole black bloud forth gushed from her corse. (i.24)

Once again, in this description, Spenser points out the danger the knight is in, and also illustrates the power, which is "more then manly," that saves the knight. What Spenser points to is that the knight's very armour, the fact that flawed he is nevertheless Christian, is enough to save him. As with his ability to uncomprehendingly follow Una's advice, his victory indicates that the weakness of pride does not, necessarily, incapacitate the Christian in his battle with Error.

When Error is dead, she is cannibalized by her vomited spawn:

They flocked all about her bleeding wound,
 And sucked up their dying mothers blood,
 Making her death their life, and eke her hurt their good. (i.25)

The knight watches, as,

Their bellies swolne he saw with fulnesse burst,
 And bowels gushing forth: well worthy end
 Of such as drunke her life (i.26)

This conclusion to the episode with Error indicates the doctrinal significance of the figure. In death, she provides a feast which destroys the participants. The allusion is to the unreformed church's doctrine of real presence, the view that communication of man with God is in the

literal body of Christ.¹⁰ The phrase, "[m]aking her death their life," and the immediate death of the spawn suggests that blind opinion holding to the doctrine of real presence results in participating in the body of Satan, and in death, not life. The whole of the episode in the forest deals with false views of the body, of the material world, and the victory of the knight indicates that he is able to resist the temptation to abandon truth, despite his inability to comprehend it, for the ways of the world. The episode points out that the knight's faith is not grounded in knowledge, and, as the legend soon demonstrates, he is not always proof against the temptation to abandon truth.

The next test of Red Cross Knight's faith is provided by the counterfeit holy man, Archimago.¹¹ The area of shadowy truth, the woods, is replaced by the darkness of night, and by sleep which separates the knight from truth. Archimago troubles Red Cross Knight's sleep with passionate dreams of Una ["And made him dreame of loves and lustfull play" (i.47)]. Archimago seeks to alter the relationship between the knight and truth by altering the nature of truth, by essaying to insinuate the appearance of truth for real truth, Una. The effort is much more subtle than Error's attack on the perplexed companion of truth. While the episode with Error merely suggested the knight's dim comprehension of faith, Archimago's nocturnal tricks indicate the knight's total incomprehension of deceit. Archimago makes use of the natural weaknesses of the knight, speaking to his earthly desires while he is in the state of sleep during which reason is absent from control of the body.¹²

Archimago's first ploy fails when the knight refuses to give in to the inclination to wrath, instead deciding to test the evidence of his senses with his reason:

All cleane dismayd to see so uncouth sight,
 He thought have slaine her in his fierce despight:
 But hasty heat tempring with sufferance wise,
 He stayde his hand, and gan himselfe advise
 To prove his sense, and tempt her faigned truth. (i.50)

The illusion of Una speaks to him, and describes her case in such a way as to bait the knight's pride:

. . . Ah Sir, my liege Lord and my love,
 Shall I accuse the hidden cruell fate,
 And mightie causes wrought in heaven above,
 Or the blind God, that doth me thus amate,
 For hoped love to winne me certaine hate?
 Yet thus perforce he bids me do, or die.
 Die is my dew: yet rew my wretched state
 You, whom my hard avenging destinie
 Hath made judge of my life or death indifferently. (i.51)

This false figure of Una pleads innocence on the grounds that she is motivated by forces beyond her ken and which she can not identify. The argument, in the mouth of this figure of truth, is suspiciously incoherent, given that she likens fate, a power she should recognize as controlled by God, with blind Cupid, a power she should not acknowledge as equal to fate. As well, this figure of truth ought not put the power of life and death into the hands of the mortal and flawed Red Cross Knight. This power belongs to God alone. The knight, while not fathoming the meaning of the counterfeit Una's words, notes that her words are not commensurate with his experience ["What frayes ye, that

were wont to comfort me affrayd? (i.52)]. The knight suspects the argument, but, as the text points out, he has not the resources to determine its flaws:

Her doubtfull words made that redoubted knight
 Suspect her truth: yet since no'untruth he knew,
 Her fawning love with foule disdainefull spight
 He would not shend (i.52)

Innocence ("no'untruth he knew") marks the knight, and suggests both his strength and weakness: while he has pride and is flawed, he knows neither. Earlier, the illusion of Una has argued that her inexperience has led her to "[f]ly to [his] faith for succour and sure ayde" (i.51), and this is quite clearly an inversion of the case. The knight's faith, such as it is, depends on his lack of worldliness rather than on the certainty of his knowledge. Yet he has both profited by his association with the truth by recognizing that the false Una's argument is not testimony of the truth, and has been able to check his initial impulse to passionate action. He, therefore, overcomes this temptation to abandon reason and violently abandon truth, and as well does not succumb to the blandishments of a fabricated truth. However, again, his near escape suggests his fallibility.

The third test of the knight's faith takes place near dawn:

By this the Northerne wagoner had set
 His sevenfold teme behind the stedfast starre,
 That was in Ocean waves yet never wet,
 But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from farre
 To all, that in the wide deepe wandring arre:
 And chearefull Chaunticlere with his note shrill
 Had warned once, that Phoebus fiery carre
 In hast was climbing up the easterne hill,
 Full envious that night so long his roome did fill. (ii.1)

In this description, a prelude to the test, there are allusions to the Devil ("the Northerne wagoner"), Christ ("the stedfast starre,/ That was in Ocean waves yet never wet"), and to the flawed faith of Peter whose denial of Christ is marked by the crowing of a cock.¹³ The description is prophetic of the outcome of this third test, and as well serves to soften the knight's failure by placing it in the context of Peter's failure.¹⁴ In this last darkness of the night, Archimago presents the knight with the illusion of an unfaithful Una, seduced by the lusts of the flesh. Red Cross Knight, having barely settled his troubled reason after the previous test, is awakened and directed to the sight of Una in amorous embrace with the illusion of a lover,

Which, when he saw, he burnt with gealous fire
The eye of reason was with rage yblent;
And would have slaine them in his furious ire. . (ii.5)

The knight, with the Dwarf as company, abandons Una by leaving her behind at the first light of day.

Thus, perverse passion ("gealous fire" and "rage") overthrows reason's tenuous courtship with truth, forcing aside reason's embryonic movement to intellection by a capitulation to the power of appetitive desire. That reason itself is not abandoned, but rather slipped from its upward stage of intellection to a stage of mere practicality, is evidenced by the presence of the Dwarf as companion to the knight following the abandonment of Una. Red Cross Knight leaves with the Dwarf whose charge is the horse and armour, and Una's needments, the body, abandoning truth for the body. Faith, having overcome, with the

assistance of truth, the test of erring opinion based on a false valuation of the material world, and a test of the knowledge of truth, albeit small, fails before the onslaught of perverse passion. His ruling passion, will, leads him, whereas the will should seek that which reason directs, and be guided by truth ["Will was his guide, and grieve led him astray" (ii.12)].

The precise nature of the knight's failure of faith is suggested in his meeting with Sans foy and Fidessa, the first incident which involves the knight after he leaves Una. Attacked by Sans foy, Red Cross Knight makes short work of the battle, dispatching his opponent easily (ii.15-19). The implication of this battle is that faithlessness (Sans foy) has not been the knight's undoing in his failure to continue as Una's champion. However, Fidessa, Sans foy's companion, easily insinuates herself into the knight's sympathy, and becomes his companion (ii.21-27). Fidessa, as the tale she tells to Red Cross Knight reveals, is falsehood disguised as truth. Appearing faithful, she does not know even the most rudimentary articles of faith. As an instance, she reveals ignorance of the ascension of Christ:

His blessed body spoild of lively breath,
Was afterward, I know not how, convoid
And fro me hid (ii.24)

She suggests, thus, the absence of knowledge about anything but the material world, and thus the absence of faith. As well, in her description of Christ, she reveals her belief, if such it may be termed,

in appearance, and thus again in the material world:

Was never Prince so faithfull and so faire,
Was never Prince so meeke and debonaire. (ii.23)

Balancing "faire" with "faithfull," and "debonaire" with "meeke" unmasks Fidessa as counterfeit faithful. Yet the knight notices none of this. In a description which recapitulates his failure to meet Archimago's final test of his faith, Spenser describes him as,

More busying his quicke eyes, her face to view,
Then his dull eares, to heare what she did tell. (ii.26)

His failure to flush out this figure of deceitful faith is both the result of his unruly passions and of his lack of knowledge. Spenser does not suggest that he is unaware of her words, but rather that he barely hears them. Thus his failure is at least in part the result of his lack of the knowledge which constitutes faith. This incident with Archimago, Sans foy, and Fidessa argues forcefully that the knight's failure, like Peter's, is not evidence of faithless but rather of the awesome obstacles between the knight, the natural Christian, and faith.

Spenser, however, does not stop at this point in his recapitulation of previous events. By linking Fidessa with the faith of the Roman Catholic Church [she is the daughter of an emperor who has "set his throne, where Tiberis doth pass" (ii.22)], Spenser mocks, again, the Catholic doctrine of eucharestia, suggesting again the danger to faith of an insistence on materialism. This suggests that the knight has succumbed to error, by association with Fidessa. It also recalls

the phrase "dead as living" used to describe the knight's love for Christ at the beginning of the legend (i.2).

During Fidessa's tale of her career to the point of her meeting with Red Cross Knight, she explains to the knight that the opponent he has just slain is one of three brothers:¹⁵

There lies he now with foule dishonour dead,
Who whiles he liv'de, was called proud Sans foy,
The eldest of three brethren, all three bred
Of one bad sire, whose youngest is Sans joy,
And twixt them both was borne the bloody bold Sans loy. (ii.25)

Fidessa's order of listing the brothers corresponds to the biblical order of the christian virtues of which these brothers are an infernal parody.¹⁶ The three brothers, jointly, are the antithesis of the state of Holiness, which is comprised of faith, hope, and charity. Fidessa, listing the brothers, describes an order of generation which differs from the order of her list. In terms of generation, Sans foy is the first, Sans loy the second, and Sans joy the last of these sons of the "bad sire," Satan.

Aquinas, explaining Paul's statement that charity is the last but greatest of the theological virtues, argues that there is both an order of perfection and an order of generation.¹⁷ In Fidessa's description, generation is the key to comprehending the order, with the generation of the three theological virtues finding its parody in Fidessa's order. The point is that one sire, Satan, caused the creation of these infernal virtues in a specific order which is neither identical with the order of perfection or the order of generation by which Paul

describes the three theological virtues. Faithlessness and lawlessness entered into creation first, and with the Fall and the creation of permanent damnation, joylessness came into existence ("Abandon Hope all ye who enter here"). Later, during the temptation of Red Cross Knight's hope, his opponent, Sans joy, is nursed back to health in his proper domain, hopeless hell, by Aecalapius, the physician who must first be convinced of his own hopeless condition before ministering to Sans joy (v.36-44).

Faithlessness, lawlessness, and hopelessness attack Red Cross Knight, according to the order of generation. While Sans joy does not directly attack Red Cross Knight, his attack on Una suggests the lawlessness that is the cause of the knight's abandonment of the truth. Lawlessness is a permanent threat to the knight, as possessing the passions of the body he is forever threatened by them. The only proof against the threat of lawlessness is a natural acceptance of and loyalty to truth.¹⁸ The test of the knight's charity begins with his entrance into the forest at the start of the legend, and continues until finally he abandons his armour and succumbs totally to the lewd charms of Fidessa (vii.2 and 7). The final failure of the knight's charity, the abandonment of his quest on Una's behalf and his lewd embrace of Fidessa marks also the final failure of the knight's faith signaled by his sinful relationship with false faith. In accordance with Fidessa's description of the generation of the three, infernal brothers, hopelessness follows for the knight. In Orgoglio's castle he longs for death, and in the dave of Despair he succumbs to despair.

As a termination to this test of the knight's Holiness, Fidessa and Red Cross Knight are shown seeking sanctuary from the oppressive heat of mid-day in the shelter of two trees. Nelson notes the similarity between the woods of Error and these two trees which cast "a calme shadow far in compasse round" (ii.28).¹⁹ By framing the test with these two, related, aboreal images, Spenser implies that Red Cross Knight's failure is mitigated by virtue of his belonging to the family of Adam, represented by the living trees, Fradubio and Fraelissa. Tracing the names and situation of this pair, Nelson argues that this configuration is an emblem of fallen mankind, Adam and Eve. He points out that the names Fradubio, "in doubt," or "brother doubt," and Fraelissa, "failty," both suggest the "folly of Adam and the weakness of Eve that brought about the Fall."²⁰ Red Cross Knight echoes the notion of man as frail when, after mastering his initial fright over the cries of Fradubio, he asks,

What voyce of damned Ghost from Limbo lake,
Or guilefull spright wandring in empty aire,
Both which fraile men do oftentimes mistake,
Sends to my doubtfull eares these speaches rare? (ii.32)

As well, Spenser indicates the knight's likeness to Fradubio by having him describe his ears as "doubtfull." Fradubio, it turns out, abandoned Fraelissa for the apparently beautiful Duessa, and therefore Red Cross Knight shares his flaws.

Finally, to complete the gloss of this emblem, Spenser presents the following exchange between Red Cross Knight and Fradubio:

But how long time, said then the Elfin knight,
 Are you in this misformed house to dwell?
 We may not chaunge (quoth he) this evil plight,
 Till we be bathed in living well;
 That is the term prescribed by the spell.
 O how, said he, mote I that well outfind,
 That may restore you to your wonted well?
 Time and suffised fates to former kynd
 Shall us restore, none else from hence may us unbynd. (ii.43)

The irony of the knight's second question is obvious, for he stands precisely in need, at this point, of the "living well." The "living well," an image that occurs again at the end of the legend (xi.29), is, of course, baptism in Christ, evidence of God's love for mankind. Through baptism old Adam becomes new man. According to Augustine, Adam and Eve hide either inside a tree or within the shade of it, meaning that they hid within themselves, shunning the light of truth.²¹ The similarity of Red Cross Knight's experience and that of Fradubio clearly implies that his state at this point is like that of Adam after disobedience. His having been tempted through his senses and appetite into a denial of the truth is repeated in the allegory of Fradubio and Fraelissa, and his fall mitigated by the implication that he has recapitulated Adam's fall.

Wilfully separated from Una, and accompanying, lustfully, her hellish counterpart, Fidessa, Red Cross Knight is dispossessed of true faith and in danger of losing, completely, charity. In this state, Fidessa, the foul witch Duessa, seeks to overcome the knight's Hope, the last, untested, bastion of Holiness in his soul. She leads him into the earthly city ruled by Lucifera, and there the assault begins. However, at this point the legend takes up the plight of Una following

her abandonment by the knight, and deals with the second, infernal virtue, lawlessness.

NOTES

¹Nelson, p. 158.

²Tasso, p. 40; quoted in Nelson, p. 158.

³Virgilis Opera, fol. 124v; trans. in Nelson, p. 159.

⁴Matthew 7:13; Augustine, City of Man, xv.21.

⁵On Pride of Life see John 2:16, Ruskin, Works, I, 130.

⁶Aquinas, 468.

⁷Gardner, pp. 79-80.

⁸Tasso, p. 40.

⁹The knight's view that virtue provides its own light illustrates erring reason.

¹⁰For a discussion of this see John Calvin, Institutes of The Christian Religion, trans. Henry Beveridge (London, 1953), II, 555-605, and John Jewel, An Apology of the Church of England, ed. J. E. Parker (Ithaca, 1963), pp. 97-98.

¹¹In the scheme of the legend, Archimago's role is to exploit the knight's weaknesses in order to separate him from truth, rendering him prey to falsehood, Duessa, and worldliness, thereby exposing the knight's soul to damnation.

¹²On reason's absence during sleep see Ruth Ellis Messenger, Ethical Teachings in the Latin Hymns of Medieval England (New York, 1930), p. 65.

¹³Mark 14:30.

¹⁴The allusion to Peter's doubt argues that the knight's coming failure is the result of the inevitable weakness of man.

¹⁵Fidessa's tale has its counterpart in Una's tale of her history later in the legend (vii.43-50). A comparison reveals the worldliness of Fidessa's tale.

¹⁶1 Corinthians 13:13.

¹⁷Aquinas, 153-154.

¹⁸The hunting Lion's spontaneous "love" for Una argues that order is natural, and, in the moral scheme of the legend, that Nature is good rather than neutral.

¹⁹Nelson, pp. 160-163.

²⁰P. 162.

²¹Augustine, "De Genesi contra Manicheos," Patrologia Latina, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1877), xxxiv, 208, trans. Nelson, p. 163.

IV

The Test of Charity

The story of Una's wandering search for the knight who has forsaken her for a counterfeit truth appears somewhat of a digression in the Legend of Holiness. Yet, carefully woven as it is into the legend from the point of Una's abandonment to the point at which Prince Arthur frees Red Cross Knight from Orgoglio's castle, it has the qualities of a digression which comes to rival the main story in importance. It is a digression which keeps pace with the knight's errant quest for truth. The link between the story of Una's experiences while searching for her champion, and the knight's experiences while separate from truth lies in the pattern, developed in the story of Una's experiences, which describes the relationship between love of truth and the faculties of the soul.

Una, "her due loves deriv'd to that vile witches share" (iii.2), strays "[i]n wildernesses and wastfull deserts . . . ,/ To seeke her knight" (iii.3). During this search, and in a pointed comparison with the knight, she alights from her "unhastie beast," and, weary,

. . . on the grasse her daintie limbes did lay
In secret shadow, farre from all mens sight:
From her faire head her fillet she undight,
And laid her stole aside. Her angels face
As the great eye of heaven shyned bright,
And made a sunshine in the shadie place;
Did never mortall eye behold such heavenly grace. (iii.4)

This is an image of truth manifest, sweeping away the shadows of error and illusion, shadows which have trapped Red Cross Knight. Her "unhastie beast" suggests orderly government of the body; unlike the knight's inability to curb the impulses of his "mettlesome" horse (i.1), his passions, which have borne him away from the truth. In this state of repose, Una is chanced upon by a lion foraging for food:

It fortun'd out of the thickest wood
 A ramping Lyon rushed suddainly,
 Hunting full greedie after salvage blood;
 Soone as the royall virgin he did spy,
 With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,
 To have attonce devour'd her tender corse:
 But to the pray when as he drew more ny,
 His bloudie rage asswaged with remorse,
 And with the sight amazd, forgat his furious forse.

In stead thereof he kist her wearie feet,
 And lickt her lilly hands with fawning tong,
 As he her wronged innocence did weet. (iii.5-6)

The love the lion demonstrates for Una prompts her to compare his behaviour with that of Red Cross Knight:

The Lyon Lord of everie beast in field,
 Quoth she, his princely puissance doth abate,
 And mightie proud to humble weake does yield,
 Forgetfull of the hungry rage, which late
 Him prickt, in pittie of my sad estate:
 But he my Lyon, and my noble Lord,
 How does he find in cruell hart to hate
 Her that him lov'd, and ever most adord,
 As the God of my life? why hath he me abhord? (iii.7)

The lion's behaviour is here described in terms of raging appetites checked by the vision of truth. The implication of Una's questions is that if a savage beast can demonstrate submission to truth,

the knight, who as a man is lord of all of the beasts of the field, should also be able to love truth.¹ However, the ability of beastly appetite to submit to government is a natural ability subverted in man by the Fall. The arch example of this subversion is Sans loy, whom Spenser describes as "lawless lust" (vi.gloss), and who seeks to satisfy his appetites despite being confronted by Una unveiled.

The love the lion shows for Una she describes as charitable ("prickt, in pittie of my sad estate"). The lion automatically accompanies Una in her search for Red Cross Knight. The journey of Una and the lion, until the meeting with Sans loy, is punctuated by two episodes, the first involving the trio of Corceca, Abessa, and Kirkrapine, and the second Archimago disguised as Red Cross Knight.

The first episode presents Una in the wilderness, seeking sanctuary in the dwelling of Corceca ("blindness"), Abessa ("ab esse," analogous with "Duessa" and suggesting "abbess"), and Kirkrapine ("rapacious church").² The dwelling, "under the steepe foot of a mountaine hore" (iii.10) which is reached by a well trodden path, is a counterpart of the House of Holiness through which Red Cross Knight passes to gain the pinnacle of the mountain of Contemplation. The blind Corceca telling her beads (iii.13) is the opposite of Caelia, heavenly wisdom, the bead-telling governess of the House of Holiness (x.3). Coreca, Abessa, and Kirkrapine in this cloister suggest the blind unholiness of the Roman Catholic Church. When Una begs sanctuary, the inmates, Coreca and Abessa refuse, fearing the presence of truth and her natural guardian. Their charity is non-existent.

The rapacity of Kirkrapine and the perverse desires of Abessa (iii.18) in the presence of Corceca's blind faith argues disorder of the soul. Appetite rules, and darkness marks the dwelling, with charity forgotten and in its place only lust. The natural relationship between truth and appetite, reflected by Una and the lion, easily overcomes the perverse order of the dwelling, the well-governed appetite of the lion destroying the perverse Kirkrapine.

In the morning, Una and the lion leave the dwelling, only to be pursued and cursed at by Corceca and Abessa for the destruction of Kirkrapine. Like two furies of revenge, they rail against the truth in their passion for vengeance,

. . . her accusing of dishonesty,
That was the flowre of faith and chastity. (iii.23)

In their blindness, they appeal to Archimago, who, counterfeited as Red Cross Knight, chances to pass by. The irony of the appeal lies in the fact that Archimago appears to be the patron of Holiness, Red Cross Knight, invoked by Corceca and Abessa to destroy Una, the figure of truth.³ Their appeal, of course, proves well directed, and Archimago, disguised, sets off to find Una.

On meeting Una, Archimago's counterfeit benefits from the charity of her love for Red Cross Knight. Duped by Archimago, she listens while he defends the behaviour of Red Cross Knight towards Una with an appeal to reason:

Farre be it from your thought, and from my will,
 To think that knighthood I so much should shame,
 As you to leave, that have me loved still,
 And chose in Faery court of meere goodwill,
 Where noblest knights were to be found on earth:
 The earth shall sooner leave her kindly skill
 To bring forth fruit, and make eternall derth,
 Then I leave you, my lief, yborne of heavenly berth. (iii.28)

There is in this speech both error and cunning sophistry. Red Cross Knight was chosen for the quest not because "of mere goodwill," but rather, as Una explains later to Prince Arthur, as the result of his innocence and courage (vii.47). Archimago, overlooking innocence, assumes the choice was based on affection. In his analogy between Red Cross Knight's steadfastness and the perpetual creativity of the earth, sophistry is evident: while it is true that the earth is unlikely to abandon eternally her creative role, she does abandon it annually. The statement carefully circumvents any reference to winter. Archimago, both by error and cunning avoids mention of either innocence or death as it normally occurs in nature, thereby avoiding any allusion to the Fall and his association with it, and therefore not alerting Una to the danger she is in. What Archimago avoids mention of is the occasion by which truth came to be veiled from man. Una is deceived, though, not by the lust that deceived Red Cross Knight, but by the charity that marks her love for the knight.

Sans loy appears following the counterfeit Red Cross Knight's reconciliation with Una, and the knight is spurred to the defence of Una by her encouraging words. This parallels, in its irony, the encouragement Red Cross Knight takes as meant for himself during the later

battle he has with Sans joy (v.11). The counterfeit Fidessa's words of encouragement to Sans joy proves to be Sans joy's undoing in his battle with Red Cross Knight. Here, Una's words breed ironic hope in the breast of Archimago, and he sallies forth to immediate defeat before Sans loy. The parallel informs us, by reinforcement, that deceit is liable to deceit, caught in its own web of illusion, and that innocence, to some extent, proves an ally in confronting deceit.

The description of Sans loy reveals the character of Una's enemy:

Full strongly armd, and on a courser free,
That through his fiercenesse fomed all with sweat;
And the sharpe yron did for anger eat,
When his hot ryder spurd his chauffed side;
His looke was sterne, and seemed still to threat
Cruell revenge, which he in hart did hyde,
And on his shield Sans loy in bloudie lines was dyde. (iii.33)

The mettlesome nature of the knight's horse, angered at the spur and "free," suggests that the horse has rein. This, coupled with the description of Sans loy's wrath, argues that, in his case, flesh controls spirit, that the appetites control the faculty of reason. Again, there is a parallel with Red Cross Knight, whose horse earlier was described as mettlesome, and whose misanthropy towards Una was the result of lust and wrath overcoming reason. The parallel is an indication that Red Cross Knight's misanthropy is about to be reenacted, as proves immediately to be the case. But as well it suggests that the Legend of Holiness will here turn to deal with the behaviour of man towards truth, and its causes.

Sans loy, unmasking his victim, Archimago, prior to killing him, recognizes his error in attacking the counterfeit Red Cross Knight. Aborting his effort, and apologizing to Archimago, he turns his beastly appetite towards Una. The lion guarding Una essays to defend her, but Sans loy proves too cunning and slays Una's champion, leaving her apparently defenseless to his advances. Sans loy's conquest of the lion is attributed to his physical strength and the reason he commands:

O then too weake and feeble was the force
Of salvage beast, his puissance to withstand:
For he was strong, and of so mightie corse,
As ever wielded speare in warlike hand,
And feates of armes did wisely understood. (iii.42)

The point of Sans loy's victory over the lion is that it is the triumph of subverted reason, serving appetite, over appetite, orderly but unaided by reason. Reason sets man over the beast, giving him dominion, and Sans loy's subverted reason is more than enough to defeat the lion. Una, at this point, is in serious jeopardy:

Her faithfull gard remov'd, her hope dismaid,
Her selfe a yeelded pray to save or spill.
He now Lord of the field, his pride to fill,
With foule reproches, and disdainfull spight
Her vildly entertaines, and will or nill,
Beares her away upon his courser light. (iii.43)

Sans loy is described in a fashion which parallels the earlier description of the lion he has just slain. The lion was "lord of everie beast in field," and "mightie proud" (iii.7). Faced with the unveiled Una, the lion submits to control, demonstrating charity. Sans loy, upon

unveiling Una, is further kindled in his lust, the opposite of charity. The pride he seeks "to fill" is the pride of the flesh which has suzerainty over his reason and which was implicit in the description of his horse having control of the bit. Marked by the parallel with the lion, his behaviour is clearly unnatural and immoral.⁴ And finally, Una's palfrey is described as "more mild in beastly kind, then that her beastly foe" (iii.44). Caxton provides an illuminating gloss of this comparison: "And man that is callyd a beste resonable and doth not his werke after reson and truthe Is more bestyall than any beste brute"⁵ It is the appetite's control of reason, a lawless state, which provides Sans loy's physical superiority over the beasts and also his moral inferiority. Una, the truth, is quite defenseless before the unnatural disorder Sans loy represents.

Sans loy's attack on Una resembles Red Cross Knight's abandonment of her. In the case of Red Cross Knight, Archimago kindled the knight's appetites to the point where reason was overthrown by wrath sparked by lust. In a neat inversion of this sequence, Sans loy's "wrathfull fire" is turned to "lustfull heat" as he views his victim (vi.3). However, whereas Sans loy is a permanent embodiment of an evil, disordered state which threatens man, Red Cross Knight is the victim of evil forces. Buttressed by allusions to Peter's doubt, and to the knight's innocence, Red Cross Knight's behaviour is stretched against the backdrop of human fallibility rather than human evil.

Sans loy first seeks to win Una to his desires by the employment of his reason, essaying to persuade her to yield to him (vi.3). Unable

to gain his end by "diverse guile," he resorts to violence (vi.3). At the edge of destruction, Una is rescued by the hand of Providence sending a horde of Satyrs to the scene. This miracle is a sign of God's intent to preserve truth for man, and not to abandon truth to chaos.⁶

Una comes to reside with the Satyrs who are part man, part beast, and is worshipped by them in an idolatrous fashion. Like the lion, they recognize "her heavenly grace" (vi.9), but when she attempts to teach them truth they fail to comprehend her teaching. Described as having "feeble eyes" (vi.19), the Satyrs embody a feeble reason unable to comprehend truth. They are carnal, more beast than man, and only barely above the level of the raging lion turned humble servant which Una's radiant truth conquered earlier. Their love of the truth is not charity but infatuation, and while not evil, this infatuation is clearly a hopelessly limited kind of love:

. . . [Una] long time with that salvage people staid,
To gather breath in many miseries.
During which time her gentle wit she plyes,
To teach them truth, which worshipt her in vaine,
And made her th' Image of Idolatryes;
But when their bootlesse zeale she did restraine
From her own worship, they her Asse would worship fayn. (vi.19)

Unable to spread truth amongst the Satyrs, and trapped by their idolatrous worship, Una meets Satyrane, a figure who eventually assists her in leaving the Satyrs and their forest behind. Satyrane is himself a Satyr, as his name implies, although more man than beast. His birth was the result of the passion of Thyamis for Therion which prompted her

to enter a wood in search of him, only to kindle "coles of lust in [the] brutish eye" of a Satyr who chanced to come across her (vi.22). The woods of course suggest bodiliness and sensuality, and the birth of Satyrane is the result of inflamed appetite. Learning to "banish cowardize and bastard feare" (vi.24), Satyrane's growth to manhood is defined as a time of his gaining lordship over the beasts of forest and field.⁷ Having a human mother and therefore being more man than his father, he overgoes his father in conquering the beasts of the forest and field, and is able to force them into "yron yokes":

And for to make his powre approved more,
 Wyld beasts in yron yokes he would compell;
 The spotted Panther, and the tusked Bore,
 The Pardale swift, and the Tigre cruell;
 The Antelope, and Wolfe both fierce and fell;
 And them constraine in equall teme to draw.
 Such joy he had, their stubborne harts to quell,
 And sturdie courage tame with dreadfull aw,
 That his beheast they feared, as a tyrans law. (vi.26)

The description of Satyrane's chariot is intended to summon up comparison with the iron chariot pulled by six of the seven deadly sins and guided by the seventh, Pride, in the House of Pride (iv.18). The bending of the wild beasts to "yron yokes" alludes to the curbing, by Satyrane, of his beastly appetites, an act beyond the capacity of his more beastly father. His chariot's being drawn "in equal teme" is in contrast with Pride's chariot which is drawn in an unruly fashion. His mastery of the beasts is not the unruly result of overweening pride, but rather of the natural superiority of reason (implicit in this description of Satyrane's growth to manhood is his inevitable clash with

Sans loy). In contradistinction to the disordered ranking of vices and complementary beasts pulling Pride's chariot, Satyrane's chariot is an emblem of the ordered soul.⁸ He has grown up "from lawes of men exilde" (vi.23), but in accordance with natural law which marked the immediate response of servitude in the lion's meeting with Una. Having settled the government of the body under the banner of reason, and possessed, at the time of manhood, with an ordered soul, he left the forest for the world of man and his "famous worth" spread throughout "all Faery lond" (vi.29). His meeting with Una occurs during a visit to the home of his nurture to see his ancient sire, for, despite his success, Satyrane is not prideful:

Yet evermore it was his manner faire,
After long labours and adventures spent,
Unto those native woods for to repaire,
To see his sire and ofspring ancient. (vi.30)

Satyrane quickly comes under Una's influence:

He wondred at her wisdom heavenly rare,
Whose like in womens wit he never knew;
And when her curteous deeds he did compare,
Gan her admire, and her sad sorrowes rew,
Blaming of Fortune, which such troubles threw,
And joyd to make prooffe of her crueltie
On gentle Dame, so hurtlesse, and so trew:
Thenceforth he kept her goodly company,
And learnd her discipline of faith and veritie. (vi.31)

Rational by nature, and possessed of an orderly soul, Satyrane succeeds where the Satyrs failed. He comprehends the presence of truth not as an object of physical worship, but as knowledge the rational mind can learn. His response, like that of the lion, is natural, but whereas

the beast could only dumbly serve, the rational mind of Satyrane can comprehend the figure served. Charity lights his comprehension, for his attitude is that of "rew" for Una's plight.

It appears that Satyrane would provide an ideal companion for Una. He has the rational control over the body the Red Cross Knight lacks, and is able to turn his reason to intellection, learning Una's "discipline of faith and veritie." Una, however, does not take Satyrane as her knight because she is "vowd unto the Redcrosse knight" (vi.32). Kellogg and Steele argue that Satyrane is the emblem of rational paganism which the truth passes beyond, coming, finally, to rest with Christ. Their argument, which traces Una's hunt for Red Cross Knight in terms of the truth's abandoned state after the Fall and until the arrival of Christ, is strained, particularly at this point.⁹ Una's hunt for her knight is essentially a long digression in the legend, dealing with the virtue of charity, perfect love. Satyrane is well-nigh a perfect companion for Una. He battles one of truth's principle enemies, Sans loy (Duessa and Archimago are the other enemies), to a standstill, thus demonstrating his power to confront lawless appetite. Una's de facto rejection of Satyrane as a replacement for Red Cross Knight is not, in fact, a rejection at all. It affirms, by her ever-present concern for Red Cross Knight, that cardinal element in perfect love, loyalty. She has vowed herself unto the Red Cross Knight, and,

His wandring perill closely did lament,
Ne in this new acquaintaunce could delight,
But her deare heart with anguish did torment. (vi.32)

Satyrane assists Una in her escape from the Satyrs, and, the forest cleared, they arrive "on a plaine" (vi.33) where they are apparently safe. However, the master of deceit, Archimago, awaits them in the guise of a pilgrim, and again illusion threatens truth. He fabricates a story of the death of Red Cross Knight (vi.38-39), and manages to engage Una's defender, Satyrane, in a battle with Sans loy. The implication of the battle is that because of the deceitful story of Red Cross Knight's death, Satyrane is moved to possess Una as his and must battle against perverse appetite. Una's vow to Red Cross Knight is eternal, and beyond the world of the body. Her love is not material. Satyrane is tricked by Archimago into a battle with his material desires. As Sans loy argues, during their unfinished battle,

Were it not better, I that Lady had,
Then that thou hadst repented it too late?
Most sencelesse man he, that himselfe doth hate,
To love another (vi.47)

While the main thrust of Sans loy's argument is for inconstancy in love, he implies that they are fighting for Una. The substance of the battle is a fight between perfect love and lawless lust, Satyrane's earlier charity and his present desire. Yet the mere fact of the battle does not qualify Satyrane as a lesser figure than Red Cross Knight, for Red Cross Knight himself had been tricked by the same Archimago into misanthropic behaviour resulting from perverse desire for Una.

While the battle between Sans loy and Satyrane is unfinished, its illusionary basis is soon unmasked for Una when she receives a report from the Dwarf that Red Cross Knight is imprisoned in Orgoglio's

castle, and in peril. Satyrane himself appears again in a later book of the poem, a fact that argues his moral victory over Sans loy. The mere fact of the illusionary basis of his battle having been unmasked, suggests that apprised of the truth he would revert at that point to charity even if he is unable to conquer Sans loy. At any rate, the argument is moot, for Spenser does not fulfil his promise to tell of the battle's end in "another place" (vi.48). Una, faced with the sight of Sans loy, flees the scene of battle, and Spenser ends his digression on Charity, although the virtue continues to play a cardinal part in Red Cross Knight's quest.

NOTES

¹The allusion is to Genesis 1:26.

²Nelson, pp. 175-176; and Kellogg and Steele, pp. 23-24.

³Corceca's passionate appeal to Archimago, counterfeited as Holiness, serves also to emphasize that she is a counterfeit form of Holiness.

⁴There are two nodal points of Nature in the Legend, the lion and the doors of Orgoglio's castle (viii.5), dumb beast and inanimate Nature.

⁵Caxton's Game and Play of Chesse, 1474 (London, 1883), p. 104.

⁶All of the miracles that occur in the legend have, fundamentally, the same meaning; specifically they all serve to ensure the union of Red Cross Knight with Una, and, generally, of man with truth.

⁷Satyrane's control over the beasts is an emblem of the ordered soul. His control, however, is tyrannical, and this forecasts the revolution of the appetitive soul revealed in his battle with Sans loy.

⁸See Plato's description of the chariot and charioteer, "Phaedrus," The Dialogues of Plato, III, 153.

⁹Kellogg and Steele, p. 29. A comparison of Satyrane's and Red Cross Knight's behaviour towards Una does not reveal Red Cross Knight's Christ-like superiority.

V

The Test of Hope

Red Cross Knight, companioned by counterfeit faith, Fidessa, strays far from the truth, coming, eventually, into the sinful House of Pride. Prior to the knight's entry into the House of Pride, Spenser glosses the behaviour which has led him to this point:

Young knight, what ever that dost armes professe,
And through long labours hunttest after fame,
Beware of fraud, beware of ficklenesse,
In choice, and change of thy deare loved Dame,
Least thou of her beleewe too lightly blame,
And rash misweening doe thy hart remove;
For unto knight there is no greater shame,
Then lightnesse and inconstancie in love;
Then doth this Redcrosse knight's ensample plainly prove. (iv.1)

The gloss reveals the lawlessness which the knight has been tricked into. He has been fickle, inconstant, and the resulting unfaithfulness has lead to his having Fidessa a companion. This leads him to the type of worldliness manifest in the House of Pride. It is the social embodiment of the materialism of the wood of Error from which he escaped in Una's company. Like the wood of Error, the House of Pride is reached by a "broad high way" (iv.2).

The beauty of the House of Pride is illusionary, as is its apparent strength. Its high walls are "nothing strong, nor thick" (iv.4), and its "hinder parts" are "ruinous and old, but painted cunningly" (iv.5). As Kellogg and Steele have noted, it resembles Augustine's

City of Man.¹ It is built on sand, a pointed allusion to Matthew's fool who builds his house upon sand;² and its ruling character is a passion to dominate. Marked by a foundation of rock and representing the desire to serve, the House of Holiness is the House of Pride's opposite in the legend. Like Augustine's dichotomy of the City of Man and the City of God, Spenser's two houses describe opposite ways of life, one leading to God, the other to Satan.

The paramount physical feature of the House of Pride is its clock, emblematic of the mortal materialism to which the House of Pride is dedicated. *Lucifera*, whose name pointedly alludes to Lucifer, the prideful angel who sought to overthrow God, is ruler of the House of Pride. She is represented as,

Looking to heaven, for earth she did disdayne,
And sitting high; for lowly she did hate. (iv.10)

A dragon lies under her feet, suggesting the Satanic root of her character and the error of her materialism. Enshrined in *Lucifera* is the perversion of order, rule based on usurpation and tyranny rather than law:

And proud *Lucifera* men did her call,
That made her selfe a Queene, and crownd to be,
Yet rightfull kingdome she had none at all,
Ne heritage of native soveraintie,
But did usurpe, which she now did hold:
Ne ruld her Realmes with lawes, but pollicie,
And strong advizement of six wisards old,
That with their counsels bad her kingdome did uphold. (iv.12)

Lucifera is compared to Phaeton, Apollo's presumptuous son

(iv.9), and she rides a chariot drawn by six figures mounted on beasts and representing six of the seven deadly sins, with Lucifera herself the seventh and greatest sin of Pride. The chariot is a metaphor for the soul, and Lucifera's chariot is a parody of the chariots of the Gods Plato describes in the Phaedrus.³ The Gods' chariots, their souls, roam the heavens with ease, while man's chariots are earth bound because of the disharmoniousness that exists between the horses and the charioteer. Man's soul, according to this metaphor, is an imperfect union of the beastly and the rational, a chariot difficult to drive. Lucifera, whose chariot is compared not only to Phaeton's but also to Juno's (iv.17), makes slow headway. Led by the intractable figure of Idleness, and whipped on by Satan, Lucifera mounts her chariot at the time when

. . . faire Aurora in her purple pall,
Out of the East the dawning day doth call. (iv.16)

The allusion, lodged in this description, is again to the chariot of Apollo, further establishing the contrast between the harmonious soul of the Gods described by Plato and the disordered soul represented by Lucifera's chariot. The sins are ranked in a team, with Idleness as the leader of the team:

. . . [the chariot] was drawne of six unequall beasts,
On which [Lucifera's] six sage Counsellours did ryed,
Taught to obay their bestiall beheasts,
With like conditions to their kinds applyde:
Of which the first, that all the rest did guyde,
Was sluggish Idlenesse the nourse of sin. (iv.18)

Sloth is described as a figure shunning "manly exercise," and leading a life of,

. . . lawlesse riotese;
By which he grew to grievous malady;
For in his lustlesse limbs through evill guise
A shaking fever raignd continually. (iv.20)

Idleness is a perversion of the irascible portion of the appetite; the figure lacks spirit, and suffers a strength-sapping fever throughout his "lustlesse limbs." As leader of Pride's chariot, Idleness represents one of the chief threats to the soul. Idleness is the condition of receptivity to the remaining deadly sins, culminating in pride. As such, it is one of the chief antagonists of hope, the virtue which shields the soul, giving man the strength to abjure the present, material world for the future, spiritual world.⁴ Red Cross Knight, at the point of his surrender to the body, is described, like Idleness, as being shaken by Fever and badly weakened (vii.6). The implication of the description is that hope, the strength to deny the material world, has been overcome. In this negative state, the knight capitulates to lust (vii.7).

Entering Lucifera's domain, counterfeit faith, the disguised Duessa, is welcomed as an old familiar (iv.15). Red Cross Knight, "goodly" entertained,

Thought all their glorie vaine in knightly vew,
And that great Princesse too exceeding prowd,
That to strange knight no better countenance allowd. (iv.15)

The knight, welcomed by Lucifera who was "halfe loth to looke so low"

(iv.14), is peaked by the reception. There is, in his view of the welcome, the barest hint of pride. There is, in his expectation of a courtly welcome, vanity, which will prove a source of his downfall. However, at this point the knight isolates himself from the entertainment of the House of Pride's inhabitants:

Him selfe estraunging from their joyaunce vaine,
Whose fellowship seemd far unfit for warlike swaine. (iv.37)

At the point of Red Cross Knight's withdrawal from the joys of the House of Pride, he is attacked by Sans joy. Sans joy represents the state of joylessness which marks the absence of hope, and his attack on Red Cross Knight argues that the knight's hope is in peril. Red Cross Knight's response to the House of Pride, while apparently prompted by a healthy disregard of its vain inhabitants, is revealed by Sans joy's attack as resulting from his own vanity. Entering the House of Pride, the state of worldliness it represents imperils Red Cross Knight's soul.

Sans joy's attack on Red Cross Knight offends Lucifera, who views it as a breach of courtly decorum (iv.40). She insists that the battle take place with due pomp and ceremony, that it be a prideful display according with the nature of the House of Pride. Chastened by the rebuke, Sans joy explains his breach of decorum by pointing out that Red Cross Knight has slain his brother, Sans foy, and he vilifies Red Cross Knight during the explanation:

Ah dearest Dame, (quoth then the Paynim bold,)
Pardon the errour of enraged wight,

Whom great grieve made forget the raines to hold
 Of reasons rule, to see this recreant knight,
 No knight, but treachour full of false despight
 And shamefull treason, who through guile hath slayn
 The prowtest knight, that ever field did fight,
 Even stout Sans foy (O who can then refrayn?)
 Whose shield he beares reverst, the more to heape disdayn.

And to augment the glorie of his guile,
 His dearest love the faire Fidessa loe
 Is there possessed of the traytour vile,
 Who reapes the harvest sown by his foe,
 Sown in bloudy field, and bought with woe:
 That brothers hand shall dearely well requight
 So be, O Queene, you equall favour showe. (iv.41-42)

Red Cross Knight does not reply to Sans joy's charges:

Him litle answerd th'angry Elfin knight;
 He never meant with words, but swords to plead his right. (iv.42)

Sans joy's initial apology to Lucifera alludes to the metaphor of the soul and body as horse and horseman, pleading a brief usurpation of reason's control by bodily passion. The implication of the apology is that, rebuked, he has returned to the ordered state of reason governing the appetites. However, given the disordered soul of his audience, Lucifera, Sans joy's implied assertion appears at once to be suspect. His vilification of Red Cross Knight bears out the suspicion that an ordered, rational state is beyond his capacity.

Sans joy's explanation of his behaviour abuses reason. Red Cross Knight is not a "treachour full of false despight/ And shamefull treason," nor was his conquest of Sans foy accomplished "through guile." The irony of Sans joy's argument is that it is Red Cross Knight, himself, who has been conquered "through guile." Yet the angered knight's

decision not to confront the accuser with reason but with the body ("He never meant with words, but swords to plead his right") is an error. It marks, once again, an elevation of passion over reason, and signals Red Cross Knight's involvement with the House of Pride. Once his combat with Sans joy is arranged for the following day, he passes the night in "joy and jollity," stewarded by Gluttony, and then is chamberlained to rest by Sloth (iv.43).

The real test of the House of Pride for the Christian Knight of the Redcross is the test it presents to hope. Citizenship in Lucifera's kingdom undermines hope, putting the desire for the glories of the material world in the place of the desire for Heavenly reward. Sans joy represents this test, as the state of joylessness which attends hopelessness. He stands as an emblem of Red Cross Knight's growing attachment to the material world, and the consequent jeopardy this represents to the knight's entry into heaven. Hopelessness confronts Red Cross Knight as a result of his separation from truth, Una, and his present association with Fidessa, the apparent faith deceit, Duessa, is cloaked in. During the night before the battle, she visits Sans joy and delivers her support:

Ah deare Sans joy, next dearest to Sans foy,
Cause of my new griefe, cause of my new joy,
Joyous, to see his ymage in mine eye,
And greev'd, to thinke how foe did him destroy,
That was the flowre of grace and chevalrye;
Lo his Fidessa to thy secret faith I flye.⁵ (iv.45)

The battle with Sans joy goes badly for Red Cross Knight near its end [". . . twice he reeled, readie twice to fall" (v.11)]. At

this point, Duessa, seeking to spur on Sans joy, cries out that he will win Sans joy's shield, herself, and all else by defeating Red Cross Knight ["Thine the shield, and I, and all" (v.11)]. The cheer, ironically, wakens Red Cross Knight's "faith" (v.12), as, of course, ignorant of Duessa's alignment with Sans joy, he assumes his lady's cheer is meant for him. With the return of "faith," the knight prevents Sans joy's victory.

The point of Red Cross Knight's ironical prevention of Sans joy's triumph is similar to that of Archimago's unhorsing at the hands of Sans loy: deceit is liable to deceit. As well, however, the outcome is proof that Providence is stronger than the powers of Hell. [Earlier, in her clandestine conversation with Sans joy, Duessa voiced her fear of "fortune false" (iv.50)]. This same point is made by the providential rescue of Una from the hands of Sans loy (vi.7). That the outcome is not the result of Red Cross Knight's own, true faith is revealed in the description of the faith that is awakened. He is "mov'd with wrath, and shame, and Ladies sake" (v.12).⁶ This faith is the faith that marked his earlier battle with Error (i.12 and 19).

Sans joy is not destroyed by Red Cross Knight. Duessa manages to prevent this by shrouding him in a cloud. Later, in the company of her ancestor, Night, she takes the wounded Sans joy to the appropriate hospital, Hell. Here, Night takes him to Aescylapius, the physician who merited hell for his usurpation of the Gods' power over life and death (v.40). Aescylapius' sin is one of Pride, and implicitly he is linked with the House of Pride, suffering the hopelessness consequent

on his former citizenship. However, Night must first convince him of his own hopeless condition before he agrees to minister to Sans joy. She prevails by an argument that sophistically appeals to his reason, and flatteringly appeals to his pride:

. . . sith that heavens king
 From hope of heaven hath thee excluded quight,
 Why fearest thou, that canst not hope for thing,
 And fearest not, that more thee hurten might,
 Now in the powre of everlasting Night?
 Goe to then, O thou farre renowned sonne
 Of great Apollo, shew thy famous might
 In medicine, that else hath to thee wonne
 Great paines, and greater praise, both never to be donne. (v.43)

Night excludes the possibility that contrition might earn Aescylapius remission from torment, and that "heavens king" has at his disposal greater torments. Having exercised her perverse reason, she turns to flattery and appeals to Aescylapius' pride. The argument reflects the perversity of the House of Pride, and Aescylapius' condition points clearly to the hopeless state which awaits the unwary who become its citizens. That Red Cross Knight does not destroy Sans joy bodes ill for him. The hopelessness that Sans joy represents remains a threat which returns later in the legend to test and nearly conquer the knight.

Having apparently conquered Sans joy, Red Cross Knight is accorded a victor's place in the House of Pride. His service is accepted "with thanks, and goodly gree," by Lucifera, and she "[g]reatly advanc[es] his gay chevalree" (v.16). His wounds are carefully tended by "skilfull leaches,"

And all the while, most heavenly melody
 About the bed sweet musicke did divide,
 Him to beguile of grief and agony:
 And all the while Duessa wept full bitterly. (v.17)

Duessa's tears, of course, are only apparently the result of Red Cross Knight's wounds, her bitterness stems from the failure of Sans joy to triumph over the knight. All seems well for the knight, except that he is now settled comfortably into the House of Pride. What the direct attack of Sans joy failed to accomplish the House of Pride will indirectly accomplish. Residence in the House of Pride results in hopeless residence in Hell. The Dwarf saves Red Cross Knight from permanent residence in the House of Pride by revealing to him the ugly threat it represents. Warily taking the measure of Lucifera's house, the Dwarf discovers the hell over which it is built, and learns from its inhabitants "[t]he hidden cause of their captivitie" (v.46). The list of inhabitants is a litany of greatness unhorsed by pride, and a chorus of the consequential damnation of man overthrown by pride. Red Cross Knight, warned by the Dwarf,

. . . . no lenger would
 There dwell in perill of like painefull plight,
 But early rose, and ere that dawning light
 Discovered had the world to heaven wyde,
 He by a privie Posterne tooke his flight. (v.52)

The Dwarf's revelation of danger reflects reason's role in upholding hope. By warning Red Cross Knight of the danger of damnation hidden in the House of Pride, the Dwarf rescues the knight from the worldliness which threatens hope. Reason's ability is limited, though.

The Dwarf can only warn the knight of the threat of pride, divorced from the truth it is beyond his capacity to counter worldliness with a vision of the New Jerusalem which awaits the Holy. The truth of revelation lies beyond the command of reason. Yet reason is sufficient to see the dangers inherent in worldliness, if the reward for shunning the seduction of the world be beyond its capacity to see. The Dwarf leads Red Cross Knight out of the House of Pride, but the knight is not healthy. Sans joy's attack has left him weak and vulnerable, if not to the temptation of pride, in the form of lust for dominion, then to the temptation pride in the flesh.

Weakened by his wounds, after leaving the House of Pride Red Cross Knight comes to rest beside a fountain in a wood. He disarms and finds solace in cooling shade. Duessa, who has discovered his removal from the House of Pride upon her return from Hell, comes upon him in this state. Together they "bathe in pleasaunce of the joyous shade" (vii.4), and the knight drinks from the stream flowing from the fountain (vii.6). Thereafter he courts Duessa,

Pourd out in loosnesse on the grassy grownd,
Both carelesse of his health, and of his fame. (vii.7)

The knight's armourless state signals his defeat. Shorn of the defenses of hope and charity, and in the lewd embrace of counterfeit faith, his soul is defenseless before the powers of evil lurking in the world. The wood he is in, with its shade, recalls the emblematic wood of Error, and the materialism it stood for. Here, without Una, there is no escape for the knight. The fountain he drinks from has the power

to render "faint and feeble" (vii.5) those who taste its waters. The cause of the power,

. . . was this: one day when Phoebe fayre
 With all her band was following the chace,
 [A] Nymph, quite tyr'd with heat of scorching ayre
 Sat downe to rest in midst of the race:
 The goddesse wroth gan fowly her disgrace,
 And bad the waters, which from her did flow,
 Be such as she her selfe was then in place. (vii.5)

Like the "creeping deadly cold" (v.12) that attacks Red Cross Knight during his battle with Sans joy, the fountain undermines the strength and determination which sustains hope. It is an emblem of sloth ("rest in midst of the race"), the sin which leads Lucifera's chariot in the House of Pride. Drinking of the fountain brings on the symptoms of sloth in the knight:

He chaunged powres at first them selves not felt,
 Till crudled cold his corage gan assaile,
 And chearefull bloud in faintnesse chill did melt,
 Which like a fever fit through all his body swelt.⁷ (vii.6)

The knight, of course, disarms himself. His overthrow is the result of his own weakness, reason's inability to ascend to intellection to comprehend faith, and his perverse appetite's unbridled state which leads him to uncharitableness and a state of hopelessness. The description of Red Cross Knight "[p]our'd out in loosenesse" as he entertains Duessa alludes to Jacob's comparison of Ruben's behaviour to spilled water.⁸ A gloss of this text, provided by Spenser's contemporary, St. John of the Cross, reveals its meaning:

. . . the partriarch Jacob compared his son Ruben, who had given rein to his appetites in a certain sin, to spilled water This was like saying: Bècause according to appetite you are poured out like water, you grow not in virtue.⁹

Having abandoned the quest for salvation "in midst of the race" by disarming, Red Cross Knight is attacked and overcome by Orgoglio, a giant emblem of the flesh which has brought the knight to this sorry state. Attempting to defend himself, the knight is scarcely able to wield "his bootlesse single blade." This description of the knight's efforts alludes to the two swords of Christ, one spiritual the other of this world, by which he conquered worldliness, sin, and the Devil.¹⁰ Red Cross Knight's sword is of this world, and his flesh is weak to the point at which he is unable to wield even this. The conquest of worldliness is beyond his powers.¹¹ Pride of flesh marks Orgoglio, and this worldliness Duessa trumpets: "O great Orgoglio, greatest under skye" (vii.13). His realm lies "under skye," in this world. Yet Red Cross Knight's feeble attempt to battle Orgoglio represents a yet remaining desire to conquer worldliness, and, as a result, Duessa prevents Orgoglio from killing him. The soul still struggles for dominion over the knight's body, despite its inability to gain rule, and hence Red Cross Knight has not chosen to abandon Heaven, but rather is the victim of his own weakness. The body's triumph at this point would not mean the soul's damnation, and a victory for the forces of evil. Thus Duessa's plea to Orgoglio to imprison rather than kill Red Cross Knight:

O hold thy mortall hand for Ladies sake,
 Hold for my sake, and do him not to dye,
 But vanquisht thine eternall bondslave make. (vii.14)

Consequently, the knight is imprisoned in Orgoglio's castle where the keeper is ignorance, Ignaro, the father who fostered Orgoglio.

The rescue of Red Cross Knight from ignorant bondage to the flesh begins with Una's meeting with the Dwarf. Bearing the knight's armour, the Dwarf has set out to "tell of his great distresse" (vii.29). Having not travelled far, he meets the "wofull Una" who is fleeing from Sans loy "[w]hilest Satyrane him from pursuit did let" (vii.20). Embleatically, the meeting reveals reason as still searching for the truth that sets the soul free of its subservience to the body.¹² Further it introduces the main theme of the rescue of Red Cross Knight: reason's capacity and its limitations.

The Dwarf's office at this point in the legend is similar to the one Spenser describes in his "Letter" to Raleigh.¹³ At the time of Una's arrival at the court of the Faerie Queene, the Dwarf led the horse and carried the armour which was to become the equipage of Red Cross Knight. Like his bearing of Una's needments at the start of the knight's quest, the office Spenser describes in his "Letter" is care of the body. The horse is an image of the body, and the magical, Christian arms serve to protect the body against its own weaknesses, which, if not guarded against lead to the enslavement of the soul. The meeting between the Dwarf and Una joins the two main elements of the narrative together, linking the major digression on charity, Una's wandering search for Red Cross Knight, and the story of Red Cross Knight's career

while divorced from truth. Una, at the end of the digression, is fleeing from the lawless lust, Sans loy, that threatens the existence of truth. The knight is in bondage to the flesh. The Dwarf's meeting with Una argues the means of combating the flesh and its lawless lust which imperils the salvation of the soul. It is reason in the company of truth that can come to the knight's aid. However, unadorned reason is bound to the body, despite its capacity to comprehend truth, and the battle with the weakness of the flesh, through which the forces of evil work, requires providential assistance for victory. The Dwarf is replaced as the image of reason by Prince Arthur, the figure of paramount rationality in the legend, who is also the bearer of a shield through which God's Providence operates. Arthur's first task, upon meeting Una, is to convince her that reason is a powerful force, and that therefore she need not despair of Red Cross Knight's bondage to the flesh (vii.41).

Una meets Prince Arthur as she journeys to Orgoglio's castle. The exposition of his character is begun by the same device used at the outset of the legend to describe Red Cross Knight's character. He is described from afar, but in contrast to the description of Red Cross Knight only one equivocal term enters this description. The contrast argues that Arthur is as he appears to be, a goodly knight of great prowess. His control of his horse goes unmentioned, although one assumes it to be well-nigh perfect given that his squire "could menage faire/ His stubborne steed with curbed canon bit" (vii.37). Prince Arthur's chief strength, his shield, has the ability to cut through

deceit, to reduce appearance to reality:

. . . all that was not such, as seemd in sight,
Before that shield did fade, and suddaine fall. (vii.35)

Prince Arthur's primary function in the pattern of the legend is to represent the ability of reason to cope with the weakness of the flesh. During his efforts to console a disconsolate Una, he argues that "[f]lesh may empaire . . . but reason can repaire" (vii.41). Reason, Arthur's armour, shines from "farre away" (vii.29), unlike Red Cross Knight's armour of Holiness which gives little light at the outset of the legend (i.14). Arthur's armour appears complete "From top to toe no place appeared bare" (vii.29). Later in the legend, Arthur reveals to Una the love he bears the Faerie Queene (ix.8-15), and his tale reveals the chinks in his armour, chinks which he is aware of. His description of the onset of love teems with references to the antagonism of the flesh and reason. Timon, Arthur's wise, old tutor had warned him "[t]hose creeping flames [of passion] by reason to subdew" (ix.9). Arthur had warded off Cupid's darts "with wary government" (ix.10). His efforts were in vain, and passion prevailed. In a minor, but important, digression, he observes that,

. . . no fort can be so strong,
Ne fleshly brest can armed be so sound,
But will at last be wonne with batttrie long,
Or unawares at disadvantage found;
Nothing is sure, that growes on earthly ground:
And who most trustes in arme of fleshly might,
And boasts, in beauties chaine not to be bound,
Doth soonest fall in disaventrous fight,
And yeeldes his caytive neck to victours most despight.

Ensamble make of him your haplesse joy,
 And of my selfe now mated, as ye see. (ix.11-12)

Both Red Cross Knight's and Arthur's case are particular examples of the weakness of the flesh. Arthur's observation is simply a general conclusion drawn from his own case and that of the Red Cross Knight. As well, however, it contains an argument that binds the conclusion to the examples. The argument concerns innocence, or, put less favourably, ignorance. To trust "in arme of fleshly might" without acknowledging desire (boasting "in beauties chaine not to be bound") is a sure route to disaster. The knight who does, "[d]oth soonest fall in disaventrous fight." As concupiscence twins inrascibility, so desire partners courage, and the man of action who relies on the body to serve his courage can not escape the body's desires. This simple equation is denied in ignorance. The alternative to being bound "in beauties chaine" is not to trust "in arme of fleshly might," to renounce the flesh by renouncing the world and all action in it. Contemplation, a figure who appears at the end of Red Cross Knight's sojourn in the House of Holiness, has renounced the world, his earthly eyes are "both blunt and bad" (x.47). But both Arthur and the Red Cross Knight have chosen the active as against the contemplative life, and are subject to the world and the flesh.¹⁴ Therefore for them ignorance of the weakness of the flesh is a paramount danger. Yet, as Arthur's conclusion implies, even knowledge of the weakness of the flesh is insufficient as a defense.

Arthur has succumbed to desire through a dream vision of the

Faerie Queene, as he reveals to Una (ix.13-15). Unlike the Red Cross Knight's vision of Una (i.47-55), Arthur's vision is not the result of evil forces seeking his overthrow. The vision does not lead to lawless lust, but rather to a love whose realization must wait until "just time [has] expired" (ix.14). Nevertheless the love is a triumph over "wary government," gains sway while reason is absent during sleep, and is a sign of the weakness of the flesh. The difference between the example of Arthur "mated" and the example of Red Cross Knight imprisoned in Orgoglio's castle is not one of kind but of degree. The weakness both knights share has, in Red Cross Knight's case, been the path by which evil powers have succeeded in jeopardizing the salvation of the soul. Arthur's recognition of the parallel is implicit in his pairing of his own case with that of the Red Cross Knight.

When Una and Prince Arthur meet, their conversation takes the form of debate. Arthur argues the strength of reason, while Una, in despair over the fate of Red Cross Knight, takes the view that reason is insufficient:

. . . wofull Ladie let me you intrete,
 For to unfold the anguish of your hart;
 Mishaps are maistred by advice discrete,
 And counsell mittigates the greatest smart;
 Found never helpe, who never would his hurts impart.

O but (quoth she) great grieve will not be tould,
 And can more easily be thought, then said.
 Right so; (quoth he) but he, that never would,
 Could never: will to might gives greatest aid.
 But grieve (quoth she) does greater grow displaid;
 If then it find not helpe, and breedes despaire.
 Despaire breedes not (quoth he) where faith is staid.
 No faith so fast (quoth she) but flesh does paire,
 Flesh may empaire (quoth he) but reason can repaire. (vii.40-41)

Arthur prevails with his argument:

His goodly reason, and well guided speach
 So deepe did settle in her gracious thought,
 That her perswaded to disclose the breach,
 Which love and fortune in her heart had wrought. (vii.42)

Una's position reflects the events that have taken place prior to her meeting with Prince Arthur. Her sorrow is the result of the fate that has befallen Red Cross Knight, and her pessimistic view towards "counsell" is essentially a conclusion drawn from her experience with reason. Red Cross Knight's "faith" has been "paire[d]" by the flesh, reason has proven to be weak. On the basis of this evidence, to rely on reason to contain and ease the passion of "griefe" is to invite the greater passion of "[d]espaire." Red Cross Knight's own grief "displaid" overwhelms reason and leads him to despair following his release from Orgoglio's castle (ix.37-51).

The "[d]espaire" that Una argues to be the consequence of grief exposed, rather than being contained, and not relieved by reason is an antagonist of hope.¹⁵ Essentially, it parallels the emotional state of joylessness represented by Sans joy. Red Cross Knight's battle with Sans joy was the result of his "[un]staid" faith, his abandonment of Una and his companionship with Fidessa. This "[un]staid" faith, the result of reason's overthrow by the flesh, led to the exposure of hope in the House of Pride. And again, when the figure of Despair confronts Red Cross Knight following his rescue from Orgoglio's castle it is a combination of insufficient reason and "[un]staid" faith which threatens the knight's hope for salvation.

Arthur's rebuttal of Una's argument asserts man's ability and means to alleviate his earthly lot. He argues self-moving ("will to might gives greatest aid"), and reason's ability to counteract the flesh ("reason can repaire"). That he prevails on behalf of reason is made abundantly clear in Spenser's description of Una's persuasion; but as well, he prevails through reason, serving as the example of the faculty he defends:

His goodly reason, and well guided speach,
So deepe did settle in her gracious thought,
That her perswaded to disclose the breach,
Which love and fortune in her heart had wrought. (vii.42)

Before discussing Arthur's assertion of free-will and his championing of reason as these relate to his battle with Orgoglio and his relationship with Red Cross Knight following the battle, it is important to take note of his place amongst the companions Una has during her search for Red Cross Knight. As the last of Una's defenders in her search for Red Cross Knight, Arthur lies in a hierarchical pattern that ranges from the beastly appetite of the lion, to the rational man aware of the weakness of the flesh.¹⁶ Arthur's government of the flesh, unlike that of Satyrane, is civil rather than tyrannical, he counsels rather than commands. During his battle with Orgoglio, he is "wise and warie" (viii.7) while Satyrane matches "force" with Sansloy (vi.43). Arthur's knowledge of the weakness of the flesh ("Flesh may empaire") places him higher in the hierarchy from beast to man than Satyrane. Further, it is a truth he recognizes but which Satyrane does not, and therefore places him nearer to Una, the figure of truth.

In Arthur is found the perfection of the faculty of reason, the recognition of just order, true government. Arthur's quest is for union with the Faerie Queene, which, as she has revealed to him, lies in his future. One consequence of this future union is, of course, that Arthur will be king of Faerie Land, the supreme figure of reason in the state.¹⁷ Thus his debate with Una and his quest are congruent.

Arthur's relationship with Una is purely one of charity, pure love. His passion is directed towards the Faerie Queene, he seeks only to serve Una, and, after convincing her of reason's ability to serve truth by repairing faith, she accepts. She allows hope to return:

. . . Faire Sire, I hope good hap hath brought
You to inquire the secrets of my grieffe,
Or that your wisdom will direct my thought,
Or that your prowess can me yield reliefe. (vii.42)

To return to Arthur's assertion that "will to might gives greatest aid," there is in Arthur's argument a marked absence of any reference to God's part in the support of man against his own weaknesses. He asserts the role of reason and free-will in combating the flesh. While quite clearly Arthur is not pridefully arguing self-sufficiency, it is clear that he insists on the ability of man's faculty of reason and will. His argument stresses responsibility ("he, that never would,/ Could never"). Acquainted with miracles [his gift to Red Cross Knight is a miraculous balm (ix.19)], he nevertheless juxtaposes flesh with reason rather than Providence. Asked later by Una to tell what brought him to Faerie Land, he complains:

Full hard it is . . . to read aright
 The course of heavenly cause, or understand
 The secret meaning of th'eternall might,
 Thāt rules mens wayes, and rules the thoughts of living wight. (ix.7)

And yet later, he exchanges gifts with Red Cross Knight, receiving the New Testament from the knight.

Arthur's complaint about the difficulty of reading "[t]he course of heavenly cause," and of understanding "[t]he secret meaning of th'eternall might" is an admission that God's will is unavailable to reason. Red Cross Knight's gift of the New Testament to Arthur argues that Arthur stands in need of the revelation of God's will it contains.¹⁸ Further, his rescue by miracle from Orgoglio when he falls in battle (viii.19) suggests that ultimately reason alone is insufficient to combat the flesh. Arthur's faith, a term he refers to in his debate with Una (vii.41), is rooted in the Old Testament. His insistence on reason and will in combating the weakness of the flesh is based in the Adamic rather than the new covenant of Christ. That man's reason and will failed to combat fleshliness is evident in biblical history in the appearance of Christ, and that Arthur fails to defeat the flesh by reason and will is evident in the miracle he needs to overcome Orgoglio.

Una's historical summary of the events which have led to her present situation is usually taken as an allusion to either the Edenic and Adamic periods of biblical history, or to the term spent in the wilderness by the woman described in Revelations 12:6.¹⁹ The tale she tells Arthur seems to support the first interpretation, given the direct allusion to Eden by mention of the rivers Phison, Euphrates, and

Gehon, and the description of her parents past felicity and present bondage (vii.43). Further, the term of bondage which Una gives as four years (vii.44) is more obviously an allusion to the term of the Adamic covenant, traditionally four thousand years, than to the twelve hundred and sixty days term given for the wanderings of the woman in the wilderness.²⁰

Yet despite the obvious allusions to the Edenic state of man, and the less obvious allusions to the Adamic period, Una's tale departs significantly from Old Testament history. Specifically, in both her description of her parent's fall from felicity and the parallel fall of Red Cross Knight into the clutches of Duessa, Una does not assign responsibility to either her parents or Red Cross Knight. Instead, she blames external forces for bringing about their falls. Una's parents are imprisoned by "their cruel cursed enemy" (vii.44), the Dragon, and Red Cross Knight has had "[h]is sense abusd" by "an Enchaunter bad" (vii.49), and through witchcraft Duessa has "[i]nveigled him to follow her desires unmeete" (vii.50).

In Red Cross Knight's case, his abandonment of Una is the result of a combination of his own appetites (ii.5) and the machinations of "an Enchaunter bad." His following of Duessa's "desires unmeete" is not merely the result of "her witchcraft," but as well of his appetites (ii.26). In the case of Una's parents, the allusion to Eden argues that the biblical description of Adam's and Eve's disobedience should apply to them.

Una's departure from both the traditional view of the fall of

Adam and Eve and the legend's description of Red Cross Knight's fall argues what many other details in the legend point to: that Una's roots are in the New Testament, and that her actions are governed by charity. She first appears accompanied by a lamb, emblematically figuring the love of Christ (i.4). When Red Cross Knight is driven to the point of suicide by Despair (ix.51), Una counters the argument of Despair by arguing mercy and God's grace (ix.53). While Despair's argument is marked by sophistry ["is not his law, let every sinner die:/ Die shall all flesh?" (ix.47)], in the main it is based in Old Testament faith. He argues the view of God as vengeful, and of man's responsibility for his own actions. Before Una's intercession, the effect of Despair's argument on Red Cross Knight is,

That nought but death before his eyes he saw,
And ever burning wrath before him laid,
By righteous sentence of th'Almighties law. (ix.47)

The justice that Despair argues applies to the knight is the law of the Old Testament. The effect of the argument, Red Cross Knight's decision to commit suicide, signals the complete erosion of the knight's hope for salvation. Una triumphs over Despair by countering Old Testament law with New Testament grace:

Where justice growes, there grows eke greater grace,
The which doth quench the brond of hellish smart,
And that accurst hand-writing doth deface. (ix.53)

Una's tale of her history is a veiled example of her teaching of the truth. While accepting Arthur's argument on behalf of reason

and free will, she goes beyond it by putting before him an example of charity. Her story forecasts the two gifts Arthur receives: Red Cross Knight's present of the New Testament, and the gift of God's providence he receives during his battle with Orgoglio. Further, it foreshadows Arthur's own conclusion to his battle with Orgoglio:

This dayes ensample hath this lesson deare
 Deepe written in my heart with yron pen,
 That blisse may not abide in state of mortall men.²¹ (viii.44)

Finally, Una's tale joins Spenser's gloss on the action up until the entry of Red Cross Knight into the House of Holiness. The gloss makes the point that man is ultimately defenceless without God's charity:

What man is he, that boaststo of fleshly might,
 And vaine assurance of mortality,
 Which all so soone, as it doth come to fight,
 Against spirituall foes, yeelds by and by,
 Or from the field most cowardly doth fly?
 Ne let the man ascribe it to his skill,
 That through grace hath gained victory.
 If any strength we have, it is to ill,
 But all the good is Gods, both power and eke will. (x.1)

That the battle between Arthur and Orgoglio is a test of reason is made evident by the forward position of the Dwarf in leading Una and Arthur to Orgoglio's castle (vii.52).²² Yet while the vanguard is reason, it is reason in the company of truth. Una guides Arthur to seek the deliverance of Red Cross Knight. The action, according to Spenser's gloss, signifies the forces which serve to aid "[t]he righteous man" whose weaknesses of pride and of the flesh threaten him with a "daily fall":

Ay me, how many perils doe enfold
 The righteous man, to make him daily fall?
 Were not, that heavenly grace doth him uphold,
 And stedfast truth acquite him out of all.
 Her love is firme, her care continuall,
 So oft as he through his owne foolish pride,
 Or weaknesse is to sinfull bands made thrall:
 Else should this Redcrosse knight in bands have dyde,
 For whose deliverance she this Prince doth thither guide. ²³
 (viii.1)

Upon arriving at Orgoglio's castle, Timias blows his enchanted horn to open the castle gates (viii.5). Timias, as Arthur's squire, is an apprentice to Arthur's character, and, as the description of the relationship between squire and his horse implies, not the character of paramount rationality that his master is (vii.37). His horn is like the horn Logistella presents to Astolfo.²⁴ Upton argues that Logistella represents reason, the horn, justice. He extends the significance of Timias' horn beyond that of Logistella's horn by arguing that not only is it derived from Orlando Furioso, but as well that it represents an allusion to Romans 10:18 (The horn is "[t]he word of truth, the word of God, whose sound goeth into all the earth"). Upton concludes that Timias blows the "horn of salvation."²⁵

Like Arthur's shield, Timias' horn overpowers deceit:

No false enchauntment, nor deceiptfull traine
 Might once abide the terror of that blast. (viii.4)

Its effect before the castle of Orgoglio is that the castle doors open of their freewill ["every dore of freewill open flew" (viii.5)]. In arguing that Timias blows the "horn of salvation," Upton goes beyond the mark. While it may signal the beginning of Red Cross Knight's

salvation, the knight's release from Orgoglio's castle is not significant of his salvation but of his rejoining Una, the truth. He succumbs to Despair after his release, marking the loss of his hope for salvation.

Timias' horn trumpets God's order, His justice. Like Logistella's horn it is a symbol of justice, but unlike Logistella's horn, it symbolizes divine justice. The blast of Timias' horn results in the doors opening of their "freewill." They accede to the horn's authority freely. The second result of the horn's blast is that Orgoglio and Duessa rush to attack Arthur and his squire. Unlike the door's response, their response is a challenge to the authority of Timias' horn.

In the broadest Medieval and Renaissance sense, justice signifies order and degree, the freely willed positioning of all of creation according to God's will.²⁶ The doors of Orgoglio's castle, inanimate nature, freely acquiesce to the statement of God's justice Timias' horn makes.²⁷ Both Duessa and Orgoglio defy God's justice, His order. Orgoglio, giant symbol of the supremacy of the flesh, and Duessa, evil deceit, rush to defend their usurpation of God's order. The battle between Arthur and Orgoglio is a battle between flesh and reason, with evil, Duessa, urging on Orgoglio. The issue, finally, is order, and whether man's reason is sufficient to preserve it by overthrowing the flesh.

As the battle develops, Arthur contests with Orgoglio and Timias seeks to contain Duessa, mounted on her many-headed beast, and thus

prevent her from coming to Orgoglio's aid. Timias is not equal to the task. Duessa overcomes him through witchcraft. From her "golden cup" she takes a "secret poison" and sprinkles it on Timias' "weaker parts" (viii.14). Of the "golden cup," Spenser tells us that "[d]eath and despayre did many thereof sup" (viii.14). The effect on Timias of this witchcraft is that,

. . . his sturdie courage soone was quayd,
And all his senses were with suddeine dread dismayd. (viii.14)

Arthur comes to the aid of his squire, and drives off the many-headed beast which, following Timias' undoing by witchcraft, is on the point of extinguishing the squire's life.

Timias' battle with Duessa and her beast is a minor but important digression on the main battle between Arthur and Orgoglio. It reveals hope undermined by the weakness of faith (Timias' "weaker parts"). Duessa's "golden cup" from which she dispenses "[d]eath and despayre" is the antithesis of Fidelia's "cup of gold" which contains the "wine and water" of life (x.13). To sup of Fidelia's cup means life and hope. Timias is Arthur's squire, not his equal, he is not a figure of paramount rationality. He is able to contain the beast Duessa rides, as he is able to manage his own spirited horse, his appetites (vii.37). His faith, thought, is imperfect.²⁸ Reason, which in his case exercises control over the flesh, does not reach up to embrace faith. Duessa sprinkles false faith over him and he withers before the attack of the beast. Figuratively having tasted of the cup of false faith his hope evaporates, and like others before him he knows

"[d]eath and despeyre." In many respects, Timias' fall before Duessa telescopes the fall of Red Cross Knight. In the guise of false faith, Fidessa, Duessa inveigled her way into Red Cross Knight's company, taking advantage of the knight's weakness of flesh. Her company led the knight into the House of Pride and to his battle with Sans joy. And finally her company led to Red Cross Knight's fall before the giant emblem of the flesh, Orgoglio. Arthur's rescue of Timias from the claws of Duessa's beast parallels his battle with Orgoglio for the release of Red Cross Knight.

Yet the similarities between Timias' fall before Duessa, and Red Cross Knight's fall are attended by differences. While Red Cross Knight's fall was a result of both the weakness of the flesh and the insufficiency of reason, Timias' fall is the result of the insufficiency of reason faced with deceit. Arthur's battle with Orgoglio represents the major aspect of Red Cross Knight's fall, the weakness of the flesh which reason is unable to conquer. The two battles dramatise the quandry of reason. It is faced both by forces which attack truth and by the flesh to which it is bound. The major battle is with the weakness of the flesh, for, as the legend reveals, it is through this weakness that evil chiefly works.

Arthur's battle with Orgoglio pits pride of flesh against reason. Arthur is "wise and warie" (viii.7) in the battle; he is "the carefull knight" who notices Timias' plight and goes to his aid. Yet Orgoglio's force results in Arthur's fall. Arthur, who does not uncover his magic shield during the battle, is saved by its chance

uncovering which signals Orgoglio's defeat:

And in his fall his shield, that covered was,
 Did loose his vele by chaunce, and open flew:
 The light whereof, that heavens light did pas,
 Such blazing brightnesse through the aier threw,
 That eye mote not the same endure to vew.
 Which when the Gyaunt spyde with staring eye,
 He downe let fall his arme, and soft withdrew
 His weapon huge, that heaved was on hye
 For to have slaine the man, that on the ground did lye.

And eke the fruitfull-headed beast, amaz'd
 At flashing beames of that sunshiny shield,
 Became starke blind, and all his senses daz'd,
 That downe he tumbled on the durtye field,
 And seem'd himselfe as conquered to yield.
 Whom when his maistresse proud perceiv'd to fall,
 Whiles yet his feeble feet for faintnesse reeld;
 Unto the Cyant loudly she gan call,
 O helpe Orgoglio, helpe, or else we perish all.

At her so pitteous cry was much amov'd
 Her champion stout, and for to ayde his friend,
 Againe his wonted angry weapon proov'd:
 But all in vaine: for he has read his end
 In that bright shield; and all their forces spend,
 Themselves in vaine: for since that glauncing sight,
 He hath no powre to hurt, nor to defend;
 As where th'Almighties lightning brond does light,
 It dimmes the dazed eyen, and daunts the senses quight.
 (viii.19-21)

Arthur is saved by heavenly grace which shields man against the flesh. Like Timias' horn blast at the beginning of the battle, Arthur's shield reflects God's will, against which the flesh ultimately is powerless and must, finally, obey. Both symbols of the flesh are undone by the unveiled shield. Orgoglio is powerless and Duessa's beast collapses. Duessa as well is rendered powerless, indirectly, for the defeat of the flesh has stripped evil of its ally, its chief means of gaining power. She is indecorously stripped of her disguise by Una

and, revealed as a loathsome old hag, she flees "from heavens hated face" into "the wastfull wilderness apace" (viii.50). Arthur's victory is final when he cuts the head from Orgoglio's shoulders. Once dead, Orgoglio's "huge great body" vanishes, and of the great bulk all that is left "like an emptie bladder was" (viii.24).

The vanishing of Orgoglio's body is emblematic of the mortality of the flesh. The source of his strength was an illusion grounded in pride and it crumbles before God's will. Duessa, though, is not illusory, although she gains control, in part, through illusion. She is a real principle of malignant intelligence refusing to be governed, and pitting her perverse order (falsehood over truth, and flesh over reason) against God's order. The divine Providence which rescues Arthur does not destroy Duessa, but rather unmask her by stripping her of her ally, the flesh. She returns to attempt to separate Red Cross Knight from truth at the end of the legend (xii.26-28), and it is only through the knight's admission of his weakness that she fails (xii.32).

Following the destruction of Orgoglio, Arthur searches the giant's castle for Red Cross Knight. He meets, in his search, Ignaro, Orgoglio's foster-father, and the keeper of the keys to the castle (viii.31). Ignaro, as his name suggests, represents ignorance. When asked by Arthur to direct him to Red Cross Knight, Ignaro is not able to assist him. Arthur, rationally observing Ignaro, is able to read his character despite Ignaro's appearance of old age and therefore of wisdom (viii.34).

The appearance of Ignaro at this point in the legend marks, firmly, the relationship between pride of flesh represented by Orgoglio, and ignorance, represented by Ignaro. Ignaro is not Orgoglio's father, but rather his foster-father. The point made by the relationship is that while ignorance fosters the pride of flesh represented by Orgoglio, it is not its cause. Rather, man's inherent weakness of the flesh draws him away from the truth to the company of ignorance. The relationship between Ignaro and Orgoglio is a partial anatomy of Red Cross Knight's situation. The knight's abandonment of the truth has resulted in his incarceration in Orgoglio's castle, of which Ignaro is keeper. Yet his initial abandonment was the result of his own fleshliness through which the figure of evil, Archimago, exercised his sorcery to bring about the separation. Weakness of the flesh is prior to ignorance in the course of Red Cross Knight's fall. Fostered by ignorance, the absence of truth, the knight eventually arrives at the state of giant fleshliness represented by Orgoglio's conquest over him. Arthur, guided to his battle with Orgoglio by Una, the truth, is able to see through the appearance of Ignaro by virtue of his powers of reason.

Spenser establishes, by antithesis, that knowledge is an attribute of Holiness. As ignorance fosters the growth of fleshliness, so knowledge fosters the growth of Holiness. In describing Red Cross Knight's progression through the House of Holiness later in the legend, Spenser describes a spiritual curriculum leading to Holiness. Yet, quite obviously, knowledge is not the cause of Holiness, for the knight donned the armour of the Christian prior to his acquiring knowledge.

The division approximates one that Aristotle argues applies to any virtue: that there exists both a propensity towards virtue and also the acquisition of virtue.²⁹

Once past Ignaro, Arthur succeeds in rescuing Red Cross Knight from his bottomless cell over Hell. Shortly thereafter, the two knights exchange gifts, Red Cross Knight giving the New Testament, and Arthur giving a few drops of a miraculous healing balm:

Prince Arthur gave a boxe of Diamond sure,
 Embowd with gold and gorgeous ornament,
 Wherein were closd few drops of liquor pure,
 Of wondrous worth, and vertue excellent,
 That any wound could heale incontinent:
 Which to requite, the Redcrosse knight him gave
 A booke, wherein his Saveours testament
 Was writ with golden letters rich and brave;
 A worke of wondrous grace, and able soules to save. (ix.19)

William Nelson interprets Arthur's gift as the oil of mercy described in the Book of Seth.³⁰ Other critics argue that the gift derives from the well of life.³¹ Nelson's view, I think, is accurate. Essentially the two gifts are complementary, and suited both to giver and receiver. Medieval tradition links the gifts, asserting that the oil of mercy flowed from the tree that was to bear Christ, and that the tree was the tree of life.³² The oil of mercy is a promise of the mercy of Christ, while the "Saveours testament" is a record of Christ's mercy. Elizabethan Bishop John Jewel writes that Christ was born "that he might declare to the world the secret and hid will of his Father."³³ Red Cross Knight's gift to Arthur matches the need Arthur has for the revelation of this "secret and hid will." The testament serves to

assist reason against the flesh by revealing God's will. It is merciful for, as the text makes plain, it is capable of saving souls.

Arthur's gift to Red Cross Knight derives from the Old Testament. The oil of mercy was God's gift to fallen man, and the gift was the promise of mercy. The promise was the chief support of hope for man, and Arthur's gift matches Red Cross Knight's situation. The knight, while released from the bondage of flesh, still faces the fact of his fall. His hope for salvation is seriously threatened by this fact, and the test of hope which he faces, a test which reaches its climax in the knight's meeting with Despair, is met by the promise of mercy. Una overcomes Despair by casting the oil of mercy, figuratively, upon the knight by revealing God's mercy.

Red Cross Knight's encounter with Despair is prefaced by an inset tale told by Sir Trevisan, a knight fleeing Despair. Sir Trevisan's tale describes how he and his friend, Sir Terwin, became acquainted with Despair, and how this acquaintance culminated in Sir Terwin's suicide and Sir Trevisan's near-suicide. Sir Terwin loved a lady, who loved him "in the least degree" (ix.27). Although we are not directly told, Sir Trevisan, we can assume, was in something like the same situation. Their situation occasioned grief, and Despair, a satanic figure ["Snake in hidden weedes" (ix.28)], insinuated himself into their consciousness and caused the suicide of Sir Terwin. His method struck at hope, and was followed by the offer of suicide as an alternative to despair. Sir Trevisan tells Red Cross Knight that,

He pluckt from us all hope of due reliefe,
 That earst us held in love of lingring life;
 Then hopelesse hartlesse, gan the cunning thiefe
 Perswade us die, to stint all further strife. (ix.29)

Sir Trevisan's tale prompts Red Cross Knight to challenge Despair. The point of similarity between Trevisan's tale and Red Cross Knight's bout with Despair lies in the destruction of hope which occurs in both cases. The despair which led to Sir Terwin's suicide was the conventional despair of the spurned suitor, the despair which leads to Red Cross Knight's near-suicide is the despair for salvation his fall occasions. But in both cases, Despair is cast as hope's antagonist.

The figure of Despair Red Cross Knight encounters is joyless (ix.33). He recalls the knight's partially vanquished antagonist, Sans joy.³⁴ The parallel is both obvious and significant. Sans joy and Despair are consequences of Red Cross Knight's worldliness, and both figure hopelessness. They frame this final test of the knight prior to his entry into the House of Holiness. Both are encountered in ignorance. The knight engages Sans joy while ignorant of the worldliness of the House of Pride which threatens his hope for salvation. As well, he engages Despair while ignorant of the real danger in which Despair places hope. The difference between the meeting with Sans joy and the meeting with Despair derives from the knight's awakened conscience and the corresponding burden of guilt Despair plays on in his argument with the knight.

Nelson is obviously correct in describing Despair's principal

weapons as "Old Testament texts and the Knight's own conscience."³⁵ Specifically, Despair utilizes the concept of justice embedded in the Old Testament. Ironically, it is Red Cross Knight, himself, who introduces this concept when, first encountering Despair, he demands,

What justice can but judge against thee right,
With thine owne bloud to price his bloud, here shed in sight?
(ix.37)

Despair draws the knight into a debate on justice, which turns, finally, to focus on the justice due Red Cross Knight for his past actions. The debate shifts from the justice due Despair to that due the knight, and it is led by the faintly, and sometimes starkly, irrational argument of Despair.³⁶

Despair's rejoinder to Red Cross Knight's initial question is the faintly irrational question,

What justice ever other judgement taught,
But he should die, who merites not to live? (ix.38)

While Despair's question contains some truth, it also begs the knight's question by placing Despair himself in the position of judge, and reduces the concept of justice to the vague term "merites." As well, Despair illustrates his rejoinder with an ambiguous example of assistance rendered to a man who longs for death:

Who travels by the wearie wandering way,
To come unto his wished home in haste,
And meetes a flood, that doth his passage stay,
Is not great grace to helpe him over past,
Or free his feet, that in the myre sticke fast?

Most envious man, that grieves at neighbours good,
 And fond, that joyest in the woe thou hast,
 Why wilt not let him passe, that long hath stood
 Upon the banke, yet wilt thy selfe not passe the flood? (ix.39)

In the first instance, Despair's example shifts the discussion completely away from murder, as the knight introduced it, to mercy killing, and away from the notion of meriting life to meriting death. Aside from the illogicality of the argument, the example faintly alludes to the crossing of the river Jordan ("flood," and "banke"), and conceals an allusion to the river Styx. This ambiguous allusion evokes the damnation that is the real conclusion to Despair's argument.

Red Cross Knight's initial statement of reciprocity is garnered from the notion of retributive justice. Despair's reply derives from the notion of distributive justice.³⁷ Red Cross Knight's response is an objection that the distributor is God and not man in Despair's example:

. . . The terme of life is limited,
 Ne may a man prolong, nor shorten it;
 The souldier may not move from watchfull sted,
 Nor leave his stand, untill his Captaine bed. (ix.41)

Despair's rejoinder is not a direct reply to Red Cross Knight's objection. Despair observes that God's ways are mysterious, but that death for man was certainly ordained by God, and that man's life was a license for his death:

Who life did limit by almightie doome,
 (Quoth he) knowes best the termes established;
 And he, that points the Centonell his roome,
 Doth license him depart at sound of morning droome.

Is not his deed, what ever thing is donne,
 In heaven and earth? did not he all create
 To die againe? and ends that was begonne.
 Their times in his eternall booke of fate
 Are written sure, and have their certaine date.
 Who then can strive with strong necessitie,
 That holds the world in his still chaunging state,
 Or shunne the death ordaynd by destinie?
 When houre of death is come, let none aske whence, nor why.
 (ix.41-42)

Despair's argument is sophistical, twisting the knight's objections to serve as proof for his own, opposite position, without disproving the knight's argument. He argues, here, that man can not know God's will except insofar as to know that man's death is according to God's will. The implication is that to assist in man's death may likely further God's will, particularly when, in general, man's death is demonstrably God's will. The red herring in Despair's argument is his insistence that God created all to die ("did not he all create/ To die againe?"). The soul is the exception to this principle Despair invokes, and it is the soul which is the object, although veiled, of the debate. For the suicide Despair urges on the knight means certain damnation for the knight's soul.³⁸

Despair follows the argument about death as God's will with an argument about life and sin. He argues that,

The longer life, . . . the greater sin,
 The greater sin, the greater punishment. (ix.43)

Usurping the knight's initial statement of retribution, he argues that ". . . life must life, and bloud must bloud repay," and concludes that once the straight and narrow path to salvation is missed, it is missed

forever:

For he, that once hath missed the right way,
The further he doth goe, the further he doth stray. (ix.43)

Added to this, Despair again invokes distributive justice,

Thou wretched man, of death hast greatest need,
If in true ballance thou wilt weigh thy state. (ix.45)

And after striking home with pointed references to Red Cross Knight's infidelity and his calling out for death while shut in Orgoglio's castle, Despair turns to invoke the notion of justice as it is revealed in the Old Testament:

Is not he just, that all this doth behold
From hightest heaven, and beares an equall eye?
Shall he thy sins up in his knowledge fold,
And guiltie be of thine impietie?
Is not his law, Let every sinner die:
Die shall all flesh? what then must needs be donne,
Is it not better to doe willinglie,
Then linger, till the glasse be all out ronne?
Death is the end of woes: die soone, O faeries sonne. (ix.47)

The result of this series of rhetorical questions asked by Despair is the overthrow of Red Cross Knight's hope for salvation. Despair shows the knight the hell that awaits him, and the knight is dismayed by the sight:

. . . nought but death before his eyes he saw,
And ever burning wrath before him laid,
By righteous sentence of th'Almighties law: (ix.50)

Despair's argument is illogical. On the one hand it upholds God's

command of destiny (ix.42), and on the other it urges the knight to die before the "glasse be all out ronne." Further, the answer to the series of questions put to the knight at the end of the argument is not suicide. It is precisely the case that God will man's "sins up in his knowledge fold," for that is the meaning of Christ. As well, it is not his law "Let every sinner die:/ Die shall all flesh." Again, Christ is meant to save the sinner. Further, while the flesh may be doomed, the soul is not, and the destruction of the flesh does not prove evidence of a law whereby the sinner dies. Finally, Despair cloaks suicide in the garb of an act of piety, insinuating that to shorten what must be a sinful life is to avoid the consequences of sin. The act, of course, is itself a chief sin, for it is a usurpation of the power of God, and therefore an act of pride. Despair's argument leads to the damnation of the soul.

Red Cross Knight's rational powers are insufficient to unmask the sophistry in Despair's argument. Burdened by guilt, he falls sway to Despair's persuasions. Old Testament justice looms horrible before the knight, and he chooses suicide in compliance with Despair's argument. The point of the debate, and of its outcome prior to Una's intercession, is that the knight's reason is insufficient to sustain hope, surrendering to Despair's irrational argument. Also, the debate recalls Prince Arthur's battle with Orgoglio, and the failure of reason to overthrow the flesh. Both Arthur's failure, and the knight's failure before Despair suggests that the Old Testament offers no solution to the dilemma of fallen man.

Una's intercession, already discussed in terms of what it reveals about Una's character, sweeps aside Despair's argument and reason's insufficiency by invoking Christ's testament:

Come, come away, fraile, feeble, fleshly wight,
 Ne let vaine words bewitch thy manyly hart,
 Ne divelish thoughts dismay thy constant spright.
 In heavenly mercies hast thou not a part?
 Why shouldst thou then despeire, that chosen art?
 Where justice growes, there grows eke greater grace,
 The which doth quench the brond of hellish smart,
 And that accurst hand-writing doth deface.
 Arise, Sir knight arise, and leave this cursed place. (ix.53)

Red Cross Knight's fleshliness which has led him to accede to Despair's argument is overturned by the promise of God's mercy. The "hand-writing" of the Old Testament is replaced by justice tempered with mercy. The "letter" which kills is replaced by "the spirit [which] giveth life."³⁹

In neither faith nor charity nor hope has Red Cross Knight proven sufficient, as neither the intellectual, appetitive, nor rational parts of the soul have been sufficient proof against both evil and the flesh. Yet, while the knight's soul has been compromised by the flesh, his fall has been primarily the result of ignorance, although the fall is inevitable as the knowing Prince Arthur's fall proves. The knight still retains his natural inclination to Holiness, and aided by God's mercy he is able to add to this inclination the knowledge offered him in the House of Holiness. Una, whose love constantly recalls the love of Christ for man, directs the knight to the House of Holiness, and there the knight is led to true Holiness.

NOTES

¹Kellogg and Steele, p. 26.

²Matthew 7:26.

³Dialogues of Plato, III, 153. The disorderliness of Lucifera's chariot mocks her pretensions to God-like power.

⁴Augustine, City of God, xix.4.

⁵Fidessa, as a parody of faith, speaks to Sans joy, the parody of hope, in parodic terms, finding "new joy" in Sans joy. The parodic interplay flowers into ironic disaster for Fidessa and Sans joy when Red Cross Knight mistakes her appeal to Sans joy as a cheer directed at him.

⁶Spenser's editors use "tho mov'd with" The context of the statement seems to suggest that Spenser intended "So" rather than "Tho."

⁷Sloth is portrayed as wracked with fever (iv.20).

⁸Genesis 49:4.

⁹The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross, trans. Kavanaugh and Rodriguez (London, 1966), p. 94.

¹⁰Luke 22:38.

¹¹One implication of the knight's inability to wield the sword is that in a healthy state he would have been able to engage Orgoglio in combat. However, in the light of Arthur's fall, the outcome would have been defeat. The single-bladed knight, without God's assistance, is unable to triumph over the flesh. Like the earlier allusion to Peter's doubt, this allusion to Christ's conquest forestalls a merely negative, moral judgement of the knight.

¹²John 8:32.

¹³Works, I, 169.

¹⁴Arthur is brought up to the active life by Timon and Merlin, and the "clownish person" who became Red Cross Knight, according to Spenser's "Letter" (Works, I, 169), desired the adventure of the quest.

¹⁵On the traditional association of Despair with the absence of hope, see, Works, I, 271.

¹⁶Kellogg and Steele, p. 29, argue that by this "hierarchy of creation" Spenser represents the "progress of true religion." I agree with their notion of herarchy, but can not agree with their argument of historical progress as the basic meaning of the hierarchy.

¹⁷See Tillyard, p. 115.

¹⁸Evans, pp. 103-104, argues that "Arthur suggests both the Old Law and the New." Emblematically, the dragon on Arthur's helmet represents the Old Law, and the Almond tree on his crest, an allusion to Aaron's rod, represents the New Law. Evans runs afoul in his argument when he points out that Aaron's rod is "a traditional symbol of the Old Testament forshadowing the New."

¹⁹Nelson, p. 157; Kellogg and Steele, p. 23; and Works, I, 256.

²⁰See Percival's reading, Works, I, 256.

²¹Arthur's conclusion is that a permanent happiness ("blisse may not abide") is beyond man's own capacity.

²²The Dwarf's new position indicates that the action follows the position taken by Arthur in his debate with Una.

²³It seems quite clear from this gloss that Una is not the woman in the wilderness described in Revelations, but rather "stedfast truth" which does not desert man in his weakness.

²⁴Ariosto, Orlando furioso, trans. W. S. Rose, ed. Stewart Baker and Bartlett Giametti (Indianapolis, 1968), xv.14.

²⁵Works, I, 257.

²⁶See Tillyard, p. 114.

²⁷The number three associated with the horn (viii.4) alludes to the triunal God from whom all order comes.

²⁸Timias confronts Fidessa's beast "with single sword in hand" (viii.12). It is insufficient, like Red Cross Knight's single blade, when faced with the debilitating effects of Fidessa's falsehood and the fleshliness of the beast.

²⁹Aristotle, pp. 190-191.

³⁰Nelson, p. 167.

³¹See Josephine Waters Bennett, The Evolution of "The Faerie Queene" (Chicago, 1942), p. 94.

³² See "The Tree of Life," Journal of Sacred Literature, XXXVI (January, 1864), 30-36.

³³ Jewel, p. 22.

³⁴ Nelson, p. 154.

³⁵ P. 152.

³⁶ Works, I, 277.

³⁷ On distributive and retributive justice, see, Aristotle, pp. 145-47, and 151-53.

³⁸ Nelson, p. 152.

³⁹ 2 Corinthians 3:6.

VI

Holiness Perfected

The Red Cross Knight enters the House of Holiness having failed through his own fleshliness to withstand the assault of evil. Natural propensity to the tripartite virtue of Holiness has proven insufficient as a consequence of reason's inability to govern the flesh and of evil's employ of the flesh to seek the knight's damnation. To rectify this weakness, Una leads the knight into the House of Holiness. His education in Holiness which takes place there prepares him for the main object of his quest, the battle with the satanic Dragon who tyrannizes the kingdom of Una's parents, the kingdom of man.

The House of Holiness, and Holiness itself, is under the government of Caelia, heavenly wisdom.¹ She is the mother of Fidelia, Speranza, and Charissa, Faith, Hope, and Charity (x.4). She ministers to the needs of soul and body:

. . . [her] only joy was to relieve the needes
Of wretched soules, and helpe the helpelesse pore. (x.3)

Both Prince Arthur and the Dwarf pass out of the legend with the Red Cross Knight's entrance into the House of Holiness under Caelia's government. Her ministry embraces reason, for through her daughter, Fidelia, she dispenses the truth of revelation which reason, through intellection, embraces (x.18-19). Through Speranza and Patience, Caelia teaches the knight to check his passion, teaching the rational

soul to govern the flesh (x.22-24).

Caelia's House of Holiness is set against the House of Pride. Unlike the House of Pride, the path into the House of Holiness is "streight and narrow" (x.5), and the entrance is guarded by Humilità. And whereas the House of Pride dooms its inhabitants to Hell, the House of Holiness prepares those who pass through it for Heaven. The materialism of the House of Pride is the antithesis of the spirituality of the House of Holiness, and Caelia's humble service to the needs of the poor the opposite of Lucifera's prideful disdain of all about her.

Besides standing as an antithesis of the House of Pride, the House of Holiness is also the antithesis of the cottage inhabited by Corceca, Abessa, and Kirkrapine. Corceca's cottage and the House of Holiness both lie below a high mountain (iii.10 and x.46). However, where there is a path through the House of Holiness to the top of the mountain, there is no path through the cottage. The comparison reveals the essential dissimilarity of the two. Corceca's cottage is marked by a perverse religiosity, an uncharitable materialism that is the opposite of true Holiness. From this base, there is no path to the heavenly vision symbolized by an ascent to the top of the mountain. The House of Holiness accords the Red Cross Knight the heavenly vision which lies at the end of the path up the mountain. Caelia's heavenly wisdom, the substance of the heavenly vision, is the opposite of the mortal blindness of her bead-telling counterpart, Corceca.

The House of Holiness also stands in antithesis to the Wood of Error and Orgoglio's castle. The mortal materialism of the Wood of

Error is a marked contrast to the spiritualism of the House of Holiness, and the wide, worn paths of the Wood (i.7) the opposite of the "streight and narrow" way into the House of Holiness (x.5). Orgoglio's castle, where false faith, Fidessa, is queen, is a monument dedicated to the flesh. Caelia's heavenly wisdom is the antithesis of errant materialism of Error and the mortal ignorance of Ignaro. Despair's cave, in which hopelessness is bred, as well finds its antithesis in the House of Holiness. Where Despair argues the ultimate triumph of the flesh and the damnation attendant on the triumph, the House of Holiness provides the means to reduce the flesh to near insignificance and thereby to generate hope.

The antithesis of the House of Holiness to the House of Pride, Corceca's cottage, the Wood of Error, Orgoglio's castle, and Despair's cave reflects its place in the Legend of Holiness. The House of Holiness provides support for the soul in its struggle with evil, the flesh, and materialism. Caelia's heavenly wisdom, dispensed through her daughters, Fidelia, Speranza, and Charissa, and other figures related to the daughters, is the substance of the support. The figures she stands in antithesis to in the legend are all variously associated with the flesh, materialism, and evil. Red Cross Knight's contact with these figures, excepting Corceca, indicates the growing corruption of his soul, measured by his descent to fleshliness, his eventual embrace of Fidessa, and his capitulation to Despair. Una's contact with Corceca indirectly indicates the corruption of the knight's soul, for her meeting with Corceca is the result of her having been abandoned

by the knight. Meeting Corceca, Una has displayed to her the elements of corruption which led the knight to abandon her. In Corceca's blindness is revealed the knight's ignorance which led to his being tricked by Archimago, in the uncharitable welcome accorded Una is revealed the knight's lack of charity, and in Corceca's perverse religiosity is revealed the knight's ignorance of faith.

The knight's entry into the House of Holiness signals the beginning of the rectification of his soul. Under Caelia's guidance, the soul is purged of its corruption and regains its rightful government of the body. The process of rectification is accomplished by a hierarchy of characters who dispense aid to the soul in the form of aspects of the virtue of Holiness. Ranked under Caelia are her daughters, Fidelia, Speranza, and Charissa. Around these are various satellite figures. Obedience is attached to Fidelia, Patience, Amendment, Penance, Remorse, and Repentance are attached to Speranza, and Mercy, and the seven Bead-men are attached to Charissa.

Three conditions are met by the knight on his entrance into the House of Holiness. Each is represented by figures the knight meets prior to his introduction to Caelia, and each are pre-requisites to the education in Holiness he receives under Caelia's guidance. Initially, he meets Humilità, the gate-keeper of the House of Holiness (x.5). He then meets Zele (x.6), and finally he meets Reverence (x.7). The meetings argue that the knight's character is marked, at this point, by humility, zeal, and reverence. The three figures are presented in terms which recall the initial description of the Red Cross

Knight. All of them appear to be what they are. Humilità casts his look "full lowly" (x.5), Zele labours "lively to expresse the same" (x.6), and Reverence's behaviour is "no courting nicetie,/ but simple true" (x.7). In contradistinction to the ambiguity of the initial description of the knight, these figures are described in a way which insists on the lack of ambiguity. In the House of Holiness, appearance and reality are one and the same. The knight's character, described by his meeting with these three figures, is commensurate with this quality of the House of Holiness. Whereas initially he appeared to be what he was not, a tried and true Holy knight, he now appears to be what he is, humble, zealous, reverent, and prepared to be guided to true Holiness. Humility, zeal, and reverence are not, however, moral virtues. Rather, they specify the natural virtue which is antecedent to the tripartite moral virtue of Holiness.² Humilità, Zele, and Reverence are commoners in the House of Holiness. Humilità is the gate-keeper, Zele a Francklin (x.6), and Reverence a squire (x.7). They are three aspects of the native propensity to Holiness, and, accordingly, they are met by the knight prior to his introduction to Caelia.

Red Cross Knight's instruction in Holiness begins under the tutelage of Fidelia, Caelia's eldest daughter (x.12). Prior to this, the knight is tended by Obedience (x.17). Obedience disarms the knight, in preparation for his re-arming in faith, hope, and charity. But principally, Obedience prepares the knight for his instruction by Fidelia. Obedience is a satellite of Fidelia, her teaching cannot be

commanded but only obeyed. The truth Fidelia reveals to the Red Cross Knight is beyond the "weaker wit of man" (x.19).

Fidelia ministers to the intellectual portion of Red Cross Knight's soul, that part of reason which reaches to intellection to comprehend the mysteries of God.³ From her "heavenly documents" she teaches the knight "[o]f God, of grace, of justice, [and] of free will" (x.19). Fidelia's "sacred Booke" (x.19) is the New Testament.⁴ The knight, under Fidelia's tutelage grown perfect in faith, comes to loath "mortall life" (x.21). Fidelia's lore awakens the Red Cross Knight's soul to "heavenly learning" (x.18), but the contingent effect of the light of truth is the illumination of the knight's sins. The perfection of the intellectual portion of the knight's soul magnifies the corruption of the remainder of the soul, rendering the knight susceptible to despair.

Speranza follows Fidelia in ministering to the knight's soul. Speranza's service describes the relationship between faith and hope. Calvin writes that "faith exists not without hope . . . ," and St. Paul that ". . . faith is the substance of things hoped for"⁵ Speranza's role, at this point in the Legend, is to provide the knight's soul with the means to support his newly revealed faith (x.22). The role, as the descriptions by St. Paul and Calvin suggest, is the traditional role of Hope. Yet, the Legend of Holiness argues a further and more extensive role for Hope. The knight is ministered to by Speranza's satellite figures who work to eradicate the cause of the knight's despair.

The cause of the knight's "distressed doubtfull agonie" (x.22) is [i]nward corruption, and infected sin" (x.25). The knight is "soulediseased" (x.24), and the consequence is the threat of hopelessness. He is cured by the ministering efforts of Patience, Amendment, Penance, Remorse, and Repentance (x.23-29). Their cure is to teach the knight to check his "passion" (x.24). Patience seeks out the disease that lies between the body and the soul, the "marrow and the skin" (x.25), and Amendment trims the "superfluous flesh" (x.26) that rots away under Patience' treatment. Penance, Remorse, and Repentance treat the corrosion of the flesh by castigating the knight, "whip[ing]" and "prick[ing]" him onward in the course of his cure, and stinging his diseased body by bathing him in "salt water" (x.27). The effect of their treatment is that,

. . . they did to health restore
The man that would not live, but earst lay at deathes dore.
(x.27)

Hope is restored by Patience, Amendment, Penance, Remorse, and Repentance.⁶ Their treatment checks the knight's passion, clears the disease of the flesh that infects the knight's soul, and returns the knight to a state of rational control over his body. This, the second stage in the rectification of the knight's soul, is the restoration of the rational soul to a state of health. The moral effect of the cure is the restoration of the knight's hope. In this state, the knight is able to meet Charissa and to continue his education in the virtue of Holiness.

Charissa appears at this stage in the course of the knight's career in the House of Holiness having waxed strong after being "late in child-bed brought" (x.29). Prior to this, the knight has not met Charissa for, as Fidelia and Speranza earlier told Una,

. . . she of late is lightned of her wombe,
And hath encreast the world with one sonne more. (x.16)

The son that Charissa, charity, has brought forth into the world is, figuratively, the Red Cross Knight. It has been through charity that the knight has survived the trials of the flesh to come to learn the virtue of Holiness in the House of Holiness. God's charity through His Providence upheld Prince Arthur in his battle with Orgoglio over the fate of the Red Cross Knight, and Una's invocation of God's mercy prevented the knight from abandoning hope in the cave of Despair. Charity is responsible for the entry of the knight into the House of Holiness, although his education proceeds from faith, through hope, to charity. The order of the knight's education has the authority of St. Paul, and corresponds to Aquinas' order of generation.⁷ But the child-bearing Charissa, and the role of charity in upholding the Red Cross Knight prior to his entry into the House of Holiness suggests that Aquinas' argument for an order of perfection for the theological virtues applies to the House of Holiness. According to Aquinas' order of perfection, "charity is the mother and root of all the virtues."⁸ In this order, charity precedes faith and hope.

The double order of generation and perfection points out the special place charity has both in the House of Holiness and in the

legend. The knight, following his instruction by Charissa and her satellite, Mercy, is led to Contemplation to complete his education in Holiness, the achievement of heavenly vision (x.50). Contemplation is a satellite of Fidelia (x.50). However, Contemplation reveals that Mercy, Charissa's satellite, can equally well lead the knight to heaven (x.51). That Contemplation, Fidelia's satellite, does lead the knight up the mountain to achieve heavenly vision provides a circularity to the virtues of faith, hope, and charity, harmonizing both the order of generation and perfection, and describes the tripartite but indivisible nature of the virtue of Holiness.

The love that Charissa represents is described as the opposite of lust. She hates "Cupids wanton snare," and is "chast in worke and will" (x.30). Red Cross Knight's love for Una has been revealed as corrupted by lust, and his abandonment of her as an act of uncharitableness. Charissa instructs him in "love, and righteousness," and teaches him "wrath, and hatred warely to shonne" (x.33). Further, she teaches him that God withdraws His charity when man acts uncharitably. Finally she places him in the care of Mercy who completes his education in charity by leading him to a holy hospital wherein he learns the seven corporal works of mercy.⁹

Charissa ministers to the knight's appetitive soul, teaching him proper desire. Her education of the knight begins with lessons on checking the perverse passions of wrath and hatred, and lessons engendering love and righteousness (x.33). Under Mercy he is instructed in the various, corporal ways to demonstrate the passion of Charity.

Mercy is the patroness of the holy hospital in which the knight learns to demonstrate charity, and Charissa is its founder (x.34). The seven works of mercy the knight learns of in the holy hospital provides an oblique contrast with the seven deadly sins in the House of Pride. Both sets relate to man's worldly life, but whereas the seven deadly sins result in damnation, the seven corporal works of mercy, as Contemplation reveals (x.51), leads to heaven. Mercy teaches the knight,

His mortal life . . . to frame
In holy righteousness, without rebuke or blame. (x.45)

At this point in the knight's passage through the House of Holiness, his soul is perfected. The intellectual, rational, and appetitive parts are purged of their previous corruption, and faith, hope, and charity have been acquired. Mercy leads the knight to the hermitage of Contemplation, the last stage in his career through the House of Holiness. Contemplation is a function of the intellectual soul, and is attached to Fidelia (x.50).¹⁰ Psychologically, the return to a satellite of Fidelia indicates the harmoniousness of the knight's soul, and as well it indicates the closing of the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity into the single virtue of Holiness. Yet the knight's sojourn with Contemplation reveals more than this.

Through Contemplation, the knight achieves heavenly vision, and has revealed to him his destiny. The future glory the Red Cross Knight has shown to him results in his desire to remain in a state of Contemplation or to be released from mortal life. He fears that

further, active life might jeopardize his promised reward (x.63). His hope stands in danger, he argues, if further active life is necessary (x.63). Contemplation reminds the knight of his appointed task to aid Una by meeting the satanic Dragon that tyrannizes her parent's kingdom and of his vow of service to the Faerie Queene. The knight acquiesces. His request to remain in a state of contemplation or to be released from mortal life faintly echoes his hapless state following his instruction by Fidelia. The faintness of the echo indicates the extent to which the knight's soul has gained strength in the House of Holiness. Finally, Contemplation discovers to the knight his name and origins. The Red Cross Knight's name is Georgos, and he springs "from ancient race/ Of Saxon kings" (x.65). He was brought into Faeryland by a Faery who hid him in a "heaped furrow," where he was found by a "Ploughman" who named him (x.66). Nelson notes an etymology for St. George's name, the name the knight will acquire in heaven (x.61), occurring in The Golden Legend: "George is sayd of geos/ Which is a much to saye as tilyenge the erthe/ that is his fleshe."¹¹ Earlier, Contemplation has called the knight a "man of earth" (x.52). The point of this discovery is that through Contemplation the knight discovers that he is tied to the flesh, and that his destiny is bound with the active life. He must descend from the mountain of Contemplation, for mortal life with all its hazards is man's lot.

Confirmed in the virtue of Holiness, Red Cross Knight enters the last stage of his quest. This final stage consists of his battle with the Dragon, his overcoming Duessa and Archimago in their final

effort to separate him from truth, and his marriage to Una.¹² His burnished armour of Holiness "glistring" with heaven's light (xi.4), he enters into battle with the Dragon. The contrast with the battered and dull arms of Holiness with which he is armed at the outset of the legend is marked. Red Cross Knight's sojourn in the House of Holiness burnished his natural Holiness to an accomplished virtue, and prepared him for this last stage in his quest.

The battle with the Dragon lasts three days and conventionally is regarded as "a type of Christ's conquest of hell during the three days between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection"¹³ Yet while there are obvious parallels between the knight's battle and Christ's harrowing of Hell, this typological exegesis is misleading. In the first instance, it tends to deflect attention from the relationship the details of the battle have with the shematic details of the legend. As well, it is a generalization which overlooks the differences between the battles which take place on each of the three days. Finally, this typological exegesis fails to focus attention on the possible links that might exist between this battle, Duessa's last effort to separate the knight from truth, and his marriage with Una, all of which occurs after his emergence from the House of Holiness.

All of Red Cross Knight's antagonists display qualities which are related to evil. This is especially true of the Dragon, of Duessa, and of Archimago. Red Cross Knight's battle with evil is not over in the legend until after he stands before Una's parents to answer the charges brought against him by Duessa through Archimago (xii.25-32).

These charges are hurled as proof that the knight is unholy and therefore unable to marry Una. His answer to the charges is the necessary final proof of the Holy character promised at the outset of the legend, and which, having perfected this character in the House of Holiness, has qualified him to battle the Dragon. His ability to answer the charges gives final proof of his fitness to marry Una. In short the three episodes of this final stage of the quest are linked, with the marriage a reward for the proof of Holy character. Both the Dragon and Duessa, with Archimago, stand in the way of a successful conclusion to the courtship. The tests they present for the knight are linked.

The battle with the Dragon and the effort by Duessa and Archimago to separate the knight from Una constitutes a re-testing of Holiness following the knight's instruction in the tripartite virtue in the House of Holiness. The battle with the Dragon represents the testing of charity and hope, while Duessa's charges represent the testing of faith. Psychologically, the battle with the Dragon represents the test of appetitive and rational portions of the knight's soul, and Duessa's charges the testing of the intellectual portion of the knight's soul.

Essentially, the battle with the Dragon occupies two days, with victory coming easily for the knight at the start of the third day. The first day finds the knight sorely pressed by the Dragon. Thrown from his horse, he battles on until the Dragon scorches his armour with flame. The knight, nearly overcome, desires to disarm (xi.26). He is,

Faint, wearie, sore, emboyled, grieved, brent
 With heat, toyle, wounds, armes, smart, and inward fire.
 (xi.28)

In this condition, he longs for death (xi.28). He is saved by being knocked backward into "The well of life" (xi.29).

The flame sears the flesh, placing the knight in danger of its weakness. His desire to abandon his armour recalls his earlier abandonment of his armour when he succumbed to fleshliness. The knight's fall from his horse suggests not reason's overthrow, but the insufficiency of the flesh, its inability not to become entangled with evil:

. . . his froth-fomy steed, whose courage stout
 Striving to loose the knot, that fast him tyes,
 Himselfe is streighter bandes too rash implyes,
 That to the ground he is perforce constraynd
 To throw his rider (xi.25)

The aim of the knight's battle with the Dragon is to secure the release from bondage of the kingdom of Una's parents. Like Christ's harrowing of Hell, the knight's act is essentially selfless, an act of charity. Put starkly, the knight's desire to abandon his armour, and his longing for death reveals that his charity is limited. The weakness of the flesh is an insuperable barrier to limitless charity. Spenser removes any blame for the knight's desire to cease battle by comparing his situation with that of Hercules dressed in his "poysoned garment" and describing the knight's distress as greater (xi.27). In charity, Red Cross Knight is as perfect as man's earthly lot allows. Where the knight's charity ends, God's begins, and the knight is supported by God's charity.

The "springing well" which restores Red Cross Knight "trickl[es] forth a silver flood" (xi.29). It is the well of life of the New Testament.¹⁴ Nelson points out that the Geneva gloss on the Bible interprets the flood from the well as "the everlasting grace of God." As well, he compares the well of life into which the knight falls with the "water of life Christ offers to the woman of Samaria," pointing out that this is explained in the Geneva edition thusly: "This everlasting water, that is to say, the exceeding love of God, is called living, or of life, to make a difference between it, and the water that should be drawne out of a well."¹⁵ The water into which the knight falls springs from the well, suggesting the freely given nature of the gift of charity which restores the knight.

The test of this first day's battle is also a test of the appetitive portion of the knight's soul. The desire the knight has to abandon the battle reflects the limited strength of the appetitive part of the soul, and, morally, the limit of his charity. The second day's battle constitutes a test of the knight's hope, the virtue which shields the soul from the Dragon, evil, worldliness, and the flesh. During the battle, the Dragon pierces the knight's shield (xi.38), and then attempts to tear the shield from the knight's grasp (xi.40-41). Unsuccessful in the attempt, the Dragon resorts to flame. The effect is that the knight is,

. . . forst . . . to retire
A little backward for his best defence,
To save his bodie from the schorching fire,
Which he from hellish entrailles did expire. (xi.45)

The piercing of the knight's shield and the wound that results from this (xi.38) argues the limited nature of the knight's hope. His retreat before the force of the Dragon suggests the eventual triumph of worldliness, evil, and the flesh. However, unlike the first day's battle, the knight does not desire to abandon the fight, and his retreat is an effort to defend his body from the flames. Though while the effect is not despair or the abandonment of reason, the knight's retiring posture indicates the weakness of the rational soul and the inability of hope to shield the knight from the Dragon's force. The weakness of the flesh draws the rational soul to its care, forcing a retreat from the battle with evil, a retreat which marks an advance for the Dragon and a sign of his impending conquest of hope. God's providence intervenes at this point in the battle, and the knight falls under the tree of life (xi.45).

The balm which flows from the tree of life and restores the knight is the oil of mercy.¹⁶ While the balm is a token of God's Charity, the tree of life serves to sustain Hope. Augustine points out that "Christ himself is prophetically called the Tree of Life."¹⁷ The promise of his return, the promise of the restoration of the tree of life to God's chosen people at the last judgement upholds hope. It is like the gift given Red Cross Knight by Arthur (ix.19). With God's aid, the knight withstands these tests of charity and hope, tests of the appetitive and rational soul's control of the flesh. On the third day of the battle, the knight dispatches the Dragon with ease (xi.53-54).

The test of Red Cross Knight's Holiness is completed when

Archimago presents Duessa's charges against the knight in the court of Una's parents. Faith is an intellectual virtue, a function of the intellectual soul, and in its test the knight is confronted with duplicity and deceit. The missive Archimago delivers is signed Fidessa, counterfeit faith (xii.28). It contains Fidessa's claim that the knight is faithless:

To me sad mayd, or rather widow sad,
 He was affiaunced long time before,
 And sacred pledges he both gave, and had,
 False erraunt knight, infamous, and forswore:
 Witnesse the burning Altars, which he swore,
 And guiltie heavens of his bold periury,
 Which though he hath polluted oft of yore,
 Yet I to them for judgement just do fly,
 And them conjure t'avenge this shamefull injury. (xii.27)

The irony of Fidessa's claim is that if the knight is guilty, as she charges, then it does appear that he belongs to counterfeit faith, Fidessa. The knight wisely pleads innocence and human weakness as the causes of his companionship with Fidessa:

. . . unwares I strayd
 Out of my way, through perils straunge and hard;
 That day should faile me, ere I had them all declard.

There did I find, or rather I was found
 Of this false woman, that Fidessa hight,
Fidessa hight the falsest Dame on ground,
 Most false Duessa, royall richly dight,
 That easie was t'invegle weaker sight:
 Who by her wicked arts, and wylie skill,
 Too false and strong for earthly skill or might,
 Unwares me wrought unto her wicked will,
 And to my foe betrayd, when least I feared ill. (xii.31-32)

The knight, by his testimony, demonstrates his knowledge of the weakness

of man and of the workings of evil, thereby surmounting this final test of his Holiness. False faith, Fidessa, is unmasked as deceit, Duessa, and the threat to faith dispelled. At this point, Una comes forward to witness the knight's testimony, but the witness is a formality (xii.33-34), the knight, on his own, has recognized the truth. This last series of tests is a trial of the knight's perfected Holiness, and it has followed the order of perfection of its parts, charity first, followed by hope and faith. The knight's success proves the perfection of his moral character, and hence of his soul. Marriage to Una and temporal separation from her follow, but the quest and courtship are concluded. At the beginning of Book Two of The Faerie Queene, the knight is too wary to succumb to the trickery of Archimago (II.i.4).

NOTES

¹Ruskin identifies her as "Heavenly Grace" (Works, I, 424). The nature of the knight's sojourn in Caelia's House of Holiness is better explained, I think, by identifying her as heavenly wisdom. The knight acquires the knowledge of Holiness under Caelia's general direction.

²Again, Spenser is following Aristotle's general division between natural virtue and true virtue.

³Castiglione, p. 336.

⁴Kellogg and Steele, p. 41.

⁵Institutes, III, 653, and Hebrews 11:1. Both are cited in Kellogg and Steele, pp. 40-41.

⁶Romans 8:24-25 associates patience with hope.

⁷1 Corinthians 13:13, and Aquinas, 151-54.

⁸Aquinas, 153.

⁹On the seven corporal works of mercy see Messenger, pp. 18-19.

¹⁰On Contemplation see, Terence Hawkes, Shakespeare and the Reason (London, 1964), pp. 30-31.

¹¹Nelson, p. 151.

¹²Essentially, this last stage of the quest is a re-testing of the knight's Holiness, with success proof of his intimate relationship with truth and the marriage a formal testimony to his Holy character.

¹³Kellogg and Steele, p. 45; see also, Works, I, 295.

¹⁴Revelations 2:10.

¹⁵Nelson, p. 167; see also Tyndale, The Work of William Tyndale, ed. on G. H. E. Duffield (Philadelphia, 1965), pp. 47, on baptism as a quenching and drowning of the lusts of the flesh.

¹⁶Augustine, City of God, xx.26.

¹⁶Augustine, City of God, xx.26.

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