

provided in religious life; it is almost entirely interior. But obedience, separation from the *spirit* of the world, and various kinds of 'stripping' are there, adapted to the circumstances.

All this is in no way intended to 'belittle' contemplative life in the official sense, nor to make any sort of comparisons between it and contemplation in the life of the world outside the cloister. In itself, of course, official contemplative life is the best and safest means of attaining to Christian perfection, and it possesses the inestimable safeguard of religious obedience. But, as the Carmelite writer truly says: 'Surely the highest vocation for each is the vocation to which God calls him individually. That way alone surely will the closest union with God be reached and God's greatest glory manifested.'

### THE BREAD

[A fragment written between two treatises in Ms. All Souls XXIV, fol. 29v.—C.K.]

Ye wot well that wheat being in the sheaf is not able to be served afore a lord at his table, unto time it be alto beaten with the flail, alto thrown with the fan, alto broken with the mill & shaken with the bowltel,<sup>1</sup> alto wet with water, alto kneaded & moulded with hands & then to be set in an hot oven till it be baken. Right so man's soul that is bound in the sheaf of fleshly lusts & earthly affections is not able to be served afore our Lord in heaven, till it be alto beaten with the flail of tribulation, alto thrown with the fan of persecution, alto broken with the mill of temptation, alto shaken with the bowltel of sickness, alto wet with the water of sorrow & contrition, alto kneaded & moulded with the hands of slanders, reproofs, cursings, scornings and despising. And then to be set in the oven of the love of our Lord and of heavenly things & so to be baken with the heat of charity, till adversity be to him as joyful as prosperity, poverty as riches, sickness as health, despising as praising. And then as the wheat, well dight & baken as it is aforesaid, shall be presented & served afore the Lord in his royalty, right so the soul, dight & baken as it is aforesaid, at the hour of death shall be presented with angels afore our Lord in heaven, with him to dwell there without end. Amen.

1. meal sieve.