

earth'. The Psalmist now repeats what he has just said, strengthening our faith.

PSALM 61, VERSE 2.

Nam et ipse deus meus et salutare meum; susceptor meus, non movebor amplius. 'For he is my God and my saviour. He is my protector; I shall be moved no more'. Truly, he is my salvation, for he is my God by grace, and my saviour, which means 'my redeemer', and he raises me from the troubles of this world to heavenly joy. Therefore I shall no more be moved from him, because

No greater joy I crave
Than in my heart to have
The love of his praising.
This is the better part—
Keep Jesu in thy heart
And want no other thing.

*Done into modern English from the Thornton MS. by
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NOTE ON ROLLE'S LANGUAGE IN HIS PSALTER

Rolle declares, in his Prologue to his Psalter, that in his exposition he aims at a style that is easy and colloquial rather than highflown and one that will, at the same time, introduce those of his readers who know no Latin to a knowledge of that language. Therefore he will use English words most like to the Latin ones. An introduction of sixty long alliterative lines in couplets says that the work was undertaken by Rolle at the request of Margaret Kirkby, a recluse. Hence the necessity for an exposition in English, since women were not expected to be as familiar with Latin as men. But, for the religious life, a knowledge of Latin was useful, to say the least of it, and so he endeavoured to give some rudimentary instruction. The result of this mixed aim is an attempt to reconcile two irreconcilable dictions, the colloquial and the Latinate. Consequently this experimental English style is inclined to be clumsy and unidiomatic and lacking in flexibility although there are excellent patches where the colloquial phrases remind us that the work was addressed to an intimate friend or where the matter becomes infused with his own fervent and romantic mysticism. Only occasionally does he remember to help the weaker brethren in the acquisition of Latin, possibly because his own Latin was not of the best. There is, however, a startling example of such tuition in his exposition of the second verse of Psalm 61. He translates '*salutare meum*' as 'mi saveour' and then adds, 'pat is, mi bier', which means literally, 'that is, my buyer'. According to the *New English Dictionary* the use of the word 'bier' in this theological context is first found in 1300 in the Early English

(Surtees) Psalter. It occurs again in the 14th century in one of Wyclif's sermons and then, later in 1410, in Nicolas Love's 'Bonaventure's Life of Christ'. After which the word appears to have become obsolete. The word 'bier' is of Old English derivation and by employing it Rolle is assisting his reader to associate the English word with that word of Latin origin which has the same meaning, 'saveour'. What he does not do is to demonstrate explicitly the connection between the Latin '*salutare*' and its Anglicised derivative 'saveour'. As the English word 'buyer' in this usage has dropped out of the language another latinism, 'redeemer', must be used in a modern translation.

Note on the Lollard Revisions of Rolle's Psalter (cf. J. E. Wells, *Manual of Middle English Writings*).

In the latter part of the 14th century a revision of Rolle's Commentary was made to suit the needs of Lollards but was still palmed off as Rolle's. The prologue is kept, the text of the Psalms is little modified; but in the commentary gradually more and more matter of the Wycliffite type is added, the expansion becoming extensive and Rolle's comments being practically lost. Still later the Lollard Psalter was cut down, the controversial matter and attacks on the clergy being eliminated or generalised. Miss Emily Hope Allen notes that the nuns of Hampole kept an autograph copy of Rolle's Psalter chained in their priory for authentic reference.

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