“Stond wel, moder, vnder rode, 
bihold þi child wyth glade mode, 
þyðe moder mittu ben.”

“Svne, quu may bliðe stonden? 
hi se þin feect, hi se þin honden, 
nayled to þe harde tre.”

“Moder, do wey þi wepinge; 
hi þole þis ded for mannes thinge— 
for owen gilte þoli non.”

“Svne, hi fele þe dede stunde, 
þe swerd is at min herte grunde, 
þat me byhytte symeon.”

“Moder, reu vpon þi bern! 
þu wasse away þo blodi teren, 
it don me worse þan mi ded.”

“Sune, hu mitti teres wernen? 
hy se þo blodi flodes hernen 
huth of þin herte to min fet.”

“Moder, nu y may þe seyn, 
bettere is þat ic one deye 
þan al man-kyn to helle go.”
“Sune, y se þi bodi swngen,
þi brest, þin hond, þi fot þur-stungen—
no selli þou me be wo.”

“Moder, if y dar þe tellen,
yf y ne deye þu gost to helle;
hi þole þis ded for þine sake.”

“Sune, þu best me so minde,
with me nout; it is mi kinde
þat y for þe sorye make.”

“Moder, merci! let me deyen,
for adam ut of helle beyn,
and al mankin þat is for-lore.”

“Sune, wat sal me to rede?
þi pine pined me to dede,
let me deyn þe bi-foren.”

“Moder, mitarst þu mith leren
wat pine þolen þat childre beren
wat sorwe hauen þat child for-gon.”

“Sune, y wot y kan þe tellen,
bute it be þe pine of helle
more sorwe ne woth y non.”

“Moder, reu of moder kare!
nu þu wost of moder fare,
þou þu be clene mayden man.”

“Sune, help alle at nede,
alle þo þat to me greden—
mayden, wyf and fol wyman.”

“Moder, y may no lenger duellen,
þe time is cumen y fare to helle,
þe þridde day y rise upon.”

“Sune, y wyle wi’the funden,
y deye ywis of þine wnden,
so reuful ded was neuere non.”
When he ros þan fel þi sorwe,
þe blisse sprong þe þridde morewe,
wen bliþe moder were þu þo.  

Moder, for þat ilke blisse,
bisech vre god, vre sinnes lesse,
þu be hure chel ayen hure fo.  

Blisced be þu, quen of heuene,
bring us ut of helle leuene
þurth þi dere sunes mith.  

Moder, for þat hithe blode
þat he sadde vpon þe rode,
led us in-to heuene lith. Amen.
BEFORE SPEAKING OF THE SHORT MEDITATIVE POEMS ABOVE, KANE EVALUATES the religious poet's use of the dialogue as one of the less successful means of treating the crucifixion.

It tends to diffuseness and clumsy handling or else, by the obviousness of its standard answers to the customary rhetorical questions of her lamentations, distracts attention from what seems the most striking feature of the situation, namely Mary's emotion as a human mother face to face with her suffering Son. The dialogue treatment is the easy way of showing how an incarnate God and His mother are victims of the conflict between divine and human purposes. By dialogue the reasons for this conflict can be not only made explicit but also developed beyond any possibility of misconception, or else Christ can offer consolation to His Mother within which doctrinal instruction for the hearers is contained. Poetry, however, does not necessarily thrive on the obvious. . . .

Among the dialogues he refers to, Kane includes the thirteenth century sequence "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode." I would like to discuss this dialogue as the final example of a poem on the crucifixion. Here, not only does Christ speak, not only does Mary lament or appeal, but there is an exchange between the two. Thus the poem forms a complement to the three
others we have considered, as well as illustrating yet another way the crucifixion was conceived by the medieval poet. It will give us another opportunity to study the relationship of theology to these lyrics and to see further results of this method of approach.

The Dialogue

Iste erat dolor meus maximus quia videbam me descri ab eo quem genueram, nec supererat alius, quia mihi erat unicus. Vox mea fere perierat omnis, sed dabam gemitus suspiriaque doloris. Volebam loqui, sed dolor verba rumpebat. . . . Videbam morientem quem diligebat anima mea et tota liquefiebam prae doloris angustia. Aspiciebat et ipse benignissimo vulto me, matrem plorantem, et verbis paucis voluit me consolari, sed ego nullo modo consolari potui.  

The dialogue of “Stond wel, moder, vnder rode” can be seen to be the counterpart of that in “Als i lay vp-on a nith,” set at the moment that is the negation of the moment of the dialogue between the mother and the Child in His cradle. Whereas “Als i lay vp-on a nith” opened in the spirit of Mary’s joy at Christ’s birth, “Stond wel” opens at the moment of Mary’s deepest sorrow at Christ’s death. As He does in the former poem, Christ instructs Mary about the meaning of an event of His life and the dialogue opposes the omniscience of her Son’s divinity to the limited vision of Mary’s humanity. But in “Stond wel” Christ is not presented to be as aloof and relentless as in “Als i lay vp-on a nith” where in foretelling His suffering He showed no sorrow for causing His mother’s pain or fear for Himself. Here, His mother’s suffering causes His own greatest sorrow and His humanity seems to suffer and struggle in the same way as Mary’s does. In this poem, as in the other, the poet has used the figure of joy and sorrow to structure the poem, but the joy and sorrow, from the beginning of the poem to the end, is conceived not as it is reflected in the vision and heart of Mary, but from the perspective of the cosmic view of theology looking back on the crucifixion as it is ultimately the source of all man’s joy.

As did “Als i lay,” “Stond wel” begins with an ironic contrast between the situation and the command of Mary’s Son. It begins at the moment when
Mary’s Child, suffering on the cross, is about to die. Yet, paradoxically, He commands Mary to rejoice:

“Stond wel, moder, vnder rode,  
bihold þi child wyth glade mode,  
blyþe moder mittu ben.”  
“Svne, quu may bliþe stonden?  
hi se þin feet, hi se þin honden,  
nayled to þe harde tre.”

Christ commands Mary to be happy beneath the cross. Mary cannot understand Christ’s request for her to stop sorrowing. In reply she simply presents what she sees, that her Son suffers. In the same way as in “Als i lay vp-on a nith” Mary’s words expressed the natural joy of a mother at her child’s birth, Mary’s reply here expresses the natural agony of a mother at the suffering of her son.

This first stanza establishes the opposition fundamental to the poem. In the same way as in the lullaby, the opposition reflects the gulf between the divine and human perspectives of sorrow and joy, which for Mary will become more incomprehensible as Christ’s death approaches. In “Stond wel, moder, vnder rode,” however, the divine view will not gradually widen the capacity of Mary’s understanding, but at each exchange between Mary and her Son, His suffering will remain in her heart as an absolute. The first nine stanzas follow a consistent pattern, opposing in the first three lines the words of Christ to, in the second three lines, the reply of Mary. In each stanza Christ’s words begin with “Moder,” Mary’s reply with “Sune.”

“Moder, do wey þi wepinge;  
hi þole þis ded for mannes thinge—  
for owen gilte þoli non.”  
“Svne, hi fele þe dede stunde,  
þe swerd is at min herte grunde,  
þat me byhytte symeon.”

For the second time Christ commands Mary to cease weeping and proposes to her the significance of His suffering. It is not My guilt I suffer for, but the guilt of man. Mary, however, replies in deeper sorrow, for she senses her Son’s death is near. Now, at the moment of her most profound suffering,
she realizes what the prophecy of Simeon meant: the sword Simeon had said would be ground in her heart is the wound she feels at the death of her Son.⁴

The next stanza reaches the first climax of the suffering their love for each other causes and a sudden reversal. In response to Mary's sorrow, suddenly overcome by compassion for His mother's suffering and as if His human nature could not endure the sorrow of His human mother, Christ cries out for her to have mercy on Him. He appeals to Mary just as she herself had appealed to Him, and His cry is caused, as hers was, by what He sees.

“Moder, reu vpon þi bern!
þu wasse away þo blodi teren,
it don me werse þan mi ded.”
“Sune, hu mitti teres wernen?
hy se þo blodi floses hernen
huth of þin herte to min fet.”

To the tears of blood her Son sees her weep Mary simply opposes again what she beholds, the blood running out of her Son's heart down to her feet. Her suffering is His suffering. Her comprehension extends no further. The intensity of the suffering of each is reflected through the speech of the other, as through Christ we see Mary's pain for her Son is so great that her tears are blood, through Mary Christ is so deeply wounded in His heart that the blood flows down to Mary.⁵

Christ then reasons with Mary a second time, wrestling to put her absolute grief in relation to His eternal plan. He presents the same reason He gave in stanza two, now formulated in a new way, opposing their sorrow to the eternal sorrow of man.

“To emphasize to Mary the value of what He is doing, He weighs His own death, that of one man, against the fact that all mankind will go to hell if He does not die. By comparing death and hell He has defined the stakes for

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which He suffers. Hell is man's separation from God, his eternal loss, but Christ’s single death will outweigh this loss. Although Christ has here clearly defined the divine significance and power of His crucifixion, Mary simply repeats what she has said before, enumerating the points of Christ’s suffering she can see, the physical agony and coming death of her Son. How can you make me happy through woe? she asks.

In a third way, a way which replies directly to her question and, brutally, would seem to demand from Mary a deeper response of pain, Christ then explains His suffering and death.

“Moder, if y dar þe tellen,
yif y ne deye þu gost to helle;
hi þole þis ded for þine sake.”
“Sune, þu best me so minde,
with me nout; it is mi kinde
þat y for þe sorye make.”

I suffer for man’s guilt, one man dying rather than all; and—if I can dare to say so to you—I suffer this for you, for if I do not die, you yourself will go to hell. The dilemma is analogous to the dilemma proposed by “Pe milde Lomb isprad o rode,” where the one who loves Christ most causes Him His greatest pain and is classed with fallen mankind as an instrument of His crucifixion. Again Mary is powerless to stop grieving. As in the first part of the stanza Christ revealed that she was the source of His suffering, so in the second three lines Mary replies by presenting the fact that her motherhood is the deepest source of her compassion: Son, you are so much in my mind. Do not blame me. It is my nature that I sorrow for you.

A fourth time Christ cries out beseeching Mary, this time in words which a sinner might use to appeal to Mary for aid.

“Moder, merci! let me deyen,
for adam ut of helle beyn,
and al mankin þat is for-lore.”
“Sune, wat sal me to rede?
þi pine pined me to dede,
let me deyn þe bi-foren.”

Just as the suffering Christ had, paradoxically, told Mary to be happy, so now He cries out, God, paradoxically entreating one of His creatures to let Him
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die. Mother, mercy! Let Me die so that I can buy Adam out of hell and all mankind which is lost. Just as the angel of the annunciation sought Mary's consent that she be the mother of Christ, so here the poet has Christ plead with Mary that she accept His death to become the mother of mankind. Replying, Mary accepts His death, but she then offers her death for His death, turning His appeal into an appeal of her own. What shall I say to this? Your pain has pained me to death. Let me die before you. For Mary, pain remains an absolute fact. The next two stanzas focus on her pain, developing the parallel between Mary's painless giving birth to Christ and her suffering at the crucifixion, in yet another way from the poems mentioned earlier, as an element of persuasion. Christ uses it to gain Mary's consent that she become the mother of mankind.

Using the sorrow Mary suffers now to make Mary one with the sorrow of every mother, Christ says, Now for the first time you can learn what pain they suffer who bear children, what sorrow they suffer who lose their children. And as if Mary's heart is opened by the intensity of her own pain of motherhood, Mary's mode of reply changes. No longer opposing her pain to the requests of her Son as an absolute, she sets it in relation to the greatest pain possible for mankind, the very pain from which Christ is buying man through His suffering and death. Son, I know I can tell you, she replies, that except it be the pain of hell I know of no greater sorrow.

It is after Christ has reasoned with Mary step by step to explain that He is dying to redeem mankind and Mary herself, and after Mary has made the fullest expression of her sorrow and seen it in relation to the greatest sorrow man can suffer, that Christ cries out a fifth time from the cross and asks Mary to pity mankind.

"Moder, mitarst þu mith leren
wat pine þolen þat childre beren
wat sorwe hauen þat child for-gon."
"Sune, y wot y kan þe tellen,
bute it be þe pine of helle
more sorwe ne woth y non."

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"Moder, reu of moder kare!
nu þu wost of moder fare,
þou þu be clene mayden man."
"Sune, help alle at nede,  
alles þat to me greden—  
mayden, wyf and fol wyman."

Mother, have pity on mothers’ sorrow. Now you know the lot a mother suffers, although you are a maiden. Opened to the sorrow of mankind by her sorrow at the death of her own son, Mary becomes the intercessor for mankind, and in the second three lines instead of opposing to Christ’s words her own sorrow, Mary fulfills the request of her Son and makes her first intercessory prayer. Both the death of Christ which follows and her prayer will become the basis for the final petition by the poet in the last stanza. Son, she prays, help all in need, all those who cry to me—maiden, or wife, or unchaste woman.

As if the moment could come only with Mary’s consent and after her words of petition for mankind, Christ now announces His death.

"Moder, y may no lenger duellen,  
þe time is cumen y fare to helle,  
þe þridde day y rise upon."
"Sune, y wyle wi’þe funden,  
y deye ywis of þine wnden,  
so reuful ded was neuere non."

With the announcing of His death and His descent into hell, Christ foretells His resurrection, but in this poem only time, not the power of words, can release Mary from sorrow. It will be only when the events themselves transform sorrow to joy through Christ’s actual rising from the dead that Mary’s heart will change and she be able to obey Christ’s opening command to be joyful. To Christ’s prophecy Mary opposes her desire to go with her Son and the fact that she herself is dying of His wounds.

The first three lines of the next stanza narrate that what Christ foretold in fact came true. But the death and descent into hell are omitted to present the outcome of events in terms of Mary’s joy.

When he ros þan fel þi sorwe,  
þe blisse sprung þe þridde morewe,  
wen bliþe moder wer þu þo.
The Crucifixion

Moder, for hat ilke blisse,
bisech vre god, vre sinnes lesse,
þu be hure chel ayen hure fo.

When He rose, the poet says, then your sorrow fell. “Blisse” sprang up on the third morning, and then were you the happy mother your Son had commanded you to be. With this stanza there is an abrupt change in the manner of the poem. There is a transition from past time to the present, and as the poet forms a petition to Mary in virtue of that same “blisse” that is hers, the point of view has shifted from that of Christ and Mary at the moment of Christ’s death to that of the poet and his audience in present time. Although the dialogue has ceased, the stanza retains its proportioning into two parts. While the first three lines narrate Christ’s rising and the springing up of Mary’s joy, the second three, customarily devoted to Mary’s reply of sorrow, present the petition of those “at nede” (line 46). Now Mary is in joy above while the poet and his audience stand below on earth, from the position that had been hers seeking her intercession. But the poet’s words echo the words with which Christ addressed Mary, and appropriately so, for in fact man in the present is the spiritual child of Mary. “Moder,” the poet addresses her, Beseech our God to loose our sins. Be our shield against the devil (“hure fo”).

Then in the last stanza, the poet develops the full significance of the appeal for those for whom he composes his poem. He makes the prayer into a power to preserve from hell and to lead to final joy.

Blisced be þu, quen of heuene,
bring us ut of helle leuene
þurth þi dere sures mith.
Moder, for þat hithe blode
þat he sadde vpon þe rode,
led us in-to heuene lith. Amen.

In the first three lines he asks Mary as Queen of Heaven to bring “us” through her Son’s power out of hell’s flames. The limits of sorrow and joy having been demonstrated by the debate between Christ and Mary and by the narration of the facts of Christ’s death and resurrection, the soul now knows what to seek, and the poet concludes with his most powerful claim. Again addressing Mary as “moder,” and setting in opposition to the figure of
hell's flames the figure, in the last line, of "heuene lith," the poet beseeches Mary: For that precious blood that He shed upon the cross—that very blood that caused your bloody tears and salvation for man—lead us finally into the light of heaven, the light in which you now rejoice as blessed while we stand here below seeking the light.

The Intelligible Cross

Hence Scripture treats of the whole universe as regards height and depth, first and last, and as regards an intermediate course under the form of a certain intelligible cross in terms of which the whole mechanism of the universe has to be described and in a certain way seen by the light of the mind.

"Stond wel, moder, vnder rode," like "Als i lay vp-on a nith," is about the transformation of sorrow to joy. It tells of how Mary's sorrow at Christ's death was turned to joy by His resurrection, and it explains that Christ's suffering reflected in Mary's compassion is the means of transformation of man's eternal sorrow to eternal joy. "Als i lay vp-on a nith" had its dynamic center in the transformation of Mary's incompletely realized joy to joy fully realized through Christ's explaining to her the implications of His birth. In Christ's birth was implied His suffering and death. The structure of "Als i lay" was determined by the stages of Mary's reactions of joy and sorrow as Christ foretold the joys and sorrows of His life, and the poem ended when the Child told of the final mystery, the resurrection and last judgment when He will come again in glory. By his knowledge of the full plan of history, the listener knew more than Mary whose limited vision determined the structure of the poem. His fuller knowledge gave him an ironic view of what Mary saw, until through her knowledge of the story of her Son's life as it unfolded, her vision corresponded in scope with the listener's.

Although in "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" the structure is also governed by the concepts of joy and sorrow, the principle of development differs fundamentally from "Als i lay." In the first place, the poem is not a gradual transformation of Mary's limited understanding of sorrow and joy through her imagined experience of a series of events. The poet, rather, chooses three moments of time and at each moment sets joy in opposition to sorrow. The
first is the moment of psychological definition just before Mary's sorrow and Christ's suffering reach their greatest intensity, the moment of Christ's death. The second is the moment of the resurrection, the past event in sacred history which transforms Christ's death to life and Mary's sorrow to joy. The third is the poet and his audience's time of present transition, as they seek by virtue of Christ's death and resurrection to experience eternal joy.

The first moment is contained in the section of dialogue between Christ and Mary (lines 1-54). It is introduced as a joyous moment by Christ, Who opposes to Mary's human vision of sorrow at her Son's death the fact that by His death He will transform cosmic sorrow, the sorrow of all mankind. The dialogue develops this fundamental opposition of divine joy to human sorrow, as first Christ explains the divine reason for His death and then Mary counters by giving her own vision, limited to her "kinde," of the suffering of Her Son. Each repeats the vision again, and then again, and each time the intensity of opposition builds (lines 7-30), until out of desire to release man from sorrow and yet in an agony of compassion for His mother, Christ cries out to His mother to let Him die, whereupon she replies with her request to die first (lines 31-36). Together the two voices define the whole dimension of the passion, Christ giving the supernatural value, Mary offering the human—as if the suffering of Christ's spirit were presented in the first four lines and the suffering of His flesh, through Mary's vision, were given in the second four.

The second moment is the moment of the event which transforms Christ's death to life, Mary's sorrow to joy (lines 55-57). The divine command in the dialogue to be joyful is made fully comprehensible to Mary by the power of an event in history, which is the dimension that creates her experience. When Christ rose, then Mary's sorrow fell, the poet says. But indirectly this moment introduces a second opposition which arises out of the event. This is the separation of Mary from her Son that occurs with His ascension, for Mary's joy can be full only when she is reunited to her Son in heaven. Her assumption into heaven is implied in the transition between the second and third moments of the poem, as line fifty-eight, "Moder, for hat ilke blisse," establishes that now in the present Mary experiences joy in heaven.

The third moment, expressed in lines fifty-eight through sixty-six, is that defined by the poet and his audience's petition in present time. Mary has become a means to joy for man, as man raises his petition to her. A significant proportion is established by the third moment. Mary's position now corresponds to the position which in the dialogue Christ had in relation
to Mary. As Mary had stood below Christ at the crucifixion, so man stands
below Mary, on earth and still in sorrow. Just as in the poem the resurrection
transformed Mary's sorrow to joy, so analogously the poem has reformed
man's knowledge of human sorrow and suffering to an understanding of
sorrow and cosmic joy, so that in the last lines man sees his alternative:
to have the flames of hell or the light of joy in heaven.

The opposition of supernatural joy to the sorrow of hell, of the eternal
vision of this cosmic joy to the limited vision of human joy and suffering,
and the transformation of both these kinds of sorrow to joy provides the
structural movement of the poem. The structure of the poem embodies the
transformation of sorrow to joy in two proportions: there is the opposition of
high to low and there is the horizontal movement of sequence of events, the
transformation of the past and present to future. These two proportions

The dimension of awareness is developed first by the dialogue section. It is
vertical dialogue of things above with things below, which in terms of the
poem opposes three levels of significance or application. The first is the
literate. Christ hangs on the cross above Mary. Mary weeps below. Christ
commands Mary to be glad. This is the level at which Mary comprehends
Christ's suffering. Revealed by Christ's command to Mary is the inner level,
the level of the abyss between man and God, the separation of the divine
point of view from the human and of the purpose of the Son of God from
the understanding of His human mother. Revealed also by Christ's words is
yet a third level of opposition, the deeper source of the second. At the time of
the dialogue mankind lies imprisoned in hell. God is above in heaven. It is
Christ's death in time that will join the two—as it will resolve each of the
oppositions. By suspending the horizontal movement of time with the dia-
logue between Christ and Mary the poet intensifies the oppositions. The
ninth stanza (lines 49-54), where Christ announces that His time has come
and Mary says she desires to go with Him, acts in the poem as a prophecy
which foretells the movement to come in the tenth stanza.

Then in the tenth stanza by the narration of events the poet develops the
horizontal movement of time, and we see the three levels of vertical opposi-
tion simultaneously transformed. Omitting Christ's descent into hell which
He had also prophesied, the poet focuses instead on the third day, the day of
Christ's resurrection from the dead (lines 55-57), for this is the event which
transforms the literal opposition between Mary's sorrow and Christ's joy. As
Christ bodily rises, Mary's sorrow falls. She becomes joyful, to fulfill the
original request of Christ with which the poem opened. Then in the petition of the last nine lines, with Christ's ascension and the assumption of Mary implied, the transformation of the second and third oppositions is revealed. In present time Christ is literally above in heaven, with Mary united to Him. For Mary the abyss of understanding has been closed and her view has become Christ's view. But the final petition reveals also that in the present moment of time there is a separation between Mary and mankind, because for mankind the horizontal time has only incompletely resolved the oppositions. Until his own resurrection and judgment day mankind will remain in an incomplete relationship to joy. But by the power of Christ's death and resurrection which accomplished Mary's joy, he has the power to obtain the joyful end of his own destiny, and Mary's presence in heaven is both a sign and the means of man's own entry into final joy. In the horizontal movement of time, through prayer and good actions he can be drawn up from the depth of a potentially eternal hell into the height of the eternal light of heaven. It has been the purpose of the poem, having in the first section defined its nature, having in the second worked its transformation, and now having in the third applied its power by prayer, to make the outlines of this cross and the source of its power intelligible.

The Dialogue Form

In his survey of the contents of the St. John's College manuscript, M. R. James describes the incomplete version of this dialogue, which corresponds to the Royal version we are using, as a song both in Latin and in English. However, a reference to James' description of the Latin text upon which the dialogue is based, shows that the opening lines are the following:

Stabat iuxta Christi crucem
stabat uite uidens ducem
nitens uale facere.

And a reading of the Latin sequence which James quotes shows that it does not correspond exactly with "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode," although both poems have the same stanzaic form. "Stabat iuxta Christi crucem" is not a dialogue between Christ and Mary, but a narrative of the sufferings of Christ just before His death from the point of view of Mary's compassion. Yet the basic structure of the English poem is analogous to the structure of the Latin
sequence, and it appears that the dialogue is an adaptation of it. The narrative sequence referred to by James exists in two Middle English versions printed in Brown's anthology of thirteenth century English lyrics. Only the latter part remains of the first version, and the second is a complete translation of the sequence.

Of the two English narrative versions, the incomplete one is closer to the Latin original. On the other hand, "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" and the complete English narrative version, "Iesu cristes milde moder," share elements neither in the Latin nor in the incomplete English version. Because the complete English version retains the narrative method of its Latin source and yet in some respects its contents are closer to "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode," it provides us with an excellent basis for comparing the narrative and dialogue treatments of the sequence. By showing the similarities of "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" to "Iesu cristes milde moder" and at the same time by pointing out in what way the English poem is modified from the Latin, I can indicate what particular purpose is achieved through the use of dialogue and offer an evaluation of George Kane's judgment about the effectiveness of the dialogue form.

Both "Iesu cristes milde moder" and "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" begin with a section which meditates on the suffering of Christ through the compassion of Mary. Then both poets apply to the moment of Mary's most intense suffering the contrast of the moment of her painless giving birth and show that her suffering binds her to the nature of womankind. Next, both poems make a transition through sacred history to the present and end with a prayer made in virtue of the events the poets have told before. The most striking difference between the two poems is that the poet of "Stond wel" has changed the point of view from that of a compassionate observer, who through eleven stanzas speaks of what Mary must have experienced and then petitions Mary, into the nine stanzas of dialogue which interchange the points of view of both Christ and Mary. Only in the final two stanzas does he use the view of the speaker of the narrative version.

Iesu cristes milde moder
stud, biheld hire sone o rode
þat he was ipined on;
þe sone heng, þe moder stud
and biheld hire childes blud,
wu it of hise wundes ran.
Po he starf þat king is of lif,
dreriere nas neuerre no wif
þan þu were, leuedi, þo;
þe brithe day went in-to nith,
þo ihesu Crist þin herte lith
was iqueint with pine and wo. [9]

Þi lif drei ful harde stundes
þo þu seye hise bludi wundes,
and his bodi o rode don. [12]
Hise wundes sore and smerte
stungen þureu and þurw þi herte,
as te bihichte simeon. [15]

Nu his heued with blud bi-sprunken,
uu his side with spere istungen,
þu bihelde, leuedi fre. [18]
Nu his hondes sprad o rode,
nu hise fet washen wit blode
an i-naillet to þe tre. [21]

Nu his bodi with scurges beten,
and his blud so wide hut-leten
maden þe þin herte sor. [24]
War-so þu castest thin eyen,
pine strong þu soie im dreien—
ne mithte noman þolie mor. [27]

Nu is time þat þu gielde
kende þat þu im withelde
þo þi child was of þe born;
Nu he hoschet wit goulinge
þat þu im in þi chiltinge
al withelde þar biforn. [30]

Nu þu fondest, moder milde,
wat wyman drith with hir childe,
þei þu clene maiden be; [32]
“Iesu cristes milde moder” begins with five stanzas of meditation on Christ’s suffering on the cross as it affects Mary. The first three stanzas set the scene. The poet opens his meditation by saying, Mary stood while Christ hung. Then, addressing Mary, the speaker says, No one was ever sadder than you. The day turned to night when the Light of your heart was quenched.
As you saw the wounds of your Son, your life suffered the wound Simeon foretold. After these three introductory stanzas, in stanzas four and five the poet describes Christ's bloody wounds, beginning at His head and moving to His limbs, then to His body, saying that wherever Mary cast her eyes she could see only her Son's pain. The first five stanzas of the narrative version correspond to stanzas one through six of the dialogue version, where by opposing Mary's suffering to Christ's exhortations that she be "biñe," the poet of "Stond wel" gradually increases the sense of intensity of Mary's suffering. Stanza six of the dialogue reaches a climax as both Christ and Mary cry out to die.

In stanzas six and seven of the narrative version the poet develops the traditional correspondence between Mary's suffering and her painless giving birth. He uses it to suggest the accumulation of pain, saying, Now nature exacts with usury what it withheld at the birth of your Son—as if not only is Mary's present suffering just, but that justice exacts over and beyond for the time she had not suffered. In the dialogue it is stanzas seven and eight which develop the parallel, not, however, to suggest the justice of Mary's pain, but to relate her pain to God's mercy, as she agrees to become the intercessor for mankind.

In stanzas eight and nine of the narrative version, as in the dialogue the poet uses the transition of sacred history, her Son's resurrection, to change Mary's sorrow to joy. In recounting the resurrection, however, he develops a third correspondence to Mary's painless childbearing. Christ's body rose through solid stone ("thur þe hole ston"), just as when He was born of Mary He left her maidenhood whole before and after His birth. In "Stond wel" this third correspondence has been omitted. In its place the poet puts the stanza of dialogue where Christ foretells His resurrection and Mary asks to go with Him, and the event in time, which in "Iesu cristes milde moder" is given two stanzas, he condenses into three lines.

Finally, in stanzas ten and eleven of the narrative version, the poet applies the joy to man and appeals to Mary to make all man's sorrow into bliss. This corresponds in the dialogue version to the second half of stanza ten and the whole of the concluding stanza eleven. The dialogue section of "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" has extended through stanza nine. Now the last two stanzas of the poem use the same point of view as the whole of the narrative version, and its final stanza contains the same elements as the final stanza of the narrative version.

In the narrative version of the sequence, the divine point of view is not
developed fully throughout the poem. It is only given briefly at the end, at the point after Christ’s suffering as seen through Mary’s compassion has been related, after the speaker has pointed out the parallels to the virgin birth, and after he has related the resurrection and made the third parallel to Christ’s rising through solid stone. It comes, in the last two stanzas, as the introduction to his prayer:

Neue blisse he us broue,  
Jat mankin so dere boute  
and for us gaf is dere lif.

In his notes on “Stond wel, moder, vnder rode,” Brown indicates that its ultimate source is the dialogue of St. Anselm or St. Bernard. This source, or a similar source, has provided the poet of the dialogue with the divine point of view from which Christ speaks to console or debate with Mary. There are many points of similarity between Christ’s thoughts in the *Lamentatio St. Bernardi* and what He says to Mary in “Stond wel, moder, vnder rode.” In the *Lamentatio*, after Mary has expressed the depth of her sorrow, her Son replies at length, gently reminding Mary first of the purpose for which He took her flesh and became her Son, which is now the most intense source of her sorrow. How else can He fulfill His purpose, He reminds her. Then, as He does in line fifty-one of “Stond wel, moder, vnder rode,” He prophesies that He will rise again on the third day after His death, appearing to both His disciples and to Mary. Put away your sorrow, He tells her, for then He will go to the glory of His Father. By His one death all mankind will be saved. In what way can what pleases the Father displease you? Do not weep, I will not leave you, He consoles her. You will be with Me for all time. You know well whence I proceed, whence I come. Why are you sad if I ascend to the place from which I have come? Yet although Christ’s thoughts in “Stond wel, moder, vnder rode” seem to be based on those of Christ in the dialogue of the *Lamentatio*, as in his adaptation of the narrative sequence, the changes the poet has made in the material he uses reflect the particular purpose of his poem.

In the first place, in “Stond wel, moder, vnder rode” the poet opens the dialogue with Christ telling Mary to be glad, before He has recalled to her the reasons that should make her glad, so that His command to His mother who sees Him hanging on the cross seems incongruous and paradoxical, and Mary can reply only by opposing to His command the evidence of suffering
before her. Second, the poet sustains this opposition between Christ and Mary's view by withholding until the very end of the dialogue the mention by Christ of His own happy outcome, that He will rise again. We see that by his use of both the narrative source and the *Lamentatio* the poet has recast the theme of Christ's crucifixion, Mary's compassion and Christ's compassion for Mary, into a debate of cosmic joy with human sorrow.

Returning to Kane's evaluation of the dialogue form's effectiveness in treating the crucifixion, it seems to me that the dialogue form of the sequence we have examined provides dimensions to the religious lyric which are not easily conveyed by a narrative form. The deepest dimension provided is the expression of the Christian quality of the divine perspective. The dialogue form is the embodiment in its most perfect expression of the medieval theology of the Incarnation, where God manifests Himself and His love for man through Himself becoming incarnate and assuming human nature. In understanding the dialogue to be merely the easiest means of doctrinal instruction Kane shows the common point of view of critics who classify medieval Christian theology without considering its subject matter, and who equate it with a kind of dispassionate and static body of knowledge which is opposed to what can be humanly experienced and felt. By pointing out two essential differences between the English narrative form of the sequence "Iesu cristes milde moder" and the dialogue form of "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode," I would like to illustrate two points about this poet's use of the dialogue form which show the insufficiency of Kane's view.

In the first place, rather than the poet using the dialogue treatment of "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" to show how "an incarnate God and His mother are victims of the conflict between divine and human purposes," as Kane suggests, the poet shows rather how the divine purpose transforms the suffering of Mary into the greatest manifestation of God's love for man. And second, the dialogue form of the sequence, rather than being used to give "doctrinal instruction," is used to convey to man a much more intimate and personal view of sacred history than the narrative form.

The first point can be illustrated by the contrast we noted between how the poets of the two forms relate Mary's human suffering to the significance of sacred history. In the narrative version and in the Latin original, the poet has used the correspondences between events to point out two symmetrical relationships in the plan of sacred history. (1) When Christ took His mother's flesh, Mary did not suffer pain. But Christ's suffering and death which caused man's spiritual rebirth, caused Mary's spiritual suffering. (2)
Christ's resurrection in His glorified flesh was as miraculous as His birth, for just as Mary remained a virgin, so Christ passed with His body through the stone of His tomb leaving it whole. His resurrection was given as a sign, just as His birth from a virgin was a sign, of His divinity. The poet of the dialogue, however, has modified this parallel to make Mary's suffering show God's accessibility to man. Omitting the second parallel in the narrative version, of Christ's virgin birth to His rising through a stone, he has focused on the first parallel which defines Mary's human motherhood. He has used the relationship of Mary's intense suffering at the crucifixion as it contrasts to her painless giving birth and made it the basis by which Christ unites Mary to the suffering of mankind, to become the spiritual mother of those for whose ultimate joy her Son is dying. Mary's second motherhood through her sorrow—the intensity of which the poet has defined through the dialogue by opposing it to joy—is made a power by which mankind can appeal to Mary to intercede for them, as, in fact, the poet does appeal at the close of the poem.

The unique power of the dialogue form can be seen in "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" in how the poet conveys through sacred history the feeling of God for man. The dialogue and the narrative versions develop their subject matter in essentially the same proportions. They both begin with a meditation on Christ's suffering through the compassion of Mary, then explain her suffering in relation to her painless giving birth, and then tell of the resurrection of Christ which is the source of man's spiritual rebirth. But the poet of the dialogue has presented the crucifixion, not, as the poet of the narrative does, to point out the intensity of Christ's pain as Mary saw it in the evidence of His physical suffering, but to express the inner conflict of love between the human and the divine. He has drawn the divine or inner meaning of Mary's suffering at Christ's pain back from where it began to be developed in stanzas six and seven of the narrative version into the opening section of the dialogue and formed it into a loving voice which explains to Mary the inner meaning of what she sees with her eyes. In each exchange of the dialogue the divine purpose of love for man is opposed to Mary's particular human love for her Son, which she expresses simply through describing what she sees. Yet the divine point of view does not deny the pain Mary feels because of her human motherhood of Him, rather, as in "Pe milde Lomb isprad o rode," her human love adds to the suffering of divine love, and Christ transforms her love for Him with His own love for her, into love for man. The difference between the way the narrative and the dialogue
treat this inner dimension can be clearly illustrated by the way the poets convey the compassion of Mary.

The poet of the narrative version focuses on the moment of Christ's approaching death, suspending the movement of time before Christ's death and resurrection in a present moment made up of detail upon detail of suffering. As time is held still, these details accumulate:

Nu his heued with blud bi-sprunken,
nu his side with spere istungen,
þu bihelde, leuedi fre.
Nu his hondes sprad o rode,
nu hise fet washen wit blode
an i-naillet to þe tre.

This intense suffering of Christ which the poet conveys through repetition he applies to Mary as she is impressed with each detail:

Nu his bodi with seurges beten,
and his blud so wide hut-leten
maden þe þin herte sor.
War-so þu castest thin eyen,
pine strong þu soie im dreien—
ne mithte noman þolie mor.

The poet continues to intensify the present concentration of the moment by repeating "nu" throughout his theological explanation of Mary's suffering: "Nu is time þat þu gielde . . . Nu he hoschet wit goulinge . . . Nu þu fondest . . . Nu þe's giolden arde and dere/ þe pine werof þu were/ ine ti chiltuing quite and fre" (lines 31-42).

The poet of the dialogue, on the other hand, suspends the movement of time, not by an accumulating intensity of details, but by the desire of Christ and Mary, expressed in the love they reveal for each other. Throughout the first eight stanzas Christ pleads with Mary to accept her suffering on His behalf, while Mary opposes His plea by pointing out the severity of His suffering which causes her own. The intensity built up is the inner intensity of two wills rather than of accumulating physical details. It is an intensity of love which then is transferred by both Christ and Mary to man, as at Christ's request Mary makes her first intercessory prayer on man's behalf.
In the narrative version of the sequence the succession of events in time, suspended by the speaker's concentration on the most intense moment of suffering during the crucifixion, is suspended further until after he develops the parallels in sacred history. In the dialogue, the succession of events is shown to depend upon the will of Christ and to reflect His central quality, love of mankind. Thus Christ first foretells what will happen after His death, in order to console Mary. And instead of giving divine reasons—I suffer to buy Adam, and even you, from hell—He offers her the promise of the joy of His own humanity which will rise from the dead. The events which follow, told by a speaker whose view is analogous to that used in the whole narrative version, confirm Christ's words, and as well as bringing Mary joy they are a consolation to the listener to whom the events apply.

In the narrative version of the sequence the events move with a relentless quality of impersonal and symmetrical form by which Christ and Mary suffer as one part of the total design of God's justice and mercy. The impersonal form allows mankind (the listener) to stand back and recognize the meaning of the design. In the dialogue version, however, the form expresses Christ's will as it is touched by compassion for His mother, the compassion which through Mary's consent He turns to compassion for mankind. And mankind is engaged and caught up as the object of the love expressed in the debate of the poem.