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SPENSER AND THE SACRED BOOKE

SPENSER AND THE SACRED BOOKE:
BIBLICAL ALLUSION AND TYPOLOGY
IN BOOK I OF THE FAERIE QUEENE

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis will examine Spenser's use of biblical allusion and typology in Book I of The Faerie Queene focusing on two major patterns: the pattern in which the Legend of Holiness parallels the structure of the Bible as a whole, and the pattern drawn from the Book of Revelation. Chapter One will examine how the first part of the Legend of Holiness makes extensive use of the Old Testament, particularly the Fall story and the account of Israel's wandering. Chapter Two will explore Arthur's role as a redeemer figure, the Redcrosse knight's crisis of faith and his subsequent education in New Testament doctrine. The third chapter will concentrate on Spenser's use of the Book of Revelation, demonstrating how allusions to Revelation also contribute to the structure of Book I and then examining the relationship of the two concluding cantos to two of the great visions of St. John-- the triumph of the forces of good over the forces of evil and the marriage feast of the Lamb.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most important resources for a Renaissance poet was the Bible. Though Spenser's knowledge of the classics and of continental literature is well-documented, his use of Scripture is worthy of more extensive and detailed examination. While it would be impossible within the limitations of a thesis to exhaust all aspects of such a study, a logical point of departure is the first book of The Faerie Queene which, as A.C. Hamilton remarks, "establishes man's right relationship to God and upon which all virtues depend."¹ More than the rest of the poem, the Legend of Holiness mirrors the manifold complexity of the Bible. As James Nohrnberg suggests, "Book I is a deduction from the Bible-- the Bible supplies its 'type'."² Northrop Frye calls the first book of The Faerie Queene "the closest following of the Biblical quest-Romance theme in English Literature; it is closer even than The Pilgrim's Progress which resembles it because they both resemble the Bible."³

¹ In his edition of Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queene (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1977), p.23, hereafter cited as "Hamilton".

² James Nohrnberg, The Analogy of "The Faerie Queene" (Princeton: University Press, 1976), p. 158.

³ Northrop Frye, The Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: University Press, 1957), p. 194.

As central as Spenser's biblical patterning is to the structure of the Legend of Holiness, work on his use of the Bible has often focused on other considerations. Much critical ink has been expended on the relatively fruitless task of determining which of the many available versions of the Bible was used in the writing of The Faerie Queene. Since it is likely that Spenser's knowledge of Scripture derives from a number of different sources and would be acquired in many different ways, it is doubtful that any version can claim preference.⁴ Another approach to the subject is that recently attempted by Naseeb Shaheen in his Biblical Reference in "The Faerie Queene" which provides a checklist of biblical allusions based largely on the work of earlier commentators. Shaheen does not, however, examine how the allusions function or what kinds of biblically derived patterns occur in the poem. More helpful in this regard are the notes in Hamilton's edition of The Faerie Queene and several articles, most notably, perhaps, Carol Kaske's examination of the dragon fight and John Hopkins' of the relationship of the Book of Revelation to the Legend of Holiness. Nohrnberg's The Analogy of "The Faerie Queene" also gives an extensive treatment of biblical typology. He considers Spenser's use of the Bible in the light of exegetical and liturgical traditions which often establish

⁴In the interest of consistency I have chosen when quoting from the Bible to use the Geneva Bible of 1560 unless otherwise noted.

the relevance of a particular allusion to The Faerie Queene.

Expanding on the work of Hamilton, Kaske, Hankins and Nohrnberg, I hope to demonstrate the very close relationship between the structure of the Bible and the first book of The Faerie Queene. On at least one level the Legend of Holiness follows the pattern of an unfolding Bible beginning with the Fall of Man in a paradisaal garden and moving toward the redeemed garden-city of the Book of Revelation. In the first canto of Book I the Redcrosse knight's quest is articulated: he must seek out and destroy the dragon which is wasting the kingdom of Una's parents, later identified as the Kingdom of Eden. In the context of the Pauline concept of the old Adam by whose sins mankind fell and the new Adam, sent by God to redeem mankind, it is clear that the knight aspires to be a type of the latter. In the first part of the poem, however, it is quickly apparent that he is functioning as a type of the old Adam. The name Adam and the name Georgos, which the knight eventually discovers to be his own, are both related to the word "earth". Like Adam, the knight is beguiled and tempted away from the path of faith and obedience only to become attached to Duessa, a figure in whom the biblical imagery of tempting serpent and tempting female are combined. The pattern of wandering and exile which begins to emerge after Redcrosse's abandonment of Una parallels a major pattern of the Old Testament: the cycle of Israel's sinful

fall and eventual restoration through the mercy of God. Spenser identifies the enemies of faith and truth, particularly in the House of Pride episode, with the enemies of Israel who frustrate the nationhood of the chosen people and attempt to subvert the Hebrew religion.

With the fulfilment of the Messianic prophecies in the birth of Christ, the meaning of Israel is radically altered. In the New Testament, Israel becomes a metaphor for the people of God, no longer just the Hebrew nation, but all those redeemed by the death of the Saviour. More specifically and more importantly for Spenser, Israel becomes a metaphor for the Church. The change in the nature of the Bible from the Old to the New Testaments is reflected in the Legend of Holiness. With the arrival of Arthur, a redeemer figure for the Redcrosse knight, the knight becomes more clearly a type of the Christian who must abandon the ways of sin and seek to be cleansed through baptism in the Holy Spirit. The Despair episode and the House of Holiness, which draw extensively on material from the New Testament epistles, describe the efforts of a Christian to escape from the bondage of a sinful nature and the life-denying constraints of the Mosaic Law.

Since the quest of the Christian is also to be Christ-like, it is in the last two cantos of Book I that the Redcrosse knight, after receiving the revivifying vision of the Holy City, is finally able to become a type of the new

Adam. He is baptized in the Well of Life and partakes of the fruits of the Tree of Life, a probable allusion to the two sacraments of the Reformed Church. Like the slayer of the beast in the Book of Revelation, usually interpreted as Christ, Redcrosse defeats the forces of evil, now concentrated in the symbol of the great dragon, and restores the Kingdom of Eden. Finally, in the concluding canto, Spenser again draws on Revelation in his account of the betrothal of the knight and Una, a prolepsis of the wedding of the Lamb and the Bride.

Although the Legend of Holiness, on one level, parallels the structure of the Bible as a whole, such a scheme does not take into account the vast number of allusions to the Book of Revelation which occur throughout Book I and are by no means limited to the two concluding cantos. The presence of these allusions suggests that there is a second major biblical pattern at work in the poem which is interwoven with the first-- one rich in apocalyptic imagery. Since Spenser would have known, from various commentaries, of the relationship of various texts in different parts of the Bible, he would have been aware that Revelation draws together a number of types and images from the rest of Scripture and re-organizes and re-interprets them in the context of a Christian apocalypse.⁵

⁵John E. Hankins, "Spenser and the Revelation of St. John" in A.C. Hamilton, ed., Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser (Hamden: Archon Books, 1972), p. 40.

Moreover, because the Book of Revelation was interpreted by Reformation commentators as an anti-papal vision, it is a particularly useful source for imagery in the Legend of Holiness which, in at least one of its meanings, is an allegory of the restoration of the true English Church during the reign of Elizabeth.

Finally, though the history of the Redcrosse knight and his victory over the dragon are, anagogically, the triumph of Christ over the forces of evil, an event which occurs in a realm outside the boundaries of space and time, Spenser recognizes that the events of his poem are trapped by these boundaries. St. George is allowed a glimpse of the heavenly city while he is on the Mount of Contemplation, but he cannot, like Christian in The Pilgrim's Progress, enter into it. At the end of Book I he is betrothed but not married to Una since he must first fulfil his explicitly temporal obligations to Gloriana. The biblical pattern is not finished in the final canto because it cannot be completed in a transitory and imperfect world. As important as the slaying of the dragon may appear, ultimately it is only in "the New Hierusalem" that "eternall peace and hapiness" (1.10.55) will be found.

The form this thesis will take is an examination of how Book I of The Faerie Queene is itself a "type" of the Bible. Chapter One will examine how the first part of the Legend of Holiness draws extensively from the Old

Testament, particularly the Fall story and the theme of Israel's wandering. Chapter Two will explore Arthur's role as a redeemer figure, the Redcrosse knight's crisis of faith and his subsequent education in New Testament doctrine. The third chapter will concentrate on Spenser's use of the Book of Revelation, demonstrating how allusions to Revelation also contribute to the structure of Book I and then examining the relationship of the two concluding cantos to two of the great visions of St. John-- the triumph of the forces of good over the forces of evil and the marriage feast of the Lamb.

CHAPTER ONE

ADAM AND ISRAEL

1. The Fall of Man

The opening canto of the Legend of Holiness articulates the two major biblical patterns functioning in the book: the pattern which draws specifically on the Book of Revelation and the pattern which suggests that Book I is more broadly structured to parallel the Bible as a whole. On the one hand, Spenser echos the words of the victorious Christ in Revelation, " I was dead: and beholde, I am alive for evermore,"¹ in his description of the knight who bears the sign of the cross in "remembrance of his dying Lord" (1.1.2). The history of Christ's incarnation, crucifixion and triumph over sin and death is clearly of considerable importance to an understanding of the knight's actions and, by providing the model of perfection, will also be a means of judging his success. On the other hand, the first part of the Legend of Holiness parallels events in the Bible which preceded Christ's birth suggesting that on another level, the history of the knight's quest is also the entire history of mankind from the Fall in the Garden of Eden to the

¹Revelation 1: 18

restoration of Man in the heavenly Jerusalem.

Before proceeding to the first episode in the poem from which significant echos of the Fall story can be adduced, Spenser describes at length the two major figures in Book I. His account of the knight underscores Redcrosse's potential role as a miles Christianus. He is an untested knight who has never before borne armour, yet his "mightie armes and silver shielde" are clearly ancient since they are scarred by "old dints of many deep wounds" and "cruell markes of many' a bloody fielde" (1.1.1). As Spenser himself suggests in the Letter to Raleigh, the allusion is to the "whole armour of God" and the "shield of faith" which Paul commends to the believer in the concluding chapter of Ephesians.² At his initial appearance Redcrosse also recalls the battling Christ with a white shield emblazoned with a red cross found in medieval illustrations of Revelation.³ As Christ the warrior "was called faithfull and true, and he judgeth and fighteth righteously",⁴ the Redcrosse knight is "Right faithfull true... in deede and word" (1.1.2). The "angry steede" on which he is mounted, however, suggests that the knight is a fallen man susceptible to his passions.

²Ephesians 6: 11-17

³Douglas Brooks-Davies, Spenser's "Faerie Queene": A Critical Commentary on Books I and II (Manchester: University Press, 1977), p. 14.

⁴Revelation 18: 11

Spenser's Christian knight is accompanied by a lady whose appearance also recalls a number of biblical associations. She is riding "upon a lowly Asse" which suggests the humility of Christ (see Matt. 21:5 from Zech. 9:9). Her whiteness is that of Truth and Faith and the "milke white lambe" (1.1.4) connects her with the innocence of the sacrificial lamb of John 1: 29.⁵ The woman's purity recalls the unblemished bride of Song of Songs who, according to patristic tradition, is a type of the Church, the bride of Christ. The word "one" is suggestive of the "one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church" of the Nicene creed. She is also, however, the daughter

Of ancient Kings and Queenes, that had of yore
Their scepters stretcht from East to Westerne shore,
And all the world in their subjection held.

(1.1.5)

As the poem later reveals, the king and queen are the king and queen of Eden and Spenser here alludes to God's commandment that Man should "Bring forth the frute, and multiplie, and fil the earth, and subdue it, and rule over the foule of the heaven and over everie beast that moveth upon the earth."⁶ Spenser suggests a connection with original Man but is careful not to make

⁵Hamilton, p. 30.

⁶Genesis 1: 28.

the identification complete. Like Adam and Eve, Una's parents have been expelled from their kingdom but unlike the account of Adam and Eve's loss of the garden or the Redcrosse knight's later adventures, their expulsion is not a fall story. The destruction of their kingdom takes place not through their own fault but by the machinations of an "infernall feend" that "with foule uprore/ Forwasted all their land and them expeld" (1.1.5). Spenser adjusts the biblical pattern to incorporate a political dimension to the meaning wherein the Kingdom of Eden represents an ideal state of England which existed in the past but which has been oppressed and wasted by its European Catholic enemies and awaits restoration by Una, a figure who functions as a type of Queen Elizabeth.

The image of the woman "under a veil that wimpled was full low,/ And over all a blacke stole she did throw,/ As one that inly mourned" (1.1.4) also has important liturgical overtones. Her mourning dress suggests the season of Lent. The beast on which she rides is "more white than snow" which alludes to a verse of Psalm 51, one of the seven penitential psalms which, during the Middle Ages, were appointed to be read on Fridays throughout Lent. The forty days of Lent recall Christ's forty days of fasting in the wilderness which are ended by the temptation sequence.⁷ They also recall the forty years of Israel's error

⁷Matthew 4: 1-11

and wandering in the wilderness before being allowed to enter into the promised land, an episode which supplies the type for the wandering theme of the Legend of Holiness. The Lenten associations provide a further dimension to the biblical patterning of the poem and lend support for a reading of the poem as a parallel of the Bible as presented in the annual cycle of liturgy.

The first movement of knight and lady is "to seek some covert nigh at hand" (l.1.7). Since both leaves and pride will eventually fall, the "loftie trees yclad with sommer's pride" (l.1.7) connects the episode with the original error. Also, since the trees "Did spred so broad, that heaven's light did hide", they are like the trees of Isaiah 37 and Ezekiel 31 which are struck down by the Lord because of their pride. In attempting to block the light, the trees align themselves with the forces of chaos, the darkness on the face of the deep⁸ out of which the created order is formed. They also set themselves in opposition to God and Christ who are associated in the Bible with imagery of light,⁹ and also to the light of reason by which the knight and lady are eventually capable of solving the episode by themselves.

⁸Genesis 3: 8

⁹See Psalm 84: 11, "For the Lord God is the sunne & shield"; Psalm 19: 4-5, "in them hathe he set a tabernacle for the sunne. Which cometh forthe as a bridegrome out of his chambre"; and John 8: 12, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shal not walke in darkenes, but shal have the light of life."

The wood itself is a scriptural image for the wilds of human life "where the various kinds of perturbation of soul flourish, and where destructive beasts dwell and-- as if in a cave-- lie hid."¹⁰ Like Dante's wood in the Commedia, it is dark because all error always proceeds from ignorance and blindness of mind.¹¹ The "pathes and allies wide" (l.l.7) associate the grove with the way to the House of Holiness and with the road to Despair. The multiplicity of paths symbolize the difficulty of choice and manifold nature of error.¹² Spenser also alludes to the Sermon on the Mount where Christ warns, "Enter ye in at the streite gate for it is the wide gate and broad waye that leadeth to destruction: and manie there be which go in thereat."¹³ The knight's retreat into the trees recalls the story of the Fall where Adam and Eve, after eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, attempt to hide themselves "from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden."¹⁴ As Hamilton notes,¹⁵ in Paradise Lost Adam's fallen state is similarly revealed in his desire to hide in "highest woods impenetrable/ To

¹⁰Nohrnberg, Analogy, p. 158.

¹¹Ibid., p. 138.

¹²Brooks-Davies, Spenser's "Faerie Queene", p. 18.

¹³Matthew 7: 13-14

¹⁴Genesis 3: 8

¹⁵Hamilton, p. 33.

star or sunlight." St. Augustine in De Genesi contra Manichaeos suggests that by hiding in medio ligni paradisi Adam and Eve hide within themselves, divorcing themselves from the light of truth.¹⁶ Despite the obvious danger, the knight over-confidently dismisses the potential hazards of the wood:

Ah Ladie (said he) shame were to revoke
The forward footing for an hidden shade:
Vertue gives her selfe light, through darkenesse for to wade.

(1.1.12)

Echoes of the Fall story continue in the description of the wandering wood's inhabitant. Errorr is,

Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide,
But th'other halfe did womans shape retaine,
Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine.

(1.1.14)

Like Satan in the C text of Piers the Plowman, Errorr is a composite of the two tempters of Adam-- the serpent and Eve. In her double aspect, Errorr also anticipates Duessa and the House of Pride both of which have misleading appearances.¹⁷ Errorr's "huge long taile... in knots and many boughtes upwound,/ Pointed with mortall sting" (1.1.15) associates her with the labyrinth of the wandering wood itself and with the wandering Adam and Eve after their

¹⁶William Nelson, The Poetry of Edmund Spenser (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 163.

¹⁷Hamilton, p. 34.

exile from the garden. The "mortall sting" suggests a second consequence of the Fall, death ("For as in Adam all die"¹⁸). Also like the wood, Errour is an enemy of light and therefore an enemy of God, "For light she hated as the deadly bale" (1.1.16).

On one level, the allegorical significance of the monster of Errour is easily perceived by both reader and knight. She is like the monster Echidna, half woman and half snake, who was interpreted in the Renaissance as an emblem of learned error.¹⁹ She is also like the locusts in the Book of Revelation which have "stings in their Tailles"²⁰ and which the Geneva Bible glosses as an image of the pope's clergy who "infect and kil with their venemous doctrine." As such she is the antithesis of Una whose simplicity of appearance is suggestive of the reformed clergy. By obeying Una's injunction to add faith to his force, an allusion to II Peter 1: 5 ("joyne moreover virtue with your faith"), Redcrosse is able to avoid making a wrong choice and to defeat the monster, whereupon she spews forth "vomit full of bookes and papers" and "loathly frogs and toades, which eyes did lack" (1.1.20), again an allusion to Revelation where frogs come out of the mouth of the false prophet.²¹ Although Errour is a representation

¹⁸I Cor. 15: 22

¹⁹Brooks-Davies, Spenser's "Faerie Queene", p. 15.

²⁰Revelation 9: 10

²¹Revelation 16: 23

of the evils of popish propaganda, more generally Error may suggest any learning which is in opposition to faith,²² any word which competes with God's Word. Moreover, Error's scattered brood which suck up "their dying mother's blood" (1.1.25) is an emblem of the self-defeating nature of sin, recalling the suicide of Judas Iscariot who "when he had throwne downe him selfe head long he brast a sondre in the middes, and all his bowels gushed out."²³ The image also suggests that Error is a demonic parody of mother Church which was often represented as a pelican feeding her young. The knight's victory over the monster proves him more worthy to wear the armour of God, the loss of which will later become an emblem of his fallen state. When Redcrosse and Una leave the wandering wood, they are also escaping from the tyranny of Egypt and the aimless wandering of Israel in the wilderness, an association which is confirmed by the resemblance of the outflow from Error's mouth to the river Nile when "With timely pride above the Aegyptian vale/ His fattie waves... fertile slime outwell,/ And overflow each plaine and lowly dale" (1.1.21). Like Israel which is exhorted to "turne not aside to the right hand nor to the left, but walke in the wayes which God has commanded,"²⁴ the knight and the lady

²²Hamilton, p. 35.

²³Acts 1: 18

²⁴Deut. 5: 32-33

follow the path "which beaten was most plaine,/ Ne ever would to any by-way bend" (1.1.28).

Although the knight is successful in the Errour episode, he allows himself to be duped in his encounter with Archimago who is, in one of his meanings, a type of the serpent (like the Genesis serpent he is "subtill"

1.2.9) and a figure associated, like Errour, with the anti-creative primordial darkness. Following his "fall" from faithfulness and his abandonment of Una, Redcrosse's desire for death inevitably associates him with the Pauline old Adam. He subsequently initiates a pattern of wandering analogous to Israel's exile motif in the Old Testament thus involving himself in the two biblical patterns he had successfully avoided in the Errour episode. If, as Nohrnberg suggests, "Una's frequent quotation of Scripture and the veil that in part identifies her with the ark of the testimony make her, among other things, the Word of God that Redcrosse properly champions,"²⁵ in his abandonment of her he has lost the capacity to recognize the analogy between his own situation and the events of the Bible. Nowhere is this failure more apparent than in the Fradubio episode. Following his flight from the Hermitage, the knight's first encounter is with Sansfoy. Although he defeats Sansfoy, the victory is certainly Pyrrhic since he is not only completely taken in by the superficial glitter of

²⁵Nohrnberg, Analogy, p. 151.

the "goodly lady clad in scarlot red" (1.1.13), but he also loses the "helmet of salvation"²⁶ and damages the effectiveness of the shield of faith by taking up the shield of faithlessness as a symbol of victory (1.2.20). The two shields cancel one another so that, like the church of the Laodiceans in Revelation, the knight is neither hot nor cold, neither true nor false. By leaving behind a woman who is faithful and true and by allying himself with a woman of doubtful repute, Redcrosse has committed a serious blunder which the parallel story of Fradubio and Fraelissa also serves to illustrate.

The Fradubio episode, like the encounter with Errour, begins with an Adam-like retreat from the heat of the sun into the shade of two "goodly trees" (1.2.28). The tree under which Redcrosse and Duessa choose to sit is not an ordinary tree "But once a man Fradubio, now a tree,/ Wretched man, wretched tree" (1.2.33). As Upton suggests the "Fra" in Fradubio may be the Italian preposition "in" or "among" but most commentators take it for the Italian for "brother," hence "brother doubt." Like Redcrosse whose eye of reason is "with rage yblent" (1.2.5), Fradubio's capacity for healthy doubt has been perverted causing him to doubt at the wrong time. The first syllable of Fraelissa's name is "Frael" rather than "Fra" which is possibly the Italian fragelezza or

²⁶Ephesians 6: 17

"frailty."²⁷ Frailty suggests the "frelnes of oure flesshe"; the weakness of Adam and Eve, "which by theyre fragylte brake the goddes commaundment."²⁸ According to a medieval reading of Scripture, the name of the first woman is not Eve but Issa or Isha which may account for the final syllable of Fraelissa's name.²⁹ The similarity to the name Elissa may also suggest a connection with Dido who is abandoned by Aeneas. A link with the story of Adam is further suggested in Redcrosse's Pilate-like thrusting of the tree's bleeding bough into the ground and his closing of the wound with the clay from which man was created. The act also echos part of a litany for the Ash Wednesday penitential service: "Remember, O man, dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." Fradubio himself attributes the cause of his disastrous predicament to the same cause which led Adam to the first sin:³⁰ "O too deare love, love bought with death too deere" (1.2.31).

Fradubio's story of how he came to be transformed links Duessa with Adam's other wife Lilith. In cabbalistic tradition, Lilith was created separately from Adam, and either preceded Eve, or else consorted with Adam during an assumed period of separation from Eve after the expulsion from Eden. After Lilith's and Adam's eventual falling

²⁷ Nelson, The Poetry of Edmund Spenser, p. 327n.

²⁸ Nohrnberg, Analogy, p. 160.

²⁹ Ibid. p. 160.

³⁰ Nelson, The Poetry of Edmund Spenser, p. 162.

out, Lilith is said to fly to Egypt as a demon vowing vengeance.³¹ In Christian iconography the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is often represented with a snake coiling around it presenting the face of an attractive woman and coming between Adam and Eve. Such an analogy may account for Fradubio's choice between the two women.³² John Gower on the difference between the good woman and the bad woman offers a description highly suggestive of Duessa:

All evils have usually proceeded from an evil woman; indeed she is a second plague to men. With her blandishments, a cunning woman gently touches upon a man's evil inclination and breaks down his manly honor. Through her various wiles she destroys his feelings, his riches, his virtues, his strength, his reputation, and his peace. She deceives in a thousand ways and sets a thousand snares in order to catch one man. Such a woman comes adorned with radiant jewels, gold and finery so that she can deceive. Her clothes are well arranged, her rising breast is bound up, and the pattern of her bosom extends her neckline. She adorns her head with tinted hair and veils, and the golden splendor of gems decorates her handiwork. In order to sharpen the eyes of the frenzied man upon herself, there is one ring after another on her fingers. It is not her task to soften wool by spinning it, but to be able to catch men when she is all decked out. A showy woman lets herself be seen by people; perhaps there will be one out of many whom she can allure.³³

One must also note the similarities between Fradubio's situation and that of Una's father. Both are imprisoned, one in a tree and one in a brazen tower. Spenser's choice of the tree as a symbol of the captivity

³¹Nohrnberg, *Analogy*, p. 229.

³²*Ibid.*, p. 231.

³³John Gower, *The Three Estates in Chaucer: Sources and Backgrounds*, ed. R.P. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p.201.

of the spiritually dead draws on several traditions. In Tasso, the tree is an externalized form of the hero's anxieties.³⁴ Sir John Harington writing on Ariosto's version of the Polydorus story comments: "In Astolfos metamorphosis into a myrtle tree (which tree is said to be dedicated to Venus) we may note, how men given over to sensuality, leese in the end the very forme of man (which is reason) and so become beastes or stockes."³⁵ Bishop Pilkington in a passage of biblical commentary also uses the metaphor of Adam trapped in a tree:³⁶

As long as we be wandering in the mountains and wild woods of this world, being highly minded and in great wealth or authority above others, as on a hill, we have froward proud minds, and not meet for God's house, until we be made lowly in our own sights, and fall flat down at Christ's feet, and have the rough bark of our old Adam pulled off.

Again because the knight's eye of reason is clouded, he is incapable of seeing the similarity of his own situation to that of Fradubio and, by analogy, to that of Adam. Both Fradubio and Redcrosse are guilty of infidelity. According to Ecclesiasticus, pride is the original sin but "the beginning of man's pride, is to fall away from God, and to turne away from his maker."³⁷ Nohrnberg cites a passage from Calvin's Institutes which

³⁴Nohrnberg, Analogy, p. 160.

³⁵Nelson, The Poetry of Edmund Spenser, p.162.

³⁶Ibid., p. 163.

³⁷Ecclesiasticus 10: 13.

provides an interesting commentary on the actions of Spenser's knight:³⁸

...we must consider the very fourme of the same negligence in the fall of Adam It is a childish opinion that hath commonly bin received, concerning the intemperance of glottonie, as though the summe and head of all vertues consisted in the forebearing of one only frute Therefore we must looke further because the forbidding him from the tree of knowledge of good and evill, was the triall of obedience, that Adam in obeying might prove that he was willingly subiect to the gouernement of God But the promise whereby he was bidden to hope for eternall life, so long as he did not eate of the tree of life, and again the horrible threatening of death so sone as he shoulde taste of the tree of knowledge of good and evill, served to prove and exercise his faith For sith the woman was with the deceit of the Serpent lead away by infidelitie, now it appeareth that disobedience was the beginning of the fall But it is withall to be noticed, that the first man fell from the subiunction of God, for that he was taken with the entisements of Satan, but also despising the trueth, did turne out of the waie to lying Therefore infidelitie was the roote of that falling away.... Albeit it was no simple Apostasie, but ioyned with shameful reproches of Satan, wherein he accused God of lying, enuie, and niggardly grudging. Finally, infidelitie opened the gate to ambition, ambition was the mother of obstinate rebellion, to make men cast away the feare of God, and throw themselves whether their lust carried them.... For Adam woulde never have bin so bold as to do against the commaundement of God, but for this that he did not beleve his word.

Though Fradubio and Redcrosse are both types of the old Adam, Redcrosse is also potentially a type of the new Adam. His question "How long time Are you in this misformed house to dwell?" (1.2.43) is a reminder of how far he is from realizing his potential. In the context of the Fradubio episode, it is interesting that the living

³⁸Nohrberg, Analogy, p. 161.

tree is an image for the new Adam. According to St. Jerome, the just and blessed man "will be planted as if he were a tree which is planted by the passage of waters, that is, he will be like Christ; since 'he made us to sit in the heavens and reign with him' You see because this tree is planted in paradise, and we are all planted with him."³⁹ The image of the Messiah as tree also occurs in the prophecy of Isaiah: "But there shall come a rod forth out of the stock of Ishai and a grafe shall growe out of his rootes. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge, and the feare of the Lord."⁴⁰ Christ himself uses a variation of the tree image in the Gospel of John: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth the much frute: for without me can ye do nothing."⁴¹ The cross which Christ mounts (in patristic tradition the cross was made from the wood of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) frees Man from the bark of the dead tree and allows him to become a part of the living tree. As St. Paul comments: "Knowe ye not, that all we which have bene baptized in Jesus Christ have bene

³⁹St. Jerome, *Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos*, ed. D. Germanus Morin, *Corpus Christianorum Serie Latina LXXVIII* (Turnholti, 1957), pp. 6f.

⁴⁰Isaiah 11: 1-2

⁴¹John 15: 5

baptized unto death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead.... so we also shulde walke in newness of life. For if we be grafted with him to the similitude of his death, even so shal we be to the similitude of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our olde man is crucified with him, that the bodie of sinne might be destroyed, that henceforthe we shulde not serve sinne. For he that is dead is freed from sinne."⁴²

The Redcrosse knight's question, "mote I that well out find./ That may restore you to your wonted well?" is ironic since his goal is, like Christ's, a goal of restoration of life to a land which is "wasted". Before he can perform this task, however, he must first realize that he, like Fradubio, has been faithless and has committed spiritual suicide. He must once again ally himself with the Word so that he can put off the bark of the old Adam and be made alive in Christ "risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept."⁴³

⁴²Romans 6: 3-7

⁴³I Cor. 15: 20

2. Israel in Exile

Between the banishment of Adam from the garden of Eden, the birth of the second Adam and the revelation of the New Covenant is the whole history of Israel. In addition to the great pattern of the Hexateuch which is, typologically, the pattern for Christ's liberation of mankind from bondage, Spenser makes use of a second pattern in which there are four phases: 1) error -- Israel falls away from God; 2) oppression -- God hands his chosen people over to his enemies for punishment; 3) repentance -- Israel cries to the Lord in distress; and 4) deliverance -- God sends the Israelites a deliverer.⁴⁴ In the Legend of Holiness the wandering of the Redcrosse knight and Una draws on this four-phase cycle. The knight who has turned away from the Word of God in his rejection of Una and is delivered into the hands of the enemies of God is associated with Israel in the first two phases. Una, on the other hand, cries out in her misery at the loss of her champion and, like Israel in the latter two phases, is sent a series of deliverers culminating in the arrival of Arthur.

⁴⁴Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, trans. D.M.G. Stalker, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), vol. I, p. 330.

Since she is also a type of Elizabeth, it is necessary for Una to avoid being associated with the error phase of Israel's cycle. Nevertheless, in one of her aspects Una is a type of the true English Church in exile for which the suffering of the repentant Israel is an appropriate analogy. Moreover, her rescue by a "deliverer" whom the Tudors claimed as an ancestor is a clever manipulation of biblical and political allegory. The enemies of both the Redcrosse knight and Una are clearly identified both with the anti-creative chaos which attempts to subvert the created order and with the idolatrous enemies that oppress Israel in the Old Testament, particularly Egypt and Babylon.

The narrator's lament for Una at the beginning of the third canto underscores her feelings of distress and forsakenness:

Nought is there under heav'ns wide hollowesse,
 That moves more deare compassion of mind,
 Then beautie brought t'unworthy wretchednesse
 Through envies snares or fortunes freakes unkind:
 I, whether lately through her brightnesse blind,
 Or through alleageance and fast fealtie,
 Which I do owe unto all woman kind,
 Feele my heart perst with so great agonie,
 When such I see, that all for pittie I could die.

And now it is empassioned so deepe,
 For fairest Unaes sake, of whom I sing,
 That my fraile eyes these lines with teares do steepe,
 To think how she through guilefull handeling,
 Though true as touch, though daughter of a king,
 Though faire as ever living wight was faire,
 Though nor in word nor deede ill meriting,
 Is from her knight divorced in despaire
 And her due loves deriv'd to that vile witches share.

(1.3.1-2)

The theme is suggestive of the great psalm of the repentant Israel praying to be delivered from the tyranny of Babylon:⁴⁵

By the rivers of Babel we sate, and there we wept, when we remembred Zion. We hanged our harpes upon the willowes in the middes thereof. Then thei that led us captives, required of us songs and mirth, when we had hanged up our harpes, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.⁴⁶

Like Israel, Una is a "Forsaken, wofull, solitarie mayd/ Farre from all peoples prease, as in exile,/ In wildernesse and wastfull deserts strayd,/ To seeke her knight" (1.3.3). Nevertheless, she bears a mark of God's favour. Like Moses whose face is transfigured by talking with the Lord, Una lifts her veil and her face makes "sunshine in the shadie place" (1.3.4), an image also suggestive of the woman clothed with the sun in the Book of Revelation and of Elizabeth who sheds the beams of the true religion.⁴⁷ Like Daniel ("My God hathe sent his angel and hathe shut the lions mouthes, that thei have not hurt me: for my justice was found out before him"⁴⁸) Una is protected from the hungry lion by her innocence. Una herself echos psalm verses in her complaint: "How does he find in cruell hart to hate/ Her that him lov'd and ever most adord,/ As the

⁴⁵Hamilton, p. 55.

⁴⁶Psalm 137: 1-3

⁴⁷Brooks-Davies, Spenser's "Faerie Queene", p. 36.

⁴⁸Daniel 6: 22

God of my life? why hath he me abhord?" (1.3.7).⁴⁹ Her words are also reminiscent of a verse of the Te Deum: "when thou tookest upon thee to deliver man, thou didst not abhor the virgin's womb." Significantly, the allusion links Una with the Virgin Mary which, in turn, suggests a connection with the Virgin-Queen in her ecclesiastical role as head of the Church.

Spenser further suggests Una's role as a type of the suffering Israel in his account of her encounter with Abessa, Corceca and Kirkrapine. As Upton notes, Spenser may have modelled his description of Abessa on the woman of Samaria in the Gospel of John, a woman who is both an adulteress and an idolater. From a biblical standpoint all false gods are idols and all false faith idolatry. The prophet Micah tells of the link between idolatry and harlotry in his condemnation of Samaria:

Therefore I will make Samaria as an heape of the field,
& for the planting of the vineyards, and I wil cause
the stones thereof to tumble downe into the valley, & I
wil discover the fundacions thereof. And all the graven
images thereof shalbe broken, and all the gifts thereof
shalbe burnt with the fyre, and all the idoles thereof
wil I destroye: for she gathered it of the hyre of an
harlot, and they shal returne to the wages of an harlot.⁵⁰

The concept of Israel whoring after false gods is further suggested in the Book of Wisdom which states that "the

⁴⁹Psalm 42: 8: "In the night shal I sing of him, even a praier unto the God of my life"; Psalm 89: 38: "Thou hast rejected and abhorred, thou hast bene angrie with thine Anointed."

⁵⁰Micah 1: 6-7

inventing of idols was the beginning of whoredom."⁵¹

The false nature of Abessa and Corceca's faith is implicit in their high regard for outward displays of popish religiosity. In addition to the suggestion of an element of Christian superstition in the mindless repetition of Paternosters and Aves, Corceca wears sackcloth and sits in ashes like the fearful daughters of Rabbah in the prophecy of Jeremiah.⁵² Since biblical idols are often melted from jewellery, meretriciousness can be an indication of harlotry or idolatry.⁵³ Significantly, in her first appearance in the poem, Duessa cultivates the "kiosk look" in her display of ornaments. Similarly Abessa accepts "gold and rings" from Kirkrapine and is the woman "with whom he whoredome used" (1.3.18). Following Kirkrapine's speedy demise and her subsequent departure from the house of Corceca and Abessa, Una is abused by the shameful "rayling" of the two women. Like the daughter of Zion in the Lamentations of Jeremiah "her adversaries saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths."⁵⁴ The women attack Una's reputation, "accusing [her] of dishonesty" and praying "That plagues, and mischiefs and long misery/ Might fall on her, and follow all the way,/ And that in endless error she might ever stray" (1.3.23).

⁵¹Wisdom 4: 11

⁵²Jeremiah 49: 3

⁵³Nohrnberg, Analogy, p. 224.

⁵⁴Lamentations 1: 7

Throughout her period of wandering, the vision of Una's beauty elicits a wide range of responses. The lion is "with sight amazed" and moved to forget his "furious forse" (1.3.5). Abessa and Corceca are blinded to it, however, by their false faith as the Redcrosse knight is by his rage and Archimago by his hatred. Sansloy's response is entirely negative. Instead of being moved to awe and wonder, the figure of lawlessness "burnt his beastly hart t'efforce her chastitye" (1.6.4). He is like the wicked watchmen in the Song of Songs who abuse the forsaken bride ("they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me"⁵⁵). Nohrnberg further suggests that the attack of Sansloy "falls into place as any act of sacrilege offered against the Holy of Holies; included here would be the violation of Nebuchadnezzar, Heliodorus, Antiochus, Ptolemy, and Titus. Cyril of Jerusalem specifically says that Nebuchadnezzar violated the temple veil."⁵⁶ Again Spenser echos the Psalms describing Israel's feelings of forsakenness in the narrator's plaint,

Ah heavens, that do this hideous act behold,
 And heavenly virgin thus outraged see,
 How can ye vengeance just so long withhold,
 And hurle not flashing flames upon that Paynim bold?⁵⁷

(1.6.5)

The intervention of the Satyrs in reponse to her "shrill

⁵⁵Song of Songs 5: 7

⁵⁶Nohrnberg, *Analogy*, p. 208.

⁵⁷see Psalm 10: 1-2: "Why standest thou farre of, O Lord, & hideth thee in due time eve in affliction?"

outcryes and shriekes" creates another problem for Una. Like the lion they are "astonied at her beauties bright" (1.6.9), but in their ignorance they make her "th' Image of Idolatryes." When she attempts to restrain their zeal "they her Asse would worship fayn" (1.6.19). Upton notes that "these satyrs allegorized are ignorant Christians"⁵⁸, yet they are also like the ignorant Israelites in the Book of Exodus who turn away from God and worship a golden calf.

As a type of the faithful Israel, Una must await a redeemer who will deliver her from the perils of wandering in the wasteland. Sir Satyrane is a type of the redeemer figure who enables Israel to move to the fourth phase of the biblical pattern. His childhood defeat of the lion and bear suggest the two animals killed by David in order to prove himself worthy to fight Goliath.⁵⁹ In Christian theology, however, these Old Testament redeemers, in turn, anticipate the Messiah. In addition to outlining Israel's four-phase cycle of fall and restoration, the prophets also foretell the arrival of one sent from God who will finally deliver Israel from her enemies, from the trap of her own almost generational cycle of error and redemption, and who will establish an eternal Messianic kingdom. According to the Christian tradition, it is Christ who is

⁵⁸Hamilton, p. 89.

⁵⁹I Sam. 17: 34

the great light liberating "the people that walked in darkenes."⁶⁰ In the Legend of Holiness, the task of delivering both Una and Redcrosse from the darkness is performed by Arthur.

While Una is wandering in search of Redcrosse, the knight is himself functioning as a type of Israel, but unlike Una, Redcrosse parallels Israel in the first two phases of the exilic cycle: error and oppression. Spenser develops this pattern in the two related episodes of the House of Pride (the sinful counterpart of the House of Holiness) and the nymph's fountain where the knight is overcome by the debilitating effect of drinking from its waters.

The initial description of the House of Pride is rife with sinister biblical associations. Like the way to the wood of Errour, the "broad high way" which leads to, but not away from, the house is a signal of impending danger. The presence of such suspicious words as "good" and "seemed" and the building itself which, like Duessa, is "garnished" are similarly unpropitious. The "stately Pallace built of squared bricke... whose walls were high but nothing strong or thick" is like the Tower of Babel in the Book of Genesis which the Geneva gloss suggests was built by men who "were moved with pride and ambition

⁶⁰Isaiah 9: 2

thinking to prefer their own glorie to God's honour." The "squared bricke" parodies the square or quadrate as a symbol of virtue and of stability and constancy in opposition to Fortune's rolling wheel.⁶¹ It is laid "without mortar" like the building in Ezekiel which is constructed with untempered mortar that the Lord vows to "bring... downe to the grounde, so that the fundacion thereof shal be discovered an it shal fall."⁶² The foundations of the House of Pride are built on a "sandie hill" (1.4.5) like the house of the foolish man in Christ's parable which is destroyed because it rested on sand. The "Diall" which sits atop the edifice is a reminder of the destructive power of time and an indication of the fate which awaits unsuspecting visitors who will "die all." Since "diall" is also an Elizabethan word for a prostitute, the "cunningly" painted house also advertises itself as a den of ill repute which is further suggested in the word "howres" which is an anagram of the word "whores."

The ominous biblical echos continue in Spenser's description of the House of Pride's mistress who sits

most brave embellished
 With royall robes and gorgeous array,
 A mayden Queene, that shone as Titans ray,
 In glistring gold, and peereless pretious stone:
 Yet her bright blazing beautie did assay
 To dim the brightnesse of her glorious throne,
 As envying her selfe, that too exceeding shone.

(1.4.8)

⁶¹Brooks-Davies, Spenser's "Faerie Queene", p. 43.

⁶²Ezekiel 13: 14

In her vulgar ornamentation she is like her comrade Duessa and is clearly connected with the biblical type of the harlot. She also shines "so proud... in her Princely state,/ Looking toward heaven; for earth she did destaine," an allusion to the proverb "A hautie loke, and a proude heart which is the light of the wicked is sinne."⁶³ When she looks at the knight and lady "with loftie eyes, halfe loth to looke so low," Spenser is again alluding to the Book of Proverbs: "There is a generation, whose eyes are hautie, and their liddes are lifted up."⁶⁴ More importantly, as her name and the allusion to the story of Phaeton intimate, she is the female counterpart of Lucifer, identified with Satan in the New Testament, who rebelled against God and was cast down from heaven. The taunting song of Isaiah 14 identifies Lucifer with the proud king of Babylon:

Thy pompe is broght downe to the grave, & the sound of thy violes: the worme is spread under thee, and the wormes cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, sonne of the morning? & cut downe to the grounde, which didest cast lottes upon the nations? Yet thou saideth in thine heart, I wil ascend into heaven, and exalt my throne above beside the starres of God: I wil sit also upon the mount of the Congregation in the sides of the North. I wil ascend above the height of the cloudes, & I wil be like the moste high.⁶⁵

As Hamilton notes, Lucifera's "dreadful Dragon with an

⁶³Proverbs 21: 4

⁶⁴Proverbs 30: 13

⁶⁵Isaiah 14: 12-14

hideous trayne" is like the "huge long tayle" of the dragon which wastes the Kingdom of Eden. Later Lucifera's lengthy procession of sins assumes the shape of the dragon's tail forming another labyrinth in which the knight is invited to wander.⁶⁶ Even in his fallen state, however, Redcrosse recognizes that the revellry of Lucifera and her cohorts is but "joyance vaine" (1.4.37). Nevertheless, the knight is without the authentic joy which Paul describes in the letter to the Romans: "we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ."⁶⁷ In the person of Sansjoy the knight is confronted with an externalization of his own joylessness and his failure to defeat the Sarazin has important implications for his later meeting with Despair.

The account of the preparations for the knight's battle with Sansjoy also serves to illustrate how far he has moved from realizing his potential to be a type of Christ. Spenser's allusion to the sun rising "as bridegroom to his mate" recalls the nineteenth Psalm: "The heavens declare the glorie of God... in them hathe he set a tabernacle for the sunne. Which cometh forthe as a bridegrome out of his chambre, and rejoyceth like a mightie man to runne his race."⁶⁸ The knight is also

⁶⁶Hamilton, p. 65.

⁶⁷Romans 5: 11

⁶⁸Psalm 19: 1-5

brought "wines of Greece and Araby,/ And daintie spices fetcht from furthest Ynd" (1.5.4) suggestive of the bride's offering of "spiced wine & newe wine of the pomegranate"⁶⁹ in the Song of Songs. The evocation of the marriage pattern in the house of the "Diall" heightens the seriousness of Redcrosse's predicament and the extent of his failure to live up to his potential as the bridegroom of Una. In an historical context, Redcrosse's following of Duessa and Lucifera, like Israel's whoring after false gods is suggestive of England's abandonment of the ideal of a true British Church and its whoring after the false god Rome during the Middle Ages and, more specifically, during the reign of Mary Tudor.

After the battle with Sansjoy, the knight is brought back to the House of Pride and undergoes an elaborate ritual with funereal overtones. The leeches wash his wounds with wine and oil but the word "embalme" also suggests the preparation of a corpse for burial. The "heavenly melody" seeks to "beguile" rather than to sooth and is more like the "noise of thy viols" of Isaiah's taunt song than the heavenly melody heard at the knight's betrothal to Una (1.12.39). Moreover, the allusion to the "wearie traveller that strayes/ By muddy shore of broad seven-mouthed Nile" (1.5.18) suggests that the knight is

⁶⁹Song of Songs 8: 2

still trapped in his role as Israel suffering God's punishment for faithlessness.

Duessa's descent to the underworld and her attempt to find a cure for the ailing Sansjoy draws, among other sources, from the Hebrew concept of Sheol. In Hebrew cosmology Sheol or "the pit" is the shadowy abode of the Old Testament dead. Since it is a place dominated by darkness, Sheol is an appropriate world for the enemies of God to be cast into. Both Duessa and Night who are allied with the anti-creative forces of darkness and the primordial chaos (Night has seen the "secrets of the world unmade," 1.5.22) originate in the pit and find their pleasure in attempting to subvert the "children of faire light."⁷⁰ As enemies of the Divine, Duessa and Night also parody the Word of God. Duessa's "I that do seem not I, Duessa am" recalls the "I am that I am" of the Book of Exodus.⁷¹ In her speech describing how the "sonnes of day" shall "not escape so freely all; For some shall pay the price of others guilt:/ And he the man that made Sansfoy to fall,/ Shall with his owne bloud price that he hath spilt" (1.5.26), Night upholds the covenant of the old Law as does Despair in the ninth canto. Nevertheless, she also stumbles onto the doctrine

⁷⁰John 12: 16

⁷¹Exodus 3: 14

of atonement since one who "shall pay the price of others guilt" is Christ who "truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried to reconcile his father to us, and to be a sacrifice not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men."⁷² Through this reference to the Atonement, Spenser again draws attention to how far Redcrosse has strayed from realizing his potential to be a type of Christ.

The other inhabitants of the underworld which Duessa visits and of the dungeon of the House of Pride are also anti-creative figures and enemies of God and Israel. Aesculapius, while not a biblical character is, like Chaucer's Pandarus, a parody of the true physician Christ. Aesculapius is an expert in the "wondrous science" of restoring life to the physical body, but he does nothing to cure the spiritual body nor is he capable of preventing his own death. His constant striving "Himselfe with salves to health for to restore,/ And slake the heavenly fire, that raged evermore" (1.5.40) is a bitter echo of the biblical injunction "Physician, heal thyself."⁷³ The "dungeon deepe" (1.5.45) of the House of Pride may derive from the description of the pit prepared for the proud in Isaiah:⁷⁴

⁷²Article II of the 39 Articles.

⁷³Luke 4: 23

⁷⁴Nohnberg, Analogy, p. 204.

Hell from beneath is moved for thee to mete thee
 at thy coming, raising up the dead for thee,
 even all the princes of the earth; and hath
 raised from their thrones all the Kings of the
 nations. All thei shall crye and say unto thee, Art
 thou become weake also as we? art thou become like
 unto us? Thy pomp is broght down to the grave ...
 But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable
 branche: like the raiment of those that are slaine,
 & thrust thorowe with a sworde, which go downe to
 the stones of the pit, as a carkeise troden under fete.⁷⁵

The presence of a dungeon under Lucifera's palace is also suggestive of a verse from Ecclesiasticus which was used in the Elizabethan prayer book in a prayer for the preservation of Her Majesty and the realm from the traitorous and bloody practices of the Pope and his adherents: "He that diggeth a pit shall fall therein himself, and whoso breaketh down a hedge, a serpent shall bite him."⁷⁶ The dungeon is the dwelling place of those who have given themselves over to the tyranny of the seven deadly sins and who are bound by the Law to "live in woe and die in wretchednesse" (1.5.46): "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of our sinnes, which were by the Law, had force in our membres, to bring forthe frute unto death."⁷⁷ Included in the catalogue of the damned is Nebuchadnezzar, the great oppressor of Israel who, in the Book of Daniel, sets up an image of gold and demands

⁷⁵Isaiah 14: 9-11, 19

⁷⁶Ecclesiasticus 10: 8

⁷⁷Romans 7: 5

that all must worship the idol. The king also experiences a dream in which he envisions himself as a tree which, like the light-blocking trees of the wood of Errour, grows toward heaven in overweening pride and is cut down by God's wrath. Also among the inhabitants of the pit is Antiochus who defiled the temple and who, like Nebuchadnezzar, was an idolator setting up "altars, & groves, & chapels of idoles" in the midst of the temple of Jerusalem. Nimrod was the first tyrant and oppressor of mankind after the flood and also the founder of Babylon.⁷⁸ Ninus was "the fyrst that made warre. He conquered unto Indie."⁷⁹ He is also famous as the founder of Nineveh, the sinful city of the Jonah account. Significantly for the Legend of Holiness, both Nebuchadnezzar and Pharaoh are compared by Ezekiel to dragons and the city of Nineveh by the prophet Nahum to "the harlot that was beautiful and agreable, and that made use of witchcraft."⁸⁰

Following his flight from the House of Pride, the knight retreats for a third time from the "boiling heat" into the shade and though he had been able to resist Duessa's advances earlier in the poem, he is finally trapped by his own passivity. By disarming "all" he rejects

⁷⁸Hamilton, p. 84.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 84.

⁸⁰Nahum 3: 4, 8

the armour of God and loses his wholeness and his holiness.⁸¹ He is now helpless before "the plague that destroyeth at noone day."⁸² The trembling leaves on the trees surrounding the nymph's fountain suggest the enslavement of Fradubio and reinforce the association of Redcrosse at this stage of his progress with the Pauline old Adam. Duessa's cavorting in the shade echos Jeremiah ("Like an harlot thou runnest about... under all grene trees"⁸³) and the knight's joyning with her suggests that he has given himself over to idolatry. He is "pourd out in looseness on the grassy ground" (1.7.7) which links him with his horse which had earlier been grazing in the grassy forage suggesting the traditional association between an unbridled horse and the passions out of control. The phrase is also an allusion to the psalm verse "I am like water pourd out"⁸⁴ and to Isaiah 40: "All flesh is grasse, and all the grace thereof is as the floure of the field."⁸⁵ Nohrnberg suggests that the knight's self-congratulatory mood and his collapse into frailty here may be manifestations of his pride: "It is not obvious why Redcrosse is so

⁸¹Hamilton, p. 95.

⁸²Psalm 91: 6

⁸³Jeremiah 2: 20

⁸⁴Psalm 22: 14

⁸⁵Isaiah 40: 6

'prone' to pride after escaping its House; the triumph of Orgoglio seems to follow on no great overweeningness, but merely on the return to Duessa. The man who makes an idol 'chuseth his own devises' says the Geneva gloss in Isaiah 41:24, and perhaps this reliance is a form of pride."⁸⁶ In the context of Redcrosse's identification with Israel in her error phase, a prophecy of Hosea is helpful in understanding the knight's lapse: "but the Lord accepteth them not, now wil he remember their iniquitie, and visite their sinnes: they shal returne to Egypt."⁸⁷

In the House of Pride the sins are abstracted and easily identifiable; in this episode, however, they are engrained with the texture of the experience and the knight is unable to perceive them. Having drunk from the debilitating stream "clear as cristall glas" (1.7.6) which parodies the "pure river of water of life cleare as crystall" of the Book of Revelation, the knight becomes a helpless victim of Orgoglio who as a giant is both a figure of pride and an externalization of the knight's own pride of the flesh. Like the human body, Orgoglio is a mixture of "earthly slime" and water and his puffing up with air is a parody of man's creation by the breath of life.⁸⁸

⁸⁶Nohrnberg, Analogy, p. 263.

⁸⁷Hosea 8: 13

⁸⁸Hamilton, p. 94.

He is also one of the race of Old Testament giants in the tradition of Nimrod and Goliath. The earthquake which he causes is like the earthquake which is a signal of judgement in the Book of Revelation. The repetition of the syllable "dis" when the knight is "Disarmed, disgraced and inwardly dismayde" suggests that Orgoglio is associated with the dark realm of Dis, the world under the House of Pride from which Redcrosse has just barely escaped. Typologically, Orgoglio's making of the knight "an eternall bondslave" and his casting of Redcrosse into a "Dongeon deepe" (1.7.15) confirms the knight's association with the old Adam and the unredeemed Israel. His "slombred sencelesse corse" (1.7.15) links him with "all those who have fallen asleep since the beginning,"⁸⁹ all of the Old Testament figures who exist in the darkness of Hell awaiting, as Una in the darkness of her despair awaits, the coming of the "great light" which will liberate them from the forces of darkness.

⁸⁹Acts of Pilate 1: 18, translated from the Greek text by Montague Rhodes James in The Apocryphal New Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924).

CHAPTER TWO

REDEMPTION AND REGENERATION

1. The Messianic Prophecies Fulfilled

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dere children, And walke in love even as Christ hathe loved us, and hathe given himself for us, to be an offring and a sacrifice of swete smelling savour to God. But fornication, & all unclennes, or covetousnes, let it not be once named among you, as it becommeth Saintes, Nether filthines, nether foolish talking, nether jesting, which are things not comelie, but rather giving of thankes. For this ye knowe, that no whoremonger, nether uncleane persone, nor covetous persone, which is an idolater, hathe any inheritance in the kingdome of Christ, & of God. Let no man deceive you with vaine wordes: for for suche things commeth the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not therefore companions with them. For ye were once darknes, but now light in the Lord: walke as children of light, (For the frute of the Spirit is in all goodnes, and righteousness, and trueth) Approving that which is pleasing to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruteful workes of darkenes, but even reprove them rather. For it is shame even to speake of the things, which are done of them in secret. But all things when they are reprovved of the light are manifest: for it is light that maketh all things manifest. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that slepest, & stand up from the dead, & Christ shal give thee light.

Ephesians 5: 1-14

Appointed in the Book of Common Prayer (1559)
as the Epistle for Lent III

The arrival of Arthur and his Christ-like battle with the forces of darkness represented by Duessa and Orgoglio initiate a new phase in the biblical patterning of

the Legend of Holiness. On one level, he is a type of the Redeemer, the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, one who will deliver Israel from the entrapment of her cycle of error and wandering. In a New Testament context, however, Israel is no longer merely a nation; its meaning has expanded to include all of the children of God, both Jew and Gentile, whom Christ was born to save. In the light of Tudor mythology, Arthur's function as a type of Christ redeeming Israel is particularly apt. Since both Redcrosse and Una at times function as types of the true English Church in exile during the Middle Ages and oppressed by the overweening pride of Rome, the rescue of knight and lady by Arthur suggests the restoration of the Church of England by the Tudors (who claimed descent from Arthur).

Arthur's identification with Christ is evident not only in Spenser's account of the battle but also in the first description of him in the poem. The association of Christ with imagery of light which pervades the passage from Ephesians 5 is linked with Arthur through the portrayal of his "glitterand armour" that "shined farre away,/ Like glauncing light of Phoebus brightest ray" (1.7.29). Similarly his "haughtie helmet; horrid all with gold/ Both glorious brightnesse, and great terrour bred" (1.7.31). The armour recalls the Psalm verse "For the Lord God is a

Sun and shield"¹ and also the bridegroom image of Psalm 19. A link with Elizabeth is suggested by Spenser's account of the crest of Arthur's helmet on which rests a dragon recalling both Arthur's father, Uther Pendragon and the dragon which the Queen bore on her coat of arms. The hairs of his loftie crest which "seem'd to daunce for jollity,/ Like to an Almond tree ymounted hye/ On top of greene Selinis all alone" (1.7.32) are reminiscent of the rod of Aaron that blossomed and bore ripe almonds as a sign that he had been chosen by God as a leader of the Israelites during their period of wandering. The veiling of Arthur's diamond shield, like Una's veiling, associates it with the truth of the Word, the veiled Ark of the Covenant and, more generally, with the mystical veil of biblical allegory.² In addition to the obvious link between Arthur's shield and the shield of faith, Spenser also draws on several other traditions. In Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata, the diamond shield which liberates God's faithful is taken by an angel to aid the Christian champion. It is also said to be among the weapons used by Michael to slay the dragon in the Book of Revelation. In his "Allegory to the Poem", Tasso identifies the shield as "the special safeguard of the Lord God."³ A possible pun on "Hewen out of Adamant rock" suggests the pattern of the new Adam emerging out of the petrified

¹Psalm 84: 11

²Nohrnberg, Analogy, p. 54.

³Hamilton, p. 103.

remains of the Old. Moreover, the shield also gives Arthur power of divine proportions. As Lot's wife is turned to a pillar of salt as punishment for her disobedience, Arthur is able to turn men into stones and "stones to dust" (1.7.35). He similarly participates in the divine ability to know the inmost thoughts of others. In Una's remark "Faire Sir, I hope good hap hath brought/ You to inquire the secrets of my griefe,/ Or that your wisdom will direct my thought" (1.7.42), there is an echo of Psalm 44 where God in his omniscience is able to perceive the griefs of the psalmist: "Shal not God searche this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart."⁴

The battle between Arthur and the forces of Orgoglio and Duessa and his rescue of the Redcrosse knight from the dungeon draw on two major biblical traditions. Its debt to the account of the warrior's defeat of the many-headed beast in the Book of Revelation will be examined in the next chapter. A second tradition, briefly alluded to in the Apostle's Creed and in two passages of the New Testament, is the Harrowing of Hell. According to I Peter, "Christ also hathe once suffred for sinnes, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, and was put to death concerning the flesh, but was quickened in the spirit. By the which he also went, & preached unto the spirits that were in prison."⁵ A reference to this episode also occurs in

⁴Psalm 44: 21

⁵I Peter 3: 18-19

Ephesians: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on hie, he led captivitie captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now, in that he ascended what is it but that he had also descended first into the lowest partes of the earth? He that descended, is even the same that ascended, farre above all heavens, that he might fill all things)." ⁶ Spenser himself specifically refers to the Harrowing of Hell in a passage in the House of Holiness episode where the fourth beadman describes Christ as "he that Harrowed hell with heavie stowre" and who "The faultie soules from thence brought to this heavenly bowre" (1.10.40). The most extensive treatment of this theme and the source from which such medieval works as Piers the Ploughman and the passion plays draw much of their material is the apocryphal book The Acts of Pilate also known as The Gospel of Nicodemus. The Acts of Pilate can be divided into two parts, the first of which is an account of the Passion and the second of the descent of Christ into hell.

Spenser gives several indications throughout the battle with Orgoglio and the release of the Redcrosse knight are, on one level, meant to parallel the defeat of the forces of Satan and the release of the captive patriarchs and specifically of Adam. Like Adam, the knight has fallen through "his owne foolish pride" and is "to sinfull bands

⁶Ephesians 4: 8-10

made thrall" (1.8.1). Arthur is the agent of "deliverance" and of "heavenly grace" (1.8.1) and is also associated with a number of Old Testament types of Christ. Though the enchanted horn which opens the gates of Orgoglio's castle is like the enchanted horns of Italian romance and the horn in the Chanson de Roland, it is also like the ram's horn which signals the shout that brings down the walls of Jericho suggesting an association between Arthur and Joshua (significantly for patristic typology Jesus is the Aramaic form of the name Joshua) who eventually leads the Israelites into the promised land. In a New Testament context it may also suggest the trumpet which heralds the opening of graves at the Resurrection⁷ or the Word of God, the sound of which went through all the earth.⁸ There is a suggestion of Moses striking the rock from which the fresh water poured out in Arthur's shedding of Orgoglio's blood which "gushed like fresh water streame from riven rocke" (1.8.10).

The description of the knight's victory ("the knight then leaping to the pray/ With mortall steele him smot againe so sore,/ That headlesse his unwieldy body lay" -- 1.8.24), echos the story of David's victory over Goliath.⁹ Finally, the horn has the same effect as the thunderous words which

⁷I Cor. 15: 32

⁸Romans 10: 18

⁹I Sam. 15: 51: "David ran, and stooode upon the Philistin and tooke his sword and drew it out of his sheath, and slew him and cut off his head therewith."

burst the iron gates of hell. In Spenser's version:

Was never wight, that heard that shrilling sound, ...
 No gate so strong, no looke so firm and fast
 But with that percing noise flew open quite or brast.
 The same before the Geants gate he blew
 That all the castle quaked from the ground,
 And every dore of freewill open flew.

The Gyant selfe dismaied with that sownd,
 Where he with his Duessa dallaince fownd,
 In hast came rushing forth from inner bowre,
 With staring countenance sterne, as one astownd,
 And staggering steps to weet, what suddein stowre
 Had wrought that horror strange, and dar'd his dreaded
 powre.

(1.8.4-5)

There is certainly some similarity with the account of the bursting of hell's gates in the Latin B text of the Acts of Pilate: "And lo, suddenly Hell did quake, and the gates of death and the lockes were broken small, and the bars of iron broken, and fell to the ground, and all things were laid open. And Satan remained in the midst and stood put to confusion."¹⁰ Moreover, the blazing light of Arthur's shield "that heavens light did pas" (1.8.18) suggests the "great light"¹¹ which announces Christ's arrival to the patriarchs in limbo. The association with the Harrowing of Hell is again clear in Spenser's account of Arthur's destruction of the door to the dungeon in which the Redcrosse knight is imprisoned. The knight is among those "that dwell in darkenes and in the shadowe of death, being bounde in

¹⁰Acts of Pilate, Latin B text VIII (XXIV).

¹¹Acts of Pilate, Latin B text II (XVIII).

miserie and yron because they rebelled against the wordes of the Lord." Nevertheless "they cryed unto the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them from their distres. He broght them out of darkenes, and out of the shadowe of death, and brake their bands asunder."¹² The words of the psalmist are echoed in Arthur's rescue of Redcrosse:

Which when that Champion heard, with percing point
Of pittie deare his hart was thrilled sore,
And trembling horroure ran through every joynt,
For ruth of gentle knight so fowle forlore:
Which shaking off, he rent that yron dore,
With furious force, and indignation fell;
Where entred in, his foot could find no flore,
But all a deepe descent, as darke as hell,
That breathed ever forth a filthie banefull smell.

(1.8.39)

In the light of the Redcrosse knight's role as Israel wandering forty years in the wilderness and as the English Church wandering in error during the Middle Ages, it is interesting to note that he is delivered from the dungeon in the fortieth stanza. Similarly, its position in the eighth canto suggests Christ's resurrection on the eighth day after the beginning of Holy Week. The ambiguity of the "three Moones have changed thrice their hew" (1.8.37) allows for the possibility of the period of imprisonment being three months (corresponding to the three days before the Resurrection) or nine months suggesting the

¹²Psalm 107: 10-11, 13-14

period of gestation which leads to a spiritual rebirth. The stanza total of the canto, fifty, signifies remission of sins, of servitudes, and also liberty¹³ and associates the defeat of Orgoglio with the New Testament concept of casting off a sinful nature as the casting off of the old Adam.

The etymology of the name Orgoglio connects him with the earth-bound nature of the first Adam. The word "orge" which means tilling is also the root of George, again indicating that, though Orgoglio can be a type of Satan, he is also a manifestation of the knight's own earth-bound nature (Redcrosse is later called "thou man of earth" -- 1.10.52). According to the Golden Legend "so george is to saye as tilyenge the earthe/ that is his flesshe."¹⁴ Significantly, in terms of the Fradubio episode, Orgoglio falls,

as an aged tree,
High growing on the top of rocky clift,
Whose hartstrings with keen steele nigh hewen be,
The mightie trunck halfe rent, with ragged rift
Doth roll adowne the rocks, and fall with fearefull drift.

(1.8.22)

His fall is also suggestive of the potential fall of the House of Pride, for he collapses just

as a Castle reared high and round,

¹³Brooks-Davies, Spenser's Faerie Queene, pp. 80-81.

¹⁴Hamilton, p. 109.

By subtile engins and malitious slight
 Is undermined from the lowest ground,
 And her foundation forst, and feebled quight
 At last downe falls.

(1.8.23)

In the context of historical allegory, Orgoglio may also anticipate the fall of Spain (Castle may be a pun on "Castile") and the success of the Tudors in deflating the pride of Rome.

Another important figure in the account of the release of Redcrosse from Orgoglio's prison is the blind keeper of the dungeon, the "old old man, with beard as white as snow" (1.8.30). As his name indicates, Ignaro is a type of the spiritual ignorance¹⁵ which led to the fall. He is also like the Gentiles who "walke in vanitie of their minde, Having their cogitation darkened, and being strangers from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the hardnes of their heart."¹⁶ His blindness is reminiscent of Corceca's and his backward-turned face echos a passage in Isaiah where God's power will "turne the wise men backward, and make their knowledge foolishnes."¹⁷ The rusty keys carried by Ignaro recall Luke's gospel where Christ rails against the lawyers: "Woe be to you, interpreters of the Law: for ye have taken away

¹⁵Brooks - Davies, Spenser's "Faerie Queene", p. 82.

¹⁶Ephesians 4: 17-18

¹⁷Isaiah 44: 25

the keye of knowledge: ye entred not in your selves, and them that came in, ye forbade."¹⁸ According to the Geneva gloss "They hid and toke away the pure doctrine and true understanding of the Scriptures," suggesting that like Orgoglio, Ignaro is an externalization of Redcrosse's abandonment of the Word. Also like the knight, Ignaro exists in a region of darkness which the light of reason cannot penetrate. He has departed from the true faith and become the foster-father of lust, giving himself over to the care of a physical rather than a spiritual body. Ignaro personifies the old Adam which the knight has exchanged the new Adam for and Redcrosse's greeting, "O welcome thou, that doest of death bring tydings true" (1.8.38) suggests Adam's role as the bringer of death to the world.

The knight's spiritual ignorance is also a crucial element of the Despair episode which follows, almost immediately, his release from the dungeon. In a Christian context, Redcrosse has been "delivered" by Arthur as mankind is delivered from the bondage of sin and death through the suffering of Christ on the cross. The knight fails to recognize the significance of this action or of the gifts which he exchanges with Arthur. Redcrosse receives the "boxe of Diamond sure,/ Embowd with gold and gorgeous

¹⁸Luke 11: 52

ornament" which contains inside it "few drops of liquor pure,/ Of wondrous worth, and vertue excellent,/ That any wound could heale incontinent" (1.9.19). The liquor suggests the blood of Christ which "cleanseth all from sinne,"¹⁹ and the blood of the sacrament. The knight gives Arthur "A booke wherein his Saveours testament/ Was writ with golden letters rich and brave;/ A worke of wondrous grace, and able soules to save" (1.9.19). Since the book is likely a gospel book, the relation between the two gifts may be inferred from Christ's words "For this is my blood of the Newe testament, that is shed for manie, for the remission of sinnes"²⁰ as an answer to the blood and book of the Old Covenant in the Book of Exodus.²¹ Though the knight has possession of the book and has been reunited with the Word by rejoining Una, he is nevertheless paralyzed by his vast sense of guilt. He is able to recognize his sinful nature but not to make the gesture of repentance which will relieve him of the burden of his sins and free him to fulfil his goal of becoming Christ-like.

¹⁹1 John 1: 7

²⁰Matthew 26: 28

²¹Hamilton, p. 123.

2. The Education of a Christian Knight

The episode of the Cave of Despair is the Redcrosse knight's greatest spiritual temptation. Since Despair is "A man of hell" (1.9.28), his twisted logic suggests the "wiles of the devil" which Paul warns against in Ephesians.²² As in earlier temptation episodes, the knight enters into the Cave of Despair by choice. Also, as in the prior episodes, there are abundant warnings of immanent danger. The first significant warning is the similarity of Trevisan's situation to the knight's own. When he is first visible to Redcrosse and Una he is riding in haste from near-death and appears "unarmed" and "dismayd" (1.9.22) as the Redcrosse knight had earlier been "disarmed, disgrast and inwardly dismayde" (1.7.2). His face is bloodless just as Redcrosse's had been "pale and wan" (1.8.42).²³ Also like Redcrosse in his battle with Sansjoy and his dalliance with Duessa at the enervating fountain, Trevisan's head is unarmed indicating that he has committed an error of reason. He has also failed to take heed of Paul's exhortation to "put on the hope of salvation for an helmet./ For God hathe not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtaine salvation by the meanes of our

²²Ephesians 6: 11

²³Hamilton, p. 123.

Lord Jesus Christ."²⁴ Moreover, Terwin's "misseeming plight" (1.9.23) is suggestive of the Redcrosse knight's "misseeming hew" upon emerging from Orgoglio's dungeon.²⁵ Also, like other potentially hazardous episodes in the Legend, several aspects of the Cave of Despair have sinister biblical associations which align it with the anti-creative forces of evil. The cave is dark, suggesting a retreat from God and from the light of reason. Despair gives Terwin a rusty knife which "A wide way made to let forth living breath," recalling the wide way to the wood of Errour and the House of Pride. Despair's "subtill tongue" which "like dropping honey, mealt'th/ Into the hart" is like the tongue of the Psalmist's enemy whose words "were softer than butter, yet warre was in his heart: his wordes were more gentle than oyle, yet they were swordes."²⁶ Also, Despair's rags "with thornes together pind" (1.9.36) signify that he is cursed beyond hope of redemption according to God's curse in the third chapter of Genesis.²⁷ Spenser may also have had in mind a verse from Isaiah in his description of the cave: "And thornes shall come up in her palaces and nettles and brambles in the fortresses therof and it shall be an habitation of dragons and a court for owls."²⁸

²⁴I Thess. 5: 8

²⁵Hamilton, p. 123.

²⁶Psalm 55: 21

²⁷Genesis 3: 18

²⁸Isaiah 34: 13 (authorized version of 1611)

As Hamilton notes, when the knight views Despair attempting to shed his own blood he paves the way for his own condemnation. His speech,

Thou damned wight
The author of this fact we here behold,
What justice can but judge against thee right,
With thine owne blood to price his blood, here shed
in sight?

(1.9.37)

recalls the retributive law of the Book of Genesis, "Whoso shedeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed,"²⁹ an argument which had earlier been articulated by Night ("He the man that made Sansfoyl to fall,/ Shall with his owne blood price that he hath spilt" -- 1.5.26). By judging harshly, the knight demonstrates his profound ignorance of New Testament doctrine ("Judge not that ye be not judged"³⁰). In the epistle to the Romans, Paul states: "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for in that thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself."³¹

In his first argument in favour of suicide Despair offers a perverted version of the Psalms. His speech,

Who travels by the wearie wandering way,
To come unto his wished home in haste,

²⁹Genesis 9: 6

³⁰Matthew 7: 1

³¹Romans 2: 1

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?

(1.9.39)

recalls Psalm 69, "Save me, O God: for the waters are entred even to my soule. I sticke fast in the depe myre, where no staie is: I am come into depe waters, and the streames runne over me."³² Had the knight been acquainted with the rest of the Psalm, he would have known that it ends with an affirmation of God's grace, "For the Lord heareth the poore, and despiseth not his prisoners."³³ The Redcrosse knight's reply is, however, ineffective. By echoing another Psalm verse ("My soule waiteth on the Lord more then the morning watche watcheth for the morning")³⁴ he betrays his own feelings of spiritual weariness through his reduction of his purpose in life to the sentinel's weary role of keeping watch.³⁵ Spenser undercuts the knight's arguments in the forty-second stanza where it is impossible to determine whether knight or tempter is speaking.

In his next argument, Despair clearly speaks from an Old Testament standpoint. His words, "For life must life, and bloud must bloud repay" again echo the laws of the Pentateuch which ordain that "thou shalt pay life for life."³⁶

³² Psalm 69: 1-2

³³ Psalm 69: 33

³⁴ Psalm 130: 6

³⁵ Hamilton, p. 126.

³⁶ Exodus 21: 23

Though well-versed in Old Testament law, Despair proves himself equally adept at perverting the meaning of the New Testament. In commenting "the longer life, I wote the greater sin" (1.9.43), Despair alludes to a discussion of the necessity of sin in I John: "If we say that we have no sinne, we deceive our selves, and trueth is not in us."³⁷ Nevertheless he deliberately omits the words of comfort in the verse which follows: "If we acknowledge our sinnes, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sinnes, and to clense us from all unrighteousnes."³⁸ He is also able to twist the argument of the fourth chapter of Hebrews to suit his own immoral purpose. Moreover, he gives Redcrosse the name given to the Anti-Christ in II Thessalonians³⁹ when he addresses him as "man of sin." As Hamilton notes, Despair is the only figure in the poem who judges the knight guilty of his crimes and reminds him that he has functioned as a type of the old Adam. Una blames an evil star and fortune, Arthur the uncertainty of worldly bliss and the weakness of the flesh, and Una's parents blame fate. Despair also invokes the Pauline

³⁷I John 1: 8

³⁸I John 1: 9

³⁹II Thess. 2: 3

Dies Irae⁴⁰ in his effort to threaten the knight:

Why then doest thou, O man of sin desire
 To draw thy dayes forth to their last degree?
 Is not the measure of thy sinfull hire
 High heaped up with huge iniquitie,
 Against the day of wrath, to burden thee?

(1.9.46)

Spenser's knight "that once hath missed the right way" (1.9.43) shares in the general condemnation: "They have all gone out of the way... there is none that doeth good no not one."⁴¹ Despair further recommends to the knight that suicide is a way of escaping from having to carry the "burden" (1.9.46) of his sinfulness upon himself, yet Redcrosse is again unable to quote the biblical refutation, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord."⁴² Despair's vision of God is of a vicious bureaucrat dealing out justice mechanically:

Is not he just, that all this doth behold
 From highest 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? ...

(1.9.47)

⁴⁰Romans 2: 3-5: "And thinkest thou this, O thou man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgement of God? But thou, after thine hardnes and heart that can not repent, heapeth unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and of the declaration of the just judgement of God."

⁴¹Romans 3: 12; Psalm 14: 3

⁴²Jeremiah 22: 23

According to Hamilton, if the knight were not paralyzed by guilt, he would reply with an appropriate psalm verse:⁴³ "the Lord is good to all, and his mercies are over all his workes."⁴⁴ Moreover, Despair's rhetorical question suggests the solution to all his riddles: "Christ dyed for our sinnes according to the Scriptures"⁴⁵ answering the Old Covenant with the New.⁴⁶ Again, Despair alludes to the Old Testament ("The same soule that sinneth, shal dye";⁴⁷ All flesh shal perish together"⁴⁸) and offers a half-accurate version of the epistle to the Romans: "The wages of sinne is death." What he again deliberately omits, however, are the words which follow: "but the gifte of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."⁴⁹ His choice of this particular passage of Scripture offers a further reminder to the knight that through his sinfulness he is like Adam since it was "By one man sinne entred into the world, and death by sinne."⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Despair commits a

⁴³ Hamilton, p. 128.

⁴⁴ Psalm 145: 9

⁴⁵ I Corinthians 15: 3

⁴⁶ Hamilton, p. 128.

⁴⁷ Ezekiel 18: 20

⁴⁸ Job 34: 15

⁴⁹ Romans 6: 23

⁵⁰ Romans 5: 12

theological error in ignoring the ultimately fortunate nature of the Fall. The Pauline felix culpa of which the Redcrosse knight appears to be ignorant is expressed in the text of an anonymous ~~fifteenth~~ century carol:⁵¹

Adam lay I-bowndyn, bowndyn in a bond,
fowre thowsand wynter thowt he not to long;
And al was for an appil, an appil that he tok,
As clerkis fyndyn wretyn in here book.

Ne hadde the appil take ben, the appil taken ben,
ne hadde never our lady a ben heavene qwen;
Blyssid be the tyme that appil take was,
Ther-fore we mown syngyn, 'deo gracias!'

Finally, Despair presents to the knight a table on which is painted a picture of "The damned ghosts, that doe in torments waile,/ And thousand feends that doe them endlesse paine/ With fire and brimstone, which for ever shall remaine" (1.9.49). Unwilling to admit the possibility of salvation through God's grace, the fiend offers only the vision of eternal damnation for the unbelieving and the fearful who "shal have their parte in the lake, which burneth with fyre and brimstone, which is the seconde death."⁵²

On the brink of suicide, the knight is rescued from making a wrong choice by Una or, in her role as the Word,⁵³ by the soul-saving efficacy of the New Testament. She

⁵¹Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century, ed. Carleton Brown (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), p. 120.

⁵²Revelation 21: 8

⁵³In her role as a type of Elizabeth, Una's rescue of Redcrosse here may be analogous to Elizabeth's rescue of the English Church which had temporarily been restored under the rule of Henry and Edward but which had once again fallen into error during the reign of Mary Tudor.

recognizes that the knight is, like all men, a "frail, feeble, fleshly wight" (1.9.53) and her exhortation suggests Christ's words in Matthew, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into tentation: the spirit in dede is readie, but the flesh is weake",⁵⁴ while her words recall those of Paul when she implores Redcrosse not to "let vaine words bewitch his manly hart."⁵⁵ She reminds him that he is among the chosen of God. Her rhetorical question, "In heavenly mercies hast thou not a part?/ Why shouldst thou then despeire, that chosen art? (1.9.53) echos II Thessalonians: "God hathe from the beginning chosen you to salvacion, through sanctificacion of the spirit, and the faith of trueth."⁵⁶ Una's speech "Where justice growes, there grows eke greater grace" recalls a passage from Romans on the fortunate nature of the fall and effectively exposes the weakness of Despair's arguments:

Likewise then as by the offence of one the faute came on all men to condemnation, so by the justifying of one the benefite abunded toward all men to the justification of life. For as by one mans disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shal many also be made righteous. Moreover the Law entred thereupon that the offence shulde abunde: nevertheles where sinne abunded, there grace abunded mucche more: That as sinne had reigned unto death, so might grace also reigne by righteousnes unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.⁵⁷

She further explains to the knight that God's grace has

⁵⁴Matthew 26: 41

⁵⁵Col. 2: 4:"And this I say, lest anie man shulde beguile you with entising wordes."

⁵⁶II Thess. 2: 13

⁵⁷Romans 5: 18-21

erased the "accursed hand-writing" of the Law.⁵⁸ Though Redcrosse has been rescued by the Word it is clear that in order to become a soldier and servant of Christ, he must first gain the knowledge and experience which will enable him to be purged of his suicidal feelings of guilt and remorse and it is for this purpose that he is brought to the House of Holiness.

The House of Holiness enshrines the titular virtue of Book I and it is appropriate that of all the episodes in The Faerie Queene it should contain the greatest concentration of New Testament teaching. Drawing extensively from the epistles, Spenser outlines the Redcrosse knight's spiritual progress from decay to health culminating in his climactic vision of the heavenly city of Revelation. It is also a school in which the knight receives the kind of education which will enable him to realize his potential as a miles Christianus and to function no longer as a type of the old Adam but, like Arthur, to become a type of Christ. The inspiration for Spenser's House of Holiness may be found in the first epistle of Peter in which the apostle exhorts the faithful to "laye aside all vice, Shewing that Christ is the fundacion whereupon they buylde."⁵⁹ The faithful come to the Lord "as unto a living stone disallowed

⁵⁸Col. 2: 14: "And putting out the hand writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrarie to us, he even toke it out of the way, & fastened it upon the crosse."

⁵⁹I Peter, rubric

of men, but chosen of God & precious. And ye as livelie stones, be made a spiritual house, and holie Priesthode to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."⁶⁰ Significantly, the earthly temple of which Christ is the cornerstone is a metaphor for the Church, an analogy which is further reflected in the House of Holiness' similarity to a monastic establishment.⁶¹ The episode is introduced by a stanza in which the narrator takes an extreme Calvinist view of Man's helplessness:

What man is he, that boasts 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 thorough grace hath gained victory.
If any strength we have, it is to ill,
But all the good is Gods, both power and eke will.

(1.10.1)

As Dees suggests, the narrator's comment is his assent to Una's earlier rebuke of Redcrosse while he is on the verge of suicide. However, in a sense his statement is just as incomplete as Despair's because it is just as extreme in its denial of man's freedom.⁶² Redcrosse's journey through

⁶⁰I Peter 2: 4-5

⁶¹The metaphor is particularly appropriate since the House of Holiness presents an ideal which the knight, as a type of the Church of England in error, is exhorted to follow.

⁶²Jerome S. Dees, "The Narrator of *The Faerie Queene*", *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, XII (1970), 563.

the House of Holiness is essentially a process of qualifying, thereby "correcting" this extremism.⁶³ The narrator's statement is true, but incomplete.⁶⁴

As a manifestation of God's abundant grace, the House of Holiness is the antithesis of the sinful House of Pride. Unlike the House of Pride, it is built on a solid foundation. It is also clearly to be indentified with the path to eternal life since, in order to enter into it, the knight and Una must "passe in stouping low:/ for streight and narrow was the way" (1.10.5). Similarly, the way to the holy Hospitall within the house is a "narrow way" and the opposite of "the broad high way" which leads to destruction. As the House of Pride was the dwelling place of the seven deadly sins, the House of Holiness is associated with the seven corporal works of mercy thus combining faith and good works in accordance with Anglican doctrine.⁶⁵ Unlike the doors to Lucifera's palace which "stood open wide" (1.4.6), the door of the House of Holiness is "fast lockt" but "when they knockt,/ the Porter opened unto them streight way" (1.10.5), echoing Christ's words, "Ask, and it shalbe given you: seke, & ye

⁶³Virgil K. Whitaker, The Religious Basis of Spenser's Thought (Stanford: University Press, 1950), p. 45.

⁶⁴Paul Alpers, "Narration in The Faerie Queene", ELH, XLIV (1977), 30.

⁶⁵Rejection of the doctrine of good works has earlier been an attribute of Envy who "hated all good workes and vertuous deeds," (1.4.32).

shal finde: knocke, & it shalbe opened unto you."⁶⁶ As Duessa is well known in the House of Pride, Una, "borne of heavenly berth," is immediately recognized and embraced in the House of Holiness.

In his description of the inhabitants of the house Spenser also draws on a number of biblical sources. Dame Caelia "From heaven came" (1.10.4) and is, as Ruskin suggests, "heavenly Grace, the mother of the Virtues."⁶⁷ The Porter, Humilita, contrasts with Malvenu the porter of the House of Pride, and Ignaro the porter of Orgoglio's dungeon. Humilita is the porter to the house in which Redcrosse discovers his true spiritual nature and confronts his fleshly pride, "since in the gifts of the Holy Ghost-virtues-vices schemes, the first gift, timor Domini (fear of the Lord) destroys pride (superbia) and places in its stead the virtue of humility."⁶⁸ Zeale, the "franklin faire and free" (1.10.6), recalls the "zeale of the Lord of Hostes",⁶⁹ Arthur's "Constant zeale" (1.8.40), and a passage from Galatians on "the libertie wherewith Christ hathe made us fre."⁷⁰

The three daughters of Caelia are representations of the three theological virtues described in the first letter to the Corinthians: "And now abideth faith, hope & love, even

⁶⁶Matthew 7: 7

⁶⁷Hamilton, p. 130.

⁶⁸Brooks-Daviès, Spenser's "Faerie Queene", p. 93.

⁶⁹II Kings 19: 2; Isaiah 9: 7, 31: 32

⁷⁰Galatians 5: 1

these thre; but the chiefest of these is love" (in Latin Fides, Spes, Charitas).⁷¹ Spenser's three sisters Fidelia, Speranza and Charissa appear in the poem in their traditional order. Fidelia,

... sunny beames threw from her Christall face
That could have dazd the rash beholders sight,
And round about her head did shine like heavens light.

(1.10.12)

The image associates her with the unveiled Una and echos several biblical transfiguration episodes (particularly that of Christ since her face is "Christall"). Her association with the sun also recalls the solar Arthur and the knight himself in his role as the bridegroom. Her "lilly white" robe anticipates Una's betrothal gown and the "cup of gold/ With wine and water fild up to the hight" is suggestive of the sacrament of Holy Communion and the healing blood and baptismal water that issued from the crucified Christ⁷² described in a passage of I John: "This is that Jesus Christ that came by water & blood, not by water onely, but by water and blood."⁷³ According to the Geneva gloss water and blood "declare that we have our sinnes washed by him, and he hathe made ful satisfaction for the same." The serpent contained in the cup is the traditional emblem of St. John the Evangelist and also recalls the serpent lifted up by Moses⁷⁴

⁷¹I Cor. 13: 13

⁷²Hamilton, p. 132.

⁷³I John 5: 6

⁷⁴Numbers 21: 9

which is interpreted typologically as Christ lifted up on the cross, a symbol of healing and redemption. The serpent image also suggests Aesculapius, one of the inhabitants of the underworld of Night and a parody of the true physician Christ. Since it is the answer to "death and despeyre", Fidelia's cup is the positive counterpart of the cup with which Duessa attempts to subvert Arthur's squire (1.8.14). Fidelia's role as healer recalls a passage of St. Augustine's De doctrina Christiana which is of particular relevance to the Redcrosse knight's situation:

He who tends the wounds of the body sometimes applies contraries ... at other times he applies similar things ... Thus the Wisdom of God setting out to cure men, applied Himself to cure them being at once the Physician and the Medicine. Because man fell through pride, He applied humility as a cure. We were trapped by the wisdom of the serpent; we are freed by the foolishness of God ... Our malady arose through the corrupted spirit of a woman; from the incorrupted flesh of a woman proceeded our salvation ... Instruction will reveal many other examples of Christian medicine operating either by contraries or by similar things to those who diligently consider and are not hurried away by the necessity of completing some task they have begun.⁷⁵

Fidelia's "constant mood" echos the epistle to the Hebrews: "Let us kepe the profession of our hope, without wavering (for he is faithful that promised)."⁷⁶ Also significant is Fidelia's "booke, that was both signd and seald with blood,/"

⁷⁵St. Augustine, De Doctrina Christiana, trans. D.W. Robertson (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1958), p. 15.

⁷⁶Hebrews 10: 23

Wherein darke things were writ, hard to be understood"

(1.10.13). As Nohrnberg notes,

It is of some significance for this theme that in each of the low points of the knight's passage Spenser includes a sinister version of the Word; we have already met Error's books, ... and Archimago's "Magick bookes" and saints' legends. At the House of Pride the first of Lucifera's six "wizards," Idleness, is a monk who guides Lucifera's way. He rides an ass, is "Arayd in habit blacke, and amis thin" (1.4.18), and carries a "portesse" or breviary.⁷⁷

It is appropriate and indeed necessary that during his process of spiritual regeneration the knight should meet with a positive version of this theme in Fidelia's book which is still "hard to be understood" but no longer encumbered by the error of Roman Catholicism. He enters Fidelia's schoolhouse,

That of her heavenly learning he might taste,
And heare the wisdom of her words divine.
She graunted, and that knight so much agraste,
That she him taught celestiall discipline,
And opened his dull eyes, that light note in them shine.

(1.10.18)

Spenser's words recall Paul's wish that God would give to the Ephesians "the spirit of wisdom, and revelation thorough the knowledge of him, that the eyes of [their] understanding may be lightened."⁷⁸ Christ himself sent Paul to the gentiles "To open their eyes, that they may turne

⁷⁷ Nohrnberg, *Analogy*, p. 151.

⁷⁸ Ephesians 1: 17-18.

from darkenes to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgivenes of sinnes, and inheritance among them, which are sanctified by faith in me."⁷⁹ Through faith, Redcrosse is able to read Fidelia's "sacred Booke" and understand the contents of her "heavenly documents" (1.10.19). He does not read the book himself, but is guided by the tradition of faith. Moreover, Fidelia is herself able "with her words to kill,/ And raise againe to life the hart, that she did thrill" (1.10.19). This ability recalls II Corinthians on the contrast between the Old and New Testaments: God "hathe made us able ministers of the New Testament not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."⁸⁰ In outlining Fidelia's accomplishments, Spenser makes reference to six celebrated instances of faith: Joshua's command to the sun to stand still, Hezekiah and the dial of Ahaz, Gideon's victory over the Mideanites, the passage of the Israelites over the Red Sea (typologically Christ's baptism and his delivery of fallen man from sin), and Matthew on the faith that will move mountains.⁸¹

The second of the three sisters, Speranza "was clad in blew" (1.10.14), the traditional colour representing "the seat of God, that is the Heavens."⁸² The "silver anchor"

⁷⁹Acts 26: 18

⁸⁰II Cor. 3: 6

⁸¹Brooks-Davies, Spenser's "Faerie Queene", p. 96.

⁸²Hamilton, p. 132.

which lies on Speranza's arm recalls the anchor image of the epistle to the Hebrews who are exhorted "to holde faste the hope that is set before us which we have as an ancre of the soule, both sure and steadfast."⁸³ It is Speranza's duty to comfort the knight who has been moved by Fidelia's heavenly perfection to a state of "doubtfull agonie" which is suggestive of Christ's experience in the garden of Gethsemane. He is further improved by the ministrations of Patience ("let patience have her perfete worke, that ye may be perfete and entire"⁸⁴). Nevertheless, he is still plagued by "the cause and root of all his ill,/ Inward corruption, and infected sin," which "Not purg'd nor heald, behind remained" (1.10.25). As the ninth of the Thirty-nine Articles explains, "This infection of Nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated." The knight must undergo a regimen of cleansing beginning with Penance. Unlike the superstitious piety of Corceca's attempts at penance, the knight's has the very real purpose of "the swelling of his wounds to mitigate" (1.10.26). He washes his body "in salt water smarting sore,/ The filthy blots of sinne to wash away" (1.10.27), recalling the penitential psalm verse, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquitie, and cleanse me from my sinne."⁸⁵ The Geneva gloss adds: "My sinnes

⁸³Hebrews 6: 18-19

⁸⁴James I: 4

⁸⁵Psalms 51: 2

sticke so fast in me that I have nede of some singular kinde of washing." The experience of penance is a positive counterpart to the torment endured by the inhabitants of Lucifera's dungeon. Like them, the knight endures "the paines of hell, and long enduring night" (1.10.32) but unlike them his suffering is curative. The knight's outcry which sounds "like a Lyon" recalls the tradition of the lion of human sin subdued by Christ. Since the lion is also the emblem of the Sun of Righteousness, the lion simile is a reminder that the knight is being prepared for his eventual Christ-like defeat of the dragon. Moreover, his rending of his own flesh (1.10.28) echos God's admonition in the Book of Joel to "rend your heart, and not your clothes: and turne unto the Lord your God, for he is gracious, and merciful, slowe to angre, and of great kindenes, and repenteth him of the evil."⁸⁶

Finally, Redcrosse is brought to the third sister, Charissa who appears separately from the other two sisters as an indication of her importance. She offers the knight the New Testament kiss of greeting or "kysse of love."⁸⁷ Since it is the salutation of the early Church, it also suggests the ideal of primitive Christianity,⁸⁸ the true English Church, restored by the Tudors after centuries of

⁸⁶ Joel 2: 13

⁸⁷ I Peter 5: 14

⁸⁸ Nohrnberg, Analogy, p. 278.

oppression. Significantly, Charissa was "late in child bed", suggesting the possibility that the child to whom she has given birth may be the reborn Redcrosse knight.⁸⁹ Iconographically, Spenser draws on several traditions in his representation of Charissa. He depicts her in the traditional pose -- bare-breasted, suckling and surrounded by babies. By her side sit "a gentle paire of turtle doves", the emblem of true love and the chaste Venus but also a possible allusion to the Gospel of Matthew ("Behold, I send you as shepe in the middes of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpenttes, and innocent as doves"⁹⁰). Charissa is yellow-robed, a symbol of perfection. The "tyre of gold" (1.10.31) combines Charity's usual crown of flames with the gold crown of virtue⁹¹ and the "incorruptible crown of glorie."⁹² Her association with gold also suggests a link with Una who has "golden heare" further suggesting the bond of unity and charity with which, according to St. Augustine, Christ binds his body:

For the Church "is His body" as apostolic teaching asserts, and it is also called His bride. Therefore he binds His body, which has many members performing diverse offices, in a bond of unity and charity which is, as it were, its health. He exercises it in the world and cleanses it with certain medicinal adversities, so that when it is delivered from the world He may join Himself in eternity

⁸⁹Nohrnberg, Analogy, p. 278.

⁹⁰Matthew 10: 16

⁹¹Brooks-Davies, Spenser's "Faerie Queene", p. 97.

⁹²I Peter 5: 4

with His bride, the Church, "not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing."⁹³

Augustine's joining of the marriage pattern and the healing pattern intimates that the knight's regeneration in the House of Holiness is also the preparation of the bridegroom for marriage. As such, it is the antithesis of the "healing" which followed his wounding in the battle with Sansjoy at the House of Pride which was more funereal than matrimonial.

Following his visit to the seven bead-men whose occupations correspond to the seven corporal works of mercy, the knight is led forth to the hill of Contemplation. Though Contemplation is, like Archimago, a hermit he is not allied with the forces of darkness but rather with the light of the beatific vision. Though "All were his earthly eyes both blunt and bad,/ And through great age had lost their kindly sight" (l.10.47), nevertheless "wondrous quick and persant was his spright,/ As Eagles eye, that can behold the Sunne." Contemplation has been entrusted with the keys "To that most glorious house, that glistreth bright", which are clearly the "keyes to the kingdome of heaven" given to St. Peter. Unlike Ignaro, the blind guide who has lost the meaning of apostleship,⁹⁴ Contemplation

⁹³ St. Augustine, De doctrina Christiana, p. 16

⁹⁴ Nohrnberg, Analogy, p. 152.

is able to use his keys to show the knight the way "high heaven to attaine."

The high mount from which heaven can be glimpsed provides a fitting contrast to the Cave of Error, the dungeon of the House of Pride, Orgoglio's prison and the Cave of Despair. It is the traditional mountain of the house of the Lord and the mountain from which St. John the Divine is shown the vision of the New Jerusalem. It is also Mount Sinai where Moses, after journeying through the "bloud-red billowes like a walled front" on his way out of Egypt, "writ in stone/ With bloody letters by the hand of God,/ The bitter doome of death and balefull mone He did receive."⁹⁵ It is also the Mount of Olives which is associated with Christ and the advent of the New Law. In the context of this episode, it is worth noting that St. Bonaventure in Itinerarium mentis in Deum relates the threefold pattern of illumination to the progression from the Old Law to the New Law as (1) Apprehensio, in which the soul turns from itself to the outside world to discover signs of the Creator corresponds to the Old Law; (2) Oblectatio (delight), the middle meditative stage in which the mind turns inward and finds within itself patterns of the Creator corresponds to the New Law, and (3) Diiudictatio

⁹⁵ This passage suggests II Cor. 3: 7: "the ministration of death written with letters and ingraven in stones."

(decision), in which the contemplative mind moves out to the eternal is compared to the insight achieved in Revelation.⁹⁶ Another important meaning of the mount is Spenser's allusion to the Platonic notion of the contemplative power of the poet-prophet in his reference to "that pleasant Mount ... On which the thrise three learned Ladies play/ Their heavenly notes, and make full many a lovely lay" (1.10.54).

The detail of the "goodly citie" which the Redcrosse knight views originates in the description of the heavenly city in the Book of Revelation. The knight's vision is also the point in the Legend at which the anagogic level of the poem, the kingdom of the Messiah brought into being by the defeat of the forces of evil, is momentarily glimpsed. In a stanza which suggests a number of biblical sources, Contemplation summarizes the Christian interpretation of the history of mankind:

Faire knight (quoth he) Hierusalem that is,
The new Hierusalem, that God has built
For those to dwell in, that are chosen his,
His chosen people purg'd from sinfull guilt,
With pretious bloud, which cruelly was spilt
On cursed tree, of that unspotten lam,
That for the sinnes of all the world was kilt:
Now are they Saints all in that Citie sam,
More deare unto their God, then younglings to their dam.

(1.10.57)

⁹⁶Brooks-Davies, Spenser's "The Faerie Queene", p. 101.

The House of Holiness episode ends with the knight's realization of his own identity. Contemplation offers him a clue by referring to him as "thou man of earth" (1.10.52).⁹⁷ Redcrosse is, however, eventually informed that he is destined to become a saint: "thou Saint George shalt called bee,/ Saint George of mery England, the signe of victoree" (1.10.61). He also discovers that he is a changeling and though the idea of the changeling is from folklore, the tale told here underlines the English nation's aberration as it moved away from truth to error until, under Elizabeth, the Arthurian empire could be restored.⁹⁸ Finally, Spenser's reference to the baby Saint George sleeping "in tender swathing band" echos the nativity story and suggests that through his educational experience in the House of Holiness, the knight at long last has cast off the shackles of the old Adam and has been reborn as a type of Christ. Once this is accomplished, the fulfilment of the quest immediately becomes possible.

⁹⁷the name George is formed from the Greek geos or earth and orge, tilling.

⁹⁸Brooks-Davies, Spenser's "The Faerie Queene", pp. 102-103.

CHAPTER THREE

THE VICTORY AND MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

1. The Legend of Holiness and the Book of Revelation

As the Bible moves from the Catholic epistles to conclude with the Revelation of St. John, the last two cantos of the Legend of Holiness reflect two of the major events of the Apocalypse. The battle of the Redcrosse knight with the dragon and the betrothal of the knight to Una are, anagogically, the epic battle in which the forces of evil are defeated by the forces of good as a prelude to the Last Judgement and the marriage feast of the Lamb. It would be completely artificial, however, to assert that the influence of the Book of Revelation does not extend beyond these two cantos. Mrs. Josephine Waters Bennett has suggested that the Apocalypse of St. John not only furnished Spenser with particular passages but largely determined the structure of Book I.¹ The reason why such a concept does not conflict with the assertion that

¹Hankins, "Spenser and the Revelation of St. John, p. 40.

the Legend of Holiness in one of its aspects parallels the structure of the Bible as a whole is twofold. The first consideration is that Spenser's use of the Bible is eclectic and any attempt to provide a reading following too rigid a scheme is doomed to frustration. Secondly, a close examination will reveal that the Book of Revelation itself borrows extensively from other parts of the Bible, reorganizing and reinterpreting already existent patterns. Also, since at the Apocalypse time ceases, the events of Revelation can be simultaneously completed and in the process of becoming. It is not inconsistent, therefore, for Redcrosse who is trapped within the limitations of space and time to be granted a vision of the Holy City which is to come into being after the final defeat of Satan.

In the Book of Revelation, the forces of evil are represented by the Great Dragon, the Beast from the Sea, the False Prophet, and the Whore of Babylon; the forces of good by the Woman clothed with the Sun, the Archangel Michael -- usually interpreted as Christ, the Bride of the Lamb, and Christ himself. There is a further contrast between the cities of Babylon and Jerusalem.² All of these patterns, several of which clearly find their origins in the Old Testament, are employed by Spenser throughout the fabric

²Ibid., p. 41.

of the Legend of Holiness. Perhaps the most significant of these for Book I, the dragon image, appears in several versions in Revelation and in the Bible as a whole. The image of the dragon is implicit in the Genesis creation account where the Spirit of God (in Hebrew the Ruah Elohim) moves across the waters of the primordial ocean (the Tehom) and shapes the created order out of the watery chaos. In the seventy-fourth Psalm, the Psalmist recounts a version of this story in which God subdues the sea-dragon Leviathan or Rahab, a personification of the restless waters of chaos. The story of Noah's flood is an account of the destruction of the created world by the unleashing of the Tehom. In the Book of Job, the Lord demonstrates to his somewhat less than patient servant some of the mysteries of divine omnipotence. He asks Job, "Canst thou draw out Leviathan with an hooke, and with a line which thou shalt cast downe unto his tongue? Canst thou cast an hooke into his nose? Canst thou perce his jawes with an angle?"³ Isaiah declares that "the Lord with his sore & great and mightie sworde shal visite Liviathan, that percing serpent, even Liviathan, that croked serpent, & he shal slay the dragon that is in the sea."⁴ In addition to the sea-dragon, there is the ten-horned sea beast in Daniel, the prototype

³Job 40: 20-21

⁴Isaiah 27: 1

of the seven-headed monster of Revelation.⁵ In the context of Israel's oppression by neighbouring powers, the dragon becomes associated with various tyrants. In Jeremiah, Nebuchadnezzar is described in such terms: "Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babel hath devoured me, & destroyed me: he hath made me an empty vessel: he swallowed me up like a dragon, and filled his belly with my delicacies, & hath cast me out."⁶ Similarly, in Ezekiel, the Egyptian Pharaoh is identified with the dragon: "Thou art like a lion of the nations & art as a dragon in the sea: thou callest out thy rivers and troublest the waters with thy fete, and stampeth in their rivers."⁷

The dragon pattern in the Book of Revelation has two significant manifestations. There is the great dragon who with his tail swept down "the third parte of the starres of heaven, & cast them to the earth"⁸, and the beast from the sea "having seven heads, and ten hornes, and upon his hornes were ten crownes, and upon his heads the name of blasphemie."⁹ Typologically, these monsters are associated with the serpent in the garden, the Old Testament

⁵Daniel 7: 7

⁶Jeremiah 51: 34

⁷Ezekiel 32: 2

⁸Revelation 12: 4

⁹Revelation 13: 1

tyrants, Lucifer, Satan and the Anti-Christ who will appear in the last days to persecute Christians and draw them away from the true faith.

In the Legend of Holiness, the most prominent manifestation of the dragon image is the beast which ravages the kingdom of Una's parents and is eventually overcome by the Redcrosse knight. The pattern is also implicit, however, in the Errour episode. Errour is "Halfe like a serpent" recalling "the dragon, that olde serpent, which is the devil and Satan."¹⁰ The flood which proceeds from Errour's mouth after the knight wounds her connects her with the false prophet motif in Revelation and also with the beast who "cast out of his mouth water after the woman like a flood."¹¹ Similarly, in canto 2, Archimago's hatred of Una ("For her he hated as the hissing snake,"--1.2.9) recalls the passage in Revelation, "the dragon was wroth with the woman and went and made warre with the remnant of her seede."¹² Hankins further suggests that there is a parallel between Archimago and the beast from the land in the thirteenth chapter of Revelation which is later identified as the false prophet: "that enchanter's name may be interpreted as Arch-magician or Arch-image. In both interpretations it is applicable to the False Prophet, who

¹⁰ Revelation 20: 2

¹¹ Revelation 12: 15

¹² Revelation 12: 17

causes people to worship the Beast from the Sea by drawing down fire from heaven and performing other strange enchantments. He fashions an image of the Beast and insists that all must worship it; those who refuse are persecuted and killed. He causes the image to speak as though alive and works many other miracles of faith."¹³ Like the men who "blasphemed the name of God... and blasphemed the God of heaven,"¹⁴ Archimago "cursed heaven, and spake reproachfull shame/ Of highest God, the Lord of life and light" (l.l.37). Van Der Noot suggests that as a type of the false prophet, Archimago represents "all manner of false prophets and ungodly teachers"¹⁵ which, in the context of sixteenth century Protestantism are the friars, monks, canons and priests of the Roman Catholic Church. "In using Archimago to represent all this group, Spenser is imitating the Revelation, where one False Prophet is used to personify the many 'false prophets' who are foretold in earlier books of the Bible."¹⁶ Spenser also identifies Archimago with the Antichrist: as the Antichrist imitates the Lamb, Archimago disguises himself as the Redcrosse knight, a potential Christ-type.

¹³Hankins, "Spenser and the Revelation of St. John", p. 45.

¹⁴Revelation 16: 9, 11

¹⁵Hankins, "Spenser and the Revelation of St. John", p. 45.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 45.

The dragon image is also highly visible in the House of Pride episode where, as has already been noted, Lucifera's procession of sins is like a dragon's tail. The description of Lucifera with the dragon under her feet provides a demonic parody of the true royal power shown in Mercilla ruling with a chained lion under her throne (5.9.33).¹⁷ The picture of the prideful Lucifera mounted on her chariot derives from John's account in Revelation of the Babylonian harlot: "I sawe a woman sit upon a skarlat coloured beast, full of names of blasphemie, which had seven heads, & ten hornes."¹⁸ The same passage is the basis for Spenser's account of Duessa who rides into the battle with Arthur mounted on a seven-headed beast (1.7.18). In the midst of the fight, Arthur "Stroke one of those deformed heads so sore,/ That of his puissance proud ensample made" (1.8.16). The allusion is, again, to Revelation where John "sawe one of [the beast's] heades as it were wounded to death."¹⁹ The stroke is a warning of what will eventually happen to the dragon's "puissance proud" and is also a token of God's promise that the seed of woman "shal break thine [the serpent's] head."²⁰ The blood which

¹⁷ Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, p. 148.

¹⁸ Revelation 17: 3

¹⁹ Revelation 13: 3

²⁰ Hamilton, p. 111.

"gush'd from the gaping wound" and "overflowed all the field/ that over shoes in bloud he waded on the gound" (1.8.16) recalls the winepress in Revelation from which "bloud came out ... even unto the horse bridles."²¹

The two major female types in the Book of Revelation are the "woman clothed with the sunne"²² and the great whore of Babylon. The association of Una with the exiled ecclesia figure of the Apocalypse is suggested by "her angel face" which

As the great eye of heaven shyned bright
And made sunshine in the shadie place
Did never mortall eye behold such heavenly grace.

(1.3.4)

Like the woman clothed with the sun, Una is threatened by the power of a great dragon and is forced to flee "into the wildernes" to seek refuge. The Geneva gloss on this passage declares that "the Church was removed from among the Jews to the Gentiles, which were as a baren wildernes, and so it is persecuted to and fro." In Elizabethan terms, the reference suggests the ideal of the true British Church in exile and, more particularly, the leader of that Church who was considered a potential threat to the stability of the throne of her sister, Mary Tudor, and

²¹Revelation 14: 20

²²Revelation 12: 1.

was imprisoned for a time in the Tower. In his error phase, Una's knight commits several of the sins attributed to the churches at the beginning of John's vision. Like the Church at Ephesus he had "left [his] first love."²³ Like the Churches of Pergamum and Thyiatira he had committed idolatry by taking up with the false sorceress, like the Laodician Church he proved neither hot nor cold while bearing both the shield of faith and the shield of faithlessness and like the Church at Sardis he is more dead than alive throughout much of the poem. Allegorically, he represents the British Church in the Middle Ages and also the British people during the reign of Mary who fell back into the practice of Roman Catholicism.

The antithesis of the woman clothed with the sun is the scarlet whore who provides the pattern for Duessa. Again, the Book of Revelation takes up an Old Testament pattern and expands its meaning, reinterpreting it in a Christian context. Spenser draws on Isaiah in his description of the stripping of Duessa and the sorceries and enchantments he attributes to her:²⁴

Come downe, and sit in the dust: O virgine, daughter of Babel,
sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the
Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, Tendre and
delicate ... loose thy lockes: make bare the sete: uncover thy

²³Revelation 2: 4

²⁴Hankins, "Spenser and the Revelation of St. John", p. 41.

legge, passe through the floods. Thy filthines shalbe discovered, and thy shame shalbe sene: I wil take vengeance and I wil not mete thee as a man ... But these two things shal come to thee suddenly on one day, the losse of children and widowehead: they shal come upon thee in their perfection, for the multitude of thy divinacions, & for the great abundance of thine inchanters ... Stand now with thine inchantments, and in the multitude of thy sothesayers (with whome thou hast wearied thy self from thy youth) ...²⁵

Nevertheless, Spenser also intends Duessa to be considered in terms of the New Testament version of the pattern. She is "A goodly Lady clad in scarlot red./ Purfled with gold and pearle of rich array" (1.2.13). After she takes up with Orgoglio,

He gave her gold and purple pall to weare
 And triple crowne set on her head full hye,
 And her endowed with royal maiestye:
 Then for to make her dreaded more of men,
 And peoples harts with awfull terrour tye,
 A monstrous beast ybred in filthy fen,
 He chose which he had kept long time in darksome den.

(1.7.16)

Spenser's source for both of these descriptions is Revelation where John sees a woman "araied in purple & skarlat, & gilded with golde, & precious stones, and pearles."²⁶ She is then named "great Babylon, the mother of whoredoms" as Spenser calls Duessa "that scarlot whore" (1.8.29). The Geneva gloss states that the whore of Babylon

²⁵Isaiah 47: 1-3, 9, 12

²⁶Revelation 17: 4-5

"is the Antichrist, that is, the Pope with the whole bodie of filthie creatures ... whose beautie onely standeth in outwarde pompe and impudencie and craft like a strumpet" on "whose crueltie and blood sheding is declared by skarlat." In addition to providing the prototype for Duessa riding on the seven-headed beast, Revelation is the source for Duessa's "golden cup,/ Which still she bore, replete with magick artes" (1.8.14). The Babylonian harlot carries a "cup of golde in her hand, ful of abominations, and filthines of her fornication."²⁷ Orgoglio's castle contains

An Altare, carv'd with cunning imagery,
 On which true Christians bloud was often spilt,
 And Holy Martyrs often doen to dye ...
 Whose blessed sprites from underneath the stone
 To God for vengeance crye continually.

(1.8.36)

Spenser derives this account from John's vision of the martyrs: "I saw under the altar the soules of them, that were killed for the worde of God and for the testimonie which they maintained. And they cryed with a lowde voyce saying, 'How long, Lord, holy and true! doest not thou judge & avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?'"²⁸ The Geneva gloss comments, "the altar ... is Christ,

²⁷Revelation 17: 4

²⁸Revelation 6: 9-10

meaning that they are safe in custodie in the heavens." The image recalls one of Elizabeth's major political tools: the Protestants who were martyred during the brief reign of Mary Tudor, whose memory is enshrined in Foxe's Book of Martyrs. The presence of the altar in Orgoglio's castle suggests that Orgoglio and Duessa function as types of Elizabeth's sister and her husband, the King of Spain.

In addition to a possible allusion to the Isaiah passage, the stripping of Duessa suggests other biblical associations. It recalls Revelation which tells of the time when the great whore shall be made "desolate and naked ... the great citie, that was clothed in fine linen and purple, and skarlet, and guilded with golde, and precious stones, and pearles."²⁹ Duessa with her

...foxes taile, with dong all fowly dight;
 And eke her feete most monstrous ... in sight;
 For one of them was like an Eagles claw,
 With griping talaunts armd to greedy fight,
 The other like a Beares uneven paw:
 More ugly shape yet never living creature saw.

(1.8.48)

is transformed into a creature resembling one of the monsters of Revelation ("the beast ... was like a leopard, and his fete like a beares, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power and his throne, &

²⁹Revelation 18: 6

great autoritie."³⁰) When she flies,

fast from heavens hated face,
And from the world that her discovered wide,
Fled to the wastfull wildernesse apace,

(1.8.50)

she is forced into exile as Una, the woman clothed with the sun, had earlier been required to wander in the wilderness. Finally, Duessa "lurkt in rocks and caves long unespide" (1.8.50) like the kings of the earth, the rich and the powerful who attempt to hide themselves from the wrath of the Lamb on the day of wrath by hiding themselves "in dennes and among the rockes."³¹ She is also like the proud men in Isaiah who have puffed themselves up and filled their land with idols and who "shal go into the holes of the rockes, and into the caves of the earth"³² in their effort to escape the terror of the Lord.

³⁰Revelation 13: 2

³¹Revelation 6: 16

³²Isaiah 2: 19

2. The Restoration of Paradise

The dragon fight in the eleventh canto of the Legend of Holiness is the climactic episode of Book I and the focal point at which the poem's many patterns and levels of meaning converge in a single struggle of cosmic proportions. There has been considerable critical controversy over the nature of the dragon fight and why such an important episode should embody the kind of repetition which Whitaker rather uncharitably refers to as "the greatest fault in the book."³³ Again, it is helpful to consider the canto in the light of the Book of Revelation. Like Revelation, the dragon fight recapitulates patterns of the preceding poem. As Carol Kaske notes in her helpful article on the structure of canto 11, the sequence of the three battles with the dragon recalls the threefold progress of human history and human nature. It begins on the first day with unregenerate man under the law "identified as such by [the knight's] inconvenient armor, his defeat through unchecked concupiscence."³⁴ Following Redcrosse's baptism in the well of life, he enters the second stage "identified by his use and need of both sacraments and his qualified victory over concupiscence; it culminates in Christ,

³³Virgil K. Whitaker, "The Theological Structure of The Faerie Queene, Book I", in A.C. Hamilton, ed., Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser (Hamden: Archon Books, 1972), p. 112.

³⁴Carol Kaske, "The Dragon's Spark and Sting and the Structure of Red Cross's Dragon-fight: The Faerie Queene, I. xi-xii", Studies in Philology, LXVI (1969), 638.

the perfect man, showing his swift and final victory over Satan both on his own behalf and that of others."³⁵

In broad terms, the knight's three-day battle with the dragon and the restoration of the kingdom of Una's parents parallels the battle of Christ with the forces of evil in Revelation and the re-establishment of the garden with the tree of life in its midst. Significantly, Spenser departs from the parallel by placing the Kingdom of Eden on earth, a necessary adjustment for the political allegory of the poem. The Kingdom of Eden is also the Kingdom of England and on a literal level, the battle is the nation-founding fertility myth of St. George and the dragon. Moreover, though Spenser warns the reader not to limit the meaning of the battle to the contemporary political sphere, in so doing he suggests that a political reading is possible:

Faire Goddess lay that furious fit aside,
Till I of warres and bloody Mars do sing,
And Briton fields with Sarazin bloud bedyde,
Twixt that great faery Queene and Paynim king,
A worke of labour long, and endlesse prayse:
But now a while let downe that haughtie string,
And to my tunes thy second tenor rayse,
That I this man of God his godly armes may blaze.

(1.11.7)

In Elizabethan terms, the restoration of Eden is the

³⁵Ibid., p. 638.

restoration of the true Queen and of the English Church to their rightful positions, initiating a period where the seeds of faith will once again fall on fertile ground.

Several of these meanings can be adduced from Spenser's description of the dragon. At first its colossal size is emphasized. It is "like a great hill" (1.11.4) resembling the "great mountaine burning with fyre"³⁶ in Revelation which the Geneva gloss states represents "divers sectes of heretikes" that "were spred abroad in the worlde." Since it blocks out the light, it is a creature associated with the forces which oppose creation. The Redcrosse knight will be forced to demonstrate the kind of faith that moves mountains if he hopes to displace the monster. The dragon's great tail "sweepeth all the land behind him farre,/ And of three furlongs does but litle lacke" (1.11.11). The tail recalls the dragon's tail that swept "the thirdparte of the starres of heaven"³⁷ down to earth. Moreover, through his concern with the dragon's bulk, Spenser also hints that the monster must be a large enough symbol to incorporate many levels of meaning. He is never precise about the dragon's measurements, however, since it will be necessary later in the canto for him to shrink the beast in order to make the knight's victory plausible. Similarly, the dragon is never given a name to avoid

³⁶Revelation 8: 8

³⁷Revelation 12: 4

placing any restrictions on its potential as a symbol.

In a biblical context, the dragon is identified with the destructive forces of the Tehom, the watery chaos which attempts to subvert the created order:

He cryde, as raging seas are wont to rore,
When wintry storme his wrathfull wreck does threat,
The rolling billowes beat the ragged shore,
As they the earth would shoulder from her seat,
And greedie gulfe does gape, as he would eat
His neighbour element in his revenge:
Then gin the blustering brethren boldly threat,
To move the world from off his stedfast henge,
And boystrous battell make, each other to avenge.

(1.8.21)

When the knight's spear wounds the beast the blood flows from the wound like a gushing river "that drowned all the land whereon he stood;/ the streame thereof would drive a water-mill" (1.11.22). The land which the dragon drowns with his blood is Eden, the paradisaal garden which was destroyed by the unleashing of the Tehom during Noah's flood.

Like Archimago and the knight himself, the dragon embodies the four elements of creation -- earth, air, fire and water. It is a "mountaine", it can fly through the air, it breathes fire and can roar like the sea. It is associated with discord since it seeks to unmake the harmony of the elements that is synonymous with creation.³⁸ As Hankins has noted,³⁹ Spenser's dragon also draws on the

³⁸cf. 4.1.30 on the binding of the elements of creation by Concord.

³⁹Hankins, "Spenser and the Revelation of St. John", p. 49.

account of Leviathan in Job where "the maiestie of his scales is like strong shields, and are sure sealed. One is set to another, that no winde can come betweene them. One is joyned to another: they sticke together, that they can not be sondered."⁴⁰ The monster fighting Redcrosse is covered "all over, all with brasen scales was armed/ Like plated coate of steele, so couched neare/ That nought mote perce" (1.11.9). His teeth are like those of the beast in Daniel and the stings at the end of his tail recall the stings of the locusts in Revelation and also the sting of death.

Although the dragon would seem to be a conflation of the tempting serpent, Lucifer and Satan, it would also appear to be a symbol for Hell itself and the battle another evocation of the Harrowing of Hell tradition. The "brazen towre" (1.11.3) in which Una's parents are imprisoned recalls the captivity of the patriarchs in limbo.⁴¹ The "watchmen wayting tidings glad to heare" (1.11.3) suggest the prophets who watch for the coming of the Messiah and who announce the arrival of Christ at Hell's gates in the Acts of Pilate.⁴² The monster's jaws that "wide gaped, like the griesly mouth of hell,/ Through which into his darke abisse all rauin fell" (1.11.12) recall the tradition, in medieval iconography, of depicting Hell as within the belly

⁴¹Brooks-Davies, Spenser's "Faerie Queene", p. 103.

⁴²The tower is also a symbol of interrupted tradition and allegorically represents the traditions of the Church of England temporarily in limbo.

of a sea-beast.

In its eventual fall which is like "an huge rockie clift,/ whose false foundation waves have washt away" (1.11.54), the dragon resembles the House of Pride which was similarly built on the "weake foundation" of a sandy hill (1.4.5) and its fall the fall of Orgoglio. By association, the dragon is also a symbol for the sea-power of Spain and the menace of European Catholicism. Spenser makes the link in his description of the monster as an Armada-like sailing ship:

His flaggy wings when forthe he did display,
 Were like two sayles, in which the hollow wynd
 Is gathered full, and worketh speedy way:
 And eke the pennes, that did his pineons bynd,
 Were like mayne-yards, with flying canvas lynd,
 Which whenas him list the ayre to beat,
 And there by force unwonted passage find,
 The cloudes before him fled for terrour great,
 And all the heavens stood still amazed with his threat.

(1.11.10)

The connection is further strengthened by Spenser's allusion to a verse from Psalm 22 ("They gape upon us with their mouths: as it were ramping and roaring lions"⁴³). After he is injured by the knight the dragon yells loudly "for exceeding paine:/ As hundred ramping Lyons seem'd to rore" (1.11.37). The psalm verse appears in a prayer for deliverance from enemies used in 1572 for a church service

⁴³Psalm 22: 13

held as a tribute following the massacre of French Huguenots and also, interestingly, in a service of thanksgiving for the defeat of the Armada in 1588.⁴⁴

Like the dragon symbol, the three-stage progress of the knight contains a number of complex associations. On the first day of the battle,

A flake of fire, that flashing in the knight's beard
Him all amazed, and almost made affeard:
The scorching flame sore swinged all his face,
And through his armour all his bodie seard,
That he could not endure so cruell cace,
But thought his armes to leave, and helmet to unlace.

(1.11.26)

As Kaske notes, the incident of the spark would seem to be a development of the universal metaphor of sin as fire.⁴⁵ It also serves as a reminder of earlier unpropitious escapes from the heat of the sun and of the knight's tendency toward wrathfulness. Just as the dragon sent the spark, the devil is said to initiate the first stage of any given sin. The spark would be that first stage causing confusion of the mind ("all amazed") and the blinding of reason which is, as it had earlier been, the first stage of a fall. The paradox of the protective armour harming the knight echos St. Augustine's gloss on the first half of Romans 7:

⁴⁴Liturgical Services of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, ed. William Keatinge Clay (Cambridge: University Press, 1847), pp. 543, 620.

⁴⁵Kaske, "The Dragon's Spark and Sting", p. 611.

"Armis tuis te vicit, armis tuis te intermit" (sin conquered you with your own arms, with your own arms it slew you).⁴⁶ In the epistle to the Romans Paul declares that the devil employs the prohibitions of the Mosaic law in order to increase concupiscence which further suggests a parallel between the first stage of the battle and the first stage of the knight's progress in the poem. There is also a similarity between Paul's longing for death, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death"⁴⁷ and the Redcrosse knight's earlier death wish: "Death better were, death did he oft desire" (1.11.28). The knight's allowing the spark to develop and eventually conceding to it is "tantamount again to what he did with such disastrous results in the Orgoglio episode."⁴⁸ He is disarmed and now "dismayd" as he had been by the enervating fountain in canto 7. By the intervention of divine grace (Spenser explains that in this canto fortune words represent "eternall God that chaunce did guide"--1.11.45), Redcrosse falls into the antithesis of the fountain -- the well of life. The well recalls the passage in John, "the water that I shal give him, shalbe in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life"⁴⁹ and

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 622.

⁴⁷Romans 7: 27

⁴⁸Kaske, "The Dragon's Spark and Sting", p. 626.

⁴⁹John 4: 14

the "river of water of life cleare as Christall"⁵⁰ in the Book of Revelation. The fall into the well is analogous to the knight's progress following the intervention of Arthur: his movement from being a type of unregenerate man to being a type of regenerate man. The well as a potential symbol of baptism "epitomizes the advent of Christianity, the coming of grace to the individual."⁵¹ Since it would "guilt of sinfull crimes cleane wash away" (1.11.30), it is like the "sign of Regeneration ... new Birth whereby sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; Faith is confirmed, and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God."⁵² The well recalls the passage in Ephesians: "Even when we were dead by sinnes [God] hath quickened us together in Christ, by whose grace ye are saved."⁵³

On the second day of the battle Una rises before Redcrosse as the morning star precedes the sun which anticipates her appearance as the morning star in canto 12 (1.12.21) and further suggests that through the regenerative experience of the well, the knight is beginning to re-assume his solar role. He rises

As Eagle fresh out of the Ocean wave
Where he hath left his plumes all hoary gray,

⁵⁰Revelation 22: 1

⁵¹Kaske, "The Dragon's Spark and Sting", p. 634.

⁵²Article 27 of the Thirty-nine Articles.

⁵³Ephesians 2: 5

And deckt himself with feather youthly gay.

(1.11.34)

Spenser alludes to Psalm 103 ("Thy youth is renewed like an eagle"⁵⁴) which is interpreted as putting off the old Adam and putting on the new. He also arises "Like Eyas hawke up mounts unto the skies, His newly budded pineons to assay" (1.11.34), which Fowler suggests is a reference to the prophet Malachi: "Unto you that feare my Name, shal the Sunne of rightousnes arise, and health shalbe under his wings."⁵⁵ The word play on "So new this new-borne knight to battell new did rise" recalls the liturgy for private baptism in Edward VI's first Book of Common Prayer: "Graunte that the olde Adam, in them that shalbe baptized in this fountayne, maye so be buried, that the newe man may be raised up agayne."⁵⁶ Also, the defective armour which Kaske suggests has been the armour of the Law⁵⁷ becomes more obviously the armour of Ephesians which the Letter to Raleigh declares the knight will need in order to be successful:

I wote not, whether the revenging steele
Were hardned with that holy water dew,
Wherein he fell, or sharper edge did feele ...

⁵⁴Psalm 103: 5

⁵⁵Hamilton, p. 150. The reference is to Malachi 4: 2.

⁵⁶Hamilton, p. 150.

⁵⁷Kaske, "The Dragon's Spark and Sting", p. 623.

For till that stownd could never wight him harme,
By subtilty, nor slight, nor might, nor mighty charme.

(1.11.36)

Significantly, the dragon's second attack is on the shield of faith. He attacks with his "mortall sting" (1.11.38) recalling the question in I Corinthians "O death, where is thy sting?"⁵⁸ The epistle continues, "the sting of death is sinne and the strength of sinne is the Lawe." Physical strength alone is insufficient to withstand the blow but the "sworde of the spirit, which is the worde of God"⁵⁹ prevails. A claw remains in the shield, however, which Kaske takes to be Paul's "thorne in the flesh"⁶⁰ glossed by the Geneva Bible as "concupiscence, that sticketh fast in us, as it were a pricke, in so much as it constrained Paul himselfe being regenerate to crye out..."; the gloss further notes that "God well have even his best servants to be vexed by Satan." Even though the second day of the battle parallels the knight's progress as a type of the regenerate, it is still possible for him to sin as the Despair episode has already illustrated. The thorn may also stand for concupiscence in the form of the reason's impulse to doubt. The knight's pratfall on the second day is, then, indicative of the possibility, according to

⁵⁸I Cor. 15: 55

⁵⁹Ephesians 6: 17

⁶⁰I Cor. 12: 7

Anglican doctrine, that the Christian may fall into sin:

After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may rise again, and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned which say, they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.⁶¹

Though the events of the canto may be repetitious Kaske maintains that they

become credible and poetic if seen as non-mimetic recapitulations of earlier events in Book I. Spenser has Red Cross defeated on the first day by the same antagonist and in the same land as were those he seeks to save (cf. I.vii.43-4; Letter to Raleigh), thus tying the beginning of his quest in with the ending and highlighting both his kinship with the victims in weakness and the power of the dragon. The temporary failure of his rescue attempt recapitulates also those earlier abortive rescues in Una's life-story (I.vii.45), apparently for the same purpose. In particular, the presumable inclusion of Red Cross's defeat under the "guilt of sinful crimes" (xi.30.2) which the Well of Life washes away shows his defeat to be indeed a spiritual one and links it with that "guilt of sin" (vii.45.8) which betrayed his predecessors to the dragon. The decision to disarm, the defeat by a blow, the battle outside a prison-castle suggestive of Hell, the interceding lady, and the monster opponent recall his own and Arthur's encounters with Orgoglio and his Beast. The agency of law in his fall repeats with a significant difference law's agency in his earlier fall to Despaire (ix.50). Red Cross, passively saved by the "living well" (xi.31.6) which could "wash" sin, experiences that salvation awaited by the earlier characters Fradubio and Fraelissa-- to be "bathed in a living well" (ii.43.1). All these reminiscences will become meaningful also in the related themes of the uses of law and the religious history of mankind. What is clear so far is that Red Cross's backsliding is dictated not only by his rather repetitious personal development but by a certain representative role.⁶²

⁶¹Article 16 of the Thirty-nine Articles.

⁶²Kaske, "The Dragon's Spark and Sting", p. 629.

Though he withstands the dragon's fire more successfully when he experiences it for a second time, the knight nevertheless falls "with dread shame sore terrifide" (1.11.45), which recalls Despair's earlier attempts to exacerbate Redcrosse's acute feeling of guilt and shame. Again, he is rescued by divine grace:

There grew a goodly tree him faire beside,
 Loaden with fruit and apples rosie red,
 As they in pure vermilion had beene dide,
 Whereof great vertues over all were red:
 For happie life to all, which thereon fed,
 And life eke everlasting did befall:
 Great God it planted in that blessed sted
 With his almightie hand, and did it call
 The tree of life, the crime of our first fathers fall.

(1.11.46)

The trees are clearly the two trees planted by God in the garden of Eden. However, it is the tree of life and not the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which Spenser calls "the crime of our first fathers fall." Though it is difficult to account for this discrepancy, Spenser may be recalling the extremely close biblical association of the two trees.⁶³ In Proverbs, Wisdom is said to be a tree of life to them who lay hold of her.⁶⁴ The stanza also suggests the Book of Revelation where Christ tells the Church at Ephesus that "To him that overcometh wil I give to eate of

⁶³Nohnberg, Analogy, p. 334.

⁶⁴Proverbs 3: 18

the tree of life which is in the middes of the paradise of God,"⁶⁵ and also the passage where the leaves of the tree of life are used to heal the nations.⁶⁶ Christ himself is the tree of life⁶⁷ and the "goodly tree" is the "tre of his cross."⁶⁸ The apples of the tree suggest the Fall while the red colour recalls the blood of Christ and the sacrament of Holy Communion. The "trickling stream of Balme" alludes to the Acts of Pilate where Seth asks Michael to be allowed to anoint his father Adam and receives the reply that, when Christ is baptized, then "shall he anoint with the oil of mercy shall be unto all generations of them that shall be born of water and of the Holy Ghost, unto life eternal."⁶⁹

Refreshed by the water of the well of life and the fruit of the tree of life, the knight is confirmed in his role as a miles Christi. The rest of the battle is startling in its brevity. As Christ rises from the dead on the third day after releasing the patriarchs from limbo, the knight is finally able to kill the dragon before sunrise on the third day of the battle. Interestingly, in the context of Christ's descent into hell, the dragon is

⁶⁵Revelation 2: 7

⁶⁶Revelation 22: 2

⁶⁷Brooks-Davies, Spenser's "Faerie Queene", p. 109.

⁶⁸I Peter 2: 24

⁶⁹Brooks-Davies, Spenser's "Faerie Queene", p. 109.

distressed to find that the Redcrosse knight is not "damnifyde" (1.11.52) as Satan hopes to find Christ vulnerable to sin in The Acts of Pilate.⁷⁰ The knight chooses to take "advantage of his open jaw", that part of the dragon which most resembles hell, and runs "through his mouth with so importune might,/ that deepe emperst his darksome hollow maw" (1.11.53). When Una sees that the dragon has at last fallen "Then God she prayd, and thankt her faithful knight/ That had atchiev'd so great a conquest by his might' (1.11.55). The deliberate ambiguity of the pronoun "his" underlines the close identification now possible between the knight and Christ: "Man's might and God's grace merge as the knight is revealed in the lineaments of Christ, the Dragon-killer, even as Michael, the Dragon-killer of Rev. 12.7, is identified by the Geneva gloss with Christ."⁷¹ Having accomplished this feat, the knight is now able to reassume his role as the bridegroom.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 109.

⁷¹Hamilton, p. 154.

3. The Marriage of the Lamb

In the concluding canto of the Legend of Holiness the major event is the betrothal of the Redcrosse knight to Una, anagogically the marriage of the Lamb Christ to his bride the Church, the event with which the Bible also concludes. The celebration of the dragon's death begins with "triumphant trumpets ... That sent to heaven the ecchoed report/ Of their new joy, and happie victorie/ Gainst him that had them long oppressed with tort" (1.12.4), again suggesting an association with the apocalyptic trumpets. The feast itself recalls the eschatological banquet. Spenser also echos the account of the entry of Christ into Jerusalem, the event which begins Holy Week and also the celebration of the Israelites after the exodus from Egypt in his description of the knight's welcoming into Eden:

Unto that doughtie Conquerour they came,
 And him before themselves prostrating low,
 Their Lord and Patrone loud did him proclame,
 And at his feet their laurell boughes did throw.
 Soone after them all dauncing on a row
 The comely virgins come, with girlands dight, ...

And them before, the fry of children young
 Their wanton sports and childish mirth did play,
 And to the Maydens sounding tymbrels sung
 In well atuned notes, a joyous lay,
 And made delightfull musicke all the way.

(1.12.7-8)

The defeat of the monster is, however, linked to the event which ends Holy Week, the resurrection of Christ from the dead. The King and Queen of Eden wear "sad habiliments" (1.12.5) reminiscent of the black stole worn by Una both as a lament at man's fall into sin and as an indication of the poem's association with Lent. Appropriately, however, the Lenten motif is transformed in Spenser's description of Una who appears at the banquet

As bright as doth the morning starre appeare
Out of the East, with flaming lockes bedight,
To tell that dawning day is drawing neare,
And to the world does bring long wished light;
So faire and fresh that Lady shewd her selfe in sight.

So faire and fresh, as freshes flowre in May;
For she had layd her mournfull stole aside,
And widow-like sad wimple throwne away,
Wherewith her heavenly beautie she did hide,
Whiles on her wearie journey she did rede;
And on her now a garment she did weare,
All lilly white, withoutten spot, or pride,
That seemd like silke and silver woven neare,
But neither silke nor silver therein did appeare.

(1.12.21-22)

The passage suggests a connection with Christ who, in Revelation "is the bright morning starre."⁷² The more obvious associations are, however, with the Song of Songs where the bride is "my undefiled, she is the onelie daughter of her mother, and she is deare to her that

⁷²Revelation 26: 16

bare her ... who is she that loketh forthe as the morning,
 faire as the moone, pure as the sunne?"⁷³ The garment
 "withoutten spot" echos the groom's remark, "thou art all
 fare my love, and there is no spot in thee."⁷⁴ Since the
 Song of Songs has been interpreted typologically as the
 love song of Christ and his Church, there is a further
 connection with the Book of Revelation where "the marriage
 of the Lambe is come, and his wife hath made her selfe
 readie. And to her it was graunted, that she should be
 armed with pure fine linen."⁷⁵ The "blazing brightnesse"
 of Una's "beauties beame,/ And glorious light of her sunshyny
 face" (1.12.23) also recall her role as a type of the
 woman clothed with the sun. The white linen recalls
 the white vestments which mark the liturgical season of
 Eastertide and the white robes of the redeemed in the
 Book of Revelation.⁷⁶

Nevertheless, throughout the canto Spenser
 consciously undercuts the sense of completeness suggested
 by the allusions to the concluding chapters of Revelation.
 The "heavenly noise" which sounds through the palace,

Like as it had bene many an Angels voice,
 Singing before th'eternall maiesty,

⁷³Song of Songs 6: 9

⁷⁴Song of Songs 4: 7

⁷⁵Revelation 19: 7-8

⁷⁶Revelation 7: 14

In their trinall triplicities on hye,

(1.12.39)

is clearly a reference to the transcendent music heard at the marriage of the Lamb.⁷⁷ It sounds in reponse to the human music which is played not as an expression of rejoicing but rather in an attempt to "drive away the dull Melancholy" (1.12.38). Throughout the festivities the sense of joy is constantly qualified. The banquet is a "solemne feast" which suggests a sacred festival but carries with it the additional meaning of gravity. The ceremony itself is a betrothal, not a marriage. The knight is required "Backe to returne to that great Faerie Queene,/ And her to serve six years in warlike wize,/ Gainst that proud Paynim king, that workes her teene" (1.12.18). On an allegorical level, the Church of England has been recalled from error and the Kingdom of England from the aberration of the reign of Mary. Elizabeth has been restored to her rightful throne and the evil papal dragon replaced by the dragon on Elizabeth's coat of arms, the visible symbol of the Queen's power. Nevertheless, the possibility of a war with Spain led by the "proud Paynim king" remains on the horizon.

The sense of frustrated completion is also apparent in the number symbolism of the canto. The number twelve is a number of grace and perfection. It is also the number of

⁷⁷ Revelation 19: 6-7

the tribes of Israel and of the disciples. In Revelation, the heavenly Jerusalem is proportioned by twelve. The city "had a great wall and hie, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve Angels, and the names written, which are the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. On the East parte there were thre gates, and on the Northside thre gates, on the Southside thre gates, and on the Westside thre gates. And the wall of the citie had twelve fundacions, and in them the names of the Lambs twelve Apostles."⁷⁸ The city is of equal length, height and breadth, the measure being "twelve thousand furlong"⁷⁹ and the measure of its wall "an hundreth, fortie & foure cubites."⁸⁰ The number of stanzas in the canto, forty-two, is the number of months which the nations will be allowed to oppress Jerusalem⁸¹ and the length of time that the seven-headed beast will make war against the saints.⁸² The number forty-two, however, suggests the importance of the numbers six and seven. Six years is the length of the knight's responsibility to Gloriana. It is also the number of days of creation which precede the sabbath or of the number of days of the world which are to be followed by the eternal

⁷⁸ Revelation 21: 12-14

⁷⁹ Revelation 21: 16

⁸⁰ Revelation 21: 17

⁸¹ Revelation 11: 1

⁸² Revelation 13: 5

sabbath. The seventh day "is ascribed rest , which signifies the seven thousandth wherein (as John witnesseth) the Dragon, which is the Divell, and Satan, being bound men shall be quiet and lead a peaceable life."⁸³

A type of the binding episode in Revelation also occurs in the Legend of Holiness when Archimago and Duessa intrude into the betrothal festivities. When the two are recognized as counterfeit by Una's father, the king is "with suddein indignation fraught" and "Bade on that Messenger rude hands to reach./ Eftsoones the Gard, which on his state did wait,/ Attackt that traitor false, and bound him strait" (1.12.35). Archimago is "layd full low in dungeon deepe/ And bound ... hand and foote with yron chains" (1.12.36). The details are similar to John's vision of the Angel which came down from heaven with a great chain in his hand "And he toke the dragon that olde serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and he bounde him a thousand yeres, And cast him into the bottomles pit, and he shut him up, and sealed the dore upon him."⁸⁴ One must bear in mind, however, that just as the devil must "be losed for a litle season,"⁸⁵ Archimago, like the Blatant Beast in the sixth book, will once again be freed

⁸³Brooks-Davies, Spenser's "Faerie Queene", p. 111.

⁸⁴Revelation 20: 1-3

⁸⁵Revelation 20: 3

to wreck havoc in the poem. Spenser has intentionally frustrated his ending to illustrate the paradox of being and becoming which is intrinsic to Christian thought. Though Spenser has paralleled the Bible, his concern has been with the earthly kingdom and with Cleopolis which is "for earthly frame,/ The fairest peece, that eye beholden can" (1.10.59). His theologically sophisticated vision nevertheless allows the reader a glimpse of the ultimate reality, the Heavenly City which represents the triumph of eternity over time. The sense of incompleteness with which the Legend of Holiness concludes anticipates the vision of the narrator in the final stanza of the Cantos of Mutabilitie:

Then gin I thinke on that which Nature sayd,
 Of that same time when no more Change shall be,
 But stedfast rest of all things firmly stayd
 Upon the pillours of Eternity,
 That is contrayr to Mutabilitie:
 For, all that moveth, doth in Change delight:
 But thence-forth all shall rest eternally
 With Him that is the God of Sabbaoth hight:
 O that great Sabbaoth God, graunt me that Sabaoths sight.

(7.8.2)

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have traced the two major biblical patterns in Book I of The Faerie Queene, the first of which indicates that Spenser intended the Legend of Holiness to be read as a "type" of the Bible and the second which taps the rich poetic and allegorical potential of the Book of Revelation. Moreover, in his treatment of biblical material and more explicitly in the vision of Fidelia and her "sacred Booke", Spenser offers a view, consistent with the doctrines of the Elizabethan settlement, of how the Bible is to be read. In the stanza which describes Fidelia (1.10.13), the image of the cup and book is an image of balance suggesting the balancing of the Word and the sacrament. The book which she holds is not open to all men. In order to understand it the knight must receive instruction; the book must be interpreted by faith and by the Faith. The contrast between Spenser's ideas and the emphasis on the Bible that developed with Puritanism and other radical sects immediately becomes apparent when the Redcrosse knight is contrasted with Christian in The Pilgrim's

Progress.¹ Redcrosse is accompanied by truth personified in Una, fortified by reason and by the virtues in the House of Holiness and sustained by the sacraments in his battle with the dragon in which God's grace and human heroic action co-operate to defeat the forces of evil. Christian, on the other hand, receives only the Bible as a guide.

Finally, the image of Fidelia's book also offers a productive direction for further studies of Spenser's use of the Bible to take. Since the knight receives not only the Word, but also an interpretation of the word, the reader of The Faerie Queene would do well to explore, more extensively, Spenser's biblical patterning in the light of exegetical and liturgical tradition.

¹Whitaker, The Religious Basis of Spenser's Thought, p. 223.

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