Mankind Justified by Faith: Tragicomedy
by Henri de Barran

Translated, with Introduction and Notes,
by Richard Hillman
Introduction

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It is the obvious premise of the accompanying translation that the dramatic allegory composed by the French Protestant pastor, Henri de Barran, and published in Geneva in 1554 under the title of *Tragiqe comedie francoise de l’homme iustifié par Foy*, deserves to be better known among English-speaking theatre historians. My reasons for this opinion may seem recklessly far-ranging. They begin, however, with the simple and fundamental point, to be developed below, that Barran, who seems to have written nothing else – and about whose life we have little information, apart from his evident connection with the court of Navarre¹ – was a highly accomplished dramatist. While eschewing the cruder sort of anti-Catholic satire exemplified by many Reform polemicists, he produced an impressively theatrical demonstration of his resolutely Protestant doctrinal message – namely, that sinners are justified by faith alone, rather than by simply obeying the dictates of the (Roman Catholic) church and performing good works. Key to this demonstration is his vivid portrayal of a representative of humanity (“L’Homme”, hereafter “Mankind”), who undergoes an arduous spiritual journey of a particularly profound

¹ See Eugène Haag and Émile Haag, *La France protestante ou Vies des Protestants français qui se sont fait un nom dans l’histoire, etc.*, 10 vols (1846-59; fac. rpt. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1966), I: 263-66, where Barran is said to have suffered periods of imprisonment by Catholic authorities in 1557 and 1558, and to have been protected by Antoine de Bourbon and Jeanne d’Albret. Most of the notice is devoted to an admiring summary of Barran’s play. It seems to the point, given the prominent role of preaching in the piece, that, according to Pierre Olhagaray (one of the principal sources of *La France Protestante* for information on the author), Barran had formerly belonged to the Dominicans – a preaching order known for combatting heresies; see Pierre Olhagaray, *Histoire des comtés de Foix, Béarn et Navarre. Diligemment recueillie, tant des précédens historiens, que des Archiues desdites maisons* (1629; fac. rpt. Nîmes: Lacour-Ollé, 2013), p. 518.
kind from sin to despair to redemption. All in all, it may be argued, no other surviving post-Reformation morality in either French or English is at once so comprehensive, so coherent, and so well-balanced.

I

Few historians of the English theatre would dispute the affirmation of Murray Roston, writing specifically of the mid-sixteenth century, that “the continental drama was well known in England at this time, and there was a fruitful interchange of ideas”. Exploration of this interchange has been sporadic and limited, however, despite a recent resurgence of interest in productions of the post-Reformation Tudor stage (or, more precisely, stages). This is partly due, no doubt, to a scarcity of documentation, although Hardin Craig, writing in 1955, set out a number of authors and titles that might fruitfully be brought to bear, while, coincidentally in the same year, Marvin T. Herrick expounded the range and breadth of the “Christian Terence” in the context of the development of tragicomedy across Europe. Of the relatively few cases of such “interchange” that have been pursued in detail, the most prominent is certainly that of the Latin anti-papal satire *Pammachius*, composed by the German Protestant polemicist Thomas Kirchmeyer (who published under the pseudonym of Thomas Naogeorgus). This trenchant polemic was performed at Christ’s College, Cambridge, in 1545 and received an English translation (now lost) by John Bale; it also influenced John Foxe’s similarly militant *Christus Triumphans* (1556). This case is, in fact, the chief basis for Roston’s statement (“As Foxe’s play shows . . .”), and it has been widely discussed. Yet criticism has not advanced much beyond it, and the most

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4 Roston, p. 57.
recent book-length study of Reformation drama in England leaves the circulation of Continental texts completely out of account.\(^6\)

I have recently ventured a small way into this largely uncharted territory with evidence that the two variant texts of Christopher Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* (“A” and “B”) draw on another polemical drama by Kirchmeyer, *Mercator seu Judicium* (The Merchant, or, The Judgement) (1540), both in its Latin original and in its 1558 French translation by the martyrrologist Jean Crespin (as *Le Marchant converti* [The Merchant Converted]).\(^7\) This work, showing a sinful worldling confronted by his conscience, also left pretty clear traces elsewhere in the Elizabethan field of what might be termed neo-morality drama: in *The Three Ladies of London* (pub. 1584), by Robert Wilson, which features the roles of Mercadorus, Conscience, Usury and Lucar (cf. *Lucrum* in Kirchmeyer’s Latin);\(^8\) in *A Looking Glass for London and England* (c. 1590), by Thomas Greene and Thomas Lodge, in which a Usurer is prominent.\(^9\) *The Conflict of Conscience*, a still more aggres-

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\(^6\) Tamara Atkin, *The Drama of Reform: Theatre and Theatricality 1461-1553*, Late Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 23 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013). Similarly limited are Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and Popular Theater in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), and the essays in *Tudor Drama before Shakespeare, 1485-1590: New Directions for Research, Criticism, and Pedagogy*, ed. Lloyd Edward Kermode, Jason Scott-Warren and Martine van Elk (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). Almost certainly, some of the lost Latin plays, evidently controversial, which Chambers (II: 224) enumerated were of Continental origin; pertinent, too, is his documentation (II: 219) of a fascinating case of cultural transfer in the Catholic cause: in 1527, a play portraying persecution of the Pope by a heretical Luther (whose wife was also satirically represented) was staged, seemingly in both Latin and French, by the boys of St Paul’s, with ambassadors from France in attendance.


sively anti-Catholic interlude by Nathaniel Woodes (1581), likewise contains similarities to *Mercator*, most prominently the representation and function of Conscience itself, but also the special condemnation of worldly prosperity. Remarkably, Woodes’s play seems to show acquaintance with Barran’s as well, to judge from several parallels, which will be duly noted, that extend beyond the commonplace; Lewis Wager’s *The Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene* also presents suggestive parallels.

The present publication aims at adding a further element to the same broad picture, though to a different sector of it. For it was in exploring the tragic counter-currents of conscientious suffering in two middle-to-late Shakespearean comedies, *The Merchant of Venice* (c. 1596) and *Measure for Measure* (1604), that Barran’s play surprisingly emerged, in my view, as an illuminating intertext. The roots of this relation, moreover, arguably run deep, and its ramifications spread wide. Not only does *Mankind Justified by Faith* present significant points of contact with at least these two works of Shakespeare through its management of the Justice versus Mercy dynamic, but, more generally, it appears to me to constitute a virtually unique mid-century dramatic model for techniques of character portrayal extensively deployed in the late Elizabethan theatre.

Barran’s play traces a trajectory, explicitly designated as tragicomic, whereby a mankind figure falls into knowledge of his sinful state, is condemned to suffer eternal death according to the Old Testament Law of Justice, then is finally redeemed by the New Testament Law of Mercy through Christ, Grace and Faith. The underlying spiritual schema, which underpins much medieval and early modern literature – and,

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10 Nathaniel Woodes, *An excellent new comedie intitulde, The conflict of conscience contayninge a most lamentable example of the dolefull desperation of a miserable worldlinge, termed by the name of Philologus, etc.* [London: Richard Braddock, 1581], I.i; online, Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A68918.0001.001/1:1?rgn=div1;view=fulltext>; accessed 19 April 2017).

11 An intriguing problem of dating is raised by the specific similarities found in Wager’s play, whose dramaturgy is generally close to John Bale’s practice, notably in *A Comedy concernynge thre lawes of nature, Moses and Christ*, *The Complete Plays of John Bale*, ed. Peter Happé, 2 vols, vol. II (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1986). (Henceforth cited as Thre Lawes.) For while *Mary Magdalene* was first printed in 1566, its editor has conjectured an origin within the reign of Edward, who died in 1553. See Lewis Wager, *The Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene. Reformation Biblical Drama in England: An Old-spelling Critical Edition*, ed. Paul Whitfield White (New York: Garland Publishing, 1992), pp. xxii-xxiii. The specific points that appear to connect the play with Barran’s might be due to an unknown common source (presumably French or Latin) or to additions, conceivably by Wager himself, who lived until 1562. The diverse mixture of elements, modes and styles in the text as it survives is more consistent with the latter explanation.

12 For a detailed argument with respect to *The Merchant of Venice*, see Richard Hillman, ”Mercy Unjustified: A Reformation Intertext for *The Merchant of Venice*,“ *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 154 (2018): 91-105.
of course, thinking – is universally Christian, hence fundamental to both the pre- and post-Reformation morality drama. Naturally, the doctrinal inflection it receives here – the play’s declared raison d’être – is distinctively Protestant, while the Law, as interpreted by Rabbi and hypocritically followed by Mankind, is assimilated to Catholic practices. But Barran’s Reform orientation arguably carries beyond theology into dramaturgical innovation. Suspended less between good and evil than between contradictory claims to spiritual truth, Mankind is theatrically exploited as a site of erring blindness not merely subjected to, but subjectified by, tormenting self-discovery, according to a quintessentially Protestant conception of the individual’s personal relation with God. The effect, paradoxically, is to transcend the doctrinal framework, while mimetically lending Mankind “human” qualities akin to those of more fully “developed” tragic and tragicomic figures on the early modern English stage.

It is a critical commonplace to evoke the morality-play affinities – in effect, the claims to the representational range of Everyman – of such dramatic emblems of secular erring and suffering as Shakespeare’s Richard II, Macbeth, King Lear and Leontes. Non-Shakespearean analogues and variants also abound – from Hieronimo (in Thomas Kyd’s The Spanish Tragedy [1587?]) to John Webster’s Duchess of Malfi (1614) and John Ford’s tormented hero-villains in The Broken Heart (1629) and ’Tis Pity She’s a Whore (1632). But actual precedents within the post-medieval morality play theatre in England are scarce and, in comparison with Barran’s work, incomplete. Indeed, the latter’s very comprehensiveness as a model functions intertextually to show up the truncated spiritual journeys of some later self-tormented wrong-doers who are, usually for generic reasons, prevented from completing them: from this perspective, for instance, the mercy dispensed to Angelo in Measure for Measure appears notably undeserved (as it certainly does to himself), while the rough justice meted out to Claudius in Hamlet short-circuits a potential process of penitence in the cause of locating tragic experience elsewhere.

In addressing the relation of the late English morality plays to the universalising (“Everyman”) tendencies of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, particularly that of Shakespeare, Craig discerned a formal gap in literary influence, which he attempted to fill by appealing to national temperament – “the moral earnestness of the Elizabethans”. Such recourse was necessary for him because “[m]ost moral plays of the later Tudor period dealt, even when they proceeded according to the pattern of the morality play, with some special human situation already recorded in story or chronicle”. The Elizabethan temperament must therefore be responding to a still-palpable residue of universality in such

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13 Craig, p. 389.
14 Craig, p. 386.
works and is thus effectively harking back to late medieval practice, in particular the “uni-
versally representative character, the fundamental feature of English moralities”.\textsuperscript{15} “The
argument supposes that building a morality play around a mankind figure is an English
innovation, since there is “no evidence that the broadest and finest kind of moral play had
been imported from abroad”.\textsuperscript{16}

Value judgements aside, and allowing for the limited evidence available, Craig may
have been technically correct in maintaining that, contrary to a general impression that
“almost everything artistic or literary in the English Middle Ages comes from France”,
a French origin cannot be identified for “the particular universal type of morality play
that is dominant in England”.\textsuperscript{17} Still, there are closer French precedents than he seems to
have been aware of: one of these dates back to the late fifteenth-century;\textsuperscript{18} another, \textit{Le
Gouvert d’humanité} (The Governance of Humanity), has a special claim to be juxtaposed
with Barran’s \textit{Mankind} and will be considered in some detail below.\textsuperscript{19} Craig’s reading of
subsequent dramatic history (perhaps even of national character) might have been sub-
stantially different if he had been aware of such pieces, and of Barran’s work in particular.

II

If its universal protagonist may finally be aligned, at least roughly, with French morality
tradition, \textit{Mankind Justified by Faith} obviously makes a radical departure with respect to
document. It is therefore remarkable to find a contrast, as well, with the common forms
of early modern French Reformation theatre. The latter, again according to the surviv-
ing texts, tends to be either biblical in less abstract (if highly symbolic) ways – as in the
\textit{Abraham sacrifiant} of Théodore de Bèze (1550) or the \textit{Nabuchodonosor} of Antoine de La
Croix (1561) – or more aggressively polemical. Historians of the early modern French
theatre, when they mention Barran’s play at all, have tended simply to assimilate it to the
latter model: thus J. S. Street treats this complex and evocative text as virtually identical

\textsuperscript{15} Craig, p. 383.
\textsuperscript{16} Craig, p. 389.
\textsuperscript{17} Craig, p. 352.
\textsuperscript{18} The anonymous \textit{Moralité à six personnages}: BnF ms. fr. 25467, ed. Joël Banchard (Droz: Geneva,
2008), centres on \textit{Aulcune} (“someone”, “anyone”) as a typical young man on the make. Only slightly
later (1511-22) is the \textit{Moralité nouvelle des iiiii elemens, a xv personnaiges, cest assauoir Raison, l’Hom-
me, La,ire, Le Feu, Leaeu, La terre, etc.}, Receuil Trepperel, 22 (Paris: Vve de Jehan Trepperel et Jehan
Jannot, 1512-22 [1515]), doubtfully attributed to “Jehan d’Abundance” (name regularised according
to the BnF standard but likely a pseudonym in any case). This is a succinct (not to say rudimentary)
piece tracing a trajectory parallel to that of \textit{Everyman} with “L’homme” at the centre.
\textsuperscript{19} Jean d’Abondance [Jehan d’Abundance], \textit{Le Gouvert d’humanité}, ed. Xavier Leroux (Paris: H.
Champion, 2011); henceforth cited as \textit{Le Gouvert}, given the uncertainty about authorship.
to Kirchmeyer’s caustic Mercator (French by adoption in Crespin’s adaptation, which postdated Barran’s work by four years).20 The only modern editor of L’homme justifié par Foy, Régine Reynolds-Cornell, echoes this reading in reducing the discredited Rabbi, the advocate of salvation by means of the Law and good works, to a mere personification “du clergé catholique [of the Catholic clergy]”.21 As will appear further, this is surely an oversimplification.

Reynolds-Cornell also, more convincingly, points up a continuity with the spiritual theatre of Marguerite de Navarre, in both its dramaturgy and its theology.22 Yet this association, too, finally appears askew, given Marguerite’s more fragmented – and more elusive – dramatic productions. The common ground constituted by what Reynolds-Cornell terms the sixteenth century’s rediscovery of “l’intériorisation de la vertu [the interiorization of virtue]”23 also makes for a tenuous link, given its abstract generality. The formulation does, however, effectively point to the inward-turning of allegorical signification that appears to me distinctive, indeed innovative, in Barran’s work.

Before attempting to describe this effect more fully, however, I wish to evoke another contemporary French context – one that is obvious enough, given the author’s theological parti pris and didactic thrust, yet has been relatively neglected. Our sense of mid-sixteenth century Protestant polemic as attacking Catholic doctrine and institutions has perhaps obscured its defensive aspect, particularly its concern to rebut the initiatives (themselves defensive) of the Counter-Reformation, as promoted by the Council of Trent from 1545 onwards. The extent to which these initiatives took dramatic form remains uncertain, but one surviving text to the immediate point is Le Gouvert d’humanité, assigned to the prolific (if pseudonymous) Jehan d’Abundance and published in Lyons sometime between 1540 and 1548.24 Xavier Leroux stresses the impetus given to Counter-Reformation theatrical polemic in the Rhône-Alpes region by the proliferation of Reformation drama emanating from Geneva.25 Given several key points of contact and

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23 Reynolds-Cornell, ed., p. 442.
25 Leroux, ed., pp. 21-22 and, on the play’s strict adherence to Tridentine doctrine, notably on the
contention between Barran’s Geneva-published piece and the work of “Jehan d’Abun-
dance”, it is reasonable to conjecture that the Protestant playwright may have been not
only encouraged by the example of Bèze but impelled to action by the circulation of Le
Gouvert and its ilk.

I will be indicating, in the notes to the translation, some specific intersections with
Le Gouvert, which may well, of course, show a generic rather than a particular link, since
stock gambits and situations doubtless appeared in many texts now lost or never printed.
In sum, Le Gouvert traces a typical pattern of temptation and fall into sin, as Humanité
undergoes a seduction by vices – especially the young man’s vice of Luxure – managed
by Temptation itself. Remort de Conscience (Remorse of Conscience), applying a death’s-
head mirror, converts Humanité to Penitence, with a suitable change of garment, and is
seconded by Caresme (Lent), but Humanité relapses. It takes Justice Divine, threatening
death like Barran’s Law, to bring him back to a virtuous resolution, after Misericorde has
interceded on his behalf.

There is nothing intrinsically remarkable about this scheme, although it is set out
with some lively staging, moving from a tavern – a traditional site of moral corruption16
– to the Garden of Penitence. What stands out from the present perspective is the prom-
inent role assigned to Erreur, as the ally of Temptation and Luxure, in effecting the down-
fall of Humanité. Erreur boasts of having spread Luther’s heresy throughout Germany,
teaching even women and youngsters to interpret sacred scripture, and in particular Saint
Paul.17 Subsequently, he assures Humanité that Penitence is unnecessary, since Christ has
redeemed the sins of all men, and that Lent, fasting and confession are mere fictions,
ever instituted by God or mandated by the bible.18 Such assurance proves an incitement
to epicureanism, as Catholics claimed, and it builds to an ironic attack on the precise
doctrine that Barran writes to defend: “Paradis t’est tout assuré / Par foy/ainsi Dieu l’a
juré! [You are assured of Paradise by faith: so God has sworn].”19 Barran’s hypocritical
Mankind-as-Pharisee displays an identical assurance, though mistakenly relying on the
Law instead of faith, and the symmetrical contrast extends to his scrupulous observance

question of penitence, p. 63.
26 Featured, for instance, in the Moralité nouvelle des iiiii elemens and in the English Mary Magdalene
plays of the Digby manuscript (The Late Medieval Religious Plays of Bodleian MSS Digby 133 and e
Museo 160, ed. Donald C. Baker, John L. Murphy and Louis B. Hall, Jr., Early English Text Society,
283 (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the EETS, 1982) and of Wäger.
27 Le Gouvert, ll. 760 ff. Cf. Mankind’s prayer to be instructed in correct interpretation of scripture
(V.v.1786).
28 Le Gouvert, ll. 976-86.
29 Le Gouvert, ll. 1457-58.
of Lent and other rules for fasting (III.viii.1149-31). To some extent, then, *L’homme justifié par Foy* apparently constitutes an intervention in a theatre of doctrinal controversy, perhaps on a local level, even if its carrying power beyond that context seems to have been considerably greater than that of the principal surviving example of the opposition. There are, after all, at least five copies extant internationally (according to the Universal Short-Title Catalogue\(^\text{30}\)), whereas *Le Gouvert* subsists in a single Swiss regional library, where it was discovered in the 1960s.\(^\text{31}\)

### III

A further contrast with *Le Gouvert* may serve to return the discussion to Barran’s innovative dramaturgy. As has been mentioned, the Counter-Reformation morality stresses the role of conscience (personified as *Remort de Conscience*) in converting *Humanité*. In this, it conforms to a traditional allegorical dynamic, which was widely adapted also by Protestant authors of moralities, both Continental and English. Barran’s play stands out as featuring no such personification, and yet the function of conscience, as the interior mechanism that effects awareness of sin, is pervasive, beginning with the Prologue’s address to the audience: “in his conscience / Each one of you will be interpellated [dans sa conscience / Chacun lira qu’il est de la partie]” (Prologue, 66-67).\(^\text{32}\) A link is thereby established between the awakening of conscience and preaching, which, obvious though it may seem, enters profoundly into the play’s dramatic method.

Especially given the scarcity of independent information concerning either the play or the dramatist, Barran’s prefatory address to the reader ("*Au Lecteur*, running title "*Epistre*") takes on particular importance. It is hardly surprising that it should announce the priority, for Barran, of the communication of doctrine over mimetic process – not to mention entertainment. Even in so doing, however, the preface proves revealing, not least because it indirectly acknowledges the subversive potential of theatricality in the dramatist’s view. We learn, first, that he held back publication for two years after composing his work because of scruples over the abuses rampant in the acting and reception

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\(^\text{31}\) Leroux, ed., p. 10.

\(^\text{32}\) The French text cited, and used as a basis for translation, is Henry de Barran, *Tragoïde comedie francoise de l’homme justifié par Foy* ([Geneva]: [Zacharie Durant], 1554), in the copy available on Gallica (<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k702797>; accessed 16 September 2017). Contractions have been expanded; long “s” has been modernised. The original text is divided into acts and scenes, with a Prologue and Conclusion; I have supplied line numbers coordinated with those in Reynolds-Cornell, ed., and referenced the ancillary matter omitted there by signature marks.
even of religiously edifying (therefore presumably Protestant) theatre.11 (This is valuable inferential evidence of the extent of such theatre at the time: one would dearly like to be offered more precision, especially as to the circumstances and conditions of performance.14) It is clear that, whether or not the piece was ever actually staged, Barran envisaged the possibility of representation: the division into acts and scenes is less an imitation of classical practice, he explains, than a means of allowing for pauses, “if by chance one were to have it read or set forth in public performance [si d’auenture on la faisoit lire ou proposer par dialogues publique]”; in such a case, he insists, holy scripture “should not be turned to derision and mockery, and consequently be made an occasion for our perdition [ne soit changée en ieu de derrision & moquerie & consequemment en occasion de notre perdition]” (“To the Reader”, p. 6; sig. a3r). Hence, too, his plan – a virtual containment project – to reinforce the doctrinal truths expounded in the play by composing a supplementary exposition (unknown today if it was ever written). The issue is explicitly form, not content; he intends, he explains,

after this to write a little treatise in prose on the subject, not as containing other matter, but to declare in greater perfection what has been briefly touched upon – showing manifestly what are justification, faith, law, good works, and what their true use is according to the holy Scriptures. (“To the Reader”, pp. 5-6)

cy-apres d’en faire un petit traité en prose, non comme contenant autre matière, mais pour declarer en plus grande perfection, ce que en bref auoit
Anxiety that the heteroglossia of dramatic dialogue may destabilise or occlude the unitary Word of God is evident even within the text as printed, which features frequent marginal references to those biblical passages that it is the play’s simple purpose, as Barran affirms, to set forth in action for better understanding and instruction. Even in these terms, however, the end is inevitably complicated by the means. The essence of the didactic exercise for Mankind is learning to distinguish true from false preachers, and this requires giving superficially convincing arguments to Rabbi, who at first prevails. The same is true even of “Satan transformed [Satan transfiguré]” (in accordance with Paul’s warning in 2 Corinthians 11:14), when the latter briefly intervenes, pseudo-angelically, to support Rabbi’s position. Indeed, as a marginal reference to Paul’s letter to the Romans confirms, Satan is heard and seen to do exactly what Shakespeare’s Antonio lays to the charge of Shylock: “The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.”35 In turning Paul’s own words against his stage representative, Satan, of course, cites selectively,36 but while Rabbi is flattered and fooled (“[t]his gracious spirit [le bon Esprit]” [II.vi.820]), Paul at once recovers the advantage:

Satan has taken this disguise –
And yet the Scripture he applies
Confirms my case.

[C’est Satan qui se transfigure
En bon Esprit. Or l’Escriture
Qu’il a produite, fait pour moy.] (II.vi.824-26)

Whether Satan’s costume at this point is more angelic or rabbinical, it must be transparently false, and a comic effect would be hard to avoid. In any case, this is far from a straightforward illustration of doctrine in action such as Barran claims his entire work to be: it is a complex moment that ironically calls attention to its multi-layered theatricality.

Arguably, then, it is out of a fundamental distrust of his own attraction to his medium and its potency, rather than from modesty (false or otherwise), that Barran disclaims, or at least substantially downplays, literary considerations:

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36 See the translation, n. 63.
Rather, the role to which he aspires is that of the “Preacher of the Gospel [predicateur de l’Evangile]” (“Characters [Les personnages]”), which is assigned in the list of dramatis personae to Paul, whose epistles are the chief biblical authority for the key doctrine, and who opposes “Rabbi, preacher of the Law [Rabby predicateur de la Loy]”. It is Paul whose persuasions are endowed with a quasi-miraculous power, derived from the transcendent truth of the divine word he transmits, to bring the sinner out of his damnable state and the despair that goes with it. But behind the scenes, that power is necessarily wielded, not by a passive instrument of the Word but by the dramatist who chooses to deploy it, and how to do so.

IV

Dramatic choice conspicuously extends to – indeed, begins with – genre, and that Barran was fully conscious of the fact is confirmed in the first sentences of his prefatory address, where he refers to “comedies, tragedies and other similar histories [Comedies, Tragedies, & autres semblables histoires]” (“To the Reader”, p. 5; sig. a2’) and reiterates the distinctive generic label announced in the title (and apparently here used for the first time for a French literary composition). It is obviously the archetypal Christian pattern that he understands as “tragicomic”, and he follows majority morality-play practice in showing Mankind redeemed. (Kirchmeyer’s Mercator, by contrast, which identifies itself as tragedy, consigns some characters to damnation, while Woodes’s The Conflict of Conscience was published in two states with alternative endings of damnation or salvation for its protagonist, thereby illustrating both the real menace of spiritual tragedy for individuals and the contrary bias built into the morality genre.) What remains remarkable

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37 See Madeleine Lazard, *Le Théâtre en France au xviè siècle*, Littératures Modernes (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1980), pp. 222-23. Generic labels were often casually, even arbitrarily, applied in the early and mid-sixteenth century, in both French and English, but the choice of “tragicomic”, however variously the term was interpreted, seems more likely to be a considered one.

38 On the implications of this doubleness for Marlowe’s unequivocally tragic variation on the morality-play model, see David Bevington, “Christopher Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus and Nathaniel Woodes’s
is that Barran’s label is not just eschatologically indicative but dramatically functional. Indeed, his management of the form anticipates, *mutatis mutandis*, the essential pattern that John Fletcher would sketch out a half-century later under the influence of Giovanni Battista Guarini, the author of *Il Pastor Fido* (1580-83) and an important defence of tragicomedy as a genre, *Compendio della poesia tragi-comica* (1601). For Fletcher, writing for a very different theatre, albeit one obviously still synchronised with Barran’s spiritual view of the world, a tragicomedy “wants deaths, which is inough to make it no tragedie, yet brings some near it, which is inough to make it no comedie”.39 Barran’s treatment of this trajectory is, of course, no mere matter of effective dramatic fiction, or, from his point of view, of fiction at all. Not only is his Mankind brought “near” to death indeed, but death in Barran’s conception, like redemption from it, is eternal, and integral to a universal plan in which each element lends significance to the other.

On the technical level, Barran’s adroit manipulation of varied line-lengths and rhyme schemes, including his dexterous use of linking rhyme within and between speeches, displays, willy-nilly, a gifted poet’s ear and verbal ingenuity. Likewise, his sense of dramatic action is everywhere apparent. The scenes are numerous, brief and varied. The outright preaching in the Prologue and Conclusion, as well as by Paul and the positive allegorical figures, while inevitably repetitive, maintains a fine balance with more lively dialogue, often involving the same characters. The rhythm of the whole is punctuated by physically dynamic moments: Mankind’s conspicuously ineffectual breaking of the Law, the Law’s removal of his blindfold, the later unveiling of the Law’s terrifying countenance, the opening of the protagonist’s breast to expose his sinfulness, his rescue by Paul at the point of suicide – these are all spectacular stage effects which, far from gratuitous, lend concrete impact to the specific doctrinal points at stake.40 The very potential for

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40 The terrifying aspect of the Law, deploying Sin and Death and backed by the Spirit of Fear, corresponds roughly to the appearance and function of the Lawe in awakening Mary Magdalene’s conscience – a much more straightforward matter – in Wager’s play (ll. 1109-1288); Wager’s character Knowledge of Sinne recalls the Spirit of Fear, while his Lawe likewise leaves the sinner a way out through faith in Christ’s mercy (ll. 1281-88). Cf. also the plea of Humanité, confronted by Justice Divine, in *Le Gouvert*: “Dame d’efficace, / Changés vostre face / Rude, rigoureuse! [Powerful dame, change your face, rude, rigorous!]” (ll. 1639-41), which leads to the pleading of *Misericorde*.
tension between theatrical appeal and pedagogy, of which Barran shows himself warily conscious, is turned to dramatic advantage.

A recognisable holdover from the medieval mysteries and moralities, as in other Reformation drama, is the comic quality attached to the diabolic. Sin and Death, the devil’s offspring and hench-persons, are capable only of sarcastic taunting and decidedly grim jokes: they consistently make their mark – in words, actions and no doubt appearance – as sinister agents and presences. Satan himself, however, has considerable comic range. His first entry virtually announces his theatrical heritage with a classic line echoing a multitude of diabolic forbears: “With rage for evil I’m infected [l’énrage désirant mal faire]” (I.ii.95).41 Almost immediately, however, he begins to display a variety of subler, if nonetheless familiar, colours. To his outright imposture, which has already been noted, may be added several more-or-less comic facets: the pater familias presiding, reverenced like God the Father, over an unholy family of evil (“Belovéd father of our band [. . . vous, qui estes nostre pere]” [180]);42 the witty, confident, almost suave, and certainly subtle enemy of Mankind (“I think today I’ve done quite well [I’ay bien gagné pour ce iour-d’hui]” [III.vi.1063]); a ridiculous blusterer when he is physically restrained by Grace (“O Beelzebub, come help, for I am raging! [O Belzebub, vien à moy, car l’énrange]” [V.iii.1740]). And even though he is finally banished by prayer from Mankind’s sight (Vix.1947 SD), his ironic determination never to give up – “For all your days, I will assail you [Tant que viuras te fascheray]” (V.viii.1894); “And yet another time we’ll get you [Si t’aurons nous vn’autre fois]” (V.viii.1908) – remains hanging in the air as a stark warning to spectators against their ever-present invisible enemy. For, dramatically engaging as all these attitudes are, they are also highly functional within the didactic framework. In contrast with various theatrical ancestors and contemporaries, there is no gratuitous display, no scatology (Satan in Kirchmeyer’s Mercator {farts noisily}), no Catholic disguising (as in Balé’s frequent practice43 or Abraham sacrificant, where Satan appears as a monk).

41 The word “énrange” makes for a specific link with devils in the French tradition.


43 See Paul Whitfield White, “The Bible as Play in Reformation England”, The Cambridge History of
The treatment of Concupiscence is equally subtle and in keeping with her allegorical role, even as her theatrical potential as fleshly temptress is exploited – to the point of one extended lyrical parody of romantic harmony (I.ix.466-501). Barran’s Concupiscence – this is also the term in French – is not merely that traditional vice (one of the Seven Deadly Sins) who elsewhere goes under the name of Luxuria, Lust or Lechery. As Satan’s eldest daughter, implanted by him within the flesh of Mankind, she represents all the varied, and varying, appetites that bind man to the things of this world and alienate him from God, including wealth, honour and pride. The principle is clearly articulated by Satan himself:

Of every vice you are the source,
The nurse that feeds such men their force –
Wherefore it’s needful well to govern
This splendid saint and always turn
Him to what may honour impart:
All must be done to draw his heart
To vainglory.

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On the range of meanings of "concupiscence" in French and English see, respectively, *Le Trésor de la langue française* and *OED*, s.v. The narrowing of the term to signify fleshly appetites, and sexual desire in particular, is documented in both languages and is what permits Barran to present Mankind’s fall into all manner of sinfulness as a literal seduction. Paul identifies “concupiscence” with “lust” in Rom. 7:7-8 in expounding the function of the Law, and the denotation runs straight through to Milton: cf. John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey Press, 1957), IX.1079.

Bale, unlike Barran, allegorically dramatises a distinction between fleshly and spiritual corruption in *Thre lawes*:

*Sodomismus.*  
I will corrupt Gods Image  
With most unlawfull usage,  
And brynge hym into dottage,  
Of all concupyscience.

*Idolatria.*  
Within the flesh thu art,  
But I dwell in the hart,  
And wyll the sowle pervart  
From Gods obedience. (II.683-90)

Cf. Wäger, who deploys a panoply of vices, including Carnall Concupiscence, expressive of “all the pleasures of the fleshe” (l. 384), under the aegis of Infidelitie, self-described as “the Serpents sede” (l. 322) and clearly the equivalent of Barran’s Sin:

Loke in whose heart my father Sathan doth me sow,  
There must all iniquitie and vice nedes growe,  
The conscience where I dwell is a receptacle  
For all the diuels in hell to haue their habitacle. (ll. 323-26)
In the end, the female gendering of Concupiscence is again exploited, this time in a frankly comic way, after she is put in her properly subordinate place within his physical being by Mankind, with the aid of Grace. (Being part of his make-up, she cannot be eliminated until the soul is liberated from the body.) He responds to her final effort at seduction with, “You get away from me, old witch! [Va t’en de moy, vieille sorciere]” (V.viii.1917). She then ruefully soliloquises on her sad fall in status from mistress of the house to chamber-maid but consoles herself with the thought that “if one lord holds me in sway, / A hundred others me obey! [pour vn seigneur que j’auray, / A cent autres commanderay]” (V.viii.1926-27). The play’s message of salvation thus effectively acquires a post-script reminder that each spectator must exercise his (or her) own free will in order to profit from it. In effect, Concupiscence momentarily and backhandedly assumes the function of the Doctor or Expositor who draws the lesson in numerous moralities.

V

This barb tossed at the audience – an interpellation indeed, if a humorous one – highlights Barran’s deft management of allegory in general, and particularly with respect to Mankind himself. By definition and convention a universal figure – and so he presents himself when he steps fearfully onto the threatening stage of this world in the third scene (I.iii.221-48) – he is suddenly presumed to be resolvable into individuals. Elsewhere, too, this effect, enacting the multiplicity of sinfulness, is related to the operations of Concupiscence. It is by her influence in different forms that Satan enumerates his innumerable victims in his opening monologue (I.ii.95 ff.),45 and she herself reports to him, “Moved by you, moreover, I find / That all desire, with eager mind, / To harbour me [Quand de vous suis esmeue aussi / Tous desirent par grand soucy / M’entretenir]” (I.ii.189-91). Under her influence, Mankind in Rabbi’s eyes initially appears as a swarm of sin-

45 This is as close as the play comes to evoking the damnation of stock types of sinners, and Satan’s reference remains oblique and distanced by grim humour: “They are the grand whom I uphold – / Then leave the bastards to God’s care! [Ce sont les grans que j’entretiens, / Laissant tous ses coquins à Dieu]” (I.ii.114-15).
ners – “They all chase after vain delights, / Like animals completely senseless [Chacun va son désir suivant, / Comme les bestes insensées]” (I.vi.366-67) – before cohering again into allegorical comprehensiveness as “the sinner [le pecheur]” (378). Moreover, in abetting Mankind’s Pharasaical pretensions, Rabbi, too, takes Concupiscence into his heart, according to Paul (IV.i.1161-71), and so visibly doubles the figure of the sinner. (Rabbi’s pride and self-righteousness, amounting to vainglory, are in any case glaringly apparent and call for the chastisement they receive.)

In her ultimate futile effort at persuasion, Concupiscence urges Mankind to give himself variously to pleasure, “As worldlings all are wont to do [Ainsi que font tous les mondains]” (V.viii.1914), and with consummate irony offers him an excuse with which to soothe his conscience: “We’re all human – is this not true? / Then let’s do as both poor and rich [Ne sommes-nous pas tous humains? / Suiuons la commune maniere]” (1915-16). In contemptuously rejecting her, Mankind resumes the unitary role he has now securely achieved – that of the emblematic Christian.

It is, of course, built into the genre – arguably from its beginnings46 – that Everyman figures in morality plays acquire more-or-less particular identities at various points, whether or not they bear names narrowing their range of moral or social reference, such as Wit, Magnificence, Lusty Juventus, Mercator, or Philologus (in The Conflict of Conscience). They often proceed through typical stages of life, which may also be nominally identified (as in Mundus et Infans);47 they may come already divided into faculties (as in Wisdom). Barran takes active advantage of the fact that his character’s name in French remains (untranslatably) poised between the general – “all of Mankind” – and the particular: “the individual in question”.48 Thus Mankind indirectly evokes a succession of life-stages by way of Concupiscence’s evolution from sensuality towards vainglory; early on, he even displays a brash youthful naiveté by vaunting the contrary: “Enough

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46 Pace Craig, who maintains a nostalgia for a (hypothetical) pure medieval English morality drama which “took Mankind as its hero” and deplores the subsequent particularising of that figure: “The result was that the English morality play almost, but not quite, lost its original distinctive feature of representing generalized humanity on the stage” (p. 378); see his analysis of this process (pp. 378-84). Curiously, Craig took Everyman (at least in a supposed original form) as typical of the oldest kind of English morality; he was evidently sceptical about the priority of the Dutch Elckerlijk, which is not now in doubt; see pp. 346-47 and 346-47, n. 3.

47 Craig, p. 378, sees such division as a natural extension of universal representation, but it is surely a step towards individualisation.

48 A comparison may be drawn with Everyman, where the protagonist’s name is used variously in the singular and plural senses; see A. C. Cawley, ed., Everyman (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961), p. 30, n. to l. 66. Cf. also Richard Hillman, Self-Speaking in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama: Subjectivity, Discourse and the Stage (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 45-47, on the discursive negotiation of particular versus universal identity in that play.
prudence and wisdom can’t I boast / For someone of my age – and more than most? [Ne suis-ie pas assez prudent & sage? / Plus ie le suis qu’un autre de mon age]” (I.v.345-46). Later, when adapting herself to his Pharisaic phase, Concupiscence asks rhetorically (and ironically), “Friend, have I not told you the truth, / Followed you ever since your youth? [Amy, n’ay-ie tenu promesse, / T’ayant suiuy dés ta ieunesse?]” (III.vii.1081-82). Despite such scattered moments, however, and others when he serves as a lens for viewing humanity in its diversity—as when Faith urges indulgence towards his “fellow-man [tes prochains]” (V.v.1802)—the dramatic function of Barran’s character depends on an unusual resistance to particularity: he does not readily take on distinctive traits but reasserts his engagement with the whole of humanity so as to speak, not from an individual perspective, but for all of us. Nor does this alter—on the contrary—when his experience of the divine glory engenders the desire to share it with all of us through praise: “of thy wonders all shall hear [Je diray donc à tous, tes grans merueilles]” (V.vii.1891).

The single highly specific identity Mankind acquires – that of a Pharisee, decked out with the gear specified (and condemned) by Jesus in Matthew 23:5 (see III.i.1038 ff.) – is the exception that proves the rule, an aberration calculated to feed directly back into the spiritual pattern. For his hypocritical ostentation of holiness at Rabbi’s instigation precisely entails a self-conscious assertion of particularity – “Here I show as a man of virtue [Me voicy en homme de bien]” (III.v.1045) – even exemption from humanity; he becomes a fountain, not a seeker, of grace, convinced (as we all are at some level) of his own uniqueness:

To you, Lord God, I offer grace,
I who, not wicked like the rest,
Keep from all evil, knowing best
That which you, by Your Law, ordain.
All others, as to me is plain,
To theft, false-witness, lechery
Are given, while, Lord, as for me . . .

[O sire Dieu, ie te rens graces,
Que comme tous, ne suis meschant,
De tout mal me garde, sachant
Ce que commandes par ta Loy:
Tous les autres, comme ie voy,
Sont paillardz, larrons, faux-tesmoingz,
Mais moy, Seigneur . . . ] (III.viii.1132-38)

Mankind thereby attracts Concupiscence’s scornful dismissal of his distinctiveness as such: “types like that [telles gens]” (III.vi.1973). And when Paul instructs him to put off the outward signs of his false pretence, once he has renounced it, he is visibly gathered
back into the common condition, confirmed as an example to – and theatrically representative of – all humanity:

We must in public places fittingly
Be clad to suit the customs of our age
And with the exercise of judgement sage.

[Il nous convient estre au de-bors vestuz
Decentement, en ensuivant l’usage
De nostre temps, avec iugement sage.] (V.vi.1853-55)

Paul’s point matches the play’s theatrical and didactic restraint. In general, the doctrinal contention between Protestants and Catholics is restricted to the biblical – in effect, the abstract and doctrinal – level. Barran’s Pharisee boasts of following distinctively Catholic fasting practices (III.viii.1140-41), which are thereby assimilated to the outward exigencies of the Law; he arrogates a quasi-priestly power to curse and bless. But he is not transformed by costume into a transparent stand-in for a Catholic ecclesiastic – again, in contrast with Bale’s polemical technique. Rabbi is obviously marked as specifically Jewish, the Law as Mosaic, even if Rabbi’s angry outburst at Paul when, in one of several lapses from abstraction, he loses self-control – “Heretic fit to burn! [heretique bruslable]” (II.vi.849) – resonates tellingly in the post-Reformation air (while echoing Satan at I.vii.438). The fundamental opposition remains that between the Old Testament and the New, for which the respective preachers stand, as both advocates and embodiments. Barran’s target in his own time and place is perfectly clear, and appears at selected moments when the allegorical masks are allowed to slip, but his universal setting and characters make a subtler means than Bale’s or Kirchmeyer’s polemic of affirming Christian “truth” and “true” Christianity. And so, in the list of speakers in Act Five, Scene Two, Mankind is finally introduced explicitly, not as a convert to Reform, but simply as a “Christian” (“L’Homme Chrestien”).

VI

Behind Barran’s broad insistence on keeping his allegorical framework firmly in place, and especially his commitment to Mankind’s inclusive generality, may well lie, as his prefatory

49 The identification of Catholic priests as Pharisees is a commonplace of Reformation polemic. Hence Satan in The Conflict of Conscience speaks of the Pharisees as his “children” in a self-introductory speech whose tone and claim to dominance in this world bring it close to that of Barran’s Satan. Cf. his opening lines: “High time it is for mee to stirre about, / And doo my best, my kingdom to maintaine” (Woodes, I.i).
remarks suggest, a distrust of theatricality as highly prone to abuse. But the paradoxical result is to lend his emblem of sinful illusion, despairing disillusion, and ultimate redemption a highly theatrical power that seems to arise from within the character – something universal in the sense of being specifically and recognisably human. Precisely because the sinful nature of man is a given, as Protestant theology insisted, with Concupiscence “always already” lodged within (even if for dramatic purposes she displays what might be termed outward mobility), the struggle between vice and virtue traditionally exteriorised in the form of psychomachia could gain no purchase on the spiritual history thus unfolded. It is especially telling that there is no personification of conscience – the faculty staged as the source of spiritual terrors, for instance, in Kirchmeyer’s Mercator and, of course, of “doleful desperation” in Woodes’s play. In Mankind Justified by Faith, such models give way to another more dynamic one – a process launched by the devastation produced by self-awareness, leading to a spontaneous access of despair, and finally issuing in the realisation of faith, heavenly in origin but experienced internally. In this respect, the contrast is particularly marked, not surprisingly, with the resolutely Catholic Everyman, where conscience plays no role at all and the salvific function is enacted by Knowlege, who acts as a guide in transmitting the teachings of the Church.

“Conscience” is finally inseparable in Barran’s work from “consciousness”. Indeed, French “conscience” unites both meanings, and the word is used recurrently in the text to signify not merely an inward quality but inwardness itself. The sinner, we are told (in the Argument to Act One), at first rejects exhortations to goodness, “not yet being touched by the virtue of the Law and of the spirit of God in his conscience [n’estant encore touché de la vertu de la Loy & de l’Esprit de Dieu en sa conscience]” (p. 9; sig. a5v). In the key scene where Mankind’s heart is exposed, Death speaks of finding nothing but viciousness in his “conscience”:

Nothing can I perceive within his conscience  
But crime upon crime: ambition and hate  
Have moved into his heart and rule in state.

[Je ne voy rien dedans sa conscience  
Que tout forfait, haine & ambition  
Dedans son cœur font habitation.] (IV.ii.1288-90)

From this point on, the evocation of Romans 2, which begins with an attack on hypocritical judges of others, is unmistakable:

But thou, after thine hardnes and heart that can not repent, heapest  
vnto thy self wrath against the day of wrath and of the declaration of  
the iuste judgement of God. (Rom. 2:5)
Mankind’s subsequent transformation across terror and despair into faith duly corresponds to Paul’s rejection of the outward sign of Jewishness according to the Old Law, circumcision of the flesh, for “circumcision ... of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Rom. 2:29).

Faith expresses the wish for Mankind, once he has been made a Christian: “may conscience never cease / To lend you strength in your adversities [tousjours ta conscience, / Te donne force en tes adversitez]” (V.v.1820-21). But she also makes this power of conscience self-strengthening through the production of greater consciousness: “Causing your knowledge of it to increase [En t’accroissant tousjours sa connaissance]” (1823). The Conclusion speaks of the need we all have to “solidly assure our conscience [asseurer tres-bien la conscience]” (Conclusion, 26) in Christ.

It is, therefore, precisely on the common ground of conscience/consciousness that spectators or readers are finally collectively interpellated under the sign of Mankind, thereby coming full circle from the role defined in the prefatory address. There readers were informed that “conscience”, not outward show, must lead them to true understanding; they should not merely “consider diligently [considerent diligement]” but “realise feelingly in their conscience, where our justification comes from and our eternal salvation [espreuuent en leurs consciences d’ou vient nostre iustification & salut eternel]” (“To the Reader”, p. 5; sig. a2’). As has been seen, it is “in his conscience [dans sa conscience]” that each is to be engaged. The ultimate power of Barran’s anti-theatrical theatricality arguably consists, not in staging the opening of Mankind’s breast so as to expose – to himself, it should be emphasised – the fact “that his heart to rottenness is wed [qu’il a le cœur du tout pourry]” (IV.ii.1273), but in convincing the spectator that the character, like him or herself, actually has a heart to reveal.
Mankind Justified by Faith: Tragicomedy
by Henri de Barran

Translated, with Introduction and Notes, by Richard Hillman
Référence électronique

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Note on the Translation
The present translation is based on the only early edition known: Henry de Barran, *Tragique comedie francoise de l’homme iustifié par Fay* ([Geneva]: [Zacharie Durant], 1554), of which there are five extant copies. My copytext is that available on Gallica, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (NUMM-70279). The original title page carries epigraphs from Galatians 3:2 – “Receiued ye the Spirit by the workes of the Law, or by the hearing of faith (preached)?” – and (less legibly) Hebrews 10:38: “the iust shal liue by faith.” (The English bible cited throughout is *The Bible and Holy Scriptures, etc.* [Geneva: (n.pub.), 1562]; STC 2095), with comparative citations taken at several points from *Le Nouveau Testament, etc.* [Geneva: Jean Bonnefoy, 1563; Gallica NUMM-108678].)

I have also consulted the only later edition of the play, which modernises spelling and, to some extent, grammar: Henri de Barran, *Tragique comédie française de l’homme justifié par Foi*, ed. Régine Reynolds-Cornell, *La comédie à l’époque d’Henri II et de Charles IX: Première série, Vol. VI, 1541-1554*, ed. Luigia Zilli, Mariangela Miotti, Anna Bettoni and Régine Reynolds-Cornell (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1994). Variants are noted where they seem significant. I have included the material regretfully omitted from that edition – the marginal biblical references (using the standard abbreviations), as well as the author’s address to the reader and the arguments prefacing each act. The verse-paragraphing within speeches has been restored, and I generally punctuate in a way closer to the original. For the reader’s convenience, however, I adopt the modern editor’s line numbering (continuous for the main body of the text, but with Prologue and Conclusion numbered separately). The fairly numerous original stage directions are given in italics, slightly adapted in most cases; additional directions in roman type are supplied at a few points, but exits, entrances, character groupings and action are generally clear enough without them.

Barran makes use, often to effective dramatic purpose, of differing line-lengths: chiefly tetrameter and pentameter (mostly iambic), but even trimeter; the rhyming is primarily in couplets, but, for special effects, some intricate stanzaic forms are employed. I have done my best to reproduce these technical features.
Characters

1. The Law
2. The Spirit of Fear
3. Satan
4. Sin
5. Death
6. Concupiscence'
7. Mankind ("L’Homme")
8. Rabbi, preacher of the Law
9. Paul, preacher of the Evangile
10. Faith
11. Grace
12. The Spirit of Love

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1 The term as it is used in the play refers to worldly appetite of all kinds, hence to worldliness itself, but theatrically exploits the common specific application to the sexual impulse. See Introduction,
To the Reader

I am not ignorant, Christian reader, of the great abuses that are committed daily, as much by those who play comedies, tragedies and other similar histories taken from sacred Scripture, as by those who are present at them. For the former think only of temporal reward, or rather imprint on the understanding of their auditors some opinion of their fine ability,2 often mingling profane and dissolute matters with the holy words. The latter are content to pass the time in some pleasant manner, delighting more in the attractiveness of the characters, or indeed in language merry and amusing, than in the utility and edification that they might gain from the experience. This is why commonly, after such dialogues, some dissolute farce is played, since the whole is considered worthless if the merry farce is not added on. I say nothing of other great abuses which may be committed there, the performance of which – whatever edification they may convey – is forbidden to all Christians. For that reason, many fine minds desist from composing such comedies or similar stories, for, although they may be holy and highly profitable, nevertheless the corruption of men is such that they abuse them in one way or another. For that reason I also hesitated to publish this tragicomedy, to the point where I kept it back for almost two years, resolving never to make it known. But, considering that all the faithful know how to use good things for the honour of God and the edification of their fellow-man, I have no fear of presenting them, being certain that such persons have the honour of God in such high esteem that for nothing in the world would they wish that such stories, intended for edification, should serve for destruction. Therefore, I pray the readers, and admonish them in the name of God, not to abuse his sacred scriptures as a foolish pastime, but to consider diligently, and indeed to realise feelingly3 in their conscience, where our justification comes from and our eternal salvation. For although by the ministers of the Word we have knowledge of the articles of our faith, nevertheless this means of teaching by dialogues may somewhat serve the purpose. And in as much as the article of justification is the foundation of all Christian doctrine, I thought that this manner of speaking through characters would not be unprofitable in bringing us to some awareness of it. For indeed I have done nothing but take the pronouncements of holy Scripture on which this doctrine is founded and ordered them in the form of French verse, knowing that this manner of composing is not unworthy of the holy Scripture, considering that a certain part of it has been so composed. It is true that I have not taken such great care of the suitability and perfection of that rhythm (as the low style of my writing shows well enough) as of the truth of the doctrine, which is Christian and not poetic, since, moreover, I am far from being a poet. Now, I have wished to show in this “Mankind Justified” the diverse opinions that are held of justification, some saying it comes by works, others by faith, concluding that it is only God our Lord who, by his grace alone, justifies us and pardons us our sins in his son Jesus Christ, whom we apprehend with all his benefits by means of living faith. Such is our object, which (if we understand well) we understand to be the principal part of all Christian doctrine. And although such a means of teaching in French verse is easy and delectable, nevertheless it is not adapted to all minds, since not everyone can readily propose in this manner all the necessary points that the question involves. I have said “to all minds”. For I know well that many have the elegance and gift to compose as well as to understand all good doctrine, not less in verse than in prose – many, but not all. For that reason I am myself not satisfied to have treated the subject of justification in French verse. And indeed I did not know how sufficiently to make an exposition in such a form of composition, nor similarly to respond to several objections and arguments that one might advance on the subject. Therefore, I have determined, with God’s help, after this to write a little treatise in prose on the subject, not containing other matter, but to declare in greater perfection what has been

2 “[F]ine ability”; orig. “bonne grace”, a term which here, as in the next sentence, where I translate it as “attractiveness”, seems calculated to contrast with the spiritual grace on which the play will insist.

3 “[R]ealise feelingly”: orig. “epreuuent”.
briefly touched upon – showing manifestly what are justification, faith, law, good works, and what their true use is according to the holy Scriptures. With regard to the disposition and order which I have followed in this tragicomedy, I have arranged it by acts and scenes, not so much in imitation of comic poets, as in order to divide the speeches and dialogue – also so that one may make a pause at certain points, if by chance one were to have it read or set forth in public performance. But if that is done, once again I pray all its readers and auditors that this may be in all modesty and reverence for God and for his Word, and that the holy Scripture, which was bestowed by God with marvellous indications for our salvation, should not be turned to derision and mockery, and consequently be made an occasion for our perdition. Hoping, therefore, that it will be used legitimately, and in a Christian manner, for the honour of God and the edification of faithful consciences, I set it forth and give it wholeheartedly to all those who desire the advancement of the reign of Jesus Christ, by whom I pray our good God and father to maintain and increase in us all his holy grace, imprinting in us knowledge of him, so much so that it shall bring forth the fruits of good works in his honour, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prologue

Since you seek, with honourable desires,
Such pastime as both pleases and inspires,
To your minds is now to be presented
What will do you good and make you contented,
Which will show by agreeable discourse
Our ultimate useful and sweet recourse
Called Justification of our condition,
And how it is that we may have remission
Of our sins, in addition to the favour
Of gracious God, our father and saviour.

You will see, therefore, the causes of sin,
Also how mankind, being steeped therein,
Comes by the Law his state to recognise,
So that, seeing he is, by sturdy ties,
To Sin and Death bound in captivity,
With all his might he struggles to break free.
Rabbi says that, his mind to pacify,
The Law’s conditions he must satisfy.
Paul says not so, since the Lord will by grace
All the sins of those who repent efface.
But the sinner his faith in Rabbi places,
So that soon after great dismay he faces:
In service to the Law he pays the price
Of knowing and feeling still more his vice.
That’s why Rabbi veils the Law’s countenance,
While the sinner claims that each ordinance
He follows – but none in reality:
Thus he becomes a perfect Pharisee.

By Pharisee we would have understood
That man whose heart contains no truthful good,
But only the appearance and the show,
Who in his life and mode of thought is also
Distinct from other mortals and apart,
Thirsting to have the world to him impart
All honour at all times and preference;
Who, if he sometimes succours indigence,
Does so only to make himself admired,
Sure he has the power and force acquired
To gain salvation by his goods alone
And Paradise obtain, too, for his own.
The Pharisee is a great hypocrite:
God’s name’s in his mouth, and matching to it
Most holy words, but his heart nothing fills
Except ambition and all other ills.
Now, being in that state, he is content
A little while, but then, subject to judgement,
Sees himself arrayed with every fault
And is quite overwhelmed by that assault.
His fall into despair your eyes will trace,
And desperate indeed would be his case
If Faith and Grace divine did not prevent
That deadly ruin which was imminent.
But you will see him by Faith elevated,
And in the rank of a Christian instated,
For such firm assurance he will possess
Of the benevolence and loving goodness
Of holy God by Jesus Christ his Son
That lasting peace of mind will then be won.
Now the threats of Satan from him are barred
Because he trusts in God as his safe-guard;
Therefore he’ll offer on each due occasion
In steadfast Faith to God his orison,
And him adoring warmly, faithfully,
By Grace he’ll come to live eternally.

Please you, then, grant us the sweet gift of silence,
And you may rest assured that in his conscience
Each one of you will be interpellated.
So well, also, is the story related,
That there is no person to whom we’d say
He’s not – in silence – welcome to this play.

[F]oy” and “grace” are not in upper case in the original here, but the text is inconsistent on the practice, and I have chosen to capitalise spiritual qualities where the reference is felt to evoke an allegorical character; the inevitable slippage between an abstraction and its embodiment is often exploited deliberately.

“[L]oving goodness”: orig. “bonté”.
The insistence on silence (reiterated in l. 70) is standard and confirms that the play was intended for staging, while ll. 69-70 suggest a broad public.
Act I

Argument

We have brought The Law onstage first in this tragicomedy to show that God has imprinted his Law on our understandings, and made it manifest to us by his living voice, so that none can be excused because he has not heard it. From the Law comes the Spirit of Fear, which is in man before he is completely bereft of sense by his Concupiscence. Next we show that Satan, the mortal enemy of God and of his ordinances, attempts to thwart the glory of God and the salvation of man, in that he attracts all men to evil through their Concupiscence. And because it has pleased God to wish to draw sinners to penitence by the mystery of the Word, we have placed there two ministers, signifying two means by which God calls us: namely, by threats and fear, and by promises and love, thereby illustrating the diversity of opinions on this question, and showing that there are false ministers seducing sinners on the pretext of holy Scripture, whom the spirit must judge whether they are of God or not. Now in the beginning, the sinner rejects both of them, because they wish to turn him away from sin, not yet being touched by the virtue of the Law and the spirit of God in his conscience.

Scene i

The Law, The Spirit of Fear

THE LAW

1 Hear me, you heavens, the earth and the sea,
2 And all you mortals, young and old, hear me!
3 Hear the Law speaking, your sovereign mistress,
4 For it's to you that I my words address.
5 How comes it that, though by you so reviled,
6 And from amongst you cruelly exiled,
7 I still exist? What thing is so perverse,
8 So horrible in all the universe,
9 That you regard with as much deadly hate
10 As holy Law? O nature reprobate!
11 Exists there any monster apt to ravage,
12 Were it Satan or some devil more savage,
13 That would not by you be well entertained
14 And dearly by the lot of you maintained?
15 And I, who am so just and so divine,
16 Of ruin am made to carry the sign,
17 And therefore am allowed so little worth
18 That I cannot remain at peace on earth.
19 From that time when God sent me to the world,
20 Against me all mortals hatred have hurled;
21 What's more, their hearts are so corrupt within,
22 They dare to name me causer of their sin,
23 In that there can exist no violation

Rom. 4
And as a consequence no condemnation,
Where earlier no Law had been established.
It is the Law, therefore, they say, that's furnished
Occasion so often to be delinquent:
Wrong your conclusion, false your argument!
It's true that God, for all the human race,
The holy Law has justly put in place,
But not so that Law (as the wicked claim)
May cause the fault for which they are to blame,
But rather to denote that there is distance
Between God and you, for great arrogance
Would make the creature claim an equal place
With his Creator. Oh, you rotten race!
What boldness! Law compels you to accord
Your Creator's rights as master and Lord.
The Law of prelature is thus a sign;
By her are also taught the feats divine
Of the Almighty: who else can instil
In man the knowledge of his Author's will?
Now, then, when he his Maker's Law transgresses,
Himself a shifting liar he confesses.
It follows thus that God is justified
As alone (though this by sinners is denied)
Just and perfect, constant and veritable;
And so the Law, in essence equitable,
Must serve you as a rampart high and wide,
Encompassing Mankind on every side.
Without Law, what safety for anyone?
No parent would be honoured by his son;
No one could be sure to preserve his life;
Right out of your hands, your own wedded wife

8 “Oh, you rotten race!”: orig. “O pourriture!”. Cf. the Law’s later accusation that Mankind’s “heart to rottenness is wed [il a le cœur du tout pourry]” (IVii.1275).
9 The same word in French as in English, and distinctive enough to require retaining. The term inevitably evokes the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy, and in the Reformist context would surely have been self-discrediting on the part of Law. The latter thus becomes associated with both Jewish and Catholic perversions of the truth; hence it is suggested from a double perspective that “she” needs to be put in her legitimate but limited place.
10 The repetition “justified”/”just” is in the original.
Would be ravished away; and at all moments
Your house you might see pillaged of its contents.
In short, without Law disorder would reign,
For even she can scarcely it restrain,
So far advanced, alas, is your corruption.

Therefore I say to you, as my conclusion,
That there is need that God should laws dictate
To range all things by number, size and weight,
For otherwise there’s nothing can persist
In stable state. Therefore, you must resist
No longer, but render obedience
With all your heart, or else here is the sentence
Which God has given you by his decree:
That all of you condemned to death shall be
The very moment you have transgressed me.
I wish it to be stated publicly,
So that none shall offend by ignorance.

Now, what is more, by divine ordinance
I must, since you will thus your love deny
To God, all-gentle, to your hearts apply
That spirit whose title is servile Fear.
[to the Spirit of Fear]
Now, then, spirit agile and light, appear
All mortals to maintain beneath Law’s sway,
For I’ve seen them do ill in every way.
If by constraint they could not be dissuaded.
I dearly wish that they could be persuaded
By honest love and fear that’s mild and kind,
But there’s no point: force must be used to bind
Them, till that time when they’re made capable

---

11 Orig.: “Qu’il est besoing que par loix toute chose / En poidz, mesure, & nombre Dieu dispose”. The reference is clearly to Wisd. 11:17, where God is praised for withholding his infinite power to punish sinful mankind with destruction: “but thou has ordered all things in measured number and weight”. In the 1562 Geneva bible, the apocryphal books are printed after the canonical books of the Old Testament. While rejected by Reformation theologians as not sacredly inspired (in contrast with the canonical status confirmed for Roman Catholics by the Council of Trent [1546]), the Apocrypha were still generally held in high regard; Luther translated the Book of Wisdom (also known as the Wisdom of Solomon).

12 Orig.: “vser de contrainte / Faut”. The dislocating inversion and enjambment accentuate the vio-
Of such great good.

THE SPIRIT OF FEAR

I count agreeable

Your holy words, O mother most respected.

By me your noble will shall be effected,¹⁴

Forcing mankind harsh servitude to bear.

Thus I shall employ my study and care

From the Eternal’s wrath to keep them free,

Declaring to them the most grave decree

Proclaimed by God against those who transgress

His holy Law. And then I shall, relentless,

Hammer them with threats of death everlasting.

In short, they’ll find no refuge from my blasting.

Scene ii

Satan, Sin, Death, Concupiscence

Satan¹⁴

With rage for evil I’m infected;

All things to bring unto perdition,

For such indeed is my ambition.

Yes, I said all – for all is mine

That’s found within the earth’s confine.

There is no punctuation after l. 156 or l. 157 in the original, and the latter could be taken to depend grammatically on either the preceding or the following verse. The former solution seems to me preferable, and I punctuate accordingly.

Satan’s self-introduction here is comparable in its comic-threatening tone, and broadly in content (though less aggressively anti-Catholic), to the opening monologue of Satan in Nathaniel Woodes, *An excellent new commedie intituled, The conflict of conscience containinge a most lamentable example of the dolefull desparation of a miserable worldlinge, termed by the name of Philologus, etc.* (London: Richard Braddock, 1581), I.i; online, Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A68918.0001.001/1:1?rgn=div1;view=fulltext>; accessed 19 April 2017). See Introduction, n. 49. Other possible anticipations of Woodes’s interlude are noted below.
All's held beneath my potency;
Mine is all the excellency
And grandeur that this world can boast:
Those who of learning have the most;
Those said all-powerful to be;
Those shining so resplendently
With some species of sanctity;
Judges filled with iniquity;
The haughty in their pride's great height,
Who trace my ways by day and night;
Procurers, too, of benefices;
Those who pursue great offices –
All such I count within my fold:
They are the grand whom I uphold –
Then leave the bastards\footnote{Orig. \textit{"coquins"}.} to God's care!\footnote{The irony here is compounded by the idea that Satan functions only as permitted within the divine scheme.}
Much good it does aloud to blare
And curse mankind with vehemence,
Threatening dire consequence!
All of that like the wind goes by.
The Law is wont to rail and cry
Against these mortals, well advised
To turn to good. I'm not surprised:
I know quite well that in my power
All mortals lie from their first hour,
More than the Law's, which makes them groan,
While I – let it be widely known –
Have ways that coddle them and please,
And one chief means to do them ease
And draw them without violence,
Namely, my daughter Concupiscence.
By her I fetch them all my way.
The Law may well cry out and say
What she likes, for I'll do so well
That in terror of me shall dwell,
More than of her, all humankind.
Not one of them, in sum, you’ll find
Who does not grovel at my feet.
[to Sin and Death]
Now, children, boldness I entreat!

**Sin**

Why doubts my father and creator?¹⁷
Must our mettle be still greater?
Our triumph is prepared, and well,
For dragging all mankind to hell.
Just let us our craft exercise,
For all that’s covered by the skies
Fears us and is obedient.
Where are the mighty and the potent
Whom we do not strike down for you?
Where is David, where his virtue?
Say where the brilliant judgement lies
Of Solomon so great and wise.
Cyrus, Alexander, Darius –
Even Caesar could not parry us:
So many monarchs turned to ashes,¹⁸
As all mankind our power dashes!
Am I not Sin, of matchless force
Because I am of Death the source?
I dominate all humankind,
Him, indeed, of filthiest mind,
Although by him I am committed.
Then, perfect father, we are fitted –
What course of action do you choose?

**Satan**

I wish henceforth to see us use¹⁹
Our privileges and our full rights.

¹⁷ “[M]y father and creator”: orig. “mon pere & auteur”. Here, as elsewhere, the evil characters parody the language of divinity.
¹⁹ “[U]se”: orig. “visions”; Reynolds-Cornell, ed., gives “usion”, which must be a typographical error.
The Law proclaims it from the heights
That our rule mortals should reject,
Not ceasing harsh threats to direct
To have us be no longer served,
And she alone to be observed,
And this on pain of stark damnation.

**Sin**

All serves the end of their perdition,\(^{20}\)
Since in the end, it’s empty breath.
As long as man’s subject to death,
From me he cannot be immune –
That’s sure.

**Satan**

But him to importune,
By Fear he is now to be haunted.
Well, anyway, I’m not too daunted,
Being certain that you will do
For me the most you’re able to.

**Concupiscence**

Who will refuse what you command,
Belovéd father of our band?\(^{21}\)
The eldest daughter, am I not,
My dear progenitor begot,
Who bears the name of Concupiscence?
For since I took up residence
In human nature, spawned by you,
I am the offspring of you two.
Due honour, then, I you accord
As to my father and true lord.

\(^{20}\) The imperfect rhyme “damnation”/”perdition” is identical in the original.

Moved by you, moreover, I find
That all desire, with eager mind,
To harbour me.

Satan
I know it well;
That's why no more in doubt I dwell.

Concupiscence
Then let us leave the Law to cry
Along with servile Fear.

Death
And I –
Into this life I made my entry,
Father Satan, through your own envy;
You first engendered me by Sin
When to the world she entered in
Through Adam. Therefore, tell me how
You wish to use me.

Satan
Wait for now –
You all shall serve me. [to Concupiscence]
For this time,
To make that sinner sure in crime,
You must give him blandishments
To comfort him in his intents,
Use words of soothing kind to ease him.

Concupiscence
I know well what things will please him.
For if he has not liberty,

22 I change the original reference’s “2.d” to conform to the standard numbering; it is clearly the last verse of Wis. 2 that is cited: “Neuertheles, thorow enuy of the deuil came death into the worlde: and they that holde of his side proue it.” “[E]nuie” in l. 196 of the French text surely plays on the sense of sexual desire.
23 Orig.: “Il te le faut entretenir”. Reynolds-Cornell, ed., omits “le”, as is clearly erroneous.
Is not from all subjection free
To God or Law, he feels frustrated;
Nothing by him is so much hated
As when he’s held in such subjection.
I follow closely his affection,
Cause him with clarity to see
He has no master, and is free.
Thus my advice he’s bound to heed.

Satan
That is a precious means indeed.
Go: experience is the way
To know who bears the greater sway –
God, who from sin Mankind would guard,
Or I, who want him from good barred.

Scene iii
Mankind [in sin],
Concupiscence, The Spirit of Fear

Who has ever been so unfortunate
As I, conceived and born in human state?
Who was ever so mutable and fragile
As I, just like the earth that made me, vile?
Who was ever to more evils made subject,
Even among beasts, and the most abject?
What thing is there that on the earth bears life
That feels in itself such dangerous strife,
As I, mere mortal? Casting my glance wide,
Enemies I see on every side:
Above my head the Law looms threatening;

24 Orig. “L’homme pecheur”.
25 Mankind’s vivid imagery of enemies above, below and around him evokes a dynamic three-level staging, at least imaginatively.
I see below the form of hell’s great king;¹⁶
I see besides them Satan, Death and Sin –
All of a single mind to drag me in.
I am enclosed all round by Concupiscence;
The Spirit of Fear that stirs in my conscience
Troubles me much.¹⁷ Alas, what must I do?
One must please God – I know well it is true –
By keeping his Law, but also intense is
In my flesh another, drawing my senses.
And so I am caught between two contraries,
Which promises, alas, great difficulties.
What then? To God I must commit my cause,
Beseech that to him my spirit he draws,
And that, if into sin they should deceive me,
By Grace he would be willing to relieve me.
And even now already I’m aware
That Concupiscence comes: I must take care.

Concupiscence

How now, my friend, tormenting yourself still,
And for no reason? Not yet had your fill?
You were created of such noble kind;
The very child of heaven is your mind;
Your understanding clear and deftly wise,
Sufficient quite to penetrate the skies;
Your reasoning power, so just and fair,
Suffices to make you fully aware
Of difference between the good and bad:
From your self-torment, what gain’s to be had?
Do you fear God? What is that God? A dream!
The Law’s a lie, whatever she may seem;
The rest are nothing but pure fantasies,
And all their speeches merely mockeries.
And so, my friend, know your own excellence;
To no one should you give obedience;
You are sufficient to bear your own sway.
Remain, therefore, at all times blithe and gay;
As such you can live in greater content:
Deliver your mind, therefore, from this torment,
And let no master over you appear.

Oh, how your words are pleasing to my ear!

Mankind

The Spirit of Fear [entering]
Sinner, the Law, your great lady and mistress,
Is at hand. You see, too, Sin’s heinousness,
Death and Satan – all three enforcers here.

Mankind

My darling, alas, that’s just what I fear!

Concupiscence

By apprehension you need not be pained:

The repetition of “suffisant(e)” in the original ironically insists on the danger of relying on human reason in its fallen state. The seduction of Mankind by Concupiscence here obviously recalls that of Eve by the serpent. Cf. also Temptation’s approach to Humanité in Jean d’Abondance (i.e., Jehan d’Abundance), Le Gouvert d’humanité, ed. Xavier Leroux (Paris: H. Champion, 2011), ll.223 ff., which includes flattering his physical and moral excellence (“Extraict estes de noble rasse!” [l. 233]); henceforth cited as Le Gouvert.

Orig. “sergens”.

Orig. “Ma mie”: a standard term of endearment for a woman; Concupiscence has, after all, seduced him and made him dependent on her. This is evident also in his childishness. While the pattern is not explicit here, it is common in morality plays to trace the protagonist’s progression from youth to age. Cf. below, ll. 346, 1082.
For all these things, I promise you, are feigned."

**The Spirit of Fear**

- Do you not know that God has founded fast  
  His holy Law, that He has sentence passed  
  Of death on those who scorn commands of hers?  
  Don’t you see the three executioners,  
  Ready to exercise on you their might?

**Mankind**

Alas, my dear, I tremble at the sight.

**Concupiscence**

- By apprehension you need not be pained:  
  For all these things, I promise you, are feigned."
  We simply need to make you unafraid.

**The Spirit of Fear**

- How do you think you can the Law evade?  
  The potency how could you ever shun  
  Of God most-high? Alas, where could you run?  
  Don’t you fear the harsh sceptre in her hand?  
  See Satan, Sin and Death, who ready stand,  
  If you offend, to strike with all their might?

**Mankind**

Alas, my dear, I tremble at the sight."

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31 Cf. the false reassurance by Sensual Suggestion of Woodes’s Philologus, whose conscience torments him with fear of the divine wrath: “These are but fancies certainly” (IViv). Sensual Suggestion has accosted him in his spiritual despond, as Concupiscence does Mankind, and distracts him by showing him all manner of worldly pleasures in a “mirrour” (IVi). Suggestion is the Vices’ effective last resort in corrupting the protagonist, but, like all the characters in *The Conflict of Conscience*, he is male, and his operations lack the seductive dimension of Concupiscence. Generally parallel, too, is the attempt of Infidelitie to cheer up the conscience-stricken protagonist in Lewis Wager, *The Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene*, *Reformation Biblical Drama in England: An Old-spelling Critical Edition*, ed. Paul Whitfield White (New York: Garland Publishing, 1992), ll. 1234–40, 1309–12. In this context, it appears that a well-worn motif is being reoriented ironically whenErreur in *Le Gouvert* insists that Catholic teachings are fabrications: e.g., “Caresme n’est que fiction [Lent is a mere fiction]” (l. 983); cf. ll. 1441, 1489, and 1517.

32 Ll. 353–54 exactly repeat ll. 345–46.

33 A repetition of l. 352.
Concupiscence

He makes things up – he’s not to be believed.
Now just, so that your fear may be relieved,
Put on this blindfold.  

[Concupiscence covers the eyes of Mankind, and, when he fidgets, says to him:]
Wait, I’m almost done.

[Having blindfolded him, she shows him the Law, Sin and Death, saying:]
Now don’t you see that it’s a perfect fiction?

The Spirit of Fear

Truly, blind from your day of birth you went,
But God to you had much great knowledge lent.
But now to be blindfolded by her hand
Has made you blind indeed.

At your command
She ought to be, and by you subdued,
For by your mind you could to servitude
Reduce her: let her, then, to reason bow.

Mankind

Right, Fear, go on – get out of my house now!
Too long I’ve been in servitude to you!

The Spirit of Fear

[aside] Henceforth, he’ll be determined to pursue
His sensuality in all he can,
Since I am disdained, put under the ban,
Having no fear, he’ll turn to every vice.

---

34 Orig. “voile” (“veil”), corresponding to the veil later placed over the Law, which is biblical in origin, but the term is misleading in English. Cf. the blindness of Philologus in Woodes’s interlude, induced by Suggestion’s distracting mirror.

35 There is a comically maternal touch to the relation here that underlines Mankind’s childishness.

36 Satan is not mentioned – presumably an accidental omission, given l. 290.

37 Cf. Conscience in Woodes’s interlude:

Such is the blindnesse of the flesh, that it may not descrie,
Or sée the perrils which the Soule, is ready to incurre:
And much the lesse, our owne estates, we can our selues espie:
Because Suggestion in our hartes such fancies often stirre:
Wherby to worldly vanities, we cleaue as fast as burre.
(IV.iii)
[to Concupiscence] I well know it’s your practice to entice

These straying mortals, cunning Concupiscence,
Causing them thus all their knowledge and sense
To lose, until they nothing can perceive –
Not God, or Law, or hell – nor can receive
In their ears God’s voice which calls them in vain
To him. Then, now that wasted is my pain,
I shall withdraw, hoping that in my turn,
Together with the Law, I may return.  [Exit the Spirit of Fear.]

Scene iv
Satan, Sin, Death, Concupiscence

SATAN
Oh, I’m filled with a flood of joy:
The blindfold was a wily ploy!
Let’s leave him therefore at his ease
And listen to those words that please.

SIN
I’ll rest and let her edify.\(^{38}\)

DEATH
And I.\(^{39}\)

SATAN
How sweetly she’ll him ply!
[to Concupiscence]
But you must with solicitation,
Darling, and steady instigation,
Urge him to every sort of pleasure.

---

\(^{38}\) “[E]dif y”: I choose the term advisedly, given its common use for religious instruction.

\(^{39}\) Reynolds-Cornell, ed., makes this a question, as is not indicated in the original and does not seem necessary.
Concupiscence

I'll do your will in fullest measure:

Have I not rather well begun?

Satan

Our cause is much advanced, not won,

And nothing will be gained till more

We do.

Concupiscence

All things I'm ready for.

Satan

Then listen to me. What we need

Is for your coaxing to succeed

In making him the Law attack:

From doing so he'll not hold back,

For sight he's lost, all thanks to you,

And will not have her in his view.

From fear he'll have immunity

And act sure of impunity.

Concupiscence

Just so I'll do as you command.

Satan

And I'll be waiting close at hand.

Scene v

Mankind, Concupiscence

Mankind

Now a restful life I visualise,

Regardless of the Law, and of her allies.

Enough prudence and wisdom can't I boast
For someone of my age – and more than most?
Then I'll submit to no authority.
Dear Concupiscence, you're enough for me!

**Concupiscence**
A worthy resolution, wise indeed;
A blissful life the two of us will lead!

**Mankind**
Whatever you wish, I promise to do.

**Concupiscence**
If you trust me, all pleasures will accrue.

**Mankind**
Even as my mistress I'll defer to you;
Down with Law! All matters I'll refer to you!

**Concupiscence**
Destroy the Law: let's go and do the deed.

**Mankind**
I cannot see her – help, a guide I need.
[being in front of the Law]
Now, then, come on – grab it all, smash and tear:
[as he strikes the Law]
Look, like mere wax, I rend it everywhere.⁴⁰
Of God, all the devils, I'm not afraid,
Sin, or Death – they're just fables Fear has made.
Have I not finally been rendered free? –
In which state always I intend to be!

⁴⁰ Seemingly a clue to staging: Mankind may well be breaking a waxen model of the tablets on which the Law is inscribed, but the original tablets were of stone, and of course he cannot destroy the Law itself. In Wager's play, The Lawe enters "holding stone tablets" (l. 1108 SD), in keeping with traditional iconography.
Scene vi
Rabbi, Mankind, Satan, Concupiscence

RABBI

363 How this world turns and turns about;
364 All, I see, will go inside-out,
365 Unless I set affairs to rights.
366 They all chase after vain delights,
367 Like animals completely senseless:
368 God’s laws they readily transgress,
369 Of hesitation show no trace;
370 Then are they not a wicked race?
371 It’s evident I must take charge
372 And give them warning clear and large
373 Against their deeds to Law contrary;
374 For I see no one besides me
375 To plead her case with zeal so burning:
376 I am her Rabbi, full of learning.
377 To all, then, I the Law must preach."
378 Here, now, the sinner comes in reach;
379 With him I’ll show myself severe.
380 [to Mankind] Villain, come here! Have you no fear
381 Of God and of his pending judgement?
382 Where is the knowledge he has sent?
383 What do you think? Can you not tell
384 You’ll quickly find yourself in hell
385 If soon to God you don’t resort?

MANKIND

386 Now what wind blew you to this port

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41 Cf. Rom. 2:17-20:
17 Behold, thou art called a Iew, and restest in the Law, and gloriest in God.
18 And knowest (his) will, and alowest the things that are excellent, in that thou art instructed by the Law.
19 And persuadest thy self that thou are a guide of the blinde, a light of them which are in darkenes.
20 An instructor of them which lacke discretion, a teacher of the vnlearned, which hast the forme of knowledge, and of the truth in the Law.
387  To bring me up with words so short?
388  I like only pleasure and sport,⁴³
389  And now you come to nettle me!

**RABBI**

390  Just like some beast, then, will you be,
391  Not having God before your eye?

**SATAN**

392  Hold your noise, O glorious Rabbi!
393  Who asked you to come here today?
394  May every evil come your way!
395  Your words my hearing mortify.
396  [to Concupiscence – a whispered suggestion]
397  “Let that God in heaven remain.”⁴⁵
398  For if he starts his thoughts to send him,
399  He’ll be afraid and not offend him.

**CONCUPISENCe [to Mankind]**

400  Let that God in heaven remain.

**MANKIND [to Rabbi]**

401  Let that God in heaven remain.
402  To God I will pay no attention:
403  Let simply my own will be done,
404  As up till now has been assured.

**RABBI**

405  O how your senses are obscured,
406  Having of God no cognizance!
407  But know that by such ignorance
408  Evil will you more deeply stain.

---

⁴² Ll. 385-88 likewise rhyme on the same sound in the original.
⁴³ Satan thus “prompts” Concupiscence, who passes the message to Mankind. The echoing effects and repetitions beginning with this line make an effective dramatic technique, as well as a shrewd allegorical point. The rhyme scheme becomes unusually intricate for the rest of the scene.
MANKIND
Let that God in heaven remain.

RABBI
I see your flesh and heart inured
To every vice and violation,
God’s will held in abomination,
So full of twisted spite your brain.

MANKIND
Let that God in heaven remain.

RABBI
With such a life as that procured,
Making mere pleasure your ambition,
You will go straight to your perdition.
Leave bad, and good you will obtain.

MANKIND
Let that God in heaven remain.
To God I will pay no attention:
Let simply my own will be done,
As up till now has been assured.
Go, dreamer! Enough I’ve endured! [Exit Rabbi.]

Scene vii
Paul, Satan, Concupiscence, Mankind

PAUL
Sure it is that a noble heart
Is called to play a gentle part,
And rigour is no way to teach,
So I will go to him and preach,
Advising him that God, by Grace,
Each sinner would in Christ embrace,
If he in Faith to him resorts;
430 But if with vice he still consorts,
431 Pursues the course of his abuse,
432 He shall be held beyond excuse,
433 Having to stubborn hardness turned.
434 [to Mankind] Listen, my friend, God is concerned
435 For you, loves you without surcease;
436 Do likewise, then, yourself and cease
437 To be to him antagonistic.

SATAN
438 O what a cunning heretic!\[44\]
439 A hundred devils take the bastard!
440 That song he sings could hit us hard,
441 So soft and sweet is its refrain.

CONCUPISCENCE
442 I’ll make it such a source of pain
443 That he’ll prefer to leave it quite.
444 [to Mankind] If you want to pursue delight,
445 Of that liar no word retain.

MANKIND [to Paul]
446 Let that God in heaven remain.

PAUL
447 All will show of some vice the trace;
448 But if you live so all the time,
449 Seeking merely riot and crime,
450 You give yourself too dark a stain.

MANKIND
451 Let that God in heaven remain.

PAUL
452 Pardon by Christ Jesus’ Grace

\[44\] Orig.: “O L’heretique ingenieux!” Besides the comic incongruity of the term “heretic” in Satan’s mouth, one may detect a (literally) damning echo of Catholic condemnations of the doctrine Paul represents. Cf. below, II.v.849.
You’ll have for all, if you repent:
Then do, before the time is spent;
Do not his tender care disdain.

MANKIND
Let that God in heaven remain.
Get out of here – don’t show your face!

Scene viii

Paul [as he leaves]
Oh, it’s a task of daunting measure
To draw towards true penitence
Mankind, when he with Concupiscence
Follows merely lust and pleasure.
He is now the prisoner sure
Of Satan, who controls his sense;
Both Love and Fear he does abjure,
With God, in rank irreverence.

Scene ix
Concupiscence, Mankind

Concupiscence
So trust to me, my friend,

Cornell-Reynolds, ed., plausibly suggests that, given the lyric quality and form of this scene, it may have been sung or danced. The *carpe diem* message is, of course, undermined by ironic reminders of death, time and divinity, while the idyllic mood gives way at the end to unease, especially on the part of Concupiscence, who knows better. There are similarities to the lyric effusions in *Le Gouvert*, as the protagonist is seduced in the tavern (ll. 321 ff.); there Remort de Conscience, when he intervenes, is dismissed as a spoilsport by Peché: “Mais d’ou dyable vient ce folia, / Qui nous vient icy caquetter? [But where the devil does that idiot come from who comes here to chatter to us?]” (ll. 379-80). Cf. Satan’s rebuke of Rabbi above, I.vi.392-94.
All turmoil let us end
And live deliciously.
No care our bliss shall sever;
Let us live thus forever,
Both well\textsuperscript{46} and joyously.

\textbf{MANKIND}

Live thus I wish to do,
My darling, just we two,
Never-\textit{ever} to part.
Let’s follow our desire,
Push all our pleasures higher;
They’ll always have my heart.

\textbf{CONCUPISCENCE}

We two will always be
Together, happily
Living our days well spent.
While you with me remain
And give your will free rein,
You will live free from torment.

\textbf{MANKIND}

I will believe, my dear,
Your words, and persevere
Always as they direct.
I love your counsel well;
In counsel you excel:
Each part I will respect.

\textbf{CONCUPISCENCE}

Let’s leave these underlings
Who spoil talk of good things.
Let them go hang\textsuperscript{47} elsewhere.

\textsuperscript{46} Orig. “\[b\]ien”; both the material and (ironically) the moral senses apply.
\textsuperscript{47} “\space{"H}ang”; orig. “resuer”—literally, “sweat”, but the sense is of a rude dismissal.
MANKIND
493  I’ve said to them good-bye,48
494  But I’m afraid they’ll try
495  Again here to repair.

CONCUPISCENCE
496  Then let us rather fly,
497  For, not to tell a lie,
498  Those types – I like them not.

MANKIND
499  Well, I don’t give a damn,
500  Free from fear as I am
501  That I’ll believe one jot!49

48 “[G]ood-bye”: orig. “A-dieu”, which is strongly ironic in context; I have tried to recuperate the irony in the wording of l. 499.
49 The evocation of damnation is not there in the original but is consistent with the ironic mentions of fear (“crainte”) and belief (“croye”).
Act II
Argument

We show in the second the means whereby the sinner comes to cognizance of his sin, namely by the strength of the Law, the transgression of which engenders the ire of God. Consequently, the sinner is put into the power of Sin and Death, to the point where he would desire to be out of this world, as a result of suffering such torment, although in this way he may not by any means depart, but will enter more deeply into them, as is declared to him by the Law. Therefore, he seeks the means of having remission from his sins, whereupon the two ministers arrive: one proposes justification by the Law and by good works, the other by true repentance and Faith in the mercy of God. But the sinner believes the former. Thus he is placed in service to the Law.

Scene i
Rabbi, Paul Mankind, Concupiscence

RABBI

502 Uselessly, Paul, our time we spend;
503 But listen – here’s what I intend:
504 To bring him back to cognizance
505 Both of himself and of his conscience,
506 From every vice to turn his head,
507 Unto the Law he must be led,
508 For Law will make him realise
509 How gravely him who rules the skies,
510 The sovereign God, his ways offend.

PAUL

511 My thoughts in this direction tend:
512 That upon Faith we must then call
513 To comfort him, for he will fall
514 By the Law into grievous woe.
515 Of that I’m sure, for I also
516 Was just as subject to his flaw,
517 A wretch who, living without Law,
518 Did with my will too much comply,
519 But then, the living God on high
520 Showed through the Law his angry face.\(^{10}\)

---

Paul’s conversion experience made him the perfect model and instrument for converting others; especially pertinent to Barrani’s treatment is his former zealouclus in promoting Jewish law and tradition (see Gal. 1:13-14).
So I drew back and turned to Grace,
To seek and have from God his pardon,
Who deigned to give me his dear Son,
Being by Faith to him directed.

**Rabbi**

See him flee there, by sin infected!
Let us go after him and take him;
The Law without a doubt will make him
Know how damnable is his state.

[taking the sinner]

Come here, O Mankind reprobate!
Will you forever favour vice?
Unless you follow my advice,
You will go straight unto perdition.

**Mankind**

Oh, rough and rude is the condition
You present, vile fellow: so far
From hope of pleasing me you are,
I want with you no amity.

**Paul [to Mankind]**

My friend, I have for you great pity,
Seeing your state is damnable.
But if you were amenable,
Our counsel would your ill relieve.

**Mankind**

Your counsel? No word I believe!

**Rabbi [pulling the sinner]**

Here, here, come now.

**Mankind**

What's all this fuss?

**Paul**

For your own good, come now with us.
MANKIND [to Concupiscence]

How do you take this, mistress mine?

Concupiscence

Dear friend, I fear they’ve some design
To ambush you.

MANKIND

I’m not afraid.

Their hands we’ll easily evade
When we want to.

Paul

It’s for your profit.

MANKIND

Well, then, give me your hand on it.
Rightly or no, I’ll go along,
But I shall live – don’t get me wrong –
As I have done and always will.

Rabbi [to Paul]

Though harder than an age-old anvil,
Soft he shall once again be made.

Concupiscence

Ah, my heart feels a piercing blade,
Fearing that woe may come our way.

MANKIND

We will follow them, come what may.
Scene ii
Rabbi, the Law, Sin, Death

Rabbi

O Law divine, O dame most excellent,
Humbly to you I offer and present
Mankind hardened, in vice’s grip held tight,
Rejecting God, in falseness his delight.
We have set out for him and preached God’s Word,
But he, perverse, considers it absurd.
I used severity and confrontation;
Another tried with gentle exhortation:
Of Faith and God he simply will not hear,
And so he is immune to Love and Fear.
In short, there is no means to set him straight
But you, who will impress on him the state
He’s been reduced to by that vice of his.
So therefore, if you please, now do your office:
Remove his blindfold and restore his sight;
Reduce him with language that will affright,
With which you often make the mountains shake
Causing the heavens, sea and earth to quake,
And smoke to billow from hard stones and rocks:
All hearts impure and swollen your voice shocks.
When you give voice with your own special sound,
Then none so perfect and so good is found
But he his sin confesses straightaway,
And soon enquires for the shortest way
By which to extricate himself from sin.

The Law

Then right away with him I will begin,
The frightful rigour of my face disclosing:
I’ll set on him with language so imposing
That almighty God’s full anger he’ll feel.
[to Sin] Come hither, Sin, and bring in at your heel
Your wages— that’s Death, of which you’re the source;

Orig. “loyer”; I translate so as to evoke Rom. 6:23: “the wages of sinne is death”. The French Gen
Engender in him the cruellest remorse
Of conscience, then eat at him constantly:
Thus you'll see to what degree foul and filthy
Is his way of living, his nature too.

**SIN**
If I’ve merely slumbered hitherto,
It’s high time that from slumber I awake.
Come here, O Death, your dreadful dart now take;
Carry with you your scythe, your teeth prepare.

**Death**
My burning darts will serve you anywhere.

**Scene iii**
The Law, Mankind, Sin, Death

**The Law**
O hardened one, with so much vice in you,
Why have you failed to keep your God in view,
So to forestall commission of such ill?
Why have you, false in all, disloyal still,
My son chased from you, the Spirit of Fear?
My voice most holy did you never hear
The sacred will of God to you expounding?
Don’t you know that God, his goodness abounding,
Had granted you great knowledge and good sense?
But now, thanks to the lure of Concupiscence,
The object of my stringent prohibition,
Sense, reason, memory go to perdition.

eva version of 1563 has “gages”, but cf. “le loyer du peché est mort”, likewise referencing Rom. 6, as explicated by Jean Calvin, *Institution de la religion Chrétienne: Composée en latin par Jean Calvin, & translatée en François par lui mesme, & puis de nouveau reuene & augmentée, etc.* (Geneva: Jean Gerard, 1551), p. 345.
You do not know God, his goodness and power;\(^{52}\)
You have not loved him – you don’t to this hour.
Instead, mere false desires to pursue,
Yourself in worldly pleasures to imbue,
You do not cease, and crimes to perpetrate.
Well, now it’s I who’ll make you know your state,
How deeply you are wretched and damnable.
Come, let’s tear off that blindfold detestable,
To show you how extensive are your wrongs,
For that office also to me belongs.

[The Law tears off the blindfold, at which the sinner, astonished,
falls to the ground, whereupon the Law says:]

Then here and now, open your eyes and learn
To feel your God’s ire against you turn.
Don’t you fear, foul one, with horror not thrill,
Starkly exposed to his furious will?
Do you suppose at all that you can shun it?
Do you not feel Sin strike you heart, and stun it,
Threatening you with Death that has no end?
Don’t you see her all her effort\(^{53}\) expend
To make you suffer for eternity?

MANKIND

Ah, what terrible news you bring to me!

SIN [seizing Mankind]

There, I’ve got you, false traitor, fast, and faster:
Acknowledge me now for your lord and master.\(^{54}\)
Death I bestow upon you as your wages:
Strike, then, Death with the full force of your rages.

DEATH [seizing Mankind]

To Death, to Death must you be subjugate:

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\(^{52}\) “[G]oodness and power”: orig. “grand [sic] vertu”, which encompasses both notions.
\(^{53}\) “[H]er effort”: orig. “son effort”, which Reynold-Cornell, ed., unnecessarily makes plural (“ses efforts”).
\(^{54}\) “[L]ord and master”: the original, “Seigneur & maistre”, is likewise unambiguously masculine, although the character is female, as we have just been reminded in l. 690 (“her”, orig. “elle”).
Every sinner falls into that state
Who does not love God but instead despises
His holy Law, which he so greatly prizes.
Does fierce remorse not beat within your head?

MANKIND
Oh yes, Death, it does – I wish I were dead!
Therefore I pray you to end my travails
By leading me to those shadowy vales
Where humans go who leave the world behind.

DEATH
What, do you think, cursed sinner of foul kind,
You will escape us after you have died?
Poor sinner, to illusion you are tied:
Then from our power nothing can detract,
And a cruel vengeance we will exact –
Harsher than that which here before you knew.

SIN [to Mankind]
Dead, more than living, you’ll have a clear view
Of all your sins displayed before your eye.

DEATH [to Mankind]
Do you suppose (I say) that when you die
You’ll be exempted from my lasting reign?
Do you not know that it is there I reign\(^{55}\)
Over sinners much more than I do here?

THE LAW
There to you eternally will appear
God in his wrath, and you will feel his ire
As being – far beyond description – dire.
In short, no end of torments will you know.
[to Sin and Death]
But in the meantime, beat him, strike him, so

\(^{55}\) The identical rhyme on “regne” as verb and noun is present in the original.
That there's no lull in our sweet lullabies.\textsuperscript{56}

\textbf{Sin [striking him]}

There, then, now try another on for size!
Let us strike, O Death, our forces unite.

\textbf{Death}

I'm not pretending – I use all my might.

\section*{Scene iv}
\textbf{The Spirit of Fear, Mankind}

\textbf{The Spirit of Fear}

Do you not now perceive with open eyes
That you’ve angered God, who dwells in the skies?
Do you not feel his fury on you bent
To deal to you horrific punishment?
Do you not see that Sin now does you in,\textsuperscript{57}
That ugly Death has snared you in its gin?

\textbf{Mankind}

I do so, alas, and I feel the pain,
Well knowing it is justly I sustain
All trials, the more because I banished you.

\textbf{The Spirit of Fear}

Yet I with rigour had admonished you,
Showed how the Law, with Sin and Death, was strong.

\textbf{Mankind}

It's true, and so I acted with great wrong
When I rebelled and drove you from my sight;

\textsuperscript{56} [O]ur sweet lullabies”: orig. “en nostre doux langage” (obviously ironic).
\textsuperscript{57} The original likewise features internal rhyme and a play on words: “Peché te despeche”.
Surely I was then in less grievous plight
Than I am now; but alas, tell me, please:
How may I hope to gain a little ease?

The Spirit of Fear

Learn, yet again learn – let this give you pause –
To hold God in fear and revere his laws.
Having the Fear of God as your companion,
Many a sin, because of fear, you’ll shun.
It’s true that, by itself, fear counts as vile,
And I am used to being scorned as servile,
But better that you should with me remain,
Than God quite forsake and his law disdain.
Pray also to God that with loving fear,
Which renders every soul from vices clear,
His spirit may consent your heart to fill.
Nevertheless, let you be mindful still
That by the Law will be broken and dashed
Sinners who are not daunted or abashed.

Scene v
Rabbi, Paul

Rabbi
That sinner’s to the quick astounded.
So on vice was his being grounded
He had to bow beneath the Law
With good sense to repair that flaw.
But I perceive it is by me
From this distress he’ll be set free.
Now God he may well satisfy,
For by the Law he’ll ratify
His thorough reconciliation.

Paul
But lacking any expectation
That Law’s dictates he can observe,
Tell me, then, how his works may serve
To bring the rest he seeks to reach.
Rather, a discourse we should preach
Of Faith and merciful forgiveness.
For that is how God offers access
For all who sin to Grace and pardon.
Thus, I esteem, may he be won
Most readily from his distress.

RABBI

So you’ll teach me my business,
How in this case I must proceed?
I understand quite well his need.

PAUL

Well, let us go and we shall see:
I know what his response will be.

Scene vi
Mankind, Rabbi, Paul, Satan transformed

MANKIND

Alas, how wretched my condition!
Oh, wicked, destined to perdition!
Oh, shall I have no consolation,
No pity for my situation
From someone who might give relief?

RABBI

What could have caused in you such grief,
Poor mortal, and brought you so low?

MANKIND

My friends, I know nothing but sorrow,
And live with pain that is most dire,
For God pours forth on me his ire,
Since I espied the visage blazing,
Heard the voice with power amazing
Of Law, to whom you introduced me;
Alas, see how she has reduced me:
You see she’s brought me to my knees,
Given me to my enemies.

Paul
But you, poor wretch, are your own bane;
Against the Law you plead in vain:
For your woe stems not from her, truly,
But from that treacherous unruly
Concupiscence, which dwells in you.

Mankind
Well I see it – indeed, it’s true:
But for my pain what may be done?

Paul
For all your ills the best solution
Is to nurture sincere repentance,
And place in God full confidence
His pardon to receive and Grace:
For he alone does sins efface
By Christ and his abounding goodness.

Mankind
I wish to ask you, nonetheless:
Will God to succour me assent
As I am now, and be content
With penitence by Faith sustained?
Or need my pardon be obtained
By Law, and I in her confide?

Rabbi
All by the Law are justified.
Paul

Ah, friend, the Law does no such thing.

None is so perfect in his living

That he in everything obeys.

Now, anyone who merely strays

On some small point — know that one must

Not number him among the just.

Thus he earns his God's execration.

See, then, friend: have no expectation

That justice in the Law you'll find;

Through Faith is God's good will inclined

To sinners.

Rabbi

By the Law it's won,

As I well know, I am the one –

Not so? – who boasts a doctor's learning,

Observant, too, and well discerning.

For she has been by God established

And to the whole of mankind furnished

So that his godhead they may serve.

It's by the Law you may deserve

In Paradise your life eternal.

Believe me – it's the truth I tell

And speak to you in perfect conscience.

Paul [to Mankind]

But as you see, for your offence

You by the Law are now consigned

To these tormentors so unkind.

Could you then ever possibly

Repose beneath her rule? You see

---

58 The original adds a question-mark, which Reynolds-Cornell, ed., is surely correct in suppressing.

59 Cf. Jas. 2:10: "For whosoeuer shal kepe the whole Law, (and) yet faileth in one (point,) he is gilty of all".

60 "Justice" is also the term in the original, evidently in the sense of "justification".

61 Orig.: "Voire aussi grand observateur", with "observateur" in the sense of one who conforms to rules.
From that alone there’s not a chance.
But having Faith and with repentance,
God will to you prove merciful.

**RABBI**

Yet first of all he must be mindful
Of the Law, and follow it wholly,
For only through the Law most holy
Will he by God be entertained.

**Paul** [to Mankind]

Go forth to God in Faith unfeigned;
Your hope all on his goodness lay:
By him you’ll not be turned away
But will be welcomed, have no fear.

**Rabbi** [to Mankind]

Come, follow me; don’t linger here.
For he’ll not be by God received
Who never has good works achieved.
Thus to the Law you must submit.

**Paul**

I will teach you a means most fit
To meet with God in fine array:
The garment fresh you must display
Of Christ, which living faith obtains.
As King of Justice sole he reigns,
And his dominion has no term.

**Rabbi**

By the Law comes love that is firm
Towards God and towards your neighbour.

---

62 Poor printing makes this marginal reference doubtfully legible, but “Galat.” is almost certainly correct, as clearly at the beginning of Scene vii. Cf. Gal. 5:6: “For in Jesus Christ neither Circumcision availeth aniething, nether vnecircumcision, but faith that worketh by loue.”
Not for nothing are these asked for,
But you can’t have them without Grace.

Follow me, and you’ll learn to trace
The only path to God – through Law.

Faith brings union with God – not awe;
Then as a Christian you will live,
Service as his true son you’ll give,
And he by Grace will grant your boon.

Yet you must judge and decide soon
Which of us two you will believe.

I beg you for a brief reprieve.

One reads declared in holy Scripture,
Where all is truth and truth is pure,
They are not just who hear Law’s will,
But those prepared it to fulfil.
One owes the Law, then, observation
And by that means may gain salvation.

This gracious spirit have you heard,
By holy writ his truth conferred,
Speak what I told you, every word?

---

Cf. Rom. 2:13: "For the hearers of the Law (are) not righteous before God: but the doers of the Law shalbe justified." Satan’s speech conspicuously omits the same chapter’s strictures against outward conformity, as opposed to that of the “heart” (2:15, 29), and ignores the next chapter: “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the workes of the Law” (Rom. 3:28).
Paul

823 Wait now, for this is quite absurd! 
824 Satan has taken this disguise – 
825 And yet the Scripture he applies 
826 Confirms my case: for since the Law 
827 Cannot be followed without flaw, 
828 None by works gains a perfect state; 
829 Thus hearing is inadequate. 
830 Wherefore you see there must be found 
831 Salvation on some other ground: 
832 The means we have is by God’s Grace, 
833 Which can through Christ our sins efface. 

Rabbi [to Mankind]

834 Don’t believe that, for well I know 
835 That all he says is empty show. 
836 Nothing remains but that we see 
837 Which of us two your guide shall be. 

Mankind

838 The thoughts of both I have well weighed. 
839 Since great offence to God I’ve made 
840 By breaking the Law, then must I 
841 Strive to appease the Lord most-high 
842 By means of Law, and gain his Grace. 

Rabbi

843 I promise you, here in this place, 
844 That if his Law you don’t transgress, 
845 He will free you from this distress 
846 Imposed on you by Death and Sin. 

---

64 In the original, too, successive couplets rhyme on the same sound.
65 This chapter bears pertinently on the distinction between divine truth, as Paul preaches it, and the blind wisdom of this world. Still more obviously to the point is 2 Cor. 13-15 with its distinction between false and true apostles:
   For suche false apostles are deceitful workers, and transforme them selues into the Apostles of Christ.
   14 And no marvelle: for Satan himselfe is transformed into an Angel of light.
   15 Therefore it is no great thing, thogh his ministers transforme them selues, as thogh(they were) the ministers of righteousnes, whose end shalbe accordyng to their workes.
MANKIND

847
I’ll follow you now – let’s begin.

PAUL

848
The Law will judge you to damnation.  

Rom. 7

RABBI [to Paul]

849
Heretic fit to burn! Be gone!

850
No more I’ll stand your company.

PAUL

851
You can say what you like of me.

852
The fact remains, I have assurance

853
From God, secure within my conscience,

854
That with such words you fool his ear.

855
But that will in due time appear.

MANKIND [approaching the Law]

856
When I perceive her, my heart trembles.  

66
An unrhymed line in the original.

RABBI

857
Fear nothing, I’ll present your case

858
And introduce you face to face.

Scene vii

Rabbi, The Law

RABBI

859
Here is the man, Law most-esteemed,

860
Who hopes by you he may be deemed

861
Worthy to put off God’s just ire

862
And his beneficence acquire
By service perfect and sincere.

**The Law**

I accept him, but be it clear

He’ll do God’s wishes, never swerving

In punctiliously observing

The will of his high majesty –

If not, I will for him have ready

Torments so keen it may be said,

That’s how God’s wrath falls on one’s head,

With which his spirit shall be riven;

Then to Sin shall power be given

On him, and Death, implored in vain,

Shall keep him in eternal pain.
Act III

Argument

The sinner, being in service to the Law, feels his burden to be unbearable; so much so that he sees his corruption more than before and is more solicited by his Concupiscence; so far is he from obtaining peace by means of the Law. Therefore, he complains to Rabbi, who had put him in this state. Then Rabbi places a curtain before the Law, by which we signify that there is no one who can satisfy the Law’s rigour, if her true condition is manifest. This is shown by the people of Israel’s inability to hear, when God pronounced the Law in his majesty;[67] rather, they shrank back, saying, “God is not speaking to us; otherwise we shall die”. But many false prophets conceal such virtue, preaching only outward works, for which Christ sharply rebukes the Scribes and Pharisees.[68] By this means the sinner becomes a hypocrite and a Pharisee, esteeming himself just and perfect by his works and failing utterly to see that his heart within is infected. Therefore, he relies on his good works, which he performs out of vainglory,[69] so much so that he boasts of and glorifies them, publicly praying to God in great arrogance.

Scene i

The Law, Sin, Death, Concupiscence, The Spirit of Fear, Mankind

875 Those poor folk are greatly deceived
876 Who, when they are by Sin aggrieved,
877 At my high throne display their throes;
878 For merely I increase their woes,
879 Unless through Faith they’re welcomed in
880 By God – and there’s the origin
881 Of their destruction come the Judgement.
882 Lay on, then, Sin, with special torment
883 For Mankind, whom you must appal
884 Until his pains his thoughts recall
885 To God in full obedience.

Sin

886 Lady of highest eminence,
887 He’ll never find me at a distance,
888 For, to tell truth, there is no chance
889 He’ll satisfy all your demands.

[67] Here there is a marginal reference to Rom. 20.
THE LAW

890 Leave him, then, in torturing hands
891 Forever, subject to Death’s force.

SIN [to Mankind]

892 Are you not stirred now by remorse,
893 As servant to the Law ordained?
894 [to Death] See the Law’s zealot entertained,
895 You too, O Death, in fitting sort.

DEATH [to Mankind]

896 Never will you attain that port
897 Intended by your navigation,
898 For on you I’ll have domination
899 While to this Law you’re bound in fee.

CONCUPISCENCE

900 Alas, alas, listen to me!
901 Let us begin now to rejoice,
902 No longer hearing the Law’s voice,
903 If we’re to live at our own ease.

MANKIND

904 Do not suppose she can me please.70

THE SPIRIT OF FEAR

905 That false woman seeks to seduce you.

THE LAW

906 I see I must at last reduce you
907 And simply pack you off to hell.

MANKIND

908 I’m on the way, I see it well,
909 That leads to ultimate perdition.
910 O what a curse plagues this condition,

---

70 Spoken, I take it, to Concupiscence with reference to the Law (“she”); he is falling into temptation.
To which I gave my full assent
Not long ago! How I repent
That such a one I took for mistress:
Never will she cure my distress.

Scene ii
Rabbi, Mankind

Rabbi
I must not linger any longer:
I go to show support still stronger
For him the Law is to amend.
I see him there –
[to Mankind] Now tell me, friend,
Have I not to my word proved true,
Making the Law mistress to you?
It's I who caused her to agree.

Mankind
What then? I never thought to see
Again with me both Death and Sin.
Yet now I feel still more hemmed in
Than ever was the case before:
Each time I would take one step more,
To God's wrath I feel more a prey.
Alas, I am almost mid-way
Between hell-pains and execration,
Sensing more sharply my damnation
Than when without all Law I strayed.
And what is more, I feel conveyed
By Concupiscence deep within,
As if by force, to practise sin
A hundred-fifty-thousand ways.
By beasts most cursed to spend their days
In wretchedness such pain's not borne:
Beaten by Law, by Sin I'm torn;
To bite me Death will never cease.  
So I see well that my release  
From ill can never come from there.  
I must, then, have recourse elsewhere  
To put myself in healthy state.

Rabbi

Now listen: does not reason dictate  
That from all ill you turn away,  
And that by works you make your way  
Into God’s favour and his Grace?

Mankind

Can you not see that’s out of place?  
That’s what I told you formerly,  
And since, alas, too well you see  
I took the Law as my sole guide  
Yet never have they left my side –  
Sin, Satan, and Death too is seen:  
And, still worse, more foul and unclean  
I know myself to be in conscience,  
Because I feel my Concupiscence  
Drawing me more and more to vice.  

Rabbi

Listen, I’ll give you my advice.  
All good works and everything just,  
To rid you of your ills, you must  
Perform as suits the Law’s behest.  
Don’t kill; in nothing be dishonest;  
Count theft and lies abomination;  
Thank God often for your creation,  
In great abundance giving presents:  
Thus will you have for your offence  
A thorough and complete remission.

Mankind

That is mere idle repetition:  
So you have many times maintained.
Rabbi

970 Now I proclaim you will have gained
971 By your great merits influence
972 With God such that you may dispense
973 And share them with the undeserving.

MANKIND

974 Your strictures I have tried observing,
975 But I see my impurity,
976 Shown by the Law’s great clarity,
977 Such that I cannot bear her sight.
978 Thus, Rabbi, I am surely right
979 That by the Law I am expected
980 To be, in truth, far more perfected
981 Than I was led to think by you.

Rabbi

982 Since you don’t dare her face to view,
983 It must be covered with a veil:
984 Then her commandments may prevail,
985 And you can give her satisfaction.

MANKIND

986 Your idea, then, put into action.

Rabbi [having covered the face of the Law]

987 Behold the Law God has bestowed:
988 Do no one harm—that breaks his code;
989 Perform all good works publicly.
990 Then Death and Sin are bound to flee;
991 Never then can their power reach you.
992 This your experience will teach you.
Scene iii
Satan, Sin, Death, Concupiscence

Satan
993 There’s the sinner in finest kind,
994 Well satisfied, being quite blind
995 To the Law with her dazzling face;
996 It seems to him that while no trace
997 He outward shows of fault or defect,
998 He shall be entire, and perfect.
999 On his good deeds he shall repose
1000 And see to it his honour grows.
1001 Deep in his heart, then, lie in wait;
1002 There for a time no stir create,
1003 But listen for the proper moment,
1004 When he shall be called to judgement,
1005 Yourselves to declare.

Sin
1006 I’ll do so,
1007 There, then, O Death, let us both go
1008 Out of his sight.

Death
1009 I give consent,
1009 But after, with unsparing torment
1009 I will afflict him.

Satan
1010 Concupiscence, Within him take up residence,
1011 Acting at my solicitation.

Concupiscence
1012 From him I’ll meet with no negation.

Satan
1013 Let’s leave him in his deeds to glory.
Concupiscence

You’ll soon hear him recount his story.

Scene iv

Paul

Oh, the great harm that these preachers produce,
Preaching without Faith of good works and merits!
For sinners are thus subject to abuse,
Informed that merely doing well acquits
Them of sin: so they turn to hypocrites,
Not fully realising the Law’s great brilliance.

Faith must be preached, along with true repentance; Acts 2

Then after ask abundance of good deeds.

He who holds Christ in Faith’s continuance

Of Faith’s true fruits will have all that he needs.

Scene v

Mankind [as Pharisee], Rabbi

Just now I feel I could take flight,
So very easy seems, and light,
The heaviest of all commandments.

I follow all requirements –

Yes, do more than the Law intends
(I’ve counted on my fingers’ ends),

For I the Councils keep as well.72

With weaklings I no longer dwell,

---

71 Orig. “L’Homme pharisien”.
72 Most immediately, no doubt, the decrees of the Counter-Reformation Council of Trent. This is a reminder, then, of the assimilation of the Pharisees to the Roman Catholic priesthood and supports a reading of Barran’s play as a reaction against plays, such as Le Gouvert, promoting Tridentine dogma.
Nor aught with sinners have to do;
To preachers, then, I bid adieu:
Of preaching I have need no more.
Of good deeds I’ve amassed such store
I am a saint, to God most dear.

**RABBI** *[presenting him with a Pharisee’s robe]*

You need to put on, then, right here
These robes, thus set apart in dress
From others lost in wickedness:
With them there must be no confusion.

**MANKIND**

I will add fringes in profusion,
Along with large phylacteries.

**RABBI**

Your sanctity’s confirmed by these.

**MANKIND** *[being clothed]*

Here I show as a man of virtue.
Now as a Pharisee should do
I shall go make my orison.
*praying* I enter, God, your house as one
My deeds of worth have rendered just.
I do no ill nor things unjust,
But your commandments all apply.
It’s certain, too, that I don’t lie
In calling you God veritable.

---

73 Especially intended is Matt. 23:5, where Jesus, speaking of the Pharisees’ hypocritical preaching of the Law of Moses and ostentatious display of symbols of piety, declares: “All their workes they do for to be sene of men: for they make their phylacteries broad & make long the fringes of their garments”. (Phylacteries are small boxes bound on the hand and forehead containing biblical verses expressing obedience to Mosaic law.) The image of prescribing heavy burdens to others which they themselves could not bear is found in 23:4. Cf. Christ’s rebuke of the hypocritical Pharisee Simon in Wager, ll. 1889–96.

74 The trace of intimacy that still makes itself felt in modern English when the second-person familiar forms are used in prayer (“thou”, “thee”, “thine”) has inclined me to reserve these for Mankind’s later sincere prayers “as a Christian”.
Render me, then, God equitable,
According to my works and merit,
For which I wish you may acquit
Of sin all those I have befriended.
But all those who have us offended,
Them to all the devils remand:
Evil they are and should be damned. 
Do this for me, for I am worthy,
As Pharisee exemplary.

Scene vi
Satan, Concupiscence

Satan
I think today I’ve done quite well,
O my daughter, who in him dwell.
Of every vice you are the source,
The nurse that feeds such men their force –
Wherefore it’s needful well to govern
This splendid saint and always turn
Him to what may honour impart:
All must be done to draw his heart
To vainglory.

Concupiscence
I grasp your sense:
For nothing has more influence
On types like that; they are quite bent
For honour’s sake on diligent

75 The use of “us” (orig. “nous”) at once slides towards the self-important “royal we” and confirms his self-identification with God.
76 Arrogation of power to remit sins and to condemn specifically evokes the Roman Catholic clergy.
77 “[S]uch men” (orig. “ces gens”, literally “these people”); the translation opts for a limited reference to hypocritical sinners, and is supported by “types like that” (“telles gens”) in l. 1073. Still, Satan might here be speaking universally, even, with a gesture, including the audience.
1075  Performance of each worthy deed.
1076  Now, to your orders paying heed,
1077  I go to him and will converse
1078  Most sweetly, and will words disperse
1079  Adapted to his own desire.

Satan

1080  Go, then, and into him retire.  

Scene vii
Concupiscence, Mankind

Concupiscence

1081  Friend, have I not told you the truth,
1082  Followed you ever since your youth?  

Mankind

1083  And I, my lady Concupiscence,
1084  I gave you all obedience
1085  Until I languished at Death’s door,
1086  For evils on my head did pour
1087  While I behaved your will to please.

Concupiscence

1088  And now, must we be enemies?

Mankind

1089  No, for as you see, I retain you
1090  Still in my heart, and there sustain you,
1091  Receiving from you great delight,
1092  Such that I often wish I might

---

78 The original’s “retire” is evidently a typographical error for “retire” (“retire”, “withdraw”).

79 Cf. again the blandishment of Philologus by Suggestion in the presence of Conscience in The Conflict of Conscience: “Thou hast good triall of the faith, which I to thee doo beare, / Commit thy saftie to my charge, there is no daunger neere” (Woodes, IViii).
Outwardly, too, with you comply.

The Law, though, I must satisfy

And by good deeds achieve salvation.

Concupiscence

Make them, then, fit the situation,

A source of honour and of fame:

Everyone knows your perfect claim

To their possession, for your doctrine

Is to your life itself akin

In pure, resplendent sanctity.

Now, in doing what pleases me,

Keep me concealed within your heart.

Mankind

You’ll lodge there secret and apart,

In pleasure well maintained and prized:

But see you are not recognised

Either by Law or humankind,

Or else my deeds quite vain they’ll find,

For by the Law we’d be opposed.

Concupiscence

Then let our pact not be disclosed.

Mankind

It will not be. And now keep low

Within my heart, for forth I go

To preach to people of my justice.

Concupiscence

And for my part, I’ll do my office.\(^{80}\)

---

\(^{80}\) The line is no doubt directed toward the public.
Scene viii
Mankind, Rabbi

MANKIND
1115 Oh, how I’m happy and at ease,
1116 For I do everything I please,
1117 Thanks to my strict observation
1118 Of the Law: no exaggeration
1119 To call me perfectly conforming,
1120 Greatest commandments all performing
1121 To the letter, nothing undone.
1122 Wherefore I have the expectation
1123 In due course glory to procure.

RABBI
1124 Of that I judge you may be sure:
1125 For truly, holy works you do
1126 With unfeigned words to match them, too:
1127 So much you amply demonstrate.
1128 Thus for God your deeds will rate
1129 You Paradise: it stands to reason.

MANKIND
1130 Now I’ll go perform my orison.
1131 [The orison of Mankind as a Pharisee]
1132 Everywhere, in every place,
1133 To you, Lord God, I offer grace,
1134 I who, not wicked like the rest,
1135 Keep from all evil, knowing best
1136 That which you, by your Law, ordain.
1137 All others, as to me is plain,
1138 To theft, false-witness, lechery
1139 Are given, while, Lord, as for me,
1140 I fast twice weekly, at the least,
1141 Besides when fasting is increased

---

81 The prayer elaborates on that of the Pharisee in Luke 18:11-12.
1141 For Advent, Lent and Ember days.  
1142 What’s more, I know the different ways.
1143 I pay the tithes on all I own;  
1144 I nourish, as to you is known,  
1145 Poor people with my ample alms;  
1146 Thus reason bids you have no qualms  
1147 In granting me this world’s respect  
1148 And riches; then, Lord, I expect  
1149 You will not show yourself unfair  
1150 But after death for me prepare  
1151 Your Paradise where I may dwell.

**Rabbi**

1152 Indeed, you’ve spoken very well.

---

82 Ember days: the English term, which derives from Latin “Quatuor Tempora”, corresponds to the original’s “quatre-temps”, fasting days prescribed at the beginning of each of the four seasons. This is also one of the targets of John Bale’s *Thre Lawes* (*A Comedy concernynge thre lawes of nature, Moses and Christ*, *The Complete Plays of John Bale*, ed. Peter Happé, 2 vols, vol. II [Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1986]), III.1172.
Act IV

Argument

Paul, having led Rabbi and pharisaical Mankind to the Law, removes the curtain from in front of her face, preaching the Law in her full virtue and power, with her demand for the heart pure and entire. And she shows Mankind his impurity and corruption, indeed consequently subjects him to the ire and malediction of God, to such an extent that he seeks a means to kill himself. Then Satan aggravates his sin and throws him thoroughly into despair, so much so that Rabbi leaves him, unable to provide a remedy despite his best efforts. But Paul makes an effort to console him with the discourse of Faith, as, however, he cannot do until God sends his holy Grace to the sinner.

Scene i
Paul, Mankind, Rabbi

Paul

I am most thoroughly astounded
That Mankind, his whole being founded
On sin, indeed with Sin complicit,
Who Concupiscence’s illicit
Promptings to base effect applies,
Should dare to God to raise his eyes,
Proclaiming himself whole and perfect.
Arrogant heart, with pride infect!
I see two there who make that claim,
Not knowing that they are to blame,
Corrupted and degenerate.
I’ll show the falseness of their state
And that in nature they are sinful.
O you of filth and foulness full,
How can you think you’ll satisfy
The Law, and with all points comply?
For sure, you’re woefully beguiled,
And your hearts thoroughly defiled
And soiled by putrid Concupiscence.

Mankind

Villain, you think you know the essence
Of what my inmost heart contains?

83 "[V]irtue and power": orig. "vertu", which in the context carries both meanings.
1174 To God alone that appertains,
1175 So you discourse rank blasphemy.

**Paul**

1176 Ignorant wretch, it’s you, not me,
1177 Alas, who blaspheme without ending.
1178 For here you were just now pretending
1179 You stood in a perfect condition.

**Mankind**

1180 My works and deeds earned that position,
1181 By holy Law’s observance gained.

**Paul**

1182 Your holiness is only feigned;
1183 You cling just to the mere outside.
1184 The Law’s true might you’ve not descried,
1185 Her brilliance and her great virtue.

**Rabbi**

1186 What about you? Tell me, do you
1187 Grasp better what I preach all day?
1188 Don’t fear for this man anyway,
1189 For his great value I can tell.

**Paul**

1190 Ha, Rabbi, I know you too well!
1191 It’s you who by the Law abuse him,
1192 For you do nothing but amuse him
1193 With works he outwardly performs.
1194 But such alone are empty forms,
1195 Of power to please God bereft.  

**Mankind**

1196 Then what for me to do is left?

---

84 The gist of the chapter is the vanity of following such prescriptions as fasting in the absence of faith; cf. above, III.viii.1139-42.
I think I fail in no command.

Paul

If you would clearly understand,
Unto the Law we must go back.

Rabbi [to Mankind]
Come, my company you’ll not lack.

Mankind [to Paul]
Here is the Law – but what’s the need?

Paul
Well, then, go on, begin to read
To see if you’ve with all complied.

Mankind
I’ve looked at it from every side;
Nothing I see that I’ve missed out.\footnote{Presumably, tablets recalling the original commandments are used as a prop.}
But please, Rabbi, you read it out.

Rabbi
Father and mother you shall honour, \textit{Exd. 20}
And if you live in such a manner, \textit{Eph. 6}
Long life upon the earth you’ll bear.

Mankind
And so I do, as I can swear.

Rabbi
Murder must you never commit.

Mankind
That would I not myself permit.

Rabbi
Lechery must you keep at bay.
MANKIND

That rule you need not even say.

RABBI

Commit no theft and tell no lies.

MANKIND

Of those I bear away the prize.

Is that all? All this I discharge,

And find so wondrous light the charge

That I choose heavier to bear.

PAUL

Your claims are merely empty air.

The message, still you don’t receive it.

RABBI

If something else, I don’t perceive it.

Read yourself, if more you discover!

PAUL

Isn’t it you who dared to cover

The burning eyes of holy Law?

Thus now you view her without awe,

From her harsh scrutiny protected:

And hence your hearts became infected,

Quite brimming with hypocrisy.

The hypocrite from care is free,

For hidden evil he contains,

Not realising how much it stains

His heart, which is the Law’s demand.

But come, that formidable band

Upon her eyes let us undo.

RABBI

We do not dare.
Paul
Well then, I do!

[Here Paul removes the veil in front of the Law; this causes Mankind and Rabbi to draw back in fear.]

Scene ii
The Law, The Spirit of Fear, Mankind, Sin, Death

THE LAW
1237 Woe unto you, who of God have no fear
1238 And still less love: how false you now appear!
1239 O hard heart full of infidelity!
1240 Woe unto you, who are mere vanity:
1241 Woe unto you, a whited sepulchre,
1242 For nothing inwardly but blood you harbour,
1243 Enmities, cruel vengeances, hard exactions,
1244 Coupled with a hundred other infractions.
1245 O most false heart, heart wicked and malign,
1246 Who always to all sorts of crimes incline;
1247 O cursed heart, with corruption festering,
1248 Woe unto you, for never anything
1249 You cared for but gaining honour and glory.

THE SPIRIT OF FEAR [entering]
1250 O woeful wretch, your sin’s a well-known story.
1251 Now all before your eyes displayed you’ll see
1252 Sin, Death, by which tormented you shall be
1253 So fiercely you’ll wish you’d never been born:
1254 Then let the cloak from your pretence be torn
1255 Of saintly piety and pure perfection.

MANKIND
1256 The Law shows me, alas, my deep infection,

---

86 In this section, the translation draws on the familiar rhetorical turns of the Authorised Version.
And her sheer brilliance I cannot sustain;
Here can I, therefore, no longer remain,
For otherwise death surely will ensue.

The Law
Without running, O wretch, I can reach you,
There, I'm no longer hindered by my blindfold:
To you it seemed as if I was controlled
By deeds of yours that had no inner substance;
You were deceived: my holy ordinance
Requires nothing less than pure affection.  

Rom. 7
I rightly, then, pronounce your cursed rejection:
Corrupted you are and for death reserved;
Damnation for your sins you've well deserved,
Unless elsewhere you gain deliverance.

Sin and Death, now come here quickly, advance:
Before me bring that cursed hypocrite;
Do what you must so that fine counterfeit
Sees that his heart to rottenness is wed.

Within his heart a long time I've been fed:
It's time I did myself to him declare.

Death
For me as well his heart has been my lair,
But now I need to show myself outside.

The Law
Go, then – let your best efforts be applied.
Spare nothing; see that you the message render
To that fair saint so delicate and tender
That he is nothing but hypocrisy,
And all his holiness mere fantasy.
Whatever you do, don't you let him go,
But give his heart mighty blow after blow,
To see if he's a saint, as he's been saying.
Sin [looking into his breast]

1286 I've opened him: one sees no other thing
1287 But foul desires of his Concupiscence.

Death

1288 Nothing can I perceive within his conscience
1289 But crime upon crime: ambition and hate
1290 Have moved into his heart and rule in state.

Sin

1291 Strike without stint that heart that so offends.

Death

1292 Let's make sure that his anguish never ends. 87

Scene iii
Rabbi, Death, Sin, Paul

Rabbi

1293 It's time for me to pay a call
1294 On my disciple, to install
1295 My claim to merit heaven with him –
1296 But what's that? Death cruel and grim
1297 Is near him, and Sin too I see.
1298 From them he must be freed by me
1299 Yet again, as before was seen.
1300 All went well with me on the scene;
1301 Without me, nothing right can run.
1302 I'll go right now.
[calling out from some distance to Sin and Death]

What's being done

1303 To that epitome of goodness?

---

87 This is the beginning of the confrontation with despair that ultimately leads to what Paul terms the "circumcision . . . of the heart" (Rom. 2:29). See Introduction, p. 22.
Of God and the Law's holiness
He is a servant of long date.

Death
Back, you who falsehoods perpetrate,
Or I'll not fail to swallow you!

Sin
Do you think, Rabbi, you can skew
God's ire from Mankind so tainted?
It seems I must make you acquainted
With his torments: come, closer draw.

Death
Now, counterfeiter of the Law!

Sin
This deceiver deserves our care.

Rabbi [fleeing]
I do believe I must beware.
Their company I must eschew;
There's nothing left to say or do
For me, so I throw up my hands.

Paul
Yet you know well the Law commands
The ass's burden to relieve:88
That dictate do you disbelieve?
And so you'll leave him in this state,
Rabbi, who never hesitate
To claim the Law will justify?
Cursed be he who trusts in that lie!

88 Cf. Exod. 23:5: "If thou se thine enemies asse lying vnder his burden, wilt thou cease to helpe him? thou shalt helpe him vp againe with it." More generally pertinent to Sin's rebuke of Rabbi in ll. 1308-9 is God's admonition in Exod. 23:7: "I will not justifie a wicked man."
RABBI
1325 Then go yourself, for I don't dare.

PAUL
1326 Oh no? Then that will be my care,
1327 Although the time is not yet right.

RABBI
1328 For that I've lost all appetite.

Scene iv
Satan, Sin, Death

SATAN
1329 Nothing's been done: he has to die,
1330 And surer will I be thereby
1331 To keep that sinner than last time.
1332 He'd heard the Law denounce his crime
1333 In searing tones; Death he had felt;
1334 Sin most ferocious blows had dealt:
1335 Still, his footing he could regain.
1336 It's true that some surcease from pain
1337 We offered of uncertain kind,
1338 But now a great fear fills my mind
1339 That if I let him longer live,
1340 When all is done, the slip he'll give
1341 Me, using means sure to succeed.
1342 I must then act with greater speed
1343 And all my power bring to bear
1344 To lead him into deep despair.
1345 O Sin and Death, your aid now lend,
1346 For well I see the Law's true end
1347 Is far from being utterly
1348 To damn him, but instead that he
1349 Shall have occasion to seek Grace:
1350 Hence the Law shows an angry face.
1351 But we must make him recognise
His evil and himself despise
And then by hanging seek to die.

Sin
Vivid depictions we'll supply
To show to him his damned condition.

Death
We must without the least remission
Of God's fell wrath increase his fear.

Satan
All right, then, let's not linger here
But start the torment to him suited.

Death
In short, he must be executed.

Scene v
Satan, Sin, Death, Mankind

Satan
Poor cursed wretch, doomed by your God to dwell,
Eternally damned, in the pit of hell,
For you've committed crimes innumerable.

Sin
Faithless sinner, traitor abominable,
It's time for you to end your dire woe:
Go on, then, give yourself to Death there; so,
You'll soon be freed from your damnable state.

Death
Come now to me, O sinner reprobate:
Through me you must pass into rottenness.
MANKIND

1370 Oh, in this state how great is my distress!
1371 Of God on high, ah, the dread rage I sense,
1372 Compelling me to confess my offence,
1373 In which for so long I have been employed.
1374 Oh, how I feel and know my heart devoid
1375 Of all goodness, while sin it over-fills:
1376 I see myself stained with all crimes and evils.
1377 Indeed, since I was born, from that same hour,
1378 Of Concupiscence I’ve perceived the power;
1379 Never a moment’s peace have I procured:
1380 Who has ever greater torment endured?
1381 O Death, come here – I don’t you now abhor:
1382 Despatch me, for I can’t bear living more!

Death

1383 Ready I am to grant what you implore.
1384 Satan, Sin, help out – there’s no time to waste!

MANKIND

1385 O Death, alas, come rapidly, make haste!
1386 Cursed be my father and my mother too,
1387 For I received from them the bitter brew
1388 That brought me to this state so miserable.

Satan

1389 All right, wicked wretch, sinner detestable,
1390 That you are damned you may well understand.

MANKIND

1391 And you, Satan, set to that fact your hand
1392 And teach me how by hanging I may die.

Satan

1393 Your wish to learn that art I’ll satisfy
1394 With all my heart, and, what’s more, charge no fee:
1395 Just tie around your neck this cord you see,

---

89 This line is unrhymed in the original; I have preferred to it with the following couplet.
And afterwards up there around that beam;
By no other means must you ever dream
Of ending your infinite suffering.

MANKIND
I’ll be damned if I fail in anything. 90

Scene vi
Paul, Mankind

For some time I left the sinner to stew
In his misery, as his preacher, too,
Abandoned him, his helplessness confessed.
I see him now in such a state, hard-pressed
By Satan and by Death, with his own Sin,
That he’ll be ready to drink comfort in.
O my Lord God, lend me your help, I pray,
Through your own Spirit, and to us display

Orig.: “Ie sois damné si d’vn seul point i’y faut”. Here the grim irony is unmistakably built into the text. Cf. above, n. 49; also II.vi.757-59 and n. 59.
The mechanism and iconography of despair are commonplace, but the presentation here closely resembles that in The Conflict of Conscience:
... here alas, confusion, and hell, doth mée assaille,
And that all grace, from me is reft, I finde it to be true.
My hart is steele, so that no faith, can from the same insue.
I can conceieue no hope at all, of pardon or of grace,
But out alas, Confusion is alway before my face.
And certainly, euen at his time, I doo most playnly sée,
The deuils to be about me rounde, which make great preparation,
And képee a stirre, here in this place, which only is for mee.
Neither doe I conceieue, these thinges, by vaine imagination,
But euen as truly, as mine eyes, beholde your shape and fashion.
Wherefore, desired Death dispatch, my body bring to rest,
Though that my soule, in furious flames of fire, be supprest.
(Woodes, Vii)

Cf. the evocation by Paul below, in his plea to Grace, of Mankind’s “soul, mind / And body ... in great torment confused” (V.i.1565-66). Paul’s consolatory preaching broadly parallels that of Woodes’s Theologus.
Your charity, and that favour exceeding
By our dear Saviour Christ to us proceeding.
I’ll go to him right now – this is the moment.
[to Mankind] Hey there, my friend, whatever’s your intent?

Take care not to place your faith in that crew;
That is hardly the reason I conveyed you
Just now to the Law, but to make you know
Your sins, and that honour to God you owe  
{Rom. 3}
Alone as just and perfect glorified.
Know now, then, that he is well gratified
To welcome you in his misericord.

Mankind
Alas, let me only attach this cord!
Cursed be my father and my mother too,
For I received from them the bitter brew
That brought me to this state so miserable."
Ah, sorely I feel how I am damnable,
So that to hang myself is all I seek.

Paul
Poor sinner, that is blasphemy you speak.
I grant you are, as you yourself can see,
As badly off as possibly can be,
But for your ill there’s ready remedy.

Mankind
I feel God’s ire fierce and harsh in me.

Satan
Come, make haste, wicked one, with rage I strain.

The repetition in IV.x.1420-22 of ll. 1386-88 initiates an echoing pattern reminiscent, on a smaller scale, of I.vi.400 ff.; see above, n. 43. The opposition between the sinner’s sense of unworthiness, which he has internalised and expresses in formulaic fashion, and the insistent message of mercy is thereby accentuated.
Paul

1431       By no means yield, but your courage maintain,
1432       Since for your ill there's ready remedy.

Mankind

1433       I feel God's ire fierce and harsh in me.
1434       What succour, then, may I from you expect?
1435       No recourse but by hanging to effect
1436       My death at once and strangle utterly.

Paul

1437       Wait a little, for you shall presently
1438       Hear words delivered by a voice divine
1439       To soothe you, if your ear you will incline.

Scene vii
Faith, Mankind, Paul

Faith

1440       All those persons who to the Law resort,
1441       Hoping to receive for their torment comfort,
1442       In one of two consequent ills are caught.
1443       One is despair, because, when they are brought
1444       To see and feel their great iniquity,
1445       The hell also where they deserve to be
1446       For having the most righteous Law transgressed,
1447       They’re driven – O piteously distressed! –
1448       To seek their deaths in almost every case. 92
1449       Or if, perhaps, their sin they can outface,
1450       Unaware wholly of the Law’s great might,
1451       (For often her face is hidden from sight,
1452       Such that the corruption festers unknown

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92 Orig. “[c]ent mille fois” (lit. “a hundred thousand times”). In l. 1448 Reynolds-Cornell, ed., emends “se pourchasser” to “de pourchasser”, I think unnecessarily; the meaning is not affected.
In human hearts, with fictions overgrown,
Since all acts in hypocrisy performed
Are faithless before God—unjust, deformed,
Although they may well bear a fair outside),
Then, when at last, when God's judgement is applied,
Those hearts that have not been by faith renewed,
Soon after shall with sorrow be imbued,
As clearly they look the Law in the face:
For by the Law God marks the mortal race
As all within sin's snares confined and caught.
And by that knowledge man is so distraught,
It follows that despair moves into place,
For from the Law he has no hope of grace,
Since all in all she can't be satisfied.

MANKIND
So far her words, I see, can be applied
Exactly to my case: for from the start
My lifeshe has summed up with perfect art –
Both stages, and how I in them behaved.

FAITH
No one can ever by the Law be saved,
For the holy Law is spiritual,
While mankind's nature draws him to the carnal:
Thus there is disproportion between these.

MANKIND
All this with truth most perfectly agrees.
One point remains for me to learn: the name
I wish to know of this celestial dame.

FAITH
I am Faith, from high heaven appearing
To mankind by way of the purest hearing –
Hearing, I mean, the one God's voice discourse.  

Cf. Rom. 10:17: “Then faith (is) by hearyng, and hearing by the worde of God.” The Geneva gloss
From there I fashioned here below my course,
The cognizance of God with you to share
And that supreme benevolence declare
He shows to those who for their ill atone
And will return, through Faith, to him alone.
Thus one who by my strictures will abide,
Him I promise to help along and guide
To God, who is replete with grace and goodness,
So never then will he be barred from access.²⁴

**Paul**

Oh, what profit Faith proffers as a present!
Rise to your feet, then, while you have her present:²⁵
For she will lead you by the hand, I’m sure,
To Grace and peace, and by her means assure
The pardon of God, granted by his mercy.

**Mankind**

Alas, my friend, I have in memory
Words you often spoke to me such as those,
Which promised my by Faith a sure repose,
But the Law has cast me into a flame
That sears my soul with its tormenting shame.

**Scene viii**
Grace, Mankind, Paul

**Grace** [*at some distance from Mankind*]
Grace am I, by the high God sent this way
To the lower world and the soul astray,

(“g”) specifies a reference to preaching of the gospel.

As doctrine mandates, a similar exposition is offered by Wager’s Faith (ll. 1473-88), who appears in response to the prayer of the penitent Mary Magdalene; Christ Jesus himself in that play takes the place of Paul as mediator of the divine Word and grace.

The original similarly rhymes on “presente” in two different senses.
That pardon for its sins I may dispense,
Seeking from it no other recompense
But Faith, which to my throne it needs to bear.

**Paul**

Come then, my friend, for Faith your heart prepare.

**Mankind**

My heart and sense, alas, show too much stain.

**Grace**

Come to me, all you who travail in pain.
Come to me, and welcome with all my heart;
Come to me, for heaven’s gifts I impart,
You who can claim no merit, gold or money.

**Paul**

She comes carrying in her mouth sweet honey
And milk that from the divine bounty flow;
By no means may Sin and Death overthrow
One who Faith entire to her will bear.

**Mankind**

Certainly, she is most gentle and fair,
But I am so oppressed by sinfulness,
Fallen within the deep ditch of distress,
That I can’t, alas, any longer stand.

**Grace**

Grace and most rapid comfort are at hand,
If you come to me, sinners desolate;

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96 “[T]o my throne”: orig. “à mon throsne”, a clear indication of the staging, which becomes notably dynamic at this point.


98 Cf. Isa. 55: “Ho, euery one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and ye that haue no siluer, come, bie and eat: come, I saie, bie wine and milke without siluer and without monei.” Notable is the addition of “merit” (orig.: “Vous qui n’auez or, n’argent, ne merite”), which confirms the Calvinist lesson.
Come, therefore, and your sorrows will abate.
Abandon Sin, which retains you all captive:
I'll render you the sons of God adoptive,
Delivering you from your prison cell,
Paying your ransom – and paying it well.

MANKIND
Alas! The burden of my sins is heavy,
And I can see no way of getting free.

GRACE
Come to me, you by hard burdens aggrieved;
By me you shall be nourished and relieved.
Come here to me all, for my name is Grace,
And I present the sinner to the face
Of that good God who shows me everywhere.\(^{99}\)
Light is my burden, my yoke sweet to bear.\(^{100}\)
Then be assured and put aside all fear;
Accompanied by confidence, draw near:
I shall receive you with benignity.

PAUL
Come here – let’s seek Grace with alacrity!

MANKIND
Alas, I see no point in being told
Of Grace and Faith – in any case, consoled
I never can be, if heavenly Grace
Does not come here and seek me in this place.

\(^{99}\) “[W]ho shows me everywhere”: orig. "qui me presente à tous".
\(^{100}\) Orig. "Tres-legier est mon fai, & mon ioug doux". Echoed are Christ’s words in Matt. 11:30: “For my yoke is easie, and my burden light”; "Car mon ioug est aisé, & mon fardeau leger."


Act V

Argument

Paul, seeing that the ministry of the Word lacks all power without the assistance of the Holy Spirit, prays to God, with Faith, that he may be willing to send his Grace to the poor sinner. God does so at once, banishing Satan, Sin, Death, and all fear, even the harshness and malediction of the Law, which God renders gentle and friendly to the sinner, having pardoned his sins and clothed him in the justice and perfect obedience of Jesus Christ. And although Concupiscence remains with the Christian, he holds her in subjection, mortifying her day by day by the Holy Spirit of God. In doing so, he perseveres in his holy vocation with assurance of eternal life.

Scene i

Paul, Faith, Grace, The Spirit of Love

Paul

O Lady Faith, if you would know my mind,
Since it exceeds the strength of humankind
To raise the sinner from a state so low,
There is great need, Dame Faith, for you to go
With me to pray at Grace’s lofty throne,
That the poor sinner may by her be shown
The honour of repairing where he stays:
For he, myself and others have no ways
To God, you know, unless he will provide
His Grace, from his goodness, to be our guide
And manifest herself to us. The case
Is also yours, O Faith, who have no place
Within our hearts and with us cannot dwell
But by his gift, as you know all too well:
From God must Faith and Grace to us abound.

Faith

Your reasoning is evident and sound.
Therefore, I’ll keep you willing company:

---

101 ”[V]ocation”: identical in the original and used in the broad religious sense common among Prot- estants; see OED, s.v., def. 1.b: “The action on the part of God (or Christ) of calling persons or mankind to a state of salvation or union with Himself”.

102 “[B]y his gift”: orig. “par son don”, echoing Eph. 2:8: “For by grace are ye saued through faith, and not that of your selues: it (is) the gifte of God”; “Car vous estes sauuez de grace par la foy: & cela non point de vous: c’est le don de Dieu.”
I promise you that aid and succour he
Denies to no one.

Paul

Then let’s go to her.
[making this request to Grace with Faith]

Since the essence eternal will confer
On you, sent to these sombre vales below,
The comforting of sinners in their woe,
Be pleased, O lady of heavenly kind,
To come and see that sinner, whose soul, mind
And body are in great torment confused.
Alas, by enemies he’s so abused
They’ve brought him to the point of Death, or nearly:
The Law with her sceptre strikes him severely;
Sin holds him in strong bonds securely tied;
By Death as well he has been sorely tried;
Satan is never ceasing to assail him:
If ever at this point your love should fail him,
Sweet Grace, alas, quite hopeless is his cause.
Please you, then, lady, whose heart has no flaws,
To his rescue right now, or he’s undone!

Grace

Let us go, alas, and cease not to run!
That I may embrace him, let’s quickly go,
And his heart I’ll cause straightaway to know
The love the Spirit of his God supplies.
Spirit of Love, go before to where lies
Fallen the languorous sinner; go lightly
And there perform a preacher’s part forthrightly,
Declaring the love that God for him feels.

103 “[T]he Spirit of his God”: orig. “l’Esprit de son Dieu”, hence identified with the third person of the Trinity – and, in l. 1583, with the inspiration of the preacher (orig.: “Va t’en leger luy seruir d’vn precheur”).
The Spirit of Love

I fly to him, as with wings on my heels,
Your most holy commandment to fulfil.
[to Mankind] Poor sinner, it was God's eternal will
As such to fashion and to form mankind;
He did so, and to tell in brief his mind,
He placed in him his image and resemblance.
Now that high gift does man's state so advance
That God thereby declares by proclamation
Himself to be the Father, man the son:
He's therefore man's protector and his saviour.
It is quite true that by sinful behaviour
Man renders himself of that state unfit;
Still, God's vast bounty yields its benefit:
Again he would all sin eradicate,
By good your evil more than compensate;
And so he did, granting his only Son
To ungrateful man, so making donation
Of his deity and, in verity,
For his part taking on humanity:
Thus God with human nature joined and fused.
Now that Son was for your sake so abused
His woes for all sins made full satisfaction.
Acknowledge, then, God's perfect love in action,
Which shows to you a gentle father's care.
You have his Grace, as well, just over there,
Who comes with still more solace to surround you.

Grace [to Mankind]

My dear child, let me put my arms around you,
Declaring that by God you've been received.
For even though in sin you were conceived,
God is so good that he sends you his Grace.
Now, therefore, raise up towards him your face
In order that your sins may have his pardon.

---

104 The character Love, though far less dynamically presented, is given a roughly similar expository role at the conclusion of Wager's play (ll. 2093-2108, 2117-34), seconding the speech of Justification (ll. 2057-88) by drawing the moral that "by Faith onely Marie was iustified" (l. 2131).
For God gives you the gift of his own Son.
Paul, and you, Faith, at once my son unbind.
Spirit of Love, let it not slip your mind
Hence the trembling Spirit of Fear to banish,
And I in him shall thoroughly extinguish
The flame of Lady Law with all her rigour;
Away I shall chase Satan with great vigour –
Sin, too, and Death, so horrible to see:
Thus from menacing fear he shall be free.

Paul [to Mankind]
Satan by Sin’s means had held you bound fast
Within his toils, from which you’re freed at last
By virtuous force of that Grace divine.

Faith
By Faith you are now, and by Grace benign,
Poor sinner, given back your liberty –
That’s of spirit – serving in verity
God always with pure heart, always sincere,
And fearing him, but with a loving fear.

Scene ii
The Spirit of Love, The Spirit of Fear, Grace, The Law, Mankind as Christian

The Spirit of Love
Get out of here, Spirit fearful and pale:

105 Reynolds-Cornell, ed., reads "seras" (i.e., “you will be”), but the original (“sera”) clearly mandates “he,” and emendation seems unnecessary.
107 The biblical chapter is essentially an admonition against liberty in carnal matters.
108 Cf. esp. Rom. 8:15: “For ye haue not receiued the Spirit of bondage to feare againe: but ye haue receiued the Spirit of adopcion, whereby we crye Abba, Father.”
109 The arrangement of verses throughout this scene (quatrains rhyming abba) seems designed to foster the ambiance of reconciliation and divine love.
110 Orig.: "L’Homme Christien".
Long have you kept Mankind in servitude;
He has endured too great a multitude
Of sufferings within your dismal jail.

The Spirit of Fear
O Lady Law, numbed with chill I depart;
To the Spirit of Love I cede the place:
Wherever he is, I can’t show my face,
For he is all mercy and gentle heart.

Grace
O Lady Law, let’s put aside all threats;
The efforts you have made so far suffice:
This sinner now acutely feels his vice;
He’s now disposed to Grace by his regrets.

The Law
As you know well, my sole authority
Depends on God the most high and immortal;
Likewise you know that every single mortal
Is placed beneath me by divine decree.
You know, as well, divinity’s dictate
That to every sinner who me offends
Justly (as is well known) his curse he sends,
Whereby, through me, Death shall him dominate.
Lastly, you know what Jesus Christ describes:
Earth and heaven will sooner have a pause,
Their operations cease, before one clause
Shall not be kept that Holy Writ prescribes.

Grace
Certain I am, too, that from God you come

111 The repeated insistence that these things are known is in the original.
112 Orig.: “. . . terre & ciel plustost tresbucheront, / Et de leurs faiz & œuvres cesseront, / Qu’vn tiltre seul passe du saint Escrit.” Cf. Matt. 5:18: “For truly I say unto you, Til heauen, and earth perish, one iote, or one title of the Law shal not scape, til all things be fulfilled”; “Car en verité ie vous di, que jusqu’a ce que le ciel sera passé, & la terre, vn iota, ou vn seul poinct de la Loy ne passera, que toutes choses ne soyent faites.”
No less than I, but further to afflict
With rigour, and with language harsh and strict,
The soul who’s come to me is not your custom.
   Certain it is that thus, as you’ve submitted,
Great power you possess of castigation,
Showing to everyone their condemnation
   (If they lack Faith) for all their faults committed.
   It’s true, too, that the functions will be spent
Of heaven and earth, which will disappear,
And that not in the slightest can one veer
From Sacred Writ – that’s all too evident.
   But you’re aware that perfect satisfaction
For all Scripture states – including you, Law –
   Was made by Christ, God and man without flaw,
So that no wrong to you by this is done.
   And yet, although by Christ alone fulfilled,
You’re so, for Christians, in entirety;
On those, then, you have no authority
Who take the way, truth, life that Christ has willed.
   Now, therefore, God has made himself propitious
To each sinner by Faith to Christ united,
So if by Law he stands to be indicted,
By Grace and Faith he is no longer vicious.
   Then, all the gifts of Jesus, God’s own son,
Imputed are to those who turn away
From sinning and, in making Faith their stay,
Return to his care: they won’t be undone.

The Law
Inform me then, one of you, if you please,
In what I serve man in a gracious state,
And how, given that my threats I abate,
   My perfect will with such mildness agrees.\footnote{Orig: “Par toy tiendray tout mon vouloir parfait” (“By you I shall maintain all my perfect will”). This is grammatically possible but obscure as a completion of the question, especially because the referent of “toy” (singular “you”) is unclear. It seems not unlikely that the compositor substituted “toy” for “quoi” (perhaps looking ahead to the “t” of “tiendray”), and I translate accordingly.}
To man you are of great utility,
And precious benefit on us bestow,
Reminding us, as all too well you know,
How far from God is man’s fragility.
Further, such is our body’s composition
It seeks for every pleasure to be free
Of check and bridle; hence, the flesh must be
Constrained, O Law, by your severe condition.
Yet to vex the spirit you have the power,
When it is set by Grace at liberty:
It follows God by Faith, in verity,
Awaiting of freedom from flesh the hour.

Therefore I am, and shall exist, forever,
Enduring in my force and virtue always,
But once his great guilt the sinner dismayed,
Different in him shall be my endeavour.
For suddenly by me he shall be given
Means his release from woe in Christ to seek:
Christ showed me full obedience, and meek,
When by his sacrifice sins were forgiven.
Then, when man is received by God in Grace,
Still me, the Law, he cannot do without,
For my dictates will leave him in no doubt
That he is a sinner of fragile race.
What’s more, while he, through Faith, is in
enjoyment
Of Christ’s own absolute justification,
No vice of his can gain my reprobation,
For his spirit gives to the Law consent.
Now therefore, Christian, have no longer fear
Of me: with Jesus Christ by Faith instilled
Within your heart, Scripture he has fulfilled

114 I retain the original punctuation here; by omitting the colon, Reynolds-Cornell, ed., confuses the syntax.
In full for you, who have a Faith sincere.

MANKIND
O Lady Law, no pain your voice procures me
Now, my spirit at peace, and most benign
You seem; but that is since, by Grace divine,
Christ was given me, who by Faith assures me.
Now, then, myself I willingly accord
To you,“ O Law, and promise to fulfil,
As best I can, whatever is God’s will,
Having the aid of his misericord.

Scene iii
Grace, Faith, Satan, Sin, Death

GRACE
Oh, you’re here, cursed one! Of audacity
To my face you show huge capacity!
Here, then – I’ve got bonds.

FAITH
And they’re strong ones, too!

GRACE
Now let’s put to the test what they can do:
They shall be bound by virtue celestial.
[to Satan] Evil spirit, to men pestilential,
Come over here to me – you must be tied!

SATAN
Oh, woe is me! How I am mortified!

115 “[M]yself I willingly accord / To you”; orig.: “de bon cœur ie m’accorde / A vous.” Reynolds-Cornell, ed. emends to “Avec vous”, which arguably alters the meaning (from “attune myself to” to “come to an understanding with”), even if the phrasing is more idiomatic in modern French.
GRACE
1738 Here, here and now, cursed one! You must be tied.

Satan
1739 Oh, woe is me! How I am mortified!
1740 O Beelzebub, come help, for I am raging!

GRACE [seizing Sin and Death]
1741 Come also, Sin and Death, you cursed offspring
1742 Of the old serpent, author of all wrong.

Sin
1743 O Death, alas, how this restraint is strong!

Death
1744 Death, death, and a thousand devils of hell!
1745 These are no fables, I see all too well.16

Grac
1746 Now hear from me, vile crew of vicious vermin,
1747 What it has pleased divine will to determine:
1748 This man is not to be by you defiled,
1749 For God accounts him as his own dear child.

Scene iv
Concupiscence, Satan, Grace

Concupiscence [to Satan]
1750 So all our efforts were for naught?

Satan
1751 No, not at all, for he’ll be caught,

116 The line ironically harkens back to Concupiscence’s deception and blindfolding of Mankind; cf. I.iii.276 and 284; I.v.360.
I have good hope.\(^{117}\)

**Concupiscence**  
For my part, never,  
I’m sure, myself from him I’ll sever.

**Grace**  
True, you won’t, but weaker he’ll find you:  
That is why I must also bind you,  
To show you you’ll no longer wield  
Such potent sway, but needs must yield,  
By the Holy Spirit abated,\(^{118}\)  
Until that joyous day awaited  
When he from you is liberated  
Thoroughly.

**Concupiscence**  
Still, I’ll be instated  
In him.

**Grace**  
But with the difference  
I’ve said: you’ll have no influence.

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**Scene v**  
Grace, Mankind as Christian

**Grace**  
Now, then, my son, of fear dispel all trace:  
Present yourself before God’s holy face  
By Jesus Christ in Faith with all perfection.  
Pray boldly to God in every place,

---

\(^{117}\) Orig.: “Nenny, nenny: car ie m’attens / Encor’ l’auoir.” The devil may rage in frustration but, in contrast to Mankind, he never gives up hope.  
\(^{118}\) Ll. 58-61 likewise rhyme on the same sound in the original.
Crying in Faith, “Father, Father of Grace”,
With both your mouth and heart in pure affection.

MANKIND [praying to God]

O Father of Grace, for eternity,
I dare raise up my eyes, my Lord, to thee,
Dust though I am, and of a sinful race.
Yet thanks to thee such benefit I’ve won
By Jesus Christ, I count as thine own son:
In his name I appear before thy face.
Doubtless I merit not such dignity,
Had it not pleased thy great benignity
To lead me from the pit of hell to Grace;
Be pleased, then, gentle Father, to impart
Thy ever-present Spirit to my heart,
And so in me give Faith a firmer place.
Grant me of thy sweet favour delectation,
O Jesus Christ, who art my sole salvation,
And by such savour from all others sway me:
May my spirit in thee alone repose;
Instruct me how thy sacred Word to gloze;
And in the end away with thee convey me.

Grace

To you, dear son, God with frank heart affords
His Grace and peace, and pardon sure accords
For all your sins, accounting you his son;
And what is more, receive, to satisfy
Your ills entirely, and purify,
The blessèd Crucifix and grievous passion,
Whereby you are in your God’s sight reputed
Just and perfect, because he has imputed
To Jesus Christ your vice and sinfulness.
In him you enjoy your justification,
Thanks to his gift to you, in pure donation,
Of all his perfect justice and his goodness.

Faith

Now, having had from God pardon and grace,
1801 You also must present a kindly face
1802 To your fellow-man, and forgive offence:
1803 You must in such wise live that peace you seek
1804 With all – the strong and those by faults made weak,"¹⁹
1805 To all exemplifying innocence.
1806 Then, you have only to fulfill the rest:
1807 Render your Faith to others manifest,
1808 All virtue practising in works and action;
1809 Engage yourself quite to think, say and do
1810 Those things you know your Lord God wants you to,
1811 And wicked words and deeds at all times shun.
1812 If, at some moments, of us you lose sight,
1813 You must still to the certainty hold tight
1814 That we remain with you, invisible.
1815 Have no regard to what is mere appearance;
1816 Rather, be guided by a strict adherence
1817 To Holy Writ, not to things visible.
1818 Now may the Lord God by his Grace uphold you
1819 In his favour, and, by Christ's aid, enfold you
1820 In Faith and peace; may conscience never cease
1821 To lend you strength in your adversities,
1822 And prompt relief in your necessities,
1823 Causing your knowledge of it to increase.

MANKIND

1824 To God with all my heart myself I give,
1825 Beseeching the Lord that his Grace may live
1826 Always in me, and I within it dwell.
1827 I pray, too, he may constantly instruct me
1828 By his Spirit, and finally conduct me,
1829 By way of Jesus Christ, to joy eternal.

[Exeunt Grace, Faith, The Law, and The Spirit of Love.]

¹⁹ Orig.: “fortz ou imparfaitz”; the translation attempts to capture both the basic opposition and the moral implication.
Scene vi
Paul, Mankind, Concupiscence

PAUL
1830 Here, now, my friend – you have been wholly freed
1831 Of enemies.

MANKIND
1832 That would be true indeed
1833 If I did not have Concupiscence with me.

CONCUPISCENCE
1833 I have dwelt in you since your infancy,
1834 For in your very flesh I have my share.

PAUL
1835 It’s true that burden is heavy to bear.
1836 But Christ wrought so that judgement is forborne
1837 For it, as long as one has been reborn:
1838 For the Christian who has knowledge and sense
1839 Of Jesus Christ confines his Concupiscence
1840 By his spirit, and his flesh crucifies
1841 Along with Christ, who in him mortifies
1842 The false desires of that flesh rebelling:
1843 He must endure this cruel combat, quelling
1844 The flesh’s instigations with the Spirit.
1845 Then, regulate yourself by Holy Writ,
1846 Renouncing your affection’s grave temptation;
1847 By following this course, from condemnation,
1848 Through Jesus Christ, the Lord, you shall be freed.

MANKIND
1849 I grasp that what you say is true indeed.120

120 Ll. 1848-49 likewise echo ll. 1830-31 in the original by repeating the rhyming words (“déli-
uré”/”vray”), thereby showing that Paul’s efficacious preaching has overcome the reservation Man-
kind expressed at the opening of the scene.
Paul

These, your phylacteries, must still be broken.

Mankind

I wore them visibly\textsuperscript{121} to be a token
Of the commandments, but broken they shall be.

Paul

We must in public places fittingly
Be clad to suit the customs of our age
And with the exercise of judgement sage.
Having the Law upon our hearts impressed,
We must as well see that it is expressed
In works and deeds by living Faith induced,
By which the Law within us is produced.

Mankind

Now I see well that the kingdom divine
Lies not in garments, head-gear,\textsuperscript{122} outward sign,
But is by Faith within the heart renewed,
And by its fruits then outwardly construed.

Scene vii

Mankind [as a Christian]\textsuperscript{123}

O God, my lord, alas, what alteration
Do I feel? I see, without hesitation,
Your pity and benevolence profuse.
Alas, my neck already in the noose,

\textsuperscript{121} Orig. "par dessus", which might mean "on top" and thus indicate especially that worn on the forehead, but the mention is plural and inclusive, suggesting the more general sense of "over [everything else]", i.e., so as to be seen; I translate accordingly.

\textsuperscript{122} The original specifies two forms: "chapperon" and "heaume". I generalise and make the moral explicit.

\textsuperscript{123} The designation no doubt signals a change in appearance, in keeping with the end of the previous scene, and prepares for the pointed contrast with the pharisaic of III.viii.1048-62.
I found myself already at death’s door;
My grievous sins oppressed me more and more,
Until I heard, “you’re lost, there is no hope”.
Satan cried out that, strangled with the rope,
I’d go to hell: oh, to what dire anguish,
In pains, travails, tortments and cares to languish,
That cunning evil race was leading me.
But now, thanks to thy great benignity,
I see no danger need I henceforth fear;
Wherefore, my God, while life I harbour here
I’ll always have in mind thy benefits:
It is thy Grace divine, Lord, that acquits
Me now, as I feel sure, of every flaw.
I hear no more the harsh threats of the Law,
No more experience the sinner’s fright,
No more of thee in fury have the sight.
Thus I don’t fear a Death that will not cease;
Rather, I feel within myself such peace
I must confess that I have been transported
From death to life, by thee so comforted.
Alas, for thy great gifts what can be rendered
By me? Just to tell, and cause to be heard
By all alive, thy bounties without peer:
By that means of thy wonders all shall hear,
So amply thy most precious name I’ll praise,
Since more I cannot do, for all my days.

Scene viii
Satan, Sin, Death, Concupiscence, Mankind

SATAN

For all your days, I will assail you:

124 The original is similarly repetitive (“desia”).
125 The mocking echo of the previous line is present in the original.
My company will never fail you.

**Sin**

Oh, how my tender touch will draw you!

**Death**

And often, too, my teeth will gnaw you.

**Mankind**

I fear no more these threats of yours.

**Concupiscence**

Grace your freedom from fear assures.\(^{126}\)

But with delights to take your ease,

Come rest yourself upon my knees.

**Mankind**

Suppose no longer, Concupiscence,

You can lead me. I know and sense\(^{127}\)

My God and Jesus Christ with me;

Living by the Spirit’s decree,

Your pleasure’s no affair of mine:

Better die than vex the divine.

**Satan**

And yet another time we’ll get you.

**Sin**

Out of my sight I’ll never let you.

**Death**

I simply can’t leave you alone.

**Concupiscence**

You know what promptness God has shown,

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\(^{126}\) Concupiscence argues subtly, attempting to turn his sense of grace into an argument that he need not fear giving way to pleasure – a reminiscence of his earlier hypocrisy.

\(^{127}\) I seek to give its full meaning to the original’s “j’ay cognoissance”. 
My friend, to pardon small offences.
So why not dance and please our senses,
As worldlings all are wont to do?\(^\text{128}\)
We’re all human – is this not true?
Then let’s do as both poor and rich.

\textbf{MANKIND}

You get away from me, old witch!\(^\text{119}\)

\textbf{CON UPCIPISCENCE}

Now here a great change meets my eyes,
For he will not in any wise
Live as my desire dictates:
All my will he repudiates,
So that I’m now his chamber-maid.
Alas, how have I dropped in grade,
Becoming such when I was mistress!
But he alone . . . – then, what distress?
For if one lord holds me in sway,
A hundred others me obey!\(^\text{130}\)

\textbf{Scene ix}

\textbf{Paul, Mankind}

\textbf{PAUL}

You must with still more wariness regard
Henceforth those evil foes that so entice.

\textsuperscript{128} Cf. again Erreur in \textit{Le Gouvert}, who urges Humanité to renounce Penitence and accept Luxure’s proposal to “mener joyeuse vie, / Dancer, galler, passer le temps! [lead a joyous life, dance, amuse ourselves, make the most of the time]” (ll. 1490-91), on the grounds that “Jesuchrist / En fin tout te pardonnera [Jesus Christ in the end will forgive you everything]” (ll. 1506-7).

\textsuperscript{129} Mankind may conceivably exit here, but this would blur the point about to be made by Concupiscence that she remains with him as his servant; the dramaturgy is sufficiently supple for her to slip into soliloquy in his presence.

\textsuperscript{130} A rare satirical moment, prepared for by ll. 1914-16, when the universal inclusiveness of Mankind opens into a panorama of down-to-earth human possibilities. See Introduction, pp. 18-21.
But you have God to serve as your safe-guard,
A shield, and Father’s care, of countless price.
Yet do take care to love not Sin and vice
Or give your wanton flesh its liberty:"
Ensure you do not leave too loosely chained
Its longings; duly fearing, you must serve
Your God, lest soul and flesh be further stained
With Sin, or else from honest Faith you swerve.

MANKIND [praying to God]\(^{131}\)

O Lord God, through Christ kind Father to me,
Alas, my great infirmity is plain,
Which is why I pray thee this grace to do me:
In Faith and charity me to maintain.
Here now are Satan, who first taught to feign,
Cruel Sin, and Death – a hideous sight –
And Concupiscence, too, bears me such spite
That I would have, without thy Grace, no choice
But to be vanquished (oh, dangerous fight!\(^{133}\)):
Be pleased, therefore, to hear, through Christ, my voice!

[Exeunt Satan, Sin and Death.\(^{134}\)]

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\(^{131}\) In this *dizain*, the line rhymes, unusually, only with the first (l. 1938) of the following one, the prayer that completes and balances Paul’s counsel, and which follows the rhyme scheme used, notably, by Clément Marot and Maurice Scève: ababbccdcd.

\(^{132}\) Mankind’s prayer here pointedly recalls his self-introduction (I.iii.221-46) with its sense of vulnerability and plea for deliverance from his enemies, which now is visibly accorded.

\(^{133}\) “[D]angerous fight”: orig. “guerre dangereuse”; Reynolds-Cornell, ed., reads “malheureuse [unhappy]” for “dangereuse”. There is no apparent reason for this emendation, which, on the contrary, weakens the sense.

\(^{134}\) While Mankind’s prayer produces the disappearance of Satan, Sin and Death, Concupiscence probably remains onstage in the background, in keeping with Paul’s next speech.
Scene x
Paul, Mankind

Paul

Brother and friend, while here below we stay
In bodies that are subject to decay,
We shall be tempted, tormented as well:
Body with spirit must by nature dwell.
But our good lies in the knowledge and sense
Of Jesus Christ, sole means of our salvation,
Who, in bestowing peace upon our conscience,
Sends of favour divine the revelation.
Without this any other good is vain,
Whatever show of worth it may present;
From evil, too, no harm can he sustain
Who of that good possesses true enjoyment.
As for the rest, let us live confident,
Waiting for our redemption to be wrought
On Christ's own day, when, certain of his judgement,
We have all blessings to perfection brought.

Mankind

I well understand, and feel the effect,
For the experience has been my own
That here we never shall have peace that's perfect,
Except by means of Faith and hope alone.
Now by that hope such influence is shown
It keeps the heart assured, in peace profound,
And though its benefits are not made known
To human sight, the fact should not astound:
Its solid basis is God's sacred Word,
The solemn weight, without equivocation,
Which in the midst of woes, when it is heard,
Brings to the spirit joy and consolation.

Paul

Now may the Lord maintain you in his Grace,
And grant that of his Son your eyes may greet
In Paradise at last the holy face.
MANKIND

1979  Amen.

Paul

God keep you till again we meet.

MANKIND

1980  God keep you, Paul, I say, and I return
1981  Great thanks for your attention shown to me,
1982  As well as your compassionate concern,
1983  Which I shall always hold in memory.

Paul [as he leaves]

1984  Do not forget often to offer prayer
1985  Through Christ to God, no matter where or when.

MANKIND

1986  I shall.

Paul

To pray is the routine affair

1987  Of Christians. Go with God.

MANKIND

And you too, then.
Conclusion

We may thus conclude from this demonstration
That we benefit from justification
For all our sins by means of Faith and Grace.
It is quite true, as right here in this place
You have been shown, that necessarily
The Law, too, serves us in this vitally,
Declaring to Mankind his sinful state.
Now he, feeling this, can hope for no fate
From her but sentencing to pains eternal.
Then he is ready to receive the gospel
Of Grace and peace the Evangel imparts:
It is by this that God to fragile hearts
Gives Faith, and the remission evident
Of all their sins, because the punishment
Entirely was by Jesus Christ assumed.
With love of God the soul is then consumed,
And led by Faith to holy rest and peace.

Next, we maintain that Faith will never cease
To bear as fruit such works as God will bless,
And make us hate all acts of wickedness.
Unless Faith to that fruitfulness has led
Of good deeds done which please God, it is dead.\(^{135}\)
Also, however, since what we effect
In this poor state will always be imperfect,
We must not place in that our confidence,
But rather solidly assure our conscience
In Jesus Christ, who in his ample justice
Has taken on himself all our injustice,\(^{136}\)
Thus peace in Faith and sure repose us sending.

Now it is time, this present discourse ending,
To pray to God that, by his holy Grace,
He may cause all of us to see his face

\(^{135}\) “[I]t is dead”: the original reads “elle morte” and evidently lacks the verb “est”, which is supplied in Reynolds-Cornell, ed.

\(^{136}\) The contrasting terms (“justice”/“injustice”) are those of the original.
33 In heaven, seat of bliss, where he does dwell
34 On high. Amen. And may God keep you well.

End