

# DOWNLOAD PDF CELL OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE: SEVEN EARLY ENGLISH MYSTICAL TREATISES PRINTED BY HENRY PEPWELL IN 1521

## Chapter 1 : The Cell of Self-Knowledge - Title

*The cell of self-knowledge: seven early English mystical treatises printed by Henry Pepwell in by Pepwell, Henry, d. ; Gardner, Edmund Garratt, Publication date*

This etext was included by Charles Aldarondo Aldarondo yahoo. The Cell of Self-Knowledge: The Frontispiece is taken from B. Exterso autem speculo et diu diligenter inspecto, incipit ei quaedam divini luminis claritas interlucere, et immensus quidam insolitae visionis radius oculis ejus apparere. Hoc lumen oculos ejus irradiaverat, qui dicebat: Signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui, Domine; dedisti laetitiam in corde meo. Ex hujus igitur luminis visione quam admiratur in se, mirum in modum accenditur animus, et animatur ad videndum lumen, quod est supra se. How the Virtue of Dread riseth in the Affection Cap. How Sorrow riseth in the Affection Cap. How Hope riseth in the Affection Cap. How Love riseth in the Affection Cap. How Ordained Shame riseth and groweth in the Affection Cap. A Devout Treatise of Discerning of Spirits, very necessary for Ghostly Livers FROM the end of the thirteenth to the beginning of the fifteenth century may be called the golden age of mystical literature in the vernacular. In Germany, we find Mechthild of Magdeburg d. Catherine of Siena d. The seven tracts or treatises before us were published in in a little quarto volume: In the yere of our lorde God, M. Bernard, Richard of St. Victor is, perhaps, the most important of the three. Himself either a Scot or an Irishman by birth, Richard entered the famous abbey of St. Victor, a house of Augustinian canons near Paris, some time before , where he became the chief pupil of the great mystical doctor and theologian whom the later Middle Ages regarded as a second Augustine, Hugh of St. His masterpiece, *De Gratia Contemplationis*, known also as *Benjamin Major*, in five books, is a work of marvellous spiritual insight, unction, and eloquence, upon which Dante afterwards based the whole mystical psychology of the *Paradiso*. He teaches that there are three qualities of contemplation, according to its intensity: This master of the spiritual life died in Amongst the glowing souls of the great doctors and theologians in the fourth heaven, St. Thomas Aquinas bids Dante mark the ardent spirit of "Richard who in contemplation was more than man. Ibi Benjamin adolescentulus in mentis excessu: Elevated above itself and rapt in ecstasy, it beholdeth things in the divine light at which all human reason succumbs. What, then, is the death of Rachel, save the failing of reason? *De Praeparatione animi ad Contemplationem*. It is a paraphrase of certain portions of this work, with a few additions, and large omissions. In the one, he speaks of knowledge of self as the Holy Hill, the Mountain of the Lord: Full knowledge of the rational spirit is a great and high mountain. This mountain transcends all the peaks of all mundane sciences, and looks down upon all the philosophy and all the science of the world from on high. Could Aristotle, could Plato, could the great band of philosophers ever attain to it? I hold all truth in suspicion which the authority of the Scriptures does not confirm, nor do I receive Christ in His clarification unless Moses and Elias are talking with Him. Thou shalt call together thy thoughts and thy desires, and make thee of them a church, and learn thee therein for to love only this good word Jesu, so that all thy desires and all thy thoughts are only set for to love Jesu, and that unceasingly as it may be here; so that thou fulfil that is said in the psalm: And then, in this church of thoughts and desires, and in this onehead of studies and of wills, look that all thy thoughts, and all thy desires, and all thy studies, and all thy wills be only set in the love and the praising of this Lord Jesu, without forgetting, as far forth as thou mayst by grace, and as thy frailty will suffer; evermore meeking thee to prayer and to counsel, patiently abiding the will of our Lord, unto the time that thy mind be ravished above itself, to be fed with the fair food of angels in the beholding of God and ghostly things; so that it be fulfilled in thee that is written in the psalm: Ibi Benjamin adolescentulus in mentis excessu; that is: Among others, it is found in the Arundel MS. It has been published from the Harl. Horstman, who observes that "it is very old, and certainly prior to Walter Hilton. External and internal evidence seems to point to its being the work of the anonymous author of the *Divine Cloud of Unknowing*. This is not the place to tell again the wonderful story of St. Catherine of Siena , one of the noblest and most truly heroic women that the world has ever seen. Her life and manifold

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About 1480, Wynkyn de Worde printed *The Lyf of saint Katherin of Senis the blessid virgin*, edited by Caxton; which is a free translation, by an anonymous Dominican, with many omissions and the addition of certain reflections, of the *Legenda*, the great Latin biography of St. Catherine by her third confessor, Friar Raymond of Capua, the famous master-general and reformer of the order of St. Francis. From the first of these two works, the *Lyf*, are selected the passages--the *Divers Doctrines* devout and fruitful--which Pepwell here presents to us; but it seems probable that he was not borrowing directly from Caxton, as an almost verbally identical selection, with an identical title, is found in the British Museum, MS. 10095. Margery Kempe is a much more mysterious personage. She has come down to us only in a tiny quarto of eight pages printed by Wynkyn de Worde: *Enprynted in Fletestrete by Wynkyn de worde*. It is undated, but appears to have been printed in 1521. Tanner, not very accurately, writes: "There is nothing in the treatise itself to enable us to fix its date. It is, perhaps, possible that the writer or recipient of these revelations is the 'Margeria filia Johannis Kempe,' who, between 1470 and 1475, gave up to the prior and convent of Christ Church, Canterbury, all her rights in a piece of land with buildings and appurtenances, 'which falls to me after the decease of my brother John, and lies in the parish of Blessed Mary of Northgate outside the walls of the city of Canterbury. For Margery, as for Juliana, Love is the interpretation of revelation, and the key to the universal mystery: For, if it were possible that I might weep with thee, I would weep with thee for the compassion that I have of thee. Like the Hermit of Hampole, he was the founder of a school, and the works of his followers cannot always be distinguished with certainty from his own. Like his great master in the mystical way, Richard of St. Victor, Hilton was an Augustinian, the head of a house of canons at Thurgarton, near Newark. His great work, the *Scala Perfectionis*, or *Ladder of Perfection*, 'which expoundeth many notable doctrines in Contemplation,' was first printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1521, and is still widely used for devotional reading. A shorter treatise, the *Epistle to a Devout Man in Temporal Estate*, first printed by Pynson in 1521, gives practical guidance to a religious layman of wealth and social position, for the fulfilling of the duties of his state without hindrance to his making profit in the spiritual life. These, with the *Song of Angels*, are the only printed works that can be assigned to him with certainty, though many others, undoubtedly from his pen, are to be found in manuscripts, and a complete and critical edition of Walter Hilton seems still in the far future. The writer goes on to speak of the mystical consolations and visitations granted to the loving soul in this life, distinguishing the feelings and sensations that are mere delusions, from those that truly proceed from the fire of love in the affection and the light of knowing in the reason, and are a very anticipation of that ineffable 'onehead' in heaven. The three remaining treatises--the *Epistle of Prayer*, the *Epistle of Discretion in Stirrings of the Soul*, and the *Treatise of Discerning of Spirits*[19]--are associated in the manuscripts with four other works: *The Divine Cloud of Unknowing* has been credited to Walter Hilton, as likewise to William Exmew, or to Maurice Chauncy, Carthusians of the sixteenth century, whereas the manuscripts are at least a hundred years earlier than their time; but it seems safer to attribute the whole series to an unknown writer of the second part of the fourteenth century, who 'marks a middle point between Rolle and Hilton. They show us mysticism brought down, if I may say so, from the clouds for the practical guidance of the beginner along this difficult way. Catherine of Siena, though in a less degree, he has the gift of vision and the faculty of intuition combined with a homely common sense, and can illustrate his 'simple meaning' with a smile. I have borrowed a phrase from St. Catherine, 'The Cell of Self-Knowledge,' *la cella del cognoscimento di noi*, as the title of this little volume.

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Knowledge of self and purity of heart, the mystics teach, are the indispensable conditions for the highest mystical elevation. Knowledge of self, for Richard of St. Victor, is the high mountain apart upon which Christ is transfigured; for Catherine of Siena, it is the stable in which the pilgrim through time to eternity must be born again. Victor, "let whoso thirsts to see his God, wipe his mirror, purify his spirit. After he hath thus cleared his mirror and long diligently gazed into it, a certain clarity of divine light begins to shine through upon him, and a certain immense ray of unwonted vision to appear before his eyes. This light irradiated the eyes of him who said: Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us; Thou hast put gladness in my heart. From the vision of this light which it sees with wonder in itself, the mind is wondrously inflamed and inspired to behold the light which is above itself. As the object of this book is not to offer a Middle English text to students, but a small contribution to mystical literature, the orthography has been completely modernised, while I have attempted to retain enough of the original language to preserve the flavour of mediaeval devotion. The one is reason, the other is affection; through reason we know, and through affection we feel or love. Of reason springeth right counsel and ghostly wits; and of affection springeth holy desires and ordained[26] feelings. By Jacob is understanden God, by Rachel is understanden reason, by Leah is understanden affection. Bilhah was a great jangler, and Zilpah was ever drunken and thirsty. By Bilhah is understanden imagination, the which is servant unto reason, as Bilhah was to Rachel; by Zilpah is understanden sensuality, the which is servant unto affection, as Zilpah was to Leah. And so much are these maidens needful to their ladies, that without them all this world might serve them of nought. For why, without imagination reason may not know, and without sensuality affection may not feel. And yet imagination cryeth so inconveniently[27] in the ears of our heart that, for ought that reason her lady may do, yet she may not still her. And therefore it is that oft times when we should pray, so many divers fantasies of idle and evil thoughts cry in our hearts, that on no wise we may by our own mights drive them away. And thus it is well proved that Bilhah is a foul jangler. And also the sensuality is evermore so thirsty, that all that affection her lady may feel,[28] may not yet slake her thirst. The drink that she desireth is the lust of fleshly, kindly, and worldly delights,[29] of the which the more that she drinketh the more she thirsteth; for why, for to fill the appetite of the sensuality, all this world may not suffice; and therefore it is that oft times when we pray or think on God and ghostly things, we would fain feel sweetness of love in our affection,[30] and yet we may not, for are we so busy to feed the concupiscence of our sensuality; for evermore it is greedily asking, and we have a fleshly compassion thereof. And thus it is well proved that Zilpah is evermore drunken and thirsty. And right as Leah conceived of Jacob and brought forth seven children, and Rachel conceived of Jacob and brought forth two children, and Bilhah conceived of Jacob and brought forth two children, and Zilpah conceived of Jacob and brought forth two children; right so the affection conceiveth through the grace of God, and bringeth forth seven virtues; and also the sensuality conceiveth through the grace of God, and bringeth forth two virtues; and also the reason conceiveth through the grace of God, and bringeth forth two virtues; and also the imagination conceiveth through the grace of God, and bringeth forth two virtues, or two beholdings. And the names of their children and of their virtues shall be known by this figure that followeth: Jacob temporally, God spiritually.

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### Chapter 3 : Henry Pepwell (Author of The Cell of Self-Knowledge)

*Contents I. A very devout treatise, named Benjamin, of the mights and virtues of a man's soul, and of the way to true contemplation, comp. by Richard of Saint Victor -- II. Divers doctrines devout and fruitful, taken out of the life of that glorious virgin and spouse of Our Lord, Saint Katherin.*

### Chapter 4 : The Cell of Self-Knowledge

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